

Valley Bible Church – Life of Christ

FOCUS #8:

THE PASSION WEEK OF JESUS

Thursday

THURSDAY AFTERNOON & EVENING OF THE PASSION WEEK

- Remember that during the days just preceding this week, Jesus and His disciples had traveled up to Jerusalem with a great crowd of pilgrims going to the city to keep Passover. Jesus and His apostles had arrived at Bethany late on Friday afternoon and turned in to the village to spend the Sabbath with Lazarus and his sisters. The multitude of pilgrims traveling with Jesus had gone on into the Holy City, bearing the exciting message that this Jesus of Nazareth, the maverick so hated, feared, and sought after by the Pharisaical leadership of the nation, would in fact be in Jerusalem for the feast - indeed, He would arrive Sunday morning.
- We have already considered the events of the Triumphal Entry, which occurred on Sunday morning. We will now consider the events of the next 3 days of the Passion Week.

First, it will be helpful to briefly survey once again the events of each day of that week.

SUNDAY - A day of Messianic presentation. Jesus enters the city of Jerusalem on a colt and is welcomed as a king.

MONDAY/TUESDAY - days of Messianic proclamation. Jesus enters the Temple, cleanses it, and for two days rules in its precincts, answering the public charges and challenges of all His enemies, and then pronouncing the judgment of God upon those who reject Him.

WEDNESDAY - a silent day. There seems to be nothing recorded concerning this day; Jesus was probably in Bethany with the Twelve, enjoying the protection afforded Him there by His host, Lazarus. The day was perhaps given to preparing for the feast to come on the following day, and to instructing His disciples, preparing Himself for the ordeal soon to come, and giving the nation time to consider the challenge He had set before them early in the week

THURSDAY afternoon and evening - a time of Messianic preparation. Judas had contracted to betray Jesus to the Sanhedrin; Jesus arranges for His last supper with the disciples, and Judas seizes the opportunity to betray the Lord; after Judas departs, Jesus instructs the disciples carefully.

FRIDAY - a day of Messianic perfection. Jesus was arrested sometime after midnight on Friday morning; He was tried by the Sanhedrin in a mock trial, and then the decision of that tribunal was "legitimized" at sun-up; after appearing before the Roman procurator, Jesus was crucified between two malefactors; late in the afternoon, His body was removed from the cross and hastily entombed in a borrowed sepulcher

SUNDAY - a day of Messianic pronouncement. Early in the day Jesus resurrected from the dead, thus declaring Himself to be the Son of God with power.

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THURSDAY AFTERNOON --a time of Messianic Preparation

#169 Thursday afternoon (Jewish Friday) - preparation is made for the Paschal meal, to be held at a previously secured room (Mt 26:17-19; Mk 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13)

Note:

1.) There is much question as to whether the meal eaten by Jesus and His disciples was the Passover meal, or a ceremonial meal eaten in connection with the preparation for the Passover.

It is my conviction that it was the Passover meal, and that it was eaten on the day that was, for Jesus and the 12, the appropriate day to partake of that meal.

2.) Notice the way in which Jesus instructed Peter and John to find the room where the meal was to be held. (See Luke 22:7-13.)

There seems to be very deliberate purpose in this--to hide the location from one who was looking for a time when He could report the whereabouts of Jesus to the Sanhedrinists, who were longing for an opportunity to take Jesus in PRIVATE.

"Jesus might have named the house to His disciples, but, cognizant of the traitor's purpose, He would not have Judas know the place, lest he should reveal it to the rulers and bring them in upon Him in the midst of the Supper. He would fain eat that Passover with His disciples ere He suffered and commune with them undisturbed, and therefore He had lain a plan with His host.... Since drawing water was a woman's office, a man carrying a pitcher would be sufficiently noticeable and, since he was evidently one of their host's slaves, he would be known to the disciples. The direction afforded Judas no clue, and he durst not track the messengers." --Smith, *Days Of His Flesh*, p. 438

3.) The possible home in which the Last Supper was eaten:

4.) Concerning the preparation for the Passover meal:

- "The afternoon of the 14th (of Nisan, the day of preparation for the Passover) was a time of the most intense bustle, for the ram's horn trumpets would presently announce, from the Temple, the beginning of the feast. At the sound, every one took his lamb to the Temple, the court walls of which were gaily hung with many-colored Carpets and tapestries, in honor of the day. The countless victims must be first examined by the priests, to see if they were without blemish, then slaughtered and prepared for roasting, in the forecourts of the Temple, by the heads of the different households, or by men deputed by them, or by the Levites in attendance, with indescribable haste and confusion, for there was more than work enough for all, to kill, almost at the same time, the 256,000 lambs sometimes required. The exact time for killing the victims was 'between the evenings,' from sunset of the 14th till the stars appeared, though they might be killed in the three last hours of the day. As soon as the courts were full, the gates were shut on the multitude within, each holding his lamb. Three blasts of trumpets then announced the beginning of the heavy task. Long rows of priests, with gold and silver bowls, stood ranged between the altar and the victims, to catch the blood, and pass it on from one to the other, till the last poured it on the altar, from which it

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ran off, through pipes: beneath. When the lamb had been drained of blood, the head of the family to which it belonged took it to the hooks on the walls and pillars around, where it was opened and skinned."--Geike, *Life and Words*, I, 214-15

III. "A little while, and ye behold me no more..." (John 16:17)

[The last night: in the upper room with His apostles, and then the experience in the Garden of Gethsemane]

THURSDAY EVENING (Jewish Friday) --Jesus partakes of the Passover meal with His disciples

Note: This is a very important night in the Passion Week; the four Gospels give us a rather complete description of this night's activities and teachings, but once again it is necessary to piece together the accounts from the four

Gospels to gain the fullest possible account of this night.

#171 Jesus rebukes His disciples for their jealousy and selfish ambition (Lk 22:24-30)

1. Notice the argument which had arisen as the disciples arrived and took their places around the table (Luke 22:24)

- This was not the first time this dispute had arisen among the disciples.

Luke 9:46-48 --earlier, a dispute had arisen among the 12 as to "which of them would be the greatest", evidently in the assignments given them in the Messiah's kingdom

Mark 10:35-45 --James & John (perhaps through the intercession of their mother, Mt 20:20) had requested that they be given the chiefest places of leadership in that anticipated kingdom

- The most probable explanation as to what sparked this dispute at this time-

"...the Supper began with a 'contention among them, which of them should be accounted to be greatest.' We can have no doubt that its occasion was the order in which they should occupy places at the table. We know that this was a subject of contention among the Pharisees, and that they claimed to be seated according to their rank. A similar feeling now appeared, alas!, in the circle of the Disciples and at the Last Supper of the Lord." --Edersheim, II, 492

- Compare Mt 19:28, a promise made by Jesus to His disciples on the way up to Jerusalem for this feast season

This dispute points up very graphically the total absence of any understanding on the part of the disciples of that which was soon to occur in the ministry of Jesus; they are

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still anticipating the soon establishment of His Kingdom, even as He is preparing for the awful ordeal of death which He was to suffer within a matter of hours.

2. Notice the principle laid down by Jesus in response to this dispute (Luke 22:25-30)

#172 During the meal, Jesus washes the disciples' feet (John 13:1-20)

1. Concerning the arrangement and posture of Jesus and the disciples around the table-

"At times of special...ceremony, a triclinium table might be used. This is a table with combined couches around 3 sides,...U-shaped so that food can be served from the open center. Each guest eats while reclining on a couch, with the upper part of the body resting on the left arm, the head raised, and the legs and feet stretched out behind him. Cushions are always provided to be placed behind the back for added comfort. With all diners in this same position, it means that the head of the second guest is opposite the breast of the first, so that if he desires to speak secretly to him he may simply lean back on his breast and speak in a whisper. Or, as a token of affection, one may actually rest his head on the other's bosom - not an uncommon act in the East."--Weiss, *Insights into Bible Times and Customs*, p. 82

2. Foot washing was a common custom of the day, it was performed by a servant in the host's home, for the sake of those who had traveled over the dusty roads of Palestine. It was for the purpose of cleansing and refreshing.

3. This particular act of foot washing was remarkable on two counts:

a. It was done after the guests had arrived and taken their places at the table; usually it was done as the guests entered the room.

b. It was done by the master and honored participant of the feast; usually it was done by one of the lowliest of the servants.

4. This was the place in the feast where the master of the feast was expected to explain the significance of the Passover; many have suggested that in this act of foot-washing Jesus was indeed explaining in dramatic action the real significance of the Passover, that what YHWH demanded was simple trusting obedience, and that the spirit of pride which exalted oneself had no place in the one who claimed to be a follower and servant of YHWH and His Christ.

#173 At the meal, Jesus points out Judas as the betrayer (Mt 26:21-25; Mk 14:18-21; Luke 22:21-23; John 13:21-30)

1. Jesus initiated this conversation; He announced to ALL THE APOSTLES that the betrayer was at the table (John 13:21)

2. Remember that this occurred on Thursday night; it was on Tuesday night that Judas had sought out the Sanhedrinists and arranged to betray Jesus to them at a time when He could be arrested apart from the multitudes. The act of betrayal had already taken place; the culmination of betrayal would occur several hours later, in the Garden of Gethsemane.

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3. Notice the reaction of the disciples in John 13:22; this reaction is instructive in many areas:

a. It is instructive with reference to the effectiveness of the charade being played out by Judas,

b. It is instructive with reference to the treatment of Judas by Jesus; there was nothing in the way, which Jesus had acted toward Judas, which might suggest to the other disciples that it was Judas who would be the betrayer.

c. It is instructive with reference to the immaturity of the disciples, who all began to wonder, "Is it I?" (Mk 14:29).

4. Peter beckoned to John to inquire who the betrayer would be; Jesus told only John (John 13:23-26)

a. Again, it is important to understand how this room was arranged for the feast.

b. Some difficulties arise in this narrative:

- Concerning the phrase, "there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved." John the apostle was in front of Jesus and reclined back on Him and quietly asked Jesus who it is. Bosom (*kolpos*) refers to the chest or an outer pocket on the front of the garment. The significance here is that this is a private conversation between Jesus and John.
- What is the "sop/morsel" and what is its significance here? This morsel was usually given as a courtesy to the one next to you, therefore Judas was on the other side of Jesus at the meal. This was actually a public act of kindness or politeness. (Jesus practiced what He preached... "love your enemies.")
- Why does Jesus command Judas, "What you do, do quickly!?" Jesus knows the heart of Judas is set to do evil. Jesus knows that Judas' betrayal is a necessary part of God's plan. Judas had already allowed himself to be controlled by Satan.
- Why did the other disciples let Judas depart? No one knew but John. The others assumed Judas to be going off to buy some things for the feast or that he was going to make an offering to the poor.

#174 After Judas departs, Jesus warns concerning desertion, with special attention to Peter (Mt 26:31-35; Mk 14:27-31; Luke 22:31-38; John 13:31-38)

1. There is some question as to how to properly harmonize the accounts of Jesus' words as given in the four Gospel accounts of this time.

a. Mt and Mk indicate that these words were spoken after Jesus and the eleven departed the upper room (Mt 26:30,31; Mk 14:26,27); John speaks of this conversation of Christ with Peter occurring the upper room, after Judas had departed (John 13 :30,31; cp. 14:31). Luke seems to agree with John's chronology.

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b. However, piecing the four accounts together, it seems best to understand that there were in fact two times when Peter protested his loyalty, and Jesus warned him about his coming denials. The initial prophecy and warning came in the upper room (John 13:31-38; Luke 22:31-38); but then, as the night wore on and Jesus continued to foretell the horrible suffering to be His, Peter's heart was smitten by Jesus' earlier warning and thus he once again insisted on his loyalty, only to be issued the warning once again (Mt 26:31-35; Mk 14:27-31). This is certainly consistent with the character of Peter as we know him in the Gospels.

c. Because of this distinction between these two closely related accounts, it is good to briefly consider the initial experience here (John 13:31-38; Luke 22:31-38); the later incident will be mentioned in the appropriate place below.

2. Notice the tone of relief evident in Jesus' words after Judas' departure (John 13:31)

3. With Judas' departure to actually betray Jesus, the drama of the death of the God-man was actually set in motion. Compare John 13:31,32.

4. Jesus clearly foretells His own imminent departure and the responsibility of the disciples in light of that departure (John 13:33-35)

Notice that it is in response to Jesus' statement in 13:33 that the question is asked by the disciples in 13:36a. The disciples are still completely confused about what is going on in the ministry of their Lord.

5. In response to Jesus' words, "Where I go you cannot follow me now," Peter for the first time insists upon his unique and unbending allegiance and devotion to Jesus (13:37).

Compare Jesus' words in 13:36: "But you shall follow me afterwards." This is probably a reference to the crucifixion Peter would one day suffer.

6. Peter's three fold denial is foretold by Jesus (John 13:38)

Notice that Luke expands this account significantly (Luke 22:31-38).

#175 The Lord's Supper is instituted (Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20)

1. Notice that Judas had left the upper room by the time the Lord's Supper was instituted. The betrayer was present at the beginning of the Passover meal, but departed in the midst of it.

2. This was part of the Paschal (Passover) meal, but in His presentation of the bread and the cup at this time, Jesus invested this particular ceremony with a new meaning.

a. It is a commemoration of His death, first of all.

b. It is a picture of the fellowship the believer enjoys with God (a shared meal).

c. It is a reminder of what was necessary for the "New Covenant" to become a reality.

3. Notice that Jesus spoke a prophecy at this time concerning the next time He would enjoy a meal such as this with His disciples (Mk 14:25); that prophecy awaits fulfillment even today.

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#176 The Farewell Discourse to His disciples in the upper room (John 14)

1. Only John records this discourse; the Synoptics give the impression that Jesus left immediately after instituting the Lord's Supper (cp. Mk 14:25,26).
2. Remember that these words were spoken just hours before the Lord's arrest and eventual crucifixion.
3. Notice how abruptly the Lord brought this discourse to a close and departed the upper room (John 14:31).

LATE THURSDAY NIGHT (Jewish Friday) --Jesus and the eleven apostles leave the upper room and go to Gethsemane

#177 The discourse on the way to Gethsemane - the True Vine, the Ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 15,16)

1. Concerning the Garden of Gethsemane--
2. Again, Jesus departed the room in the middle of the night in order to gain a few more precious moments with the eleven.
3. It was evidently at this time, as Jesus led the disciples out of the city, across the Kidron Valley, and over to the lower reaches of the Mount of Olives, that Peter once again insisted that he, above all the others, could be depended upon to stand by Jesus no matter what happened (Mt 26:31-35; MK 14:27-31).

Jesus repeated the prophecy of Peter's denial, and Peter became the more insistent. Note that the other disciples also insisted on their own individual fidelity (Mt 26:35).

#178 The "High-Priestly Prayer" of Jesus, spoken near the Garden of Gethsemane (John 17)

"It was a prayer of self-consecration, thanksgiving, and intercession. He did not intercede for the world which He had come to redeem and which was very dear to His heart, but for His disciples: first for the Eleven who were with Him while He prayed the men whom the Father had given Him out of the world, whom He had kept in the Father's name, and whom He was leaving as His representatives, charged with the self-same mission whereon He had Himself been sent; and then for all who should be won by their preaching, and all who from generation to generation should share their faith and carry on their work even to the end. There is nothing more remarkable about this prayer than the note of exultant triumph which rings through it. As Jesus spoke, the end was nigh; and in the world's judgment it seemed as though His life-work were closing in dire and tragic failure. Where was His throne? Where was His crown? He should, if He were the Messiah, have been the nation's hero, encompassed by acclaiming thousands; but there He stood, despised and rejected, with only that little band of Galilean peasants by His side; and ere many hours had passed His insulting enemies would be dragging Him to the cross of shame Yet He bore Himself as a conqueror, and, lifting up His eyes to Heaven, He declared: 'I have glorified thee upon the

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earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.' ...Jesus faced death without regret and without disappointment. His life seemed to the world to be closing in darkness and defeat; but He saw the final issue, and He knew that what seemed darkness was glory what seemed defeat was triumph."--Smith, p. 455

#179 Jesus suffers long in agony in the Garden; the disciples could not watch with Him (Mt 26:30,36-46; Mk 14:26, 32-42; Luke 22:39-46; John 18:1)

1. Notice John's remark in John 18:1; he seems to have felt it was significant that as He approached Gethsemane Jesus stepped over the "brook Kidron."

2. Jesus left eight disciples at the entrance of the Garden, and took the "inner three" with Him to the inner recesses of the enclosed place

3. Three times Jesus went to prayer to His Father, and each time the prayer is the same: "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will but thy will be done!"

- As Jesus emerges from the Garden after that season of prayer before His Father, the Sanhedrinists will arrive to arrest Him.
- By early the next morning, Jesus will have endured six distinguishable "trials," and as a result of those trials will have been adjudged a criminal worthy of capital punishment.
- By 9:00 on Friday morning, Jesus will be hanging on a cross on a small hill outside a main gate on the north side of the city of Jerusalem. He will be executed between two thieves, the object of undisguised and rabid derision and contempt, dying in unimaginable ignominy and torment. *The serpent had bruised the heel of the woman's seed.*
- But before the dawning of the first day of the following week, that borrowed tomb in which the body of Jesus had lain was found empty.
- For forty days, Jesus walked among men, showing Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs.
- Then He mounted up on high in the clouds of heaven, ascending to His Father, where He sits even today at the right hand of the Exalted One, ever living to make intercession for His own.
- Death has lost its sting! The grave has been swallowed up in victory! *The Seed of woman has crushed the head of the Tempter!*

NOTE: The trials of Friday morning will be the focus of the next section of notes.