

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW – THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS’ LIFE ON EARTH
Week 7 – I Go To Prepare A Place For You
March 7, 2023

Hours before Jesus would be arrested, tried, flogged, and crucified, He told His disciples, *I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶for I say to you, I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.*

As the first Passover in Egypt brought an enslaved people into a new life of liberty and rest in the land of promise, Jesus the Messiah came to die so that believers in Him, both Jews and Gentiles, would be brought into an eternal life of peace and rest! Luke 22:15-23 - *And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, ‘Take this and share it among yourselves; ¹⁸for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.’ ¹⁹And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is My body, which is being given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’ ²⁰And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup, which is poured out for you, is the new covenant in My blood. ²¹But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table. ²²For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!’* What a stark contrast... Jesus unconditional love... man’s betrayal of the Son of Man... of God! The contrast continued...

²⁴And a dispute also developed among them as to which one of them was regarded as being the greatest. ²⁵And He said to them, ... ²⁶But it is not this way for you; rather, the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant.

Within the Passover meal, it was customary to wash the feet of the participants. Either a servant would wash the feet of all those attending the Seder or the one in the lowest position would assume a servant’s role and wash the feet of all! Did any of the disciples jump up to wash the others feet? NO! That would have been a public announcement that they considered themselves the least... when each one wanted to be the greatest. Jesus, Who is *Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace* did not hesitate at the Passover Seder to take off His outer garment, lay it aside, and wrap a towel around His waist. A towel was the sign of a servant. Mark 10:45 - *The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.* Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross (Phil. 2:6-8).

At first, Peter refused to permit Jesus to minister to him saying, *You shall never wash my feet* (John 13:8). Jesus then explained to Peter that unless Peter would accept this ministry from Jesus, while Peter would have a relationship with Jesus, he, Peter, would not enjoy fellowship with Him. Jesus continued, *a person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet* (John 13:10).

Some have suggested that Jesus was teaching a lesson through the bathing customs of His day. There were no bathing facilities in the small homes of the people. In order to bathe, people had to go to a public bath. When a person had been invited to a home for a meal, he would go to a public bath and bathe. In traveling from the bath to the home, the guest's feet would become soiled from the dust of the road. The host would

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provide a basin of water so that the guest's feet could be cleansed from his walk. Jesus appeared to be teaching that the **ONE** who previously had been washed completely was in a relationship with Him. But, in order to enjoy the fellowship that comes from the relationship, it was necessary to receive cleansing from Jesus. We need to submit to Jesus' work on our behalf...His providing for the complete cleansing and the washing clean of our daily walk with Him (I John 1:9) as we receive His grace.

There's more....

John 13:14 - ...*if I, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.* Jesus had shown them that love produces service. He expected the disciples – and us – to serve one another.

During the Passover Seder meal, Jesus announced, *One of you is going to betray Me* (John 13:21), *It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish* (John 13:26). It was customary to offer such a piece to the most honored guest at the feast. CONSIDER: the religious Jewish leadership had plotted to take Jesus...but they had originally said, *Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.* BUT, Jesus' hour had come...He MUST be betrayed...the spotless Lamb of God MUST die on the day that the spotless animal lambs were sacrificed on Passover.

Now after the piece of bread Satan entered into him/Judas (John 13:27). And so, Jesus said to Judas, *What you are about to do, do quickly* (John 13:27). Jesus' hour had come!

In what is called the Upper Room discourse, Jesus gave final instructions to the disciples. Jesus told His friends, the disciples, that in a few hours He would leave them and that it would be impossible for them to come with Him (John 13:33). The disciples were overwhelmed. Jesus explained that the separation resulting from His departure would be temporary!

John 14:1-3 - *Do not let your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.* We can have an untroubled heart amidst troubled circumstances. Because you believe in God, you should believe in Me as God the Father sent Me! *In My Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*

The Jewish Wedding Feast

- The Father of the bridegroom negotiates a price for the bride.
- The bridegroom travels to the bride's house.

- Betrothal symbol – drink from a cup of wine.
- From that moment the bride was declared sanctified or set apart.
- The bridegroom would leave the bride’s home and return to his father’s home. The bridegroom would speak these words to the bride before his departure: “Let not your heart be troubled. . . I go to prepare a place for you. . .and. . .I will come again”. We note two comings on the part of the bridegroom.
- The bride did not know the exact day or hour the bridegroom would return. She needed to be prepared at all times.

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- The bridegroom would add a bridal chamber onto his father’s home.
- At the father’s command, the bridegroom and the groomsmen would travel to the bride’s home. The bridegroom himself didn’t know the exact time. Note: Matt. 24:36.
- The bride would be beckoned from the street by a shout.
- The entire bridal party traveled to the father’s home for a marriage feast.
- The bridegroom and bride went into the bridal chamber to consummate the marriage (Judges 14:12).
- When the marriage was consummated, there was a seven-day marriage celebration during which time the bride remained hidden in the bridal chamber.
- At the end of the seven days, the bridegroom brought his bride out for all to see.

While Jesus would depart, He would not forget them. Jesus is occupying Himself at this present time preparing a place where we will dwell together with Him for all eternity! What a blessed reunion for those of us who are believers in Jesus! Of what event is Jesus teaching? (I Cor. 15:51-52; I Thess. 4:13-18)

During the time with His disciples that night, Jesus promised them “another” Helper/Comforter - *parakletos* – “the one coming alongside.” “Another” – another just like Myself! The Helper/Comforter would be the “Spirit of truth” (John 14:17) who would dwell within them forever!

John 16:32-33 - *...Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.* ³³ *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

Matt. 26:36-38 - *Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, ‘Sit here while I go and pray over there.’³⁷ And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. ³⁸ Then He said to them, ‘My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.’*

Jesus had left the masses in Jerusalem so that He could celebrate the Passover Seder with His disciples. There Judas had forsaken Him. Jesus then

walked with the remaining eleven to the entrance of the Garden and took Peter, James, and John with Him into the inner garden. He then left the three and prayed alone. Was He moving toward the loneliness of the cross as He prepared to take upon Himself the sins of the world?

Jesus prayed alone in Gethsemane. The word *gethsemane* in Hebrew is *gat-shemanim* which means oil press. During Jesus' time, heavy stone slabs were lowered onto olives that had already been crushed. Gradually, the weight of the slabs squeezed the olive oil out of the pulp, the oil ran into a pit and was collected in clay jars. Gethsemane provides for us such a vivid picture of Jesus' suffering. The weight of the sins of the world pressed down upon Jesus.

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Luke 22:44 - *Being in agony, He prayed more earnestly and His sweat, like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

Luke 22:41-42 – Jesus knelt down to pray, saying, *Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.*

Matt. 26:39 – *He fell on His face and prayed....*

Jesus, God the Son, always submitted to the will of God the Father.

John 18:1-8 - Judas knew about the garden and having received a detachment of troops (a cohort of Roman soldiers – 500 to 1,000 men at full strength) *and officers* (Temple Police) *from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.* (Weapons to take one man? They knew about Jesus and His ministry for 3.5 years. And, it was Passover. The Roman troops who were on the alert at Jewish holy days were ready to act as an emergency police force.) ⁴ *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, 'Whom are you seeking?'* ⁵ *They answered Him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'* *Jesus said to them, 'I am He.'* ... ⁶ *Now when He said to them, 'I am He,' they drew back and fell to the ground.*

The Greek verb for “fell” may refer to “one overcome in battle by a superior” (Luke 21:24), or “to fall down before high ranking persons or divine beings” (Matt. 2:11; Rev. 5:14). Some have taught that those who fell to the ground were bowing before the Lord. What did Jesus declare? “I AM He”! God told Moses in Ex. 3:14 “I AM that I AM” Jesus proclaimed His deity to the crowd gathered in Gethsemane that He is God! ⁷ *Then He asked them again, 'Whom are you seeking?' And they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'* ⁸ *Jesus answered, 'I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,'* Jesus interceded for His disciples.

Matt. 26:50 – Jesus addressed Judas, *'Friend, do what you have come for.'* *Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested Him.*

Matt. 26:51-56 - *And behold, one of those who were with Jesus reached and drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁵² Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all those who take up the sword will perish*

by the sword. ⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions (a Roman legion equated to 6,000 soldiers) of angels (72,000 angels)? ⁵⁴ How then would the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?" ⁵⁵ At that time Jesus said to the crowds, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest Me as you would against a man inciting a revolt? Every day I used to sit within the temple grounds teaching, and you did not arrest Me. ⁵⁶ But all this has taken place so that the Scriptures of the prophets will be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples left Him and fled.

Matt. 26:59-60 - Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, ⁶⁰ but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none.

Jesus faced six trials – three religious trials and three civil trials. There were many illegalities connected with the trial of Jesus:

- No trial was to be held during feast time – and yet Jesus was arrested at Passover!
- No trial was to be held at night – and yet Jesus was arrested at night and taken directly to Caiaphas, the High Priest.
- If the death penalty was given, ONE night must pass before the sentence was carried out; however, only a few hours passed before Jesus was nailed to the cross.
- The Jewish people had no authority (Jn. 18:31) to execute anyone – yet there were three religious trials.
- The accused was to be given counsel or representation - Jesus had none.
- The accused was not to be asked self-incriminating questions; however, Jesus was asked if He was the Messiah. Jesus was put under oath by the HP Caiaphas to answer the statement, "Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God." Jesus replied with, "It is as you said" (Matt. 26:63-64). PRAISE GOD that we hear Jesus further declare Who He is!

The trials of Jesus represent the ultimate mockery of justice.

The religious trials charged Jesus with blasphemy...claiming to be the Son of God, the Messiah (Matt. 26:62-66; Mk. 14:60-64).

The civil trials charged Jesus with claiming to be King (Matt. 27:11-14; Mk. 15:1-2)

Both religious and civil entities were attempting to protect their status and power!

BUT GOD....

Acts 4:27-28 - For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together ²⁸ to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.

The death of Jesus was according to the predetermined plan of God!

Jesus the Messiah will one day judge the world but not before the world judges Him!

QUESTIONS

How many of you learned something new? Please share!

How has this lesson impacted you?

How are you marveling at Jesus?

What are your questions?

What will you share with others about this lesson?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 7 with the Bible references.

Continue writing in your journal re: The Last Week of Jesus' Life on Earth.

Ask God to give you divine appointments.

Read Week 8's handout when it arrives.