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**Day 317 - November 13**

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**Jesus the Christ (5 BCE-30 CE)**

***Final Week – Tuesday Afternoon***

***Final Week – Wednesday***

**Readings: *Matthew 26:1-5, 14-19; Mark 14:1-2, 10-16; Luke 21:37-38; 22:1-13; John 12:37-50***

***Reflections:***

- Jesus foresees crucifixion: Jesus continues to tell the disciples of his approaching death, now just two days away. Jesus knows his mission and its culmination is just hours away.
- Priests and elders conspire: The religious leaders plot Jesus' arrest but are mindful of the popular support Jesus still receives. They are seeking to be sly. One of the marks of religious leadership is that they are manipulators. Rather than leading people by speaking the truth in love, they work covertly to get their will accomplished even if everyone else doesn't support them.
- Judas bargains to betray: Luke makes it clear that Judas is possessed by Satan himself. What could be Judas' personal motivation after three years of being a disciple of Jesus that would open the way for Satan to take over his will? Judas no doubt believed that Jesus was going to lead a revolution that would result in Judas gaining wealth and power. Judas was just in it for himself. When Jesus declared that the poor would always be with us, Judas finally realized that Jesus was not going to lead a revolution and so it was time to try to instigate a revolution. He wants to force a showdown and see if Jesus' followers will step it up to save their Messiah even if Jesus is not going to initiate the first attack. It is logical that Judas' rationalization and self-centeredness positioned him to be deceived like Adam and Eve were deceived. At the beginning of humanity's fall, Satan is right there playing an active role in their rebellion. Here at the crucifixion of Jesus Satan is again playing an active role thinking he will destroy God's son. What Satan doesn't know is that he is actively playing into God's plan and that through the death of Jesus, he will be crushed as prophesied in Genesis 3:14-15. Judas betrays Jesus to the religious leaders for thirty pieces of silver, the price of buying a common slave. This reminds us again of how Jesus became a slave or servant for us that we might be freed. See Philippians 2:5-11.
- Which day did Jesus eat the Last Supper? There is a debate among scholars as to the timing of the Last Supper. Although the traditional position is that was Jesus at the Last Supper on

the Thursday of Passover and then was crucified on the Friday, many scholars believe based on the text itself that Jesus was at the Passover on the Wednesday night and was crucified on the Thursday. This is based on the following evidence: 1) Jesus explains his eagerness to eat the Passover in light of his impending death (see Luke 22:14-16); 2) When Judas leaves during the meal it is believed he is going to buy something for the Feast the next day (see John 13:29); 3) After Jesus' arrest, the next morning those that have arrested him don't want to enter Caiaphas' palace so they won't be made unclean for the Passover Meal (see John 18:28). This all adds up to Jesus celebrating the Passover the night before and then actually being crucified on the Passover. In a very symbolic way, Jesus fulfills Leviticus 23. The Passover Lamb was to be purchased and readied on the 10<sup>th</sup> day (Sunday – Jesus triumphal entry to Jerusalem); and then slaughtered on the 14<sup>th</sup> day (Thursday) for the sins of the people. Just as the first Passover Lamb at the Exodus for Egypt symbolized forgiveness of sins that lead to complete salvation for the people, so now Jesus death would take on this same meaning once and for all.

- Jesus Teaches at the Temple: Jesus starts Wednesday morning by again teaching the people in the temple.
- Many still disbelieve: Although many follow Jesus, many still don't believe. Again we are reminded that faith is not created by seeing miracles. Faith comes from hearing God speak to us and then our hearts choosing to believe what we have heard from God. Only then can that deep bond of trust start to form. They heard Jesus but in their hearts they chose not to believe. As a result they remained distant and skeptical, soon to be participants in the death of Jesus. Unbelief does not make us irrelevant to the purposes of God. Unbelief makes us opponents to his will.
- Disbelief fulfills prophecy: John quotes Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 to point out the prophetic insights of Isaiah regarding the disbelief of the Jewish people. John believed this was Isaiah seeing into the future about the time of the Messiah. We should note that John refers to the crucifixion as Jesus' glory. Glory does not mean first and foremost radiant triumph but rather the revelation of the true heart of God. In the death of Jesus we see the glory of Jesus revealed. We see his true heart and the perfection of his love for us on clear display. Isaiah 6:10 sometimes causes people to wonder if God intentionally makes people spiritually blind so that he could judge them. This is a misreading of the text. Like at other times in the past (e.g. with Pharaoh) God gives people over to their stubborn rebellion. Blindness is the judgment that comes on those that refuse to open their eyes and see. Dead hearts is what people get when they harden their hearts over and over to God's grace and mercy. They could be healed but they choose to actively rebel against God until they can do nothing but rebel. God simply gives them what they want and in doing so, hands them over to their own self-willed demise.
- Some are afraid: John now notes a very interesting insight about the religious leaders. "Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they would be put out of the

synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.” John states that some “leaders” or “rulers” believed. The term “rulers” refers to members of the Sanhedrin, the highest legislative and judicial body of the Jews. For an example of a believing member of the Sanhedrin, see Nicodemus in John 3:1. They did not want to declare that they thought Jesus was the Messiah because of losing popular support. Here we see that even in Jesus time politicians were more interested in public opinion than in the opinion of God.

- Final public appeal: John now records a final public declaration where Jesus states again that he is only acting and speaking on behalf of his Father. He again states that he has come as a light and that his Father told him what to say and how to say it. This is interesting in that it is not just speaking the truth (what to say) but speaking the truth in love (how to say it). By following Jesus’ commands, the commands of submission to his Lordship and surrendering to obedient love, we enter into eternal life.
- Disciples make preparations: Jesus again demonstrates his foreknowledge and complete control of all the events around his death. We also see here how there are people who want to support Jesus and are glad to welcome him into their home. It would seem from this text that it is already Thursday and the day of the Passover but we must remember that Thursday started on Wednesday night and so from the other texts, this is still Wednesday night after 6 pm. The final hours with the disciples will contain some of Jesus most profound teachings and symbols. The hour has come.