

• *God's plan – Jesus' death a Passover sacrifice*

Chapters 22 to 24 of Luke's Gospel tell the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus. They are among the most wonderful chapters of the Bible. God was planning that the cross of Jesus should be a Passover sacrifice^{☞1}. But the religious leaders wanted Jesus crucified before the festival time.^a They were afraid of the people who would crowd into Jerusalem for the Passover and wanted to get rid of Jesus speedily. Then unexpectedly Judas comes to them to offer his help^{☞2}.

☞1 22:1-2

☞2 22:3-5

1. *Judas was a pretender*

• *He was never a believer*

1. **Judas was a pretender.** He was a man who had claimed and pretended to be one of the disciples of Jesus, but he never was a believer. From the very beginning Jesus knew He was a betrayer. He was never 'clean'^{☞1}. He was not a 'backslider' (a Christian overtaken by some serious sin), but rather a pretender, a person who mixes with the disciples and claims to be one of them but has no faith. There are always those who find it convenient to pretend to believe what Christians believe. They can even join in God's work. They may even be used by God although Jesus has never known them^{☞2}. Judas was expecting Jesus to establish a kingdom of power and he wanted to get advantages for himself by being part of the new regime that he believed was about to bring. it. When Jesus made it increasingly clear that He was walking to the cross, Judas decided to change sides! He wanted to be on whatever side was most profitable to his finances.

☞1 John 13:10-11

☞2 see Matthew 7:22-23

• *He wanted to get advantages for himself*

• *Decided to change sides*

2. *His sinfulness left him vulnerable to the devil*

• *When we are close to God we are safe*

2. **His sinfulness left him vulnerable to the devil.** There came a point when '*Satan entered Judas*'^{☞1}. The devil comes and goes! In Luke 4:13 he left Jesus alone for a while but at various times in His life the devil came back to attack the Son of God. There are times when it is the devil's hour^{☞2} and he attacks God's Son or God's servants. When we are close to God we are safe. But sin leaves us vulnerable. Judas was full of ambition and greed. People like him are vulnerable to having demonic powers 'enter' them. Here Satan himself does the 'entering'. Judas has left the door of his life open^{☞3}. He has no protective shield^{☞4}.

☞1 22:3

☞2 see 22:53

☞3 see Ephesians 4:27

☞4 see Ephesians 6:10-20

3. *An imitation-church is at work in crucifying the Son of God*

• *Religious people with the intention of getting rid of Jesus*

3. **An imitation-church is at work in crucifying the Son of God.** I call the people here an 'imitation-church'. There are chief priests (those who ran the work of the temple) and scribes (the scholars and students of the Old Testament law). There is a specially religious occasion, the festival of Unleavened Bread and Passover. There is Judas, one of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are temple officers, who looked after the treasury^{☞1}. You could call them the 'deacons' of the temple. There are discussions about what to do with Jesus and His rebellious apostle Judas^{☞2}. How religious people like committees and discussions about church business! It is a lot of people playing at the game of religion. Yet all the discussions and the financial transactions of these verses are with the intention of getting rid of Jesus.

☞1 22:4

☞2 22:5

• *The common people totally left out*

The common people were totally left out of all this. They had no idea of what was going on. This is typical of corrupt religion. Church-leaders get into positions of power but have no interest in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The common people are used for the purposes of fund-raising but not much more.

- True spirituality is...
 - (i) sincere
 - (ii) considers the people's needs
 - (iii) content with God's will

True spirituality is the exact opposite. (i) It is sincere. It desires the honour and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It lifts high the name of Jesus. A false church is never very interested in the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. (ii) True spirituality has the needs of the people at heart. (iii) True spirituality is content with God's will. What are the motives driving Judas and these religious leaders? Judas wants money. The religious leaders of Jerusalem want power to stay in their hands without anyone like Jesus coming and disturbing their careers in the temple! They are governed by self-centredness and money-making.

4. Judas and Satan are being used without their knowledge

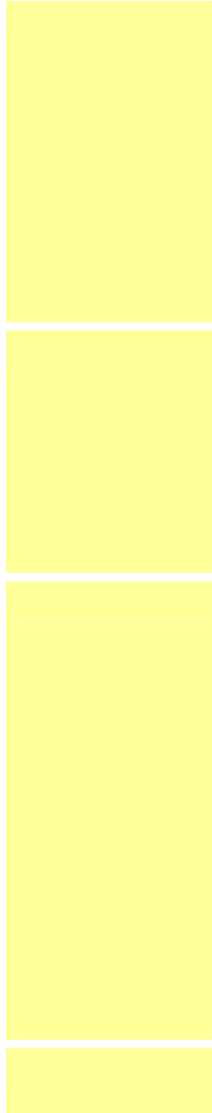
- A ghastly picture
- Yet being used by God to accomplish His will
- With God, terrible disasters can become great victories!



4. **Judas and Satan are being used without their knowledge.** These verses paint a terrible picture. Corrupt religious officials. A wicked and deceitful apostle. Satan getting hold of a man's heart and leading him into betrayal. Judas and his new friends watching for an opportunity to get rid of the Son of God. What a ghastly picture it all is!

And yet God was not being defeated. On the contrary God was getting His will done. Judas and his new colleagues were intending evil, but God was intending salvation! This is something we need to know about Satan. God uses Satan and wicked people even when they are doing their worst. God does not get defeated even when His enemies are full of deceit and betrayal of the worst kind. Satan was actually taking Jesus to the cross – but the cross was God's way of salvation. God can use evil. When the devil thinks he is getting his greatest victory, he is moving towards his greatest failure. We need to keep our eyes open for the way in which God overrules in the midst of terrible wickedness. When everything is going wrong, maybe everything is going right. When sin is at its worst – it can be used by God to achieve what God wants despite the wickedness of the people themselves. God may seem to lose a few battles, but He always ends up the Victor. He gets His will done, and neither Judas nor Satan can stop Him. They might even help Him without knowing it.

Note

a. For the significance of this see Eaton, *Mark* (Preaching Through the Bible), p. 127.



	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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