

## **The Story of Hope #16**

### **In Control**

Matthew 26:1-5, 26:26-29, John 18:1-11

Story of Hope Section 29

1.6.2018

Last week we ended with Jesus and his disciples in the town of Bethany. Jesus had just called out a dead man from his grave. The countryside was ablaze with the news, and since Bethany is less than two miles from Jerusalem, the leaders of Israel heard the news quickly.

Throughout the last few years, Jesus had not only claimed to be God, but had systematically demonstrated control and authority over all areas of life. It was an authority and control that only God could possess. Wind and waves recognized His voice. Demons trembled in fear and followed His instruction. He healed sickness and disease as simply as if he were ordering food from a restaurant. Lazarus was the final straw. Bringing a man back to life, **Jesus had control over life itself.**

The leaders of Israel were in a tough position. Jesus had demonstrated that He was exactly who He claimed to be. He did miracles that the prophets and the teachers of Israel claimed only the Rescuer would do. So, now there was a problem. The leaders of Israel had to choose who they believed Jesus was. The people of Israel were looking to them as the spiritual leaders of the nation and they wanted to know who was this Jesus. Blocked by their pride and desire to maintain their positions of power, the leaders of Israel proclaimed to the masses that Jesus was not the promised Rescuer. He, instead, received His power from Satan. The Sadducees, Pharisees, and scribes gathered together and decided that Jesus must die.

Wanting to avoid a riot, the leaders of Israel looked for a quiet way to arrest Jesus. They needed someone on the inside, someone who could present Jesus to them at a time when He was alone. Judas was that man. One night, Judas slipped away from the group and presented the leaders of Israel with their opportunity. For thirty pieces of silver, Judas would betray Jesus.

Traveling from Bethany, Jesus and his disciples arove in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover feast. If you remember, God commanded the Jews to celebrate the passover feast yearly as a remembrance of what God had done for them. They were to remember, and to teach their children how God had rescued them out of the hands of the Egyptians. Each year they were to choose a lamb without blemish. It had to be male, and could have no broken bones or maladies. The lamb then had to be set aside and tested. It had to be the right lamb, it had to be the perfect sacrifice. They would then kill the lamb and prepare it in a specific way, and eat it that night.

It was during this Passover meal that Jesus makes a startling statement. He looks at his disciples, and proclaims that one of them would betray Him. The disciples look at each other with sadness and, one by one, they ask the question, "Is it I?" If the tension wasn't already high, Jesus then identifies Judas as the betrayer. Sometime later, Jesus again points to Judas as the betrayer. The Gospel writer, John, tells us that at that point, Satan entered Judas.

With Judas out of the room and into the night, Jesus concludes the last Passover feast in a very intimate way. Speaking dearly to the eleven He instituted a new type of remembrance. Jesus picks up a cup of wine and some bread. This cup is the third cup of wine that is drunk

during the Passover meal. It comes after the main course. It is called the Cup of Redemption. In the Jewish Passover it was symbolic of the blood of the lamb that was sacrificed at the first Passover in Egypt.

Jesus now identifies Himself with this cup. He would give his life up, just like the lamb in Egypt. But, His blood would become the symbol of new and different kind of covenant. It would not just save one group of people from temporary punishment, His blood would be the payment for the sins of the world.

Once the meal is over Jesus and his disciples, minus Judas, leave and travel to a garden outside the city. Judas, knowing where Jesus would likely go, hurriedly presents himself to the chief priests. Jesus had 'outed' him as the betrayer, and so the plan that they were hoping would not happen during Passover was now forced into effect by Jesus. The chief priests send Judas to the governor Pontius Pilate as a witness to the accusations against Jesus. In order to keep peace during the Passover, Pilate released a band ,or cohort, of Roman soldiers to aid in the capture of Jesus.

Picture the scene in your head. There in the garden is Jesus, along with his disciples. They are met by this cohort of Roman soldiers along with officers from the chief priests and some of the Pharisees. A cohort of Roman soldiers was between 500 and 600 soldiers. If you add to that the delegation of religious leaders, this is a large group!

Jesus takes charge of the situation and asks who they are looking for. They answer, "Jesus of Nazareth." When Jesus answers, "I am He", everybody falls back! Imagine the noise. A group of 500-600 soldiers falling backwards. This is not a man being captured. This is not a man who was manipulated or deceived into a trap. At any time Jesus could have simply walked away from this crowd. He could have called down angels to defend him, but He didn't. That wasn't the plan. This was a man, a God-man who was giving up his life. **This was a man about to carry out the final act of a plan. He would be the perfect sacrifice, a way for perfect peace.**

**A Purposeful Plan.** Often we think of Jesus as being a victim of circumstances. He was murdered by the Romans, or deceived and put to death by the Jews. This is not the case. Jesus purposely gave up His life as a part of a grand plan. A plan set so deep in time, and by The One so powerful, that it could not be thwarted.

**Jesus was the Perfect Payment for Peace with God.** The people on Barangonan know that if there is an offense or sin, then there has to be a payment made in order for there to be peace. If there is not a complete and perfect payment made, then there can be no peace. Jesus not only claimed to be God, but He proved it. He did things that only God could do. Living a sinless life, one without spot or blemish, Jesus became like that innocent lamb that was killed in place of the guilty. God's law is clear, our sin separates us from Him. We are incapable in and of ourselves to do anything to connect us back to God. We need a way back to God. While speaking to His disciples, the night of His betrayal, Jesus proclaimed that He was, and is, that way (John 14:1-5).