

## CHAPTER 29: The Gospels Part 7

The latest threat by the Jewish religious leaders in Jerusalem effectively interrupts Jesus' ministry there. **Jesus therefore no longer openly walked among the Jews, but went from there to the region near the wilderness, to a town called Ephraim, and there He stayed with the disciples.** (John 11:54) Jesus leaves Jerusalem for now. Over the next several months He travels all over the country teaching and healing. He goes east into the Judean wilderness around the Jordan River; to Perea and then up to Galilee. Jesus is still very popular with the people and wherever He goes He's recognized and welcomed. Very little detail is given about this period in Jesus' ministry – what He says and what He does. This is in the middle of His third year of ministry, but it is beginning to wind down.

The annual feast of the Passover is approaching, so once again Jesus and His disciples begin to make their way back to Jerusalem. **As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve aside privately and said to them on the way, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the experts in the law. They will condemn Him to death, and will turn Him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged severely and crucified. Yet on the third day, He will be raised."** (Matthew 20:17-19) Of course that term "Son of Man" is Jesus' talking about Himself. So, for a third time Jesus predicts His own death and resurrection to His disciples.

As Jesus passes through Jericho a large crowd is following Him. Two blind men call out to Jesus, **"Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!"** (Matthew 20:30) They address Jesus in messianic terms as the "Son of David." **Jesus stopped, called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed Him.** (Matthew 20:32-34)

A resident of Jericho, a wealthy tax collector and swindler named Zaccheus, tries to get a good look at Jesus. But the crowd is so large and being very short he cannot see over them. So he runs on ahead of the crowd and climbs up into a sycamore tree so he can get a look at Jesus when He passes by. **And when Jesus came to that place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, come down quickly, because I must stay at your house today."** So he came down quickly and welcomed Jesus joyfully. (Luke 19:5-6)

Zaccheus is a changed man. He tells Jesus that he will repay fourfold the money he had cheated the people out of. Also, he will give half of his possessions to the poor. **Then Jesus said to [Zaccheus], “Today salvation has come to this household, because he too is a son of Abraham!”** (Luke 19:9) Then Jesus makes this famous statement revealing His purpose: **“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”** (Luke 19:10)

Jesus and His disciples make their way up from Jericho to Bethany where they will stay during the feast of Passover as the house guests of their friends, Mary, Martha and Lazarus. The Jericho Road from Jericho to Jerusalem is 15-20 miles long and it is all uphill. So this is not an easy trip. But as we will see, it will be the most important trip of Jesus’ ministry.

**They [the people] were looking for Jesus, and saying to one another as they stood in the temple courts, “What do you think? That He [Jesus] won’t come to the feast?”** (Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who knew where Jesus was should report it, so that they could arrest Him.) (John 11:56-57) The Jewish leaders are on the lookout for Jesus. The people hope that Jesus will be in Jerusalem for the Passover. But there is some doubt as to whether or not He’ll show up given the religious leaders intentions. We know that Jesus plans to be there.

While in Bethany Jesus and His disciples are invited to the home of Simon the leper. This man is actually a former leper who had apparently been healed by Jesus. He’s a close friend of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. While in Simon’s house a woman carries with her a flask of very expensive perfume oil. The gospel writer John mentions that this woman is Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Mary breaks the flask and pours its contents on Jesus’ head. She then anoints Jesus’ feet and dries them with her hair.

Judas Iscariot who is the treasurer for the twelve disciples is indignant. He says what Mary has just done is a waste of money. “This expensive oil could have been sold and the money given to the poor,” he says. As we will see Judas is a thief and is not really concerned about the poor at all. Jesus responds to Judas: **“Leave her alone. Why are you bothering her? She has done a good service for Me. For you will always have the poor with you, and you can do good for them whenever you want. But you will not always have Me! She did what she could. She anointed My body beforehand for burial.”** (Mark 14:6-8) Once again Jesus mentions His own death.

**Now a large crowd of Judeans learned that Jesus was there [in Bethany], and so they came not only because of Him but also to see Lazarus whom [Jesus] had raised from the dead. So the chief priests planned to kill Lazarus too, for on**

**account of him many of the Jewish people from Jerusalem were going away and believing in Jesus.** (John 12:9-11) Lazarus is a living, breathing testimony to the awesome power of Jesus. And the religious leaders don't like it.

Well Day 1 of Passover week finally arrives. The time has come for Jesus to make His way down into the city of Jerusalem. How will He be received? On the one hand most of the Jewish people love Jesus. He's quite the celebrity. But on the other hand, the religious leaders hate Jesus and want Him dead. They have succeeded in turning many of the people against Jesus. Thus the stage is set for the last chapter of Jesus' life and ministry.

The week of Passover is the biggest feast time for the Jews. In Exodus God told the people, **"This day will become a memorial for you..."** (Exodus 12:14) The annual observance remembers how the blood of a sacrificial lamb was placed on the doorposts of the Israelites' houses in Egypt. When the Lord saw the blood He passed over those houses and the plague of death did not strike them as it did the Egyptians. The result led to the event which became known simply as "The Exodus," the deliverance of the Israelite people from Egyptian bondage.

Jerusalem is beginning to fill with Jewish pilgrims from all over. People busily gather the supplies for the Passover celebration. There is a great deal of anticipation as people wait to see if Jesus is going to be there.

Jesus instructs His disciples: **"Go to the village ahead of you [Bethphage]. When you enter it you will find a [donkey's] colt tied there that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say, 'The Lord needs it.'" So those who were sent ahead found it exactly as He had told them.** (Luke 19:30-31) Bethphage is a small village near Bethany. The disciples do as Jesus told them and bring the colt to Him.

Why a donkey's colt? Because this was predicted by the prophet Zechariah: **"Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Look! Your king is coming to you: he is legitimate and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey..."** (Zechariah 9:9) So Jesus here is fulfilling a 500-year old prophecy about the Messiah.

As Jesus rides the donkey down the Mount of Olives toward Jerusalem the crowd gets word that He's coming. They go out and spread their coats on the road ahead of Him. Some cut branches from the many palm trees and place them on the road. As Jesus nears the city gate a loud crescendo of voices builds. **So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him. They began to shout, "Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel!"** (John 12:13) The people shout, "Hosanna!" "Give us salvation now!" "Save us Jesus!" "Deliver

us!" They view Jesus as their Messiah King. As Jesus enters Jerusalem great joy and excitement fills the air.

The Jewish religious leaders don't like the peoples' adoring reception of Jesus one bit. They tell Jesus to rebuke His followers. But Jesus replies, **"I tell you, if they keep silent, the very stones will cry out!"** (Luke 19:40) Later the chief priests become angry when they hear children mimicking their parents and yelling out in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David." They ask Jesus, "Do You hear what those children are saying?" Jesus responds by quoting from Psalm 8: **"Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouths of children and nursing infants You have prepared praise for Yourself'?"** (Matthew 21:16)

The Pharisees are frustrated and meet to discuss the "Jesus problem." **Thus the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you can do nothing. Look, the world has run off after Him!"** (John 12:19) Their greatest fear is beginning to come true. The Israelite people are following after Jesus.

**Then Jesus entered Jerusalem and went to the temple. And after looking around at everything, He went out to Bethany with the twelve since it was already late.** (Mark 11:11) So Jesus and the disciples trek back up the Mount of Olives and into Bethany where they are staying. This brings to an end a very good beginning to Passover week!

The next morning, Day 2 of Passover week, Jesus again makes His way down to Jerusalem with His disciples. On the way He spots a fig tree near the road. Jesus is hungry and goes to pick some figs off the tree ...**but found nothing on it except leaves. He said to it, "Never again will there be fruit from you!" And the fig tree withered at once.** (Matthew 21:19) Can you imagine the shocked look on the disciple's faces at seeing this fully grown tree filled with leaves shrivel up and become completely lifeless in just a matter of seconds? **When the disciples saw it they were amazed...** (Matthew 21:20)

Arriving in Jerusalem Jesus and His disciples enter the temple complex. Jesus becomes upset when He sees vendors and money-changers operating in the temple. Just as He had done three years before, Jesus takes action. **Jesus entered the temple area and began to drive out those who were selling and buying in the temple courts. He turned over the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves, and He would not permit anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. Then He began to teach them and said, "Is it not written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have turned it into a den of robbers!"** (Mark 11:15-17)

For most of the day Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders go at it head to head. They challenge Jesus' authority and try to trap Him into saying something that might discredit Him in front of the crowds. But Jesus does not take their bait. Instead He exposes their hypocrisy. He does this, not through heavy-handed sermons, but in very affective parables.

In the Parable of the Two Sons, Jesus compares the Jewish religious leaders to a son who agrees to do the will of the father, and then makes no effort to actually do it. The second son says that he will NOT do what the father wants. But then later he repents and does it. Jesus says the second son represents the tax collectors and prostitutes and other "sinners" who have turned to Jesus. To the religious leaders Jesus says, **"I tell you the truth, tax collectors and prostitutes will go ahead of you into the kingdom of God!"** (Matthew 21:31) These are strong words!

In the Parable of the Vineyard, Jesus compares the religious leaders to wicked tenants whom a landlord put in charge of his vineyard. Time and again these tenants kill the landlord's servants when they come to reap the fruits of the vineyard. Later the landlord sends his beloved son thinking that surely they will respect him. But they do NOT. Instead they kill him just as they had killed the others. Jesus asks the religious leaders, **"When the owner of the vineyard shows up, what will he do to those wicked tenants?"** They respond, **"He will utterly destroy those evil men! Then he will lease the vineyard to other tenants..."** (Matthew 21:40-41) At this point the leaders stop. They realize that Jesus is talking about them!

They say to each other, "We have to get this guy! We need to figure out something, and fast!" Putting their heads together, they come up with a plan. They will send three different groups to confront Jesus with hard questions in order to trap Him. They hope to make Him look bad in front of the people. They should know by now, though, that you can't fool Jesus!

The first group to approach Jesus in the temple courts is made up of the Pharisees and the Herodians. They raise a question regarding the obligation that the Jews have to the Roman government. They begin by buttering up Jesus. **When they came they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and do not court anyone's favor, because You show no partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Should we pay or shouldn't we?"** (Mark 12:14) This is a trick question – a setup. If Jesus approves of paying the unpopular Roman tax, then the people will likely turn against Him. On the other hand, if Jesus says that they should not pay it, then the Romans could arrest Him for sedition.

Jesus responds by giving a classic answer. **But He saw through their hypocrisy and said to them, "Why are you testing Me? Bring Me a denarius and let Me look**

at it.” So they brought one, and He said to them, “Whose image is this, and whose inscription?” They replied, “Caesar’s.” Then Jesus said to them, “Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.” And they were utterly amazed at Him. (Mark 12:15-17)

The next group up to test Jesus is the Sadducees. They are well known for denying the resurrection of the dead. Their question for Jesus comes in the form of a hypothetical situation about, of all things, the resurrection! Here’s their question: “A certain woman during the course of her lifetime had seven different husbands and had no children by any of these men. In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be?” **Jesus said to them, “Aren’t you deceived for this reason, because you don’t know the scriptures or the power of God?” For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.** (Mark 12:24-25) Jesus uses this as an opportunity to correct their faulty theology about the resurrection of the dead. He tells them, “You are badly mistaken!”

Finally here come the scribes, the experts in the law. One of them asks Jesus, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” **Jesus answered, “The most important is: ‘Listen, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second is: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”** (Mark 12:29-31) Recall earlier when Jesus had asked the scribe who approached Him this same question, Jesus’ response here was the one that scribe had given Him back then. Jesus concludes, “**All the law and the prophets depend on these two commandments.**” (Matthew 22:40)

One main focus of Jesus’ teaching in the temple during this Passover week is the spiritual condition of the Israel’s religious leaders. They see themselves as being righteous. But Jesus doesn’t see them that way at all. They will NOT be part of God’s kingdom if they continue to reject Jesus.

**Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone. This is from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?”** (Matthew 21:42) Jesus here quotes from Psalm 118. “**For this reason I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.**” (Matthew 21:43)

Jesus then tells them a parable to illustrate His point. It’s the Parable of the Wedding Banquet. Jesus says that “**the kingdom of heaven can be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son.**” (Matthew 22:2) In this parable the king represents God. The king’s son, then, is Jesus. The wedding banquet represents

the kingdom of heaven. This kingdom is made up of anyone who accepts God's invitation to come and then does so on His terms. Here's how the parable goes...

The king sends out an invitation to a wedding banquet for his son. These invitations are sent out to a select few. **“Tell those who have been invited, ‘Look! The feast I have prepared for you is ready... Come to the wedding banquet.’”** (Matthew 22:4) Most of those invited, however, decline to attend. They all have their excuses. Undeterred, the king invites them again. This time he describes how fantastic the celebration is going to be. How could anyone possibly refuse such an invitation?

But most of those who had been invited respond with indifference. Some even become violent. **They seized his servants, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was furious!** (Matthew 22:6-7) The king then renders judgment upon those who killed His messengers.

But the king doesn't give up. He sends out more of his messengers to the highways and beyond and issues an open invitation to everyone. **They went out into the streets and gathered all they found, both bad and good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.** (Matthew 22:10)

As they arrive the king supplies his guests with the appropriate wedding attire. One of the guests, however, chooses not to wear these wedding clothes and fails to give a satisfactory reason for his actions. Because of his refusal to meet the king's requirement, he is kicked out of the banquet. He is without excuse and is held personally accountable for his actions.

Jesus closes with sobering words: **“For many are called, but few are chosen.”** (Matthew 22:14)

Jesus' point is clear. God's invitation to salvation has been given to everyone, but only a few accept it. Some people reject God's invitation because they are too busy. Some don't see it as that important. Some don't care. Some, like the man who was thrown out of the banquet, will accept God's invitation, but only on their own terms. This is the category the Jewish religious leaders fall into. They are doing things their way. They are depending upon their own righteousness. God invites all to come, but whoever comes must come on HIS terms and not their own.

On Day 3 of Passover week Jesus is again in the temple courts teaching. He pronounces a series of seven “Woe's.” These are harshly worded judgments that are directed (not surprisingly) at the Jewish religious leaders. He calls them greedy, self-indulgent, corrupt hypocrites. **“Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You give a tenth of [every herb], yet you neglect what is more important in the law – justice, mercy, and faithfulness! You should have**

**done these things without neglecting the others. Blind guides! You strain out a gnat yet swallow a camel!”** (Matthew 23:23-24) They put on a big act to prove to everyone just how spiritual they are. They do all the required religious activities.

**“Woe to you, experts in the law and you Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs that look beautiful on the outside but inside are full of the bones of the dead and of everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you look righteous to people, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”** (Matthew 23:27-28) In other words, “You guys are a bunch of religious phonies!”

Jesus contrasts the hypocritical activities of the religious leaders to the sincere giving of a poor widow. He watches as this woman quietly and reverently deposits two small copper coins into the temple’s offering box. **[Jesus] said, “I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all offered their gifts out of their wealth. But she, out of her poverty, put in everything she had to live on.”** (Luke 21:3-4)

Despite the ongoing conflicts with the Jewish religious leaders, Jesus’ popularity with the people at this point remains high. But the tide of public opinion is about to turn. That afternoon Jesus is teaching in the temple and people have gathered around to listen to Him.

Jesus says this: **“The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.”** (John 12:23) Jesus is speaking of Himself here and He goes on to explain what He means. Using the analogy of a seed, He describes how the outer shell must die in order for the life inside of it to spring forth. **“I tell you the solemn truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it produces much grain.”** (John 12:24) His message is not lost on the people and it disturbs them – there can be no messianic kingdom until first Jesus dies. Now keep in mind, this is not a new message. Jesus has said this several times before to His disciples (though they did not fully understand what He was saying). Jesus repeats this message, but for the first time He states it publicly.

Well, Jesus’ message about dying is not what the people want or expect. “The Messiah must be killed? What on earth is Jesus talking about?” Jesus then tells them that if they’re going to follow Him they must abandon their own life, their personal ambitions, and die to self. This is not at all what they want to hear! But Jesus knows why He came, and that is to die. **“Now My soul is greatly distressed. And what should I say? ‘Father, deliver Me from this hour’? No, but for this very reason I have come to this hour.”** (John 12:27) Then Jesus prays, **“Father, glorify Your name.”** (John 12:28a)



At that moment something incredible happens right there in the temple complex... **Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.”** (John 12:28b) The Father answers His Son in an audible voice. He affirms Jesus’ mission for the benefit of all those listening. Those standing there who heard the voice try to explain it away. Several believe it was a natural phenomenon of some kind. Others conjecture that it was thunder. Still others think it was an angel speaking.

**Jesus says to the crowd: “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself.” (Now He said this to indicate clearly what kind of death He was going to die.)** (John 12:32-33) Being “lifted up” is a clear reference to something that is all too familiar to this Jewish audience – a Roman crucifixion which entails being nailed to and then lifted up on a wooden cross.

The people listening to Jesus don’t like what He’s saying. Some openly challenge Jesus... **Then the crowd responded, “We have heard from the law that the Christ [Messiah] will remain forever. How can You say, ‘the Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?”** (John 12:34). Their idea of an eternal Messiah comes from Isaiah 9 which says, **“Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.”** (Isaiah 9:7) Then you have other Old Testament passages like Ezekiel 37 which talks about one nation with one king; and Daniel 7 where the Son of Man is given dominion and glory and a kingdom. So the people here are asking Jesus a well-informed, legitimate question.

**Jesus replied, “The light is with you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become sons of light.”** (John 12:35-36) Jesus, **“the light of the world,”** (John 8:12) wants to overcome the people’s spiritual “darkness.” They have a flawed theology. They know a lot about the Messiah from their scriptures. We just saw a few. But they have been so focused on the eternal nature of their Messiah that they have ignored other teachings about him. For example, they don’t acknowledge the Isaiah 53 Suffering Servant passages. They have forgotten the Daniel 9 reference to their Messiah as the anointed one being killed. They’re overlooking Zechariah 12 where the Messiah will be pierced and mourned for. The people have been focusing on the passages they like while ignoring the ones they don’t like or don’t understand.

**When Jesus had said these things, He went away and hid Himself from them.** (John 12:36) This effectively brings an end to Jesus’ public ministry. For the short time remaining, His teachings will be primarily directed toward His own disciples.

Jesus and the disciples leave the temple. They walk out the city gates and head up the Mount of Olives. They gather at their favorite meeting spot overlooking Jerusalem. Here the disciples ask Jesus a series of questions about the end times.

Jesus talks about a period of tribulation to come on the earth. **“Immediately after the suffering of those days, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the power of heaven will be shaken.”** (Matthew 24:29)

He talks about His return. **“Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven with power and with great glory. And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet blast, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”** (Matthew 24:30-31)

Jesus assures them that everything He predicts WILL happen, though nobody knows exactly WHEN they will happen. **“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away. But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.”** (Matthew 24:35-36)

Jesus challenges His disciples to remain vigilant. **“Therefore stay alert, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come... Therefore you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”** (Matthew 24:42 and 44)

To drive home the importance of being ready, Jesus tells His disciples a parable. It is the Parable of the Ten Virgins. The bridegroom is scheduled to arrive at the bride’s home though his arrival time is uncertain. The bridesmaids, referred to here as “virgins,” wait for his arrival. From here there will join the procession to the bridegroom’s house where the wedding feast is to be held. It gets dark. Five “foolish” virgins who came unprepared run low on oil. Meanwhile five “wise” virgins brought extra oil in their flasks. When the bridegroom finally does arrive, the five foolish virgins are not around. They have left to go purchase oil. The result – they miss out on the wedding feast.

Jesus’ most sobering parable is the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. It pictures a shepherd separating the sheep from the goats. Here the sheep represent those who belong to God while the goats are those who do not belong to Him. Jesus teaches that there will be a final judgment when God separates the righteous and unrighteous and assigns each to their eternal destination. To those who believe in God and accept His terms of salvation, the sheep, they will hear Him say to them: **“Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”** (Matthew 25:34) On the other hand, those that reject God and His plan of salvation will hear these haunting words: **“Depart from Me, you**

**accursed, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels!”** (Matthew 25:41) This is a very sobering parable.

**When Jesus had finished saying all these things, He told the disciples, “You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”** (Matthew 26:1-2) Again Jesus lets the disciples know exactly what will take place shortly. It is all part of God’s plan. So then, when it happens, they should not be surprised by it.

The next day, Day 4 of Passover week, back in Jerusalem, the Jewish religious leaders and members of the ruling body, the Sanhedrin, meet with the high priest, Caiaphas. **They planned to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill Him. But they said, “Not during the feast, so that there won’t be a riot among the people.”** (Matthew 26:4-5) They realize that Jesus is still extremely popular with the people and so they don’t want to make a big scene.

**Then Satan entered Judas, the one called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve. He went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers of the temple guard how he might betray Jesus, handing Him over to them. They were delighted and arranged to give him money.** (Luke 22:3-5) The Gospel writer Matthew tells us that the money Judas receives for betraying Jesus is 30 silver coins.

Two factors are at work here. One is an evil spiritual force that opposes God. Satan enters Judas and compels him to betray Jesus. The second factor is Judas’ own feelings of anger, disappointment and resentment. Jesus has been talking a lot lately about dying. This is not what Judas had in mind when he first started following Jesus. He, like the other disciples and the Jewish people, are expecting Jesus to reign as their Messiah. Jesus is supposed to defeat the Romans and then set up His earthly kingdom. But dying? This is not what Judas signed up for! He is more than willing to sell Jesus out. **So Judas agreed and began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus when no crowd was present.** (Luke 22:6)

Judas’ coming forward to betray Jesus is great news for the Jewish religious leaders. Not only can they now proceed with their plan to arrest Jesus secretly, but they can claim that the driving force behind it is Jesus’ own disgruntled disciples. Well, how convenient!