

The plot against Jesus



Colour me!



Luke 22:1-13

The Festival of Thin Bread, also called Passover, was near. The chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses were looking for a way to get rid of Jesus, because they were afraid of what the people might do. Then Satan entered the heart of Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve apostles. Judas went to talk with the chief priests and the officers of the temple police about how he could help them arrest Jesus. They were very pleased and offered to pay Judas some money. He agreed and started looking for a good chance to betray Jesus when the crowds were not around.

The day had come for the Festival of Thin Bread, and it was time to kill the Passover lambs. So Jesus said to Peter and John, "Go and prepare the Passover meal for us to eat." But they asked, "Where do you want us to prepare it?" Jesus told them, "As you go into the city, you will meet a man carrying a jar of water. Follow him into the house and say to the owner, 'Our teacher wants to know where he can eat the Passover meal with his disciples.' The owner will take you upstairs and show you a large room ready for you to use. Prepare the meal there." Peter and John left. They found everything just as Jesus had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

Commentary

The storm clouds were gathering. Jesus' behaviour in the temple had dismayed many people and convinced the religious leaders that Jesus was becoming an embarrassment to them and a risk, because his behaviour could provoke the Roman soldiers to come down heavily on the festival crowds. They were also fearful of losing their own position of influence and power. They could see no other solution than to have Jesus killed.

It is hard to understand what Judas' motives were in striking a deal with the chief priests. Clearly money was involved. Perhaps he also thought that Jesus needed to confront the leaders and do a spectacular miracle to convince them that he was the true king. There is no doubt what the other disciples thought about him: he was a traitor in the grip of the devil.

In the meantime, it was clear that the one person really in charge was Jesus, who had arranged a place for them all to celebrate the special Passover meal. All they had to do was to follow a man with a water jar, which would have been an unusual sight in those days, and therefore came as an almost comical game of 'follow the leader' in what was otherwise such a tragic week.

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Questions

- ▶ Why were the chief priests and teachers of the Law so eager to get rid of Jesus?
- ▶ Why do you think Judas struck a deal with the religious leaders?
- ▶ What makes you think Jesus had planned ahead?
- ▶ Who would you invite to a special meal for an important festival like the Passover?



Visual aid

Dress someone from the family in dark glasses and a hoodie with the hood up. This story is all about holding secret meetings, plotting and being on the lookout, like spies, for a particular sign that will lead you to the right place to be.



Activity idea

Try to work out what prompted Judas to go and meet the religious leaders. Divide into two groups and put Judas on trial, one group accusing him and the other trying to defend him. Work out what each of you thinks about Judas, and also consider what Jesus would have thought about him. Do you think Jesus would have understood and forgiven him?



Prayer idea

Whatever we think about Judas, he stands as a warning to each of us not to do the wrong thing. We all need help to discover the way ahead when faced by hard decisions. Use the letters of the name JUDAS to help you pray about this. For example, ask God to help you to **J**udge tricky situations properly; **U**nderstand the way to go; **D**ecide what will be good for other people, not just yourself; **A**dmit your need; and **S**eek God's will.

Key verse

They found everything just as Jesus had told them (Luke 22:13).

Old Testament story link

Psalm 37:1-9: Here is a psalm of David with advice about making the right choices in life.

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