

Preparing for Death

“But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone” (Heb 2:9).



Jesus came with a purpose. His was not meant to be a life of ease or simply to spend time with mankind. He had nowhere to lay His head. He came to suffer, die, and rise again. Why? Because He wanted to carry out the ultimate goal of salvation for all of mankind. The plan of God had been put into place from the beginning, with the intention of culminating in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Son of God. Only through this means could salvation from sin be offered to a lost world. There would be no other way (John 14:6).

In the process of carrying out this plan, Jesus worked on this earth to prepare the hearts of people to live in His kingdom (Matt 5-7). He worked miracles in order to demonstrate that He was from God (John 10:25; 14:11), and to bring people to faith in Him so that they may have life in His name (John 20:30-31). He taught with authority to show how His word transcends every other teaching (Matt 7:28-29). He worked closely with His own chosen disciples to prepare them for the task to which they

were especially called. He demonstrated a love and patience that few would understand or appreciate.

Jesus knew that His last days would be spent in and around Jerusalem. He “set

His face” (ASV, i.e., was determined) to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51). He spent more time there toward the end, fully prepared for what He knew He would have to go through. He took His opportunities to teach, but the religious leaders of the day were becoming increasingly caustic toward Him. They had determined that He should die.

Jesus reached a high point in the eyes of the people. When entering Jerusalem on a colt, people were praising Him (Matt 21:1-10). However, it would not be long before the people would turn against Him. He wept over the city of Jerusalem because of those there who would reject Him (Matt 21:37-39). He faced much confrontation: driving money changers off the temple grounds, facing questions by the leaders who wanted to trap Him in His words, and even having to rebuke His own disciples for the way they acted at times. How foolish it must have seemed to Jesus, the Creator come in the flesh to save mankind from sin. Yet it was because He saw the people as lost sheep without a shepherd that He came to provide what everyone really needed. We must learn to

appreciate what the Lord did for us. It was not easy, but it was accomplished out of love.

Toward the End

Jesus faced His last days with resolve. There was no turning back from the plan that God had long before set in motion. Before His death, Jesus would spend some precious days and hours with His friends and chosen disciples, teaching and preparing them for what was about to happen.

Though the desire to kill Jesus was already there from the Jewish leadership, this intensified after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11). The chief priests and Pharisees were actively looking to seize Jesus. They didn't seem to care how it was done as long as it happened. In their minds, Jesus needed to go.

Just a few days before His final Passover, Jesus was at the home of Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary. While Martha was serving, Mary took some expensive perfume and began to anoint the feet of Jesus. The disciples, particularly Judas, were upset at this, but Jesus rebuked them and told them to leave Mary alone, because she was doing this "for the day of My burial" (John 12:7). Just after this, Jesus entered Jerusalem on the colt. The people were praising Him, but within just a matter of days they would be crying for His death by crucifixion.

After Jesus ate His final Passover with His apostles, He gave an example of one of the greatest acts of humility. He

rose from supper, girded Himself with a towel, and proceeded to wash the feet of His disciples. This selfless act of service is set before us for all time as an example of the attitude of Christ. He did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:44-45).

Jesus proceeded to teach and comfort His disciples, telling them that the Holy Spirit would be sent to guide them into all truth (John 16:12-13). Though the disciples still had much to learn, Jesus told them that He was about to go back to the Father. He was ready to die for the sins of the world.

"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name" (John 12:27-28).

Doy Moyer