

Title: Sovereign Logistics
Text: Luke 22:7-13
Theme: God's Sovereign Plan for our rescue
Series: Luke
Aim: I aim to call my people to be captured by God's grace and glory in planning and executing our amazing salvation.

Read Text:

Our text is 7 short verses of logistics. Who, what, when and where are obviously set forth, matter of factly. What is not obvious in these verses, but becomes obvious is the why. In fact, even the way in which the simple details are recorded make it clear that everything in the moment which seems natural and spontaneous is actually orchestrated by God. Here is just another example of how the Sovereignty of God and human freedom are compatible. I want you to see understand how God's Sovereign control over all things works through the free choices of man because this truth is all over the crucifixion account of Christ. What is stated in a matter-of-fact manner here, is described explicitly in the OT and then again in the NT.

The prophet Isaiah warned the northern kingdom (Israel) of the consequences of their rebellion against God and their pursuit and worship of idols. The specific consequences were going to be the invasion of the Assyrian army that God said would carry out the judgment of God against Israel's sin.

Isaiah 10.5-6

"Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger; the staff in their hands is my fury! Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets."

Long before Assyria develops a foreign policy of empire expansion and then a military plan to invade and conquer Israel, God says that Assyria is going to do just that. This warning by God is absolutely pointless and useless unless God has the authority to make it happen. If you threaten someone with consequences that you cannot make good on, they can simply call your bluff. God does not make idle threats and in 722 B.C. Assyria invaded and wiped out the 10 northern tribes, who were known as Israel or the northern kingdom. God said that Assyria was going to do it before Assyria chose to do it. Did Assyria have a choice in the matter? Did Assyria make the decision to invade Israel on her own? Did God make this prophecy because he was going to carry out this plan and was putting Israel and everyone on notice, or because he simply knew ahead of time that Assyria was going to do this? Did Assyria make the decision to invade and wipe out Israel by its own free will? Look at v.7

"But he does not so intend, and his heart does not so think; but it is in his heart to destroy and to cut off nations not a few;"

Assyria does not intend to carry out the will of God. Assyria has no clue that he is doing the bidding of God. His heart does not so think, but it is in his heart to destroy. Assyria is doing exactly what Assyria wants to do, plans to do and does. But what Assyria wants to do, plans to do and then does, is exactly what God ordained for Assyria to do. Assyria is responsible for its decision and God is sovereign over the free choices of man. Even the wrath of man is a servant of God's will.

Here is a NT example of the same truth. In Acts 2, Peter is preaching on the birthday of the church in Jerusalem. It is the Day of Pentecost, one of the annual holydays of Israel and in his sermon to his Jewish countrymen, Peter says,

"this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men."

Jesus was delivered up (by Judas) according to the definite plan of God and the foreknowledge of God. The death of Christ happened according to the plan of God. At the same time, the people who betrayed Christ, called for his death and executed him are all responsible for their free decisions in the moment. The betrayal by Judas for 30 pieces of silver was prophesied by Zechariah (11.13). The death of Judas was prophesied in Psalm 69 and the selection of his replacement was prophesied in Psalm 109. Was God sovereign over the betrayal of Judas? Yes, in every detail. Was Judas responsible for what he did? Yes, every bit of it.

So, when we see the sovereignty of God and the free acts of man work in harmony, we find comfort and a warning. The comfort is that God is Sovereign and will carry out his plan. No one can stop it. The warning is that no one can use the sovereign plan of God as an excuse for disobedience. Joseph's brothers intended harm to Joseph and were held accountable for it. Yet, as Joseph said, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. Those who plotted the death of Christ, meant it for evil, but God used their evil to carry out his plan. It does not make their evil less evil, it just shows the wisdom, power and unstoppable plan of God.

Evil is evil. When we are sinned against, or when tragedy happens in our lives, we are right to grieve. God provides an entire book of lament because we are designed to respond to grief with sorrow. When people sin, they are responsible for their sin and it is right and just to do so. At the same time, our lament and grief will not endure. Our lament and grief will one day, be gone. One day, God will wipe away every tear from our eyes and death will be no more. We grieve, but we are not consumed by it. We sorrow, but we are not defined by it. We lament, but we know that one day it will be gone. Martin Luther was very expressive. When his 14-year-old daughter Madalene died in his arms, he laid her body on a pillow and said, *"Dear Madalene, you have found a Father in heaven! O my God, let your will be done."* When the carpenters were nailing her coffin shut, he cried, *"Hammer away! On doomsday she'll rise again."* Even our deepest grief is held in the sovereign hands of God. The ultimate example of that is upon us.

It is Thursday, April 6, AD 30. When Jesus woke up this morning, he would not sleep again, but would close his eyes in death in the afternoon of the next day. We are on the eve of the

crucifixion. It is the day of Unleavened Bread. It is the day when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed at the Temple. The Passover meal and the day of unleavened bread which inaugurated the Feast of Unleavened Bread (v.1) were Holydays (holiday) in the Law that Israel was commanded to participate in according to specific rules. These were instituted by Moses over 1,500 years before Christ. But these events pointed to Christ. The Passover lambs were a preview of Jesus who was the Lamb of God who came to save from sin and death all who would trust in him. So, here it is, the day before Christ dies and it is the Passover. It is not coincidental. It is orchestrated by God. What happens in the Passover? You are supposed to eat the Passover meal together in the Temple, or in Jerusalem. That requires some work, especially if you are going to prepare a meal for 13 men.

(v.6) *“So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it.’”* This is like telling someone on the Wednesday morning before Thanksgiving to catch a flight that evening to come visit you. How are you going to find a room for 13 guys, and get a lamb and everything else and get it prepared for the meal? Peter and John ask about logistics. *“Where?”* Jesus gives another one of his fascinating answers. When you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters and tell the master of the house, *“The Teacher says to you, ‘Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’”* And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there. And Peter and John went and found it, just as he told them, and they prepared the Passover.”

The man carrying a jar of water was probably a servant of the man who owned the home that had an upper room that would be able to accommodate 13 men for the Passover meal. The room was reserved for this. Did Jesus make arrangements ahead of time? We don't know. Was this man led by God to do this and waited for the answer to be clear? We don't know. Peter and John were not told everything that was going on, but were simply told all that they needed to know. Even in the simple logistics, the sovereign plan of God is being carried out. God does not tell you everything there is to know, nor everything you want to know, but he does tell you everything you need to know. Here is what we see in this text:

1. **Everything is under the oversight of God.** (7)

This paragraph is all about daily and normal stuff. There is nothing real secret or mysterious about making arrangements for a meal. But the way the whole thing happened is very clear that the plan of God is in all of these details. And this paragraph follows the one where there is all of this conspiracy, secret plotting, clandestine meetings, and betrayal. Behind the scenes of what is normal and daily and secret and plotting is the oversight of God. For example, this is the Day of Unleavened Bread. This is the day when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. The Passover was an annual event for Jewish households and for many it still is. Like Christmas or Easter, however, the family traditions of eating, traveling, eating, games, eating, gift-giving can cover over the real meaning of the holiday. Passover was instituted by God and put into the OT law for the nation of Israel so they would remember the 10th plague that sprung them free from slavery in Egypt. They were redeemed by the blood of a lamb that was sacrificed for them. So, as part

of celebrating this event each home would sacrifice a lamb at the temple, but not to reapply the blood on their doorposts. They were already redeemed from Egypt. But now they sacrificed the lamb and ate the meat as part of their meal in celebration of their redemption that had already been accomplished. God ordained the death of a lamb in Egypt as the means by which they redeemed from Egypt and as a preview that pointed to our ultimate redemption from sin, by the sacrifice of Christ, our Passover Lamb (1 Cor. 5.7).

There is nothing coincidental about any of this. Everything is under the oversight of God. Let me give you a few examples. Moses was a preview of Christ: 1) Moses was rejected by his own people. 2) Later on, Moses came to rescue Israel because they could not rescue themselves. 3) God did not start with plagues on Egypt. God started with his Word. Moses preached the Word of God to Pharaoh who rejected it. Then the plagues started. Each time, Moses told Pharaoh what was going to happen. Each time Pharaoh had an opportunity to believe God and do the right thing and every time Pharaoh rebelled and his heart became harder. An earlier Pharaoh had already killed thousands of Hebrew boys and drowned them in the Nile River in order to keep a lid on their population growth. We are dealing with a moral monster here. God gives this Pharaoh 9 specific opportunities to obey and do the right thing and he refuses. Now, circumstantially, it is true that the plagues decimated the nation and empire of Egypt. Their economy was ruined, their farming was ruined, their livestock was ruined, their land was devastated and later on their army was wiped out in the Red Sea. It's like God said, you drown my babies I'll drown your army. In a matter of months, the most powerful empire in the world at that time was obliterated. Providentially, this would protect tiny, fledgling Israel from the super power Egypt for the time being. But the plagues were more than that. When you study the Egyptian system of religion, you see how the plagues were a direct assault upon the gods of Egypt. Egypt's gods could not protect Egypt. Israel had to see this. The gods of Egypt were no gods at all. But the I AM that I AM could protect them and did protect every one who was under the blood of the Passover lamb. The 10th plague was worst one. The angel of God went through the land of Egypt at midnight and killed the firstborn son of every home that did not have the blood of a lamb applied to the doorposts and lintel of the home. When this happened, Pharaoh finally agreed for Israel to leave Egypt and in fact ordered them out. The people of God were redeemed by the sacrifice of a lamb that was offered up in their place. The death of the lamb had to be applied to them personally by their faith-driven obedience in applying the blood to the doorposts of their home. When the angel of God's judgment came to their homes, he passed over the homes that were covered by the blood. The Passover marked their rescue, their redemption and the event that forged them as a nation.

For 1,500 years Israel would hear this story of their redemption and would wonder why did God do it that way? Why did God tell them to offer a lamb? And why would God say that when you offer the lamb to make certain that no bones of it were broken? Well, we are about to find out. That redemption pointed to our redemption. God arranges history to point to the death of Christ on the cross because this is the most important event in history. God is present in every detail. So, what is unfolding to be the biggest conspiracy and betrayal in the world is all under the complete awareness of God. Jesus is in control of it all. (Atonement, comforting, warning)

2. The Law is obeyed by Christ. (8)

This is another fascinating detail. Jesus is God. He is the Son of God, the 2nd Person of the Trinity. He is perfect and exact representation of the Father. That is why he is called the Word of God. He is the perfect expression and communication of God in person, in the flesh. The Bible is all about Jesus. The OT all pointed to Jesus. The Passover, crossing of the Red Sea, Day of Atonement, Tabernacle, and the sacrifices all point to him. He set it up this way.

Let's say that you are the principal of a school and you have to hire a new teacher for this fall. Every teacher you interview, has to take a standardized teachers proficiency test. It so happens that you discover that one of the applicants you interview actually wrote the proficiency test. Do you have them take it anyway? I mean, they wrote it! What if they said to you, "Look, I don't need to take that thing, I wrote it." Or What if they said to you, "Look, I don't care if I wrote it or not, I am applying for this job, this is the expectation, so I will happily take it." That is in essence what Jesus is doing here. He sends Peter and John to make arrangements for the Passover because one of the details of this text is that Christ perfectly obeyed the law of God he designed, including observing the Passover in Jerusalem and offering a lamb.

He's God, did he have to do that? Yes he did, because he determined to be our Savior. He determined to redeem us by paying the full and final price for our salvation. Jesus kept the law, here at the Passover and everywhere in order to fulfill all righteousness. You hear me say over and over that Jesus lived the life that we could not live. What I mean by that is that he perfectly obeyed the law of God. He never sinned in word, thought, deed or motive. No sin, no deficit. His life also filled the bucket of perfect righteousness (positive righteousness). He was not only the sacrifice that was offered, the Passover lamb, he was the perfectly, infinitely pure sacrifice that was offered. He measured up to the standard that God demanded, unlike us. He did for us what we could not do for ourselves. (Justification)

3. The Passover Event is fulfilled by Christ. (12)

In order for the Israelites to be spared, they had to offer a lamb in death whose blood would cover them. The death of the lamb would be the reason why they were spared God's judgment. Jesus came to the earth to fulfill this event. John the Baptist called him the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world. Paul calls him, "our Passover lamb" (1 Cor. 5.7). Hebrews 10.1-4 tells us that the OT law was a shadow of the good things to come. The law was not the end game. The law pointed to the true reality, to the actual once and for all sacrifice that would be offered to atone for sins. The offering of an animal previewed this. It was a picture that was designed to help people understand the need for an innocent sacrifice to be offered in your place. Bulls, goats, lambs could not pay for sin. They are animals and the animals don't sin. Humans do. Only an offering by a human could pay for the sins of the human race. But only the offering of a perfect human that could somehow pay an infinite debt would do.

That is why Christ died. He died as a perfect human offering, who was also God. As a human, his death could be applied perfectly to humans. As God, his payment is infinite in its scope. You

cannot pay for your sins. If you lived back in Egypt and slit your wrists and put your blood on the doorposts, it would not work. Our death, our offering, our sacrifice is tainted by our sin. That is why no prayers to the saints have any salvific merit. No prayers to Mary, no lighting of candles, no reciting of creeds, no confession, no performance of rituals can save us or forgive us. We cannot save ourselves. Our salvation has to come from outside of us. It has to come from an innocent sacrifice offered in our place that can actually pay for our sins. There is one. There is only one. It is Christ, our Passover Lamb. What he accomplished for you, has to be applied to you. And it is, when you trust in him alone.

4. **The Passover Event is repurposed by Christ.**

Peter and John were sent and Judas was likely not privy to this. Jesus wanted his evening meal not to be interrupted because the Passover meal was designed to point to something greater and next week we will see how Christ repurposed the Passover. Just as the original one marked the redemption of Israel from bondage and slavery in Egypt, the ultimate Passover by Christ marks our redemption from bondage and slavery to sin and death. The original one was the event that marked their beginning as redeemed people. The ultimate one marks our beginning as the redeemed New Covenant people. Jesus uses the Passover meal as the occasion to institute the ordinance of the Lord's Table, what we also call communion. There is deep meaning and purpose in this. It reminds of us what we are saved from, what we are and what we are saved to. All planned by God and fulfilled by Christ. God sovereignly ordains the free choices of man to carry out his incredible plan of salvation.