

by
Didymus

Evensong readings:-

Exodus Ch.7, vv8-24

Romans Ch.5, vv12-end

Gospel: Luke Ch.22, vv1-13.

Well, here we are, a year on from the moment we entered the restrictions on life, that we might escape the almost Biblical plague of the Covid virus. As we trudge through the account of the Exodus in the OT, the plagues that were visited on the heads of the obstinate Egyptians gain a reality that we can never have foretold.

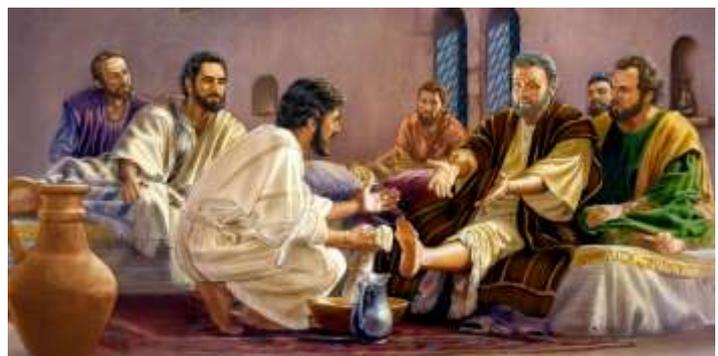


The Gospel tells about the events that preceded the Passion of Jesus. I have used illustrations to illuminate the text, chosen with care since the people painted were obviously models. The picture above depicts Judas Iscariot discussing the betrayal of Jesus with the Jewish authorities. If you read of the three temptations in Matthew Ch.4, v11, you will see that Satan left Jesus until another time. That time was here, when evil entered the soul of Judas.

I think that it was the Raising of Lazarus at Bethany, witnessed by a crowd, which challenged the Jewish authorities. They were caught between the anger of the crowd and the wrath of the Roman authorities, and the latter were on a “red alert” as we might say today, in case the Passover Festival boiled over into violence. One of the fascinating things about politics is that it offers so many ways of slipping out of aggression or confrontation with an apparently virtuous justification. Some things never change.

However, there was another way, one which the Jews would not dare to take. The evidence of Jesus’ miracles of healing and his teaching had been noted by Nicodemus, and later by Gamaliel. However, recognising Jesus would have meant a wholesale change at the Temple, its management, ritual and teaching. Many comfortable, unchallenging and senior positions in the church would have been lost, and that consideration, throughout history, has been paramount. It still is.

An irony of the Passion is that the death of the human Jesus was central to God’s plan, and it was essential that the Jews maintained their determination to put an end to him. As Paul explained in the Letter to the Romans, the sacrifice of Jesus atoned for the error of the first man, Adam. The stories in Genesis are allegorical, and the identity of the first human as distinct from an ape is as yet unknown, but the mortality of humanity is. Genesis tells us that mortality was the price, amongst other things, of humanity’s disobedience. Luke then continues to relate the story of the preparation for the Passover meal in the upper room.



In our prayers, among the many people and things for which we must give thanks, and the great many things that we need God's help with, please remember those of our families and friends who are suffering, and those who have lost loved ones. We need to give thanks for not just the people of the NHS and emergency services, but those in our community who help others in many ways.

On a national level please remember Sarah Everard, pray for the care and safety of women and that laws and services to protect the vulnerable will be soon in place.

AMEN