

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 23

The opening of this chapter begins Luke's account of our Lord's suffering and death. No part of the Gospel is as important as this passage. The life of this world begins with the death of Christ. No part of the Lord's ministry is as fully recorded by all the Gospel writers as this one; only two of them describe Christ's birth; all four dwell in minute detail on Christ's death. Of the four, not one gives as full and detailed account as Luke.

Passover

Luke 22:1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching.

The observance of the Passover began in Egypt when the Angel of the Lord passed over the homes of the Israelites. Pharaoh had pushed the Lord to the tenth plague by threatening Moses. What Pharaoh wanted to do to the Israelites, the Lord did to Egypt in a plague. Four days before the plague, the Lord instructed the Israelites to select a blemish-free lamb. At twilight, on the day of the plague, they were to kill the lamb and spread the blood on the doorpost of their homes. They were to roast the lamb and eat it during the plague that evening before midnight. Pharaoh's anger over the loss of his firstborn son caused him to recognize the power of God and he finally let the children of Israel go the next morning. In the wilderness, the Lord gave the instruction for the Passover to be a commemorative celebration for Jews every year. And so it was, straight through to this day in Jerusalem with the Lord, 1,505 years later.

Judas' Betrayal

Luke 22:2 The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death; for they were afraid of the people. ³And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, belonging to the number of the twelve. ⁴And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and officers how he might betray Him to them. ⁵They were glad and agreed to give him money. ⁶So he consented, and *began* seeking a good opportunity to betray Him to them apart from the crowd.

We see in these verses that holding a high office in a religious organization does not protect the holders from great blindness and sin. We read that the chief priests and the teachers of the law are looking for some way to rid themselves of Jesus. The first step in putting Jesus to death is taken by the religious teachers of the Jewish nation. The very men who ought to have welcomed the Messiah are the men who are conspiring to kill him; the very pastors who ought to have rejoiced at the appearing of the Lamb of God lead in killing him. They sit in Moses' seat; they claim to be guides of the blind and lights to those who are in darkness; they belong to the tribe of Levi. Most of them are direct descendants of Aaron, yet, they

are the very men who will crucify the Lord of glory! With all their professed knowledge, they are far more ignorant than the few Galilean fishermen who follow the Lord.

We must beware of attaching excessive importance to ministers of various religions because of their offices. Orders and ranks confer no exemption from error. We must judge all teachers by the unerring rule of the Word of God. It matters little who says something in religious instruction but it matters greatly what is said. Is it scriptural? Is it true? Isaiah 82:20 says, "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn."

Preparation for Passover

Luke 22:7 Then came the *first* day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover *lamb* had to be sacrificed. ⁸ And Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, so that we may eat it." ⁹ They said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare it?" ¹⁰ And He said to them, "When you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house that he enters. ¹¹ "And you shall say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?'" ¹² "And he will show you a large, furnished upper room; prepare it there." ¹³ And they left and found *everything* just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

It is Thursday, the first day of the seven day feast of Unleavened Bread. The Apostles are expecting the same supper that the Jews have observed for generations. Two of the Apostles come to Jesus and ask about the Passover. They are not prepared and they have already missed the time of selecting the lamb and killing it at twilight. The lamb should have been killed that morning as the day began but before the sun rose above the horizon but they do not have a lamb. Jesus instructs them to go into Jerusalem and find a man carrying a water pot. They are to ask him for a place to have the Passover. He provides the place and the Apostles scurry to make the preparations which include the unleavened bread, the wine, the bitter herbs and the roasted lamb that will be provided by the owner of the upper room. He had killed the lamb that morning and had placed it on the fire.

As the sun begins to set on that Thursday, Jesus and the disciples all sit down in the upper room and begin to eat the Passover meal just as had been the custom for over 1,505 years. They have absolutely no idea what is about to take place over the next 72 hours. They sit in the upper room simply expecting the same old, same old with the Master. With the setting of the sun at 6:00 PM, Friday, the new day, has begun.

At the Table

Luke 22:14 When the hour had come, He reclined *at the table*, and the apostles with Him. ¹⁵ And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶ for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

The lamb can not be boiled or baked. It is to be roasted on a spit so that all the fat and blood will be removed from the meat; the blood is not to be part of the Passover meal. The

instruction from the Lord is found in Exodus 23:18 saying, "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread." It is very interesting that the blood that is shed as the symbol of the very element that protected them on that fateful night in Egypt is not to be a part of the commemorative service. The blood that is shed so sin can be forgiven is not allowed at the Passover meal.

The Lord eats the Passover meal with the Apostles that night. The commemorative meal will be changed forever by the Lord as He will do something that they have never seen before. That night, the Lord serves them His Supper. After the meal is over, Jesus takes His place in their midst and garners their attention.

Passing the Cup

Luke 22:17 And when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; **18** for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes."

Jesus passes the cup among the twelve to be divided equally.

The Bread

Luke 22:19 And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

Once the cup is passed, Jesus breaks the bread and blesses it. He says, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." **What an incredible statement!** Jesus is revealing that the once impersonal Passover is now all about Him. It is about His body that is about to be broken for His followers.

Taking the Cup

Luke 22:20 And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood."

Then, Jesus takes the cup and blesses it. He says to them, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood." **This statement is personal!** It is all about Jesus. In the midst of Jeremiah's agony over the sin and exile of the Southern Kingdom, Jeremiah begged the Lord for a point of hope for the Jews. In Jeremiah 31, the Lord God revealed the idea of a new covenant that would come to the Jews. The Passover was from the Old Covenant. Jeremiah knew all about that!

On that evening, in that upper room, the Passover is becoming the Lord's Supper and it is the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Lord to Jeremiah. It is the beginning, the inauguration and the birth of the New Covenant. The twelve have no idea! All over the world Jews settle down at Passover to observe the Old Covenant and we find ourselves observing the New

Covenant. A comparison of the two covenants is important. Capturing just a glimpse of the incredible finished work of the Lord in these two covenants and their meanings is important today.

Old and New Covenant Comparison

In the Old Covenant	In the New Covenant	The Meaning
<i>Gifts and sacrifices were made by those who were guilty of sin</i>	<i>The guiltless Christ sacrificed himself for your sin.</i>	It means that Christ Died for you!
<i>The focus was on a physical building where a person goes to worship.</i>	<i>The focus is on the reign of Christ in the hearts of each individual believer.</i>	It means that God is directly involved in your life!
<i>The forgiveness of sin and hope of glory was just a shadow.</i>	<i>The forgiveness of sin and hope of glory is now a reality.</i>	It means that forgiveness and hope are not temporal, but eternal!
<i>There were only limited promises.</i>	<i>There are limitless promises.</i>	It means that we can trust God's promises to us!
<i>The people failed to keep the agreement with God.</i>	<i>Christ keeps the agreement faithfully no matter what we do.</i>	It means that Christ has kept the agreement whereas people could not.
<i>There were external standards and rules.</i>	<i>There are internal standards and a new heart.</i>	It means that God sees both actions and motives and we are accountable to God, not rules.
<i>The people had limited access to God.</i>	<i>The people have unlimited access to God.</i>	It means that God is personally available to you!
<i>Everything was based on fear.</i>	<i>Everything is based on love and forgiveness.</i>	It means that forgiveness keeps our failures from destroying the agreement!
<i>There was a legal cleansing.</i>	<i>There is a personal cleansing.</i>	It means that God's cleansing is complete!
<i>The sacrifice was continuous.</i>	<i>Christ's death was a conclusive sacrifice.</i>	It means that Christ's sacrifice was perfect and final!
<i>They had to obey the rules.</i>	<i>We have to serve the living God.</i>	It means that we have a relationship, not regulations!
<i>Forgiveness was earned.</i>	<i>Forgiveness is freely given.</i>	It means that we have true and complete forgiveness!
<i>The ceremony was repeated yearly.</i>	<i>The ceremony is completed by Christ's death.</i>	It means that Christ's death can be applied to your sin!
<i>The requirement was accomplished by human effort.</i>	<i>The requirement is accomplished by God's grace.</i>	It means that it is initiated by God's love for you.
<i>It was available only to some, the Jews.</i>	<i>It is available to all – the entire world.</i>	It means that it is available to you!