

The Lord's Supper Instituted; Peter's Denial Predicted

Luke 22:1-38

Luke 22:1-13: Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. 2 And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. 3 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. 4 So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. 5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. 6 So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude. 7 Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed. 8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." 9 So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?" 10 And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. 11 Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?'" 12 Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready." 13 So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

Background Notes

Our Lord spent the days of His final week teaching the people in the Temple courts (Luke 21). All during this time, the Jewish religious leaders were looking for a way to do away with Jesus, but they were afraid to make a move on Him because the common people were attracted to Jesus and loved His teaching. However, Judas played right into the hands of the Jewish leaders, because he was willing to betray Jesus at an opportune time when the crowds were not around. Scripture says Satan entered Judas when he made arrangements to betray the Lord (v3), and also during the Passover Supper (John 13).

In the Jewish calendar, Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were celebrated together (v1). Passover was on the 14th of the Hebrew month, Nisan, followed by seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Passover day was also called the First Day of Unleavened Bread. Verse 7: "*Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed.*"

We believe the Lord was crucified on the 14th Nisan, at the time when the Passover lambs were sacrificed. Since the day began with sunset the night before, verse 7 would indicate that the Lord and His disciples actually celebrated the Passover meal on Thursday evening, and the Lord was crucified on Friday.

Whether or not the Lord had made prior arrangements with the owner of the house with the large upper room, we don't know, but it was more than what the disciples could have hoped for – a large upper room, already furnished. It was easy for Peter and John to follow a man carrying a pitcher of water, because normally only women carried the water.

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord's Supper was instituted during the Passover meal.

Verses 14-23: *When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. 21 But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. 22 And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" 23 Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.*

Verse 14 says that the Lord and His disciples reclined at the table, as was normal in 1st century Roman culture. They did not sit on chairs along one side of a long table, as in Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper! They reclined on couches around a low U-shaped table.

Notice that the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man are both taught in verse 22: *"And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed."* It was predetermined that the Lord would go to the cross (the sovereignty of God), but Judas was held responsible for his betrayal (the responsibility of man).

In the Passover Seder, or Supper, four cups of wine are involved. The third cup is the known as "The Cup of Thanksgiving." It may have been at this point in the Passover celebration that the Lord instituted the Lord's Supper. In verse 16 & 18, the Lord meant that this was the last Passover He would celebrate with His disciples until His second coming, when He would return and set up the Kingdom of God on this earth. At that time, Israel will be restored as a believing nation under the New Covenant, and the Jewish feasts will be celebrated with all their prophetic implications fulfilled!

In the meantime, all believers around the world will celebrate the Lord's Supper. When we participate in the Lord's Supper, we look back and we look ahead! We **remember Him until He comes!** (See 1 Corinthians 11:26). The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Church - the Church Universal, composed of all true believers from every nation.

When the Lord said, *“This is My body given”* and *“This is My blood poured out,”* He meant that the bread and the wine are **representative** of His body and blood. How do we know this? Because He said this while He was still in His body, before He went to the cross.

Celebrating the Lord’s Supper is not an option. It is a **command**: *“Do this in remembrance of me”* (v19). If you love the Lord Jesus, you will show your gratitude and obedience by participating in the Lord’s Supper – *“in remembrance of Me.”*

2. The prediction of Peter’s denial was after a dispute about “greatness.”

Verses 24-34: Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. 25 And He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called ‘benefactors.’ 26 But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. 27 For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. 28 “But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. 29 And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” 31 And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” 33 But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.” 34 Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.”

In these verses, the Lord not only predicted the details of Peter’s three denials, but He also predicted Peter’s restoration and future ministry. *Verse 32: “But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”*

What an encouragement it is for us to know that the Lord prays for us, just as He prayed for Peter! Hebrews 7:25 says that *“He always lives to make intercession for us.”* Also encouraging for us is verse 31, *“And the Lord said, ‘Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.’* This verse indicates that Satan cannot tempt us or touch us in any way without God’s permission. Read the book of Job in this connection as well.

The disciples should have been thinking about what the Lord was teaching them, but instead they began to argue about which one of them was the most important! This was not the first time that this had happened, as we know from Luke 9. Here in Luke 22, the Lord proceeded to teach the disciples that being great in His Kingdom is not the same as being great as in the world. Being successful and “great” in this world’s eyes involves gaining “power” and “titles” and “possessions.” But not in God’s Kingdom! In God’s eyes, being truly great means that we serve others rather than ourselves.

The Lord then graciously told His disciples that because they had stood by Him in His trials, they would sit on thrones and reign over the twelve tribes of Israel when He would set up His earthly Kingdom.

This discussion about greatness and the true blessings of the Kingdom prompted Peter to say that he would follow the Lord to prison and to death (v33.) The Lord then humbled Peter by predicting Peter's denial. The Lord will have to humble us as well, when we start to think more highly of ourselves than we should! The prediction of Peter's denial followed a dispute about "greatness."

Practical Application

Be prepared for opposition!

Verses 35-38: And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." 36 Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. 37 For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: 'And He was numbered with the transgressors.' For the things concerning Me have an end." 38 So they said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough."

The point of the Lord's teaching to the disciples in these verses was that they could expect opposition to increase in the future. The reason He quoted Isaiah 53:12 ("*And He was numbered with the transgressors*") was to show His disciples that He would be considered a criminal. In turn, that would bring trouble and opposition to the disciples.

The Lord didn't mean that they should buy a sword so that they could fight offensively. (Remember, the Lord rebuked Peter when he used his sword in the Garden of Gethsemane?) It seems that the Lord was warning them that perilous times lay ahead, and that defending themselves from attack in a hostile world was not wrong. They could use what means were available. For example, Paul appealed to Caesar when his life was threatened. However, their goal should not be self-defense, but rather defending the faith and preaching the gospel!

We, too, will face opposition as we preach the gospel and do the Lord's work. 1 John 3:13 says, "*Don't be surprised if the world hates you.*" Be prepared for opposition.