

LUKE 22

THE LAST SUPPER AND THE BETRAYAL

The rulers of the Jews had already determined upon the death of Jesus. Their problem lay in His immense popularity. They were planning to delay their attempts to arrest Him until after the feast, when the great crowds would have left the city; but suddenly, help came to them from a most unexpected quarter. Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus, offered to betray his Master into the hands of the rulers at such a time and place as they desired – namely, “in the absence of the multitude.” And they gladly contracted to pay him money.

The last meal which Jesus shared with His disciples (verses 7-38) was the Passover-feast, and it was the occasion of the establishment of that sacrament which is now known as the Lord’s Supper. The Passover called to mind a national deliverance for Israel in the past; and it pointed forward to a greater spiritual deliverance that was yet to come, which was effected by the death of Christ. The Lord’s Supper points us backward to that great redemption which our Savior achieved by His atoning death; and like the Passover, it also points forward to something in the future – namely, the fuller redemption which He will accomplish when He returns.

The observance of the Lord’s Supper is to be a season of gratitude for the infinite benefits which were secured for us by the atoning death of Christ. This is the supreme purpose of the Feast! Jesus stated this clearly when He was establishing it on this solemn night. The elements that He distributed among His disciples were symbols to call to mind His body, which was broken for us; and also His blood, which He told them was to be poured out for them. This Supper, therefore, is to be a memorial of redeeming grace; it is intended to show forth the Lord’s death – as He Himself said, “This do in remembrance of me.”

From the quiet fellowship in the upper room, Jesus and His disciples went out under the shadow of night (verses 39-46); and they went forth to the Garden of Gethsemane – a favorite resort on the slope of the Mount of Olives. There the Savior experienced unequaled anguish of soul. For any sensitive soul to shrink from pain is only natural. But since He was about “to give his life a ransom for many,” and since He was to endure the hiding of His Father’s face, we can understand why His soul was sorrowful. The “cup” which Jesus was to drink did not merely consist of the terrors of death; instead, it contained the horrors of that unique death which He was to endure as the Bearer of all our sin. Never-

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *Judas makes treacherous arrangements with the chief priests – verses 1-6*
- ❖ *Jesus eats the Passover with His disciples and institutes the Lord’s Supper – verses 7-38*
- ❖ *He prays in agony in the garden, and then is betrayed by Judas – verses 39-53*
- ❖ *Peter denies his Master three times – verses 54-62*
- ❖ *Jesus acknowledges Himself to be the Son of God – verses 63-71*



theless, in this hour of bitter trial, Jesus found relief in prayer, alone with His Father. The awful “cup” was not removed; but “there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.” He was given grace to drain the cup to its very dregs – causing death to forever lose its sting, and the grave its terror!

Judas led a multitude, armed with swords and clubs, into the Garden where his Master was accustomed to retire for prayer; and there the villain betrayed Him with a friendly kiss – a sign which had been agreed upon in order that, in the deep shadows, one of the disciples might not be mistaken for the Master and arrested in His place. The fearless composure of Jesus was now contrasted with the conduct of His followers. They asked whether they should defend Him with the sword; but before He could even say anything, Peter rashly struck the high priest’s servant with his sword, and cut off his right ear! But then Jesus touched the man’s ear and healed him. He then turned to rebuke His enemies for coming out against Him with swords and clubs, as if He were a robber. The very fact that they came to Him with violence, in secrecy, and under the cover of night was a proof that the arrest was totally unjustified.

Peter truly loved Jesus, and his faith in Him never failed. Nevertheless, in the hour of trial which Jesus had already predicted, he lost courage and denied his Lord (verses 54-62). He did follow Jesus at a distance, and thus he ended up at the palace of the high priest; but he hoped to conceal his discipleship while he was there, and only be regarded as one of the excited crowd. Three times, he repeated his denial; and then he heard the crowing of a rooster. And as Peter turned toward the palace, he caught sight of his Lord looking at him. He went out and wept bitter tears of repentance.

After Jesus had been denied by Peter, He was grossly insulted and abused by His captors (verses 63-71). When the morning dawned, He was led away to be formally arraigned before the Sanhedrin, the supreme ecclesiastical court of the Jews. When every attempt to convict Jesus had failed, they finally asked Him directly if He was the Son of God. He answered with all distinctness, “Ye say that I am.” Then they immediately decreed that He was worthy of death. They were unwilling to consider whether or not His claim to be the Son of God was true; they only wished to have a reason to put Him to death as a blasphemer. If they had admitted the truth of His claim that He really was the Son of God, then they would have been obligated to submit their lives in obedience to Him. This is the same situation that the atheists, unbelievers, and worldlings of our own modern times still find themselves in. They must either believe that Jesus was an impostor, Who deserves our contempt; or else they must acknowledge that He really and truly is the Divine Son of God, Whom we must worship, obey, and love!

Lord Jesus, we praise Your name for taking upon Yourself the sins of Your people, and for becoming the spotless Passover Lamb Who shed Your blood for us! Amen.