

INTRO: Many religions give an explanation of why Jesus came to live: to be an example of morality, to show us how to love each other, to model true humility, to teach us how to live wisely in God's world. But **Why did Jesus die?** Did Jesus' death provide nothing more than a compelling example of self-sacrifice? Was it nothing more than God's attempt to show us how much He loves humanity, to draw us out in love to Him? Or worse, did Jesus die against His will, carried along by events outside His control without knowing what He was getting into? Was Jesus' death nothing more than a tragic end to a beautiful life? Luke 22 sets the stage for Jesus' death, and it gives us four reasons for Jesus' death. In vv.1-13 Jesus' died to cover our sin. His death happens during Passover week and fulfills its significance. In vv.14-22, He died to create a new covenant. This is where he institutes the Lord's Supper and says that the cup is the new covenant in His blood. In vv.23-34, He died to commence a new kingdom, a new kind of kingdom where greatness is measured by humble service. And in vv.35-38 He died to complete an old plan. His death would fulfill the plan of Scripture revealed 700 years prior by the prophet Isaiah. Jesus died to cover our sin, create a new covenant, commence a new kingdom, and complete an old plan.

1. JESUS DIED TO COVER OUR SIN (LUKE 22:1-13)

Man's self-righteousness (22:1-2). Before we get to the idea of covering our sin, there are a few secondary reasons that Jesus died. These are the human means God used to put Jesus in a position to cover our sins. But we should not mistake these for the ultimate reasons. The first is the self-righteousness of the religious leaders in vv.1-2. It's not the crowds who most want Jesus dead. It's the religious leaders who hated Him, because He threatened their authority and status as moral leaders. He interpreted Scripture differently than they did. And when it came to a showdown in chapter 20 of questions and answers, Jesus could answer all their questions, but they could answer none of His. They wanted Him dead because He proved them wrong time and again – wrong about themselves, about Scripture, about God, and about Him. And this is why modern man hates Jesus as well. Jesus proves us wrong about who God is, what God expects, what the Bible means, and who we really are. He tells us that we are not as good as we ought to be, and that even our natural righteousness is really self-serving.

The only thing keeping the leaders from killing Jesus in v.2 was fearing the crowds. The crowd still loved Jesus, and if the leaders killed Him, then it might lead to a riot.... And for a while, modern man was afraid to kill Jesus too, because popular opinion held him to be the Son of God and the Savior of the world. But now that popular opinion has changed over the last 150 years, modern man has lost his inhibitions. To many modern minds, Jesus has become superfluous at best, a trinket from a bygone worldview. But underneath that sophisticated disdain, there is a visceral hatred of what Jesus says about God, about us, and about what God expects of us, and our failure to give Him what He expects. The fashionable excuse is now science. Science, we say, tells us that Jesus is wrong. But science is often a smokescreen. The real reason we reject Jesus is that we resent His authority. He threatens our perceived prerogative to choose right and wrong for ourselves. He tells us that we are not morally free like we assumed we were. He says we're really slaves to our own sin and rebels against a holy and sovereign God. That's why modern man wants Jesus dead. That's why we've killed Him. That's why we've eliminated Him from our worldview. It's not our science. It's our self-righteousness which prevents us from believing that it would really take a miracle for us to be made right with God. Modernity's rejection of the biblical solution is really a refusal to acknowledge the biblical problem – sin.

Satan's opposition (22:3-6). *"Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve."* Here is another subsidiary reason Jesus died. Satan had tried to tempt Jesus to avoid the cross and become a different kind of king in chapter 4, but Jesus resisted the temptation. And Luke said after that episode in 4:13 that Satan *"departed from him until an opportune time."* The opportune time has now come. Jesus' death was not just a regional or even earthly affair. Satan himself was involved. It was a spiritual and cosmic contest. And Satan got involved by using one of Jesus' closest friends, one of the twelve disciples. So maybe Satan was the reason Jesus died, or Satan working through Judas. After all, Judas is the one who betrayed Jesus and made the leaders' strategy so much simpler. If you can turn an insider, you can get a bead on Jesus' whereabouts and catch him in private, away from the crowds. And here an insider voluntarily comes to them. How convenient.

Man's betrayal (22:3-6). Judas is a picture of humanity's betrayal of Jesus. Humanity is naturally in league with each other against Jesus. We have agreed to betray the One who created us, the only One who can redeem us. We call it wisdom, and it makes us happy. Look there in v.5 "*And they were glad.*" Look at how easily we rejoice at the wrong things. What is wrong with Judas? What is wrong with these leaders? What is wrong with us? Judas' betrays Jesus for a bribe, and so do we. Every time we sin, we take Satan's bribe. Jesus offers us a throne in His kingdom, and we betray Him for...what? pleasure, security, power, status? The idea of seeking frames vv.1-6. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and here humanity seeks to kill Him for it. It is the ultimate betrayal, by one of Jesus' closest disciples. So is Jesus the victim of events outside His control?

The movements are subject to Jesus' sovereignty (22:7-13). Verses 7-13 illustrate that Jesus is still in control. Jesus knows exactly what will happen, and how it will happen, as he gets ready for his last Passover. In v.7, the day comes when "*the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.*" For Luke's original readers, it would have been hard not to see a reference to Jesus here as the ultimate lamb of God who had to be sacrificed according to God's eternal plan. It was necessary, and this divine necessity of sacrificing the Passover lamb brings us to the first and ultimate reason that Jesus died. **He died to cover our sin.**

Timing is everything – Passover (22:1, 7, 11, 13). In the first 13 verses of chapter 22, Luke reminds us no fewer than seven times that the Lord's Supper and the plot to kill Jesus both happen during the Feast of Unleavened Bread or The Passover – twice in v.1, twice in v.7, and once each in vv.8, 11, and 13. Luke is emphasizing by repetition that the timing is everything. All this is happening during Passover, which makes us ask, "What's Passover?" Passover was the annual Jewish feast that commemorated Israel's exodus from Egypt. It was instituted by God Himself in Ex 12:1-13. The last of the 10 great plagues on Egypt was the death of the firstborn among the Egyptians. The angel of the Lord came and killed every firstborn child in Egypt. To protect Israel, God made an ordinance. Everyone in Israel was to kill an unblemished lamb and spread the blood over the doorframe of their houses. That night they were to roast the lamb and eat it with their traveling clothes on – sandals, belt, and staff, ready to leave Egypt; and when God saw the blood on the doorframe, he would pass over those homes and spare their firstborn. Then later in Ex 12, God instituted the Feast of Unleavened Bread connected to Passover. God told the Israelites to bake bread with no leaven for a week as a reminder of what God did for them in Egypt. The significance of bread without leaven was a reminder that God whisked them away so quickly that they didn't have time to wait for the leaven to make the bread rise (Ex 12:39).

But the question that lingers over Passover is this. If Israel was already God's special people, and God perfectly knew where every Israelite house was, then why did a lamb need to die as a sign for the Lord when he passed through Israel on his way to punishing Egypt? Why did the Passover lamb have to die? Well, why did the Egyptians die? They died as a punishment for their sin against God and Israel. God was judging Egypt. The implication is that Israel was just as sinful as Egypt was, and so they were just as liable to God's judgment. They had been idolaters just like the Egyptians were. And so this Passover Lamb was a substitute sacrifice to that satisfied God's judicial anger by covering the sins of His own people so that He would not only be gracious, but also righteous, in the way He saved Israel.

Putting Jesus' death in the context of Passover is really saying that the death of Jesus would itself constitute a new Passover. Jesus would become the new and ultimate Passover Lamb, the true and effective substitute sacrifice that the original Passover symbolized, **to cover our sin with His blood.** And when God judges the living and the dead, He will look for the blood of Jesus over the doorframe of our souls, and if it's there, he will pass over us in both mercy and righteousness, because our sins have been covered. This is a perfect example of typology – the meaning of an OT institution is fulfilled and surpassed in a NT reality. Jesus' death fulfills the significance of the OT Passover and heightens its meaning by accomplishing a greater salvation – redemption out of slavery to our sin by the sacrifice not of an unblemished lamb, but of the sinless Son of God Himself. [1Cor 5:7; Rev 5:12-14; 14:3-5; 21:22-23; 22:3]

2. JESUS DIED TO CREATE A NEW COVENANT (LUKE 22:14-22)

In vv.14-22, Jesus uses the Jewish Passover as the context for instituting the Christian Lord's Supper. And in doing so, He inaugurates the new covenant that Jeremiah had promised in **Jer 31:31-34**. "*Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers..., my covenant which they broke, though I was their husband... But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts....*" In Luke 22:20 Jesus says "*this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.*" The wording parallels **Ex 24:8**, the ratification of the old covenant between God and Israel, mediated by Moses. "*Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant that he Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.'*" Jesus says that this cup of wine represents His blood, poured out for His disciples, and it represents not just the animal blood of the old covenant, but *the new covenant in my blood.*" Ex 24:8, the ratification of the old covenant, was now being eclipsed with the fulfillment of Jer 31 in the death of Jesus. A new covenant was about to be ratified in Jesus' death, and the covenant itself is illustrated by the meal that commemorates it, the Lord's Supper.

It's a Fellowship (vv.14-15). In vv.14-15, Jesus and his disciples are reclining around a table, as was the custom in the first century. And Jesus says to them "*I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.*" The meal was a fellowship meal, fellowship both with Jesus and among the disciples themselves. And Jesus has longed to eat this meal with them. His whole life had been for the purpose of dying, and now his death was imminent, and this would be the last time He would celebrate the Passover with them before He died, and He has looked forward to the fellowship of that last meal with them. It was eaten together, not alone, and it was eaten with Jesus present. The covenant itself is a covenant that restores fellowship between God and man, between Christ and His people. It restores what the disobedience of Israel had broken in the Old Covenant. It also produces fellowship among the members of that covenant, horizontally. It is a covenant of companionship, partnership, friendship in Christ. It's such a close fellowship that it's referred to elsewhere in family terms, God being the Father, Jesus being the Elder Brother, and the church being the other children.

We should notice here too in v.15 that the word "suffer" is *paqei/n*, from *pa,scw*, the verbal form of the noun *pa,sca*, which is the word for Passover all through Luke 22. The Passover lamb was the paschal lamb, because the lamb was sacrificed. Jesus is making a deliberate verbal link between his suffering and the Passover sacrifice. "*I have earnestly desired to eat this paschal with you before I pascho.*" It would be like us saying, "*Jesus earnestly desired to eat this sacrifice before he was sacrificed.*"

It's a Hope (vv.16-18). According to v.16, this Passover will one day be fulfilled (*plhrwqh|/*) in the kingdom of God. Both the covenant, and the meal that represents it, are forward looking, toward the consummation of the kingdom. And that hope is a hope of fellowship consummated around the wedding supper of the Lamb. **Rev 19:7-9** *Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure – for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'* Every time we take the Lord's Supper, we are not only looking back to Jesus' sacrifice as the Lamb of God. We're looking forward to the consummation of our fellowship with Him at the great wedding banquet. The Lord's Supper is a way of saying, "*We can hardly wait to be with Jesus in heaven.*" It is a way of expressing the hope of the covenant itself, the hope of restored and consummate fellowship with God in Christ through the Spirit. And Jesus promises us in the strongest possible terms that he will wait until we are there to begin the feast (*ouv mh.*). He will not start eating without us.

It's a Memorial (v.19). Jesus breaks the bread in v.19 and says "*This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.*" There is a world of meaning in those words. It is the gospel in a nutshell. It is the

breaking of Jesus' body on the cross, under the judicial anger of God over all the sins of all God's people. It is Jesus body, given, both by Himself and by the Father, for you ('upe.r 'umw/n dido,menon). It is given, freely, as a gift, not under duress, not stolen, not forced, not against Jesus' will our apart from His consent. And it is for you – it is given on behalf of, in place of, for the benefit of, as a substitute for. When Jesus says “this is my body,” it's not the idea of transubstantiation, as it's taught in the Catholic Mass. It's clearly a metaphor. Jesus says “this is my body” like he says in John 10 “*I am the door.*” It's not transubstantiation. It's substitution. This is the gospel. This is substitutionary, sacrificial ('upe.r 'umw/n) atonement. Notice, Jesus does not say, “my body, given as an example for you,” or, “my body, given to prove how much God loves you.” He says, “my body...given... on your behalf.” Jesus' body is our free, sacrificial substitute, given by God, as a gift, without demand for repayment. Now friend, let the weight of the gospel rest on you. My body, given for you. My blood, poured out for you. All of God's judicial anger, at us, for all of our sin, endured willingly and freely by Jesus in your place, so that you might have right standing and fellowship with God.

The covenant, then, is accomplished through sacrifice, and in that sense the covenant itself is an eternal memorial to Jesus' death. When He institutes the Lord's Supper, He does not say “do this as a re-sacrificing of my body,” as it's taught in the Catholic Mass. He says “*do this in remembrance of me,*” as a memorial, as a reminder of the once-for-all sacrifice of my body.” And it's not so that God or Jesus won't forget. It's so that we ourselves won't forget. In the Lord's Supper, we are not asking God to remember us for who we are or what we have done. We are encouraging ourselves to remember what God has done for us in Christ.

It's a Commitment (v.20). “*This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.*” We've already mentioned this idea of covenant coming from Ex 24:8 and Jer 31:31. A covenant is a commitment. And the Bible describes that commitment in the metaphor of marriage, **Eph 5:25** “*Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.*” In the cross, Jesus gives Himself up for His bride, the church. He covenants to set her apart for Himself and His own pleasure. And he will never break His commitment. The angel says to John in **Rev 21:9-10** “*Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb,*” and what he shows John is the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, the new people of God.

Divine necessity and human responsibility. Before we move on, we should notice from vv.21-22 that Jesus knows his betrayer is at the table. He's still in total control, totally aware of all that's going on. He goes to His death willingly, in obedience to His Father and Scripture, “as it has been determined.” His betrayal was even prophesied in the Psalms. **Ps 41:9** *Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me*” (cf. Ps 55; Job 19:19; 2Tim 1:15; 4:16). But God's pre-determination that Jesus would be betrayed by Judas does not eviscerate or mitigate Judas' moral responsibility. Look there in v.22. “*For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed.*” God pre-determined that Judas would betray Jesus. Judas is even controlled for a time by Satan himself, as we learned back in v.3. AND Judas will still be held responsible for what he did to Jesus. “*Woe to that man by whom He is betrayed.*” If you have always wondered how the Bible reconciles divine sovereignty and human responsibility, this is how, right here in v.22. The Bible just sticks them right next to each other, assumes that both divine sovereignty and human responsibility are true, assumes they are compatible, and is not at all concerned to explain the mechanics to us. God is sovereign, predestination is true, AND people are morally responsible for their actions. The Bible never teaches that God's sovereignty cancels human responsibility or vice versa, and we should not use them that way either. The Bible calls us to believe both in God's sovereignty and in human responsibility. They're compatible.

3. JESUS DIED TO COMMENCE A NEW KINGDOM (LUKE 22:23-34)

It's a servant kingdom (22:23-27). In vv.23-24, the disciples go from wondering who will betray Jesus (v.23), to the opposite extreme of arguing about who the greatest among them might be. But Jesus explains that greatness in His kingdom is much different than greatness in the world. In the world, people exercise

authority harshly. Worldly rulers like to make sure everyone knows that they're the ones in charge, they're the ones everyone else answers to. Others demand to be honored and recognized for their generosity with the title "benefactor", to distinguish them from the masses. The world lives for power and position, reputation and notoriety; but not so with Jesus' disciples. Jesus' kingdom is a servant kingdom, where greatness is defined by servant leadership. In Jesus' kingdom, the one who serves is the one who leads. And Jesus Himself is the prime example. Here He is, the great King, yet He is the one serving them. He's the one who washes their feet. Jesus did not die to rule a worldly kingdom. He died to commence a new kingdom, a new kind of kingdom, a servant kingdom, where greatness is measured by servanthood. What about you, Christian? Are you willing to serve as long as you get to do something big and noticeable? Or are you willing to take the small job, the unnoticeable one? Local churches are full of opportunities to serve in humble ways – deliver a meal, visit someone in the hospital, put away chairs, sit and listen to someone, set up the sound equipment. And those opportunities to serve are where greatness is found in Jesus' eyes. Jesus is a Servant-King. He came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. To bear His name is to become a servant, which means to give yourself away for the spiritual good of others, and especially for the up-building of Christ's body, the local church. Leaders in Christ's kingdom serve. [Note in v.23 that Judas is a good enough liar that he's not discovered as everyone is questioning each other.]

It's a suffering kingdom (22:28-29). In v.28, Jesus claims the throne of His kingdom through his "trials", his suffering, both in His life and especially in His death. And the disciples will access the kingdom through suffering with and for Christ. It's as we endure with him that we will reign with Him (2Tim 1:12), and we are fellow heirs with Christ, "*provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.*" Christian, suffering is part of inheriting this kingdom. It would be that way for the disciples, and it will be that way for us to some extent. We will suffer for Christ before we reign with Him. But Jesus makes it worth the trouble, because the reward for suffering with Christ is reigning with Christ, eating and drinking with Him at His table. This is a promise that applies to all Jesus' disciples, not just the apostles. These thrones recall the prophecy of Daniel in **Dan 7:9, 22** where there were many thrones around the Ancient of Days and he gives judgment for the saints of the Most high who possess the kingdom; and in **Rev 3:21** Jesus promises "*to the one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne*" (Rev 20:4; 21:12, 14?)

Simon Peter himself would have to suffer. In fact, all the disciples would. The "you" in v.31 is plural, "*Satan demanded to have all of you that he might sift all of you like wheat.*" They would suffer direct temptation and trial from Satan himself. And they would all fail under that trial for a time. But Jesus had prayed for Simon. The you in v.32 is singular. "*I have prayed for you, Simon.*" It's not that Jesus never prayed for the others. But he had prayed for Simon especially as their leader, that he would turn and strengthen the others after their fall. Jesus prays for us. He prays that our faith would endure through suffering. That's where our courage comes from in encountering trials. But his prayers don't mean that we're guaranteed not to sin in the midst of suffering. Peter denies Jesus 3 times this very night, even after Jesus has prayed for him. Jesus' prayers mean that we will turn again from our sin back to Him, and back to His people. He strengthens us to keep repenting even from the sins he knows we'll commit in the future. That's how patient and forbearing Jesus is with our sins and weaknesses. He prays that we will turn back again after we turn away from him for a time in sin and cowardice. He prays that our faith will not fail in an ultimate sense; that we'll persevere into His new kingdom even though we may fail Him miserably along the way. Take heart, Christian. Jesus has been praying for you.

4. JESUS DIED TO COMPLETE AN OLD PLAN (LUKE 22:35-38)

The theme of suffering continues into vv.35-38. This is a kind of cryptic paragraph. He's referring back to the times in Luke 9:3 and 10:4 when he sent them out to do evangelism with no food or money, and to expect the hospitality of strangers. Stay in their homes. Eat their food – no need for a knapsack. God would provide for them through the kindness of outsiders. But now things are about to change. It's not that God is no longer going to provide for them. But once Jesus is taken into custody, they can no longer expect hospitality from the world.

They'll have to make their own preparations now. Some people have taken Jesus' instruction about buying a sword as justification for the right to bear arms. But that's not what this passage is teaching. The reason we know Jesus is not literally advising them to buy a literal sword is that later in v.49-51, when one of the disciples uses the sword to cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus rebukes the disciple and heals the ear. And besides, two swords will clearly not be enough to resist the temple officers coming for Him. When Jesus says in v.38, "It's enough," what He means is, "This conversation is degenerating." Jesus knows the disciples are misunderstanding Him, and so he just ends the conversation. They don't get it, and he's done trying to explain. But we probably should not say that Jesus' advice to buy a sword is merely metaphorical, otherwise, to be consistent, we'd have to take the moneybag and the knapsack as metaphorical as well, which is probably not right. Jesus probably does intend them to take a moneybag and knapsack with them on their evangelistic travels now. They do, literally, have to make provision for themselves. And in the same way, they will be in real physical danger. So it's probably best to take Jesus' instruction about buying a sword as ironic, almost sarcastic. He's using a dark kind of humor to say that things are about to change, and not in the disciples' favor. So when Jesus says "*sell your cloak and buy a sword*," He's saying hostility is coming. Relaxing in Jesus' presence must give way to readiness for war, so from now on, take off your robe and pick up your rifle. You're in a war now.

The reason for all this is Jesus' quotation of **Isa 53:12** in v.37. "*For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about me has its fulfillment.*" There is a very old plan, a plan as old as Isaiah and even older. It's a divine plan, God's plan, and it's about to come to a head in Jesus' arrest. Jesus will now be considered a criminal, and His disciples will be considered guilty by association. It's not going to help the disciples' case if they go and buy literal swords so that they can resist arrest or threaten to kill everyone who disagrees with them. That would contradict the rest of Scripture. They already look like criminals by association with Jesus. The age-old plan is coming to fruition, and Jesus disciples will have to provide for themselves, and watch their backs.

To believe that Jesus is the completion or climax of God's saving plan is not popular. What Jesus is teaching here at the end of our passage is that **being a Christian is not safe**. If safety is your number one priority in life, then you should not be a Christian. It's safe today to talk about God in general terms. It's safe to talk about being a spiritual person. It's safe to talk about creating your own religion as a collage made up of your favorite parts of all religions. It's even safe to talk about the Bible as an old book full of quaint stories. You can talk about being one with the universe, or being a moral person, or helping the homeless and serving the community. None of that is dangerous. But it is not safe to align yourself with the virgin birth of Jesus Christ, His sinless life, His divine nature, His supernatural miracles, His substitutionary, atoning, wrath-absorbing death, His physical resurrection, or His ascension to sit on heaven's throne at the Father's right hand. And it is clearly not safe to talk about Jesus' demand that we repent from both our sin and our self-righteousness and self-reliance in order to be saved from the power and penalty of our rebellion against God. Jesus is not a safe person to follow in this world. Being a Christian is not just about relaxing with Jesus in the upper room. And Jesus did not come to make your life in this world easier. That is the message of too many churches today, and it is confusing the gospel with the American Dream. Following Jesus is not a subordinate means to the greater ends of having a picture-perfect family, or keeping your checkbook in the black, or winning friends and influencing people. Being a Christian, according to Jesus here, often means becoming *persona non grata*. You're no longer welcome, no longer appreciated or esteemed. You're often hated, and considered a criminal, just like Jesus. Jesus was numbered with the transgressors in this life, in order to be exalted in the next. Do you still want to follow Him? The old plan is: suffering first, then glory.

CONCLUSION

Jesus died to cover our sin, create a new covenant, commence a new kingdom, and by doing all those things, He completed an old plan. Trusting and obeying Jesus is the only way to have your sin covered. It's the only way to become a member of His new covenant and a citizen of His new kingdom. And it's the only way to become a part of God's age-old plan. He gives Himself freely. But there will be a price to pay in suffering with Jesus so

that we might also reign with Him. **Is it worth it to you?**