

LUKE 22: 1-38: Jesus Last Meal with His Disciple (Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16; Mark 14:1-2, 10-11)

22 Now the festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was near.² The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to put Jesus* to death, for they were afraid of the people.

3 Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve;⁴ he went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers of the temple police about how he might betray him to them.⁵ They were greatly pleased and agreed to give him money.⁶ So he consented and began to look for an opportunity to betray him to them when no crowd was present.

7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.⁸ So Jesus* sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and prepare the Passover meal for us that we may eat it.'⁹ They asked him, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for it?'¹⁰ 'Listen,' he said to them, 'when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him into the house he enters¹¹ and say to the owner of the house, "The teacher asks you, "Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"'¹² He will show you a large room upstairs, already furnished. Make preparations for us there.'¹³ So they went and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him.¹⁵ He said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;¹⁶ for I tell you, I will not eat it* until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.'¹⁷ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves;¹⁸ for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'¹⁹ Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had 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.'²⁰ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."²¹ But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table.²² For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!²³ Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

24 A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest.²⁵ But he said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors.²⁶ But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves.²⁷ For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.

28 'You are those who have stood by me in my trials;²⁹ and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom,³⁰ so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

31 'Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded* to sift all of you like wheat,³² but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.'³³ And he said to him, 'Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death!'³⁴ Jesus* said, 'I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you have denied three times that you know me.'

35 He said to them, 'When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?' They said, 'No, not a thing.'³⁶ He said to them, 'But now, the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag. And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one.'³⁷ For I tell you, this scripture must be

*fulfilled in me, "And he was counted among the lawless"; and indeed what is written about me is being fulfilled.*³⁸ *They said, 'Lord, look, here are two swords.' He replied, 'It is enough.*

The death of Jesus at hand. His death was to be in Jerusalem ((9:31). The Passover is near, the festival commemorating the exodus from Egypt (12:). The chief priests and the scribes have for sometime been seeking to destroy Jesus, but he is so popular with the people that they have been a barrier to plots against Jesus (19:47-48); 20:19). An earlier effort to entrap Jesus in treasonous speech had failed (20:20). Now the people who had been but a buffer between them and Jesus pose a threat the vested interests and positions of the chief priests and the scribes. There could be riot or revolt, and who knows what responses the Roman military would make. Their scheming hardens.

And the opportunity for Jesus' death says the time is at hand. Satan, last seen at 4:13, left off tempting Jesus until an opportune time. That opportunity (v.6) comes through one of the Twelve.¹ Judas agrees to find the opportunity to hand Jesus over (betray) to the chief priests and officers (leaders among the Levites and therefore temple-based, Acts 4:1; 5:24) when the crowds favorable to Jesus are absent. ... Judas has been called a thief, a money lover, and devil from the beginning. His betrayal has been called the act of a greedy man, a disappointed man, a man chosen for an ugly task, a man trying to force Jesus to act by precipitating a crisis. Here is one who was chosen after a night of prayer to be in the inner circle of Jesus. He was taught and then sent to minister with apostolic authority. He enjoyed the same success as the others on those missions to preach, to heal, and to cast out demons. He was in every sense of the word an apostle. What happened? There would be no value in attempting a new theory to explain Judas. The church is at its best when it stops asking, "Why did Judas do it?" and instead examines its own record of discipleship.²

The Jewish Passover not only serves as background for the Christian Table of Remembrance but the celebration of liberation from slavery in Egypt provides directly and indirectly meaning for the Lord's Supper.³

The New Testament carries four accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper, the three Synoptics and 1 Cor, 11:23-26 which is the earliest form of the tradition coming to us. John records Jesus' last meal with the disciples, but its centerpiece is the washing of feet (John 13: 1-20). In John's Gospel, the account most akin to the Lord's Supper is that of Jesus feeding the multitudes at Passover time (ch. 6). The meal is variously referred to in the New Testament and in subsequent traditions: the Last Supper, the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20), the Mass ("meal), the Communion ("participation" or "fellowship," 1 Cor. 10:16), and the Eucharist ("to give thanks," Luke 22:17). While observed with varying frequency in different traditions, it has been historically set on Thursday evening of Holy Week, called Maundy Thursday, "maundy" being a form of the word *mande* from which we get "mandate" or "command." That particular night is thus the Night of the Commandment, the commandment referring to the memorial meal and/or the washing of feet.⁴

Luke has shaped the tradition so as to present the evening as a classical occasion of farewell by a leader to his followers; first the meal (vv. 14-20) and then words of warning, instruction, and encouragement for the days that lie ahead (vv.21-38). In this arrangement the indication of betrayer at the table is delayed until after the institution of the Lord's Supper, unlike Matthew and Mark who place it earlier. By doing so, a very important consideration in a gospel that extends forgiveness to a prodigal, tax

¹ Fred B. Craddock, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary on Luke (Louisville, KY. John Knox Pres, 1990), 252.

² Fred B. Craddock, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary on Luke (Louisville, KY. John Knox Pres, 1990), 253.

³ Fred B. Craddock, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary on Luke (Louisville, KY. John Knox Pres, 1990), 253.

⁴ Fred B. Craddock, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary on Luke (Louisville, KY. John Knox Pres, 1990), 254.

collectors, a dying thief, and the crucifiers, but also puts in sharper focus the betrayal by Judas. Not only does he deliver Jesus to the enemy but he violate a covenant in the body and blood of Jesus.⁵

It is evident that the practices of early Christian communities have affected all the traditions of the last meal. In fact, Christian observance and reflection on this meal have influenced the way the believing community remembered other meals at which Jesus was host. At the feeding of the five thousand, Luke says Jesus took, blessed, broke, and gave (9:16), clearly Eucharistic language. At table with the two disciples at Emmaus, the risen Christ took, blessed, broke, and gave (24:30). It is as though, because of this last supper, no meal among disciples is just a meal, because no loaf is just bread, no cup is just wine.

Luke's record of the meal itself consists of two parts: verses 14-18 and 19-20. The problems for the reader are several and have to be dealt with at the outset if the passage is to be free to have its effect. The most apparent difficulty is the sequence of cup, bread, and cup. The order of cup and then bread is not unique here: both I Cor. 10:16 and the early Christian writing called the *Didache* have the cup before the bread, but here alone is there a second cup. However, the second cup appears in verse 20 which is absent from some manuscripts of Luke.⁶

Luke seems to have combined two traditions about the meal, each consisting of a set of parallel sayings.....

"This is my body which is given for you" and "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." In time language came to be interpreted in sacrificial terms as atonement for sin. However, Luke's account is governed by the Passover, and the Passover lamb was not a sin offering. The lamb sacrificed for sin was another ritual; the Passover lamb was the seal of a covenant, and the Passover meal commemorated that covenant offered to the faith community by a God who sets free. Jesus' blood seals a new covenant offered to the faith community by a God who sets free. Jesus' blood seals a new covenant offering a new kind of freedom, a release from captivity to sin and death, a new covenant extended by the liberating God to all who believe, both Jew and Gentile. Those who share in this covenant are joined to one another, life to life, as signified and sealed in the cup divided among themselves. This last meaning of the tradition, the binding of disciples to one another, became extremely important Paul as he sought to create congregations in which Christians were members of one another (I Cor. 11:23-34). But both traditions preserved by Luke are rich with meanings for the community of faith.⁷

[Communion is a meal that bring us to freedom. Our Friday dinner is in this sense a communion with Christ.

Participating in this meal, what are you going to be free from????]

⁵ Fred B. Craddock, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary on Luke (Louisville, KY. John Knox Pres, 1990), 255.

⁶ Fred B. Craddock, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary on Luke (Louisville, KY. John Knox Pres, 1990), 255.

⁷ Fred B. Craddock, Interpretation, A Bible Commentary on Luke (Louisville, KY. John Knox Pres, 1990), 256.