



THE GOSPEL OF
Luke

SESSION OBJECTIVE: LUKE 22:7-23

To understand the significance of Luke's account of *the Lord's Supper*.

Different Details, Same Story

One of the criticisms sometimes levied against the Bible is the seemingly different details from different writers of the same event. One such example of this is in account of the final Passover meal that Jesus celebrates with His disciples wherein He institutes the so-called *Lord's Supper*. In Matthew's account while speaking about the cup, Jesus says: "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:27b-28). Jesus seems to emphasize the inauguration of a covenant through blood as seen in Exodus 24:8, and the pouring out of blood as seen in Leviticus 4:7-32. However, in Luke's account, we find Jesus emphasizing something a little different: "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Lk. 22:20). Here, rather than pointing to the Torah, Jesus focuses in on the prophets by connecting His covenant to the one of which Jeremiah prophesied (Jer. 31:31). Why the difference in wording? The answer can be explained through a variety of reasons. For one, the authors are likely emphasizing parts of Jesus' wording for a specific purpose endemic to their context. Matthew wrote primarily to a Jewish audience while Luke likely wrote to a more Greco-Roman audience. The Jewish audience would understand the significance of the imagery from the Mosaic covenant much more powerfully than a Gentile, and by contrast a Gentile would likely be much more excited at the prospects of a new covenant to which they might belong.

The Passover Meal

Verse 7 indicates that the day of the Passover has arrived: “Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed” (Lk. 22:7). This day involved eating the Passover meal together as commanded by God in the Torah (Ex. 12:21-28, 23:15; Deut. 16:1-5) and demonstrated in the Jewish writings (2 Kings 23:21; Ezra 6:19-22). In verses 8 through 13, Jesus gives His disciples instructions for where to go to prepare the meal, and they did as He asked. Then, “when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, ‘I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God’” (Lk. 22:14-16). It is here that Jesus institutes a practice that the church has continued to observe for the last two-thousand years. One thing to bear in mind is the Lord’s usage of physical items to point towards deeper spiritual meaning (e.g. the cup, the bread, the wine, etc.) still have significance when the church gathers to observe the supper today. That means that when we eat the bread and drink the cup, we are to remember something very specific. Below is a breakdown of such things.

THE CUP

In verse 17, Jesus says to His disciples: “And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, ‘Take this, and divide it among yourselves.’” Given that this was a meal and that all of the disciples would have had their own cups, this action would have been impactful. To drink from the cup of another individual was seen as “a means of entering into a communion relationship with that person to the point that one shares that person’s destiny for good or ill.”¹ It is at this point that Jesus uses the physical cup from which His disciples are drinking to illustrate the spiritual cup from which He is about to drink at the cross: “For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes” (Lk. 22:18). In other words, by drinking the cup of wrath and death as He is crucified, He will be prevented from drinking the cup of Passover and celebration until the consummation of the kingdom age inaugurated by His triumphal return (Rev. 19:6-9). And the disciples, by drinking from His cup, were enjoining themselves to His death as well.

“MY BODY”

In verse 19, Jesus continues to employ physical symbols of spiritual significance: “And he took 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.’” In the same way that the cup points towards death, the bread points to Jesus’ own body which will soon be “given” to take on the wrath of God as a propitiation for sin (1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10). The bread that the disciples were eating signified the body of the Lord that would soon serve as a substitute on their behalf.

THE NEW COVENANT

Verse 20 continues: “And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’” Again, the cup and the contents in the cup signify a new covenant God intends to make with His people, one first prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah: “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 on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.” Up to this point, Jeremiah is speaking of the Mosaic covenant that was established by the original Passover in Egypt. But God continues: “For 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. And I will be their God, and they shall be

¹ David E. Garland, *Luke*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 854.

my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." The Lord promised a future covenant, not like the one that Israel previously enjoyed, wherein He would put His law on their heart and they would know Him intimately. God further elucidated this covenant through the prophet Ezekiel in Ezekiel 36:26: "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put with in you."

The death of Jesus and the offering of His blood ratifies a new covenant between God and His people that is different than Abraham's and Moses'. We are no longer a people defined by land, language, or culture, but one of many lands, languages, and cultures combined (Eph. 2:11-22). When we drink the wine (or Welch's Grape Juice, like *good Baptists*), we are remembering this covenant that Jesus has established and are thus participating in it. The contents of the cup point us towards "the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Pet. 1:19).

BETRAYAL

In this moment of acknowledging His impending death, the Lord also acknowledges His imminent betrayal by one of His own: "But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this" (Lk. 22:21-23). Of course, we know from the rest of the narrative this is a reference to Judas, the one who has just recently been filled with Satan and has already worked out a deal with the chief priests and scribes for money (Lk. 22:3-6).

What About Now?

The primary takeaway is the importance of understanding what we are to remember when we take the Lord's supper. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11:26: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." You also remember the significance of the cup, that it symbolizes death, and that when you drink of it you are entering into the suffering and death of Jesus. You remember the broken body of Jesus that took upon the full weight of God's wrath in your place, and the blood of the Lord that establishes this new covenant that we now enjoy with God.

Study Questions

Day One

1. Read Luke 22:7-8. What day had arrived? What significant practice took place on this day, historically? What did Jesus instruct Peter to do?

2. Read Luke 22:9-13. What instructions did Jesus give His disciples concerning the Passover meal?

Day Two

1. Read Luke 22:14-16. What did Jesus do with His disciples? What did He say to them?

- 2. Read Luke 22:17-18. What did He give the disciples to share, and why was this significant?

Day Three

- 1. Read Luke 22:19. What did the bread represent?

- 2. Read Luke 22:20. What did the wine represent? What OT prophets did Jesus likely have in mind here?

Day Four

- 1. Read Luke 22:21-22. About what did Jesus warn His disciples?

- 2. Read Luke 22:23. How did His disciples respond to this warning?

Week 79 Discussion: The Lord's Supper

In Luke 22:7-23, Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper, a practice that the church has continued to enjoy since its inception in this passage. Talk as a group about the importance of this practice and why prioritizing it matters a great deal.

- 1. Icebreaker: When was the last time (if ever) you have taken the Lord's Supper?
- 2. Do you prioritize the Lord's Supper? In other words, do you make it a point to gather with the church when the Lord's Supper is observed?
- 3. What are reasons one should abstain from observing the supper? Use Scripture to support your answer.
- 4. Have you ever abstained from the supper? Share, if you are willing, why.
- 5. Should the supper be taken at any time with anyone, or should it only be done with the church body? Why?
- 6. How often should the church observe the supper?

Takeaways:

- 1. Jesus asks His disciples to prepare the Passover meal for them eat.
- 2. During the Passover meal, Jesus assigns new meaning to the ancient Passover elements that point towards His death, burial, resurrection, and new covenant established in His blood.