

The Gospel According to Luke

“The Lasting Supper”

Chapter 21:37 – 22:23

Introduction

Leonardo da Vinci's painting, *The Last Supper*, is for many Christians the clearest image they have of Jesus Christ's last meal with his disciples. Though it is considered great art, da Vinci's painting is bad history. **All** the details in da Vinci's painting are inaccurate. For example:

1. The painting shows daylight outside the window, but the Last Supper took place at night.
2. The figures are seated about regular tables on benches, whereas Jesus and His disciples reclined around a low table on pillows or couches.
3. Da Vinci shows thirteen Renaissance Italian men in oriental costume in a Florentine palace, *not* a Jewish celebration of the Passover in an upper room in Palestine.

To make things worse, Dan Brown wrote the best-selling fiction novel, *The Da Vinci Code* – soon to be a big Hollywood blockbuster. In it he claims that Christianity was founded on a cover-up. He presents the theory that the church has conspired for centuries to hide evidence that Jesus was a mere mortal, married to Mary Magdalene, and had children whose descendants live in France. Da Vinci supposedly wanted to expose the cover-up, so he encoded clues in paintings, like *The Last Supper*. In the painting, Mary Magdalene is said to be the person next to Jesus, *not* the apostle John.

Adding to all the confusion caused by da Vinci and now Dan Brown, many of us have our own ideas about the last supper. If you were raised in a Church, either Catholic or Protestant, your thinking about the last supper was shaped by its teachings.

As much as possible, we want to set aside our preconceived ideas and impressions about the last supper Jesus shared with His first followers. Let's confine our thinking to the biblical account – the only accurate source of information about what took place and why.

One thing you immediately notice is that, although it was Jesus' last supper, He meant it to be a lasting supper:

1. Twice He said that it looked forward to His return to earth to establish the kingdom of God.
2. Then He told His followers to go on celebrating the supper in **remembrance**.

As we look at this last, lasting, Lord's supper, we'll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 The Lasting Supper Reminds You To Make Ready For The Lord's Coming, and #2 The Lasting Supper Reminds You To Remember Why The Lord Came.

#1 The Lasting Supper Reminds You To Make Ready For The Lord's Coming (22:7-20)

Let's look at the supper itself, then go back and discuss the betrayal of Judas.

When you read and re-read verses seven through twenty of chapter twenty-two, something that jumps out at you is the idea of preparing, or making ready. You see the word *prepare* twice, in verses eight and nine; the words *make ready* in verse twelve; and the word *prepared* in verse thirteen. As the disciples made ready for the last supper, we are being reminded to make ready for the Lord's return.

Luke 22:7 Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed.

Passover was the commemoration and celebration of the freeing of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. As God announced that He would free them, He said a death angel would **smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt**. He instructed each family to sacrifice a lamb and put a

sign of its blood on their door posts, saying to them, **when I see the blood, I will *pass over* you.**

Passover and the Feast of **Unleavened Bread** are different holidays falling on successive days; however, due to their closeness they are usually treated as one festival. Jews would eat unleavened bread for seven days and leaven was not to be admitted to the household for seven days.

Luke 22:8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, **“Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.”**

Preparing involved a lot more than shopping, or even the normal house cleaning. They had to remove all traces of leaven from their houses to avoid the risk of eating leaven in the seven days of the festival. This amounted to an extensive search and cleaning, to be certain no tiny crumbs or particles were anywhere to be found that might contain leaven.

How much do we prepare prior to our ‘feasts’ in God’s Word? Or for other spiritual activities?

Luke 22:9 So they said to Him, “Where do You want us to prepare?”

Luke 22:10 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.**

Luke 22:11 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?”’

Luke 22:12 Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.”

Think about this for a moment. Jesus was hours away from the most important events in His life and ministry. His whole mission, and the fulfillment of many specific prophecies, was at stake. Yet it all depended upon His disciples running into **a man carrying a pitcher of water.**

God is at work in the smallest details of your life. Our problem is that we think in terms that are too large, too grand. Start paying closer attention to small things.

We aren't told anything about the owner of the house with the upper room. One thing we can say: It was unusual that his upper room would still be available. Places to celebrate Passover were at a premium; everything would have been rented. This man must have had some leading from the Holy Spirit to keep his upper room available. It reminds us we cannot always follow our own logic or common sense, but we must discover God's leading.

Luke 22:13 So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

Again there is an emphasis on preparation. **So much of ministry is preparation – or it ought to be!**

Luke 22:14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.

Luke 22:15 Then He said to them, "With *fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;*

Luke 22:16 *for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."*

The phrase, *no longer... until*, was a way of saying, *no longer to be done forever*. Jesus announced that this was the last **Passover** He would eat with them because all that it symbolized would find fulfillment in the coming **kingdom of God**.

Luke 22:17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "*Take this and divide it among yourselves;*

Luke 22:18 *for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."*

God was done with Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Fifteen hundred years of ritual were ended that night. Jesus looked forward to a new feast, one that He would host when the kingdom of God was fully established on the earth. You can read about it in the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. At His Second Coming, Jesus holds what is described as a *marriage supper*. Who's getting married? To describe the intimacy of Jesus' love for you, the Bible represents Him as a Bridegroom, and believers as His bride. When Jesus returns in His Second Coming, we will return to earth with Him and there will be a feast – the Marriage Supper of the Lamb – at which we will dine together.

The last supper gave way to a lasting supper. We call it communion or the Lord's Supper – an ordinance for the Church to practice while we wait for the Lord to return and hold the marriage feast.

Luke 22:19 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.*”

This is the Gospel. God told Adam and Eve that, if they sinned, they would surely die. They sinned; they died. They began to die physically; they died spiritually, as you see them separated from God; and they would have died eternally separated from God.

God did something to save them from sin and death. He killed an animal in their place, as their substitute; probably a lamb. Then He covered them with the skin of that sacrificial animal. It established, once for all, that your sin requires the death of an innocent substitute who can cover you, so that you can have fellowship with God.

God did something else in the Garden: He promised our first parents that He would send someone into the human race to be our one, final sacrifice and substitute. When John the Baptist introduced Jesus as *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*, it was the fulfillment of God's promise in the Garden. When Jesus died on the Cross, it was as the promised substitute.

Every lamb from Adam to Moses for about twenty-five hundred years, and every Passover lamb for about fifteen hundred years pointed to Jesus as the full, final sacrifice for sin. **Jesus was and is our Passover.**

When Jesus said of the bread, *this is My body which is given for you*, He meant that He was God come in human flesh in order that He might die in your place to save you.

Luke 22:20 Likewise He also *took the cup after supper*, saying, “*This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.*”

The Old Covenant was the law of Moses that required the continual sacrificing of lambs. The New Covenant is the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus as God's final Lamb. Up until the death of Jesus, it had

required oceans of lamb's blood through the centuries just to temporarily cover your sin so you could approach God. Now the blood of Jesus would itself be a depthless ocean of cleansing, sufficient for the sin of the whole world.

We understand Jesus to be talking figuratively and symbolically. The bread and the wine did not mystically turn into His body and blood. The Roman Catholic Church teaches otherwise, but they are wrong. Let me give you just one reason they are wrong to think Jesus ever meant to indicate the bread and wine are changed into His body and blood. **Jews never drank blood.** It was strictly prohibited in their law. If the disciples thought Jesus meant in any way that the cup held blood, they would have refused to drink it; or put up an argument.

The bread and the wine are symbols. Jesus was ending Passover and instituting what we call Communion or the Lord's Supper. It is a lasting ordinance, to be practiced among believers as often as we choose.

Even though the Lord's Supper is a great time for reflection on what He has done and what He is doing in our lives, **it looks forward to His return.** Discussing the Lord's Supper, the apostle Paul said (reading from the Amplified Bible),

[First Corinthians 11:26](#) For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are representing and signifying and proclaiming the fact of the Lord's death **until He comes [again].**

Passover was ended; a marriage supper is coming. We can all relate to making ready for a wedding. Some of you act as though weddings are all stupid wastes of time and money; you resent having to wear the 'monkey suit.' Put that thinking aside when it comes to making ready for the Lord to return for you.

Whether you are a man or a woman, you are to live as though you are an engaged bride-to-be who is making preparations for the wedding day and feast. The wedding could occur any moment, so you need constantly to be ready.

Let's return briefly to the back story of Judas' betrayal...

#2 The Lasting Supper Reminds You To Remember Why The Lord Came (21:37-22:6 & 22:21-23)

Jesus acted with some stealth regarding the location of the last supper because He knew there was a plot to arrest Him when the multitudes were not around.

Luke 21:37 And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet.

Luke 21:38 Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.

Jesus had entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Everyday He came and taught, and the people listened to Him. It's interesting in our context because the Passover lamb always was brought into your house for several days of examination before it was slain. Jesus was fulfilling the symbolism of the Passover lamb – allowing Himself to be examined, to show that He was the perfect, sinless sacrifice and substitute.

Luke 22:1 Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.

Luke 22:2 And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.

These were the religious leaders of Israel. They kept all outward rules, rites, rituals, and regulations. Inwardly they feared people, not God; and they were murderers! They prepared their *homes*, but not their *hearts*.

Luke 22:3 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve.

Luke 22:4 So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.

Luke 22:5 And they were glad, and agreed to give him money.

Luke 22:6 So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.

Satan entered Judas. How could he? Judas was not saved; he was not a believer. He was **numbered**, but not new-natured. A lot of

people attend Church; they even serve in the Church; they might even be pastors. But they have never been born-again.

It's radical that Judas was not just demon-possessed, but that Satan himself entered him. It is a picture of what you really are if you are not a Christian. If the Lord isn't **your** lord, then you serve the devil. You may as well be possessed by him; the result will be the same.

Judas, then, is an example of why the Lord came in the first place. Our first parents freely submitted themselves to Satan. Sin and death entered, and now reign on our planet. Men are slaves to their own nature; the devil is their master. Jesus Christ came and defeated the devil on the Cross. He redeemed the human race from slavery. His death and resurrection are effective to save any who believe in Him.

Judas was **numbered with the twelve**. He was their treasurer. He participated in performing miracles, signs, and wonders. But he never personally trusted Jesus as his Lord and Savior. He remained a slave to sin, enslaved by Satan.

Jump ahead, after the supper:

Luke 22:21 But behold, the hand of My betrayer *is* with Me on the table.
Luke 22:22 And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"

If you read all the accounts of the last supper, you see that Jesus was dealing compassionately with Judas. The Lord was giving him opportunity to repent.

But wasn't Judas destined to betray the Lord? Doesn't Jesus say, **as it has been determined**?

Listen: The Bible everywhere teaches both that God is sovereign, **and** that man is free to choose. They are simultaneously true in a way that we cannot ever fully sort out and comprehend. Judas was responsible and accountable for his choices and actions... And so are you and I and every other member of the human race.

If you try to decide between God's sovereignty and man's free will, you either make man his own master or you make God a monster. If you accept that both are true you won't get doctrinally derailed by the arguments of men who believe they can solve the unsolvable.

Luke 22:23 Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.

Peter didn't think it was him. He would go on to promise the Lord he would never betray Him. John didn't think it was him. He would ask the Lord to tell him who it was. So this questioning among themselves was probably *not* self-examination.

So what applications can we make of their [questioning](#)?

1. First of all, if you are saved, it doesn't mean you won't fall into sin. Peter *did* betray the Lord; and so can I. I don't forfeit my salvation... But I ought to be a little more mindful of my ability to sin; I ought to be a little more on my guard. The lasting Lord's Supper can remind me why Jesus came the first time – to set me free from my slavery to sin so that I might serve Him. Why should I return to the sins He saved me from?
2. Second of all, their questioning reminds us that there are always unsaved individuals among us. They may serve and say all the right things. But we should be aware that some people have not yet been born-again. Churches are full of unsaved people.

Applying the Word...

Believer: Live as though you were a bride-to-be, in love with your Bridegroom. The wedding could occur at any moment! You need to be dressed and ready for it.

If you are not a believer... You're probably not demon-possessed, and certainly not possessed by Satan himself. But the devil is your master; you are a slave to sin. If you die in your sin, you'll be separated from God for eternity, in Hell.

Don't be a modern-day Judas. He looked good from the outside; but inwardly, he betrayed the Lord. So do you – unless you receive Him.

