

“DELIVERED UP ACCORDING TO THE DEFINITE
PLAN AND FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD”

I. Introduction

- A. One of the ways that Luke’s account of our Lord’s suffering and death differs from the parallels in the other Gospels is that Luke makes explicit mention of the role that Satan played in prompting Judas to betray Jesus.
- B. This is significant because it points us back to the very beginning of the Bible, to the things that God said in response to Adam and Eve’s sin in Genesis 3.
- C. It was in that chapter that God first revealed the covenant of grace by declaring that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the seed of the serpent, and the seed of the serpent would bruise the heel of the seed of the woman.
- D. Luke’s mention of Satan reminds us that in these verses we are seeing the cosmic drama of redemption beginning to come to its climax.
- E. As we study these verses today, we will consider them under three headings: the plot, the true Passover lamb, and the sacrament of Christ’s body and blood.

II. The Plot

- A. During the last week of Jesus’s life, as the Feast of Passover and the related Feast of Unleavened Bread approached, Israel’s religious leaders faced a significant roadblock as they looked for a way to have Jesus put to death.
 - 1. The city of Jerusalem was teeming with people who were there to celebrate the feast.
 - 2. And the focus of these people’s attention was Jesus.

3. To use a contemporary term, we might say that Jesus was “trending.”
 4. If the crowds saw the religious leaders acting against Jesus, the leaders would run the risk of being discredited in the people’s eyes.
 5. Luke tells us that as the chief priests and scribes were trying to figure out some way to get around this dilemma, a solution was provided for them.
 6. Satan entered into Judas and prompted him to agree to betray his master into their hands.
 7. This gave the priests exactly what they were looking for.
 8. They needed to know about Jesus’s movements if they were going to be able to arrest him quietly, and away from the crowds.
 9. As one of the twelve, Judas would be able to provide them with the information that they needed.
- B. Aside from the mention of Satanic influence, none of the Gospel writers specify what it was that motivated Judas to betray Christ.
1. Perhaps he was simply after money.
 2. Perhaps he had grown disenchanted by all of Jesus’s talk about suffering and dying.
 3. Perhaps he was frustrated because Jesus was not the kind of Messiah that he was looking for.
 4. We can only guess.
 5. What we do know is that Judas should have known better.
 6. He had been with Jesus for three years.

7. He had seen Jesus's mighty works firsthand.
 8. He had heard Jesus preach with unparalleled authority.
 9. He himself had been empowered to minister in Jesus's name.
 10. Yet in spite of all of this, Judas chose to hand Jesus over to those who wanted to kill him.
- C. While Judas carried out these actions under Satanic influence, the ultimate cause of his betrayal was that it had been decreed by God.
1. This is made clear by what Jesus says in verse 22: "For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed."
 2. The apostle Peter says something very similar to this in his Pentecost sermon in Acts 2: "this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." (Acts 2:23)
 3. Judas's betrayal of Christ was part of God's plan.
 4. The same can be said of the unjust handling of Jesus's case by the Jewish leaders and by Pilate, of the crowd's shameful request for a criminal to be released to them instead of Jesus, and of the Romans' cruelty in crucifying Jesus.
 5. Of course, God does not make people sin.
 6. But God's decree renders the sinful actions of mankind absolutely certain.
 7. This aspect of the decree is typically described as "permissive" in order to clarify that God does not positively work in man to make him do things that are contrary to God's will.
 8. God is not the author of sin, but he is the creator of free moral beings who he knows will use their free moral agency to do evil

things.

9. And as we see so clearly in the instance of Judas's betrayal of Christ, God in his holy wisdom uses these acts of evil to accomplish his purposes.

III. The True Passover Lamb

- A. When Jesus was in Jerusalem during the final week of his life, he taught in the temple each day but lodged outside the city with his disciples on Mount Olivet.
 1. Because the Passover meal had to be eaten within the precincts of the holy city, Jesus sent Peter and John into Jerusalem to make preparations for their celebration of the feast.
 2. This would have involved securing a room, procuring a lamb that had been slain in the temple court that day, and picking up the other items that were needed for the meal.
 3. Getting a room was not an easy task in light of the influx of people in Jerusalem for this special occasion.
 4. Yet as Luke makes clear, Jesus had already taken care of this, whether by prior arrangements or by his supernatural knowledge.
 5. In doing this, our Lord further emphasizes that he is in complete control of these events.
- B. Passover commemorated God's great deliverance of his people when they were slaves in Egypt.
 1. The Passover feast originated in the context of the tenth and final plague that befell the Egyptians: the plague on the firstborn.
 2. When God sent his destroying angel throughout the land of Egypt to carry out that judgment, he made a way for the Israelites to be spared from it.

3. He provided a substitute, the Passover lamb, and he instructed his people to take the blood of that slain lamb and place it on the doorposts of their houses so that the destroyer would not enter when he passed by.
 4. When that dreadful judgment came upon the land, all who were in homes marked by the blood of the lamb were spared.
- C. It was certainly no coincidence that Jesus was killed in Jerusalem on the very same day when the Passover feast was being celebrated.
1. This was a matter of divine providence, as is everything else that takes place in the world.
 2. Jesus showed the connection between Passover and his impending death by what he did when he ate that last Passover meal with his disciples.
 3. He took that sacrificial meal and interpreted its significance not in reference to God's deliverance of his people at the time of the exodus, but in reference to himself.
 4. In doing this, he showed that he is the true Passover lamb.
 5. As John the Baptist had declared at the start of Jesus's public ministry, Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.
 6. This calls our attention to the glorious truth that is at the very heart of the Christian religion.
 7. Just as the blood of the Passover lamb was the only protection from the destroyer in Egypt, the blood of Christ is our only protection from the just wrath that God has towards us as sinners.

IV. The Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood

- A. When the hour to celebrate the feast arrived and Jesus was reclining at table with the apostles, he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat

this Passover with you before I suffer.”

1. He said this because this meal signaled the beginning of that climactic moment in history when he would complete his work as our Mediator.
 2. Consider what these words of our Lord tell us about his love for those he came to save.
 3. That last Passover was the entryway into hellish torment for Jesus.
 4. On that very night, he would be betrayed into the hands of his enemies.
 5. Nevertheless, he eagerly desired to eat that meal.
 6. Why?
 7. It was because he longed for our salvation.
- B. You will notice that Luke’s account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper begins not with the bread but with the cup.
1. We will come back to that in a moment.
 2. First, I want us to consider what Jesus says about the bread.
 3. He says, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”
 4. Notice what Jesus did in speaking those words.
 5. He took the symbolism that used to belong to the lamb that was eaten at the Passover meal, and he transferred that symbolism to the bread.
 6. In doing this, Jesus showed that the one true sacrifice for sin was about to be made by him when he offered himself up on the cross.

7. Once the sacrifice to which the Passover lamb pointed was made, it would no longer be appropriate for sacrificial animals to be a part of this sacrament.
 8. So Jesus transformed the sacrament of Passover into the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
 9. The bread that had previously pointed to the Israelites' hasty departure from Egypt would now be the sign and seal of Christ's broken body.
- C. The Passover Seder was not merely a matter of historical recollection for the Jewish people.
1. It was about participating in the same deliverance that their ancestors experienced.
 2. As Hughes Oliphant Old explains, "In Passover benedictions the devout Jew gave thanks for the history of salvation and thereby made it the history of his salvation. By giving thanks for the release from bondage in Egypt, he claimed his own freedom" [Old, *Worship That Is Reformed According to Scripture*, 108]
 3. As Christians, we are doing the same thing when we partake of the Lord's Supper in faith.
 4. We are claiming the deliverance that Jesus accomplished on the cross as our very own.
- D. This is what Jesus means when he tells us to partake of this sacrament in remembrance of him.
1. He is not merely talking about mental recollection.
 2. He is talking about participating in something that took place in the past so that it can shape your life now.

3. In Scripture, the word “remember” often has to do with being faithful to one’s covenant commitments.
 4. This is what is meant God is said to have “remembered” Noah, or Abraham, or others.
 5. To celebrate the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of Christ is to confess Christ’s Lordship over your life and to commit yourself anew to letting Christ’s sacrifice on the cross define who you are and how you live.
- E. The meaning of the cross is defined by Jesus in this text when he says that his body is “given for you.”
1. This makes it clear that his death was a matter of substitutionary atonement.
 2. Jesus instituted this new covenant meal in order to join the disciples to himself so that they would be joined with him in his death on their behalf.
 3. The Lord’s Supper means the same thing for us today.
 4. By eating the bread and drinking the cup in faith, we participate in the benefits of Christ’s atoning death on our behalf.
- F. As we noted earlier, Luke’s account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper is unique in that it has two cups.
1. Now, there is a textual variant in several manuscripts that eliminates the second cup.
 2. If those manuscripts reflect Luke’s original text, then there is only one cup here and it comes before the bread instead of after it.
 3. However, the textual evidence strongly suggests that the reference to the two cups is original.

4. While Luke differs from Matthew and Mark on this point, there is no need to see this as a contradiction.
 5. It is simply that Luke includes a detail that they chose not to include.
 6. The appearance of this additional cup is explained by the fact that in the first century Passover Seder, there were actually four cups of wine used throughout the course of the meal.
 7. The cup that is mentioned in verse 17 was probably the second cup of the Passover meal, while the cup that is mentioned in verse 20 was probably the third cup of the Passover meal.
- G. When Jesus distributes the cup to his disciples, he says that it is “the new covenant in my blood.”
1. Moses said something very similar to this in Exodus 24 when he offered the sacrifice that ratified the covenant at Sinai.
 2. That sacrifice sealed the Sinai covenant and put it into effect.
 3. By using the same language in his institution of the Lord’s Supper, Jesus showed that the sacrifice that he made on the cross sealed the new covenant and put it into effect.
 4. This new covenant is the covenant that was prophesied in Jeremiah 31, and elsewhere.
 5. This was a prophecy of the age to come, the era when all that had been foreshadowed and foretold in earlier administrations of the covenant of grace would reach fulfillment.
 6. By speaking of the new covenant in his blood, Jesus is declaring the arrival of the age to come.
- H. Our Lord also says that he will not partake of the elements of this meal again until the kingdom of God comes.

1. In Matthew and Mark he says he will not drink the cup until he drinks it "new" in his Father's kingdom.
2. To understand what Jesus means by this, it is helpful to remember that wine is a drink of celebration.
3. It is something that you drink at the end of the day, when your work is done.
4. It is the drink of consummation.
5. This was an important part of the symbolism of wine in the Passover meal.
6. The fourth and final cup in the Passover was drunk in order to signify the conclusion of the meal, along with the hope that God's great plan of salvation would one day be brought to its proper conclusion.
7. For this reason, the fourth cup was known as the cup of consummation.
8. As far as we can tell, Jesus did not drink that fourth cup when he took the Passover meal and invested it with new meaning in instituting the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.
9. The reason why he did not drink that fourth cup was because his saving work will not be consummated until the day of his return.
10. The fact that he did not drink the fourth cup means the meal that he shared with his disciples that night was never brought to its proper conclusion.
11. In a sense, then, we are participating in the very same meal every time we partake of the Lord's Supper.
12. This meal will not reach its true consummation until the day when Christ returns and drinks the cup anew with us at the great

messianic banquet.

V. Conclusion

- A. This passage tells us that it was the will of God that Jesus would be crushed for our sake.
- B. It was God's definite plan for his beloved Son to be offered up on the cross as the true Passover lamb.
- C. This is what had to happen to secure our salvation.
- D. Our situation really is that desperate.
- E. We have no hope outside of Christ.
- F. But in Christ, we have an all sufficient Savior, a Savior who is "able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him." (Heb 7:25 ESV)
- G. This is what is signified and sealed to us every time we partake of the Lord's Supper.
- H. As the 16th century Scottish pastor Robert Bruce once said, "It has pleased the Lord to pour this wine, this precious ointment, into us... In that he pours it into our hearts, we see clearly that it does not grow in our hearts, or breed in our nature... It is a gift of God poured down freely from His undeserved grace in the riches of his mercy in Christ." [*The Mystery of the Lord's Supper*, 198]