

## Luke 22:7-30

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Date: 13 July 2014

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[ 0 : 00 ] Turn to Luke 22, verses 7-32. So, there are three, I suppose, great, all-time great statements about Jesus as the Son of Man.

! And they're really good memory verses if you don't know them. The first one is that the Son of Man came to be served, came not to be served, but to serve and give His rights to run some of many. The second one is that the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. And the third great one I want to argue is the Son of Man came eating and drinking.

The Son of Man came eating and drinking. And you might think, well, that's just because we're at the Lord's Sabbath tonight. But one of the great themes of Luke's Gospel is Jesus' love to eat and drink.

So, in Luke's Gospel, there are about 16 occasions in Luke where you find Jesus eating and drinking in someone's house or talking at a feast of some sort.

[ 1 : 04 ] And tonight, this is the most famous meal of all time, isn't it? We call it the Last Supper. And it's here in Luke 22. Luke tells us, can you sit down verse 14.

He took a cup and when he'd given thanks, he said, when he'd given thanks, he brought up, sorry, verse 14, isn't it?

And when the hour came, he reclined at table and the apostles with him. And he said to them, I earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

For I tell you that I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. So the time has come. The hour has arrived and the apostles are with him.

Now, as you read this, immediately, probably, a picture will come into your mind. Probably, I think it will. And it is that very, very famous scene of the Last Supper.

[ 2 : 07 ] It's a well-known piece of art, isn't it? The Lord's Supper is inspired great works of art, but one particular in the Lord's Supper by Leonardo da Vinci. Where Jesus is sitting in the middle of the table and he's got his disciples on either side of him.

If you can see it, Google it when you get home. And you might know that when that was first painted, it was painted on the room of a monastery dining room. Unfortunately, the wall began to crumble because it was only made of some kind of dirt.

And very soon, after the painting had been done, the wall began to crumble. Worse was to come. Some of the early friars cut a door through the wall where Jesus' feet were.

And then later on, after that, he gave a storage chamber, then a stable, then a prison, and a barracks. And at one stage, there was restoration work that was done very, very carelessly.

One artist in particular was so casual about the task that he gave James six fingers on one of his hands. It's a famous work of art, and yet it's been treated terribly down through the centuries.

[ 3 : 10 ] And not only has this scene in the upper room inspired that great painting, but this scene of the Lord's Supper has inspired a great intrigue. At least that painting has been the source of conspiracy theories.

I don't want to spoil it for you, but if you've not yet read Dan Brown's book, you know, the Da Vinci Code, in fact, I will spoil it for you because it's not worth reading anyway. But in that book, Dan Brown argues that there is a conspiracy.

And the clues to that conspiracy are found in Da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper. And the conspiracy is the search for the Holy Grail. The Holy Grail is not the cup, it's not the relic, it's not the cup that Jesus had in the upper room that he poured wine into.

The Holy Grail is the bloodline of Jesus. So Jesus got married, according to Dan Brown. That is the conspiracy that the Catholic Church has been covering up, according to Dan Brown.

There's absolutely no factual basis for it whatsoever. But he says Jesus married Mary Magdalene, and he actually has descendants in the world today, and there's a secret society.

[ 4 : 17 ] There's a secret society called the Priory of Zion, and it's their job in life to protect the descendants of Jesus in the world today. That is the conspiracy.

So what is the reality tonight? What is the reality behind all that? What is the reality behind this famous work of ours? About the Last Supper? What does the Last Supper have to say to us tonight?

Is there a conspiracy? Does Jesus have living descendants in the world today? And what is the secret of the Holy Grail?

Well, we're going to look at the passage, and I want you to notice there is a conspiracy. Can you see it in verses 7 to 13? There is a conspiracy. If you don't think there's a conspiracy, you haven't read many detective novels, have you?

Jesus tells his disciples from verse 7 onwards, go into the city, look out for a man carrying a water jug on his head. It's like saying, go to King's Cross railway station, look out for a man with the Times newspaper rolled up under one arm, and a carnation of his lapel.

[ 5 : 26 ] It's got that sort of feel. Look at verse 10. Look at verse 10. It's intriguing, isn't it? He says to him, Behold, when you've entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you.

Follow him into the house that he enters. Tell the master of the house, and the teacher says to you, where is the guest room? Where I meet the Passover with my disciples. He will show you a large upper room furnished.

Prepare it there. It's intriguing, isn't it? It's mysterious. Do you know what's the surprise? Look out for a man carrying a water jug.

But in those days, you didn't see men carrying water jugs, did you? They still don't do that in that culture. That was a woman's job, they would say. I'm not saying it never happens, but it is an unusual sight to see a man carrying the water jug.

It feels like, doesn't it, when you read that, it's got the sense of being a pre-arranged signal. Why? Why the secrecy? Why doesn't he just go to 25 King Solomon Street in the upstairs flat there, I booked a room for us.

[ 6 : 30 ] Why the secrecy? Well, because it's a security issue, isn't it? Jesus is a wanted man, we saw this morning. We saw. I've come in. There's a conspiracy.

There's a conspiracy between the religious authorities and Judas Iscariot. We're told that in the opening verses we saw this morning. In fact, it's worse than that, isn't it? This conspiracy has its origins in hell.

We're told there in verse 2 that Satan entered into Judas, who was numbered among the twelve, and he went away with the chief priests and the temple police to see how he could hand them over to him.

There is a conspiracy. There's a conspiracy to get rid of Jesus, and Jesus is having none of it. It's not that he's going to die, but he's not having Judas Iscariot and the chief priests calling the tomb and setting the time and the date of his death.

Hell is conspiring to get rid of the Messiah. There's a conspiracy here. In fact, I want to argue that there are two conspiracies. You might want to talk to me about this afterwards if you think I've got it wrong.

[ 7 : 34 ] But I think there's a conspiracy of evil and there's a conspiracy of kindness. And there's a kindness to Judas. Jesus is protecting Judas.

He is protecting Judas from himself right up to the last minute. Did you notice how later on in the evening, how Jesus refers in verse 22 to the hand of the one who is betraying and who is at this table?

He doesn't name and shame him. It is obvious as you read on that the disciples don't know who he's talking about. They begin to argue. They don't realize it's Judas.

They begin to argue amongst themselves which of them it could be. Verse 23. Who is going to do this thing? No one is pointing the finger at Judas saying, well, I knew it was him.

He always looked shifty. And it's almost as if Jesus is giving Judas time to think. He's giving Judas time to have second thoughts about this.

[ 8 : 31 ] He's giving him space for repentance right until the last minute. So there's two things happening. There is a conspiracy of evil which is sort of fueled from hell to get rid of Jesus. And yet

there is a conspiracy of kindness, I think.

And yet, woe to that man by whom he is betrayed. So there are two plans here. That is what I'm saying. There is Satan's plan and God's plan.

There's a plan of destruction. And a plan of salvation. And Satan's schemes are in a mysterious way woven into God's plan and they are made to serve God's plan.

Do you see that in verse 23? The Son of Man will go as it has been determined. Verse 22. So Jesus is going to die. It has been decided.

It has been decided in the councils of eternity before the foundation of the world. The Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world. It has been decided.

[ 9 : 34 ] The Son of Man will go as it has been determined. But woe to that man by whom he is betrayed. Now do you see those two things go together, don't they? Again, we saw this a couple of weeks ago in Proverbs.

But think of the book of Job. Think of Satan wanting to destroy Job and question God and at the same time what you have in Job you have God working out his plans and actually using Satan. We don't live in a dualistic universe where good is versus evil and we don't know what is going to happen and who is going to win. God is sovereign. He can make He can make the wrath of men serve Him.

He can bring the greatest good out of the most unimaginable evil. And they want to rid themselves of the Son of God. They want to crucify Jesus. And God is going to allow that to happen.

And out of that out of the most unimaginable evil where the creatures kill the Creator. This is day sight. Out of the most unimaginable evil God is going to bring about the greatest good.

[ 10 : 45 ] To see. It's like the story of Joseph all over again, isn't it? His brothers sell him into slavery and eventually they're brought to Egypt because of the famine and they appear before Mice and Joseph. And they recognize who he is and they're scared stiff.

And do you remember what Joseph says? He says you meant it for evil. They wanted to kill him. They wanted to get rid of him. They were jealous of him. They hated him. They thought they had got rid of him. And God says to them you meant it for evil but God meant it for good.

To save many people. So while you were plotting and you were planning for others to get rid of me and you thought you'd got rid of me and throw me in the ditch all those things happened. I was falsely accused.

I was thrown into prison. All those bad and evil things. God is not the author of them. But he takes them and he uses them. To carry out his purpose. It's the same in Acts 2, isn't it?

Speaking of the same crowd that crucified Jesus 50 days later. The crowd that cried out in hysteria. Crucify him. Crucify him. Speaking to those same people. Peter says, Men of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, the man of chastity to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs.

[ 11 : 56 ] But God did through him in your midst as you yourselves know. That Jesus was delivered up according to the scriptures. According to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

And you crucify him with lawless hands. See those two things? You killed him. God foreordained it. So here it is.

Look at verse 53 of Luke 22. Jesus says to you, This is your hour. The power of darkness.

There is this conspiracy of evil but in the midst of it there is God's glorious plan of salvation. So there is conspiracy but there is also community as well. Conspiracy and community.

And it is something that struck me more than I have ever seen it before. It is not a secret society is it? It is not the Priory of Zion. It is not the physical descendants of Jesus through the line of Mary Magdalene as Dan Brown ludicrously suggests.

[ 13 : 07 ] It is the church. But do you see this community? Do you see how the church is pictured in the upper room? Sometimes we miss the obvious don't we? What is happening at the start of chapter 22?

It is the Passover. What was the Passover? What happened at the Passover? It is a family occasion. It is a family occasion more than anything else was it?

The Passover for the Jewish people was more of a family occasion than Christmas was for us. It is hard for many of us isn't it? We are away from our families on Christmas day.

I like speaking to my parents apart from one day a year. I do not particularly speaking to them on Christmas day. Because you feel so far from them. And most of you try very hard to be with your family on Christmas day.

And if that can't happen you are sad about it. Because Christmas lunch is a family occasion isn't it? That is our tradition. That is our culture. But even more so with the Passover.

[14:09] The whole family was gathered and the youngest member of the family would ask the questions. Why is this night more important than any other night? What happened to the lamb? Tell me about what happened in Israel. Why is the blood on the doors? What is it all about? And the family would be round the table passing dishes having a meal. And that is the interesting thing here isn't it?

Jesus has the audacity to pull every single one of his disciples away from their families on Passover night. Doesn't he?

And he is the one who is the head of this Passover meal and he's wanting them to celebrate this Passover with him. You see when he says I have eagerly desires to eat this Passover with you. In other words what I'm trying to say is that there's a new family being brought into existence here at this table because the cross of Jesus, that's why, we say blood is thicker than water.

[15:13] Well the blood of Jesus brings into being a new family but grace is even stronger than blood. And so here is the family of Jesus.

The beginning of this new family. But you notice what happens around the table because only Luke, the account of the last supper is in all four Gospels, but Luke is the only one who makes it clear to us that there's this dispute.

There's this bickering that breaks out. It's just like Christmas lunch, isn't it? You know it's like Christmas lunch in the family is marvellous isn't it for the first course? And then somebody says something and a dispute breaks out.

It happens every Christmas lunch with the extended family in verse 24. Luke makes it clear. And this dispute did not happen outside the room.

It didn't happen a couple of days later. It actually happened around the table at the Passover meal. This dispute about who would be the greatest. And what Jesus says is very, very significant because it actually defines for us what kind of community he is bringing into existence.

[16:20] notice what he says in verse 25. He says the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them and those in authority over them are called benefactors.

They dominate but verse 26 not so with you. It shall not be amongst you. You are not to have benefactors.

You are to be benefactors. Let me explain what I mean by that. The kings of the Gentiles they dominate they lord it over. They are called benefactors. There is this stark contrast between the way the things are done in our society and the way things are done in the world and the way that Jesus wants them to be.

How does the world organise itself? How does your office organise itself? There is a pecking order. Isn't that? That is what Jesus is referring to. When he talks benefactors it is this Greek or Roman patronage culture.

So those higher up in the socio-economic order they would give to help those lower down. And so if you wanted to live and survive in society you would look for a benefactor. And you would look for a patron who will champion your cause to look out for you.

[17:34] That is the way it works. That is how you survived. That is how society operated. And then you owed them for the rest of your life. And Jesus says that is not how you should be.

That is not the way I want my society to be organised. It is not the way my world works. It is not scratch my back and I will scratch yours. It is not so much what you know as who you know. That is how the world works. And Jesus says it shall not be so among you. people. But it is still like that. We want to be seen with the rich and the powerful, with the bold and the beautiful, with the popular and the gorgeous.

And Jesus says it will not be like that in my kingdom. That way of thinking goes out of the window when you come to the cross. Isn't that what Paul says in 2 Corinthians? Where he says we used to view human beings, we used to view one another in that kind of way.

We even used to think of Jesus in that kind of way, but not anymore. Now there is a new creation. There is a new way of relating. Everything is new now.

[18:43] The old has passed. The new has come. That's what Jesus says in verse 29, doesn't he? And I assign to you as my father assigned to me a kingdom.

He is conferring a kingdom on these people. He is conferring a kingdom that is not about power or about recognition. And status and money is about dying to serve.

It's about laying down your life for others. It's the people of the cross. And so do you see there's community here isn't there around this table? Radically new community appearing.

And just one other thing, there's something else which Luke does which is quite striking. And you see it in the context of this meal. Look at verse 31. It's still in the upper room. It's part of the same meal. It's part of the same event.

We'll look at it next Sunday morning. He says, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to have you. That he might sit you like wheat.

[ 19 : 54 ] But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. Now why does he bother to tell you that? Why does Luke put that there? At this table, around this meal?

Well I think it's because of this. I think Simon Peter is going to be the new leader of the community. Jesus has already appointed him if you like as the chief apostle. He's going to become the new leader of that community.

And leadership in the church is not the same as leadership in the world. And Jesus doesn't choose Simon Peter to lead his church because he's strong and powerful and bold and beautiful and rich and influential.

He's as weak as water. He's weak. In my kingdom, who are the leaders? Says Jesus. What are they like?

They're people like Peter who repent. There are people like Peter who are conscious most of their weakness and their failing and their utter need of divine grace and that is the community of the cross.

[ 20 : 54 ] And it's brought into being in the upper room around the Lord's table. Do you remember what Jesus said as he took the cup? He said this is the new covenant.

Just as in the Old Testament when God brought the Israelites out of Egypt on that Passover night when God brought the Hebrews out of Egypt what did he do? He brought them to Mount Sinai where the Ten Commandments were given and God entered into a formal relationship with Israel. Mount Sinai is like the giving of the constitution to Israel. Before they were a bunch of slaves who had been ransomed from Egypt and God gathered them together at the foot of Mount Sinai and he said he entered into a covenant with them and said from now on you are a holy nation.

You are my treasured possession. You are my chosen people. And that was the old covenant with Israel. Israel. And now Jesus in this upper room gathers this rag tag and bob tail group of followers. People like Simon Peter who is not a strong man at all. He gathers around him these people he takes the cup and he says now this is the new covenant in my blood shed for you shed for many.

[ 22 : 08 ] Peter picks up on his letter and he says once you were not a people but now you are the people of God and you are a holy nation and a royal priesthood and you are God's chosen people so there is a conspiracy isn't there?

Satan Judas chief priest Pontius Pilate and unbeknown to them they are doing God's perfect way and they are fulfilling the scriptures that's not to excuse them they are not pawns in a chess scheme it was unfortunate wasn't it on that great evening we had Richard Borgen on it talking about John's gospel he kept referring himself to I'm just a pawn in God's game I wanted to shout to him but you're not you're not you're not pawn the bible never ever talks about human beings that way and we must never do that they're responsible for their actions and yet through God God is conspiring with them to save the world and yes there's a bloodline it's a society but it's not a secret society it's a community but it's not a secret community it's not the priory of Zion to the physical descendants of Jesus no it's to the church the new covenant community it's those who've been redeemed by the blood of the lamb and that leads me to the last thing there's symbolism here isn't there symbolism you don't have to make it up because it's here you don't have to write a novel about it because it's here and there is real suspense and there is real mystery here at the last supper and there is profound symbolism

Jesus took bread and he took a cup he said this is my body this is my blood the bread and wine are symbols they are powerful symbols I don't know if you've ever been to an auction you've done that but you need to know if you go to an auction there are pre-arranged gestures aren't there at an auction the raising of an eyebrow the scratching of your nose then you might find yourself going home with a heap of junk right you do it or going home with something more than you bargained for because if the auctioneer sees your sign your pre-arranged signal he will accept your bid and the

hammer will come down and wonder going going gone to the man with the nervous twitch at the back and you become the proud owner of something that you didn't really want your signal in that auction in that context binds you to pay the price do you understand that?  
and so here we are the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread and took wine that is exactly what Jesus is doing he is not saying hey Presco this bread has now become my physical body that is nonsense it is superstitious nonsense it is still bread it is still wine they are powerful powerful symbols they are tokens of what Christ is about to do this is the night he was betrayed this is the day before he went to the cross and Jesus takes the bread and the wine this is my body broken for you and this is my blood poured out for you do you see Jesus is symbolically laying down his life there as he pours the wine into the cup he is pouring out his life in the upper room and what the bread and wine symbolise

Jesus is going to actualise the next day and that becomes even more powerful when you realise what is missing from the table what is missing from the table it is the Passover meal all four Gospels draw attention to this and again it is so obvious that you and I miss it what is missing from the Passover table the lamb by its absence it is conspicuous isn't it there is no lamb so imagine you come to my house for Christmas day and I say we are going to have a great Christmas lunch a traditional Christmas lunch and you arrive and there is no turkey it is unthinkable but what about Passover without a lamb the truth is this there is no lamb that is on the table because the lamb of God is at the table this is my body this is my blood he says why does Jesus have to die why does there have to be a lamb why does there have to be a sacrifice well think about it is it possible to forgive without suffering is it possible to forgive without suffering so imagine you have been hurt some of you have been you have been harmed in some way somebody has really wronged you somebody has betrayed you there is only two things you can do you can be hurt and you can retaliate you can resent that person who has wronged you and what they have done to you and if you do that you suffer don't you you lose you allow that person to hurt you over and over and over again and the evil that has been done to you actually enters into you and it leads away at you and you lose evil times before you can choose to forgive sounds so easy doesn't it but it's far easier to say than done isn't it to forgive we all know that so somebody has said that the currency of words is not the currency of forgiveness it's quite helpful the currency of words is not the currency of forgiveness actions are and if you've been hurt really hurt to forgive that person it's a costly thing isn't it you can choose to forgive you can choose to allow the good to overcome the evil but you still suffer in doing that because it's not it's not as easy as it just to say

[ 28 : 54 ] I forgive you and if it's like that for us how hard it is for us to forgive and we say well why doesn't God just forgive why does he need to send Jesus his son whom he loved into the world to die why does there need to be a sacrifice why does Jesus need to eat if I can put it in Passover terms why does Jesus need to eat the bread of suffering drink the cup of God's wrath why does he say I really I have really eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer why does he have to suffer at all why can't it just be a little sacrament why can't it just be an object lesson in bread and wine why does he have to go through with it because the currency of forgiveness is actions not words and actions speak louder than words

Jesus is Passover lamb that is how he sees himself and that is why there is all this cloak and dagger stuff at the beginning remember what he says in John's gospel he says no one takes my life from me I have the power to lay it down and the power to take it up again but no one can take it from me and that's the unique thing about the Lord Jesus isn't it for us in the end death will lay hold of you it will death will lay hold of you one way or another but Jesus lays hold of death in the upper room and that is what he's doing in the upper room Judas chief priest it's not your timetable no one takes my life I unlike any other human being I have the authority to lay down my life and I have the authority to take it up again and of course that's what he does isn't it one of the Puritans talks about a warrior with a sword here's the sword here's the sword and the warrior goes into fight with his sword in his scabbard doesn't he he runs with his sword in the scabbard and as he comes near into conflict what does he do he pulls the sword out of his scabbard and after he finishes after he puts the person to death he puts the sword back in the scabbard and the illustration is this it's a brilliant illustration the sword and the scabbard are united in the person of this warrior and Jesus goes to the cross like that what is death death is a separation of soul and body Jesus says no one can take my life from me I have the authority to lay it down and that is what he does he goes into the cross and he draws the sword from the scabbard he separates body and

soul for three days he holds his body and soul separate and on the third day he puts the sword back on the scabbard and he rises from the dead and he says

I have fervently desired to eat this Passover with you because I want you to understand what my suffering is about and do you notice this the writer of the Hebrew says it was for the joy that was set before him he did the cross and now he's going to the cross and it is going to be traumatic for his disciples and even though he's trying to warn them again and again isn't it even though in the upper room he is explaining to them what he's doing that he is the Passover lamb you should be glad about this because when the angel of death passes over he will see the blood not daubed on a wooden doorpost but on the cross and you find that when the angel of death passes over us he sees you and me and our lives and the way we have treated God and treated one another and he will pass over because of the blood of the lamb and Jesus is preparing for them for that do you notice what he says he not only talks about this being fulfilled in his death the next day but look verse 15 he said to them

I earnestly desire to eat this Passover with you before I suffer for I tell you that I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God and then verse 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 he's pointing them beyond what is going to happen in the next 24 hours and he's setting before his disciples that joy that joy of the coming kingdom and he's really saying listen boys I can't wait I cannot wait until all the ransomed church of God are saved to sin no more he can't wait and who is he talking to have you thought about that it's not so now so now is it what God has who are these people they are not heroes are they they are deserters they would have been shot if they had been in the army Peter denied him three times all the other disciples ran away when he was crucified and he says

[ 34 : 35 ] I eagerly desire to eat this Passover with you you treaters you betrayers who hasn't betrayed the Lord here who hasn't let him down we are here tonight at this table and I have let him down so often and so badly but we don't follow King Arthur do we this isn't the round table and this is the table of the Lord Jesus Christ and we follow King Jesus and this table tonight is not for heroes because there's none here it is for sinners it's not for Sir Lancelot and Galahad it's for Peter and James and John and Sarah and Terry and Mark and Betty and Jean

Claude that's who it's for and so I invite you to the table this table does not belong to me it doesn't belong to this church it's the Lord's table for the Lord's people and if you know that you are a sinner you are a sinner who needs saving then come to the table and eat of the bread and drink of the wine and Jesus wants you to know tonight how eagerly he desires to sit down with you in the kingdom of heaven he cannot wait and have fellowship with you for all eternity so much so that he went to the cross for that time let's see