

Commentary on Luke Part 13

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In this section of the commentary of Luke, Luke deals with the last Passover, the establishment of the Lord's Supper, warnings about Judas' betrayal and Peter's denial, and the dangers that lay ahead.

SECTION 8.

Jesus Is Crucified And Rises Again (22.1-24.53).

We now come to the final Section of Luke which is also in the form of a chiasmus (see analysis below). Central in this final chiasmus is the crucifixion of Jesus. This brings out how central the crucifixion is in the thinking of Luke. As the Servant of the Lord He is to be numbered among the transgressors for their sakes (22.37). This is indeed what the Gospel has been leading up to, something that is further demonstrated by the space given to Jesus' final hours. He has come to give His life in order to redeem men (21.28; 22.20; 24.46-47; Acts 20.28; Mark 10.45), after which He will rise again, with the result that His disciples are to receive power from on high (24.49) ready for their future work of spreading the word, so that through His death repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem (24.46-47). Note especially how closely the forgiveness of sins is connected with His suffering, death and resurrection. This belies the argument that Luke does not teach atonement, for without atonement there can be no forgiveness, and why else is it so closely connected with His suffering and death?

But another emphasis raises its head here. Right from the commencement of Jesus' ministry Satan, the hidden but powerful cosmic adversary, had sought to destroy His ministry (4.1-13), and having failed in that he will now seek to destroy both Jesus Himself, and the band of twelve whom He has gathered around Him. Luke wants us to see that there are more than earthly considerations in view. To him this is a cosmic battle.

This final section may be analysed as follows:

- a Satan enters into Jesus' betrayer who plots His betrayal in return for silver (22.1-6).
- b Jesus feasts with His disciples (22.7-22).
- c They discuss who is the greatest, but learn that they are rather to be servants, for which reason they will sit at His table with responsibility for His people (22.23-28).
- d Jesus comes to the Garden of Gethsemane where He shuns what He has to face but submits to His Father's will. In contrast Peter is revealed to be empty and as lacking the power that will later come in fulfilment of Christ's words (22.29-62).
- e Jesus is exposed to the mockery of the soldiers and the verdicts of the chief priests and then of Pilate and Herod (22.63-23.25).
- f Jesus is crucified (as the King of the Jews, the Messiah) and judgement is forecast on Jerusalem (23.26-33).
- e Jesus is exposed to the mockery of the chief priests (the rulers) and to the verdicts of the two thieves and the Roman centurion (23.34-49).
- d Jesus is brought to the Garden where He is buried, but defeats death, the tomb when opened proving to be empty in fulfilment of Christ's words (23.50-24.10).
- c The risen Jesus sits at table with two of His disciples a prelude to their future (24.11-35).
- b The risen Jesus feasts with His disciples (24.36-47).
- a God's Power will enter into His faithful disciples and they are to be His witnesses to His glory and triumph (in contrast with Satan entering His betrayer who sought His

downfall) (24.48-53).

- ‘And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the Temple, blessing God’ (24.53).

Note how in ‘a’ Satan enters into Judas to empower him to betray Jesus, and in the parallel the Holy Spirit will enter the other Apostles to empower them to be witnesses to Jesus. Judas is His betrayer, the others are His witness. In ‘b’ Jesus feasts with His disciples before He dies and shows them the bread and the wine, in the parallel He feasts with His disciples after the resurrection and shows them His hands and His feet. In ‘c’ they are to sit at His table, and in the parable two of His disciples sit with Him at table, symbolic of their future. In ‘d’ Jesus enters a Garden which will lead to His death, in the parallel He is brought into a Garden which will lead to His resurrection. In ‘e’ Jesus is exposed to the verdicts of the chief priests and rulers, and in the parallel He is exposed to the mockery of the chief priests and the thieves. But central to all in ‘f’ is His crucifixion as King of the Jews and Messiah.

The drama is in three stages:

- The time of preparation of His disciples for the future before His trial and crucifixion.
- The trial and crucifixion itself.
- The resurrection and preparation for the sending forth of His disciples to all nations.

This will be followed in Acts by a description of this outreach until it reached Rome itself. We would surely therefore expect that in this first part His words will include words of preparation for that future. That should be kept in mind in all our interpretation.

The Judas’ Plot (21.37-22.6).

As far as Luke is concerned the first stage in Jesus’ final hours is the entry of Satan into Judas Iscariot, the Apostle. ‘Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve.’ These words bring a chill to the heart. How has Satan managed to find a foothold in such sacred territory, into the very heart of Jesus’ work, among ‘the Twelve’? And the simple answer is Mammon. For when it came down to the final analysis, eleven of them loved Jesus with all their hearts, and one loved Mammon more than he loved Jesus. As Jesus has already made clear Mammon kept many men from Jesus (12.13; 16.19; 18.23). It even bore heavy responsibility with regard to the failure of the Pharisees (16.14). And now it was penetrating into the very inner circle of Jesus’ followers. Eleven could say, ‘silver and gold have I none, but what I have I give you ---’ (Acts 3.6). But Judas cast all that aside and went to the chief priests with his hands wide open, seeking silver and gold. And thereby he lost all that he had.

So Judas, moved by Satan who had entered into him, plotted to betray Jesus in return for money. Like the Pharisees (16.14; 20.47), and unlike the poor widow who had given her all to God (21.1-4), he had chosen Mammon rather than God. The constant teaching of Jesus on the subject had somehow passed him by. The glitter of silver was too much for him.

Disillusionment may have made him decide to cease being a disciple, but it was silver that made him betray Him.

It was a necessary lesson for the young church to learn, that they must ever be on the watch lest Satan be granted a foothold in this way. And Mammon would, in fact, be the means by which in the Middle Ages the whole church was nearly destroyed. It took a Reformation that shook the world to deliver it from itself. In the same way many a person’s faith and usefulness today is destroyed by Mammon.

Analysis of 21.37-22.6.

- a Every day He was teaching in the temple, and every night He went out, and lodged in the mount that is called Olivet, and all the people came early in the morning to Him in the temple, to hear Him (21.37-38).

- **b** Now the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover, and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might put Him to death, for they feared the people (22.1-2).
- **c** And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve (22.3).
- **b** And he went away, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might deliver Him to them, and they were glad, and covenanted to give him money (22.4-5).
- **a** And he consented, and sought opportunity to deliver Him to them in the absence of the crowd (22.6).

Note that in 'a' Jesus is constantly surrounded by the crowd from early morning to night, and in the parallel Judas promises to deliver Him to His enemies in a place where there is no crowd. In 'b' the Jewish leaders were seeking ways to put Jesus to death, but were afraid of the people, and in the parallel Judas communes with the Jewish leaders as to how to hand Him over at a time when the people will not know. Centrally in 'c' we have described the presence and activity of Satan who is the mastermind behind it all.

21.37-38 'And every day he was teaching in the temple, and every night he went out, and lodged in the mount that is called Olivet, and all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, to hear him.'

Some see these as the closing words of the preceding section, but the chiasmus seems to suggest that they are the opening words to this final section, although they are certainly also to be seen as an intermediate link. However, equally certainly they are preparing the way for 22.39 and they explain the background to 22.1.

The words reveal that the popularity of Jesus continued and that the crowds continued to flock to hear Him. This was why the Jewish authorities felt so powerless and could do nothing against Him. Apart from when He and His disciples had disappeared into the night He was always accompanied by great crowds, and there is little doubt that in the intensity of the festal atmosphere they would have reacted against any attempt to arrest Him. For the leaders were not popular with the people, whereas Jesus decidedly was. And at Passover time religious feeling was at its height. This then explains why He was able daily to appear in the Temple and teach there, while the authorities had to stand by and watch in frustration. But even while they watched their hatred and their determination were growing. The more works of God that He did, and the more people who responded, the more determined were they to be rid of Him. Reason had gone out of the window. He had become a threat, and His influence was too great. They felt that He was undermining their authority, and all that they lived for. And so they had determined that He must go.

'Every night He went out, and lodged in the mount that is called Olivet.' Bethany was on the slopes of the Mount of Olives (19.29), and He may therefore have lodged there. But it is equally possible that He camped out nightly with His disciples in the open air, not far from the Garden of Gethsemane, which was also on the Mount of olives, although often visiting His friends in Bethany for meals. See Mark 11.11; Matthew 21.17 which certainly indicate a connection with Bethany. Thus wherever He camped was clearly within the reasonable vicinity of Bethany.

22.1-2 'Now the feast of unleavened bread drew near, which is called the Passover, and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might put him to death, for they feared the people.'

Day by day the Passover or Feast of Unleavened Bread (the two feasts were seen as one and could be called by either name, as we also discover from Josephus, compare also Matthew 26.17) drew nearer, and day by day the Chief Priests and Scribes sought ways of getting rid of Him. Note how it is emphasised that it was those who had special religious interests, and who

were in direct conflict with each other, who were seeking to get rid of Him. They were each out to defend their own interests, but common interest had brought them together. On the other hand, they were afraid of the people. The situation was very tricky. Emotions, which were always high in Galilee and Judea, were at this time especially high, and any suggestion of the possibility of a disturbance had to be avoided. That would only bring the Roman authorities down on them, and they would be blamed for it. And then something happened that altered the whole picture. It must have seemed to them like a gift from Heaven, although as Luke makes clear, it was in fact a gift from Hell.

‘The chief priests and the scribes sought how they might put Him to death.’ We must assume here that an official decision had been reached. Jesus was now seen as a false prophet and must die. The only question therefore was how to bring it about without causing a riot. Yet their dishonesty comes out in that they wanted to put all the blame on Pilate, and avoid an execution for blasphemy, the very charge that they held against Him. For they knew how the people felt about the death of John the Baptist, and they did not want any reaction against themselves. They wanted Pilate to take any backlash.

‘The people.’ This would be mainly the huge numbers of Galileans and Peraeans who were present at the Feast, among whom He was exceedingly popular and highly revered. And they would no doubt also include some Judeans and Jerusalemites who had witnessed His ministry.

‘The Passover.’ Elaborate preparations were always made for this feast so as to ensure the arrival of travellers in a fit religious state for it. Roads would be repaired, bridges made safe, and tombs whitewashed (so that they could be avoided, thus preventing religious defilement). Teaching about the Passover would be given in the synagogues from up to a month beforehand, and every male Jew within fifteen miles of Jerusalem who was thirteen years old or upwards would be required to attend. But many would flock from farther afield, and it was the ambition, even of those in the Dispersion, scattered around the world, to attend at least once in their lifetime. And, as a time when all Israel was gathered, it was a time for exposing false prophets (compare Deuteronomy 17.13). So this was not just any occasion. It was central in the nation’s life. Here at this time ‘the congregation of Israel’ was gathered together.

22.3 ‘And Satan entered into Judas who was called Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve,

But in the camp of Jesus there was treachery afoot. It was actively caused by Satan (compare John 13.2, 27). For Satan entered one of His disciples, who was called Judas Iscariot, one of the favoured Twelve (compare 6.16). Outwardly his thoughts of treachery were possibly stirred because he was approached by adherents of the authorities, who probably similarly sounded out all the Apostles with a view to offering bribery. But Luke lets us know that the real reason for his treachery was that Satan had been allowed to enter his heart. In the section chiasmus outlined above this is placed in contrasting parallel with the Holy Spirit Who will later come in power on the other Apostles. Judas had to choose between two ‘spirits’ and he opted foolishly because his eyes were blinded by the thought of wealth, by ‘the deceitfulness of riches’ (Mark 4.19). While the others were learning about the coming of the Holy Spirit, He was opening himself to the spirit of Satan, and the key that was being used was Mammon. How powerful a grip Mammon has on the hearts of men.

For ‘Satan’ see 10.18; 11.18; 13.16; 22.31. He was a powerful evil spirit, a spiritual outcast, who had fallen from Heaven (10.18). He was in direct opposition to Jesus (11.18, 22). He bound unfortunate men and women by possessing and enslaving them (13.16). He sought to put men and women to the test so as to prove their fallibility (22.31). In Acts he would fill the heart of Ananias with greed as he had Judas (Acts 5.3), and he was the one who held the world in his power (Acts 26.18), mainly by the same means. Luke also speaks of him as ‘the Devil’ (4.2-13; 8.12), in which guise he put Jesus to the test (4.2-13) and seeks to remove the word that is sown in men’s hearts (8.12). In Acts the Devil oppresses men by possession (Acts 10.38)

and is the source of magic and sorcery, the father of all who do evil and try to turn men from the truth (Acts 13.10). What he is, is indicated by his name. Satan means ‘adversary’, and reminds us that he is both God’s adversary and ours. His main purpose under this title is to thwart God and act against men and women. ‘Devil’ (diabolos) means ‘slanderer’, which connects him with the temptation of men with the aim of being able to slander them before God, and he attempts to remove God’s influence from men’s hearts. But the two ideas overlap. Satan is the great adversary and slanderer. For the further idea of Satanic influence in men’s hearts see John 14.30; 1 Corinthians 2.8; 2 Corinthians 4.4; 1 John 5.19.

There is an interesting indication here that Satan thought that by this man’s action he could somehow thwart God’s plans through Jesus, plans which he clearly did not understand (see 1 Corinthians 2.8). The thought of such love as God was revealing would have been beyond him. He was as frightened as the chief priests and scribes at the success of Jesus. And it is ironic that, like them (Acts 3.17; 4.28), unknown to himself, he was thus actually spurring on God’s plan. He was simply speeding Jesus on to the very place where he himself would be defeated. But he was clearly unaware of that fact. He foolishly thought that he could thwart God’s plans.

Some ask why God allows Satan such sway? As well ask why He allows us such sway. For in our own way, once we are in rebellion against God we are ourselves little satans (adversaries). What right then has one to survive above another? But He allows it all in His own purposes that He might triumph in the hearts of those who respond to Him and are saved, who would otherwise have had to be destroyed along with the rest, and so that He can lead them to triumph through afflictions. It is of His goodness that He has allowed the world and the Devil to continue, so that by all means He may save some from among them.

22.4-5 ‘And he went away, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might deliver him to them, and they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.’

No doubt responding to promises and assurances from those who had contacted him, Judas sought out the chief priests and captains of the Temple guard. And there, in return for the offer of money, he discussed with them how he might assist them in handing Jesus over to them at a time when He was not surrounded by crowds. His own familiar friend in whom He trusted, the same was lifting up his heel against Him (Psalm 41.9). They were, of course, delighted. It presented them with an undreamed of opportunity. And they promised to pay him blood money once the matter was resolved.

‘Captains (strategoīs).’ In this case the leaders of the Temple guard. They would mainly be Levites. Compare Acts 4.1; 5.24 for their leader (strategos).

22.6 ‘And he consented, and sought opportunity to deliver him to them in the absence of the crowd.’

Judas accepted their terms, and from that moment on looked for an opportunity to deliver Jesus to the authorities when the crowds were absent. It was clear that it would have to be at night, for during the daytime Jesus was constantly surrounded by people who had come to hear Him and who revered Him. Judas is a pathetic figure, but before we sympathise with him too much we have to consider how hardened his heart must have become, in order for him to be able to go through all the experiences of the Upper Room, including Jesus’ gentle words to him, and still carry through his plan. For while Satan could prompt him and urge him, he could not force him to do what he did. Judas was still finally free to do his own thing. And he hardened his heart and did it of his own free choice.

There can be no doubt that the choice of Judas as one of the twelve and his subsequent betrayal of Jesus presents a problem to our human understanding. But it is really no greater problem than that of the idea of God’s sovereignty and free will. No man who wants to respond to Christ will ever be rejected, and yet, in spite of His attractiveness, the Bible tells us

that only those who are chosen come to Him. No one will ever be able to say, 'I wanted to come to Christ but He would not accept Me', for 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'. And yet those who will be saved have been chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1.4) and have their names permanently recorded in the Lamb's book of life from the foundation of the world. Their names are written in Heaven (Revelation 13.8. 21.27). By this we recognise that God's sovereignty and man's freewill move in parallel. God does not make history happen, but He makes it go according to His will. The cruelties of man are not God's doing. But He utilises them in His purposes, as He did with both Sennacherib and Nebuchadnezzar, and as He does with all evil men.

Jesus did not choose the eager young Judas in order that he might be there as the betrayer. He chose one who was insistent on being a disciple, and who revealed his good qualities. One who showed especial determination. He chose him that he might serve like the others, and enjoy the same privileges. But gradually He began to realise that there was a lack in Judas' character, so that He was forced to declare, 'Have I not chosen you, twelve, and one of you is a devil?' (John 6.70). Yet He would not cast him off. He would give him the full opportunity to prove Him wrong. Judas would never be able to say, 'You did not give me my chance.'

What was it that Jesus saw in Judas that made Him in the end realise what Judas was? Perhaps it was his love for money. He gave Judas plenty of warning about that. Possibly it was because, unlike the others, he did not respond to Jesus' moulding. Perhaps he continued in what would one day be called the way of Zealotry, and insisted in his own heart on a military solution to the problems of Jewry and somehow hoped that, once His enemies faced up to Him, Jesus could be stirred up to go along with it, and use His powers to that end. But Jesus gave much teaching concerning this as well. Judas thus really had no excuse for being in doubt on how things were, and it should be remembered that it was always open to him to withdraw, as other had done (John 6.66). Indeed the moment that he realised that he was out of step with Jesus, that is what he should have done, and no one would have blamed him. His crime was that he continued pretending to be a disciple when at length he knew that Jesus and he could never see eye to eye, to such an extent that he was willing to be a betrayer. He made all his choices himself, and broke every rule of honour of his background, for he ate at table with Jesus and pretended to be His friend, while plotting against Him. This would be a heinous crime in the eyes of every Easterner. Jesus was not to blame for this. He merely graciously put up with him even when He knew that his character was doubtful and was aware of what he might do. Indeed He appealed to him to the last. And yet in it all it was God's will that was done and His purposes that were accomplished. And it must be remembered in it all that Judas did not have the last word. For Jesus did not go helplessly to the cross. At every step that He took, twelve legions of angels waited in order to snatch Him to safety (Matthew 26.53). They waited eagerly and only needed His signal. But it never came. And so it was Jesus Who made the final choice to die alone, as He cried, 'Your will, not Mine be done'.

Jesus Advances To The Guest-chamber (22.7-38).

It is no coincidence that near the beginning of Luke's Gospel there was no room for Jesus in the 'kataluma' (2.7 - place to stay, guestchamber), but now that He is to be offered up, such a room (kataluma) is to be made available for Him (verses 11-12 below). He is advancing, from the manger to the cross. He is coming towards the fulfilment of His lifework, and in this guestchamber He will participate in His last Passover which will be for ever the symbol of His death, and will prepare His disciples for what lay ahead.

It was now 14th of Nisan, the day of the sacrifice of the Passover lamb, and Peter and John were to prepare for the Passover, which would require the provision of bread and bitter herbs, of suitable wine and the necessary slaughter of the lamb in the Temple, which would then be brought to the kataluma to be roasted and eaten. Most of these provisions would possibly in

this case be provided by the room owner who would receive the fleece and vessels used at the Feast as ‘payment’ for his kindness for allowing the use of the room for the feast. It would not be seen as appropriate for the room to be paid for when it was being used for such a sacred purpose. Rent could not be charged for such usage in Jerusalem during the Passover. But whatever service he performed the slaying of the Passover lamb had to be carried out ‘personally’ on behalf of the group on whose behalf it was offered, which was why the two leading Apostles were called on to do it.

Some see here a conflict with John’s Gospel, which they claim teaches that this meal did not occur on Passover eve, but on the previous evening. But that is due to their misinterpretation of certain language of John which is ambiguous. Once his language is understood John in fact also teaches that the last supper was the Passover meal. We shall now consider this in an Excursus for those who are concerned about it.

- **EXCURSUS.**

The Passover - Was the Last Supper the Passover Meal?

The Passover was the great Jewish festival which commemorated the slaying of the firstborn in Egypt, and the following exodus from Egypt of the Israelites (Exodus 12.24-27), together with those who joined themselves with them (the ‘mixed multitude’) and became Israelite by adoption (Exodus 12.38). The passover lambs/kids were slain on the afternoon of the 14th Nisan (roughly March/April), after the daily sacrifice, which was normally offered in mid-afternoon. But by the time of Jesus this offering was put back towards noon on the day of the Passover in order to leave time for the slaying of the passover lambs, which had to be slain in the Temple area in great numbers. The Passover meal was eaten in the evening (the commencement of 15th Nisan, for the Jewish day began at sunset). There was a specific pattern followed at the meal, although variations within that pattern were allowed. The celebration of the Passover was connected with the seven day feast of Unleavened Bread which by this time was so closely linked with the Passover that the whole eight days of the feast could be called either The Passover (Luke 22.1) or Unleavened Bread (Mark 14.12). This specific link with the Passover, which was there from earliest times, is confirmed by Josephus, the Jewish first century AD historian.

It was celebrated in Jerusalem in smallish groups (ten males or more) in individual houses within the city bounds, each group having a lamb. (Bethphage was one of the places that marked the outer limit). The lambs were slain within the Temple area, which confirms that they were sacrificial offerings. Movement during the evening was restricted to a limited area, although Gethsemane came within that area. Jews living within a reasonable distance were expected to gather in Jerusalem for the feast, and even those who lived far afield among the Gentiles (the Dispersion) made great efforts to attend. Thus Jerusalem might contain around 200,000 or more people at Passover time (Josephus’ estimate of 3,000,000 is almost certainly exaggerated. It would not have been possible to sacrifice sufficient lambs to meet his figures within the restricted Temple area in such a short time).

The Passover meal would begin with the ritual search by lamplight for any leavened bread which may have been overlooked (leaven was forbidden at the feast) and the Passover meal would then be eaten reclining. It included the symbolic elements of roasted lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, some other condiments and four cups of red wine mixed with water, each coming at specific points. The first cup was drunk with a blessing (Luke 22.17 probably refers to this cup, although some refer Luke’s reference to the second cup), followed by the washing of hands by dipping in water. Some of the herbs would then be dipped in salt water and given out. After this the eating surface would be cleared, and the second cup would be filled. This too would be

blessed.

Before the drinking of the second cup the story of the original Passover was recounted in a dialogue between father and eldest son (or if necessary suitable substitutes). At this stage the Passover meal would be brought back to the table and each of its constituents explained. It is quite possible that one question would be (as it was later) 'what means this bread?' The reply was 'this is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate when they were delivered from the land of Egypt'.

After these explanations the second cup would be drunk, accompanied by the singing of part of the Hallel (special Psalms), and then there would be a further dipping of the hands in water. After this came the breaking of one or two of the unleavened cakes, which was *followed* by the giving of thanks. Pieces of the broken bread with bitter herbs between them were dipped in a mixture and handed to each of the company (see John 13.26), and it would appear that then the company would themselves dip bread and herbs into the mixture (Matthew 26.23; Mark 14.20). This was the real beginning of the actual Passover meal. The Passover lamb would now be eaten. Nothing was to be eaten thereafter, although in later times the eating of a final piece of unleavened bread followed. After a third dipping of hands in water the third cup was drunk, again accompanied by a blessing. This cup was considered of special importance. The singing of the Hallel was completed with the fourth cup (see Matthew 26.30; Mark 14.26), and this was followed by prayer. It must be remembered that this was a feast and not a service so that eating and general conversation would be taking place throughout, except at the solemn moments.

It is quite clear that the first three Gospels (the Synoptic Gospels) show the Last Supper of Jesus to be the Passover meal. Jesus sent two of His disciples (Peter and John - Luke 22.8) to 'prepare the Passover' (the lamb, the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, the wine, etc), so that He could 'eat the Passover with His disciples' (Mark 14.12-15 and parallels). It was probably one of these who went to the Temple area with the lamb for slaying. The room was 'furnished and ready' which may mean that the owner had provided what was necessary. We are told that they ate the meal reclining (Matthew 26.20; John 13.23) as would be expected at the Passover meal.

It is possible that the breaking of bread by Jesus 'after He had given thanks' was the same as the breaking of bread at the feast but if so it is noticeable that Jesus gave thanks beforehand because He was enduing it with a new meaning. It could, however, have been that Jesus introduced a second breaking of bread, establishing a new pattern with a new significance. 'This is my body' parallels 'this is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate'. In the latter case it was clearly symbolic, a partaking with the fathers, as it were, in their affliction, but with a real sense of participation. Thus the former is also to be seen as symbolic, a partaking with Jesus, as it were, in His sufferings and their consequence, again with a real sense of participation. The wine which Paul calls the 'cup of blessing' (1 Corinthians 10.16), was probably the third cup given a new significance.

Some have argued that it could not have been the Passover meal. They have argued:

- 1). A trial would not have been held on Passover night.
- 2). The disciples would not have borne arms on that night.
- 3). Simon of Cyrene would not have been 'coming in from the country' the following morning.
- 4). Some Synoptic passages are inconsistent with it e.g. Mark 14.2

However these arguments are not convincing, because 1) Passover time, while the pilgrims were still in the city, might be considered precisely the time when a 'false prophet' should be executed in order that 'all Israel might hear and fear'

(Deuteronomy 17.13). It would be seen as a sacred duty to do it at such a time, and to contribute to the feast, which may well have been why the opposition had hotted up. And as far as they were concerned it was also the best time for involving the secular authorities with their Roman soldiery so as to cover themselves in the eyes of the people, for at Passover extra soldiers were in attendance in Jerusalem. Furthermore the whole affair was to be carried out in haste because Judas' information made it possible for it to be done secretly while Jesus was there available. They had been seeking such an opportunity for some time, and dared not miss it.

2) Mark 14.2 merely expresses the plan of the authorities. Like all plans it was subject to change if circumstances demanded. All good plans are subject to alteration due to circumstances. Mark may simply have been bringing out that in the end they were powerless to do it in the way that they wanted. Furthermore some suggest translating 'feast' as 'festal crowd' rather than 'feast day' which is quite possible, which then removes the supposed problem altogether.

3) There was no prohibition of arms being carried at the Passover.

4) 'Coming in from the country' need not necessarily indicate that Simon had been outside the prescribed limits, and indeed he may not have been a Jew. Besides it would always be possible that he had been delayed by some cause beyond his control so that he had arrived late for the Passover, which could be why it was mentioned

But this immediately faces us with a further problem. It is argued that John 18.28 ('so that they might not be defiled but might eat the Passover') seems to suggest that Jesus died at the same time as the Passover sacrifice because his enemies had not yet eaten the Passover. That would mean that the scene in John 13 occurred on the night before the Passover feast. Yet as we have seen the other Gospels make clear that Jesus officiates at the Passover feast (Mark 14.12; Luke 22.7), and there can be no doubt that both are depicting the same feast.

However what must be borne in mind here is that John 18.28 may be speaking of 'the Passover', not as meaning the Passover feast itself on the evening of the 15th of Nisan, but in a general sense as including the whole seven day feast (compare 2.23 where 'the feast of the Passover' is clearly the seven days of the feast and Luke's use in 22.1), so that 'eating the Passover' may refer to celebrating the whole eight days, and to participating in other special sacrifices, as well as to the continual feasting during the week (unleavened bread had to be eaten throughout the week and there would be thank-offerings as well). It may well therefore not refer to the actual Passover celebration, in which case there is no contradiction. They would need to be ritually pure in order to continue enjoying the remainder of the feast.

We can compare with this how in 2 Chronicles 30.22 the keeping of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread (verse 13), which includes the Passover (verse 15), is described as 'eating the food of the festival for seven days'.

Against this, however we should note that 'to eat the Passover' does at least include eating the Passover supper in the Synoptics (Matthew 26.17; Mark 14.12, 14; Luke 22.8, 11, 15). However, that does not necessarily tie the escorts of Jesus to using it in the same way after the Passover supper has passed.

Alternately it has been suggested that in fact the men involved had been so taken up with the pursuit of Jesus into the night as a result of Judas' unexpected offer to lead them to Jesus in a place where he could be taken without fear of the people, that they had not yet had time to complete their Passover meal. We only have to consider the facts of that night to recognised how involved their night had been! They may well have been disturbed in the middle of their Passover meal and have convinced themselves

that such a delay was justified in order to deal with Jesus at what was clearly a crucial moment. The false prophet had to be dealt with. Once they had dealt with Him they could then go home to finish eating their Passover, which had been suddenly delayed for reasons of state and religion, with contented minds. Thus they would need to retain their ritual purity both for that day and for the remainder of the week.

In the same way John's reference to 'the preparation of the Passover' or 'the Friday of the Passover' (paraskeue tou pascha can mean either) (19.14) can equally be seen as referring to the 'preparation' for the weekly Sabbath occurring during Passover week, i.e. the Friday of Passover week at whichever point it occurred, as it certainly does in verse 19.31. This would mean that it did not necessarily refer to the day of the preparation of the Passover feast itself. Basically the word paraskeue did mean 'Friday' as well as 'preparation' (as in Greek it still does) and the term Passover (pascha) was used to describe the whole festival. If this be the case by 'the Friday of Passover week' John is not necessarily suggesting that Jesus died at the same time as the Passover lamb.

Another alternative answer works on the basis that not all Jews celebrated the Passover on the same day. We do know, for example, that the Essenes had their own calendar to which they rigidly adhered, and forbade their members to follow the orthodox calendar, and they would therefore celebrate the Passover on a different day from the priests. And there are some grounds for suggesting that Galileans, an independent lot who were looked on by Judeans as somewhat unorthodox, may well have celebrated the Passover a day earlier than Judeans. Thus it may be that Jesus and His disciples, who were Galileans, followed this Galilean tradition, if it existed, and celebrated the Passover a day earlier than the Judeans.

A further possibility that has been suggested is that in that particular year the Pharisees observed the Passover on a different day from the Sadducees, due to a dispute as to when the new moon had appeared that introduced Nisan, with arrangements being made for Passover sacrifices on both days. This is thought to have happened at least once around this time. If this were the case Jesus would have been able to observe the feast of the Passover with His disciples and then die at the same time as the Passover sacrifices.

The suggestion that John was either mistaken or changed the day for theological purposes is the least likely of any explanation. The early church was far too well aware of the fact that the Last Supper was 'the Passover feast' for such a change to be accepted. It would have become a firm part of the tradition, and John would no doubt have had this firmly pointed out to him by his 'backers' if they had thought that he was saying otherwise (21.24-25). We must not assume that the leaders of the early church were gullible and unwilling to speak their minds, even to John. Nor does John emphasise anywhere in his Gospel that Jesus died at the same time as the Passover lamb. Had this been his intention he would surely have drawn attention to it more specifically.

It thus seems clear that the suggestion of a contradiction between the Synoptics and John's Gospel in the end simply arises from a misunderstanding of Johannine terminology.

End of EXCURSUS.

Having examined the Passover problem in the excursus we will now return to the passage in hand. In this passage Jesus gives directions for the preparation of the Passover feast.

Analysis of 22.7-13.

- a The day of unleavened bread came, on which the passover must be sacrificed (7).
- b And He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make ready for us the passover, that we may eat (8).
- c And they said to Him, “Where will you that we make ready?” (9).
- d And He said to them, “Behold, when you are entered into the city, there a man will meet you bearing a pitcher of water, follow him into the house into which he goes” (10).
- c “And you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with My disciples?’” (11).
- b “And He will show you a large upper room furnished, there make ready” (12).
- a And they went, and found as He had said to them, and they made ready the passover (13).

Note how in ‘a’ the day came on which the Passover was to be sacrificed, and in the parallel they made ready the Passover. In ‘b’ they were to go and make ready, and in the parallel the room is described where they are to make ready. In ‘c’ they question Jesus as to where they are to make ready, and in the parallel they question the master of the house as to where they are to make ready. Centrally in ‘d’ they find the place by following a man carrying a pitcher of water.

This central placing brings out that this symbol is intended to be significant. Only women and the lowest of slaves carried pitchers of water. Thus they are to follow one who is represented as the lowest of slaves, but who is bearing the water of life. In the context of what Jesus is about to say (verses 26-27) the symbolism is clear. The One Who supplies living water (Isaiah 55.1-2) is also the humble Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 52.13-5.12). As a result of what Jesus will do, just as they follow this man, walking in humility and bearing water, so are they also to follow Jesus, both in humble service and in bearing the water of life. For there was a very real sense in which life would flow from that room where the new covenant was proclaimed (compare Ezekiel 47).

22.7 ‘And the day of unleavened bread came, on which the passover must be sacrificed.’

Note here how Passover can be called ‘the day of unleavened bread’ even though it is the day before ‘the Feast of Unleavened Bread’ began. This was because it was the day for removing unleavened bread from their houses. On this day they would ensure that any remaining leavened bread had been removed, so that the period of being free from leaven could begin. Luke is thus stressing the connection of the Feast with what is about to happen. The sinless Lamb of God Who had come to take away the sins of the world (John 1.29; 1 Corinthians 5.7) had come to be offered up. His hour had come.

22.8 ‘And he sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make ready for us the passover, that we may eat”.’

Two prominent Apostles were sent to ‘make ready the Passover’ as representatives of their group. As we have already seen the owner of the guestchamber would assist with some of the preparations, but the lamb itself had to be offered by a representative of the group in the Temple and then taken to the house to be cooked. The Passover lambs for all who were in Jerusalem would be offered in the Temple, in the afternoon. There were so many that it would be done in three sessions, which followed the afternoon daily offering which was deliberately made early on this day. The first two would be absolutely packed out. The two Apostles would thus be joining a large bustling crowd of men who were taking their Passover lambs for the purpose, or were seeking to purchase them in the court of the Gentiles. The lambs would need to be checked to ensure that they were without blemish. They would then be taken into the court of the Priests where each would slaughter his own lamb with the blood being caught in a bowl by a priest who would then pass it along to another priest who was standing there for the purpose, who would apply it to the altar. The whole process had been streamlined, but it would still take some time.

22.9 ‘And they said to him, “Where will you that we make ready?”’

Quite reasonably they asked Jesus where they must make ready. They would know that house space was difficult to obtain in Jerusalem at such a time. It is clear, however, that they were confident that Jesus would have it all in hand. He always had.

22.10 ‘And he said to them, “Behold, when you are entered into the city, there a man will meet you bearing a pitcher of water, follow him into the house into which he goes.” ’

It is also clear that Jesus lived up to their expectations. He told them that when they entered the city they would be met by a man bearing a pitcher of water. As observed above, this would be unusual. It was mostly women who bore pitchers of water. Men carried leather water skins. This was thus clearly a prearranged signal. They were then to follow him into the house which he would enter. It would appear that Jesus had made the preparations in such a way that He could give instructions without divulging the whereabouts of the house to someone who might overhear the instructions, like Judas, and without incriminating the houseowner if the Apostles were arrested on their way there. Until they arrived they did not know where the house was and the man with the pitcher would not be directly connected with them. We can imagine Judas’ frustration at being unable to discover the whereabouts of the house so that he could send the information to the chief priests.

But in view of the position of this verse in the chiasmus it is very probable that Luke intends us to see from this description an apt picture of discipleship. The one who led them symbolised Jesus bearing the water of life, Who would as a humble servant lead them to the Messianic feast, where they would feast on Him. Like the disciples we too are to follow the water-bearer Who offers life, and to eat and drink of Him (compare Isaiah 55.1-3; John 4.10-14.; 6.33, 35, 48-51, 53-58).

22.11 “And you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?’ ”

Once they arrived at the house they were to say to the owner, ‘The Teacher says to you, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?’ The title ‘Teacher’ is regularly used of Jesus, usually by ‘outsiders’, but here almost certainly by one who would be a disciple (as in 6.40; 21.7). They were then to ask him, in words probably already arranged with the owner, where the room was where they were to eat the Passover. We note how similar this is to when the ass was borrowed for the entry into Jerusalem. Jesus has everything under control.

22.12 “And he will show you a large upper room furnished, there make ready.”

This description would suggest that Jesus had already seen the room, and was satisfied as to its suitability. Once they arrived there they were to make all the necessary preparations for the Passover meal.

‘A large upper room.’ This would be built on top of the lower room and would be reached by steps from the outside.

‘Furnished.’ The word means ‘spread’, thus it refers to cushions or divans spread around ready for use for the meal.

22.13 ‘And they went, and found as he had said to them, and they made ready the passover.’

The account ends with the confirmation that they found all as Jesus had said, and that they obeyed Him to the letter. And that is how it always is for those who follow Him. All that He says He will do if we follow Him.

The Road To The Cross: Jesus Prepares For What Is To Happen And It Inevitably Happens (22.14-23.33).

We now come to a group of passages which form a remarkable sequence within the above sequence already described covering from 22.14-23.33. In them Jesus first prepares His disciples in some detail for what lies ahead and then all unfolds in fulfilment as what He has said is fulfilled. It is possible that this chiasmus is to be seen as the work of Luke's source which he has incorporated in his overall scheme for it is not part of the usual sequences and there is much non-Marcian material here. It is again in three stages.

- It begins with the hour having come and Jesus reclining at table with His disciples, preparing them for the night ahead, and drinking the cup of blessing.
- The night then unfolds in the fulfilling in detail of what He has revealed.
- It ends with Him being hustled around and drinking the cup of suffering.

It is thus in itself a unity as the analysis will demonstrate.

Analysis.

- a Jesus manifests the danger that lies before Him and the fact of His coming death, providing the symbol of what its significance will be for His disciples in the bread and the cup. They drink the cup of blessing (22.14-20).
- b Jesus reveals the hand of a betrayer at His own table (22.21-23).
- c The disciples are not to seek greatness, but the opportunity of humble service, a service which will be granted to them as they carry on His work, just as they have shared with Him in His trials (22.24-30).
- d Peter will deny Jesus, but through his experience will be strengthened to serve others (22.31-34).
- e Jesus makes clear the danger of the hour, it is a time for swords. But this need for swords is symbolic rather than real, for it is not through swords that triumph will come (22.35-38).
- f Jesus prays in Gethsemane that He might be spared the cup of suffering that He is being called on to drink (22.39-46).
- e The hour of danger approaches, and the disciples seek to defend Jesus with their swords, but fail (22.47-53).
- d Peter fails and denies Jesus and ends up temporarily crushed and broken (22.54-62).
- c Jesus is debased and humiliated to the lowest level of servitude (22.63-65).
- b Jesus is betrayed by the leaders of the Jews in His own country (22.66-71).
- a Jesus is sentenced to death by the rulers of the Gentiles and drinks the cup of suffering (23.1-31).

We note that in 'a' Jesus reveals through symbols His coming death, and its significance, and in the parallel that death is brought about. In 'b' Jesus is betrayed by a disciple reclining at His own table, and in the parallel He is betrayed by the leaders of His own people (compare John 1.11). In 'c' Jesus tells His disciples that they are called to servitude, and in the parallel He is subjected to something that is below even servitude, to the deepest humiliation. In 'd' Jesus forecasts the denial of Peter, and in the parallel Peter denies Him. In 'e' Jesus warns of coming danger which means that they will require swords, although the requirement for swords is symbolic. In the parallel the danger comes and their 'two swords' are not enough. Centrally in 'f' Jesus prays that He might be spared the cup of suffering, but chooses above all to follow the will of God.

By means of this chiasmus the symbols at the last supper are directly paralleled with their fulfilment on the cross, and the warnings of Jesus about Peter's denial and the need for swords are directly connected with their fulfilment, first in the use of swords, and then in the threefold denial by Peter. And central to all is the cry of Jesus in Gethsemane, the place where by His obedience He submits to the awesome will of God (Hebrews 10.5-10). Here it is given a central place.

That being said this chiasmus now divides up into smaller chiasmi, the first covering the activities in the Upper Room.

Crisis Point Is Reached In The Guestchamber (22.14-38).

In this passage we have described what occurred in the Guestchamber. This divides up into five sections.

Overall Analysis.

- **a Jesus manifests the danger that lies before Him, the suffering that He is to face, and the fact of His coming death, providing the symbol of what its significance will be for His disciples in the light of the fact that the Kingly Rule of God is coming (14-20).**
- **b Jesus reveals the hand of a betrayer, wrought upon by Satan, whose life will end in woe (21-23).**
- **c The disciples are not to seek greatness, but the opportunity of humble service, and this will finally be granted to them by their ruling in the Kingly Rule of God (24-30).**
- **b Jesus reveals the hand of one who, wrought upon by Satan, will deny Him, but who through it, and through His intercession, will be strengthened to serve others (31-34).**
- **a Jesus makes clear the danger of the hour, it is the time for swords, but these swords are symbolic rather than real. It is not through swords that they will triumph (35-38).**

Note that in ‘a’ the darkness of the hour is symbolised, and the same occurs in the parallel. Both indicate that He is now about to be taken. In ‘b’ the fact of betrayal by a friend is revealed, and in the parallel the fact of denial by a friend, both as a result of Satan’s activity. One will end in woe for the party involved, and the other in restoration. For one had sinned through deliberate and continuing intent, the other at a bad three moments in an hour of deep apprehension and tension through weakness. And central in ‘c’ is the whole motive force for the future, the way of service which will lead to triumph. By this they will succeed.

At this point we should also possibly consider the emphasis in the passages on what He has to face:

- **Jesus was to suffer to the limit. The time had come for Him ‘to suffer’ (22.15) and the bread and the wine are both said to point to the suffering of death.**
- **Jesus’ betrayal by a close friend and professed loyal follower (22.21) must have caused Him great grief of heart, thus increasing His suffering.**
- **He then draws attention to the temptations and afflictions that He has had to face. And He informs the disciples that they have continued with Him in His temptations and afflictions (22.28), and have experienced these with Him, and the implication is that these will continue.**
- **He faces up Peter with the fact that he will deny Him (22.34). While He does understand the reasons for it, it could hardly be anything less than a great grief of heart to Him.**
- **He declares that they are now entering a period of conflict and danger such as they have never faced before, so that they are to arm themselves against it (22.36).**

So the passage begins, continues and ends with the emphasis on suffering. He is aware that the darkness into which He is entering is growing, and there is no relief from His suffering which is pouring in on Him from all sides.

What Is To Be Seen As Jesus’ Main Emphasis In This Passage?

One further thing we must consider before looking in detail at this passage, about which there is much controversy, is the significance of some of the ideas used in it. And as we consider them we must constantly remember Jesus’ love of the apt parable and His use of vivid illustration. For this passage can be seen as having one of two emphases, depending on our interpretation of it.

- 1). On the one hand it can be seen as describing the future service on earth which lay ahead for the Apostles in the present Kingly Rule of God being established on earth, with a strong reminder of what will be required of them in it, and the continuing fellowship that they will have with Him. This would fit well with the connection of this passage with the following words of Jesus to Peter concerning strengthening his ‘brothers’ which would be a part of his duty in watching over and serving the people of God.
- 2). Or on the other hand it can be seen as looking beyond the present to His return and to the final Kingdom and blessing. In this case He will be seen as directing their eyes to their final reward, and avoiding the mention of what immediately lies ahead.

We must remember in this regard that the disciples were imbued with the ideas of their times. These included the coming of the Messiah, the enjoyment of a Messianic Banquet of rejoicing and triumph, and the prospect of Israel ruling over the nations. But what Jesus will now seek to do is reinterpret these ideas so as to reveal that while they will be fulfilled, it is in a very different way than Israel envisaged. These ideas all fixed their attention on the prestige and power and glory that would be Israel’s. Jesus wants to fix His disciples’ minds on the opportunities for humility and humble service that they presented. In a sense He wants to turn the ideas upside down. It was Gentile kings like the King of Babylon who sought to climb higher and higher (Isaiah 14.13-14). But His disciples are to follow His own example and seek to become lower and lower (14.7-11; 18.14). They are not to seek ‘what they shall eat and drink’, but to ‘seek the Kingly Rule of God’ (12.29, 31).

But before looking at these questions, let us, in order to put it all in context, ask ourselves what we would expect of Jesus here at this hour of crisis, especially in view of what lies ahead? For He knew that this hour would result in His suffering, and His resurrection, which would then be followed by His sending forth of His disciples to all nations, commencing at Jerusalem (24.46-47). At this stage this was something that the disciples did not even dimly conceive of. So it was surely necessary for Jesus to prepare them for it in terms that they understood, but which later they would understand more deeply. We must remember that their thoughts were on, ‘Lord, will you at this time restore the Kingly Rule to Israel?’ (Acts 1.6). His thoughts were on, ‘You will receive power after the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be witnesses both in Jerusalem -- and to the uttermost parts of the earth’ (Acts 1.8). How then was He to convey the idea of the latter to those who were looking for the former? He does it, in fact, by a brilliant use of parable and symbolism which they will not come to fully understand until much later.

This is the view of many who feel that it is inconceivable that He would not in some way say something about all this in His final words to them at this feast, especially as He stresses the need for them to eat and drink of Him. They therefore see Him as wanting to dynamically prepare them for their future, only dimly understood, ministry on earth. But others see Him as rather pedantically putting all His emphasis at the feast on what lies beyond their future ministry, looking rather to the final consummation, and virtually omitting any mention at all of the near future and the task that lay ahead. Their view is that He wants to fill their minds with the splendour and glory that will one day be theirs. But what is problematic in this view is that it overlooks His emphasis on humble service and the kind of attitude that the disciples should have, and turns their thoughts towards ideas which in context He specifically rejects as being unworthy of them. For as we shall see this latter interpretation appears to indicate that He is offering to them the very thing that He at first rejects.

In the eyes of these latter interpreters it is as though at this meal, at which He is seeing His disciples for the last time before He leaves them, He is only interested in the consummation and what will be enjoyed by them then, and not in the process that will lead up to it, a process in which they will be so actively engaged. Their view is that He leaves dealing with the latter until after the resurrection, while here He lays all His emphasis on the glory that is to be

theirs, even though in verses 25-26 it is the seeking of this glory which He in specifically eschews. Thus they claim that He emphasises the future under the coming heavenly (or Millennial) Kingly Rule of God, when they will all celebrate with Him in His triumph, and virtually ignores their truly glorious future when they will achieve their great triumphs in the spreading of the Kingly Rule of God on earth, prior to going to be with Him. But in our view this error comes about because they have failed to recognise that Jesus has to present the one in terms of the other because of the continual failure of the disciples to grasp the realities that He has brought, and above all the fact that it is contradictory when compared with His words about service and seeking the lowest place..

The verses which are seen as giving this impression are as follows:

- ‘I say to you I will not eat of it (this Passover) until it be fulfilled in the Kingly Rule of God’ (verse 16).
- ‘I say to you I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine until the Kingly Rule of God shall come’ (verse 18).
- ‘And I appoint to you a Kingly Rule, even as My Father has appointed to Me, that you may eat and drink at My table under My Kingly Rule, and you shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel’ (verses 29-30).

Setting these three statements together does seem at first, until they are considered more carefully, to give a strong emphasis on the final consummation (or, for those who believe in it, the Millennial kingdom). He will not eat -- or drink -- until they eat and drink with Him at His table and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. It would seem that He is putting all the emphasis on the glory that is to be theirs, that He is lifting up their hearts to consider the power and authority that they will one day enjoy so that His crucifixion will not be too much of a jolt.

But there is one major problem with this interpretation, and that is that it stands in complete and utter contrast with the attitude that He is seeking to inculcate in them in verses 25-27. For there He inveighs against those who seek the higher place and urges rather that they must think in terms of lowly humility and humble service. He there tells them that they must seek the lowest place, that of the youngest. They must not seek to be chiefs (to sit on thrones), but to serve. They are not to be like the Gentile kings who want to lord it over people and be called Benefactors. And He then gives from the example of His own life the way in which they are to walk. They are not to seek to be sitters at table, but to be servers at table. Is it really likely then that in the next breath He would seek immediately to implant in them ideas which totally contradict this previous exhortation? And this is reinforced by 12.37 where we learn that at the consummation He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and come and serve them. Thus this is the kind of attitude that He wants them to have, the idea of humble service, not that of lording it over a great banquet.

Some would reply, yes, that is to be their attitude while serving God on earth, but the other picture is also given to them so that while serving they can look with confidence to the day when they will be lifted out of service in order to share His glory. Humility first, glory afterwards.

But this explanation assumes two things:

- The first is that the disciples had the same clear distinction in their minds that we have between their period of active service to come, in which they would serve humbly on earth, and the Kingly Rule which would follow when they would be lifted up and glorified. But this is in fact patently untrue. If there is one thing that is certain it is that their minds were in fact still very much in a whirl.
- And the second is that they would thus instantly be able clearly to distinguish in His words to them in the Upper Room the difference between the period of humble service

described by Jesus and the period of glory that would follow and would consider that for them it would be different from what it would be for Jesus.

A few moments thought will make us aware that that is actually far from the truth, for the truth is that they were, right up to the end, still very much taken up with the question as to who would be the greatest (verse 24). Thus by far the most likely scenario for the understanding of Jesus' words is that we are to see Him as emphasising how they are to approach their future with humility, and with the recognition of the need for humble service, even though in parabolic terms, rather than emphasising the glory that was to be theirs, which in view of their thoughts at that time would simply perpetuate their error.

For if there is one thing that is certain it is that the disciples did not have everything about the future sorted out in their own minds. Their minds were not on their future as depicted in Acts, which was something that would have to be explained to them after the resurrection. For even after His resurrection, and after the words He has given to them about going out with the Good News (24.47-48), their question and their interest was expressed in the terms of, 'Lord, do you at this time restore the Kingly Rule to Israel?' (Acts 1.6). It is quite clear therefore that in their minds there was considerable confusion (which given the situation is not surprising). Thus it is equally clear that they would be treating all His words at the Last Supper as running together with the situation described later and as all speaking about the same situation. For Jesus makes very clear that God's purposes with regard to the Kingly Rule in the future was none of their business. So Jesus therefore very much had to take their thoughts away from this and demonstrate that what they must look forward to, while describable in terms of His coming Kingly Rule, was actually a life of humble and dedicated service.

And we may add to this the further point, that psychologically it would hardly have been helpful to them if on the one hand He had emphasised the need to humble themselves, and follow His example of humble service, and avoid the attitude of Gentile kings, while at the same time pointing to the glory that lay ahead for them when they too would rule over the nations. To ask them to keep both ideas in mind, and keep them separate, and properly interpret and apply them and live by them, would surely have been asking far more than they were capable of grasping. We would suggest that it would not have been at all helpful, without making the situation much clearer, to combine the two ideas together with any hope of being properly understood. For Jesus was well aware that one of the great problems of the disciples was their desire for greatness (22.24). Would He really then encourage that desire by glistening promises, while at the same time trying to urge on them the need for total humility? It really does not seem likely. One would almost certainly have had to give way to the other in their minds, and we would suggest, knowing our own hearts, that it would be the way of humility that would go. Indeed when preachers follow this interpretation that is what they tend to emphasise, the glory and privilege and authority that is to be ours, something which goes in complete contrast with Jesus' words in the passage about humility. They are inculcating in us the very attitude that Jesus deprecated.

Furthermore, how could He possibly, when on the verge of leaving them, have not given them at least some instruction concerning what now currently lay ahead for them in the not too distant future? And would such instruction, and assurance of its success, not in fact have been much more encouraging than promises concerning a more distant future? (This is especially so as that is precisely what He does in John's Gospel, although that would not be recorded in writing for many years).

In the light of all this let us now consider His words as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, and especially in Luke, in preparation for what is to come, and see whether or not they agree with this suggestion once considered carefully..

Note Concerning Jesus' Words At The Last Supper About The Kingly Rule of God And the Idea of Eating At His Table And Sitting On Twelve Thrones Ruling The Twelve Tribes of

Israel In Luke 22.14-30.

The first question that arises with regard to this matter is as to what Jesus is referring to when He speaks of ‘the Kingly Rule’ in this passage. They will after all shortly be going out to proclaim the Kingly Rule of God to the people of God (and then to all nations) as the Book of Acts will make very clear (Acts 1.3 in the light of verses 6-8 where it is made clear that He is not opening their minds about a coming permanent earthly Kingdom; 8.12; 14.22; 19.8; 20.25; 28.23, 31). Are we then to see Him in Luke 22 as totally ignoring this fact, and simply concentrating on the everlasting Kingdom? Or does He rather have in mind in His words the message concerning the Kingly Rule of God that they will soon be taking out and proclaiming?

In order to determine this let us consider carefully what He says in Luke 22 about the coming Kingly Rule of God.

The Coming Kingly Rule of God In Luke 22.

What Jesus in fact says is that:

- 1) He will not eat of the Passover until it is fulfilled in the Kingly Rule of God (22.16).
- 2) He will not henceforth drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingly Rule of God will come (22.18).

Clearly the significance of these verses will depend very much on whether we interpret them in the light of the coming spreading of the Kingly Rule of God through the spreading of the word, as depicted in Acts, which Luke intends to go on to deal with in Acts, or whether we do it in terms of the everlasting (or Millennial) Kingdom which in Acts 1.7 He dismisses as irrelevant to them.

Mark has here the words, ‘I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingly Rule of God’ (Mark 14.25). Matthew has ‘I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s Kingly Rule’ (Matthew 26.29). We should note that all these are probably translations from the Aramaic, as well as each possibly being an abbreviation of what He actually said. So Mark adds the expanded thought of ‘drinking it new’. Matthew also has this but further adds ‘with you’.

Why then does Luke abbreviate the wording in verse 18 and describe it in terms of ‘the coming of the Kingly Rule of God’? Based on what we have seen previously it would be in order to make clear a Jewish idiom to his Gentile readers. Let us then consider what Luke normally indicates when he speaks of the ‘coming of the Kingly Rule of God’ elsewhere in his Gospel. The idea occurs a number of times.

- ‘And heal the sick who are in it, and say to them, The Kingly Rule of God is come near to you’ (10.9).
- ‘Even the dust of your city, which adheres to our feet, we wipe off against you. Notwithstanding be you sure of this, that the Kingly Rule of God is come near’ (10.11).
- ‘But if I by the finger of God cast out demons, no doubt the Kingly Rule of God is come upon you’ (11:20).
- And being asked by the Pharisees, when the Kingly Rule of God comes, He answered them and said, “The Kingly Rule of God does not come with observation, neither will they say, Lo here, or Lo there, for the Kingly Rule of God is within (or ‘among’) you” (17.20).

It will be noted that in every case of the mention of ‘the coming of the Kingly Rule of God’, it was present among them or ‘near’ so that they could come in contact with it for themselves. Furthermore it did not come in openly outward form, but was within or among them.

On the other hand, in the case where the Kingly Rule of God is spoken of as in the future it is

men who come to the Kingly Rule of God, and not the Kingly Rule of God that comes to them. “And they will come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and will sit down in the Kingly Rule of God” (13.29).

The same can also be said of the other two Synoptic Gospels.

- “But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingly Rule of God is come to you” (Matthew 12.28).
- ‘And He said to them, “Truly I say to you, That there are some of those who stand here, who will not taste of death, until they have seen the Kingly Rule of God come with power” (Mark 9.1).

In the first case the Kingly Rule of God has already come on them. In the second the Kingly Rule of God will come with power within the lifetime of some of those present. In both cases the words have in mind participation now, or definitely in the very near future, in the Kingly Rule of God, in the latter case revealed in terms of power.

Thus our conclusion must be that when Luke speaks of the ‘coming of the Kingly Rule of God’ he has in mind its present manifestation. Indeed in the light of his previous words his readers could hardly have seen it in any other way.

We should also note that later in Luke’s account in chapter 22 He then declares that “I covenant to you a Kingly Rule, even as My Father has covenanted to Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingly Rule and you will sit on thrones judging (ruling over) the twelve tribes of Israel” (22.29-30).

(Some would, however, translate this as meaning that even as His Father covenants to Him a Kingly Rule, so does He covenant to His disciples that they may eat and drink at His table in His Kingly Rule, and that they will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. In this translation the disciples are not themselves actually covenanted a Kingly Rule. Either translation is feasible and the difference is not really very great. The Kingly Rule of God in which they are to have a part is unquestionably involved whichever is chosen).

A large number of commentators take all these references in Luke 22 to signify that He is referring to the final coming of God’s Kingly Rule in the everlasting (or Millennial) Kingdom. They thus refer to the eating and drinking as referring to the future triumphal Messianic banquet which is described in Scripture (compare Isaiah 25.6) where the idea is of coming triumph and wellbeing, and which is referred to in later Apocalyptic literature which concentrates on the glory that is to be Israel’s. This Banquet is seen by them as the reward for all those who have been faithful to Him (in their terms), something to be looked forward to as bestowing honour and prestige and a great level of superiority, as well as abundant joy. Those who interpret like this therefore tell us that in these last moments of His presence with them Jesus completely ignores their near future, and the important task that is to be theirs, about which they must have been so concerned, and concentrates all His thoughts on when they will see Him again in the more distant future, when they will enjoy positions of prestige and authority, and does it in similar terms to these apocalyptic writers who so misrepresent the situation (such an idea is not found in Isaiah). In the light of what we have already seen it is, of course, possible. But it seems to us very unlikely. And this unlikelihood is even more so when we consider the context of the statement, which is that of seeking humility and humble service. You do not encourage men to be humble by telling them of the greatness that awaits them.

However, before discussing this question more fully let us also consider one or two other references in Luke to God’s Kingly Rule and the equivalent. In 23.42, for example, the dying thief calls on Jesus and says, ‘Remember me when you come in your Kingly Rule’. Jesus replies to this, ‘Truly I say to you. Today you will be with me in Paradise’. It may, of course, be that Jesus was simply ignoring the repentant thief’s statement, and that His reply was not

directly related to it, but many would see it as much more likely that Jesus actually saw His Kingly Rule as immediately commencing in some way in 'Paradise', and as something in which the thief would be able to partake. If not we might have expected some indication of the fact.

(Whichever way we take it 'today' must probably signify 'at this time, very shortly' as it does in Aramaic. For it was already within a short few hours of sunset when the literal day would end. It may, however, be that what He meant was that both He and the thief would be immediately transferred in spirit into what Jesus calls 'Paradise', the more pleasant side of Hades. It would be dangerous for us to be dogmatic about the question).

Furthermore at His trial Jesus is revealed as saying in reply to the question as to whether He is the Messiah, 'from henceforth will the Son of Man be seated at the right hand of God' (22.67-69). The Son of Man being seated at the right hand of God can only here indicate that He has received His Kingship by approaching the throne of God in accordance with Daniel 7.13-14. This can thus only signify that 'from this time on' He considers that He will have been enthroned and will therefore be ruling over His sphere of Kingly Rule. He clearly considers that He will by this have entered on Kingly Rule.

Mark has it as, 'you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of Heaven' (Mark 14.62). As this can hardly consistently indicate His immediate second coming, this must again be seen as referring to the Son of Man's 'coming' to the throne of God to receive Kingship in Daniel 7.13-14, where He approaches God on the clouds of Heaven and takes His kingly throne. Matthew has something similar, 'Henceforth you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven' (Matthew 26.64). And in Matthew's case we have the later depiction of the risen Jesus as looking back on this event and saying, 'All authority has been given to me in Heaven and on earth' (Matthew 28.18). So all agree that shortly after the crucifixion Jesus will receive Kingly Rule and will be reigning in Heaven. This can be seen as further confirmed in Acts 2.33, 36 where Peter declares that Jesus has been exalted and has been made both Lord and Christ.

Again prior to the Transfiguration Jesus had said, 'There are some standing here who will not taste of death until they see the Kingly Rule of God' (9.27), which as we have seen Mark puts as 'see the Kingly Rule of God come with power'. This thus must be seen as indicating that as far as Jesus was concerned the establishing of the Kingly Rule of God would occur within the lifetime of many who heard Him. Matthew and Mark in their own different ways agree, Mark declaring that the 'Kingly Rule will come with power' and Matthew referring to it in language which relates to Daniel 7. As far as these words were concerned therefore the coming of the Kingly Rule of God (in power) was to be seen by that generation.

Again, in 19.12-15, in a parable about the kingdom, the king receives kingly rule and then returns. But as no specific timetable is given this does not tell us anything more, although it does agree in the sense that it distinguishes the receiving of kingly rule from his later return. He receives His kingly rule before His return, not at it.

In contrast with all this, however, in 13.28-29 there is the idea of a heavenly Kingly Rule of God which follows the second coming of Jesus Christ into which gather all the believers of the past from all parts of the world, but as we have already seen in that case it is the people who come to the Kingly Rule of God, not the Kingly Rule of God that comes to them. And in 21.31 there is the idea of the Kingly Rule of God being near, which will follow the fulfilment of the signs of His coming. Both of these relate the Kingly Rule of God to His second coming. But neither actually speak of the coming of the Kingly Rule of God, and they are in contrast to the many verses in Luke where the Kingly Rule of God is depicted as being already present or as 'near' to the people of that day (6.20; 7.28; 10.9, 11; 11.20; 16.16; 17.21), and as 'coming'. Neither of the verses that refer to the Kingly Rule of God at the consummation actually speak of it as 'coming'.

So we can summarise all this as follows:

- 1). The Kingly Rule of God is already present among them in Jesus, and at work in their hearts (6.20; 7.28; 10.9, 11; 11.20; 16.16; 17.21; John 3.2-3).
- 2). The Kingly Rule of God is about to be revealed in power as a consequence of His resurrection and as a result of His enthronement and subsequent receipt of all authority in Heaven and earth (9.27; 22.67-69; 23.42; Mark 9.1; 14.62; Matthew 26.64; 28.28; Acts 2.33, 35).
- 3). The Kingly Rule of God will one day be revealed in Heaven, and in that day all will enter it who are His (13.28-29; 21.31).

But we would stress again that with regard to these it is only the first and the second which are spoke of in terms of 'the coming of the Kingly Rule of God'.

When, however, we come to Acts the Kingly Rule of God is unquestionably the message that is offered through the preaching of the word (14.22; 19.8; 20.25; 28.23, 31), and furthermore, in 28.23, 31 the preaching of the Kingly Rule of God is said to be specifically the equivalent of preaching Jesus. None of these references, however, specifically speak of its 'coming', although in fact the suggestion would appear to be that it has come and may be entered into by all who will respond.

So when we ask the question 'Do the references to the coming Kingly Rule of God by Jesus in 22.16, 18 have in mind the Kingly Rule of God that comes at Pentecost, or does it refer to the Kingly Rule of God which comes to fruition at the final consummation? there would only seem to be one answer. And if we ask 'Was Jesus simply giving an indication that the Kingly Rule of God would not be long in coming because it would be the result of His resurrection and enthronement, or was He talking about what would be the final position when the future had come to its consummation?', the weight of the evidence lies with the former. So the same conclusion seems to apply to both questions. The 'coming of the Kingly Rule of God' as such was seen as something that that generation would experience.

With regard to the further statements in the verses, the Passover could certainly be seen as 'fulfilled' in the deliverance of men and women through the cross at Pentecost as they were thus brought into the Kingly Rule of God with power (see 1 Corinthians 5.7). Here was a greater deliverance by far than that at the Exodus. Although it is true that it could also be seen as fulfilled at the consummation when the saved were finally gathered in. And in the same way it could be that the reference to drinking the fruit of the vine was an indication that there was only a short period between His drinking with them then and the coming of the Kingly Rule of God, although again it may be seen as having in mind a longer term view.

So overall we would suggest that in exegetical terms as well the references to the Kingly Rule of God in 22.16, 18 must be seen as suggesting that when Jesus spoke of it, He had in mind the coming of the Kingly Rule of God which would result from His approaching enthronement following His resurrection, and through the work of the Holy Spirit, as in Acts. This would, however, not exclude the fact that it would finally result for all who were thus 'saved' in the everlasting Kingdom. For in Jesus' eyes the one ran into the other, for elsewhere when speaking of blessing to be given to His own He says, 'Both now in this time --- and in the life to come' (Mark 10.30).

Having come to this conclusion let us now consider whether it is supported by the context.

The Context: The Lord's Supper.

The next thing that we note is that while Jesus declares that He Himself will cease eating the Passover and drinking the fruit of the vine for a period of time, His disciples are to continue to do so. This could indicate a short term abstinence for Himself while they continued with their eating and drinking, or it may have been in order to indicate that they were to eat and drink

of it constantly in the future in a new form. In the longer text of Luke, (which we consider is unquestionably correct, see later), this is made more explicit, even though no mention is actually made of eating and drinking, for the bread is given 'in remembrance of Me' and the cup is offered. Both of these ideas include the thought of eating and drinking. Thus there is an emphasis on the fact that while Jesus Himself will for an unstated period cease eating and drinking, the Disciples will go on eating and drinking in remembrance of Him, and that what they will eat and drink will be a reminder of His body and blood. Even in the shorter text this is implied, for Luke's readers would certainly there understand these words or similar as following 'this is My body', due to their own celebration of the Lord's Table (compare 1 Corinthians 11.23-5).

One thing that arises from the reference to Jesus as 'not eating and drinking' is as to whether the purpose of that is in order to suggest how soon the Kingly Rule of God will come ('it is so near that I will abstain from eating and drinking until then', for remember those who heard His words did not know what was coming), or whether the idea is rather that He will meanwhile shortly be active in such a way that the taking of food and wine would be improper, that is, that He sees the abstention from wine as necessary because He sees Himself as about to act as a serving priest (Leviticus 11.10) as in Hebrews, and because He is consecrating Himself to what lies ahead as the equivalent of a Nazirite (Numbers 6) as John the Baptist did (1.15). That is, that He wants them to know that He is totally devoting Himself to an important ministry that lies before Him, the ministry of the cross and resurrection and enthronement. Like the mention of the swords later it could be seen as a reference to preparation for the events that now lay ahead. In His case the point would be that He was preparing Himself for the offering up of Himself as the perfect and fully consecrated offering, for abstinence from food and drink was a regular way of preparing for some especially important task ahead (compare Acts 23.12; 1 Samuel 14.24-28). If this is so then it is clear that He sees the task as fulfilled by Luke 24.43.

In indirect contrast with Jesus' statement about not eating and drinking, however, is the fact that His people will in the future be eating and drinking because they will be partaking of the Lord's Supper. This might be seen as suggesting therefore that His abstinence will only be until then, at which point He will again eat it and drink it with them at His Table. (Compare how He does break bread with the two disciples at Emmaus after His resurrection - 24.30). And we should note that here in chapter 22 this eating and drinking is immediately connected with 'the Table', for immediately afterwards we are told that 'the hand of him who betrays Me is with Me on the Table' (22.21). The point here would seem to be that on the very table at which Jesus had dispensed the bread and the wine, the betrayer was planning to betray Him. But that shortly He would again (spiritually) be eating and drinking with them at His Table once His Kingly Rule had begun after His resurrection. We should note how in His resurrection appearance He specifically goes out of His way to eat with them - 24.41-43, compare John 21.13.

This is then followed shortly afterwards by Jesus' illustration of Himself as One Who humbly serves, where He declares, 'Which is greater, he who sits at the meal or him who serves? Is not he who sits at the meal? But I am in the midst of you as Him Who serves' (22.27). Unless this is just an illustration taken out of the blue, (which is one possible way of looking at it), we might see this as referring to what He will do in future at The Lord's Table. There He will serve those who come to that Table to partake of the bread and the wine. Or alternately it could be seen as having reference to what has gone before, and therefore to Jesus as presiding over the Passover. The problem then is that it would not be a good illustration of humility, for the one who presided at the Passover was usually someone who was seen as important. But if His point is that He will in fact from now on, as the One Who is here to serve, be serving them continually by giving them His body and blood, and will thus in the future be present at the Lord's Table in order to apply it to His people as the Servant Who gave His life a ransom for

them (Mark 10.45), then it does illustrate in His case a humbling of Himself for His people.

But however that may be, what is unquestionably true is that the purpose of this illustration is in order to demonstrate the humility, and the ambition to serve in a humble capacity, that should be the lot of those who follow Him. Indeed He stresses that fact. He says that His disciples should not be like the kings of the Gentiles whose desire it is to lord it over everyone (verse 25), but should be like Him in His desire solely to benefit others by humble service. They should not have the hearts of earthly kings, but the heart of the heavenly King, the heart of a servant. They should not be seeking to sit on the High Table, but should be seeking to serve at the lowest table. He is by this seeking to inculcate in these men who have such a dangerous tendency to think in terms of attaining greatness, a desire rather for humility and humble service, with no thought of obtaining greatness.

That being so what follows must, if interpreted as signifying the glory that awaits them at His future Table under His coming glorious Kingly Rule, be seen as quite extraordinary. For what follows is a statement which is then so at variance with what He has previously said that it is difficult to think of anything more contradictory that could have been said. He would be saying, 'although I am calling you to the humblest of humbles service, nevertheless I am going to sit you on twelve thrones as rulers'. Now that would be fine to someone theologically trained who could make the distinctions that we make, but it could only be totally confusing, and worse, to people as muddled as the Apostles were. It would give them two contradictory ideas.

Let us consider it further. Depending on how we translate it this following statement could be:

- 1). Either the statement that He has covenanted them a kingly rule, as a result of which they will eat and drink at His table in His Kingly Rule, and will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Or the statement that He has covenanted for them to eat and drink at His table in His Kingly Rule, the one God has given Him by covenant, where they will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Now whichever of these two translations is accepted this is often taken to mean that they will join Him in the Kingly Rule of God at the Messianic Banquet at which they will be privileged guests, as a result of which they will also sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and in terms of Jewish thinking lording it over the Gentiles. They will be there as those who have been exalted and raised to positions of authority in the everlasting (or Millennial) Kingdom. Can you think of anything that would more fill the disciples in their present state with pride and joy at being exalted, and with a feeling of superiority, and with a renewed interest in who would be the greatest? We must ask therefore, 'How could this possibly immediately follow on an exhortation to seek the lowest level of humble service such as we have previously seen?

Can you therefore see why we have suggested that it is quite extraordinary? For it would appear that at the same time as He is seeking to lure them away from their attitude of seeking greatness, to being truly humble, and urging them to desire not to sit at table as someone important, but to serve at table as one who is least, and as one who serves others, He is also at the same time trying to fix their minds on their coming greatness. With their previously dangerously arrogant desires for greatness this is surely so contradictory that it is unbelievable. Indeed it might be seen as encouraging hypocrisy. It would be saying, 'be humble now with a view to being rewarded with greatness. Earn your greatness by making a show of being humble'. Let us confirm this further by looking at His two parallels. Firstly consider:

- 'The kings of the Gentiles, have lordship over them, and those who have authority over them are called benefactors, but you shall not be so, but he who is greater among you, let him become as the younger, and he who is chief, as he who serves.'

And compare it with:

- You will sit on thrones ruling over (judging) the twelve tribes of Israel.'

It is surely immediately apparent that Jesus is here seemingly going against His own dictum. On the one hand He appears to be saying, 'You are to eschew power and authority,' while on the other He is bolstering them up with the very thought that they should be looking forward to a similar kind of power and authority. He is saying, 'seek to be humble', and at the same time saying 'look forward to the fact that you will be made great.' Given the dangerously wrong ideas that the disciples had revealed that they already had, this is surely, to say the least, extremely unlikely. Is He not really asking too much of them? How can He hope to inculcate an attitude of such humility and yet at the same time, in the same breath, promise such greatness as an incentive? If He is He is surely taking the cutting edge off His urging.

Now had He as an incentive compared being like the Gentile kings now, with being like a Messianic prince in the future that would have been understandable. He would be comparing earthly greatness with heavenly greatness. But the exhortation to eschew the *attitude* of the Gentile kings, and to follow the way of humility and humble service, is, we suggest, totally incompatible with seeking to arouse in them a desire for a similar future glory at the same time in the state of their knowledge at that time, especially as, as far as they were concerned the latter could be fairly soon (as Acts 1.6 demonstrates). The first promise thus makes this view of His final saying very improbable indeed we might say impossible. You can make a contrast between the pride of Gentile kings and the humility of a servant, and you can make the contrast between the glory of Gentile kings and the glory of being a Messianic prince, but you cannot do both at the same time, for in the same context they are flatly contradictory attitudes.

And this is especially so in the light of what follows. Consider again:

- 'Which is greater, he who sits at the meal, or him who serves. Is not he who sits at the meal? Yet I am among you as one who serves,'

And compare it with:

- 'I appoint to you, even as my Father has appointed me a kingly rule, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingly rule.'

If this latter means the Messianic Banquet where they feast in triumph and glory, then it is in complete contradiction with the former. He would appear to be encouraging at the same time two different attitudes of mind. How can this latter possibly fit in with the idea that they are to be like the One Who serves? They are two different approaches altogether. Either they set their hearts on the way of humble service, desiring not to sit at table, except in the same way as Jesus has as a servant, but to serve, or they set their hearts on the enjoyment of sitting at table with the Messiah in the glory of the Messianic banquet. But they cannot genuinely and honestly be expected to have both aims in mind at the same time, especially as the latter has been a constant temptation to them. (It is even worse if there is the thought of the Messiah serving them at His coming as in 12.37). Separately, in different contexts, the two aims might be compatible, humility now, glory later, but not as two aims asked for in the same breath, especially when it is asked of those who have a tendency to seek greatness, and even more especially as He has been warning them against arrogance and boastful pride. In the light of the earlier self-seeking of James and John He would surely here be in grave danger of encouraging a similar arrogance and boastful pride. Are they really then to be asked to seek the lowest place, while keeping one eye on the highest place? It is hardly possible to think so. It would surely not be inculcating the right attitude (which he has just described) at all.

But if it is not to be taken like this, how then are we to take it?

Before we answer that question let us remind ourselves again of something else, and that is

that during this time in the Upper Room, apart from the brief reference to bread and wine, Jesus on this view has apparently said absolutely nothing about the future that lies ahead for His disciples prior to His return, contrary to what we find in John.

That being so these self-contradictions and obvious misapplications described above must surely suggest that somehow we are misinterpreting these verses by seeing in them a picture of their future exaltation, rather than a picture of present service. For how could someone who has just derided Gentile kings because of their attitude, and has put His behaviour as a servant forward as the ideal of humble service, then talk as though His disciples should be seeking the highest place, and should be looking forward to life on their own thrones, and be shown to be completely ignoring all words about their coming service (which John shows that He did talk about in the Upper Room)? It is surely simply not conceivable. But how else then can we see them?

Taking the question of eating and drinking at His table first, we can relate it back to verses 19-20 and also to verse 27. There His table is the one at which He serves. Thus we might see the significance of the Table here as referring not to the Messianic Banquet which is to come in which they will exalt on their glory, but as His feeding of them at His Table in such a way that they serve humbly along with Him at the true Messianic banquet on earth, as in the feeding of the five thousand, by feeding His people, as he commands Peter in John 21.15-17. In the light of what we have seen before, this would signify His activity on their behalf as they partake in the Lord's Supper, and as they thereby work humbly within the Kingly Rule of God as He does. This would then not be indicating a feasting in triumph at the Messianic feast in some future glory, but a feasting in humility in the Kingly Rule of God as they partake of Christ and then go out to serve others, sharing in His present glory. This fits precisely with Jesus' urging to behave like humble servants.

But how then are we to think of their being given thrones from which they will rule the twelve tribes of Israel? One thing we can be sure of, and that is that this is surely to be seen as in clear contrast with the Gentile kings who lord it over their people and want to be called benefactors. The point is not that they will achieve better than the Gentile kings, for the attitude of the Gentile kings was to be abhorred. Rather it is that they are to seek to be the very opposite. If one thing is certain it is that it cannot mean that they should be looking forward ambitiously to sitting on thrones ruling the people. It would here be arousing in them all the wrong motives, and contradicting His warning about being like Gentile kings.

That being so it is clear that Jesus must have some other idea in mind than that, the idea of acting as His humble deputies in establishing the Kingly Rule of God among people on earth so that these people might finally inherit the everlasting kingdom. Rather than seeking to lord it over people, He will be saying, they must instead be seeking to humbly serve God's people in the same way as Jesus Himself has done, bringing them into the Kingly Rule of God and building them up in Christ. This would also then tie in perfectly with His following words to Peter where He describes him, as a result of his being sifted by Satan, as being prepared for this very task. But how then are we to obtain this idea from the words that Jesus uses?

At this point reference must be made to Psalm 122.4-5, for that is the passage for which Jesus obtained the idea. In that Psalm we read of, 'Jerusalem -- whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord, for a testimony to Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord, for there are set thrones for dispensing righteousness, the thrones of the house of David'. This Psalm refers to the fact that when 'the tribes' went up to Jerusalem they were to find justice at the hands of those who sat on 'the thrones of David', that is, those who were representing the son of David who was current at the time, by acting as his deputies and judiciaries. It may even indicate princes of the royal house who have this function. This would fit in admirably with what occurred in Acts. There the Apostles in Jerusalem were seen as acting in the name of the greater son of David Who was enthroned in Heaven (Acts 2.29-36; 4.24-30), and were bringing

justice and righteousness to the people as they themselves symbolically sat 'on the thrones of David', that is, were acting in Jesus' Name. They were, as it were, to be seen as acting in the name of the Greater David, and could thus be seen as sitting on the metaphorical thrones of David acting in His name. This would also then tie up with their following Him by 'ruling' in humility and humble service over the people of God, as Jesus had while on earth, and with their eating and drinking at the Lord's Table. In other words they were to 'rule' over His people with all humility.

But it might be asked, can the church be called 'the twelve tribes of Israel' in this way? The answer is in fact a resounding, 'yes'. For 'the twelve tribes of Israel' is merely in the end a phrase indicating 'all Israel', having in mind its founding fathers. At varying times there had been a varying number of tribes of Israel, especially early on (see Judges 5), and always, after Ephraim and Manasseh had split up, there were at least thirteen tribes, and yet even in Jesus' day most pure Jews identified themselves with one of 'the twelve tribes'. We can compare how Paul described himself as a Benjaminite. It was thus a general phrase, not one that was specifically applicable. It pictured an ideal.

However, apart from very few Jews, this identification would not go back many generations. Large numbers were originally linked with their tribes by adoption rather than by birth, and the number of Jews who were actually descended from the patriarchs, and certainly any who could prove it satisfactorily, would have been very, very few. The main exception would be the descendants of the royal house. Thus the phrase 'the twelve tribes of Israel' really signifies 'all who professed themselves as Israel and were bound in the covenant'.

That the church was seen as the new Israel, the new covenant community, the genuine fulfilment and continuation of Israel, comes out regularly in the New Testament. Jesus had from the beginning set out to establish a new congregation of Israel (Matthew 16.18). And almost from the beginning the unbelieving Jews were seen as having been cut off from the true Israel, and the believing Gentiles as grafted in (see for example John 15.1-6; Romans 11.17-33; Galatians 3.29; 6.16; Ephesians 2.11-22; 1 Peter 2.5, 9; Revelation 7.1-8). And Peter in a letter which is clearly to all Christians, both in its content, and in the fact that whenever he refers to 'Gentiles' it is always as those who are unbelieving, writes to 'the exiles of the Dispersion' (1 Peter 1.1), those who are strangers and pilgrims (1 Peter 2.11) dispersed around the world, clearly referring this to the whole believing people of God, and therefore seeing them as Israel. In the same way James writes to 'the twelve tribes in the Dispersion' (James 1.1), and again is writing to all Christians. This is demonstrated by the fact of his total lack of reference to Gentile Christians in his letter, something which would have been unaccountable in a letter written only to Jewish Christians when he was seeking to give them guidance about their behaviour. Had Gentile Christians not been included among those whom he addressed he would have been failing in his duty not to explain how Christian Jews were to behave towards them. So the non-mention of them, not even by a hint, confirms that they are included among those to whom the letter is written. Thus as far as James was concerned believing Gentiles had been incorporated into Israel and were part of 'the twelve tribes'.

For we must remember that the idea of 'Israel' was always a fluid one. From the very beginning many 'Israelites' had been descendants of foreign servants within the households of the patriarchs. Yet all in their 'households', (thus foreign servants included), had gone down into Egypt and had retained their identity as Israel. And when they left Egypt they had been joined by a mixed multitude (Exodus 12.38) who would mainly from then on be seen as Israelites. They would join in the covenant of Sinai, and be circumcised on entering the land. And provision was specifically made for such people to be full blown Israelites (Exodus 12.48). Indeed so many sought to join with Israel that provision was made later as to who could and could not do so (Deuteronomy 23.1-7). And all through their history proselytes were welcomed as true Israelites on equal terms (at least theoretically) if they were circumcised and submitted to the covenant. So the idea of Israel was not so much that of literal descendants of Abraham,

but of those who were faithful to the covenant. Those who were not were cut off from Israel even if they were true-born. Those who wished to become a part of 'Israel' could do so, through circumcision and submission to the covenant. And it was in fact precisely because the early church saw new converts as becoming a part of Israel that the requirement for circumcision was debated. And the final solution was not found in suggesting that they were not really joining Israel, but in the argument that once they became Christ's they were already circumcised with the circumcision of Christ (Colossians 2.11) and therefore did not need to be circumcised again. But they were certainly recognised as having become the true seed of Abraham (Galatians 3.29). For they were ingrafted into the olive tree (Romans 11.17-28), and, as Paul tells us in Ephesians 2.13-22, they became fellow-citizens with the saints (the Old Testament name for true Israelites) and of the household of God. Thus the early church did unquestionably see themselves as the true Israel, and therefore as 'the twelve tribes of Israel'.

This being so the most consistent interpretation of this passage would seem to be the one that sees it as referring to the Kingly Rule of God that would be established at Pentecost and after, and which saw the Apostles as 'serving at table' and 'sitting on thrones' by serving the people of God as they built up the Kingly Rule of God on earth ready for their later transfer to Heaven.

Before moving on further there is one more emphasis that we can perhaps examine, and that is the one in the passage about being 'at (on) the table'.

Being At The Table In Luke 22.

In verse 14 Jesus reclines with His disciples, and the assumption must be that it was at the Table(s) present in the room. So here reclining at the Table indicates closeness of fellowship. And it is as being at this Table that He gives them the bread and wine representing His body and blood.

It comes therefore in shocking contrast when Jesus says, 'the hand of him who betrays Me is with Me at (on - 'epi') the Table' (verse 21). One of those who were reclining at His Table, eating and drinking with Him, and had even solemnly received bread and wine from Him, was planning to betray Him. To behave in such a way was to go counter to all that was looked on as customary and acceptable. It was to break all boundaries of decency. For it was a principle of Eastern hospitality that when you ate with someone it was a guarantee of friendship and of concern for their wellbeing.

In contrast Jesus then pointed out that He was here at the Table in order to serve. While it was true that He was reclining at the Table with them, He said, it was not as one who considered it as His right to be served, but as one who was there in order to serve. He was not here to exercise authority over them but with the sole purpose of serving them. Indeed He was here with the purpose of giving Himself to them and for them. And this was to be an example to them, so that they also were not to be like Gentile kings lording it over people, and being given great titles, but were also in their turn, while reclining at Table, to serve, seeking only the lowest place, that of the youngest (and at some stage He gave the example by washing their feet).

So when He then goes on to say that in future they will sit at (on - 'epi') His Table under His Kingly Rule, eating and drinking as they are now (unlike the one who has betrayed Him), the thought is clearly that He will there continue to serve them, and that they too should be thinking in terms of humble service as they recline at His Table, as He has already enjoined. In the context of this whole passage this suggests that it signifies their future humble service in the Kingly Rule of God which will shortly come with power, and thus signifies what is to follow the resurrection.

In other words Jesus takes the idea of the Messianic Banquet and turns it on its head. The

ideas that should be filling the heads of His disciples, He says, should not be those of Messianic glory, but of Messianic service. Thus we may summarise by saying that He has both assured them that the Kingly Rule that they were expecting was coming, so that what is to follow in His coming death should not leave them with any doubts about that, but that they should not be looking at it as something that would bring them glory, but rather as something that would enable them, like Him, to act faithfully as ‘the Servant of the Lord’ (Acts 13.47).

Having then examined some of these rather difficult concepts involved (difficult because of our misconceptions of them) let us now look at this passage in more detail, although necessarily with some repetition.

Jesus Proclaims His Coming Death By Means Of The Passover Symbols. His Coming Suffering Is Now An Assumption. He Is To Be The Passover Lamb Introducing the New Covenant (22.14-20).

Analysis.

- a When the hour was come, He sat down, and the apostles with Him, and He said to them, “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer” (14-15).
- b “For I say to you, I will not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the Kingly Rule of God” (16).
- c He received a cup, and when He had given thanks, He said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves (17).
- b “For I say to you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingly Rule of God shall come” (18).
- a And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and gave to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of Me. And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you (19-20).

Note that in ‘a’ He desires to eat the Passover with them, and in the parallel He eats with them the new Passover revealed in the giving of His body and the pouring out of His blood. In ‘b’ He will no longer eat the Passover until it has come to its true fulfilment in the Kingly Rule of God, and in the parallel He will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingly Rule of God comes. Central to all is the cup of oneness and unity in blessing, which points ahead to their future hope, which is to be divided among them that all might partake.

22.14 ‘And when the hour was come, he sat down (reclined), and the apostles with him.’

The lack of any preparatory words with reference to His arrival (compare Mark 14.17) suggests that Luke intends us to see a deeper significance in ‘when the hour was come’ than simply as a reference to the time of the usual Passover meal, or the time that Jesus had fixed. It rather suggests that solemn hour that had to come when Jesus would begin His preparations for certain death. We must remember that to Luke this is now at the end of His prophetic ‘journeying towards Jerusalem’ to die as a true prophet (13.33; 18.31). And now He had come to that hour. Compare here also John 13.1. From this moment on His course was set. This solemnity would seem to be confirmed by the next verse.

There is an indication of firm courage behind the words here. Death was approaching, but He would carry on as normal. He was prepared for what would come, and was able to relax in the face of it. The Rabbis said that one reason why the Passover had to be celebrated in a reclining position was as an expression of joy and rest. It was in order to reveal that all was well. Symbolically at least it indicated that, unlike at the first Passover, there was no longer any need to be ready to move on. And yet Jesus was well aware that His hour was come and that this night He would commence the path of suffering that would end in a cruel death. But in spite of that He was quite ready to recline among His disciples.

22.15 ‘And he said to them, “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I

suffer,” ’

Jesus' strong words here, which are a clear translation of an Aramaic idiom 'desiring I have desired'), stress how important this Passover meal is to Him. There is a similarity of urgency here with His previous words, 'I am come to cast fire on the earth and would that it were already kindled, I have a baptism to be baptised with and how I am straitened until it be accomplished' (12.49). He had steadfastly set His face towards Jerusalem for this purpose, and now the time had come. He Himself was going forward towards the suffering that He had predicted and it was in the light of that that He had this great and burning desire to eat 'this Passover' (either the Passover meal or Passover lamb, the word could indicate either) with them beforehand. He had wanted to share with them His last hours and His last Passover. Soon He would no longer be with them, and He knew how much they would miss Him. We are probably also to see in it how much, humanly speaking, He would miss them and regretted having to leave them, even though He knew that it was for their good. It may also indicate His eagerness that what was now about to happen should be over as quickly as possible, i.e. 'I have been earnestly waiting for this'.

22.16 "For I say to you, I will not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the Kingly Rule of God."

And the reason for this great desire was that this last Passover would usher in the Kingly Rule of God. Indeed what was now to occur at this Passover, which symbolised the giving of His body and blood, was what would cause its fulfilment in the Kingly Rule of God. We must note here that there is a twofold stress in this Passover meal. The first is in order to fix their eyes on the end at which He is aiming (verses 16-18), the establishment of the Kingly Rule of God on earth which would be composed of all Who responded to Him and His words. To this end, in the first part of the meal He stresses that He will neither eat the Passover, nor drink the fruit of the vine, until its fulfilment is come about in the Kingly Rule of God (verse 16), that is, until the Kingly Rule of God comes (verse 18). Once this meal is over the final process of establishing for ever the Kingly Rule of God, for which Israel and the world so long has waited, and for which He has been laying the foundation, will begin and go on to fruition. (As we have seen above reference to the 'coming of the Kingly Rule of God' always refers to the present manifestation of that Kingly Rule on earth).

In the second part which then follows (verses 19-20) He fixes their eyes and their thoughts on the means. It is they who must now do the eating and the drinking, while He serves them. And He lays great stress on the two symbols of bread and wine (again indicating eating and drinking) which indicate how in the process of this fulfilment His body is to be 'given' and His blood shed in the establishment of the new covenant. This will be His greatest service. It is by continual participation in this latter feast, which will bind them to Him, that they will be able to ensure the fulfilment of the former, the establishment of the Kingly Rule of God.

This contrast between His not eating and drinking, and the requirement on them to eat and drink, must be seen as deliberate. It is a clear pattern (a pattern which serves to help to confirm the longer version of the text). It brings out His uniqueness as the Supplier and not the recipient, and His independence of the means of salvation in contrast to their total dependence on them. And yet they will all be one, He as the One who makes holy and the Trek-leader of their salvation, and they as those who are made holy (Hebrews 2.10-11). It also stresses that shortly He will Himself be elsewhere engaged. He will no longer be physically with them. He will no longer be able to eat and drink with them physically.

So the reason for His burning desire here was because He would not be able to eat this memorial feast with them again on earth. It was to be His last Passover with these men who had come to mean so much to Him. And it was the last Passover meal that He would have until the coming of the Kingly Rule of God. By this He was indicating how close was the coming of this Kingly Rule of God. It would be fulfilled firstly and primarily as a result of His crucifixion, resurrection and enthronement, in its manifestation as the word went out in and

from Jerusalem bringing deliverance to the world and establishing the Kingly Rule of God among men, and it would come to its final fruition at His second coming. And while He would no longer be with them in His physical presence, from now on they must go on drawing on His spiritual power as they go about establishing His Kingly Rule.

In other words He is trying to inculcate the excitement of the first Passover. Then Israel had spent a night of excitement in expectancy of the coming day, which would commence their deliverance, would result in battles to come, and was then intended to be finalised in the establishing of the Kingly Rule of God in Canaan. Now He wants them to recognise that this is a new Passover, a special Passover, and that this too will lead on to battles to come and a fulfilment in the final establishing of the Kingly Rule of God.

For He alone knew at this point in time that this Passover was introducing the most crucial moment in the history of the world. It was the time that was introducing the offering of Himself as the great Passover Lamb (John 1.29; 1 Corinthians 5.7; Revelation 5.6, 9, 12) and as commencing the continuing process of the wider establishment of the Kingly Rule of God, which would finally end in the permanent and total establishment of the Kingly Rule of God in Heaven where the Lamb as it had been slain would be seated on the throne (Revelation 5.6). It was the Exodus deliverance not only being repeated, but being multiplied a hundred times over (compare 9.31 where His death is called an 'exodus'). The previous Exodus had been intended to result in a kingly rule of God on earth in Canaan. This one would result in an extending of the Kingly Rule of God on earth which would finalise itself in an eternal Kingly Rule of God in Heaven and the new earth, (as prophesied by Ezekiel and others in terms that the people could then appreciate - Ezekiel 37.27-28; Isaiah 11.1-9; 65.17-25).

He was now aware that He would never see another Passover on earth. The first Passover had been eaten by Israel with the prospect of the coming kingly rule of God lying before them when they entered Canaan. They knew then that they would face warfare and suffering, and the need to go out and conquer, but once the conquest was over the kingly rule of God over all Canaan would have come about and all Israel would be then be able to come together in triumph (this was the ideal although in the end it never fully materialised due to disobedience).

Thus we can see why this Passover symbolised to Jesus the coming of the greater Kingly Rule of God. Through what He was about to suffer the whole process would be begun and then brought to completion, but, as with the first Passover, there would be the preliminary establishing of a Kingly Rule, but the final success would only be once the battles and the suffering were over. Meanwhile they (the people of God) would be able to continue partaking in the Passover to the full, once they recognised in it its true significance, that it was He who was the Passover Lamb, and that they must receive all the benefits of the new covenant through Him, by partaking of Him as the bread of life (John 6.35) through His death (John 6.51, 53-58), and by receiving the benefits of what the shedding of His blood would accomplish. Then would He be celebrating the Passover with them again, with Himself as the Passover lamb.

It was thus a reaffirmation of His shortly having to experience suffering and death, and a declaration of the work of conquest that had to be accomplished as the Kingly Rule of God gradually came to fruition through them (as it began to do in Acts), and it was a guarantee of the glorious hope for the future when the final everlasting Kingly Rule of God would finally be established. All this was within His view at this time. We can compare with it how the Servant knew that after His death as a guilt offering all would finally come to successful fruition (Isaiah 53.10-12). The Servant had the same certainty of victory and of what God would accomplish. But Jesus' words were not just a prophecy looking ahead, but a recognition that now, from this time on, the last battle was beginning that would result in everlasting triumph once the dark days were over, a battle that could not fail to be won, for, 'From

henceforth the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God' (22.69), something of which Stephen would also shortly become aware (Acts 7.55-56).

The Passover was in fact also linked with the coming Kingly Rule of God in Jewish eyes. For they too saw it as symbolising their future deliverance. But the problem lay in the fact that the eyes of the unbelieving among the Jews were closed to the realisation that the One Who would bring it about had come. They had missed what they had been awaiting for so long because their hearts were actually closed towards God, and too set on their own ideas. And while the Kingly Rule of God did still from that time continue to spread throughout the earth, they are still blindly waiting for it to come. But if they too will open their eyes, as their fathers failed to do, they too can even now enter under His Kingly Rule in Christ.

'I will not eat it until it be fulfilled in the Kingly Rule of God.' 'It' naturally refers to the Passover. Thus He was making clear that this was His last Passover on earth. They had shared with Him in a number of Passovers (as John's Gospel makes especially clear) but this was to be the last in which He would be with them. And yet it was not to be seen as a tragedy, but as a triumphant proclamation that He would one day return (1 Corinthians 11.26). For it would lead to its 'being fulfilled' in the establishing of the Kingly Rule of God. The deliverance by the power of God, which Passover spoke of, would finally be accomplished. Firstly because through His sacrifice as God's Passover Lamb the Kingly Rule of God would become a reality on earth through the power of the Holy Spirit at work through His Apostles, and through the cleansing effect of the blood of Jesus, and secondly because as a result the eternal Kingly Rule of God would finally be established in 'Heaven'. The deliverance symbolised by the Passover would be fulfilled in both the near and the more distant future. Jesus' intention had never been to form a Kingly Rule of God of which the earth was its permanent base. The prophets had spoken like that because they and their hearers had had no conception of a heavenly existence for men. But Jesus' purpose had always been to form a heavenly Kingly Rule of God which would first be entered by initially believing on earth (John 3.3-6), and which would then continue for ever. The Kingly Rule of God thus consists of all in both Heaven and earth who truly believe (Hebrews 12.22-24).

'I will not eat it until.' The real aim of these words is in order to stress that the Kingly Rule of God was really coming, and was coming soon, as it did at Pentecost. Passover would be 'fulfilled' in the Kingly Rule of God because it would lead on to Pentecost, and the march to victory would have begun. And He wanted them to know that it would happen before there could be another Passover at which He could eat.

But it may rightly be asked in what way He could eat the Passover in the future? Perhaps in fact He did not really mean that He would ever again eat of it, but was using it as a way of emphasising that these were His last days on earth. Possibly He simply meant that what He was promising would occur before there could be another Passover for Him to eat at. Or possibly He was hinting at the idea of a spiritual fulfilment of Passover when they sat at His Table in the future and they again enjoyed Passover, together with Him, along with all His people, in the eating of the bread and the wine at the Lord's Supper. And that that would also be when He, as it were, spiritually drank of the fruit of the vine in company with them ('where two or three are gathered in My Name there am I among them' - Matthew 18.20) once the Kingly Rule of God had come at Pentecost. Thus He would again both eat and drink with them once the Kingly Rule of God was fully established on earth by the Holy Spirit over His people.

Others who see this coming Kingly Rule of God as referring to the coming of the everlasting Kingdom see the possibility of this 'eating of the Passover' by Jesus as something fulfilled in eternity. It must be remembered in this regard that the Passover was a memorial of deliverance, and a declaration that the people were protected by sacrificial blood, and His point could therefore be that in Heaven and the new earth there will always be a memorial to

the cross and a reminder that we have been redeemed by His blood. That He will always be 'the Lamb as it had been slain' (Revelation 5.6). That all will continue to glory in the cross. Thus He could have been saying that there will in Heaven be a spiritual equivalent to the eating of the Passover, when His people will eat heavenly food and drink heavenly wine in His presence. That there will then be a kind of Messianic Banquet. But it would, as we have seen, not fit in with the whole passage.

In that case He would be telling them that eternity would be taken up with their continually partaking of Him (compare Revelation 21.22; 22.3-5), and that He would continually be with them in whatever would, in the new Heaven and earth, be the equivalent of feasting (see Revelation 21.6; 22.1-2). Compare how in Zechariah 14 Heaven can be depicted in terms of the annual Feast of Tabernacles. The idea there is not that we must expect a literal fulfilment, a going back to the old, a literal slaughtering of beasts, (or in this case an observance of the Passover with the sacrifice of a lamb), so that the only things that lambs, who were then able to lie down with lions and wolves (Isaiah 11.6-9), would fear would be humans, but rather a fuller non-sacrificial fulfilment in the heavenly realm. It would be a feast which represented God's triumph.

22.17-18 'And he received a cup, and when he had given thanks (eucharistias), he said, "Take this, and divide it (share it) among yourselves, for I say to you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingly Rule of God shall come."

During the Passover feast it was customary for four cups of wine to be drunk. This was therefore probably the first cup, the initial opening of the feast, although it may have been the second. And Luke probably has the saying that follows it in the right place. It may be seen as quite likely that Jesus made some poignant comment as each cup was drunk. It was after all a time of huge significance. Luke then draws on His two main emphases, the one to do with the soon coming and final certainty of the Kingly Rule of God which will not involve His eating and drinking, and the one which spoke of the giving of His body and of the new covenant sealed in blood, at which there would be eating and drinking, for He wants to bring out both stresses individually. Matthew and Mark meanwhile deliberately limit mention of the drinking of wine to one cup so as to concentrate the minds of their readers on the cup later used in Communion at the Lord's Table. They therefore, in order to introduce these words, had to tack them rather uncomfortably onto the words of institution which are similar to those given below, because while they did not wish to omit them altogether, their emphasis was on the significance of the Lord's Supper as continually celebrated by the church. They were combining the two aspects into one for that purpose.

'Divide it among yourselves.' It was normal at the Passover for the presiding person to drink first and then for the cup to be passed round. So this probably means that Jesus had taken His first drink and was now offering it to them, so that each might drink from the cup. It may, however, signify that Jesus did not drink of it Himself, although in our view this seems unlikely in view of His statement that He had so desired to share this meal with them. Indeed it would mar the sense of oneness and unity. But the principle point here is that the wine at this feast, and possibly in this cup, would be the last wine He would taste, until the coming of the Kingly Rule of God that lay beyond it (apart from the cup of suffering - verse 42). It was an indication of how close was the coming of the Kingly Rule of God, a coming which would be especially revealed by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The description of this wine as His last taste before the coming of the Kingly Rule of God was an assertion both of His certain approaching death, and of the certainty of the coming of the Kingly Rule of God. It was also the guarantee of His resurrection in preparation for it (for without bodily resurrection He would not otherwise be able to drink of it again). So it was both an indication of His coming death and a positive guarantee of His glorious coming victory and of the 'good times' that would one day come. It was an assurance that in spite of

what was to happen, the Kingly Rule of God would become a reality. It would begin once He was taken up and enthroned, and would then continue for ever, and they could all therefore carry with them this certainty, that they would once more ‘sup together’ and ‘drink wine’ with Him under His Father’s Kingly Rule (both on earth and in Heaven, compare Isaiah 25.6-8. See also Luke 12.37; 14.24).

As already mentioned there are two main views about what He means here, whether He means that they will once more eat and drink with Him in spiritual fellowship around the Lord’s Table, or whether it refers to His future eating and drinking in the eternal kingdom. We favour the first, firstly because otherwise there is a sad lack of reference to the period that will come between His enthronement and His coming again, and secondly because otherwise it would indicate that He was telling them to seek humility and glory at the same time, an unlikely possibility when it was spoken to men who wrongly had their minds fixed on the highest place.

In our view we must see His not eating and drinking as a symbol of His dedicating Himself to dying on the cross (compare Numbers 6.3), and of His priesthood in offering Himself on it (Leviticus 10.8), as described more fully in Hebrews 9.11-14.

But those who see it as referring to the coming of the everlasting Kingdom see it as signifying that the reason why He would not drink was because His work would not be done until all was accomplished. Cessation from the drinking of wine indicated to a Jew either the intention of entering on priestly ministry (Leviticus 10.8) or the intention to take a sacred vow (Numbers 6.3). It was a symbol of those especially dedicated to a sacred task (1.15). We are reminded here that, in Hebrews, Jesus’ future time is seen as being utilised in His ever living to make intercession for us as our great High Priest (Hebrews 7.25). No priest entering on his ministry was to drink wine. Thus Jesus may here be stressing the total dedication of Himself to the saving task that lies ahead.

‘Eucharistesas (when He had given thanks).’ All the cups would be blessed during the Passover so that this does not identify which cup it was. The verb is also used by Luke of the bread. The use of this verb without an object is typically Jewish.

22.19-20 ‘And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave to them, saying, “This is my body which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me.” And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you.”’

And then Jesus came to the second part of what He wanted to convey to His disciples from the Passover feast. For in one sense in taking the Passover bread and breaking it before passing it to them He was treating it like a regular meal (usually the blessing came after the passing out of the Passover bread). He was indicating that what He was doing had a special purpose connected with Himself, that the blessing would flow out from Himself. It was a reminder of the feeding of the multitude (9.16-17), and a guarantee that He would feed them in the days to come (24.30-31; John 6.53-58). He wanted them to see in this bread His body given for them on which they could feed as they continually came to Him and believed on Him. He wanted them to see Him as the One Who could feed their souls and give them continually abundant life (John 10.10).

He no doubt had in mind His words in John 6.35, ‘I am the bread of life (which had come down from Heaven and gives life to the world - verse 33), he who comes to me will never hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst’. And His later words, ‘I am the living bread who came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live for ever. And the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh’ (John 6.51). Thus in speaking of the giving of His body He was conveying the fact that through His death He was offering them life, eternal life (John 4.10-14) and that they would enjoy that life *as they kept on coming to*

Him and kept on believing in Him. This was no offer of a semi-magical, mystical method of conveying something inaptly called 'grace', but an offer of a living and continual personal relationship with Himself, an abiding in the vine (John 15.1-6).

We must remember that eating flesh and drinking blood was a vivid Old Testament way of describing the killing of people. In the Old Testament, when the Psalmist spoke of those who 'eat up my people like they eat bread' (Psalm 14.4; 53.4), and Micah describes the unjust rulers of Israel as 'those who hate the good and love the evil --- who eat the flesh of my people' (Micah 3.3), both were indicating the actions of those who were doing great harm to them, including slaughtering them. To eat flesh is therefore to partake in the benefits resulting from the suffering of another.

By eating the bread they would certainly not be indicating that they themselves would kill Him, at least not directly (although their sins would kill Him), but by their act they were equally certainly indicating their need to partake of His suffering, to receive benefit through His suffering, and that it was their sins which were responsible for His death. They were partaking in His death. Others would kill Him, what they would do was benefit through His death and become a part of it (see John 6.54). Thus this was not meant in any quasi-magical sense. It was to be a spiritual act. The bread could not be His body, even by a miracle, for He was Himself at that time there in His body (so those who try to make it more have to call it a 'mystery', which in this case means something that not only defies common sense and logic, which might be possible, but is totally self-contradictory, which is not possible. Even the greatest of miracles could not make a piece of bread eaten at a table the same as a human body present there alive at the same table!). In sensible interpretation it had to mean 'this represents my body' (compare the use of 'is' in Luke 8.11; Galatians 4.24; Revelation 1.20) just as the bread at the Passover represented the bread of affliction.

When eating the Passover bread the Jews saw themselves as partaking in the sufferings of their ancestors. In a sense they actually saw themselves as one with them in corporate unity. Thus they enjoyed a genuine spiritual experience of oneness with their deliverance (although the bread remained the same). In the same way when Christians eat of this bread they see themselves as partaking in the death of Christ, as having been with Him on the cross (Galatians 2.20). So by recognising and acknowledging their close participation with Him in His death by faith they recognise that through it they have received eternal life. But no further lamb is slain or is needed. No further offering is made, or needs to be made. Nothing needs to be done to the bread. He is the one sacrifice for sin for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2.2; Hebrews 10.10, 14; John 4.42; 1 John 4.14). They rather recognise that His offering of Himself once for all (Hebrews 9.28) is something that they continually participate in, and that they participate by constantly coming to Him and believing in Him (John 6.35). Thus do they eat of His flesh and drink of His blood by benefiting through His death (John 6.53-56), just as in the Old Testament men 'ate flesh' and 'drank blood' when they benefited by their deaths, and just as the Jews became partakers in the blood of the prophets by consenting to their deaths (Matthew 23.30).

'This do in remembrance of Me.' By these words He was also setting up a means of remembrance and continual participation in what He was to do for them. That was what the Passover had always been to the Jews. As they participated in it they felt that once again they were back in Egypt and God was coming down to deliver them. They recognised that once again they were His people, awaiting His powerful working. They felt as though they were being delivered again. When they ate the bread they said, 'This is the bread of affliction that we ate in Egypt'. And they really felt that it was, for the 'we' represented the whole body of Israel past and present. They felt as though they were there once again, at one with their forefathers, that they were a continuation of their forefathers. It was not just a memorial but a 'remembrance' (difference ours, the Greek word could mean either) in which they were taken back in time and participated again with their ancestors of old in the mighty working of God.

And it was all with the hope that one day it would happen again and introduce God's kingly rule.

In the same way when the disciples, and those who came to believe on Him through their words, took bread in this way and ate it, they were to feel that they were once again walking with Jesus and supping with Him. They were to feel as though they too were entering personally into His brokenness on the cross. They were being crucified with Him (Galatians 2.20). And they were then to sense that they were receiving new life from Him as the branch receives it from its oneness with the vine (John 15.1-6), and dying and rising again with Him (Romans 6.4; Galatians 2.20; Ephesians 2.1-6). And if their hearts were rightly disposed towards Him, that is what would happen. And they were to see that they were renewing their covenant with Him, a covenant sealed by His blood, that guaranteed their position before the Father as His children (2 Corinthians 6.16-18). This last idea of the covenant is central to the Lord's Supper. It is to be more than a memorial, it is to be a personal remembrance, a full participation in Him through the Spirit, and a recommitment to His covenant through which full salvation has come. But there would be nothing mysterious about the bread. The bread would not change either physically or spiritually (any more than the Passover bread did). It would rather be the point of contact through which they came in touch with the crucified and living Christ, coming to Him and believing on Him continually, enjoying His presence among them (Matthew 18.20; 28.20) and thus enjoying life through His name.

We should note that Jesus said 'do this' not 'offer this'. It was an act of remembrance not an offering. The offering was of Jesus, made once and for all on the cross. The 'doing' of this was a remembrance of that offering. The wine did not replace His sacrifice or even mime it. It was a memorial of the blood that had been shed.

It is difficult to overstress the significance of what this change to the Passover ritual meant. Consider the extraordinary fact. Here Jesus was taking over the Passover, as He had taken over the Sabbath (6.5), and was applying it to Himself. No ordinary prophet would ever have dared to do this. Humanly speaking it was outrageous, unless the One Who did it was God Himself (which is why Jesus made this crystal clear at this time - John 14.6-9). For it was to make out that what He was about to do was as great, if not greater, than what God, their Almighty Lord, had done at the Passover. It was to supplant the God-ordained Passover. It was replacing the Passover by the new deliverance being wrought by Him through the cross. In His death and resurrection it would be He Who would 'pass over' His people, protecting them from the wrath to come, and making available for them the forgiveness of sins (24.46-47). It was declaring that in Him was fulfilled all that the Passover had meant to Israel, and more. Here was God's final and full act of deliverance for all who would shelter beneath His blood. It was the fulfilment of all that the Passover had meant, and to which the Passover had pointed.

'And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you." ' And in the same way, when He took what was probably the third cup, (they were all cups of blessing, but this was especially thought of as the cup of blessing), to be taken after eating the Passover meal, He told them that it was the symbol of the new covenant in His blood, a covenant sealed through the death of the Victim, and by participation in the Victim. This took their minds back to the days at Mount Sinai when the covenant had been offered and the people of God had accepted it and had sealed it with the shedding of blood, the blood of His covenant, 'the blood of the covenant that He has made with you' (Exodus 24.8). Then animals had been offered in substitution and representation, and the blood had been sprinkled on the people. Here then also was the sealing of a covenant in blood, but this time it was in His blood, of which they in symbol 'drank' by receiving the wine as they responded spiritually to Him in dependence on His sacrifice. And the covenant was the new covenant by which God guaranteed to do a transforming work in their hearts and lives (Jeremiah 31.31-34; Hebrews 8.8-13), bringing them full forgiveness of

sins (24.46-47; Acts 26.18) and inheritance among those who were made holy in Him (Acts 26.18).

Thus when they drank wine in the future (or when they participated in the equivalent of the Passover in the future) they were to see in it a remembrance of His death. The redness of the wine would remind them of His blood shed for them. The drinking of the wine would remind them that they partook in the benefits of His death. Just as their fathers had partaken of the blood of the prophets by participating in killing them (Matthew 23.30), so they partook of the blood of Jesus because they were participating in His death and receiving forgiveness for their sins (24.47; 1 John 1.7), the very sins which had brought about His crucifixion and were therefore responsible for His death. For the cup of the new covenant in His blood was ‘poured out for them’ (so the Greek), as He was, like the Servant of the Lord described of old (Isaiah 53.12), numbered with the transgressors (verse 37). Thus by coming to Him and believing in Him through participation in the bread and the wine they would be continually enjoying forgiveness and eternal life in His name. They would be abiding in Him (John 6.53-56). They would be guaranteeing, as long as their inward hearts were in parallel with their outward action, their participation in the new covenant in His blood.

Once again He was taking a familiar Old Testament metaphor. In Zechariah 9.15 the LXX speaks of the fact that the victorious people of God ‘will drink their blood (the blood of their enemies) like wine’ signifying a triumphant victory and the slaughter of their enemies. And David used a similar picture when three of his followers had risked their lives to fetch him water. He poured it out on the ground as an offering to God and said, ‘shall I drink the blood of the men who went at the risk of their lives?’. Furthermore Isaiah brought both metaphors of eating and drinking together when he said of the enemies of Israel that God would ‘make your oppressors eat their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with wine’ (Isaiah 49.26), signifying that they would destroy themselves. Thus in Hebrew thought drinking a person’s blood meant killing someone or benefiting by their death.

So as we partake of the Lord’s Supper we are indicating that, as David would have done if he had drunk the water brought to him by those who loved him, we are seeking to benefit by His sacrifice of Himself. We are partaking in His death. We are making His death our own, so that we might enjoy His life springing up within us.

EXCURSUS on the Problems of 22.19-20.

It is sad that at this sacred point in the narrative it is necessary to pause in the midst of having our thoughts fixed on Christ in this way in order to briefly consider some of the problems connected with these verses. (A book could be written on each). Those who are not concerned with the kind of things that we will consider here can pass on and ignore this Excursus. But the first problem that we have is as to whether a part of these verses is actually in the original text of Luke (our conclusion will be a definite ‘yes’). The second is as to how Luke’s words tie in with the other Gospels and with Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 11.23-26. And the third is as to whether the bread and the wine are but symbols, or whether they are more than symbols.

1). What part of these verses were not in the original text, if any?

To simplify the matter we can say that there is one important Greek manuscript, and only one, which excludes the latter part of these verses. It excludes the words, ‘which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me. And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you.”’ All the other most important Greek manuscripts include the words. Only D does not. D is, however supported by Old Latin versions and other manuscripts of versions (e.g. a b d e ff2 i l). Still others rearrange the verse order (e.g. Syriac s c). And some would argue that it is so unlikely that it would be omitted if it was once there that this must indicate that it was not in the original version of Luke. But paradoxically the actual abundance of it in Old Latin

manuscripts, and the lack of the omission elsewhere, rather emphasises a localised omission.

If there had been a number of witnesses on both sides, of a fairly even and general nature, the argument from omission would have seemed conclusive. But against it here is the argument as to how the same words, which are not specifically reproduced from elsewhere word for word, could possibly have found their way into all other Greek manuscripts in approximately the same form, especially considering their widespread nature, apart from D, if it was not there in the original. It is statistically impossible. It would seem logically from the evidence that the omission must only have occurred in a text going to the area where D was prominent, and that the words were present in all others, which would serve to confirm that the original text of Luke, sent everywhere else, included it. Otherwise surely some other Greek texts and versions must have arisen in other areas excluding it. This solidarity of evidence is especially impressive because such an early witness as Justin Martyr (c.150 AD) includes it, even though he may well have been connected with the area in which D arose (D, which has within its pages parallel Greek and Latin texts, is probably a Western text, although this is disputed by some). On balance this is firmly and finally conclusive for the inclusion of it. Those few secondary witnesses which then have it included in a different order may be seen as an attempt to restore the text without having the full information necessary for the restoration, or perhaps as an attempt to fit it to the tradition that they used for the observance of the feast.

Then we must add a further argument and that is the fact that the whole of what is said in these verses is required by the balance of Luke's account. The first mention of eating and drinking was of 'not eating and drinking' by Jesus. In view of His then introducing the bread we would surely then expect some comment on the eating and drinking of the disciples. Thus the verses fit aptly in their place.

But why should D have excluded it? Various possible suggestions can be made. Clearly the first possibility is that it happened in a very early manuscript, (from which it was then copied in the area to which it went), through the carelessness and sleepiness of an official scribe. Even today great scholars can very occasionally make the most enormous howlers simply because their attention has slipped for a brief moment in the complexity of what they are dealing with and they never catch up on their error, and that in spite of the facilities that they enjoy that early copyists never dreamed of. It is true that it was a huge mistake to make, but it could have happened. Perhaps he got so caught up in the words that he actually forgot to write them down, and then thought that he had done so, and carelessly continued as though they were there. Copying was a long, laborious and tiring task, and checking almost equally laborious. It was not unusual for a dedicated scribe to end up absolutely exhausted, and in such a state anything could happen. Secondly it may have been copied from a manuscript of Luke's Gospel which had had the words deliberately excised in order to prevent the 'sacred and most secret' words of the most sacred Christian ceremony being publicised to outsiders in the area to which it went. (Or possibly for this reason Luke's copy to Theophilus omitted it). Or it may have been omitted because it did not agree with the tradition that the copyist's church used in the observance of the Communion/Lord's Supper (the Didache omits the sacrificial reference when describing their tradition of the Lord's Supper) People can do funny things when they regard something as 'sacred'. That would, of course, raise the questions to why it was not also done in Matthew and Mark. But the answer to that may be that it was because the alteration took place in the separate manuscript of Luke that the later copyist used, or because his church actually used the version in Matthew and Mark. Thirdly, not knowing much about the Passover feast, he may have been concerned at the mention of two cups, and having already entered in about one cup, decided to omit the second. But if that were the case we would not have expected him to end quite as abruptly as he did. Or his decision may have been the result of the fact that he was unhappy that Luke's version did not seem quite to conform with Matthew and Mark, and was therefore better left out. For the scribe would know that the church for whom he wrote the manuscript would be well aware of the words used in their own

communion services and could include them themselves, and would have Matthew and Mark to work from. This might especially be the case if he knew of fierce disputes about which words were correct. Thus he may have decided to leave the solution to the question up to them. And in considering any of these arguments we should note how abruptly the shorter reading ends. It requires a concluding comment which does not appear in the shorter reading. Something certainly seems to be missing in the shorter version, especially to anyone who did observe Communion/the Lord's Supper. Perhaps this copyist wanted each church to fill in the gap with their own traditional version of the sacred words. Another possibility is that having already written about the wine and the bread his mind might have temporarily 'switched off' so that when he picked up again he did so after the (second) giving of the wine. If this manuscript was then widely used in Old Latin areas (a copy of it was after all preserved, which suggests that it may have been an 'official' text) it would explain the comparative 'abundance' of Old Latin Texts which had the omission in them, as compared with those found elsewhere. So all in all there are many possible explanations and the facts would in our view seem to suggest very strongly that in this case the longer reading is correct, while the shorter one arose from an early copying error, mainly because of the impossibility of it otherwise being contained in all other Greek manuscripts.

2). Why are their different versions of the words in the Gospels and in Paul?

In answering this question we shall first consider the breaking of the bread passages, putting in capitals the words which are exactly the same. And in doing so we must remember that none of the writers record all Jesus' words. Each is translating, and each selects what is suitable to the point that he is getting over. It is not therefore in the main a choice between either/or but of both/and.

Matthew 26.26 'And as they were eating, Jesus **TOOK BREAD**, and blessed, and **BROKE IT**, and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; **THIS IS MY BODY**.'

Mark 14.22 'And as they were eating, he **TOOK BREAD**, and when he had blessed, he **BROKE IT**, and gave to them, and said, Take you, **THIS IS MY BODY**.'

Luke 22.19 'And he **TOOK BREAD**, and when he had given thanks, he **BROKE IT**, and gave to them, saying, **THIS IS MY BODY** which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me.'

1 Corinthians 11.23-24 'For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed **TOOK BREAD**, and when he had given thanks, he **BROKE IT**, and said, "**THIS IS MY BODY**, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." '

Common to all is that **HE TOOK BREAD, BROKE IT AND SAID, 'THIS IS MY BODY'**, stressing the essential unity of the passages. Matthew adds to Jesus' words, 'Take you, eat', Mark adds 'Take you'. Luke and Paul omit this but it is clearly implied. Luke adds, 'Which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me,' and Paul adds, 'which is for you, Do this in remembrance of me'. Paul's 'which is for you' parallels Matthew's 'take, eat' and especially Mark's 'take you'. Luke's 'given for you' simply amplifies the idea. Thus the basic idea is the same in all, with small differences of presentation in order to bring out particular points. The additional words, 'Do this in remembrance of me' are, of course, really required in order to explain the perpetuation of the feast throughout the early church. Thus even if we had not been told about it we would have had to assume it. Indeed, while 'This is my body' would certainly be impressive standing alone, it does require extra words for it to make sense to the hearers. It is possibly the writers and ministers who like dramatic pauses, and not the original speaker, who wish it to stand in its starkness, knowing that the readers/recipients would know its deeper significance. Of course, what His exact words were in Aramaic can only be postulated, for we only have the Greek translations. But the Greek in each case gives the true essential meaning of what He was saying.

Slightly more complicated are the words about the cup.

Matthew 26.27-28 'And he took a CUP, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink you all of it, for **THIS IS MY BLOOD of THE COVENANT**, which is poured out for many to remission of sins.'

Mark 14.23-24 'And he took a CUP, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them, and they all drank of it, and he said to them, **THIS IS MY BLOOD of THE COVENANT**, which is poured out for many.'

Luke 22.20 And the CUP in like manner after supper, saying, **THIS cup IS THE new COVENANT in MY BLOOD**, even that which is poured out for you.'

1 Corinthians 11.25 'In the same way also the CUP, after supper, saying, "**THIS cup IS THE new COVENANT in MY BLOOD**. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

In each Jesus takes a cup and says either, 'This is the covenant in my blood', or alternatively the more stark equivalent in Hebrew form, 'This is my blood of the covenant'. The former is interpretive of the latter. The 'new' may have dropped out in Matthew and Mark because it was felt to be superfluous, or Luke and Paul, in interpreting, may have added that it was a 'new' covenant, because they wanted their Gentile readers to know that it was not just the old Jewish covenant renewed. But all would be aware that it was in fact a new covenant, partly in accordance with God's promise in Jeremiah 31.31, and partly because it was 'in His blood' and looked to the cross, and Jesus' very words and actions thus demanded it even if He did not say it. Matthew, Mark and Luke all agree that He said, 'which is poured out for ---'. Mark simply adds, 'for many', Luke adds, 'for you' and Matthew adds 'for many to remission of sins'. Paul omits this but adds, 'Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me', which is actually required to be said by Jesus (or something like it) to establish the permanence of it as a symbol. As Mark's 'for many' probably has Isaiah 53,11, 12 in mind it has the same significance as Matthew's longer phrase 'for many to remission of sins'. 'Luke's 'you' simply personalises it, recognising that the 'you' is by then being spoken to the whole church who are the 'many' for whom Christ died. Thus the essential meaning is again the same. And as with the bread the importance of doing it in remembrance must at some time have been said by Jesus for the Apostles to take up the feast and perpetuate it as they did. The slight overall differences emphasise the point each is seeking to bring out as they translate or paraphrase from the Aramaic, without altering the basic sense. Essentially all are saying the same.

3). Are the bread and wine symbols only, even though very important ones, or do they become more than that?

To some extent we have already dealt with this question, but we must now expand on it. The bread and wine were never intended to be 'dispensed' by some authoritative figure as though divine favour could be dispensed. No human person was ever intended to take control over them. There is never any suggestion of that in Scripture. Each person who ate and drank the bread and wine was intended to look directly to God as they ate and drank it together with the fellow-members of their church. The whole point of the Passover meal was that it was a 'family and friends' occasion. While the head of the household might call on God for blessing while distributing the bread, there was no thought of priestly ministry.

But as always eventually human beings had to take control of them. At first it was genuinely in order to protect them from being used casually (compare the need in 1 Corinthians 11.27-30). But it was not long before those who thought of themselves more highly than they ought to think began to use them as a means of control. They began to give the impression that by dispensing them or withholding them they could control men's salvation. And then they even began to entrap God within them and hang Him up in a casket for all to see, and to speak of the bread and wine as though it actually became the body and blood of Christ. So

easily can such a sacred ceremony be turned into something which it was never intended to be. Fallen man has an innate tendency to bastardise pure religion, especially if by it he can control people. (The same thing happened originally in primitive religion in exactly the same way, where the basic idea of the All-father gradually became debased into polytheism and magic).

For, as we have pointed out above, the bread at the actual Last Supper could never have become His body in any real sense at all whether physical or spiritual. When he said, 'this is my body', it could not possibly have been taken literally. (For the use of 'is' in this way see Luke 8.11; Galatians 4.24; Revelation 1.20 where representation is clearly intended. In the Aramaic 'is' would probably be lacking, as in Genesis 40.12 where again the idea is representative). For He was still using His body, and they were still looking at Him in it. His words at that stage could only possibly mean 'this represents My body' for they could see his real body standing in front of them. To say that God somehow made it His body, when His body was actually there among them, is so clearly self-contradictory, that we could never suggest it of God. God is never self-contradictory. The early Christians would know that the wine could not have literally become His blood, for they knew that at the time when this was instituted His blood still flowed through His veins. Even if they had been literally turned into flesh and blood before them, it would still not have been *His* flesh and blood. And this is so even if we had had no other grounds for seeing otherwise. Those who insist, 'but He said "This is my body"' and want to take it literally do but make fools of themselves, and sadly of others. While He was in His body there could be no way at all, even by a miracle, for the bread to be His body. That is the one certainty.

But when we recognise that this phrase, 'This *is* my body' replaces 'this *is* the bread of affliction which our father's ate', the last phrase clearly symbolic even though in a powerful way (there was no way in which it could be the bread in question), the issue is settled. Both phrases refer to something that represents what is spoken about, not the thing itself. Thus we have a second reason why it should not be taken literally.

Are the bread and wine then 'merely symbolic'? We must certainly remove the 'merely'. They were symbolic in a deep and genuine way. They were a symbol to be entered into and experienced through the Holy Spirit. Thus when we eat and drink our spirits rise up to the One Whom they represent and have spiritual communion with Him. In our spirits we are united with Him in His death and resurrection (Romans 6.5). We recognise again that we have been made one with Him, and we recognise that we are participating in all that He is for us.

For Jesus' whole point was that we should see in the bread and wine pictures of what He was here to do, and of the benefits that we could receive through Him. It was fallen man who then recognised that he could use these ideas in order to manipulate gullible people, and once the ideas had taken hold and were held fanatically they were difficult to get rid of.

END OF EXCURSUS.

The Warning of Betrayal (22.21-23).

Connected with His important words to do with the bread and the wine Jesus declares that among those who have received the bread and wine is one who will betray Him. Here was the second element in His suffering, that as He sat and watched, Judas had eaten the bread and drunk the wine. It must have almost broken His heart. But His words would run like an electric shock through the gathered disciples. And they would look from one to another wondering who it could possibly be who would betray Him. It is clear that they did not suspect Judas. Judas' mercenary mind was not as apparent to them as it was to Jesus. And after all, he was the group's treasurer. He had to be interested in finance. (If he had stolen from the common purse, as John suggests (John 12.6), this would only have become apparent after he had handed it over to someone else, if indeed he ever did).

In Mark these words appear before the words concerning the bread and the wine. It is of course always possible that they were spoken twice in slightly different form as a dual warning to Judas. Indeed Luke's comment does almost look like a reminder of something that He has said before (with verse 22 possibly introduced from the earlier mention in order to bring out what was said before). Alternately we might consider that Luke or his source places them here in order to bring out the contrast with the significance of the bread and wine, or in order to tie in with the parallel with Peter in the chiasmus, or that Mark, whose account is very brief wants to present the giving of the bread and wine as the final and focal point of the meal. For neither put chronology first in their presentations except in certain specific sequences where it enhanced the message. We might feel that chronologically speaking the order here is the most likely. Would Jesus not want to complete the eating of the Passover, and the establishing of the new order, before He moved on to more controversial topics? But the question is not of great moment. What matters is that, whether before or after the meal, it happened. Analysis.

- a "Behold, the hand of him who betrays Me is with Me on the table" (21).
- b "For the Son of man indeed goes, as it has been determined, but woe to that man through whom He is betrayed!" (22).
- a And they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing (23).

Note that in 'a' He declares that the betrayer is reclining at the table, and in the parallel those reclining at the table ask themselves who it might be. Central is the declaration concerning the traitor and his action. The Son of Man is indeed going, it is determined by God, but woe to the one through whom He is betrayed.

22.21 "But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table."

There are few ideas that chill the blood more than that of 'treachery' and 'betrayal'. All knew of the growing enmity of outsiders against Jesus, and now He was telling them that one of them, one of the chosen twelve, would betray him. It must have seemed unbelievable. And that such a person should be sitting at the table eating with them demonstrated how deep must be his unscrupulousness. For to the Easterner to eat with someone was a declaration of friendship, and a guarantee of safety, honoured by all except the most degraded. Such an idea was deeply rooted in custom.

'The hand.' No closer fellowship could be imagined than that of sharing the same table with the hands constantly almost touching as they shared food on the table. It would appear that Judas had been given a favoured place, just as he was given a favoured sop (John 13.26), so that his hands and Jesus' hands were on the same table. To have someone's hand with you can signify having their support (1.66; Acts 11.21). But such an indication of a person by his hand is essentially Semitic, especially when it is the hand of an enemy or of one working to a contrary purpose (compare 1 Samuel 22.17; 18.21; 24.13; 2 Samuel 14.19). The idea may therefore be of hostility. There on the table of fellowship and love and remembrance was the hand of the betrayer that would seek to strike Him down.

22.22 "For the Son of man indeed goes, as it has been determined, but woe to that man through whom he is betrayed!"

These words are undoubtedly an appeal to Judas to consider what he was doing. Let him recognise that what he was doing, he was doing to 'the Son of Man' Who would shortly be approaching the throne of glory (Daniel 7.13-14). He was being warned that he was in danger of betraying God's Chosen One and committing the unforgivable sin. He was deliberately hardening his heart in such a way that it was becoming frozen in unbelief. It could therefore only result in the most terrible woe. And the truth is that it was only one beyond the pale who could have carried through what he was doing in the face of all the opportunities that he had to consider what he was doing. And he could only have done it by deliberately hardening and

hardening an already hardened heart. The offer of forgiveness was still open, but it was necessary for him to know that it would shortly be closed, and that his situation was a matter of great grief to Jesus ('woe' can also be translated as 'alas'). But it is a sign of man's fallenness that he can carry through the most despicable of acts by rigidly setting his own heart on it in opposition to his own conscience, even though afterwards it can only result in deep remorse and unbearable regret.

But at the same time these were also words of assurance to the other disciples. Let them not think that what was to happen would thwart the purposes of God. For what was to happen was in fact purposed by God. For death and betrayal were aspects of the treatment of 'the son of man' in Daniel 7 (the holy ones of the Most High, together with their king), and the betrayal and death of the Coming One was thus divinely predetermined, as Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah and the Psalmist had made clear (Isaiah 53; Daniel 9.26; Zechariah 13.7; Psalm 22). Judas could not thwart the divine purpose. He could only choose to destroy himself by being a part of the fulfilling it. There was nothing predetermined about Judas' own behaviour, even though it was forecastable (John 6.70), that was not his own choice. In rejection of every warning he chose his own way.

22.23 'And they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.'

Such a statement as Jesus had made could only cause surprise and concern. And yet it seems that they were sufficiently aware of their own weakness to recognise that it could be true, although they may well have thought at the time that He meant betray Him accidentally. Otherwise we would have expected a vociferous denial. But the eyewitness remembered the discussions well, and commented on them. It had been the least tasteful thing about those last hours. It was a reminder of the fact that the one who stands must beware lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10.12). But all the while Judas had to keep up his act, as the discussion went on around him. His heart had to be rigidly set to do evil.

The Humility Which Is To Distinguish Those Who Are His (22.24-30).

Having established the basis for the future by means of the new significance of the bread and wine, and having warned that He was about to be betrayed, He now emphasised the kind of attitude that was essential in His service. The whole future would depend on it. They had continued with Him in His trials and afflictions. Let them now recognise that they must continue with Him in His humble service. In the future it would be when the leaders of the church in later centuries lost this attitude, that they sank into formalism, and produced the very opposite of what Jesus wanted, a hierarchical and overbearing church which had lost its heart and its spirituality. Such people certainly wanted to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, but they did not want to accept what that involved in the eyes of Jesus.

Note the reference here to His afflictions. In verse 15 He had referred to His future suffering, a reference which was the prelude to His institution of the Lord's Supper, in verses 21-23 he had expressed His sadness and grief at Judas' betrayal. Now he joins His disciples with Him as He describes the afflictions that He and they have undergone. As the writer to the Hebrews tells us, He learned obedience by the things that He suffered (Hebrews 5.8).

Analysis.

- a There arose also a contention among them, which of them was accounted to be greatest (24).
- b And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them, and those who have authority over them are called Benefactors" (25).
- c "But you shall not be so, but he who is the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and he who is chief, as he that serves" (26).
- d "For which is greater, the one who sits at meat, or the one who serves? Is not he who

- sits at meat? But I am in the midst of you as He Who serves ” (27).
- c “But you are they who have continued with me in my temptations” (28).
- b “And I appoint to you Kingly Rule, even as my Father appointed to Me” (29).
- a “That you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (30).

Note that in ‘a’ the question is as to which of them is to be the greatest, and in the parallel none will be the greatest for they are to share twelve equal thrones. In ‘b’ is displayed the lordship of Gentile lords, and in the parallel he displays the different kind of lordship that will be theirs in the Kingly Rule of God. In ‘c’ they are to seek an attitude of humility in service, and in the parallel they continue with Him in His testings, which were partly testings as to whether He would shun glory and follow the path of humility and service (4.1-13). Centrally in ‘d’ He lays down that He has Himself chosen the way of humility and service, and that it is to be an example to them.

We should note at once here that verse 30 must be interpreted in line with what has gone before, and not as though it stood on its own. The last thing that Jesus is saying is, ‘Don’t worry, what the Gentiles seek after you will achieve at last’. He is rather saying that what the gentile kings seek after should be eschewed.

22.24 ‘And there arose also a contention among them, which of them was accounted to be greatest.’

A little consideration will demonstrate how easily their questioning of themselves about their frailty could quickly lead on to an assertion by each that they at least were trustworthy, and then on to the question of who was to be the most prominent in the future because of their reliability.

How far the disciples were from having the right attitude and understanding comes out here. Jesus had stressed the coming of the Kingly Rule of God and the sad consequence was therefore that their eyes were still on what they could attain for themselves once the coming earthly Rule, which they were anticipating, came to fruition (compare Acts 1.6, where they were still expecting it). Each wanted to ensure that they obtained their rightful place in it. None of them wanted to be ‘left behind’. The pride of life still ruled. Jesus had been speaking about the Kingly Rule of God coming. That part of His message at least they had understood (or so they thought). And all of them therefore wanted to be someone important in the future that they saw lying ahead, once Jesus had brought His plans to a successful conclusion. It is quite clear that Jesus’ warnings of His imminent death and betrayal had not really sunk in as of immediate concern. What was counting most for them at this time was the fact of the coming Kingly Rule of God and their hope of their own prominence in it.

22.25 ‘And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them, and those who have authority over them are called Benefactors.” ’.

So Jesus gently pointed out that their attitude was abysmal. It was the same as that of the Gentiles. Among the Gentiles their kings took up a position of lordship and expected men to bow down and submit to them. And they loved to be looked on as ‘Benefactors’ (this was specifically so of certain Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings who took this very title, as did later Trajan in Rome. Compare also 2 Maccabees 4.2 of Onias the High Priest). They wanted to be seen as those who graciously bestowed benefits on their subjects. It is an interesting fact of history that even the most evil of kings still wanted to be thought of as ‘good’, and as benefactors. They were constantly declaring all the wonderful things that they had done for the people whom they had enslaved. So the more authority they had, the more they wanted to be able to exert it, and yet at the same time they wanted to be thought well of. While their whole thoughts were on power and prestige and position, they still wanted to be appreciated. Indeed they very often did feel that their subjects owed them a great deal. There are none as

blind as those who have a high opinion of themselves and of their own importance. It was indeed a sad day for the church when the bishops began in exactly the same way to see themselves as 'benefactors'. The more they did so the more arrogant they became.

22.26 "But you shall not be so, but he who is the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and he who is chief, as he who serves."

But it was to be different with them. They were not to be like these Gentile kings. They were to take up an attitude of humility and service. They were not to think of being the greatest, but of being the least. They were not to look for the position of 'elder statesman' but to desire to be seen as of least account. They were not to seek chief status, but to seek to be servants. And this all genuinely from the heart, and not by some massive deception which was simply seeking to be honoured as 'humble' as a result of putting on an act. They were genuinely to consider themselves not just as servants of God, but as servants of their brethren and of mankind, just as Jesus did. (And indeed no man's ministry is in more danger than when people praise him to the skies and treat him as though he was important).

22.27 "For which is greater, the one who sits at meat, or the one who serves? Is not he who sits at meat? But I am in the midst of you as he who serves."

And this is the reason why. It is because they were to take up His own attitude. He was here as the Servant in order to serve both God and man. He was not here seeking greatness, otherwise He could have ensured it. He was here to do God's will and serve others in any way that He could, without seeking honour for Himself. He was indeed the One Who had the right to be honoured (John 5.22-23). And yet He had not sought it for Himself. He had sought only to be as good a servant as He could be. There can be little doubt that behind these words He saw Himself as the Servant of the Lord of Isaiah, whose ideal was to serve, and Who committed Himself to serve, and would do so even when He came in His glory (12.37).

This was the opposite of the way in which all mankind thought. To mankind the important person was the one whom others served. They assessed their prestige by how many people served them and bowed down to them. The man who could sit and eat while others served him was the one who was most important. But the disciples were, like Him, to take up the opposite position. They were to find 'greatness' by being true servants of others, not in ostentatious hypocrisy, but genuinely. They had to have the heart of servants. For the more they truly served, not in order to later obtain reward, but because they had the hearts of servants like He had, the more they would be honoured in the eyes of God. They could take as an example what He had told them earlier, that when He came in His glory they would sit at table while He genuinely served them (12.37). That was the attitude to be continually followed in the Kingly Rule of God. Even in His glory He would be a servant, Whose sole purpose was to genuinely serve and reveal love to others. For that is the attitude that prevails in Heaven. If He had not already done so He would shortly illustrate it by washing their feet (John 13.2-15).

His words here repeat the thought contained in Mark 10.42-45, although with sufficient difference for us to recognise that it is a repetition of the same idea rather than the same statement given in a different place (see also Matthew 23.1-11 for a similar idea). But the identification with the idea of the Servant of the Lord is the same in each case.

Note, however, the particular illustration here in terms of a household servant. This ties in with Jesus' parables about the servants. It is a repetition of what He has already taught them, but emphasising the lowliness and position of servitude they are to seek. They are to see themselves as the slaves of all. It is not therefore restricted to church ministry, but applies to Christians in all aspects of their lives (even to kings). The true sign of the Christian who is doing the Lord's will is that he enjoys being the servant of all, and desires no acknowledgement for what he does. Nor does he consider that it puts him in any special position. He does only what it is his duty to do, to serve his Lord, and to serve others. He seeks

only to be pleasing to God.

22.28 “But you are they who have continued with me in my temptations (distresses, afflictions),”

Then He pointed out to them that up to this point they had indeed walked in this way. They had continued with Him in the lowly life that He had chosen. They too had faced insults, as He had. They too had had nowhere to lay their head. They too had had to take a lowly position. They had chosen to share with Him the way of service. From the commencement of His ministry up to this point He had faced continual temptation and testing. And included in that temptation had been the temptation to take the easy way and to use His powers to smooth His way. Even the temptation to take for Himself authority and power and be exalted. The temptations in the wilderness (4.1-11) in which He had faced these questions, had been but a prelude to the continual temptations that had faced Him since. He had been challenged and tested in every way, on the one hand by insults, by perverse questioners, by a family who thought that He was going in the wrong direction, and by those who hated Him. And on the other by voluntarily going without what all men sought, by choosing poverty, by being faced with those who sought to drive Him to take honour for Himself by announcing Himself as a king, and by His own knowledge of how He could make all different simply by the wrong and selfish use of His powers. He could have wrought mighty wonders and forced Himself on their attention. He could have smitten His enemies where they stood. He could have compromised with the Scribes or the Chief Priests. They would certainly have welcomed Him if only He had been ‘reasonable’ (had generally backed up their ideas) and had compromised. But that was not why He was here. He was here to truly serve God and men. He was here to reveal truth. And thus He had only called on His powers for these purposes, and in order to turn men’s thoughts towards God. He had chosen the way that led to affliction, and never the way that led to His own glory.

And the disciples had continued with Him in this. They too had learned to use the gifts that He had given them in order to preach and serve, and not in order to obtain honour for themselves. They had done well. But it was important that they continued in this way. It was important that they continued to walk as He walked, and thus continued to face and overcome the temptations that He had faced and overcome. And once He had left them they would have to fight those temptations again, but now alone, especially in the days when, instead of obviously being assistants, they would be seen as important in their own right. They would be seen as supreme over the church. Then would come the great danger that they would think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. They would begin to think of themselves as ‘Somebodies’. But this they must for ever eschew. They must rather have their hearts set on the lowest place.

22.29 “And I appoint to you (covenant to you) a kingly rule, even as my Father appointed (covenanted) to me,”

And because they had continued faithfully with Him, walking in His way, and accepting His standards, He was now appointing to them a kingly rule even as His Father had appointed one to Him. He was making them His deputies. They would now take over responsibility for the Kingly Rule of God on earth, and it was because they had developed servant hearts. Note the connection of the word with covenant. This was binding between Him and them.

But as we have just been told, this was not to be the normal kind of kingly rule. For when He had drawn men under the Kingly Rule of God, what had He then done? He had exercised His kingly rule over them in humility and as a Servant. He had had no thought of lording it over them, but of being their servants for His Father’s sake. He had given Himself to the point of exhaustion. And now they must do the same for His sake. For God’s Kingly Rule was over all who belonged to God, over all who were submitted to, or willing to submit to Him. And like He Himself had been, they themselves were in the same way to be servant-rulers under God in

the expanding of His Kingly Rule and for the glorifying of His Name. They were to tend and feed the sheep (John 21.15-17). They were to give themselves for the sheep.

22.30 “That you may eat and drink at my table under my kingly rule, and you shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

And in this service of expanding, and ‘ruling’ in humility over, the Kingly Rule of God, they would be able to eat and drink at His Table. But what does He here mean by ‘His Table’? Many see it as the Table in the future Messianic kingdom (of which there has been no positive mention). But if we take the words in context ‘My table’ must here be connected with ‘I am in the midst of you as Him Who serves’ (verse 27), for His service there was in terms of the table of those who sat at food, and of those who served it. It therefore here signifies ‘the table at which I now serve in the midst of you, and will continue to serve’. Thus as they had sat and watched as He had washed their feet at His Table, so in the future would they eat and drink at His Table as they were served by His hands, and should themselves as a result reveal the same humility, and in the same way serve others, sharing with them also the Lord’s Table. This can only mean in context that through their participation in the Lord’s Supper He would continue humbly to serve them, a service which would then lead them on to serve others in the same way.

So this table at which they would eat and drink is to be connected with His present serving, and must surely therefore be that at which they will receive the Lord’s Supper, eating the bread and drinking the wine from His hands as they had at this Passover, rather than some future Messianic table in the unknown future of which there is no evidence in the context. And being in such a situation there could be no sense of greatness or of arrogance, but only a sense of humility and undeserving that would itself result in their serving others as they recognised the great debt and gratitude that they owed to Him. This would thus involve continual humility, continual humble service, and continual obedience to the will of God as they minister to the people of God, in the way that Jesus had just previously described.

And they would also ‘sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel’. The only Old Testament passage which really connects with this is found in Psalm 122. 5 where we learn that ‘thrones of the house of David’ were set up in Jerusalem in order to ‘bring justice/righteousness’ to ‘the tribes of the Lord’ who went up there. This must mean that those who sat on these thrones ‘judged’ in Jerusalem in David’s name, possibly even being princes of the house of David, and dispensed justice and righteousness to the tribes of the Lord. In the same way the Apostles are to be appointed by Him to act over His people as overseers of what is right in the name of the greater David, bringing to them true justice and righteousness in the name of the King because they are ‘the tribes of the Lord’.

In context there can be no thought of taking up a superior position here. That would be contrary to all that Jesus has just said. (How quickly we jump to our own conclusions because that is how we think, just as the Gentiles did). The point is rather that they will watch over His people, as He has done, with the same attitude of meekness, humility and service. They will sit in His place and act in His name with His attitude towards the people, sitting on the spiritual ‘thrones of the house of David’. He, the Greater David, will have taken His throne above, from which He can continue to serve. They as His representatives will act in His name, serving on earth in all humility, sitting on ‘the thrones of David’. It is the same idea as is found in John 21.15-17 under a different figure, where Peter, and by implication the other disciples, were to be under-shepherds over the sheep. Here they were to be servant-rulers over the Kingly Rule of God, in the same ways as He had been, and would continue to be, as the Servant-King. This was to be their privilege. They would fulfil it by continuing with the establishing of the Kingly Rule of God on earth by winning men and women under His Rule, and by caring for them as under-shepherds. This establishing of the Kingly Rule of God is indeed a central theme in Acts (1.3; 8.12; 14.22; 19.8; 20.25; 28.23, 31).

In John we have the same idea expressed in different words, ‘Truly I say to you whoever receives whom I send receives me, and whoever receives Me receives Him Who sent Me’ (John 13.20).

We have only to think for a moment to realise that any suggestion that this statement is intended to exalt the Apostles in any worldly (or even heavenly) sense is totally contrary to all that Jesus has said in verses 25-27. He is rather declaring that like Him they are to be servants, both now and in the future. He is instituting them into the new position that will soon be theirs as overseers of, and ministers to, the churches. To see it as signifying that they can look forward to being in a position of glorious authority over the people of Israel (especially the earthly people of Israel) would be to see them as being instilled with an attitude of being exalted in precisely the way that Jesus had rejected both for Himself and for them.

But can the church be called ‘the twelve tribes of Israel? The answer is a resounding, ‘yes’, as we have seen above. For ‘the twelve tribes of Israel’ is merely in the end a phrase indicating ‘all Israel’, having in mind its founding fathers.

To repeat what we have already said. At varying times there were a varying number of tribes of Israel, but even in Jesus’ day most ‘pure’ Jews identified themselves with one of ‘the twelve tribes’. We can compare how Paul described himself as a Benjamite. However, apart from the few, this identification would not go back many generations, and the number of Jews who could demonstrate that they were actually descended from the patriarchs themselves, even if there were any, would not have been many. Thus the phrase really signifies ‘all who professed themselves as Israel and were bound in the covenant’.

That the church was seen as the new Israel, the new covenant community, the genuine fulfilment and continuation of Israel, comes out regularly in the New Testament. The unbelieving Jews were seen as having been cut off from the true Israel, and the believing Gentiles as grafted in. See for example John 15.1-6; Romans 11.17-33; Galatians 3.29; 6.16; Ephesians 2.11-22; 1 Peter 2.5, 9; Revelation 7.1-8. And Peter in a letter which is clearly written to all Christians, both because of its content and because whenever he refers to ‘Gentiles’ in it, it is always as those who are unbelieving, writes to them as ‘the exiles of the Dispersion’ (1 Peter 1.1), those who are ‘strangers and pilgrims’ (1 Peter 2.11) dispersed around the world, referring by this to the whole believing people of God. In the same way James writes to ‘the twelve tribes in the Dispersion’ (James 1.1), and again is writing to all Christians. This is demonstrated by the fact of his total lack of reference to Gentile Christians in his letter, something which would have been unaccountable in a letter written only to Jewish Christians when he was seeking to give them guidance about their behaviour. Had Gentile Christians not been included he would have been failing in his duty not to explain how they were to behave towards them. So the non-mention of them, even by a hint, confirms that they are included among those to whom the letter is written. To him believing Gentiles had been incorporated into Israel and were part of ‘the twelve tribes’.

So this ‘judging (overseeing) of the twelve tribes of Israel’ began immediately after the resurrection when the Apostles in Jerusalem were in a position of humble authority over the whole church in Jerusalem and Judea. And at that stage they were all Jews or adherents to Judaism who had ‘believed’ and had thus become a part of the true vine (John 15.1-6). As His deputies they sat on ‘the thrones of David’ and ‘ruled’ over them, in the special sense of ruling as ‘servant-rulers’ that He had already described. They had authority over them in order to be their servants. And then when the expansion to the Gentiles was revealed, the believing Gentiles too would be incorporated under that Kingly Rule. But as with Jesus, it was not to be a rule of dogmatic authority, but of Christ-like service.

The establishment of the Apostles is, as we will discover in our commentary, vividly brought out in the first chapters of Acts where in Jerusalem the Apostles, supplemented by Matthias, do everything together. And it is to the Apostles in Jerusalem (along with the elders) that

major questions are brought which have to be decided on (Acts 15). In the event this would only cease because Jerusalem, having finally rejected the Messiah, was itself finally rejected (see our commentary on Acts).

It may, of course, be that the idea is then also to be seen as enduring in some way into the eternal kingdom, but if so it would only be in a general way, as a general indication of blessing on them at that time (like the servant who receives ten cities in the parable, something not to be taken literally, but indicating everlasting reward). Indeed nothing is more sure than the fact that the idea of having a servant heart is to continue into eternity. And then others would also 'rule' with them. This includes all the martyrs and all who rejected the mark of Satan - Revelation 20.4 - to say nothing of Old Testament believers. If we do extend it like this the thought will then rather be that the prestige and glory that they had enjoyed on earth at His command, the prestige of being faithful and devoted servants, would also be theirs in the eternal future as a gracious gift from God at the foundation of the new Jerusalem in the new Heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21). There also they would maintain the idea of being servants.

We should note that Jesus did not make quite the strict differentiation that we do between the earthly Kingly Rule of God, already established under Him, and continued in Acts, and the heavenly Kingly Rule of God. He saw it as one whole, as being fashioned on earth in the crucible of life before being finalised in Heaven (compare Hebrews 12.22-24). His people both had, and would have, eternal life, and this was depicted in terms of two resurrections, the first resurrection a spiritual one (John 5.24-25; Ephesians 1.19-2.6) and the second a bodily one (John 5.28-29). He saw the true church on earth from Heaven's viewpoint, as Paul did when he called them citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3.20) and spoke of them as sons of the Jerusalem which was above (Galatians 4.26). He saw them as already having been transported to being under His Kingly Rule (Colossians 1.13), for He was to build His new 'congregation' (of Israel) on the foundation of His Apostles (Matthew 16.18; Ephesians 2.20; Revelation 21.14).

Note for example how when speaking of the future rewards of His disciples He says that these rewards will be 'in this present time and in the age to come' (18.30; Mark 10.30), thus seeing them as having dual application, both on earth and in Heaven. In the same way Paul can speak of the 'new creation' as having already commenced (2 Corinthians 5.17; Galatians 6.15), and of Christians as being citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3.20), dwelling already in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 2.6). While John in Revelation sees the martyrs, and those who had rejected Antichrist in the person of the state and of the forces of evil, as reigning with Christ over the period between the first and second advent, that is over the divinely predicted 'a thousand years', which represents a vague and long period of undefined length as determined by God (Revelation 20.4 compare 2 Peter 3.8), a period which precedes the final defeat of Satan and the setting up of the everlasting Kingdom at the final resurrection. (Thus the 'thousand years' of Revelation is not looking forward to a coming Millennium, but is at present in process of fulfilment the perfectly measured time of which the extent is unknown between the first and second coming).

Comparison can also be made with Matthew 19.28. This is in interesting contrast with Luke's citation of Jesus' words. In Matthew reference is made to being 'on *twelve* thrones judging (overseeing) the twelve tribes of Israel', and this is seen as following the 'regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in His glory'. We note here that 'twelve' thrones are mentioned because at the time that this was said in Matthew Judas had not betrayed Jesus. In Luke 22 the 'twelve' is dropped before thrones, for Jesus knew that one Apostle no longer qualified and no other had yet been appointed.

But the description in Matthew is to be seen as having reference to 'the regeneration' as it came about through the work of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost, where it is also described as

‘the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord’ (Acts 3.19), and certainly at that time Stephen specifically sees the Son of Man as already then in His glory (Acts 7.55-56). For we note that in Matthew 19.28 Jesus speaks of the Son of Man sitting in His glory, not as coming in His glory. He took this seat of glory on His resurrection (24.26; Acts 2.33, 36; 3.13; 5.31; 7.55-56; compare John 17.5) which would later also be manifested at His coming (Matthew 25.31). So this overseeing will begin immediately, and in the final consummation it will spill over into the everlasting kingdom. For in that everlasting kingdom all will be eager to serve.

But we cannot really see it as signifying that the twelve Apostles will have sole supreme authority over the people of God in Heaven (or even, for those who believe in an earthly Millennium, over an earthly kingdom in the distant future, after being resurrected). This can be rejected for three reasons:

- **Firstly because one of the twelve then mentioned betrayed Him, although it is true that he could later be replaced, and was.**
- **Secondly, and more importantly, because we would then have to ask, ‘what about Abraham, and the twelve patriarchs, and Moses, and Elijah, and Isaiah, and David, and John the Baptist, and Paul, and Barnabas, and many others’? Here we can specifically compare 13.28 where it is they and not the Apostles who are mentioned in connection with the eternal kingdom. Jesus had after all refused to confirm who would sit to His right and left when He was established in His Kingly power (Mark 10.40). It is difficult to see how these others could be exempted from also sharing thrones in either a supposed Millennium or in the heaven Kingly Rule of God, if the idea was to be taken literally.**

Thirdly because the whole idea of them being offered a position of glory as an incentive goes absolutely in the opposite direction to that in the previous verses. Jesus would hardly seek to set up an idea here that He had just roundly condemned in the previous verses. It is an indication of our fallen hearts that we think how wonderful such a promise would be. We just cannot get over our desire to be lords of creation. We do not mind serving, but it is only as long as it is as kingpins, or will lead to our being kingpins. How different that is from the thoughts of Jesus Who delighted in being a servant to all.

On the other hand we do know that in Acts this being set over God’s people was precisely what did happen to the Twelve, with one having been replaced. They did act as ‘judges’ over the Kingly Rule of God on earth in Jerusalem, when it had been established after Pentecost, and as it expanded outwards into the world among all nations. They were given the power to ‘bind and loose’ (Matthew 16.19; 18.18). They could then certainly be seen as ‘sitting on the thrones of David’, that is, sitting in authority as representing the Son of David, in accordance with Psalm 122.5. We must therefore see the prime reference of these verses as being to this position following Pentecost, but put in eschatological terms.

Peter’s Coming Denial (22.31-34).

Having declared to them the future responsibility that they will have as overseers of God’s people after the resurrection, Jesus now warns His Apostles, and Peter especially, what is involved in such a responsibility, and promises that Peter is being prepared for it, as are they all. They must recognise that if they are to be overseers they must also continue to endure the testings which come with such a privilege. It is not possible to be a leader among God’s people and yet remain out of Satan’s firing line. They will thus be clearly in his sights. They have already shared such testings along with Him (verse 28), and they must now recognise that these testings will continue.

So parallel with the exposure of Judas’ coming betrayal in the chiasmus, we now have the

exposure of Peter's coming denial. He also is to be sifted. This too betrays Satan's hand at work on this awful night when all the spiritual forces of evil are at work (Colossians 2.15), for, as well as entering Judas, he is to be permitted to sift Peter, and the others, to the full. Satan would by this do his best to make them useless in Christ's service, and to turn them against God, as he had tried to do with Job (Job 1 & 2), and as he had done with Judas, for he could still not understand the gracious mercy of God that could forgive and uphold His saints. Thus Satan is seen as very active at this final juncture as he seeks to thwart the purposes of God. He knows that his time is short. This is both an encouragement and a warning. It is an encouragement in that we recognise here that he could not thwart the purposes of God, but it is a warning lest, like Judas, we allow him to steal away our part in it. Peter's failure and subsequent restoration, on the other hand, acts as an encouragement in that, even if Satan trips us up, we can be sure that there is always a way back if we come in true repentance. And through it he would learn to serve.

But this denial by Peter was also to be the fourth aspect of Jesus' suffering, for when Jesus turned and looked on Peter (22.61) there must have been great grief in His heart at the thought that even Peter had failed Him, (and that even though He had known that it would happen).

So as Jesus had said earlier, the Apostles had continued with Him in His temptations and dangers (verse 28), and now they would still continue to be called on to do so (He speaks of 'you' in the plural), for to be connected with Jesus was no easy matter. Thus they must be allowed to be tempted. Peter was merely the first, and most open to it because of his impetuosity. And, as Peter would, they would all sometimes fail. The Bible never hides the truth about man's weakness. Nevertheless the lesson received through Peter's experience was the assurance that they would always find a welcome back if their failure had been through weakness and not continual hardness of heart, and they had truly repented.

Four points result from this incident. Firstly the total composure of Jesus. Although He recognised Peter's weaknesses He had no doubts about His own ability to deal with all the temptations of Satan, even though, in the human frailty which He had taken on Himself, He winced before what lay ahead. Secondly it demonstrates that Satan is limited in what he can do to God's people by what God is willing to permit. Thirdly it demonstrates that Satan had been permitted to enter Judas in order to see what Judas would do. But that he could not force him to do it. In the end the choice was not Satan's but Judas's. Judas chose his own course, and solidly hardened his own heart. It was the end of a long process of going backwards, already visible to Jesus in John 6, which ended in deep regret and remorse, but not in repentance because he had hardened his heart beyond the possibility of repentance. And fourthly it demonstrates that Satan was permitted to sift Peter in order to see what Peter would do. But the important thing was that while Peter failed in weaker moments, he repented, and turned back to Jesus, for he was under Jesus' intercessory protection. He had thus never turned against Him in his heart, nor had he hardened his heart. So one would perish because he had irrevocably hardened his heart, and the other would be delivered by the gracious intercession and working of Jesus Christ because, although he had failed through weakness, his heart was not permanently hardened, but was still open towards Christ and he was thus able to find forgiveness.

And yet for Jesus both of these incidents must have come as body blows, even though He knew what their results would be. His testing was not just to be limited to the cross. It was to result from all that Satan could throw at Him, as in the midst of His trials at the hands of His enemies, one of His boon companions betrayed Him, and another denied that he knew Him. Satan was certainly being allowed the opportunity to do his very worst so that Jesus might overcome to the uttermost.

Analysis.

- a “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat” (31).
- b “But I made supplication for you, that your faith fail not (32a).
- c And do you, when once you have turned again, establish your brethren” (32b).
- b And he said to him, “Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death” (33).
- a And He said, “I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow this day, until you will three times deny that you know me” (34).

Note that in ‘a’ Satan will sift Peter as wheat, and in the parallel Peter will betray Jesus three times. In ‘b’ Jesus guarantees his faith (but not that he will be faithful in the short term), while in the parallel Peter foolishly guarantees his own faithfulness, at which he will be fail, but will not lose his faith. Centrally in ‘c’ Peter will be restored and thus able to strengthen his brethren. So we see that even in his permitted failure there is a deeper purpose, so that he will be able to fulfil his responsibility of ‘ruling’ over the new Israel.

22.31 “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat,”

There is an important emphasis in this passage that emphasises what has gone before. It is clear that Jesus regularly called Peter ‘Simon’, for that was his original given name (Matthew 16.17; 17.25; Mark 14.37; John 21.15-17), while His only actual use of the name ‘Peter’ was in this passage. To Jesus in their daily activities Peter was always ‘Simon’. This then makes even more emphatic the deliberate alteration in this passage from ‘Simon’ to ‘Peter’. ‘Peter’ was, as it were, Simon’s throne name (6.14; Mark 3.16; Matthew 16.18; Acts 10.5). It is because he is now about to enter onto a new phase of his life, which will begin with this extraordinary sifting, that the change takes place. It is a further indication of Peter’s taking his place on one of ‘the thrones of David’. (By the time that the Gospels were written Peter was established as Peter, but he is never directly addressed as that in the Gospels).

The repetition of Simon’s name (Simon = Peter) indicates the intensity of Jesus’ words, and the affection that He feels for Peter (compare 10.41). The thought is powerful. Satan has desired that the Apostles (‘you’ in the plural) might be put where he can get at them, so that just as wheat is sifted in separating the grain from the chaff, he can give them a thorough going over. Without God’s permission he could not do so. But God does allow it for He has confidence in the disciples and knows that it will be for their good. They have been with Him throughout His temptations, and they too will be allowed further testing.

‘Sift you as wheat.’ This sifting of wheat imitated the purposes of God. John the Baptist had declared that one day God would sift men like wheat (3.17). Thus Satan sought that he too might be allowed to do the same. Satan is confident that if he sifts Peter the grain will fall away and only the chaff will be left. He always had confidence in men that they would fail in the end. What he does not realise is that by his actions in fact the opposite will happen, because of the mercy and goodness of God. For he knows nothing of mercy and goodness. As a result of the coming of the Holy Spirit the wheat will be gathered into the barns of God, and Satan will be left with only the chaff which in the end will burn along with him.

There are similarities between what is happening to Peter here and what happened to Joshua the godly High Priest in Zechariah 3. There too Satan arraigned him before the Lord, only finally to be thwarted because of God’s protecting hand. For God will not allow His true servants to fail in their hour of need if their hearts are right towards Him (that is, if they truly believe in Him).

22.32 “But I made supplication for you, that your faith fail not, and do you, when once you have turned again, establish your brethren.”

Notice the emphatic ‘I’. Jesus stands over against Satan and proves the more powerful. None other could have done this, only the One Who was ‘Stronger than he’ (11.22). And because He

has made supplication for Peter all will be well. Peter's faith, having been battered, will finally stand the test. Furthermore, once he has 'been turned again' (or 'has turned himself again') and come back to Jesus, he is also to establish his brother disciples, and all the people of God ('the brethren'). Note how God has a purpose in all that He allows (compare Hebrews 12.2-13). What was to happen to Peter would in the end benefit him, for it would serve to humble him, and it would benefit the people of God as well. This was his preparation for his servant-throne from which he would tend the sheep (John 21.15-18). In later centuries the leaders of the church would take up the idea of thrones. Men are always looking to exalt themselves. But what they would totally reject was the actual idea of being the servants of all. (They would retain the language but reject its content). It is impossible for anyone to feel that he should be put on a pedestal, and at the same time remain humble.

This need revealed in Peter is found in us all. That is why the writer to the Hebrews points out that He ever lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7.25), so that He can save us to the uttermost. For as was true in the case of Peter, (earthly rocks are very vulnerable), without His constant intercession we too would be lost. 22.33 'And he said to him, "Lord, with you I am ready to go both to prison and to death."

Peter was appalled at Jesus' words. He had full confidence in his own ability to go through whatever was to come and to overcome it. So acknowledging Jesus' Lordship, (see in parallel John 13.37. Compare also Luke 5.8; 9.54; 10.17, 40; 11.1 etc.) he insists that whether it be prison or death that he has to face, he will face it without fear. And he meant it. Furthermore we must remember that in the Garden he did show his courage and was ready to take on the whole Roman army (22.50 with John 18.10), and he was even prepared to infiltrate the ranks of the enemy in the courtyard of the High Priest's house (22.54; John 18.15-18). But what in his self-confidence he was not aware of was what a night of terrible tension could do to a man's nerves. It required a different type of person to Peter, so confident in his own ability but so vulnerable, to stand up to that. But only Jesus knew it. (This weakness comes out again in Peter's controversy with Paul - Galatians 2.11-14).

'To prison and to death.' As a former disciple of John the Baptist Peter would have imprinted on his mind what had happened to John and he thus wanted Jesus to know that he also was prepared to face up to what John had had to face.

22.34 'And he said, "I tell you, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, until you will three times deny that you know me."'

But Jesus tenderly turned to him and warned him of what was to come. Note the change from 'Simon' to 'Peter' (a rock). This is the only time that we know of that He has actually directly addressed him as Peter, although it was He Who gave him the name (Mark 3.16), and had promised that one day he would provide the rock on which the new people of God would be founded, the declaration of Jesus as the Christ (Messiah) (Matthew 16.18). Rock man he may think himself to be, He says, but let him realise that before cockcrow he would deny Him three times.

There is no contradiction between this and Mark's reference to the cock crowing twice. Luke is speaking of cockcrow in general. He does not want to puzzle his readers by speaking of a double cock crow. The third of the Roman watches was called 'cockcrow', ending around 3.00 am. But Mark and Jesus were aware of the reality of life known to them through their familiarity with Jerusalem, and that the distant cocks would be heard first across the valley, and the nearer cocks a short time afterwards. In Jerusalem cock crow would only come after the second crowing of the cocks was heard.

It will be noted that in Matthew and Mark similar words as these were spoken as they were approaching the Garden. It may well have been that Jesus gave this warning twice, for the contexts and the wording are quite different. Or it may be that Luke (or his source) has

transferred it here so as to fit in with his chiasmatic scheme.

The Urgency Of The Hour Is Such That It Requires Swords (22.35-38).

The dark outlook of Jesus' words continues. He must suffer (verse 15), He must be betrayed (verse 21), He has endured testings and temptations (verse 28), Peter will deny Him (verse 34), and now He warns them that in a short time what they will require is not food and clothing but swords. It was not intended to be taken literally. It was simply a warning of the dangers of the hour. For He Himself was going forward to be reckoned with the transgressors, and as His disciples they would need protection in order not to suffer the same fate. Let them then be ready for the dangers that lay ahead.

Analysis.

- a He said to them, "When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet, and shoes, did you lack anything?" And they said, "Nothing" (35).
- b And He said to them, "But now, he who has a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet, and he who has none, let him sell his cloak, and buy a sword" (36).
- c "For I say to you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in me (37a).
- d 'And he was reckoned with transgressors' (37b).
- c For that which concerns Me has fulfilment (37c).
- b And they said, "Lord, behold, here are two swords" (38a).
- a And He said to them, "It is enough" (38b).

22.35 'And he said to them, "When I sent you forth without purse, and wallet, and shoes, did you lack anything?" And they said, "Nothing." '

His first emphasis was to draw attention to how God had provided for them in the past as they went forward in His service. Their sending forth in this way is described in 10.4 (of the seventy, which would include the twelve). So He made them now admit that when they had gone forward without purse, or food pouch or shoes, they had lacked for nothing.

22.36 'And he said to them, "But now, he who has a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet, and he who has none (no purse or wallet), let him sell his cloak, and buy a sword." '

But then He indicated that those days of going forward and confidently trusting in God for provision were gone. The whole situation was now changing. Their need now would not be money and food, but a sword, and to such an extent that if they had no money or food with which to obtain one, they should sell even their vital overgarment in order to do so. For above all their present vital and overwhelming need was, as it were, a sword. Such were the dangers that lay ahead.

The picture he is describing is of men stripped of everything, packs laid aside, standing sword in hand ready to face all comers. The idea was thus that they needed to recognise that they would soon be down to their last extremity. Let them now waken up to the present situation. As He had continually warned them of the violent end that awaited Him, now He was trying His best to prepare them for what was to follow that night. He was trying to awaken them to a sense of the hour. But He was finding it impossible. They just could not take it in. It was the opposite of all that they were expecting of Him, and they were therefore impervious to any danger..

That this need for a sword was not intended literally comes out, firstly in the fact that it was clearly intended to be only a short term solution, for they could not go on existing without food and clothing for long. And because, in the short term, on Passover night, they would not be in any position to obtain a sword. And secondly because He made no further effort to press them it on them once they misunderstood. This was not a leader preparing men for a physical conflict, which would have meant that he urged them until they acted. It was Someone who was trying to awaken them to spiritual battles that lay ahead. Nor in view of what He had

taught them previously would He have encouraged armed resistance (as what follows makes clear. See also John 18.36). For had He not sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves? But what He did want them to realise was that the pack of wolves were approaching, and were almost on them, so that they needed to be prepared. Their cosy future was about to be shaken up, and the fact is that He was simply trying by His startling words to awaken them to the urgency of the situation, and make them realise what a dangerous position they would now be in. He wanted them to be fully alert and ready for what was coming.

This tendency of Jesus to use violent metaphors comes out again and again, but they are clearly not to be taken literally. Compare 13.58-59; 14.26, 27; 16.16; Matthew 5.22-26, 29-30; 7.3-5; 11.12.

22.37 “For I say to you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in me, ‘And he was reckoned with transgressors’, for that which concerns me has fulfilment.”

And this was because what the Scriptures had said about the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53 must this night be fulfilled in Him. He must be reckoned among the transgressors (Isaiah 53.12). He must go forward to an unjust death, rejected by men and bruised by God. And there He must offer Himself up as a guilt offering for the sins of men (Isaiah 53.7, 10), bearing as a result their transgressions and iniquities (Isaiah 53.8, 11), and as a consequence putting many in the right so that they could be accounted righteous (Isaiah 53.11). Indeed this was the divine necessity, and it must have fulfilment, and that fulfilment was about to take place in Him. Note the twofold stress on its fulfilment. What was to happen was ordained by God.

Strictly speaking this quotation should have awakened them to what was happening. They would know Isaiah 53 well enough, and we cannot doubt that Jesus had drawn it to their attention (compare Acts 8.32-35). They must often have wondered at the sufferings of the one described there. And He had constantly warned them of what was to happen to Him. They should have put the two together. But they were so unready to accept that such consequences could come on Jesus that they just could not comprehend it.

22.38 ‘And they said, “Lord, behold, here are two swords.” And he said to them, “It is enough.”’

So at His words the blinkered, and no doubt puzzled, disciples, wondering why He had become so suddenly concerned about weapons, assured Him that they already had two swords, confident that that should be sufficient to deal with any passing footpads. They could not grasp what He was worried about and saw any danger that might threaten them as being fairly innocuous. For it is clear from their comment that they had not taken it as a suggestion that they needed to get ready to establish God’s Kingly Rule by force. For even they would have recognised that that would have required more than two swords.

So Jesus, saddened by their inability to understand, and to appreciate the true situation, replied, ‘That is enough’. He was not saying that that was enough swords. Rather it was now clear to Him that they did not, and would not, comprehend what was happening, and that in the little time remaining there was no way in which He could shake them out of their apathy. He realised that any further attempts to awaken them could only end in failure. So He acknowledged to Himself that He would have to leave them in His Father’s hands, and Himself pray for them that their faith might not fail, and then let the question drop.

‘It is enough.’ Enough has been said, He is saying. Now let us forget the matter. In other words He was resigned to their lack of response. Later when an attempt will be made to use their swords Jesus will actually tell them to desist, which demonstrates that His real intention was that His words should be interpreted spiritually. For as the future would demonstrate the battle that was to be fought would be fought with other swords than this, with swords provided by God such as the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6.17; Hebrews 4.12; Revelation 1.16; 2.12, 16; 19.15, 21).

Others see 'it is enough' as indicating that two swords were enough because, recognising their failure to understand His point, He did not want to discuss the matter any more.