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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Eschatology

“The New Covenant and Prophecy, part II”

TRANSCRIPT

Now we are turning to the New Testament. And I'm going to ask, if you will, to turn with me to Matthew chapter 26, verse 26 through verse 29, second in our series of studies on the New Covenant and Prophecy. Matthew 26, verse 26 through 29:

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament (or new covenant) which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this cup of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”

For those of you who have not been here all along, we have been studying for some time now the covenants of the Old Testament in the light of prophecy, for our general theme in this series of studies has been prophecy. We have been trying to point out that the basic, nonhistorical covenant is the covenant of redemption, the Eternal Covenant of Redemption; that the basic historical covenant is the covenant that God made with Abraham; and that the other covenants are covenants that flow out of or expand the

Abrahamic Covenant. And I speak of the other historical covenants, of course, such as the Davidic Covenant. That covenant is a covenant which has to do with kingship, but the Abrahamic Covenant also had something to say about that, though not so full, rather incidentally. So the Davidic Covenant is a covenant in which there is expanded the idea of kingship which was expressly stated but stated only briefly in the Abrahamic Covenant.

The New Covenant is also a covenant designed to amplify certain aspects of the Abrahamic Covenant. It was, of course, necessary that there be some provision for forgiveness of sins in order that the Abrahamic Covenant be fulfilled. So far as I know, no particular reference is made to the forgiveness of sins, but in the New Covenant, that is spelled out. And so it is in the New Covenant that we learn that there is in the covenantal program of God provision for forgiveness of sins by which the promises made in the Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants might be fulfilled.

So the New Covenant is our study now, and it is the last of the great historical covenants. I mentioned last time when we looked at the Jeremiah chapter 31 passage, which is the normative passage for the New Covenant that Jeremiah at the time of the writing of the New Covenant was in prison. It was the time of the final collapse of Judah and Jerusalem, famine and plague raged in the city and the Babylonian army was battering at the walls of the city. And so it was, in a sense, Judah’s midnight hour, and the people needed hope and comfort. And in the light of that historical situation, God gave to Jeremiah, his prophet, the contents of the New Covenant.

It has been called the Book of Consolation because, of course, the comfort that is contained within it for people who are battered by God -- by the forces of evil and are looking to God for deliverance. It is not all saccharinely sweet, I mentioned last time. Disciplinary judgment is set forth in the context and that disciplinary judgment must come before Israel experiences the blessings of the New Covenant. But with the statements of that chapter, which are not as, I say, all sweet, there is the assurance that the seed of Israel shall abide forever.

The program, as it is set forth in these chapters, involves the time of Jacob’s trouble in the midst of Israel’s disciplinary exiles, implicit in this is all that is stated in the Book of Deuteronomy concerning God’s discipline of Israel because of disobedience. They will be sent to the four corners of the earth, and in the latter days, in the midst of their disciplinary exile, there will come a time of Jacob’s trouble, the details of which are spelled out in Revelation chapter 4 through chapter 19. But, again, in the midst of this disciplinary judgment, it is specifically stated that there will be no final disaster, but the remnant shall be saved out of it.

Also in the chapter is a prophecy of restoration from captivity, and, particularly, there is a prophecy of the consummation of a new covenant. This covenant is to be an enduring covenant, not a temporary covenant. It is to be a covenant that is inscribed within the heart, not one that is imposed upon the hearts of Israel from without. So it is a permanent covenant; it is also an inward covenant. It is a new covenant in the sense that it is a fresh kind of approach when compared with the Mosaic Covenant which was a covenant that was addressed to the human nature of the children of Israel.

Now, in our last study we looked at the announcement of that covenant, and we saw that, I’ve mentioned, it’s the reiteration, the expansion of the Abrahamic and Davidic promises. We also pointed out its superiority to the Mosaic Covenant just as I have mentioned immediately before these remarks. I have also stressed last time that it contains within it a stress on the forgiveness of sins. It concludes, remember, with the statement: “their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.” Its goal is the one essential knowledge, communion with God. He would write his law upon the hearts of those who were in that covenant so that they would know God from within; not have a covenant imposed upon them without. But, their nature would be transformed so that they would know and be able to worship God from within. And we also stress, lastly, the gracious character of it. It is a covenant that God consummates. I will make a new covenant with you. And I tried to place a great deal of stress upon that because this New Covenant is an

unconditional covenant. Just like the Abrahamic Covenant was an unconditional covenant and just as the Davidic Covenant was an unconditional covenant, so the New Covenant is an unconditional covenant.

Now, that does not mean, of course, that there is not some provision for disobedience. If Israel disobeys, they postpone the ultimate consummation of the covenant. But they do not cancel the covenant through their disobedience.

Now, we are turning to the New Testament in Matthew chapter 26, verse 26 through verse 29 because here we have the mention of the New Covenant in the new covenant -- that is, the New Testament. And here in Matthew chapter 26 we have the fundamental basis upon which God makes it possible for him to confer unconditional promises upon Israel and those who are ultimately found within that covenant.

The background of Matthew 26 is the Passover Lamb, as you well know. You’ve read the section concerning the Lord’s Supper enough to know that this is said in the context of the Passover supper, and so in the background is the Passover Lamb, that annual festival which Israel celebrated in order to honor God for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. It is one of the preeminent festivals of divine redemption.

Now, that is not all that is found in this institution of the Lord’s Supper. There is found within it the ratification of the old covenant with the purification and consecration of the nation. I should not say there is found within it, but the background of it is the ratification of that old covenant made with Moses, for the language of verse 28 is language derived from Exodus 24 when God ratified the Mosaic Covenant by means of a sacrifice.

And then the third background of this passage is Jeremiah 31, as you can tell from our mention of our Lord of the New Testament in verse 28: “for this is my blood of the New Testament.”

Now, let me say just a word about testament before we move on. This word “testament” is a word which represents a Greek word that is translated both “covenant”

and “testament” in the New Testament. It is my own conviction, I am not, however -- I am not, however, supported by all interpretists in this -- that this term translated “covenant” here is a word that should be translated “covenant” in every place in which it is found in the New Testament. Most commentators agree with me with the exception of two passages: one, Hebrews chapter 9; the other Galatians chapter 3.

Now, more agree with me than disagree among the interpreters. In other words, more can -- more may be brought forward in support of the contention that the term for -- translated here “testament,” should be rendered “covenant” everywhere. But there are good interpreters who take the word to mean covenant -- to make the word -- take the word to mean testament in Hebrews chapter 9. But we’re going to take it to mean covenant. I’m sure that it is a reference to the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31. I don’t think anyone would doubt that in this passage. So when we read: “For this is my blood of the new covenant,” we are to think of Jeremiah chapter 31 and those promises that we looked at in our last hour.

So in the background of this passage then are three Old Testament passages. First, Exodus chapter 12 in which we have the unfolding of the ritual of the Passover Lamb. That means that our Lord is claiming to be the Passover Lamb; the antetype of that ancient type. He is the Lamb of God. Then Exodus 24 in which the animal was slain and the blood sprinkled both upon the book of the covenant and upon the people, our Lord again claims in his death to be the one who ratifies a covenant by a sacrifice. And Jeremiah 31, a passage of the new covenant by our Lord’s use of the term here, he is saying that what I am consummating in my blood is the New Covenant that Jeremiah had promised in the Old Testament period.

This, of course, is one of the greatest passages in the New Testament. It is the background of the observance of the Lord’s Supper in the Christian church. It is the passage in which the Lord’s Supper is instituted as a memorial of our Lord’s sacrifice, and it is a service that we observe in the Christian church. It is fundamental. Just as baptism

is one of the ordinances of the Christian church, so the Lord’s Supper is the other. One celebrates our entrance into Christian living or Christian life; therefore, it is observed once. The Lord’s Supper is observed frequently because it represents our communion with our Lord Jesus and also our fellowship with those who have put their trust in him.

Every time we sit down at the Lord’s table, we are acknowledging that we have a relationship to God through the bread and the wine or through the body and blood of Christ. But we also, in that we all sit and together partake, acknowledge that together we have an interest in Christ through his body and blood and, thus, we are also related to one another.

So the oneness of the body as well as the oneness of our participation in Christ is represented every time we observe the Lord’s Supper. The Lord Jesus evidently thought this was extremely important. And at the time of the last Passover service, he instituted the first Lord’s Supper. It’s almost as if two lines meet in the guest chamber in which the Twelve met for the observance of the Passover supper; the line of the Old Testament and the line of the New Testament. In the Old Testament, everything looked forward to the coming of the Redeemer. In the New Testament, everything looks back to the coming of the Redeemer. It’s almost as if they met in the old -- in that Upper Room, in that guest chamber. And after they had observed the last valid Passover, a switch is thrown and from this point on, it is only proper to observe the Lord’s Supper.

So it is at this event that that switch is thrown over, and we pass ideally from old covenant times into new covenant times. Now, of course, that will come actually when the Lord Jesus dies upon the cross. But this is the anticipation of that. In the Old Testament there is prominent the altars of sacrifice. In the New Testament, the thing that is prominent is the table of the Lord. The altars suggest the necessity for constant sacrificial slaying of animals. So the altar is the characteristic piece of furniture in the Old Testament. But in the New Testament, it is a table because the once-and-for-all sacrifice has been made and does not need to be made anymore. That’s why in the Christian

church we should never have such a thing as an altar. It suggests that the sacrifice has not been made, if you’re thinking about an altar as a place where a sacrifice is made.

Now, I can say -- I would grant that it is possible to have an altar on which nothing is; that mentions or has reference to sacrifice as a kind of memorial thing. Well, generally speaking, that is not true. So we have the table of the Lord in the New Testament times.

Well, now let’s look very briefly at this. I won’t try to handle all the details of it, but we want to concentrate on the reference to the New Covenant. In the 26th verse, Matthew describes the ceremony of the bread. He begins with the bread for the simple reason that the bread represents the body of our Lord and, of course, it must be -- it is necessary for him to assume a body in order for him to carry out his Messianic ministry. The bread also points to his death because bread was normally broken. We put a loaf of bread on our tables and we cut it, but they broke bread. And so the bread itself suggested, since it was normally broken, it is suggested the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus; it suggests his death.

So we read: “As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it.” Now, that suggests the breaking of his death. And in the giving of it to the disciples, he pictures pictorially the fact that he gives them the benefits of his death. But he adds a word of explanation which makes it clear: “take, eat; this is my body.”

We won’t deal with all of the different types of interpretation that have been put upon the statement “this is my body.” I will mention, of course, the one that is given by the large, professing Christian organization which claims that what this text says, “this is my body,” is simply that that bread was transformed into the body of our Lord Jesus. And, of course, as you know and that large religion organization at the present time, at the words of institution of a religious man, it is thought by the adherents to that religion that the bread of the Lord’s Supper is transformed into the body of Jesus Christ, and the

appeal is a very simple kind of appeal. Does not the text of Scripture say, “this is my body.” Now, what could be plainer than that? This is my body.

And so we are immediately, they would like to think, on the defensive. This is my body. So doesn’t that say that the bread is the body? Of course, it doesn’t answer many kinds of questions we might have. I wish I had time to deal with all this, but I think we did about a year ago. Any who are interested can look up in the past tapes on this particular subject.

You may remember, some of you at least, that I commented upon the fact that it would be very strange that our Lord should take the bread, and then say that this bread which is in my hand is my body. That, of course, is irrational, because if the bread is his body, what is the hand that is holding it? But we don’t have to appeal to that kind of thing. In the New Testament in many places we have the verb, to be, used in the sense of symbolic representation.

Now, will you turn right back to chapter 13 in verse 38? The Lord Jesus is here explaining or giving the second of his mysteries. And we read in verse 38 of Matthew chapter 13, as he explains the field is the world.

Now, he has told in the preceding context, verse 24 through 30, the parable of the tares among the wheat. And now he is explaining, and he is explaining that the field in the parable that I have just told, is the world. Now, the field was not the world, but what he means is the field represents the world. That is plainly its meaning.

By the way, the word *h’eme* in Greek, you’ll find in all of the lexicons is given this meaning. There are many illustrations of it. We have, for example, in the Book of Revelation a number of illustrations of it there. We have illustrations here in the Book of Matthew. The same is true of our English word “is.” We would say the same thing. We say “this *is* this.” We mean it represents that. We often do that in expounding Scripture. We will say the Passover *is* the sacrifice of Christ, but we don’t really mean that that way

and yet, the sense is plain. We mean it represents; it typifies. So here: this is my body; the reference then is symbolic, representation.

Now, I want to ask you a question, rhetorically. The Lord Jesus said: “take, eat, this is my body.” Some of the contexts as you know add: this do in remembrance of me. Now, I want to ask you a question. What would in *remembrance of me* suggest if the Lord Jesus was not the authoritative, living word of God? If he were not really the authoritative, living word and Son of God, and he told these Hebrew believers who were before him this *be doing in remembrance of me*, if that were not true, that he is what he claims to be, what would this be? Why, of course, it would be the most arrogant kind of audacity to suggest to Hebrew believers who have down through the centuries observed the Passover sacrifice upon the authority of the word of God in the Book of Exodus. We have this Hebrew saying to Hebrew men that they should not observe any longer the Passover service but they should observe this service, and they should do it in remembrance of him.

Now, they observe the Passover in remembrance of the great deliverance that the God of the Old Testament had accomplished for Israel. He is saying that you no longer have to do that. You have to observe the simple service and remember me. Why, it’s obvious that if he is not what he claims to be, the living word of God, this is the most arrogant audacity and blasphemy to suggest such a thing as this; this: *do in remembrance of me*.

Now, the ceremony of the cup: And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink ye all (drink you all -- that would make the sense very plain. He doesn’t mean drain the cup.) drink all of you of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

The sole ground of the covenant, as was the case in Exodus 24, is the atoning sacrifice. Drink all of it, for this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is shed for

many for the remission of sins. So the sole ground of the covenant is the atoning sacrifice.

Now, notice the first part of the statement of verse 28: “This is my blood of the new covenant.” I think if we were to gather together all the statements of our Lord Jesus, all of the statements of our Lord Jesus on the subject of the atonement, this would be the most important statement that the Lord Jesus ever made on the atonement. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. If you want to know what Jesus Christ’s teaching concerning the atonement is, this text has to loom large in any construction of that doctrine.

Now, when he says: this is my blood, he means by blood the violent death by means of sacrifice. He does not say when he says, this is my blood, that any kind of death will do. It’s evident by -- from the background of the context that he’s talking about the Passover Lamb. In a moment he talks about blood being shed, which is that which is done when animals are slain or slaughtered for sacrifice. He’s suggesting not simply that the blood, any kind of blood shed in any kind of way, but the violent death of a bloody sacrifice is the basis of the atoning work.

So the term “blood” suggests death, but it suggests violent death. Not death by heart attack, not death through tuberculosis, but violent death by virtue of sacrifice. This is my blood of the new covenant. So the New Covenant then is based on the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. I think we could say that the New Covenant is based upon the new sacrifice and the final sacrifice which the Lord Jesus will offer. You’ll notice, as is the case with the Abrahamic Covenant, as is the case with the Davidic Covenant, as is the case with the New Covenant, there is no condition stated whatsoever in the application of this covenant. This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins. This is an unconditional covenant.

Now, this statement of our Lord overthrows all of the liberal views of the atonement. And if there is one liberal view particularly that it overthrows -- I mention this

because it is held so widely -- it is any form of the moral influence theory of the atonement. Any form of the theory that the Lord Jesus died, gave a revelation of the love of God by which revelation of the love of God he might move upon the hearts of men and woo them to love God, too. Such a theory of the atonement avoids the necessity of the payment of a penalty.

So any kind of moral influence theory, any kind of example theory of the atonement by which the Lord Jesus is conceived to have died as an example of the love of God which is supposed to make us loving; all theories that move around the idea of example, around the idea of moral influence are negated by these words that our Lord uttered. This is my blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Now, notice the next part of the statement “which is shed for many.” That term is a term that is used of the flowing out of the blood of a sacrifice. Which is shed for many. Now, the *term “many” is* – has caused difference of opinion among the interpreters. It is my opinion that this many is a reference to Israel. And I take as the source of my interpretation Isaiah chapter 53, verses 11 and 12, which is a passage, I think we all agree, has primary reference to Israel. There we read in Isaiah chapter 53 in verse 11:

“He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: for he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

Now, when we say that this is for many, we do not mean, of course, that Gentiles are excluded by this. For we have taught that as the New Covenant unfolds that we elect Gentiles partake of the covenant through grace; that I hope to bring out most clearly in

our next study when we deal with Romans chapter 11 and Hebrews chapter 8. But we elect Gentiles partake of that covenant of grace contrary to nature, Paul says, in Romans chapter 11. We do so by virtue of the fact that we were included in the original covenant made with Israel, and we participate contrary to nature.

Now, when he says “which is shed of many” the Greek text does not specifically say that this is by substitution. Although over in the Markan account of this, a preposition is used which very frequently does refer to substitution. So I am inclined to think that the idea is here which is shed for many and involved in that is substitutionary work of our Lord Jesus.

Now, the overstatements that our Lord makes concerning atonement in the New Testament make that very plain so we don’t have any question about the doctrine that the Lord Jesus died a substitutionary death. The last statement “for the remission of sins” is important. Think for a moment about the word “remission.” Remission is the remitting or the forgiving of a merited punishment. When you remit a punishment, you are remitting a punishment that is merited. So when we speak about for the remission of sins, we acknowledge that those who have the sins are guilty and that the remitting is a legal, judicial transaction by which those who merit punishment have that punishment lifted.

So that the Lord’s words then are, this is my blood of the new covenant that is shed as a sacrifice for many for the remission of the merited punishment of their sins. In other words, it’s a judicial term. It is a reference to the payment of the penalty that others owe God.

So the key term then is penal satisfaction. That is what our Lord did when he suffered. Now, I have said this to a number of you over and over again, but I stress it again because there are many simple-minded Christian who have been taken in by sugar-tongued, liberal and semi-liberal teachers of the word who have said, of course, we believe that the Lord Jesus died a substitutionary death. And since our idea of the atonement of our Lord is that that is the evangelical doctrine, then we believe they are

evangelical. And so we listen to other errors that they have with a great deal more openness of mind because they have managed to entrap us by the use of a term which we have associated with evangelicalism.

Now, of course, the Bible teaches substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus, but the question is: what do you mean by substitutionary death? Now, many who talk about the substitutionary atonement of our Lord mean simply that he offered to God a repentance in our place. In other words, he repented for us. We should have been sorry for our sins, and he was sorry for us. So he died a substitutionary death. He repented for us. That’s just one way in which one may explain the term “substitutionary.” Retain it and yet teach liberal doctrine.

Now, the same men who say that will in the next breath or two, which, of course, you don’t hear because you only hear the things that someone says to you like this: “Well, did you know that Vincent Taylor, the well-known English New Testament student believes in the substitutionary atonement of Christ?”

“No, I didn’t. I thought he was a liberal.”

You’ll find on page 42 he says, I do not believe that God punished Jesus Christ for our sins. We do not have a God who demands punishment of human sins. Our kind of God is not that kind of God. That kind of God would not be a loving God who would exact punishment. He wouldn’t even be a righteous god because he couldn’t exact punishment of a third party -- upon a third party for the sins of other parties. But yet we affirm the substitutionary atonement of Christ.

So the key word which smokes out all liberals; the key term is “penal satisfaction.” Did he satisfy the justice and holiness of God by paying the penalty for sinners? Now, no liberal can affirm that and stay a liberal. I guess there are probably some ways they can figure out how to do that, but he hasn’t figured it out yet. Penal satisfaction theory of the atonement; that’s why we talk about -- that why I talk about the penal satisfaction theory

of the atonement or the penal satisfaction by substitution theory of the atonement. But don’t miss the term “penal satisfaction.”

Now, to smoke out Mary Baker Glover Patterson Eddy, for example, [Laughter] who believed that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, when it was flowing in his veins before he died on the cross, had just as much atoning value as when it was shed upon the cross at Calvary. She did not believe in the necessity of a penal satisfaction rendered to the holiness and justice of God.

It will also smoke out a liberal like L. Harold DeWolf who argues against this idea and says that the greatest thing about the atonement is not that God forgives men’s sins through the sacrifice of Christ but that Jesus forgave God, whatever that means. He is professor of theology at one of our institutions.

Now then, this statement then: For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. What does this mean with reference then to Jeremiah 31? For this is the New Testament reference to the New Covenant. This is my blood of the New Covenant. Well, he means, of course, that the new covenant of Jeremiah chapter 31, by which all those blessings were promised to the house of Israel, all of those blessings find their basis in the shedding of the blood of our Lord Jesus on Calvary’s cross.

So the work of our Lord in dying upon the cross at Calvary is the foundation of the New Covenant. It’s the basis upon which God could promise Israel the forgiveness of sins. Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more because in due time the Son of God will come and will offer his blood as a sacrifice shed for many for the remission of sins.

Now, in the 29th verse, he mentions the Lord’s Supper and the Great Supper. “But I say unto you, 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 kingdom.” Now, if our Lord Jesus leaving the disciples said: never forget my death; never forget my broken body; never forget my shed

blood. Then he meant that for -- that the time will come when all the powers of the cross of Jesus Christ shall be incorporated in humanity. And when those parted from him and from others will be reunited with one another and with our Lord. It’s implicit in the statement of our Lord: never forget my blood and my body, offered as an atonement for you. Never forget it; it’s implicit in that that he intends to consummate all the promises that are found in the word of God connected with the atonement of Jesus Christ.

What the statement in verse 29 does is to convert the memorial into a prophecy, so that every time we sit down at the Lord’s table we observe it, as Paul interprets this, till he comes. This is the basis of that statement, “until he comes.” When we observe the Lord’s Supper, then, it’s a temporary ordinance. It’s an ordinance that looks forward -- points forward to the time of the kingdom of God in which there shall be gathered into that kingdom both Israelites and Gentiles, the church of God and Israel, all who have believed into that kingdom, one in Christ. Not the same but one in their relationship to the Redeemer.

So it converts this memorial into a prophecy. The New Covenant issues in a new day, which is the Messianic kingdom. Now, notice the statement “when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” Now, to what are we to trace the idea of kingdom in the Old Testament? To what do we trace it? Well, of course, we trace it back to the Davidic Covenant in which it is stated that the Lord Jesus would come and rule as the Davidic king on the throne of David. But we also trace it back to the Abrahamic Covenant in which it was stated in Genesis chapter 17 in verse 6: “Kings shall come out of thee.”

So what he is saying is there is going to be a time when the consummation of the kingdom program involving the covenant made with Abraham; involving the covenant made with David, and involving the new covenant in which there will be a consummation of this kingdom program in the future. In the meantime, we observe the Lord’s Supper till he comes.

Now, there’s some implications of this statement that I don’t want you to miss. Notice the statement, “But I say unto you, 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 kingdom.” What does that statement imply? Why, it implies the exaltation of the Lord Jesus. Now, think of the historical situation. He’s in an upper room, the enmity and hatred of Israel has reached its climax. They are waiting to put him to death. They are waiting to put an end to the Lord Jesus. They are waiting to take him; kill him; put his body in a grave in order that they won’t have to deal with him any longer.

But he is saying that there is coming a time when he will drink this cup new with them in the Kingdom of God. And Luke puts it as if it’s a kind of fulfillment. In Luke chapter 22 in verse 16 and 18 -- you needn’t turn there, I’ll read the two verses for you – “For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.”

So what he is implying by this is that there is coming a time when the Lord Jesus in spite of all that they do to him will be exalted as the king in the coming king -- kingdom. So it is implied in this statement that our Lord shall be exalted. It reminds us of the statement in Mark chapter 14 when the Lord Jesus said to Mary about Mary, wherever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also which she hath done shall be spoken of her for a memorial of her. And in that remark is implied the fact that our Lord Jesus would be raised from the dead; that he would be exalted, and that people would go out and preach the good news concerning him. Again, arrogant audacity if he were not really the authoritative, living, word of God. Only someone like that could say that.

Now, the second thing that is implied is the consummation of the kingdom. And I’ve read Luke chapter 22 in verse 16 in which it is stated, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Everything culminates in the kingdom festival. Otherwise communion

would stand as an expression of Christ’s mistaken estimate of his own importance. If this is not fulfilled in the kingdom, then why do we observe the Lord’s Supper Sunday after Sunday after Sunday? We’re just expressing the fact that the Lord Jesus was mistaken; he wasn’t really as important as he said he was; the words that he said are really not going to be fulfilled. We’re just having pity upon him as we think about him; a martyr kind of figure.

And, finally he says, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom. In other words, he implies that there is going to be a gathering together of the saved; a kind of convention of the redeemed; so that the cross and the communion lead on to the second coming of our Lord Jesus.

Now, I comment on a couple of things as I close. Written unmistakably on this supper is Christ’s teaching on his death, and he links it with the New Covenant. His death is the sacrifice that ratifies the New Covenant. And he wishes us to remember that. He doesn’t tell us to remember his life; he doesn’t tell us miracles that he performed; he doesn’t tell us to remember the ethics that he taught; but he says I want you to observe this simple little service. And I want you -- as you take the cup and as you take the bread, I want you to do these things in remembrance of me. I want you to think about my death. And isn’t it interesting that in the epistles of the New Testament we have actually very little said about the miracles of our Lord; we have very little said about the teaching ministry that he gave; we don’t have any comments and exegeses of the sermons that he preached? The epistles reflect with the greatest emphasis upon the death that he died and the significance of it. Of course there are incidental references to things that he said, but they are largely incidental. They are more concerned with what he did than with what he said. And in this I think we have a fulfillment of these statements of our Lord.

I do not want to de-emphasize at all the importance of the things that he said, the things that he did such as his miracles. They are extremely important, but the apostles, it

seems, in their letters major on the cross. He’s the true Passover Lamb whose blood sacrifice establishes the New Covenant. It includes the forgiveness of sins and the coming kingdom. You’ll notice that Christ’s teaching was given to believers, men who had responded to the unconditional offer in faith and had found virtue in his blood to be shed. They had come to admire his justice, and they had come to love him for his love.

They were not put off by the idea that God must punish human sin. They did not think that the God that must punish human sin was a cruel God. They, rather, rejoiced in him as a righteous, lawgiver and lawkeeper because they knew that there could be no stable kingdom and no stable eternity if the god of eternity is not a stable, just, and righteous being. But at the same time that they rejoiced in the justice and righteousness of God that made it necessary for him to punish human sin, they rejoiced even more in the love that led him to do this. For that love that led him to do it was a love that brought his own son to be the sacrifice who renders the penal satisfaction to himself. And so they admired him for his justice, but they loved him for the love that he manifested to them in his righteous loving.

That’s what Paul means when he says that we are justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, that God might be just in punishing Christ for sinners’ sins, and the justifier in bringing by his marvelous grace the saved, his own; to saving faith in the sacrifice that he has offered. And so we worship him as a great and holy God who keeps his righteousness and his justice intact as he gives us the salvation through Christ in his grace. We have a tremendous god; a just God; and a Savior, as Isaiah calls it.

Shall we bow in prayer?

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the fact that we do have a just God and a Savior. We thank Thee that Thou has been wholly just in punishing Christ for our sins. Thou hast meted out upon him the judgment that was ours, and we worship and adore Thee for the atonement made for sinners and for the grace and activity of the Holy

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Spirit in bringing us to trust in him who loved us. And we rejoice in the fact that Thou shalt bring to pass the day in which the Redeemer shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. Now go with us as we part.

For Christ’s sake. Amen.