

# OpenTheo

## Luke 22:1 - 22:38



### Gospel of Luke - Steve Gregg

In this lengthy passage on Luke 22:1-38, Steve Gregg discusses the events leading up to Jesus' betrayal and arrest. He provides context on the Passover feast and notes that Jesus knew someone would soon betray him. Gregg believes that Jesus was also foreshadowing the establishment of the kingdom of God during the Last Supper. He delves into the disciples' lack of understanding about Jesus' statements on swords and possible interpretations of his words. Throughout his discussion, Gregg provides historical and biblical context to help listeners understand the significance of Jesus' actions and teachings.

### Transcript

Chapter 22 of Luke is almost as long as chapter 1 of Luke, which is the longest chapter. This is the second longest chapter. Many of the chapters in Luke have had 40-something or even 50-something verses.

In a few cases, 60-something. The chapter 22 has 71 verses. Only chapter 1, which has 80, is longer.

And I say that only to point out that this is essentially the length of two chapters almost, and therefore getting through a single chapter, which was my goal, is not likely to occur. I don't think I'll meet my goal. So we'll plan to get at least through half of this chapter, and perhaps beyond.

This chapter is going to bring us all the way up to the arrest of Jesus. So we're in the final hours now. We're going to have the Last Supper in the Upper Room and so forth.

It says in chapter 22, verse 1, Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. Now that in itself is a helpful verse, because Passover can refer to a day, the 14th of Nisan, or it can refer to the whole week, which is that day plus a week of unleavened bread afterwards. The longer period of time is usually called the Feast of Unleavened Bread, but Luke tells us that he's using the word Passover the same way as the week of unleavened bread.

While the whole week was sometimes called Passover, it was never the case that the single day was called unleavened bread, although on the Passover, of course, they did begin to eat unleavened bread. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was a week long. It was sometimes called the Passover, though technically it was a single day.

And the reason I say that is because there are some disputes over whether Jesus was killed on the Passover or before it. And that dispute partly is due to the fact that in John's Gospel, it says when the Jews had captured Jesus and brought him to Pilate, they did not go into Pilate's house because they didn't want to defile themselves because they wanted to eat the Passover. That sounds like when Jesus had been arrested, the Jews had not yet eaten the Passover.

And this has made some people say, well, Jesus was arrested and crucified before Passover. Yet, the synoptic Gospels will all tell us that Jesus ate the Passover with his disciples the day before he was arrested. So, some feel that John and the other Gospels disagree about that because they feel like the Jews not yet having eaten the Passover when they had arrested Jesus means that Jesus must have eaten the Passover early or that the two Gospel accounts are in conflict with each other about this.

However, since we recognize, and Luke tells us this, we would know it anyway, but Luke makes a specific note of it, that the entire week of Unleavened Bread is sometimes called Passover, then we can see that even if the Passover was taken the night before, the Jews still having a week to continue eating the Passover did not want to defile themselves because they wanted to eat the Passover. It doesn't mean they wanted, they're looking forward to the Passover meal, the Paschal lamb and all that, it just means the rest of the Passover week they didn't want to be excluded from by defiling themselves in a Gentile's house. So, recognizing that Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were technically different names for different parts of that celebration, they were also used interchangeably and very clearly Luke says that he recognizes that Passover is also called Unleavened Bread or that Unleavened Bread is also called Passover.

Verse 2, And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill him, for they feared the people. Now, it's not that they desired to kill him because they feared the people, it's that they had to connive some way to kill him because they feared the people. They couldn't just walk up and take him and kill him because the people were too much sympathetic toward Jesus and it would cause a riot.

So they had to think and connive and plot to figure out some way that they could take him and kill him because their fear of the people did not allow them to do it in any way other than a sneaky or clandestine way. The problem was Jesus was in public too much and when he was not in public, very often he was where nobody could find him except his friends. He knew there were people plotting to kill him and though he was willing to

die, he wasn't going to die until his hour came for that.

He was going to die when he and his father knew it was the time. And so he did not make himself public without crowds around him and this made it impossible to arrest him unless they could get an insider who knew of his private movements, his secret movements. If they could be tipped off about that, then they could find him.

Sure enough, they found somebody who would be willing to do that. Verse 3, Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains how he might betray him to them.

And they were glad and agreed to give him money. Then he promised and sought opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of the multitude. Now he didn't just say you can find Jesus in such and such a place at such and such time because Jesus wasn't even letting his disciples know in advance where he was going to be.

However, of course, when it came down to the Passover meal, it was pretty predictable Jesus was going to go to Gethsemane after that. It must have been a very common thing for him to do. And Judas left the meal, went and got the guards and took them where he knew Jesus would be.

But in advance, he couldn't have told them very much. Where is Jesus, for example, going to eat the Passover? Even the disciples didn't know that. Jesus hadn't told them where it would be.

When it came time to do it, he sent Peter and John with almost a clandestine kind of secret countersign with certain parties to recognize, oh, this is where we're going to go. He didn't let his disciples even know in advance what his movements were going to be. So it made it very hard even for Judas to be able to say where to find him.

But it's probable that at the Passover meal, in conversation, it became clear that Jesus planned to go to Gethsemane after the meal. So Judas excused himself and drew the people there, as we find later on. At this point, he only made a promise to help them, and he sought opportunity.

He did not anticipate exactly when that opportunity would arise, but he would help them in any way he could for money. It says, Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.

So they said to him, Where do you want us to prepare? And he said to them, Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him into the house which he enters. Then you will say to the master of the house, The teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, in which I may eat the Passover with my disciples? Then he will show you a large furnished upper room.

They were ready. So they went and found it as he had said to them, and they prepared for Passover. Now what's interesting here is the disciples, even the day of Passover, when it had come, they said, Where are we going to eat? It wasn't obvious because they didn't have regular lodgings they were staying in every night, at least not such as could accommodate a large meal like that.

And Jesus had not confided in them where they're going that night. Maybe he didn't confide in advance where he's going to go any given night. And so they said, Well, we need to prepare.

You're going to have to give us some clue where we're going. He says, Okay, I'll tell you what. Go into town and look for a man carrying a jar of water.

We might say, Well, how do I know it's the right guy? Because jars of water were usually carried by the female servants. The servants, the females, usually went out and gathered the water and brought it in for cooking and things like that. It was not common for the men to carry it.

And so to see a man carrying a jar of water would kind of stand out. And this man is actually waiting for them. He actually is going to lead them to the prearranged spot.

So they go and they find this man. He sees them. They see him.

He puts the jar on his head and walks on or wherever he carries it and walks on to the house he's going to. Now when they speak to the master of the house, notice Jesus didn't say, You'll find it's Simon's house, so and so. He said, Just ask for the master of the house.

He doesn't even indicate to them whose house it's going to be. But there will be a master house. And when you see him, say the teacher.

Don't say Jesus. People might overhear you and know that this is where Jesus is going to be and he could be betrayed there. Some neighbor may overhear it.

Just say the teacher is looking for a place to eat. That could be any rabbi. And so there's all this hush-hush, all this secrecy.

And sure enough, that's what happened. Verse 14, And when the hour had come, he sat down and the twelve apostles with him. Then he said to them, With fervent desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

For I say to you, I will no longer eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Then he took the cup and gave thanks and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves. For I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, This is my

body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Likewise, he also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Which is shed for you. But behold, the hand of my betrayer is with me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined.

But woe to that man by whom he is betrayed. Then they began to question among themselves which of them it was who would do this thing. Now, this is Passover.

He says, I have desired fervently to eat this Passover with you. This particular Passover before I suffer. It's almost certain they had had Passover with him at least twice previous to this and eaten it with him.

Eating Passover was a regular thing for all Jews. A rabbi and his disciples or a family in their household would gather for a certain ritual. And that ritual is practiced a certain way today.

I think many people assume that the Jews did it the same way back then. We don't have all the facts. But probably they followed the ritual similar to the way Jews do it today.

And there is a full meal with many questions and answers that are scripted. In a household, a child would ask his father certain things. Why do we do this? Why do we do that? And the father would have a scripted answer.

It was a way to commemorate the fact that God had delivered Israel out of Egypt in the days of Moses. And in the course of the ceremony, they would eat bread and drink wine as they did here. But generally without the same significance that Jesus was suggesting here.

Jesus gave them the bread. Now typically, the father of the household would break the bread and he would say, this is the bread of affliction that our fathers in Egypt endured. But Jesus said, this bread is my body.

I'm going to endure affliction. My body is going to be broken like this loaf for you. And when you eat it, instead of remembering the affliction in Egypt, remember me.

He was replacing his own self and, of course, his own sacrifice with the exodus. Now you might remember back in Luke chapter 9, when Moses and Elijah were on the mountain of transfiguration with Jesus. In Luke 9.31, it says that these two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glory and spoke with Jesus of his exodus.

Remember, it says deceased in English, but the Greek word is exodus. Moses, who led the children of Israel in the original exodus, was acknowledging that Jesus was going to accomplish another exodus. And there were many passages in the Old Testament, or at least some.

I won't exaggerate the number, but there were a number of passages in the Old Testament that indicate that the exodus is a type and a shadow of what the Messiah would accomplish in saving his people. There's even statements in the Prophets that say that the salvation of the Messiah will eclipse the exodus in the memories of the Jews. So that some prophets say, you know, you will no longer remember and say, blessed be the Lord who brought us out of Egypt.

But you'll say, blessed is the Lord who has drawn us from all nations. That would be into the Church. The salvation we have in Christ eclipses in significance the exodus for the simple reason that the exodus was just a type and a shadow of it.

Now, Jesus sits down at the ceremony where the Jews, including himself, have always celebrated the exodus. Every year of his life prior to this, he himself celebrated the exodus. The founding of the nation of Israel and their deliverance from bondage.

Well, he was founding a new movement, a new covenant. He said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. I'm starting something new, and from now on you don't remember Egypt, you remember me.

When you do it from now on, you remember me. This is my body, not the affliction of our fathers in Egypt. This is my affliction for you, my body which is broken for you.

And when he took this last cup, he says, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. This language in verse 20 resembles Moses' language when after he had written all the law, there was a ceremony of inauguration that God had him do where they killed several animals and they took their blood. And they took the blood and they sprinkled it on the law and on the people.

And that is, he sprinkled the people with the blood and he sprinkled the law books with the blood. And when he did, in chapter 24 of Exodus, verse 8, Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you, according to all these words. This is the old covenant, but he sprinkled them with blood and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant.

Jesus said, see this cup? It's the blood of the covenant, of the new covenant. We've been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. That's actually stated in both Hebrews 9 and 1 Peter 1. In Hebrews 9, it says that we've been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus from an evil conscience.

Our hearts have been sprinkled, of course. In 1 Peter 1, it says, I think it's in verse 2, that we are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. That's 1 Peter 1. So, we have been sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.

That is to say, we are in a covenant that has been sealed by his blood. Even as Moses

sealed the first covenant and said, This blood is the covenant. Jesus said, this blood, mine, is the new covenant.

This cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you. Now, it's obvious that Jesus was canceling out one covenant to make a new one. You might say that's not so obvious, but it is, because the writer of Hebrews declares that to be the logical assumption.

In Hebrews 8.13, the writer of Hebrews says, Now, where there's a new covenant, that makes the first one old. Actually, obsolete. And then he says, now what is obsolete? It's about ready to vanish away.

An allusion to the fact that shortly after he wrote this, the temple was destroyed and all the trappings of the old covenant disappeared. But he said, the very presence of a new covenant makes the old one obsolete. And Jesus said, this is the new covenant.

So, he was declaring the old covenant is obsolete. The old covenant was made with Israel when their nation was first established after the Exodus. God brought them out of Egypt as a clan, a very large clan of millions of people.

And he made them into a nation at Mount Sinai and gave them the laws and made the covenant with them there. So, the Exodus was immediately followed by the creation of a new covenant, and that's the creation of the nation of Israel. Jesus said, okay, this is all new now.

From now on, you're not going to be celebrating the creation of the nation of Israel. You're not going to be celebrating the Exodus here. You're going to be remembering me and the new covenant I have instituted, the new nation I've created.

And so, this is what's going on at this Passover. In other respects, we probably should assume that Jesus followed the normal Seder, that is, the Passover ritual. But he surprised them at a point where they all their lives had heard the head of the household make certain comments over the bread and the wine related to Egypt.

He surprised them by inserting, this is me. And that must have jolted them a little bit, but he did say, you know, this is about me from now on, not about the Exodus. Now, having said that, in verse 21, he said that the person who would betray him to his enemies, and by the way, that he had enemies that were dangerous, was certainly felt by them all.

We don't know how many indicators they had, but the very fact that Jesus was sneaking around, being gladness in his behavior, made it very clear that he was taking seriously the threat. The disciples certainly knew that Jesus had enemies. How determined these enemies were to really do him harm or kill him, they may or may not have been aware, but they knew that Jesus was seeing them as someone to avoid at all costs, and yet he

says, now someone's going to turn me over to those people.

And the disciples consider, you know, wait a minute, there's no one in this room but us disciples. There's no one at this table but us, and you're saying the hand of that person who betrayed you is right here on the table with you? Now, John tells us a little more detail than the synoptics do. John says that Peter asked John, because John was sitting next to Jesus, Jesus was closer to him than Peter was, that Peter whispered to John, ask him who's going to do it.

And Jesus apparently very quietly said to John, the one I hand this bread to is going to do it. They dipped the sop, as they did in the ritual, and he handed it to Judas. So John then was informed that Judas was the one, and as soon as Judas received it, he left the room.

But the other disciples had not heard Jesus give that signal to John, because they didn't know what Judas was about. They just thought Judas was going out to buy some more food for the Passover or something like that, or to give to the poor. So there was more conversation about this than is recorded.

But what we have recorded here is they all began to question among themselves which of them it was who would do this thing. Now, that could mean they were saying to each other, is it you, is it you? But other gospels tell us they were saying, is it I, is it I? It's interesting that in a group where all the disciples and no one else are present, Jesus says, one of you is a betrayer, that instead of looking at each other with suspicion, they looked at themselves with suspicion. I mean, if it were me, I'd think, I'd say, well, I know I'm not going to do it, so it must be one of these other guys.

But they were all saying, Lord, is it I, is it I? They so trusted each other and knew each other's loyalty that they couldn't imagine that it'd be someone else, maybe me. I know I'm not perfect. I know that under certain pressures I may cave in.

Maybe it's me that he's predicting will do it. I don't know. Anyway, I'm not as concerned about if it's them.

I want to know if it's going to be me because I've got to look out for my own conscience and my own obedience. I mean, someone else, let them worry about themselves. I have to worry about my own salvation here.

Am I the one who's going to backslide? Am I the one who's going to betray you? By the way, the fact that they trusted each other so much seems clear by the fact that as soon as he said that and everybody was saying, they're all focused on one person here is going to betray him, and then one gets up and leaves the room, you'd think every eye and every thought would be, oh, well, but it's him. But they had so much confidence in Judas, they said, oh, he must be going to give something to the poor. It's almost like you'd think that if you were the guy, you wouldn't want to move at that moment because



everyone's thinking one of us is going to, I don't want to get up and walk out.

What are they going to think? But even though he did get up and walk out, they didn't think anything about it. It just seems like those guys were so trusting of each other. They didn't have any suspicions about Judas, which I would even if I hadn't previously.

I know one of these guys, oh, he's moving. He's leaving. He's uncomfortable.

He must be the one. But they were guileless, and they had no idea that any of them really would have those kind of motives, except Jesus said it, but that surprised them. And they had to wonder, is it I? In verse 24 it says, but there was also rivalry among them.

I seriously doubt that this happened just in the next second. This kind of refocusing from what Jesus had just said, that was like dropping a bombshell in their heads. I seriously doubt if they just moved from that instantly to this business here.

There was rivalry among them as to which of them should be considered the greatest. First they're saying, I could betray you. Is it I? From that to, I think I'm the greatest.

How about you? It's like, what a change, what a transition. I don't think they could have transitioned in just a few seconds. This is probably later in the evening.

We do know that they were there for a long time, because John's Gospel records a very long discourse that Jesus gave on that occasion after dinner, and none of that discourse is really given here. I mean, a few of the same bits of information are parallel, but for the most part that discourse is not found outside John. So there was a long time there, and no doubt the mood changed from time to time, and different things came up.

And at one point, somehow, this crazy thing came up, which of us is the greatest? I think it's me. What do you think? Oh, you think you are? You? Come on. I'm way better than you, you know.

And this kind of conversation must have been so grievous to Jesus. Here he's about ready to get crucified the next day. He knows it.

His disciples are so on another page that they're wondering who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom and so forth. They're not at all in touch with what he's facing and going through. And he said to them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors.

That is, they provide a benefit, supposedly, for those that they rule over, but they're actually just tyrannizing them. They represent themselves as being benefactors. But not so among you.

On the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger. The younger

person be the person of lower status in any social situation. And he who governs as he who serves.

For who is greater, he who sits at the table or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Obviously, the master sits at the table, the servants come in, they're slaves. They're not greater than their master. Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet, I am among you as one who serves.

Now, this statement almost certainly would have been made in conjunction with his washing their feet, which the synoptics don't mention Jesus washing their feet. But John 13 makes an issue of this, that at the table after dinner, he girded himself and washed their feet. They had trouble with this, especially Peter had trouble with this.

It seemed inappropriate for Jesus, the Lord, to be taking such a lowly servant role. And Jesus said to him, you don't know what I'm doing now, but you'll understand later. And then when he was done, he said, do you know what I've done to you? You call me master and Lord and I am, that's true.

But he said, if I, your master and Lord, have washed your feet, that is, if I've taken the role of a lowly servant to my own disciples, rather than them doing it to me, then this is an example for you. And he says here, I am among you as one who serves. Apparently a reference to his washing their feet, almost certainly.

But you are those who have continued with me in my trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as my father bestowed one upon me, that you may eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This prediction, or something like it, is made also in a different context in Matthew 19, where he's talking about when the rich young ruler left, and people said, what shall we have? We've forsaken everything.

And he includes in it, you twelve will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. This prediction is made here too. He also says here, you'll eat and drink at my table, in my kingdom.

Now, is this talking about something that will happen after the second coming of Christ? Many people think this is no doubt a reference to something in the millennial age, that that is the kingdom. I personally believe that he's talking about the kingdom that was being established right then and there. He, after all, did say that some of them wouldn't taste death before they saw his kingdom.

And he also had said, in the same conversation a little earlier, we saw this, he said in verse 16, for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it, meaning the Passover, until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Now, the kingdom of God was going to come before the next Passover. At least that's what I take him to mean.

He says, this is the last Passover I'm going to spend with you before the kingdom of God comes, before the Passover itself is fulfilled. He suggests that the Passover is a type and a shadow of something, and there should be a fulfillment of it. And that fulfillment was Jesus' crucifixion, and what came of it.

Now, Jesus said he would eat Passover with them in the kingdom, once it is fulfilled. How is that understood? I personally believe he's talking about taking communion with the disciples, taking communion with the church. When we take communion, we're in communion with Christ.

He there is eating with us the Passover meal again, but in remembrance of him this time. The kingdom of God has come, and he does eat and drink the Passover with us. When we remember him in the last supper, in the Eucharist, as the Catholics call it, and some others, the communion meal, which I was raised calling it.

This is the Passover that we observe, and I think what he's saying is, it's that near. We won't even be together another year to take Passover like this together before it's all come to pass. I won't eat it again simply means that I won't have occasion to eat it again.

This is the last Passover I'm going to have a chance to spend with you before that comes, and that would suggest we're not going to be around here another year without this being fulfilled. And so, when he says his disciples will eat at his table in his kingdom, I personally don't doubt that this is referring to in the church age in the book of Acts. They broke bread daily.

They observed the Lord's Supper, and he ate with them, and they were at his table. I believe they were also elevated at that time over the 12 tribes of Israel in the sense that they had the ministry of being God's agents and spokesmen to the Jews. Paul said in Galatians chapter 2 that Peter, James, and John, who were certainly among these, saw their ministry as being to the circumcision, where they saw Paul's and Barnabas' ministry being to the uncircumcision, that's the Gentiles.

These 12 saw that their ministry primarily, at least initially, was over the Jews. They were there to present God's ultimatum and to declare his kingdom to the 12 tribes of Israel. That gave them an authoritative role in the church over the circumcision.

Paul had a similar kind of role over the Gentile churches. And it says in verse 31, Now, this exchange, as it is recorded here, is only really, I think, in Luke, but it corresponds with that which is recorded in other Gospels. When in John 13, for example, Jesus first announced that someone would betray him, and then he then said, and you'll all forsake me.

And Peter said, not me, I won't forsake you, I'm willing to die for you. Now, that is

probably the occasion where he said these words, Simon, Simon, Simon, Simon. So confident, but you be surprised.

Satan is crafty. He has desired to sift you as wheat. I've prayed for you, so you're going to come through this.

But don't be so confident. You will indeed deny me three times before the cock crows. Now, one Gospel says before the cock crows twice.

Not a problem. What does it mean, Satan has desired to sift you as wheat? This is made more clear when you realize that the word you, which is in verse 31, it's in italics, it's not really there in the Greek, but the form of the word sift is the Greek verb form to speak of a plural you. He is saying that you, plural, the disciples are going to be sifted.

There's some wheat and there's some chaff in here. And that's what they do. In Amos chapter nine, it talks about how God will sift his people like wheat and not one grain of wheat will fall through the cracks of the sieve.

This is the, let me see if I can get, in Amos chapter nine. I don't have this reference, but I know it's there. So let me find it.

Okay, it's Amos 9.9. It says, God says, for surely I will command and will sift the house of Israel among the nations as grain is sifted in a sieve. Yet not the smallest grain shall fall to the ground. All the sinners of my people shall die by this sword who say the calamity shall not overtake us nor confront us.

Well, this I believe is talking about AD 70 because of the general context of Amos 9. But he says that God will sift the house of Israel. The house of Israel, Peter and the disciples belong to the house of Israel. And Satan has desired to sift even the disciples.

Satan has asked me to let him sift you like wheat. And I've given him permission to do this sifting, but I'm praying for you that you'll make it through. It's interesting, here's yet another case where Satan has to come to God to get permission to test God's people.

The disciples group were sifted and there was some chaff that fell through there. That was Judas. The group's loyalty was tested.

11 of the 12 passed the test. They proved to be wheat. The chaff did fall through and Satan got one of them.

But he wanted to sift and get all of them if he could, of course. And Jesus said, Simon, you guys, you're facing a test that Satan has gotten permission from God to put you under. And I'm interceding for you.

You're going to make it through. But when you do, when you come back, strengthen your brethren. Now, when you come back from where? You're going to deny me.

That's from where? You're going to deny me three times. You're going to fail the test. But ultimately you'll pass because I've prayed and you're going to repent of your failure.

So this sifting is extremely severe. Even my most loyal disciples can stumble and fall. But they can recover.

And Jesus prayed for him to recover and he said he will. When you return to me, strengthen your brethren. Now, here's the passage, verse 35 through 38, that presents some unusual problems.

I have read so many commentaries on Luke over the years. And whenever I see one, I pick it up and look to this passage first. I want to see what they say about this.

And it's interesting because a lot of suggestions have been made about what's going on here. Some of them contradict each other. And I have to say it's one of the most difficult passages in Luke for me.

It's one of the two passages that I always use to tell people, you can ask me anything from the Bible, not about the sword, the two swords, and not about the unjust steward. Well, I don't mind being asked about the unjust steward now, but the two swords still are puzzling. After 43 years of looking at the commentaries, thinking about it, thinking of the different possibilities, knowing the possible suggestions, it still remains to me an unsolved issue.

But we'll read it and I'll tell you what some of the suggestions have been. Jesus said to them, When I sent you without money bags, sack, and sandals, did you lack anything? So they said, nothing. That is, we didn't lack anything.

Then he said to them, But now he who has money and a bag, let him take it. And likewise a sack, that would be a backpack. And he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in me. And he quotes Isaiah 53. And he was numbered with the transgressors.

For the things concerning me have an end. Then they said, Lord, look, here are two swords. And he said to them, it is enough.

Now part of this, the first part isn't as troubling as some things in the latter part of the passage. He essentially reminds them of when he sent them out before. This happened in Luke chapter 9. He sent out the disciples two by two on a short-term mission.

And in chapter 10, he sent out the 70, which almost certainly included the apostles. And in both cases, he gave them similar instructions. Don't take with you money.

Don't take extra clothing. Don't take even any provisions for yourself. Now why would

that be? He said, the laborer is worthy of his food.

And what he means by that is, you're working for me. You're my laborers. I'm a fair employer.

I'll provide for you. Or God will. You'll be provided for.

Of course, their provision would have had to come from the hospitality of people that they went to. And in fact, he said, when you go into a city, look for a worthy house. When they invite you in, speak your peace on that house.

If it's a worthy house, the peace will rest. If it isn't, it'll return to you. If they don't receive you, leave that house, stamp the dust off your feet, whatever.

But he said, if they do receive you, stay in that house as long as you're there. That is, don't go from house to house so people don't know where to find you. You're there to proclaim the kingdom of God.

And your whereabouts in that town should be predictable for people who want to inquire. So don't move around. Now, the point here is that they were going out without any provisions for themselves.

Therefore, totally at the mercy of God providing for them through hospitable people. But he says, now I'm changing that order. You're going to be sent out again.

I'm going to be killed. I'm going to be gone, is what he's implying. You're going to be doing similar ministry in the future, but you don't have to not take money with you.

You don't have to not take a bag with you. I think what he's saying is this, although there's another way of looking at it, too. In fact, there's several ways of looking at it.

I'll tell you what some people think. Some people think Jesus is saying, when I sent you out before, those were better times than these. I was riding the crest of the wave of popularity.

You guys were welcomed as celebrities because you were my associates. The world was talking about me as the great one. They welcomed you easily.

You had plenty of hospitality offered to you. You didn't need to provide for yourself because you were so popular as my agents. And people all wanted to hear what I had to say.

Now things have changed. The tide has turned against me. I'm going to be rejected.

The attitude of the public to you is going to be negative. You won't be able to count on their hospitality anymore. You're going to have to provide for yourself from now on.

In fact, you better get a sword because there could be violence. You're going to be persecuted. The mood has changed.

Following me once was very promising to you that you could be celebrities. Now you're going to be persona non grata. Now you're going to be persecuted.

Get ready for that change. That's probably the most common interpretation you'll find is because he said, buy a sword. Another view is that his statement in verse 36 is to be taken as ironic.

As if he's saying, so what? Am I going to change my plans now? I told you to take no money, to take no sack. And look, you didn't lack anything, right? You admit it yourself. God provided for you.

So what am I going to do? Change the plan now and say, go ahead and take a sack, take money, take a sword? Is that likely what you expect me to say? Now, he doesn't say it like that, but there is something in the Greek that allows that possibility in that the punctuation is not there. And therefore, it could be his statement phrased as a question. So now am I saying take a bag and take clothes and money and a sword? As if he's saying, of course not.

I've just pointed out to you, you didn't need to do that kind of thing. You didn't do it before and you didn't lack anything, so why would I change the plan now? You can still remember those lessons you learned at that time. In which case, he's not really telling them to take a bag or money or a sword.

It's almost like an ironic statement, like making his point. Clearly, I'm not going to give you different instructions now, am I? And some think that's the way to take it. Now, the way I think is most likely to take that part, the easy part, and as you can see, it's not in itself easy because there's different views about it, but there's a harder part about the swords.

I think he's probably saying this. I was training you these past several years for your future ministry. That training included the need for you to know and learn that you can trust God for things.

God will provide for you. You need to know that. So I put you through an unusual assignment that you travel without any provisions and you would learn, as you clearly have, that God can provide for you.

You don't need to worry about provisions because when you don't provide for yourself, if you're doing God's work, God provides and you found that to be true. Did you lack anything? No, you didn't, right? You admit it. Okay, you've learned the lesson.

No need to take such an unusual approach anymore. That was a special training mission.

Now, if you want to take your money, if you want to take your bag, I have no objection.

Okay, so that would be simply releasing them from prior instructions that were suited to their training period, and he's saying, okay, now comes the real life that you're trained for, and it's not really necessary for you to have all those strictures upon you that were needed for you to learn that lesson. The lesson has been learned. You can still trust God even when you have your bag with you.

But that was an unusual situation. I wanted you to find out what your testimony is right now, that you lack nothing when you're doing God's work, even when you provided nothing for yourself. So I don't think it's really that mysterious, that part.

What's mysterious is that when he's telling them they can take a bag of money and even their backpack with them, he says, and he that has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. Now, this is strange because swords are used for violence, are they not? And that being so, many commentators, perhaps most commentators, have said, well, what he's saying is, the tide has turned against us. You were popular before.

You're not popular now. Not going to be. You'll even be persecuted, so get yourself a sword.

As if he is saying you should defend yourself against persecutors with a sword. Now, this can hardly be right because Jesus always said they should turn the other cheek if someone strikes them. And certainly we never find in the book of Acts that when persecution came, the disciples all pulled out their swords and went to their own defense.

They allowed themselves to be killed without resistance. They certainly did not at that point believe that Jesus was saying you need to defend yourself with weapons against your persecutors. They never did such a thing.

Now, a slightly different explanation that is sometimes given is that it's not so much he's saying you need to defend yourself against persecution, but from now on you're going to be traveling internationally. I sent you out on local outreaches here in Israel, but you're going to go to all the world and you're going to travel, you know, remote highways and there's going to be brigands and robbers and things. You're going to have to take all those precautions people take when they make long journeys, take a sword along so that you don't get robbed or whatever.

Once again, this is problematic because I don't think Jesus would have you kill somebody in order to retain your money. It just doesn't sound like Jesus' teaching. If you're going to get robbed, get robbed.

Don't kill somebody. It just doesn't, I mean, everyone sees this as problematic. But many people who believe that Christians should participate in warfare, which is a view that the



early Christians did not believe, but people today, of course, mostly believe it, and those who defend the idea of Christians fighting a war usually say, well, see, Jesus said to buy a sword.

And they just see, I mean, they never explain his meaning. They just say, see, Jesus said even to buy a sword, implying that he says you need to be armed, you need to fight, you need to defend yourself, you need to go to war, as if all those things are implied by a sword. And yet Jesus' disciples, once the Holy Spirit came and they understood better things, they didn't buy swords, they didn't defend themselves, they didn't go to war in that sense.

So the suggestion that Jesus is saying Christians should be militant warriors with weapons against their enemies, defend themselves against persecutors or against brigands on the road while they travel to carry the gospel, these suggestions are often made as to Jesus' meaning. It just doesn't work. First of all, it's contrary to Jesus' general teaching about such matters.

Secondly, it's totally contrary to the way the disciples actually did behave when they went on their missions. They didn't defend themselves with swords. Now, by the way, it was not unusual for people to carry swords in those days.

An armed society is a polite society, and most people had a sword on them, or many of them did. It's interesting, the disciples didn't have very many, they only had two. Out of so many men, there were only two swords.

They were perhaps a little less armed as a company than the average group that size randomly chosen might be. But what's also interesting is they did have two. These men who'd been with Jesus for two or three years, a couple of them were armed.

No doubt for the same reasons people were generally armed, and that was probably for self-defense. It's interesting that they didn't feel awkward about that. If I tell somebody that I have a gun, I feel a little awkward because some people say, well, Christians shouldn't have guns.

Well, I didn't say I ever used it on anyone. It was given to me. So, should I get rid of it? Is it improper for a Christian to own a gun? Well, was it improper for a Christian to carry a sword? Apparently not enough so, or not obviously enough so, that the disciples who had swords felt any embarrassment about it.

They didn't feel like they had to explain why they had swords. What's interesting is they carried swords apparently when they traveled with Jesus, and he had never mentioned it to them. Hey, give her that sword.

What are you doing with that sword? What do you think you're going to do with that thing? That can hurt somebody. I mean, Jesus didn't say anything. They had swords.

They didn't all have swords. He was now saying if you don't have one, you should sell your gun and buy one, which ostensibly sounded like he was saying you all need to have swords. It's really important.

In fact, you should even sell your clothes if you have to get one. Now, it sounds like it's a very urgent thing for each one of them to be armed, and they understood him that way. They felt he was talking about literal swords, and they said, here's two swords.

And he said, it's enough. Well, wait a minute. Are two swords really enough if he's just said all of you need to have one? And it's not optional.

You need to sell whatever you have to sell to get one. Every one of you needs to have a sword is what he said. And they said, well, we've got two.

And he changes his mind. He said, oh, I guess that'll be enough. Two's enough.

That's cool. No more needed. Forget what I said about selling your garment and buying a sword.

No, he said that's enough. So what is going on here? Is Jesus saying they should all buy really swords? But then he changes his mind and says, no, two will do. That's all we need.

And if he is saying they should buy swords, what does he intend for them to be used for? After all, later that evening, Peter, one of the two guys in the group who had a sword, pulled out his sword to defend Jesus, and Jesus rebuked him for doing it. He said, Peter, those who live by the sword will die by the sword. He made it sound like it's not really something Jesus would recommend, using a sword in that way.

So, okay, so Jesus tells them to buy swords. What are they supposed to do with them? Apparently not use them to chop people's ears off or do anything worse. So what is this about buying a sword? What is it about? Now, a certain number of commentators have felt that when Jesus said you should buy a sword, he intended his disciples to understand this symbolically.

And when they took him wrongfully, literally, and said, well, we got two of those here. When he said it is enough, it's like him saying enough of this conversation. Almost like he's frustrated they don't understand what he's talking about.

They're taking him literally still after all this time when he's been speaking figuratively about so many things. They always take him literally. When he's in Samaria, they brought him food.

And he said, I have food you don't know about. They said, well, did someone bring him food? He said, my food is to do the will of my father and finish his work. When Jesus

would say things, people took him literally, you have to correct them.

What, can a man go into his mother's womb again and be born again? No, I'm talking about something else than that. What, you have a bucket to get this living water out of this well? How are you going to do that? No, I'm talking about something else. Every time Jesus talked about something literally, I mean, symbolically, they took him literally.

Destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up. What, you're going to destroy this temple they've been building for 46 years? No, I mean my body, come on. Can't you get a clue? Beware of the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees.

Oh, we didn't bring any bread. He's talking about bread. Oh, no.

No, don't you understand yet? He says. See, Jesus, in other words, the impression that some people have is that Jesus here is speaking symbolically again. They take him literally and he's got no time to explain it.

Enough. Next subject. You guys aren't getting it, so I'm not going to waste any more time on that.

There's more important things to get to. And this is probably the case. Jesus probably is speaking symbolically.

It strikes me as probable. He's not talking about the need to actually get physical swords. Certainly he was not advocating they defend themselves against future persecution or brigands.

He's talking about something else and they're not understanding. They're ready for a revolution, by the way. They just aren't very well armed yet.

They've got two swords, but they can get some more somewhere. But he's not even interested in their two swords or any number of swords. Enough on that already.

Like, okay, I was kind of hoping you'd get what I meant. You didn't. I'm not going to put any more confidence in my ability to let you understand this, so let's move on to something else.

Now, this is a significant number of commentators agree that this is probably what's going on. He doesn't mean literal swords. It means something else.

But what is the something else? What does it mean by a sword? Now, many Christians very quickly think, oh, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. He's saying go out and buy the word of God. Well, that would work if they lived in a town that had a Bible bookstore.

But the word of God was not available for sale. The synagogue might have had a copy

chained to the pulpit, but you couldn't just go out and buy a whole Bible. Not easily, anyway.

I suppose you could commission someone to copy it out for you, and it would cost a great deal, probably more than your cloak costs. But what's more, there's no reason why the disciples would associate the word sword with the word of God. We do because Paul did in his writings.

And the book of Revelation does. But Paul hadn't written anything yet, and the book of Revelation hadn't been written, so there's nothing to clue the disciples in for Jesus to expect them to know that he means get a Bible, get the word of God, when he says a sword. True, later Christian authors did use the metaphor of a sword for scripture, but it's not likely that that's what he means here.

One suggestion that, to tell you the truth, I don't know of any excellent suggestions. But one suggestion that may have merit, and my own judgment is it probably has merit, is that he's referring to the fact that soldiers in those days did not receive their equipment at government issue. Today, if you go into the army, all that you need, your uniform, your guns, everything you need, your helmet, that's going to be issued to you by the government, at government expense.

In Roman days, when men joined the army, they had to provide their own equipment. Now, they probably had to use standard equipment, but they had to buy it. It wasn't provided.

And so every soldier who was determined to be a soldier was willing to pay the price to pay for his equipment. And certainly one piece of equipment a soldier, no soldier would wish to be without is his weapon. Buying a sword would be absolutely essential.

So essential, in fact, that if it came down to it, you'd sell anything else to have one. You'd sell your clothes. You don't want to go to war without a weapon in your hand.

So it's absolutely urgent that a soldier have a weapon and make whatever sacrifice is necessary for him to do so. Now, if this is the milieu behind Jesus' statement, as many commentators have suggested, then what he'd be saying is something like this. You know how soldiers are.

They'll sell anything to get a sword. Well, you need to be willing to make any sacrifice in order to be ready for what you're about to face. Now, one problem with this is it doesn't suit very well the mood where he's talking about you can take a bag, you can take money, and buy a sword too.

It doesn't seem to fit that. If he's just saying make any sacrifice necessary to face the crisis ahead, and speaking figuratively of buying a sword like a soldier would, but he's not really talking about getting a real sword, just make whatever sacrifices you need to

to be armed and ready for the future, that's a different message than you can take your money with you now. And it's strange that it'd be tacked on here.

There's one other possibility that has been suggested I know of, and that is by sword, he doesn't mean a weapon necessarily. The word used here is the word for a dagger, or that is a knife. Now, he's talking about taking stuff for travel, a backpack, take your money, take your Swiss Army knife with you too, why don't you? I mean, a knife comes in handy for a lot of things when you're traveling.

You know, cutting fruit, cutting fish, all kinds of stuff you do with knives. It's amazing, if you have a Swiss Army knife and learn how to use it, you'll be amazed how many ways a knife can be used in the wild or anywhere where you don't have a lot of modern conveniences. And saying buy a sword or buy a knife could be just saying, you know, you need to have some equipment for survival as you travel.

You're going to be traveling, take your backpack, take your clothes, take a knife, you know, the normal stuff people would take on an excursion. You're going to be camping out. So it's possible that he's not even talking about a weapon here, but a utilitarian tool.

Knives are used for lots of good stuff, besides stabbing people and cutting people up. And so it's possible that they actually had some swords on them. They said, Lord, okay, we've been waiting for you to give the battle cry, we've been waiting for you to make your move against the Romans.

We got our swords ready, Lord. We're ready. He said, that's not what I was talking about.

Enough on that. Don't need more than that. Oh, there's even one other explanation.

See, there's more and more and more explanations been offered. None of them totally satisfactory. But some say the reason he says you need swords is because it must be fulfilled what is written to me, he was numbered with the transgressors.

Now, in order for Jesus to be numbered with transgressors, somebody along with him has to be a transgressor. Someone has to be a lawbreaker. So, at his arrest, if somebody resists the arrest with force, with a sword, that makes that person, in this case Peter, a transgressor.

And Jesus then can be fulfilling the scriptures that he was numbered with the transgressors. Here's transgressors in his group. One with a sword doing something that's breaking the law, resisting arrest.

Now, that is even a possibility, too. I mean, there's lots of things that are possibilities. There's some that are impossibilities.

The suggestion that he's saying arm yourself to defend yourself against persecution,

that's out of the question. And even arm yourself to avoid robbery is probably out of the question. But some of these other suggestions are possibilities.

The idea that he's saying, listen, there's this scripture that says I have to be numbered with the transgressors. We need someone here to be a transgressor. Get swords.

We got two. That'll do. We really don't need that many.

It only takes one or two of you guys to be transgressors, and I'll be numbered with the transgressors. That'll work. So, I mean, some people see that way.

I don't know which way I see it. That's the point. That's the very thing I said.

The statement is enigmatic. The statement is mysterious. The statement was not understood by his disciples, and not understood by commentaries 2,000 years later either.

Or if it is understood, it's not clear which person is really understanding it, because there's all these different opinions. This is a hard saying. The only thing I can say for certain about it is those who use it to argue for Christians going to war don't seem to have a grasp at all of even any of the possible meanings of it.

They just see the word sword. They say, ah, Jesus was not nonviolent. Well, you got to be a little deeper in your analysis than that.

You know, the question of whether Christians should go to war or not should be determined on something a little clearer, a little less, you know, ambiguous than that. And so that passage, like I say, has been controversial and extremely difficult from my point of view to know how to answer or to explain. All right, we're going to take our break here.

We're about halfway through the long chapter, and so we'll come back next time to finish chapter 22.