

# Luke 22

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon explores the rejection of Christ by humanity, the significance of the Last Supper, and the call to humility and prayer in facing trials.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 26:39, Luke 22:3-6, Luke 22:14-20, Luke 22:31-32, Luke 22:39-46, Luke 22:54-71, John 15:13, Romans 8:7, Hebrews 4:15

**Topics:** "Rejection of Christ", "Divine Patience"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby preaches on Luke 22, illustrating the profound enmity of the carnal mind against God as evidenced in the rejection of Christ by people, priests, and rulers. He emphasizes the perfect patience of Jesus amidst betrayal and suffering, showcasing His divine knowledge and human affections as He prepares for His sacrificial death. Darby highlights the necessity of recognizing human weakness and the importance of prayer and communion with God during trials, contrasting the disciples' reliance on their strength with Christ's perfect obedience. The sermon culminates in the establishment of a new covenant through Christ's blood, calling believers to remember His sacrifice and walk in humility. Ultimately, it reflects on the rejection of Christ and the grace available to those who acknowledge their need for Him.

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## Transcript

How the carnal mind was shewn to be enmity against God in the rejection of Christ! Wickedness was summed up and brought out in all - people, priests, rulers. If a friend, he is a traitor; if disciples, they either fled when danger approached, or denied Him when near. The religious chiefs who ought to have owned the Messiah took Him to the infidel power of the world. He who was in the place of judgment washed his hands, owning Christ's innocence, but gives Him up to man's will and rage. Thus man's evil was brought into complete juxtaposition with that which was perfect, and this in putting Him to death. It is no use to look for good in man. Not that there are no amiable traits of nature, but God has no place at all if man is put to the test.

Along with this is the picture of the Lord's perfect patience through it all. Not man only, but Satan was there in temptation. It was the power of darkness, as well as man's hour. And the Lord Jesus passes through this scene of men's wickedness and Satan's power; His heart melted like wax, but the effect always being the manifestation of perfectness. An angel strengthens Him; for He was really man, but perfect man, enduring all that could try Him, and nothing brought out but perfect grace and perfect obedience. Whenever there was sorrow, His love surmounts the suffering to help and comfort others.

Verses 3-6. It is a solemn thought that the nearer to Jesus, if there is not spiritual life, the more a man resists God, and the more sure and sad an instrument of the enemy he becomes. If truth has been presented and not received, nowhere has Satan so much power.\* Covetousness was the means used; but though they plotted to betray and crucify Him in a corner, this could not be; they were obliged to accomplish it according to God's purposes.

{\*This is a sample of Luke's manner as to dates. The entrance of Satan into Judas was what was morally necessary to present here; not so the particulars. Strictly, he put it into Judas' heart then, and entered after the sop was received.}

172 Then the light from behind the scene (v. 8-13) makes a passage. It is the Lord; and no matter what He suffers, or what is before Him, yet we find the divine knowledge and power. There is the chamber! What calm and peaceful dignity! It is no effort, nothing to display a character. All yields before the unwitnessed authority of this rejected Saviour - all but that to which it had been most manifested, the unrenewed heart of man. To the householder, unknown it seems to every eye but one, it is enough to hear, "The Master saith to thee."

Verses 14, 15. How blessed to see such perfect human affections combined with His divine knowledge of all things! "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer" - like one leaving his family and first desiring a farewell meeting. When we see the divine glory in the person of Christ, we find the human affections shining out. (Compare Matt. 17:27.) It is this which gives Him a power and charm which no object else has: so that God can delight in man and man can delight in God. The Lord breaks every link with the old thing (v. 16). It is not setting up the kingdom here, but setting up man with God when the old connection was impossible. He was taking a new place where flesh and blood could not enter. His death and resurrection introduce a new relation with God.

The Lord distinguishes here between the paschal lamb and the wine, and both from the institution of His supper. He entered in the fullest way into all the feelings of Israel - the Israel of God, into the interests of the people as such, till His rejection put them on other ground, and divine favour passed into another scene by the resurrection, becoming Himself the Substitute, the true Paschal Lamb. His disciples held the foremost rank as to this fellowship, as we have Hushai the king's friend. With them He desired the last testimony of parting and love. But while thus expressing His affection to them, He assumes manifestly (v. 18) the Nazarite character, which was always His morally, but now externally and painfully: "I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God come." He postpones His joy with them as in the common enjoyment of the kingdom, till then.

173 Then (v. 19, 20) He institutes the memorial of His better redemption, of His self-sacrificing dying love. If He separated Himself now to God in His joy, it was not want of love to His disciples, but its fullest display. It was to be done "in remembrance" of Him. We remember Him suffering, dead, absent; we know Him as a present living Saviour. The new covenant is established in His blood. We cannot, in all the joy of fellowship with Christ above, forget what brought us into it. On one side, it is a body broken and blood shed; on the other, it is Himself and all the perfectness of love in dying for us. We are united to Him as a risen Christ, but He calls us to remember Him as a dead Christ. The blessedness of this last is in the work He did alone, by virtue of which I am put in union with Himself, alive again for evermore. As to man's part in it (v. 21-23), it was treachery and wickedness.

The Lord then distinctly sets forth this calling to walk in His own lowliness and not as the world. Earthly grandeur was recognised among the Jews, but now it was sentenced, like all their system, as the rudiments of the world. All other greatness, though under the form of being benefactors, was worldly. He was one that served. The grace of His heart sets them right without a reproach. He lets them know that whatever high place they sought, He took a low one. He might have said, Nothing will break down this horrid selfishness; yet says He, "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations." And He is the same now. What we should seek is to have as much of the burden of the church as we can. Suffering thus with Him, His heart goes on with us.

Verse 31. Peter was bold enough in the flesh to enter temptation. But it is impossible for man to stand where it is a question of good and evil. He is a sinner and cannot go through that trial. If God judges, flesh comes to nothing. There is the weakness of human nature, but, besides, Satan's title and power over man, who had brought out his own condition in God's presence, and come under death as the judgment of God. I may have learnt in grace that the flesh is thus profitless, but it must be learnt by intercourse with the enemy, if not with God. For Simon, the Lord prayed that his faith should not fail; all his self-confidence must perish. Nor did he distrust Christ like Judas, who had no faith. What enabled him afterwards to strengthen his brethren? He discovered that there is perfect grace in Christ even when he did worst.

174 Verses 35-38 shew an entire change of circumstances. Previously He had protected them and supplied all, as Messiah disposing of everything here. That was now gone, since the Righteous One was being more and more rejected. He had come, able to destroy Satan's power, but it was the Lord, and man would not have Him; that is the condition the world is in. He must be reckoned among the transgressors! What link could there be between God and man? Humanity is a condemned thing, because it refused Christ. You may find a scrupulous conscience as to putting the money in the treasury, but no conscience in betraying and crucifying Him. But it is in a rejected, dead Christ that faith delights. The Christ that man scorns, it requires faith and grace to own. But the disciples still rested on man's strength, not on Messiah crucified in weakness, and said "Here are two swords." The Lord in saying "It is enough," alludes to their words, and implies that they did not enter into His mind. He did not want to say more.

Verses 39-46. There are siftings needed to exercise us and to judge flesh. Christ, of course, did not need this, but dealt with all in communion with His Father. To Him it was a path of obedience, a blessed opportunity of doing God's will; to Peter it was Satan's power. Christ did not speak of the wickedness of the priests, the will of the people, or the injustice of Pilate, but of the cup His Father gave Him. There was positive intercourse with God about the trial, before the time came. And so it must ever be. It is late to put the armour on when we ought to be in the battle. A man living with God, when he gets into trial, goes through it, in his measure, as Christ did. He stands in the evil day, because he has been with God when there was no evil day. On the cross it was not a question of communion; in the garden Christ is in communion with the Father, as to Satan's power, which was about to fall on Him. He felt all, but succumbed under nothing. Thus, instead of entering into temptation, He was in the highest exercise of spirituality, accomplishing the will of God in the most difficult circumstances, and the most perfect submission where it cost everything. Our Father never can lead us into sin, but He may into temptation, that is, into the place of sifting, where the flesh is exposed, when this is needful, because hardness, or levity, or inattention to His patient warnings, has come in. It is the last, and often necessary, means of self-knowledge and discipline. Though it is great grace that He should take such pains, yet seeing our weakness, and the terribleness of the conflict with the enemy, it well becomes us to pray that we may not be cast into the furnace. In such times a bad conscience drives to despair. The flesh, in its undiscerning

carelessness, meets the trial in uncertainty, or carnal opposition, and falls. If, on the other hand, trial comes, we learn our position before God - watching, prayer, entreaty, spreading all before Him in child-like confidence, but submissive desire that His will be done.

175 The Lord was thoroughly man in this, for an angel appears and ministers, strengthening Him; for the conflict of His soul was great; but it urged Him, in the realisation of the trial, to pray more earnestly. The effect of this is to see more clearly the power of evil and the sorrow; and that so as to act on the very body. He was in agony Himself, but always says "Father." He is, and speaks, in His relationship as Son; not yet the victim before God, but the sufferer in spirit, feeling all the depths of the waters He is passing through, but crying out of them to His Father. Satan tried to stop Christ with the difficulty, when he could not beguile Him with the pleasure. But He went through all with His Father. At the cross was another thing - the power of God against sin.

Verses 47-53. It is blessed to see these two things brought together - patience with men, and yet power to stop every thing. Having been in agony with God, He is calm before man. When the servant's ear was cut off, He puts forth His hand to heal. What a picture of man, what a picture of God, if we look here at Christ!

Verses 54-62. When we tremble before men, it is when we have not been with God. Peter breaks down, proving the deceitfulness of the flesh. In Jesus suffering as He was, there was nought to disable the perfect and simple action of grace at each moment required. When the cock crew, He turned and looked on Peter, who remembered His word, went out and wept bitterly.

176 Verses 63-71. The Lord spent the night, not before His judges, who took their ease till morning, before they judged the Lord of glory, but with the men whom they employed, the object of all injury and insult. Then, when it suited the convenience of the Jewish rulers, they brought Him to their council; but the Lord knew it was not the time of testimony, and left them to their weakness. The presenting of Messiah to the Jews was finished; from this the Son of man was to be seated at the right hand of God. All was settled with God - they could go on. They draw the right conclusion, and He conceals nothing. He was the Son of God. They must be guilty, not of mistake, but of condemning Him because He was the Son of God and owned it.

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