

LUKE 22

Luke 22:1–6. Judas Turns against the Savior

The following is adapted from S. Kent Brown, The Testimony of Luke (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 979–980.

At last, the drama of the Savior’s Atonement commences, breaching the dam of seeming inaction. The scene opens on one of the most venerated of festivals, the Passover. Later in the day, Jesus will recline with His most beloved associates, the Twelve, for a private supper together. Unseen by all except Jesus and Judas, the final conspiratorial act that will lead to Jesus’s betrayal and death occurs. This act will define Judas Iscariot forever as the one who sells out his Master to His tireless enemies. Luke does not offer an overt judgment against Judas, but his narrative summary of Judas’s meeting with the authorities tells the tale of perfidy (Luke 22:4–6). Other sources condemn Judas in the strongest terms, calling him a “son of perdition.”¹

Importantly, Satan comes to Jerusalem to handle the final details of the effort to undercut the Savior’s influence among citizens and visitors alike. He himself has been missing in action since his encounter with the Savior in the wilderness at the end of the forty-day fast (Luke 4:1–13). But now he returns in time to assault Judas and influence him to turn to his will, demonstrating his enormous ability to affect those who leave themselves open to his power.²

The negotiation between Judas and the authorities—and we call the meeting a negotiation because such parleys lie at the base of all deals in the ancient Near East—involves a number of important stipulations that the parties work out during their single meeting together. On his side, Judas makes the initial contact and tenders the offer to betray Jesus into their hands (Luke 22:4). Furthermore, in the encounter he pledges to carry out his end of the agreement with a firm promise, probably uttering an oath, and likely

at their insistence, he vows to turn Jesus over in a setting without crowds as that could lead to problems (22:6). On their side, the authorities agree—probably also with an oath—to pay money to Judas when he delivers Jesus (22:5). This meeting turns the tide. This meeting uncovers their perverse joy at the prospect of finally ridding themselves of Jesus.

Luke 22:7–13. Preparations for the Passover Meal

The following is adapted from S. Kent Brown, The Testimony of Luke (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 985–987.

These verses create a sharp contrast illuminating the deep rift that now opens between Judas and the rest of the Twelve. According to prior verses, Judas maliciously steps quietly away from the fellowship of the Savior and his brethren of the Twelve and negotiates the betrayal of Jesus with plotting authorities who seek to seize Him “in the absence of the multitude” (Luke 22:6). He now represents Satan (Luke 22:3; John 13:2, 27). In total contrast, Peter and John enjoy the bright light of Jesus’s full trust, illustrated when He hands over to them the arrangements for their most important and final meal together. Although they do not yet know that it is their last meal with Him, Jesus is fully aware of its significance.

Because of how Luke and the other Synoptists recount events leading up to the Last Supper, we conclude that this meal is the Passover dinner. Although some challenge this obvious connection (chiefly because no mention is given of the roasted lamb being consumed during the meal in any of the accounts), the symbolic central element of the feast is clearly sitting on the table when Jesus says, “This passover” (Luke 22:15). Certainly all of the Synoptic Gospels label the Last Supper as a Passover celebration.³ The bigger issue lies in the difference between these accounts and John’s Gospel. That text clearly notes that the Last Supper falls the night before the Passover celebration: “Now *before* the feast of the passover,” the “supper being ended.”⁴ This difference, whether the Last Supper is a Passover meal or a pre-Passover occasion, forms one of the most difficult problems for students of the New Testament. To date, this difficulty defies solution. For our purposes, we adopt Luke’s understanding that Jesus and the Twelve prepare for and participate in a Passover meal together.

Such a solution agrees with the goal of Luke, along with that of Matthew and Mark, to show that Jesus transforms the celebration of the deliverance of the Hebrew slaves from Egypt into a celebration of the deliverance of all humankind through His Atonement by adding more meaning to the wine and unleavened bread. This is certainly the pattern in the Book of Mormon. John’s Gospel, on the other hand, seeks to highlight Jesus as the Lamb of God: it omits reference to the bread and wine, and thus possible ties to a Passover meal, holding that Jesus, the Lamb, dies on the cross during the afternoon of the day of preparation, just as the paschal lambs die in the temple during the day before they are consumed in the evening Passover meals.⁵ But Luke’s notation that “the passover must be killed” may well bring readers inside this

concept (Luke 22:7). Luke's expression breathes the same air as John's account, hinting strongly at the divine necessity of the Passover lamb's sacrifice so that God's people can be delivered.

In another vein, disciples who seem to be hiding in plain view emerge into our line of sight. The first, of course, is "the goodman of the house" (Luke 22:11). Every reason exists to believe that this man is a follower of the Savior who knows Him by the title "the Master." It does not do to say that this title is a code word that the homeowner will recognize from a prior contact with Jesus when He supposedly comes to arrange for a place for the Last Supper. Jesus is known widely by this title, as demonstrated by its frequent appearance in Luke's report.⁶ The other disciples who emerge could very well be the women whom Luke introduced earlier in his narrative (8:2–3). His choice to feature them early on does not mean that they end their association with the Savior soon afterward. They are still committed followers, likely with assignments; they are still in Jesus's entourage (23:49, 55–56); and they are still offering support from "their substance" as Luke pointed out when he initially brought them to our notice (8:2–3). This last point invites us to see them as unnamed participants in the preparations for the Passover meal. Their experienced and skillful hands will be fully evident in the final adornment of the upper room and the readying of the supper. As Richard Bauckham says, "We need not suppose that only the Twelve were at the Last Supper."⁷

Incidentally, this is not the first visit the Twelve have made to Jerusalem in Jesus's company. To be sure, the Synoptic Gospels paint this picture, leading readers to see Jesus's last visit to the city as His first with His disciples. But, alongside the weight of the reports in the fourth Gospel that chronicle a number of visits⁸ and the hint that temple and civil authorities are looking for Jesus at the festival because of earlier tense interactions with Him (see Luke 19:47), Luke preserves the fact that Peter and John already know their way around the city when they ask, "Where wilt thou that we prepare [the meal]?" (22:9). Though one scholar holds that the two are asking Jesus for directions because they do not know their way around town, the plain sense of their question points to their wish to know exactly the place that Jesus has in mind, and which they with evident confidence can find.

Luke 22:14–20. Institution of the Sacrament

The following is adapted from S. Kent Brown, The Testimony of Luke (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 997–1000.

In these verses we stand on holy ground. Here we are allowed into the room where, in simple but powerful words and actions, the Savior is teaching His beloved and trusted Apostles about the meaning of His death and how they can remember it. While He and they recline in this intimate setting, we can almost smell the freshly prepared foods while we overhear His measured words in an attempt to help His followers finally grasp how He wants them to recollect the events that will soon burst upon Him and them. In a

quiet, worshipful location, far from the turbulence that will characterize the next few hours, Jesus asks them to break bread and pour wine and remember in coming days His willingness to go to His death on behalf of them and others. His is the ultimate vicarious gift: “My body which is given for you . . . my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:19–20).

To be sure, Luke does not preserve the whole scene as it unfolds, as the adjustments in the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew and Mark seem to illustrate. But because the Joseph Smith Translation makes few changes in Luke’s report, we can reasonably say that his account is accurate as far as it goes, almost totally agreeing with what comes down to the Apostle Paul. Unlike others, who struggle to make sense of the New Testament accounts of this scene—accounts that exhibit differences among themselves⁹—Latter-day Saints enjoy the illumination that comes not only from the Joseph Smith Translation but, perhaps more importantly, from the eyewitness accounts in the New World (3 Nephi 18:1–14; 20:3–9). Although the occasion for the Book of Mormon reports likely does not fall on a Passover, the common rope that binds all accounts together is the Savior’s institution of the sacrament, or Eucharist.

As in the story of the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus presides as host. A connection clearly exists between the two accounts. Jesus takes charge; He blesses the five loaves and breaks them; He then distributes them among the Twelve. The part of the story that stands out is that all are filled by this unpretentious meal (Luke 9:17). Likewise, when instituting the sacrament among His New World worshippers, all eat and are filled (3 Nephi 18:5; 20:8–9). Luke’s report of the Last Supper, of course, assumes that everyone in the room eats until filled. To be sure, the parallels between the stories of the five thousand and the Last Supper are not completely tidy. Luke pens the verb translated “to bless” when writing about Jesus’s actions for the five thousand (Greek *eulogeō*) and “to give thanks” (Greek *eucharisteō*) when describing Jesus’s efforts with the Twelve (Luke 9:16; 22:19). But in a broad sense the two verbs serve as synonyms, as we see in Mark 6:41 and 8:6. The fourth Gospel portrays the Last Supper as a pre-Passover meal: “Before the feast of the passover,” the “supper being ended” (John 13:1–2). Contrarily, the Last Supper in the Synoptic Gospels forms a Passover meal. As Jesus reclines with His associates, He pointedly refers to “this passover,” fixing on the roasted lamb that sits on the table in front of them (Luke 22:15). As do many differences between the Gospel accounts, this one defies explanation. John’s chronology fits with his view that Jesus dies as the Passover lambs die (John 19:14, 31, 42). But stepping beyond this observation leads us into a world of spiraling speculation.

The Passover meal in Jesus’s day is already ritualized. The teaching, blessings, and supper proceed in a fixed, orderly way. At the gathering for the celebration, the father or *paterfamilias* takes the lead. He pronounces two blessings, one called the *qiddush* on the festival itself and the second over the first cup of wine, as Jesus does (Luke 22:17). The meal is served but not yet eaten. It consists of unleavened bread, stewed or pureed fruit, bitter herbs, and roasted lamb. In response to a son’s rehearsed question about the special nature of this night, the father teaches everyone about the Exodus from Egypt with reference to the foods set before them: for example, the bitter herbs represent the bitter bondage. In all, the father’s

words carry the celebrants back to the Exodus as if they are participants. Those gathered then sing the first of the Hallel psalms, Psalm 113, and then drink the second cup of wine. After the father utters a blessing over the bread, which Jesus performs (Luke 22:19), everyone enjoys the meal. At the end of the supper, “when he had supped” (1 Corinthians 11:25), the father blesses the third cup, called the cup of thanksgiving. Participants then sing the last part of the Hallel, Psalms 114–118. The Apostles evidently sing these psalms, as retold in other sources: “When they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives” (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26). Not incidentally, the line sung by the multitudes that accompany Jesus into the city lies in this extended song: “Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Psalm 118:26; see Luke 19:38).

This supper, of course, is transformed from a Passover celebration into a memorial of Christ’s suffering and death, of His Atonement. As we have seen, Jesus alters the meaning of the bread of affliction, which is broken and served at the beginning of the meal, by pointing it toward Himself (Deuteronomy 16:3; see Luke 22:19). His body, His mortal self, He surrenders as an offering. Partaking of the bread is done “in remembrance of me” or, more specifically, “in remembrance of my body,” as repeated in the Joseph Smith Translation of Matthew and Mark and in the account in 3 Nephi.¹⁰ But Jesus retains the commingling sense attached to the Passover that participants stand shoulder to shoulder with the fleeing Hebrew slaves. The Joseph Smith Translation adds to Mark’s record: “As oft as ye do this ye will remember this hour that I was with you . . . even the last time in my ministry” (Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 14:21, 24). Future worshippers are to memorialize the sacrament as if they were sitting in Jesus’s presence when they partake of it.

Similarly, Jesus changes the meaning of the third cup of wine, which is served after the meal. Instead of presenting it with the traditional blessing or benediction to conclude the supper, Jesus transforms this cup of wine into a remembrance: it now represents “the new testament” or new covenant “in [His] blood” (Luke 22:20). This new covenant replaces the old one offered through Moses and is made effective not by sacrifices on the temple’s altar but by Jesus’s “blood . . . which is shed for as many as shall believe on [His] name.”¹¹ Jesus thus places His atoning sacrifice figuratively yet firmly in front of His Apostles.

Luke 22:21–23. Prediction of the Betrayal

The following is adapted from S. Kent Brown, The Testimony of Luke (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 1002.

Without naming him, the Savior now brings Judas front and center, but only for a very brief moment. What Judas is about to do does not take over the story. Instead, his betrayal fits within the larger account that focuses on what Jesus will experience. To be sure, Judas’s act triggers everything else that follows. Curiously, we do not learn whether Judas is surprised by Jesus’s prescient remark about a

betrayer. But by now he knows that Jesus possesses unusual powers to perceive the unseen.¹² Only Matthew writes that Judas keeps up the false facade—in the midst of the swirling conversation, Judas is reported to ask, “Master, is it I?” to which Jesus responds, “Thou hast said” (Matthew 26:25). Perhaps oddly, Luke does not write of Judas’s departure from the room to meet authorities; only John does (John 13:26–30).

Luke 22:24–30. Who Shall Be Greatest?

The following is adapted from S. Kent Brown, The Testimony of Luke (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 1007–1008.

The dispute among the Apostles about status at the Last Supper, reported only by Luke, ignites the Savior’s illuminating review about service and the Apostles’ place in the coming kingdom. These two teachings may seem to stand on vastly different grounds, leading some to see two sets of sayings that Luke welds together. But, borrowing Bultmann’s words, a unifying theme presents itself: “Sayings about Precedence.”¹³ First, Jesus settles the disagreement and then, in a gracious, revelatory gesture, offers a grand view of the future for these steady men who “have continued with me in my temptations” (Luke 22:28). Thus, in His last earthly instructions to His Apostles, He comes to a capstone message that lays emphasis on service—“I am among you as he that serveth” (22:27)—and then lifts their view beyond what is coming within the next few hours to a celestial horizon that is full of sunlit promise—“I appoint unto you a kingdom” (22:29).

The bone-hard honesty of Luke’s narrative does not seek to ignore the differences that arise among Jesus’s closest disciples. On the contrary, he exposes the imperfections in their personalities. Without Jesus’s influence, without His presence, their occasional inclination is to pick one another apart. After all, they have spent nearly every day together for months and months, perhaps for as long as three years. Although that sort of close association begets deep friendship, it can also activate irritants, real and perceived, when matters are not going well. And Jesus’s startling announcement that one among them will betray Him means that matters are not going well (see Luke 22:21–23).

Evidently, this is not the first time that such a quarrel erupts among the Twelve. Matthew and Mark report an earlier incident that Luke does not record. The prior occasion begins in an entirely different manner. According to Matthew, the mother of James and John approaches Jesus and, in full trust, asks that her sons be granted places at His side in His future kingdom. When the other members of the Twelve learn about this request, they become incensed. Jesus heads off their frustration by teaching them a similar lesson about leaders becoming servants in His kingdom (Matthew 20:20–28; Mark 10:35–45).

Luke 22:31–34. Peter’s Challenge

The following is adapted from S. Kent Brown, The Testimony of Luke (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 1013–1015.

Satan rears his head again. Even though he appears merely as the subject of the Savior’s warning words to Peter and the other Apostles, these words show him to be at work. What is more, he is active with God’s permission (see Luke 22:31). But his efforts involve more than snagging the heart of Judas (22:3). They involve attempts on Peter, the other Apostles, and all those who turn to the Savior (see “the children of the kingdom” in Joseph Smith Translation, Luke 22:31). This stunning piece of information, confirmed by the eyewitness account in the Book of Mormon, forms one of the pivotal points around which these verses turn (3 Nephi 18:15–19).

Beginning in verse 31, we see the other pivotal points in these verses: Simon Peter stands front and center in Luke’s narrative. It is as if we can see and hear all that goes on in the upper room. Our confidence in Luke’s report grows as we discover similarities in the 3 Nephi account. To be sure, all the Gospel stories narrate Peter’s boasting and the Savior’s prediction that Peter will deny Him three times. The sheer specificity of Jesus’s prophecy sticks out and invites the Gospel writers to report the three denials, all occurring before the rooster crows.¹⁴ Moreover, Jesus’s warning to Peter about Satan’s intentions toward him lifts away some of Peter’s later guilt because of the challenging character of the trials that he will face. Further, the placement of Jesus’s prophetic words seems to matter: Luke and John record that Jesus utters His prediction while all are still reclining around the table, whereas Matthew and Mark write that He speaks the prophecy while walking to Gethsemane.¹⁵ That is, in Luke and John, the prophecy is very much tied to the institution of the sacrament and Jesus’s final teachings to His Apostles, likely the more accurate picture. Additionally, Luke alone brings up the warning about Satan’s role in trying to undo the fellowship within the Church (Luke 22:31).

When we turn to 3 Nephi, several features jump off the page. First, the Risen Savior anticipates any bombast by telling the newly called twelve disciples that they are to avoid disputations at all hazards and are to push away “the spirit of contention [that] . . . is of the devil” (3 Nephi 11:28–29). Instead, they and their people are to “come down into the depths of humility and be baptized” (3 Nephi 12:2). In this connection, they are to “become as a little child . . . or [they] can in no wise receive these [teachings and ordinances]” (3 Nephi 11:37). For those who do otherwise, “the gates of hell stand open to receive such” (3 Nephi 11:40; 18:13). Furthermore, exhibiting a direct tie to Luke’s report, the Risen Jesus declares to the Twelve in the Americas, after instituting the sacrament, that “ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil . . . for Satan desireth to have you [and the multitude], that he may sift you as wheat” (3 Nephi 18:15, 18). Lastly, returning to what we noticed above, we observe that all this takes place on the same occasion when Jesus institutes the sacrament (see 3 Nephi 18:1–14). Coincidental? It seems not.

We can only speculate about an intended connection between Jesus’s institution of the sacrament and His evident concern with Satan. Certainly, the holy sacrament forms a natural target for the devil to use as a tool to corrupt or confuse. Why? Because it stands as the unrivaled centerpiece of Christian worship that is established by Jesus Himself. Notably, the sacrament surely suffers from change among the early generations of Christians, both in how it is celebrated and in how it is conceived of and talked about.¹⁶

The eyewitness character of Luke’s report is underscored and enhanced by Jesus’s address of Peter first by his Hebrew name, Simon, and then by his assigned Greek name, Peter. This kind of direct address, wherein we can almost hear Jesus’s voice uttering these names, rings with authenticity.

Luke 22:35–38. Missionary Preparations

The following is adapted from S. Kent Brown, The Testimony of Luke (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 1018.

In verses that only Luke pens, a major change now looms for both the Savior and His Apostles. He signals this sudden reversal in life’s landscape by the words “but now” (Luke 22:36). Before, the group traveled “throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God” (8:1); now they need to “sell [their] garment, and buy [a sword]” (22:36). Before, He sent “messengers before his face” to announce His arrival (9:52); now He faces arrest and will be “brought . . . into the high priest’s house” (22:54), never to leave free (22:68). Before, in the company of His followers, Jesus was allowed to teach in “the synagogues on the sabbath” (13:10); now His disciples will be delivered “up to the synagogues” for trial and will become known as transgressors (21:12; 22:37). Before, they arrived at a guest chamber for a private supper together (22:11); now authorities will harass them and even kill one of their leaders (Acts 4:1–3; 12:1–11).

Luke surprisingly omits the scene of Jesus singing with His Apostles before leaving the upper room. Both Matthew and Mark preserve this warmly human scene: “When they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives” (Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26). Presumably, the song they sing is the last of the Hallel songs, Psalms 114–118.¹⁷

Luke 22:39–46. At the Place of Suffering

The following is adapted from S. Kent Brown, The Testimony of Luke (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 1026–1028.

At last, the Savior comes to “the hour” (Luke 22:14). Throughout His ministry, He speaks openly and often to the Twelve and others about the approach of this decisive climax. Now, in Gethsemane, the eleven Apostles become its only witnesses, perhaps aided by the memory of the unidentified young man

(Mark 14:51–52). But even the Apostles miss most of what happens because they fall asleep. The most comprehensive account of this occasion lies in the Gospel of Mark (Mark 14:32–42). Luke’s report is sparer but holds the most graphic of descriptions: Jesus’s suffering causes Him to bleed through the pores of His skin. This spilling of His own blood, occurring metaphorically in the heavenly sanctuary, “the holy place,” brings about the new covenant and its associated blessing of an “eternal inheritance” (Hebrews 9:12–15).

Through divine foresight, Jesus anticipates the shocking intensity of what is coming and admits His anxiety about it all (see John 12:27; 18:11). But by the time He climbs from Jericho to the capital city, He shows His now settled resolve to face His suffering by pushing the pace up the hill. However, even His divine foresight and resolve do not fully prepare Him for what crashes down on Him at Gethsemane—all our sins on a sinless man, our wickedness on a righteous person, and our guilt on an innocent soul, in addition to the price for the transgression of Adam and Eve—“In all their afflictions [the Savior] was afflicted.”¹⁸

When the moment of His suffering arrives in its fiery fury, His first reflex is to push it away; His first temptation is to escape: “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me” (Luke 22:42). Again and again, He begs His Father for a way out. As the other accounts illustrate through their verbs of repetition, He moves from standing to kneeling to standing again in an effort to diminish the awful anguish, to ease the piercing pain (Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:35). As His repeated visits to the Apostles and as the additions to the Joseph Smith Translation illustrate, His suffering lasts most of the night.¹⁹

But does the Savior bleed? At this point, all students of the New Testament Gospels have to make a decision: are verses 43 and 44 genuine? That is, does the angel really come and does Jesus bleed as if He were sweating? For many, these verses represent at best an independent and somewhat dubious Christian tradition that a scribe at one point added to a manuscript because Luke’s record did not include enough about Jesus’s suffering. For others, these verses are genuine. For others still, these verses preserve “the most precious” of incidents from all the Gospels. For Latter-day Saints, Jesus’s bleeding in Gethsemane is an established fact (where else might Jesus bleed in this manner if not in Gethsemane?). It is as Luke describes and as the Risen Savior affirms—like sweat, the blood runs from every pore in His body. But this is not all. In the Savior’s own words, the searing “suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit” (Doctrine and Covenants 19:18). Not surprisingly, prophecy captures this monumental moment: “Behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people” (Mosiah 3:7). In this poignant light, we conclude that verse 44 preserves a genuine record of Jesus’s suffering.

But what about verse 43, which pictures the arrival of “an angel . . . from heaven, strengthening [Jesus]”? The second-century Christian authors Justin and Irenaeus, when referring to this scene, draw attention only to the bleeding and not to the appearance of the angel. But this omission simply represents an oversight because Justin is writing about Jesus’s sufferings and Irenaeus is treating Jesus’s human nature. In the case of the second-century author Tatian, he includes the notice of the angel. Importantly,

both verse 43 and verse 44 stand together in all the manuscripts that carry them. Hence, it seems impossible to separate the two. Thus, the account of the angel's appearance is to remain with the report of Jesus's bleeding.

For any who hold that Luke 22:43–44 forms an insertion into Luke's narrative and that this insertion emphasizes Jesus's prayers in contrast to His suffering, we simply turn to the multitude of references that describe Jesus prophetically telling His closest followers that He will suffer and die. To be sure, if we set verses 43 and 44 aside, Mark and Matthew report much more about Jesus's suffering, although they write nothing about answers to Jesus's prayers except Jesus's reference to the Father sending "more than twelve legions of angels" if only Jesus would ask (Matthew 26:53). But when we accept these two verses as authentic, then we plainly see the underlying themes of God's initiative in answering prayers and of Jesus's suffering as fulfilled prophecy.

One further observation is that when we think of Jesus bleeding from every pore, likely thoroughly staining at least His inner garments, we recall the scene sketched in Isaiah 63:1–3 of the one who "cometh . . . with dyed garments . . . [and is] red in [his] apparel" and treads "the winepress alone." This adds a significant coloration to the Coming One of John the Baptist's prophecy. Jesus coming to this moment fulfills older and deeper prophecy.²⁰

Luke 22:47–53. The Arrest

The following is adapted from S. Kent Brown, The Testimony of Luke (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 1033–1035.

The plot against the Savior took its dark, amorphous shape months before this moment, both in Galilee and in Jerusalem. The Galilean conspiracy existed separately from the Jerusalem version, which now could spread unimpeded, even involving the temple authorities. In Galilee, the plot to stop Jesus and His followers apparently lost momentum with Jesus's death, eventually allowing His followers to quietly practice their faith; in Jerusalem, authorities continued their open harassment of His known disciples for years (Acts 4:1–21; 5:17–18).

Judas now moves front and center. His pact with the authorities comes to fruition, allowing these men to capture Jesus out of sight of watching sympathetic eyes (Luke 22:4–6). For his action, Judas receives money. Mere money. Forever will he be remembered for his actions of this night and for receiving the money. What should be disturbing is the ease with which Satan influences someone so close to the Savior. Only Luke and John chronicle Judas's diabolical change of heart, framing a warning to all who read their accounts (Luke 22:3–6; John 13:2, 27).

This said, it appears that Luke minimizes the contact between Jesus and Judas on this fateful occasion, almost as if he does not want to dignify any linkage between the two. For example, Luke does not

note Judas’s withdrawal from the supper or perhaps from the company of the other eleven Apostles as they walk to Gethsemane, but then neither do Mark or Matthew. John alone writes specifically that Judas leaves the meal, walking into the grasp of the night (John 13:30). What is more striking is Luke’s omission both of Judas’s conversation with the authorities as they prepare to take Jesus and of the kiss. Instead of reporting Judas’s intent to kiss Jesus in order to identify Him to the arresting party in the dark, Luke notices only that Judas draws near “unto Jesus to kiss him” and then quotes Jesus’s simple question, “Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?”²¹ Luke thereby lets us know that by divine means Jesus knows the agreed sign of identification and Judas’s secret agreement to turn Jesus over to the authorities.

But Judas is not in charge of the events of the night; rather, Jesus is—He places Himself in a spot where Judas and his party will surely find Him. We know that Judas was already familiar with this place (Luke 22:39; John 18:2). Hence, Jesus shows His willing courage to face whatever is coming toward Him—“The great Creator . . . suffereth himself to become subject unto man in the flesh, and die for all men” (2 Nephi 9:5). Further, “the God of Abraham . . . yieldeth himself . . . into the hands of wicked men” (1 Nephi 19:10). Though He suffers supremely, more suffering is on the way, as prophecy and Jesus Himself affirm—“All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished” (Luke 18:31). We need look no further than Isaiah to see what Jesus sees. In Isaiah 53:7–8, a passage that deals with the fate of the Servant-King, we read, “He *is brought* as a lamb to the slaughter. . . . He *was taken*” (emphasis added). The two Hebrew verbs *yabal* and *laqah*, which mean “to bring” and “to take,” bear a sense of compelling a person against his or her will or to arrest. But in the context of Isaiah’s words, they point most naturally to the arrest of the Servant-King.

A second prophecy, this one from the New World, comes from Nephi, who sees the arrest of the Messiah in vision: “I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he *was taken* by the people . . . [and] judged of the world” (1 Nephi 11:32; emphasis added). Although we do not know the ancient verb that underlies Nephi’s account of the taking of the Savior, certainly the image is one of arrest in this passage. In this light, it is evident that the arrest is significant enough to warrant the notice of prophecy.

When do Judas and the arresting party arrive? The Gospel accounts offer few clues. We conclude that the supper and Jesus’s teaching take up the whole evening, ending before midnight as required by Jewish law. After He and the Apostles reach Gethsemane, Jesus evidently spends much of the night in prayer, as the record of His repeated returns to the Apostles hints.²² This observation receives strength from the Joseph Smith Translation. In both Matthew and Mark, we find an important added detail about the Apostles’ fatigue and sleep that night: Jesus awakens them the final time “after they had finished their sleep” (Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 14:47; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 26:43). Implied is the fact that they sleep about as much as they usually do—that is, most of the night. Dawn is almost here.

Luke 22:54–62. Peter’s Denials

The following is adapted from S. Kent Brown, The Testimony of Luke (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 1040–1043.

For the first time since Luke 5, Peter glides from behind the curtains of either anonymity or a shared spotlight with the Twelve and stands before our eyes, alone. He does not share the spotlight with his brother Andrew, who is present in the earlier scene, although notably, this brother remains unnamed (see Luke 5:5–6). He does not stand with his fishing partners, James and John, as he does so often. Instead, Peter sits with people who wish his Master harm, basically leaving him alone; alone he warms himself by a fire kindled by foes; alone he rolls thoughts through his head before he denies the Savior; alone he weighs the frightful prospects for his divine friend who is now in custody; alone he chases conflicting memories about Judas, his fellow Apostle and the betrayer; alone he forms the focus of all our gaze. Everyone else in this scene remains nameless, almost faceless, with the only defining feature mentioned being gender. Only Peter is clearly identified.

Even though Luke marks Peter’s devastating experience by noting the passage of time, we must not think that the approaching hearing for Jesus requires a long time. Rather, these notations—“after a little while” and “about the space of one hour after” (Luke 22:58, 59)—convey a different message, at least for Peter’s situation. Between his denials, Peter has time to think about what he says. This observation adds texture and depth to his final act in this scene: he “wept bitterly” (22:62). Following his experience, he finds healing in his soul only in the solo visit of the Risen Savior to him, making him the chief witness of the Resurrection, and in Jesus’s restoration of him to his prior station of leadership when in Galilee.²³

These conclusions stand against the view that in his denials, Peter is following Jesus’s instructions to deny Him so that he will survive unharmed to lead the Church. Such a view does not take account of Peter’s sitting in the presence of his accusers for as long as he does. To be sure, we can read the future tense “Thou shalt deny me” as an imperative.²⁴ But the Gospel stories all show the disciples acting or speaking as a group in relative anonymity, such as their shared denial of Jesus in the Joseph Smith Translation of Luke 12:9–11, which lends weight to the observation that Peter denies his acquaintance with Jesus when he is alone. Moreover, the overall character of Luke’s report requires that we see Peter genuinely denying his acquaintance with Jesus in the face of accusations from adversaries.

The notes about the passage of time, of course, say something about how long Peter sits in the courtyard and how long Jesus waits for His accusers. Both because of the added notices in the Joseph Smith Translation about how long the Apostles sleep in Gethsemane, and because of Luke’s notation about the morning coming before Jesus’s hearing, all action in the courtyard appears to occur in the early morning, sometime around five o’clock, and does not take up more than an hour or so.²⁵

For his actions, of course, Peter reaps a certain level of guilt. But we are not to allow this fact to become the controlling sentiment in our view of this man. Spencer W. Kimball offered the following commentary

on this scene: “Remember that Peter never denied the divinity of Christ. He only denied his association or acquaintance with the Christ, which is quite a different matter.” Further, “I do not pretend to know what Peter’s mental reactions were nor what compelled him to say what he did that terrible night. But in light of his proven bravery, courage, great devotion, and limitless love for the Master, could we not give him the benefit of the doubt and at least forgive him as his Savior seems to have done so fully[?]”²⁶ Said another way, Peter’s denial “is a story of personal transformation through failure, self-recognition and restoration . . . a dramatic example of the encounter with the meaning of the cross that every . . . disciple must undergo.”²⁷

Luke 22:63–71. The Hearing before Jewish Authorities

The following is adapted from S. Kent Brown, The Testimony of Luke (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 1048–1050.

Above all else, the Savior bears witness of Himself. In a final moving effort to reach out to His Jewish opponents and to turn them to Himself, He stands among them in their well-trimmed and decorated chamber and invites them to see Him as He is. Part of the challenge for them, of course, is His disheveled appearance, including skin, clothing, and hair stained by His blood. But His words spoken into a quiet, large room resonate with one person, Joseph of Arimathea, who seems to already be acquainted with Jesus’s message. The scene reminds us of the words of the condemned prophet Abinadi that reach the heart of one man, Alma the priest (Mosiah 17:1–4).

It is a spring morning. In the freshening light, colors in nearby gardens come alive. Flowers are in bloom; pomegranate and fig trees stand draped in new green leaves. In this season, the One who again and again restores and refreshes life, who again and again speaks of life continuing beyond mortality, who again and again shows the way to eternal life with God, stands condemned to death. But matters will not remain this way. Even though Jesus’s future looks bleak and dreary, He is in charge. Soon the beauty and splendor of His Resurrection will overshadow even the beauties of the earth.

Jesus chooses this moment, when the earth is renewed and fresh, to reveal Himself as He really is to those who exert the most influence in society. Their genuine grasp of His meaning lies in their condemning words: “What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth” (Luke 22:71). They ask, “Art thou the Christ?” He replies that though unobserved by council members, from now on “the Son of man [will] sit on the right hand of the power of God” (22:67, 69). They ask, “Art thou then the Son of God?” In a response that exudes humility and yet draws in the majestic divine name revealed to Moses on the mount, He answers, “Ye say that *I am*” (22:70; emphasis added). The council’s questions come to the heart of the matter; in turn, Jesus’s answers lead the council to divine truth, but they will not hear it. Instead of beholding the “light . . . and the glory of [their] people Israel” (2:32), they “walk in the light of [their own meager] fire, and in the [faint] sparks that [they] have kindled” (Isaiah 50:11).

Perhaps oddly, Luke omits the scene that features false witnesses whom the authorities assemble to accuse Jesus. Surely Luke knows about this part of the story, and surely, he is aware that it begins as Peter and others bandy by the fire. But he turns away from it. Why? From what he preserves, it is apparent that he chooses to highlight Jesus as the main witness whom His accusers hear, as the single voice to whom they listen, as the royal person whom they reject (see Matthew 26:59–61; Mark 14:55–59). But they are rejecting more than a person who bears witness of Himself. They are rejecting “the Christ,” “the Son of man,” “the Son of God,” the great “I am” (Luke 22:67, 69–70).

“From now on,” Jesus says of Himself, “the Son of man [will] sit on the right hand of the power of God” (Luke 22:69). But already in their turn, the authorities are the constant force in bringing Jesus to His execution by placing Him in Rome’s power. In the council chamber, they make a decision that propels events into Pilate’s temporary residence in the city and eventually to Calvary. Unwittingly, they make a decision that brings about the will of God, even as they drag Jesus to Pilate and argue noisily for His death and join the soldiers that lead Him to the place of execution (Luke 23:35). Never has another decision meant so much.

Notes

- 1 John 17:12; 3 Nephi 27:32; 29:7; Doctrine and Covenants 76:31–38, 43–48.
- 2 John 13:2, 27; Jacob 7:18; Alma 30:53; 3 Nephi 1:22; 2:2–3; Doctrine and Covenants 10:10, 15, 20–21; 29:40; 52:14.
- 3 Luke 22:7; Matthew 26:17–19; Mark 14:12, 14, 16.
- 4 John 13:1–2; emphasis added. See also John 19:14, 31.
- 5 Exodus 12:8, 42; John 18:28; 19:14, 31, 42.
- 6 Luke 8:49; 9:38; 10:25; 18:18.
- 7 Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 199.
- 8 John 2:13; 5:1; 7:10; 11:17–18; 12:12–13.
- 9 Matthew 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26.
- 10 Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 26:22; Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 14:21; 3 Nephi 18:7.
- 11 Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 26:24; see Exodus 24:3–8; Jeremiah 31:31–34.
- 12 See Luke 5:22; 6:8; 11:17; 20:23; 21:3.
- 13 Rudolf Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 2nd ed., trans. John Marsh (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1968), 280.

- 14 Matthew 26:33–35; Mark 14:29–31; John 13:36–38.
- 15 Luke 22:14; Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; John 13:12.
- 16 See 1 Corinthians 11:27–30; 3 Nephi 18:28–29; 4 Nephi 1:27.
- 17 See the comments on Luke 22:14–20.
- 18 Doctrine and Covenants 133:53; see Romans 5:12–17; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22; Alma 7:11–12.
- 19 Matthew 26:40, 43, 45; Mark 14:37, 40, 41; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 26:43; Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 14:47.
- 20 Luke 13:35; Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:7; Acts 13:25; Malachi 3:1; Mosiah 3:9; Doctrine and Covenants 29:11; 88:106; 133:2, 10, 17, 19, 66; see the comments on Luke 3:7–20 and 19:28–40.
- 21 Luke 22:47–48; compare Matthew 26:48–49; Mark 14:44–45.
- 22 Matthew 26:40, 43, 45; Mark 14:37, 40, 41.
- 23 Luke 24:34; John 21:15–17; 1 Corinthians 15:5.
- 24 Luke 22:34; compare Matthew 26:34; Mark 14:30.
- 25 See Luke 22:66; Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 26:43; Joseph Smith Translation, Mark 14:47.
- 26 Spencer W. Kimball, “Peter, My Brother,” in *Speeches of the Year, 1970–71* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1971), 3.
- 27 Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 180.

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