



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

The Lord's Supper; Mark 14:12-21

The Last Passover

TRANSCRIPT

Will you turn with me to Mark chapter 14, and I want to read for the Scripture reading verse 12 through verse 25, or verse 21 to save a bit of time, since this week we are going to center attention on these verses and leave the Lord's Supper aspect of the Last Passover, the First Lord's Supper for next week, the Lord-willing. Mark chapter 14 verse 12 through verse 21. And we read,

“And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will shew you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I?

And another said, Is it I? And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dipped with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.”

May the Lord bless this reading of his word.

[Message]...well, we hear your admonitions and exhortations.

The Apostle Paul wrote, “For even Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us.” And we are looking at the subject of the Lord’s Supper in this series of five or six messages, and today we come to the last of the Passover services, after having considered last week the first of them.

This is really the last authorized Passover service, for it now stands fulfilled, and the Lord’s first supper takes place within the context of the last Passover supper, so it is a momentous occasion when Mark describes, when he describes the preparation, for the Passover account and the institution of the Lord’s Supper. The two important characters in it are the Lord Jesus and Judas, and there are several unusual interchanges that take place between them.

None is more significant than our Lord’s theologically rich statement in verse 21, where he says, speaking of Judas, “The Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed. Good were it for him or for that man if he had never been born.” Now this statement affirms the sovereignty of God, the Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of him. It also affirms the responsibility of man: woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed. And it also sets forth the eternal punishment of the finally impenitent. That is a doctrine that has fallen on evil times, but it is nevertheless one that the Scriptures teach.

When a crime is condemned, it's absurd to ask how long it is condemned. Guilty for 10 days, guilty for 30 days, guilty for 60 days, guilty for one year, guilty for life – all of these are Hibernian in significance. Damnation means absolute and everlasting damnation. All suffering in the next life, therefore, of which the sufficient and justifying reason is guilt, must continue as long as the reason continues. And the reason is everlasting. The man who is guilty today is guilty tomorrow. The man who is guilty today is guilty ten years from now. And the man who is guilty ten years from now is guilty throughout eternity. Time does not convert guilty into innocence. Only in human affairs is that true.

So, when we talk about guilt, it is indivisible, it is untransferable, it is eternal. William G.T. Shedd said, “Sin is the only perpetual motion that has ever been discovered.” The Bible teaches most emphatically all three of these important doctrines, and in none of the statements of the Bible is eternal punishment taught more significantly than in the statement, “Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.”

If it were possible for a man to come into the presence of an eternal God after having sinned, apart from divine redemption, if it were possible to believe that ultimately all men shall be saved, then Jesus could never have said, “Woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It were good for that man if he had never been born.” Because no amount of suffering could prevent us from enjoying eternal life; all suffering would be compressed as over and against eternity to a point. And so if ultimately all men were to enter into the presence of the Lord, he could never have said, “It were good for that man if he had never been born.” This is our Lord's own clear and complete statement concerning eternal punishment. Even more valuable is it because it is directly an affirmation of that doctrine.

Now we turn to the last Passover. And remember, the preliminary lessons we went over last week in the First Passover. The Lord has given us two ordinances:

baptism and the Lord's Supper. In the first, we celebrate our entrance into our Christian life. In the second, we celebrate our continuance in the Christian life. Baptism is experienced once. The Lord's Supper we observe constantly.

Now, there are other organizations which insist there are other ordinances, but generally speaking, biblical students and Protestant students, in particular, have affirmed that these two ordinances are the only two ordinances of the Christian faith. An ordinance is a symbolic rite that sets forth the primary facts of Christian truth and is universally obligatory for believers.

We said last week there were many designations of the Lord's Supper, but perhaps the most common is “The Lord's Supper.” That is the one used in the Bible. It is a very fitting one because the Lord is the host and we are the guests at this meal. The importance of the Lord's Supper is highlighted by the fact that in the New Testament as well as in the writings of the early church fathers, it seems to have been the highlight of the corporate worship of the church. As Luke says, in describing the experiences of Paul in Troas, “On the first day of the week, when the disciples came together (not to preach, although Paul did preach; not to fellowship, although they did have fellowship, he expresses the primary purpose of that meeting as) to break bread.” Acts chapter 20 and verse 7.

It is the only act for which the Lord Jesus gave special direction. It is also sometimes overlooked that the very name, “Lord's Supper,” tends to emphasize the importance of it.

When I was growing up, in some parts of the country in which I lived, one ate breakfast and then lunch and then had dinner at night, and dinner was the primary meal of the day. In other places, such as in South Carolina and Charleston, we had breakfast, and then we had dinner in the middle of the day – really about one to two o'clock was the custom there – and then supper at night, which was a much lighter meal. When we think of supper, we think generally I think of something a little lighter than dinner.

The apostle in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, when he refers to the Lord’s Supper, uses the word that was used for dinner among the Greeks and others in the East. For example, in the mornings they got up – they usually had very little for breakfast. They had a very light lunch, which was usually no more than a few pieces of bread and perhaps a bit of wine. But at night they had their major meal, and they called it *deipnon*. That’s the term the apostle uses in 1 Corinthians 11 when he describes the Lord’s Supper. We would have perhaps been a little better off if it had been called “The Lord’s Dinner,” because it was the principal meal of the day, the *deipnon*. And the fact the Apostle Paul uses it underlines the significance that he and the early church places upon it.

Reading the church fathers – and I’ll cite some of them later on – reading the church fathers indicates that it was customary for them to observe the Lord’s Supper week after week. It was a highlight of their meetings.

The highlights of the Lord’s Supper, we said, go back to the Passover. The Passover is a memorial of Israel’s deliverance from physical bondage in Egypt. The Lord’s Supper is a memorial of our spiritual deliverance from bondage to sin. The Passover was observed in anticipation of the future, when the Lamb of God would come. And so, putting it in language that was not specifically scriptural, I think scriptural in doctrine, they observed the Passover until “he should come.”

When the Lord Jesus came, and this final Passover took place, the Passover service lost its validity thereafter. No valid Passovers have ever been enjoyed since that one, for the age changed, the fulfillment had come, the Lamb had come, the Lamb had been sacrificed; no further need for the offering of animals – lambs – in sacrifice. So, the Passover supper was carried out until he should come.

When we sit at the Lord’s table, the apostle tells us, we observe the Lord’s Supper until he should come, so that it, too, is observed in the view of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, right here in this account that is alluded to, for he says, “Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the vine until I drink it that day with you in the

kingdom of God.” So, the Lord’s Supper is observed in the light of and until the Lord Jesus comes again and establishes his kingdom upon the earth. There is the beautiful relationship between the Passover service and the Lord’s Supper. They are extremely important.

Let’s turn now to the account, and you notice as you read through it there are three movements in the passage. Mark first describes the preparation of the supper in verse 12 through verse 16. And then in verse 17 through verse 21 he describes certain things that happened in the Passover account. And finally he concludes in verse 22 through verse 25 with his account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper. Now this is one of the fuller accounts of the last Passover and the first Lord’s Supper, and that is why it has been chosen for exposition of the Lord’s Supper.

Remember the time. It is the time of the feast of the Passover. The feast of the Passover was the festival of Israel’s birth night. For it was in Egypt, in the spring, that Israel was delivered from the bondage of Egypt, and this one was to be the beginning of the year for them. The Passover marked the beginning of each year. And so in a sense, it was a constant celebration through the years of God’s redemption of the children of Israel from the power of Pharaoh. It therefore is an illustration of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The slaying of the lamb is designed to point forward to the slaying of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

All of those great passages in the Old Testament that set forth the lamb sacrificed point forward to the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps the highlight being Isaiah chapter 52 and chapter 53. When John the Baptist said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world,” he was, no doubt, relying upon that teaching of the lamb that goes back to Exodus chapter 12, through Isaiah chapter 53.

It was therefore a time of gay crowds. It was the time when many Israelites longed to come back to Jerusalem, to see their friends, to have that once in a lifetime experience in the observance of one of the great feasts of Israel. So many people were

there. It has been estimated that the city of Jerusalem had 50,000 people normally, but that there may have been as many as a million here at this time of year. All of these guesses are speculation, but it's been estimated there were many, many thousands of extra people there. So there were gay crowds, there tents all over the hills about Jerusalem where people were staying. Homes were filled with friends and relatives who lived elsewhere all over the face of the earth. So far as the gospel accounts are concerned, it seems that the Lord Jesus Christ spent his nights in Bethany, perhaps at the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus.

But anyway, the time came for them to celebrate the Passover. So the disciples said to the Lord Jesus, anticipating this, where do you wish that we go and prepare in order that you may eat the Passover? And the Lord replies with a commission given to the two. The two, incidentally, are Peter and John. It is not stated in this account, but in the Lukan account it is stated that it is Peter and John.

So he sent forth two of his disciples and said to them, I want you to go into the city, and when you get into the city there will meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water. Follow him. And wherever he goes in, say to the owner of the house, where is the guest room where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?, and he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared, and there prepare the Passover for us.

Now this is a most remarkable thing, and if we look at it carefully, I think we will discover that there is the hand of God over all of these events. Now first of all, he said, when you go into the city, there will meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water; follow him. Now there is something unusual about that. We in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century might miss it. Usually the women carried the water. Those were the good ol' days, men [laughter]; the women carried the water. And so when he said, there will meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water, it's obvious there's something unusual about it.

Furthermore, think for a moment that Jerusalem is filled with people, literally thousands of people milling about. Today when you go to Jerusalem, there are people

constantly milling about, people’s shoulders touching; it’s packed and jammed. It was packed and jammed then. And Jesus said when you go into that city, in the midst of that vast multitude of people, you will meet a man bearing a pitcher of water. In other words, God is already preparing these things. A man is leaving a certain place, going to get water, as he is speaking to them, they’re leaving from another place, this man will go and get water, and he will come back, and in the midst of that milling crowd he will actually cross the path of Peter and John, and they will see that man.

You know, the Apostle Paul says he works all things according the counsel of his own will. I’ve noticed speaking to theological students also to people in an audience like this, when I say, God works all things according to the counsel of his own will, there is almost always resistance. I remember when I resisted that -- the idea that God works all things according to the counsel of his own will. But this is the way that God works all things to the counsel of his own will. And in this remarkable meeting of the man bearing the pitcher of water, we see the providence and power of God again.

Now there was another instance just preceding that one might contrast with this. Remember when Jesus was getting ready to make his untriumphal entry into the city of Jerusalem, he sent forth two of his disciples from Bethany and said to them, “Go your way into the village nearby, and as soon as you are entered into it, you shall find a colt tied on which never a man sat, loose him and bring him.” You will walk into the city and you’ll see a colt and also you will see the foal with it, he says in another place, and I want you just to bring it. And if any man shall say unto you, why’re you doing this, just say, the Lord has need of him, and straightway he’ll send you here.

Now, notice the difference. In that instance, the Lord Jesus says something with reference to a stranger, the owner of the colt, evidently, whereas here there must have been some sort of arrangement with the owner of the house where they were to observe the Lord’s Supper. But notice, there is a difference between the two accounts. In account, he simply demands the colt and her foal. In the other case, he asks. In the one



case he acts as the king who is making his triumphal entry. In the other, he acts as a mediator who is coming to die as a sacrifice. In one case, he dictates to a stranger, in the other, he asks of his friend. In the one case he enters into the city which is his own – he came unto his own things, and his own people did not receive him; but here he acts as the one who does not have where to lay his head. In the one case, he acts out of his wealth, by demanding. In the other case, he acts out of his poverty by simply asking. In the one case he anticipates the glory of the king of Israel; in the other, he anticipates his Passion. In the one case he acts as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; in the other as the Lamb of God.

It's also interesting that when the Lord Jesus came, he was also of the house of David. He came into the world and his father and mother were asking for favors. They came to the city of Bethlehem and asked for a place to stay and there was no room for them in the inn. And so they were in the manger, in the – incidentally, that's the same word that is used here when the Lord says, ask for “guest room” – the same room. It was the place where they tied up the animals and where the guests slept. So here is the Son of God, the Son of David, the king to come into the world, and as he's leaving the world, the same kind of thing he requests.

However, when those two men, Peter and John, come into the city and ask about the guest room, the Lord Jesus said, he will show you a large Upper Room, furnished and prepared – that's a lovely room. So, they were just to ask for a guest room, but the one who is the owner of the house will give you a beautifully prepared Upper Room. That is precisely what happens. You can see that the hand of God is in all of this, and actually it is God himself who spreads the cloth over the table for the Last Passover and the First Lord's Supper.

Now, the arrangements that were made for the Passover are arrangements that are very significant, and I'll just quickly go through them. In the table itself, usually, they reclined. And here, when the text says, while they sat and did eat, the Greek text says,

while they were reclining and eating. They did not sit at a table, they rather reclined at the side of the table. Leonardo DaVinci's *The Last Supper* is therefore wrong in its portrayal of that supper in that it has the disciples seated around a table. They reclined, usually around a long rectangular table about eighteen inches high, and the reclined on their left side. And if you can imagine a rectangular table in front of you with the disciples, beginning over on your left, and moving around the table – the end was left vacant – you would have something like a stadium without one end being built up.

The first seat on the left, or the first position on the left was evidently the position that John the Apostle had, because the second on the left was the host, and he was reclining upon the Lord's breast, so being on his left arm he would naturally have reclined against the breast of the Lord.

The third place on the left of the horseshoe went, would be the guest of honor, and that was Judas. He was there. There are various things that are explained by this position. Now they had had an argument beforehand about who should be the greatest, and the Lord Jesus said that whoever as the least would be the greatest, and the greatest would be the least. And so Peter had been involved in the argument. And evidently, thinking that that's the way things are going to be, he'll get at the least place. Well, that was on the right at the last seat, and Peter was there.

And the reason we know that Peter was there is because he could beckon across to John and ask, “Who is going to betray the Lord?” and the others would not hear. So that was the way generally they were set up around the table. That explains, incidentally, why also John alone heard the answer, he it is to whom I give the sop after I have dipped. If Peter had heard that, Judas would not have left the table alive, but he never was able to hear it.

It's also, we can understand, how Judas is able to ask, “Is it I, master?” and the Lord reply, “You have said.” In other words, it is you, and others would never be able to

hear it at the table. So this undoubtedly -- I think undoubtedly -- the way they were reclining around the table.

The Passover service gathered around the eating of the lamb and the drinking of the cups of wine. Four cups of wine were drunk. It is said by some in tradition that a fifth cup was there for Elijah who was an absent guest at the table. But the service itself began with a cup of thanksgiving, and then the head of the house, the host, would wash the hands, and this reminds us of the washing of the feet that is recorded in the Gospel of John. The dishes would be brought to the table, bitter herbs dipped in salt water, then one of the unleavened cakes would be broken by the host, half of it would be put aside – that was the *athikamen* which was left for later eating, and the bread would be passed around.

At that time a second cup was filled, and the youngest person at the table would then ask the host, what’s the meaning of this service? And then the host was responsible for explaining the spiritual significance of the Passover. Wouldn’t you like to have been there to hear our Lord’s exposition of the Passover? It would be interesting to compare the tape of my explanation with the tape of his explanation of the Lord’s Supper, and I think we all know which explanation would be best. And that second cup was drunk, and then the supper itself was begun with the eating of a sop. A piece of bread was dipped in a pot, a piece of lamb was taken out, the choicest, and that was given to the guest of honor, in this case to Judas, as the beginning of the feast.

After the observance of the eating of the lamb, the Lord’s Supper evidently was instituted. At a point in time, the Lord Jesus, after the Passover had been observed, reached over and took the *athikamen*, the piece of bread that had been put aside, and introduced to them the memorial of the Lord’s Supper.

And finally, a third cup was drunk, the cup of blessing. That was called the cup of blessing by the Jews, that third cup, and the Apostle Paul calls the cup of the Lord’s Supper, “The Cup of Blessing,” so the Passover account merges into the Lord’s Supper.

Now that’s an amazing thing because, remember, Israel was told to observe this ceremony forever, but here is the Lord Jesus saying don’t remember the Passover account any longer, remember me! In other words, it is an expression of the sense of sovereignty over all things that he himself possessed by virtue of what he would do. He was able, in a sense, to do away with the Passover service and install in its place the observance of the Lord’s Supper. And the amazing thing is that these godly, devoted Jewish men – true believers – believed him and followed him. And the remainder of the church has been following him.

After the fourth cup and the singing of a hymn, the remainder of *ballelo* which they had sung earlier, that feast, then, was concluded.

Well that is what is involved here, and we look now for just a few moments at what is stated in verse 17 through verse 21. They came to the home – it may have been Mark’s family home. And he came with the Twelve, and while they were reclining and eating, he said, “Verily I say unto you, one of you who eateth with me shall betray me.” Incidentally, someone has said, this is our Passover going to his Passover. But notice, angles and demons are also there, because one of you, he says, shall betray me.

Now he is still fulfilling all righteousness, for he must fulfill all righteousness. Therefore, this supper must be observed, the Passover account must be observed exactly as the Old Testament has set it forth. He cannot make any mistake in the observance of the Passover, anything contrary to the law of the Old Testament. And so, it was done absolutely accurately so that the most fastidious Pharisee or Sadducee could find nothing wrong with the observance of this supper, nor even, as someone has said, an eager angel find anything wrong with it. The birth room of the Christian church must be kept immaculately pure.

Now he asks them, then, or said to them, one of you that eateth with me shall betray me. The drama that follows is very interesting. The men are shocked. One of us shall betray him? And you can just hear them. John: Is it I, Lord? In the original text, he

writes it in such a way as to expect a negative answer; it is not I, is it, Lord? And then you can hear Peter: It is not I, is it Lord? He knows he has denied the Lord previously. But nevertheless he asks, it isn't I, is it Lord? And then James and all of the rest of the apostles until we come Judas, goes around the rest of the table until we come to Judas. And then Judas says, “It's not I, is it, master?” And in the substitution of that word, Lord, and in its place, master, we see the nature of the heart of Judas.

Paul says later, “No man says Lord except by the Holy Spirit.” That is a text incidentally that teaches that faith is the gift of God. No one ever confesses the Lord Jesus Christ, truly, as Lord except by the power and authority and gift of the Holy Spirit of God. That's efficacious grace. A man may say, Lord; he may say the Lord Jesus, but to truly confess out of faith – that is only done by the Holy Spirit. Isn't it striking, too, that this question is asked in the midst of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ? To think that someone actually chosen by the Lord Jesus should be the betrayer of him.

Do you not know that it is possible that in this congregation today there is sitting in our midst someone who is the spiritual equivalent of a Judas, who attends the meetings with the saints, who hears the ministry of the word of God as Judas did from the lips of the Lord himself, who companied with him and companied with the other believers, but who at heart was different from them? Do you not know that it's possible for you, sitting in this audience to stand really in the position of Judas, and not even your best friends know it? The apostles were fooled by Judas. When he said one of you shall betray me, they didn't say, “I knew it was Judas! I knew it was he, I knew because of what has happened in the past.”

Never once do we read in the New Testament of Judas ever seeking the face of our Lord. One of the saddest things in the preaching of the gospel is to preach the gospel year after year and see no evidence in the hearts of some who listen of an honest and true seeking after spiritual growth and development through the word of God. It's

possible for elders to be fooled. In fact, it's possible for elders to be Judases. So, you can hear them. One by one: it isn't I, is it, Lord?

The sop was Judas' last chance. I wish we had time to talk about that but we don't. It's clear that these men do not yet understand the nature of the human heart. Someone might wonder, how can a Judas betray the Lord? How can a person who spent three years in the presence of the Lord, chosen by him, heard his wonderful messages, seen the love of the divine heart, and not respond? Why if you don't know how that can happen, you don't understand the nature of the human heart.

Our president doesn't understand the nature of the human heart. The other day he said, “Men are basically good.” But then his better judgment took hold and he said, “But they are prone to evil.” That's like saying they are white and they are black at the same time. No, no. He was right the second time. The heart of man is prone to evil. Men are not basically good. Since the Fall, they are basically evil. Their thoughts are contrary to God; there are none that seeketh after good, no not one, Paul said. There is none that doeth good, President Reagan, no not one. They are all gone out of the way; they are together unprofitable. We are sinners and lost, and it is only when the divine spirit works in our hearts, causes us to see our condition and causes us to flee to the blood shed on Calvary's cross that we receive a new heart and a new life and the forgiveness of sins.

Now the Lord says, “The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.” You can easily see that our Lord, in spite of the fact that he says that Judas is doing things exactly as the Scripture has said that he would do them – incidentally, he cites a passage from Psalm 41:9 applying it to Judas. He cites it directly in the Gospel of John. Here, there is an allusion to it, a reference to David and the one who betrayed him, Ahithophel. Ahithophel, a man who was so close to him that it was said of

Ahithophel, that to inquire of Ahithophel's advice and counsel was as if a man inquired of the Lord.

But Ahithophel betrayed David. Ahithophel wound up hanging himself. Ahithophel illustrates Jesus said, Judas, the Lord Jesus Christ's adversary. There must have been a close relationship between Judas and our Lord for a lengthy period of time, for the psalmist says, “My own familiar friend has lifted up his heel against me.” Woe to that man. Everything has been going exactly as it is supposed to go, but woe to that man through whom the Son of man is betrayed. Even though everything goes according to the way they should go, Judas is responsible. He is responsible before the Lord God. Woe to that man through whom the Son of God is betrayed. We are responsible.

And even though God works all things according to the counsel of his own will, we are responsible. That is a very, very significant and important truth.

There is an old story that I like of Mr. Harold Senjen. Mr. Senjen was a Bible teacher with some ability. And he was once in Oxford I believe, and in a museum. And he was looking at one of Holman Hunt's pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ. And as he was looking at it and pondering it, a group of tourists came in led by a guide. And, as they came in, Mr. Senjen stood off to the side, and the guide began to give a brief explanation of that particular portrait. He, in a few carefully chosen sentences gave the details of it. And then finally he concluded his little presentation with, “And the original of the portrait was sold for 5,000 pounds.”

Now Mr. Senjen was a man who took advantage of every opportunity. Yesterday, Martha and I were down by Central Expressway and Forest Avenue. There's a new little shop down there entitled, “Tomorrow's Body.” I said to Martha, I've always wanted to find out what the resurrection body would be like, I ought to go in and ask [laughter]. She said, if you do, they'll cart you away [loud laughter]. So we didn't go in. But someday I'm going to go in there and ask them what does tomorrow's body may look like. You never can tell what kind of an answer you might get. I might be hauled off,

but then they might say, resurrection body, I’ve never thought of that. But it’s Tomorrow’s Body – you’ll see it. And if you beat me to it, that’s alright. You may come in and they’ll say, we’ll somebody came in the other day and asked about that. You’re not the first one to ask that.

Well, Mr. Senjen was a man who took advantage of every opportunity. And when the guide said, the original of this was sold for 5,000 pounds, he stepped forward, and he said, “Will you pardon me for saying a word? I would suggest to you that the original of that was sold for thirty pieces of silver.” And he said, a quiet came over those tourists. They stood for just a few seconds and then they turned and everybody filed out without saying a single word. The original was sold for thirty pieces of silver. We are responsible, even though God controls all of human experiences.

And in that last statement of our Lord poignantly affirms eternal punishment. If men are ultimately to be saved, if it is true as so many liberal theologians say today, everybody is ultimately to be saved, then every man’s birth would be good no matter what we bear in the meantime if throughout eternity we would be in the presence of the Lord. You cannot say, “Good were it for that man if he had never been born,” for in the light of eternity, all time moves and merges into a single point. But Jesus said, “It were good for that man if he had never been born.” As the poet said, “Who counts the billows if the shore is won?”

There is an old story about William G.T. Shedd which I’ve several times told here in Believers Chapel, but I’ll tell it again. The *North American Review* engaged Shedd to write an article vindicating eternal punishment, and it also engaged Henry Ward Beecher. Mr. Beecher didn’t believe in eternal punishment; Mr. Shedd did. Well, Mr. Shedd wrote his article first, and the proof sheets were sent to the *North American Review*, and they were then sent on to Mr. Beecher. They were to read each other’s article.

But when it came to Mr. Beecher and read through Mr. Shedd’s article on eternal punishment, he shot back – he telegraphed from Denver to the *North American Review*,



“Cancel the engagement, Shedd is too much for me. I half believe in eternal punishment myself; get someone else.” He never did write an article.

If there is one thing the Bible teaches, plainly and clearly, it is the doctrine of eternal punishment. The eternal punishment of the wicked, the eternal happiness of the righteous, the eternity of God are three great planks of biblical truth. The universalists would like to push against these three great pillars of truth, and if they overthrow one of them, they will overthrow them all. But they are unable to do so. God lives on in his eternity. The righteous shout out in eternity in the presence of God and the damned groan on as they suffer eternal judgment.

Eternal judgment is of two kinds, just like the punishment of children is of two kinds. We punish our children in two ways. We sometimes desire that they need the positive. That is, the punishment of a spanking. And then there's sometimes we decide they need the privative kind of punishment: taking something from them. And we say, go to bed without your supper tonight. At least, that's what they used to do in my family – go to bed without your supper tonight. Or you won't be able to use the automobile for 30 days.

Well, God's punishment is of a similar character, for the Bible says that the lost stay in the lake of fire forever. But the Bible also says that they enjoy the blackness of darkness forever, too: the positive punishment and the privative punishment – part of the teaching of God. Just as clearly as the salvation is taught through Jesus Christ, so is eternal punishment.

So I call upon you as we close our meeting. If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ as your own personal Savior, the sacrifice has been offered. You may flee to the cross and receive the gift of eternal life, recognizing your lost condition and the saving work of the Son of God. We invite you to come to him as an ambassador of the Lord Jesus. Flee to Christ. Receive as a free gift eternal life. Be delivered from the eternal

judgment that is to come. Come to Christ. Don't leave this auditorium without the assurance of the forgiveness of sins. May we stand for the benediction.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for these words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ. No one is so qualified to speak of eternal punishment as he. And we thank Thee that he has spoken so plainly and clearly. And O God, if there is some in this audience, like Judas, who have spent many hours in the presence of the exposition of the word of God, or in the presence of believers, but who have not yet come to him, O God, so work in them that they may flee to the cross and receive eternal life.

May grace, mercy and peace go with us, for Jesus' sake. Amen.