PART FOUR

Christ's Passover
announced by the Scriptures of Israel

Section D

(LUKE 22,1–24,53)

From R. Meynet, *Luke: the Gospel of the Children of Israel*, Retorica Biblica e Semitica 4, G&B Press, Roma 2015, 713-755.

This section of the Gospel of Luke has four sequences, to which one may give titles expressing simply the sequence of events: the testament, the trial, the execution and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus[1].

The titles used stress the relations that the extreme sequences, and those marking the two central sequences have between them. The four sequences form three sub-sections practically corresponding to the three days of Jesus' Passover:

First sub-section:	THE THURSDAY	OF SEPARATION		
Sequence D1:	Christ makes a testament	for his disciples	who abandoned him	22,1-53

Second sub-section:	THE FRIDAY	OF THE PASSION		
Sequence D2:	The King of the Jews,	Christ of God,	is condemned	22,54–23,25
Sequence D3:	The King of the Jews,	Christ of God,	is executed	23,26-56

Third sub-section:	THE SUNDAY	OF RESURRECTION		
Sequence D4:	Christ opens the Scriptures	for his disciples	who find him again	24,1-53

[1] See R. MEYNET, *La Pâque du Seigneur. Passion et résurrection de Jésus dans les évangiles synoptiques*.

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Christ makes a testament for his disciples who abandon him

Sequence D1: Luke 22,1-53

This sequence comprises nine passages arranged in three sub-sequences: the extreme sub-sequences each have two passages; the central sequence, which takes place entirely during the last meal, has five passages.

The authorities	and Judas	prepare	the death of Jesus	1-6
Jesus	and his disciples	prepare	the Passover	7-13

THE PASSOVER	OF JESUS	14-20
The announcement	of the betrayal	21-24
THE DISCOURSE ON SERVICE		25-30
The announcement	of the denial	31-34
THE SWORDS	OF THE APOSTLES	35-38

Agonizing,	Jesus	agrees	to shed	his blood	39-46
Arrested,	Jesus	refuses	to shed	his enemies' blood	47-53

A. THE PASSOVER IS PREPARED (22,1-13)

The first sub-sequence comprises two passages: «The plot against Jesus» (1-6) and «The preparation of the Passover» (7-13).

1. THE AUTHORITIES AND JUDAS PREPARE THE DEATH OF JESUS (22,1-6)

COMPOSITION

: [1] Was nearing, then	the feast	of the Unleavened-bread	
:	the one said	Passover.	
+ [2] And WERE SEEKING	*the high-priests*	and the scribes	
	= **how**	**to get rid of**	**him**
+ *they were fearing in fact*	*the people.*		
. [3] Entered	**Satan**	in Judas	
. the-one called	Iscariot		
. being	from the number	of the Twelve.	
	-- [4] And having departed,		
	-- he spoke-with	*the high-priests*	and the guards,
	= **how** **to them**	**-might give-over**	**him.**
. [5] And they rejoiced			
. and arranged	with him		
. **the silver**	to give (to him).		
+ [6] And he agreed	and WAS SEEKING	the right moment	
	= **the one**	**-to give-over**	**him,**
+ *away from*	*the crowd,*	to them.	

INTERPRETATION

«Which of them was going to do that?» (22,23)

It is not «the people» who were going to hand Jesus over, because they believed in him, nor even «the crowd» from which anything can be expected, since those responsible fear the one (2c) and Judas does not want it done in the presence of the other (6c). Thus, while the multitude is favourable to Jesus, it is the members of the Sanhedrin, high priests and scribes (2a), along with the guards (4b), who are trying to get rid of Jesus. But they cannot find a way of doing it. Then the unthinkable happens: Jesus was not to be given up by the

crowd[1], nor by the elders, the scribes, the high priests and their guards; he was to be given up by Judas, «one of the Twelve» (3). And Judas was not to be hired by anyone, he would go on his own, on his own initiative, to seek out the authorities and offer Jesus to them (4)[2]. They have something to rejoice over (5a) for the most improbable luck is on their side. Treachery is at its peak. It is so monstrous that it cannot come from a man; it can only be the work of Satan (3a).

«No one can serve two masters» (Luke 16,13)

«No one can serve two masters; either he will love one and hate the other, or he will be attached to one and will detest the other; no one can serve God and Mammon» (Luke 16,13). From between Jesus and Satan, Judas has chosen his master; he will hand over one of them (4) and will get his wages from the other (5c). In fact, by refusing to continue to serve the master he had followed along with so many others and by whom he had been chosen from among all to be of the number of the twelve apostles (Luke 6,16), by using him to get money (5c), he submits to Satan (3a) who «enters» into him to possess him. So it is that the man is possessed by what he thought he possessed.

[1] Although in Luke, «the people» designates rather those who believe in Jesus and «the crowd» all comers (see, for example, Luke 18,36 and 43b), here the two terms seem to be synonyms.

[2] The central member (4) is the only one to use only words present in the two other members, which highlights it as the most outstanding. It should be noted that in the first phase (2) «the scribes» are mentioned with «the high priests», but that in the centre, it is «the guards» (4); these latter (*stratēgoi*; often translated by «the chiefs of the guards»), called «guards of the Temple in 22,52, are the officers of the police force charged with keeping order in the Temple, and probably also with the finances.

2. Jesus and his disciples prepare the Passover (22,7-13)

Composition

: [7] Then came the day of the Unleavened-bread
– in which it-was-necessary to sacrifice **THE PASSOVER**.

: [8] And he sent Peter and John saying:
– «Once-departed, *PREPARE* for us **THE PASSOVER**
– so that *we-might-eat*.»

. [9] They *said* to-him:

+ «**Where** do-you-want
+ *WE-MIGHT-PREPARE*?»

[10] He said to-them:

. «Behold! HAVING-ENTERED you in the city
- will-meet *you* a man
a-ceramic-pot of-water bearing;
- follow *him* into the house
. into the-one HE-GOES-INTO.

. [11] And *you-will-say* to-the steward of-the-house:
. "*Says* to you the teacher:

+ '**Where** is the room
+ where **THE PASSOVER** with my disciples *I-might-eat*?'

: [12] And that-one to-you will-show an-upstairs-room, great (and) furnished;
– there *YOU-PREPARE*!»

: [13] Having-left they found
: just-as he-had-said to-them
– and *THEY-PREPARED* **THE PASSOVER**.

Interpretation

«Just as he had said to them»

When, on making his solemn entry into Jerusalem, Jesus had sent two of his disciples to look for a colt in the village in front of them (Luke 19,29-34), everything happened «as he had said to them» (32). Today also the two disciples sent to prepare the Passover find things «as he had said to them» (13b). So, once again, the prophet is proved right; what he states is carried out to the letter: «When that happens — and look, it is happening now — they will know that there was a prophet among them» (Ezek 33,33).

An enigmatic sign

It was women, and not men, who went to the well and brought back the water in pitchers from it. The large number of them whom one could meet in the alleys in Jerusalem could certainly not have been used as a sign, whereas a man would attract attention by carrying a pitcher of water (10d). But would that really be the only reason why Jesus chose such a strange sign? Since that marks the turning point for those who were sent by Jesus — on seeing the man described by their master coming to meet them (10c), they turn back to follow their guide (10e) — it cannot be without any symbolic significance. In fact, that mysterious man does not lead them anywhere except to the place where they will eat the Passover. Will the rest of the text make it possible to solve the enigma?

3. THE PASSOVER IS PREPARED (22,1-13)

COMPOSITION OF THE SUB-SEQUENCE

* [1] Was near, then, the feast of the **Unleavened bread** the one called **Passover**.

[2] And the high priests and the scribes were seeking **how to get rid of him,** they were fearing in fact the people. [3] Satan entered into Judas the one called Iscariot, being from the number of the Twelve.

[4] AND HAVING DEPARTED, HE SPOKE-WITH THE HIGH-PRIESTS AND THE GUARDS,

how he might give him to them. [5] And they rejoiced and arranged with him to give him silver. [6] And he agreed and was seeking the right moment **to give him to them**, apart from the crowd.

* [7] Then came the day of the **Unleavened bread** in which it was necessary **to sacrifice the Passover**.

[8] And he sent Peter and John saying: «Once departed, **prepare for us the Passover so that we might eat.**» [9] They said to him: «**Where do you want that we might prepare**?» [10] He said to-them: «Look! having entered you in the city

WILL MEET YOU A MAN BEARING A CERAMIC POT OF WATER.

Follow him into the house where he enters.[11] And you will say to the steward of the house: "Says to you the teacher: '**Where is the room where I might eat the Passover with my disciples**?'" [12] And he will show to you an upstairs room, great (and) furnished; **there you prepare**!» [13] Having left they found just as he had said to them and they prepared the Passover.

INTERPRETATION

«Christ our Passover is sacrificed» (1Cor 5,7)

The feast is coming soon (1), the paschal lamb is going to be sacrificed (7). Its blood will be shed and placed on the uprights and lintels of the doors (Exod 12,7). It is because of this blood that they will be spared by the exterminating angel and their lives will be saved (Exod 12,13). But the victim of this Passover will not only be the paschal lamb. By being sold (5), Jesus will pay our ransom with his life; he will be the price of our redemption.

Friends and enemies of Jesus

Jesus has enemies, the authorities, high priests and heads of the guards, the people whom Judas goes to see (4) and who are pleased with what he is doing (5). He also has friends, among whom is the one to whom he sends Peter and John to prepare the Passover (10-12). The former want to eliminate him, the latter welcomes him into his house so that he can celebrate Passover with his disciples. Yet, even if Luke's scenario places him in opposition to the official authorities in Israel, this character is still very mysterious.

B. WHICH IS THE GREATEST? (22,14-38)

The second sub-sequence has five passages: «The celebration of the Passover» (14-20), «The announcement of the betrayal» (21-24), «The service discourse» (25-30), «The announcement of Peter's denial» (31-34), «The swords of the apostles» (35-38).

1. THE PASSOVER OF JESUS (22,14-20)

COMPOSITION

This passage presents a well-known problem: given that, contrary to the parallel passages in Matthew and Mark, two cups are mentioned (17.20), is it a matter of one passage, of one rite, or of two? What is at stake is important: is Jesus' new covenant separate from the former one?

A glance at some modern English translations shows the hesitations on the part of the exegetes: while the NET Bible makes one pericope of these verses and calls it «The Lord's Supper», the JB distinguishes «The supper» (14-18) from «The institution of the Eucharist» (19-20); The KJV makes the same separation (but goes until verse 23, as do many other English translations), and the subtitles of its two pericopes show its unease at separing them:

14-18 «The Last Supper»
19-23 «The Lord's Supper Instituted»

The omission of the end of 19 (from «Do this» on) and of 20 by several ancient manuscripts bears witness to similar embarrassment[3].

The first way to solve the problem, the most radical one, is then to remove the second cup! The second is to separate the two as if there were two meals, in any case two rites: one, a former one, of the Jewish Passover and another, a new one, of the Eucharist. One could say that the two rites are «placed parallel[4]», which is a way of linking them while keeping them separate.

Historical criticism tries to solve this problem, in many very different ways, by appealing to different sources and traditions. This is a genetic or archaeological explanation that does not take account of the present state of the text and of reasons for which, if different sources are at the origin of the present text, Luke has combined them. The line taken by Xavier Léon-Dufour who tries to find the form of the testaments of the patriarchs behind the story by Luke manifests an intuition that the whole of the sequence would generally bear out; however, his explanation does not seem to be absolutely convincing[5]. Rhetorical analysis makes it possible to offer another alternative: whatever may be said about the prehistory of the text, is not the important thing, through an attentive study of its composition, to grasp Luke's own message? To put it directly, the very elaborate way in which he has inseparably put together the various parts of his account of Jesus' last meal reveals his intention of showing that the covenant concluded by Jesus, although new, is simply part of the former one.

It is very difficult to bring out the composition of this text, and in particular to choose a way of dividing up the passage into its different constituent elements. To be sure, four sayings of Jesus are reported (14-16; 17-18; 19; 20), but how are they to be grouped?

A first solution would be to consider that the passage is formed of two parts (14-18; 19-20). These two parts would in fact be marked out by very striking symmetries: in the first, verse 18 repeats verse 16 almost word for word; in the second, «this is my body which is given for you» in 19 would announce «this cup is the new covenant in my blood which is shed for you» in 20. Moreover, verses 14-18 and 19-20 have eating and drinking following each other, in the same order:

EATING (15b)	–	EATING (16a)	cup (17a)	–	DRINKING (18a)
bread (19a)	–	body (19b)	cup (20a)	–	blood (20b)

[3] See P. BENOIT, «Le récit de la Cène».
[4] NJB 1985, 1727, note f.
[5] X. LÉON-DUFOUR, *Le Partage du pain eucharistique*, especially, 105 *sqq*.

= [14] And when came the hour,
. he-reclined and the apostles *with him*
. [15] and *he-said* to them

= «Deep-desire I-desire this
. THE PASSOVER to-eat *with you*
. before *I SUFFER*.

: [16] *I-SAY THEREFORE TO-YOU*
: *that* I-may-*not*-eat *it anymore*
- **until when** it-might-be-fulfilled **in the Kingdom of God**.»

+ [17] **And having-taken a CUP**, **having-given-thanks**,
+ *he-said*:

* «TAKE THIS AND SHARE IT (AMONG) YOURSELVES.

: [18] *I-SAY THEREFORE TO-YOU*
: *that* I-may-*not*-drink *anymore* from now of the product of-the vine
- **until when the Kingdom of God** might-come.»

+ [19] **And having-taken BREAD**, **having-given-thanks**,
+ he broke (it) and gave to-them, *saying*:

. «THIS is my body
- **that for you** ***is given***.

* THIS DO IN MY MEMORY.»

= [20] And **the CUP** likewise after dining *saying*:
. «THIS cup (is) THE NEW COVENANT in *MY BLOOD*
- **that for you** **is poured-out**.»

However, other symmetries could favour subdividing the passage into three parts (14-16; 17-19; 20).

= [14] And when came the hour,
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. [15] and *he-said* to them

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+ [17] **And having-taken** **a CUP**, **having-given-thanks**,
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- **until when** **the Kingdom of God** might-come».

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= [20] And **the CUP** likewise after dining *saying*:
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- **that for you** **is poured-out».**

The central part would comprise two pieces (17-18; 19) marked out by some initial parallel terms (17ab.19ab); the first of these two utterances by Jesus starts and the second ends (17c.19e) with the only two imperative sentences of the text, «take this and share it among you» and «this do in my memory». The central part (17-19), the one of thanksgiving («Eucharist») and of orders concerning the cup and the bread, would be framed by two other parts in which eating (14-16) corresponds to the cup (20), and in which «*this* cup» which is «the new covenant» in 20b corresponds to «*this* Passover» in 15c, just as «*my* blood» in 20b recalls «*I* suffer» in 15d. The linkage between the first part (14-16) and the central part (17-19) would be provided by the similar expressions that follow:

I say to you.	I may not... anymore	until when... the Kingdom of God	16ab
I say to you.	I may not... anymore...	until when... the Kingdom of God	18ab

Likewise between the central part and the last part:

This	is	my body	that for you is	given	19bc
This...	is...	my blood	that for you is	poured-out	20bc

A third solution, surely the most satisfactory, is to take it that the passage is formed of four parts (14-16; 17-18; 19; 20), each linked to the next by a very marked recurring phrase: 16 and 18 link the first two parts; 17ab and 19ab are the initial terms of the second and third parts; moreover, the two commandments in 17c and 19e place these two central parts in relation to each other; lastly, 19cd and 20bc unite the last two parts.

= [14] And when came the hour,
. he-reclined and the apostles *with him*
. [15] and *he-said* to them

= «Deep-desire I-desire this
. THE PASSOVER to-eat *with you*
. before *I SUFFER*.

: [16] *I-SAY THEREFORE TO-YOU*
: *that* I-may-*not*-eat *it anymore*
- **until when** it-might-be-fulfilled **in the Kingdom of God»**.

+ [17] **And having-taken a CUP**, **having-given-thanks**,
+ *he-said*:

∗ «TAKE THIS AND SHARE IT (AMONG) YOURSELVES.

: [18] *I-SAY THEREFORE TO-YOU*
: *that* I-may-*not*-drink *anymore* from now of the product of-the vine

- **until when the Kingdom of God** might-come».

+ [19] **And having-taken BREAD**, **having-given-thanks**,
+ he broke (it) and gave to-them, *saying*:

. «THIS is my body
- **that for you** ***is given***.

∗ THIS DO IN MY MEMORY».

= [20] And **the CUP** likewise after dining *saying*:
. «THIS cup (is) THE NEW COVENANT in *MY BLOOD*
- **that for you** **is poured-out»**.

However one takes this passage, it forms an inseparable whole the elements of which are carefully intertwined. The vocabulary of the covenant runs through, or rather arranges, the whole passage, from the beginning with «Passover» and «I suffer», to the end with «covenant» (or «testament») and «my blood» (every covenant being sealed with blood[6]) passing through the middle in which «henceforth» (18b: translated as «from now») the conclusion (the «break»[7]) with «the new covenant» is achieved.

In a long authoritative article on the subject, after carrying out a very close textual critical study in which he defends the authenticity of the long text, and then a literary critical study (in the sense of finding the sources), Pierre Benoit reaches the following conclusion:

> He (Luke) mentions firstly and separately the former Passover, describing it schematically in two cleverly chosen actions to correspond to the two actions in the eucharistic Passover. Now, if you like, he separates into two successive and parallel panels the two planes which in actual fact overlap. [...] Thus he juxtaposes the two rites and thereby places them in opposition[8].

The analysis of the composition of the text, as just carried out here, seems to show the contrary.

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

The rite at Passover and the unleavened bread

The Passover that Jesus eats with his disciples is the paschal lamb, according to the rite laid down in Exod 12,1-14.21-28. The bread he distributes among his disciples is the unleavened bread eaten on the seven days of the feast, according to the commandment (Exod 12,15-20).

The blood of the covenant

Jesus' expression «the new covenant in my blood» recalls the one at the conclusion of the covenant at Sinai: «Moses, taking the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said: 'This is the blood of the Covenant that the Lord has concluded with you by means of all these clauses'.» (Exod 24,8).

[6] See P. BEAUCHAMP, *L'Un and l'Autre Testament*, chapter VI: «La nouvelle alliance»; especially p. 243 *sqq*.

[7] Should we see in the verb «to break» (19b) another word from the vocabulary of the covenant? It is the verb normally used with «covenant»: in English one «concludes», «seals» a covenant; in Hebrew, however, one «breaks» it, one cuts it: the rite, linked to the blood, actually requires the contracting parties to pass between the halves of victims cut in two to signify the fate reserved for anyone not keeping to the pact (see Jer 34,18). The covenant in effect is «to life to death», which the blood signifies.

[8] «Le récit de la Cène», *Exégèse et Théologie* I, 196-197.

The «new covenant»

The expression used in Luke 22,20 repeats the one in Jer 31,31 (see p. 276): «Behold, the days are coming — says the Lord — when I shall conclude a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah».

INTERPRETATION

«The new covenant ...

«This Passover» (15b) is Jesus' last. It is even his last meal; he is going to die the next day. He will no more eat the Passover (16); nor will he even drink of the fruit of the vine (18); for him, all that is over. With him, the covenant is not only celebrated, recalled, realized as the liturgy of the Jewish paschal meal understands it; it is replaced by the one he is installing and which thus becomes the «new covenant» in his blood that is shed (20). Luke is the only one of the synoptics to describe in this way the covenant that Jesus concludes with his disciples. The expression «henceforth» («from now»: 18) marks a substantial change, a radical transformation, a kind of point of no return, a new era. Its function being to lead to the one that is destined to become definitive, the first covenant thereby becomes the former covenant. Jesus is the new paschal lamb and henceforth it is his blood that saves from the exterminating angel. The new Passover will take place in memory of him (19), the liberation from Egypt becoming the figure of redemption in Jesus Christ.

… and the eternal one»

The New Testament does not, however, abolish the former Passover; by taking it up it accomplishes it: it is «this Passover» (15c) that is «the new covenant» (20b). Jesus is not celebrating two different and successive rites. Who could distinguish between the two on Holy Thursday evening? Everything happens in the same city, in the same house, in the unique «now» of one meal. It is by carrying out the Passover that Jesus inaugurates the new covenant; all he has to do, so to speak, is to «give» (19d) what he has «received» (17a). The same «thanksgiving» accompanies the gift received as well as the proffered gift; it is in the same Eucharist that he receives and takes on the former covenant with the cup (17), and it is in the same Eucharist that he takes the initiative by installing the new one (19). Just as there is only one inheritance, received and passed on, passed on as it was received, so there is only one Covenant, at once new and eternal, today and for ever, because God exists since the beginning and for all time.

2. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BETRAYAL (22:21-24)

COMPOSITION

. [21] But behold! The hand		of-the-one	-GIVING-me-OVER
: (who is) with me	at table.		
. [22] Because indeed		the Son of man	
: according to what-had-been-designated		goes.	

BUT WOE	TO THE MAN	that through-whom -HE-IS-GIVEN-OVER!»	

. [23] And then they began to dispute	*among*	*themselves*	
: *who* then might-be	*from them*	the-one about	TO DO THIS.
. [24] And became a-quarrel	*among*	*themselves*	
: *who*	*of-them*	was-suposed to-be THE GREATER.	

Jesus' remarks which are to follow (25-30), introduced by «He said to them» at the start of 25 (see p. 727), appear naturally as the answer to verse 24, since it is a matter of knowing «who is the greatest» (24.26.27). But if verse 24 is considered as being part of the next passage, it is like a «floating sentence», not being integrated into what follows. Besides, the preceding passage (21-23) would itself be unbalanced. Now it happens that 23 and 24 are quite parallel both on the syntactical and the lexical level. To the piece they form there corresponds the first piece (21-22b). The second segment (22ab) repeats, on the part of the victim, what had just been stated on the part of traitor (21).

INTERPRETATION

Which of them was going to do that?

According to Luke — unlike Matthew, but like Mark — Jesus does not give the name of the traitor (21a.22c). That is because it could be anyone «of them», as the disciples understand it, since they start looking (23a), each suspecting all the others. As regards the hearer of the gospel, since the beginning of the story of the Passover (22,3), he has known the name of the one who is to go and see the high priests and the guards to hand his master over; he has known for even longer — since Jesus chose Judas with the eleven others out of all his disciples — that he is the one who will earn the name of «traitor» (Luke 6,16). But here, the silence over the name of «that man» has of course the function of involving the reader: he is called upon to recognize that he, too, is capable of betraying the Lord.

Who was the greatest?

The passage ends with such a surprising question (24) that it is usually transferred to the beginning of the next passage in which, in fact, the words of Jesus answer it. It may indeed seem quite unlikely that such a discussion would have arisen among the apostles in such a situation. How could they have argued about the question of knowing who was the greatest (24) at the very moment when the problem was to know which of them was the smallest, the most sinful — to know who was going to consign his master to death (23)? The irony with which Luke most unexpectedly juxtaposes the most unlikely questions there could be is obviously sure to cause a shock. The surprise to the reader, the scandal he finds in the ridiculously blind question of the disciples, ought to get him to reflect on what really seems to be Luke's point: wanting to be the greatest and betraying Jesus come to the same thing. The effect of Lucan pedagogy comes in the parabolic order: at first, the reader is usually tempted to judge the apostles' stupidity; then, if he reflects just a little, he will eventually realize that it is not completely out of place.

«Woe to that man!»

The central sentence of the passage (22c) sounds like a condemnation. And it is difficult to refrain from asking questions about Judas' final destiny. Is it possible that he is here and now consigned to eternal damnation? Will a last-minute breathing space be arranged so that the divine mercy may save him *in extremis* from a punishment against which there is no appeal? But does the real question posed by the text actually lie here? With this kind of problem, one does not even realize that the name of Judas has been put where Luke — and Jesus — have not mentioned it. It is not written: «Woe to Judas!», but «Woe *to that man* by whom [the Son of man] is given over!» The real misfortune is that if one believes the redactor of the gospel, these words of Jesus apply to all, to every one of those who seek to be the greatest (24) — including the reader, of course — as well as to all those whose hand is on the table with Jesus (21).

3. THE DISCOURSE ON SERVICE (22:25-30)

COMPOSITION

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[25] Then he said to-them:

+ «***THE KINGS***	of-the nations			***RULE*** over-them
+ and ***THE-ONES HAVING-AUTHORITY***	over-them			***BENEFACTORS*** are-called.
[26] But you,	not		*thus*!	
– But ***THE GREATER***	among you	let-become	*like*	THE YOUNGEST
– and ***THE LEADER***			*like*	THE-ONE SERVING.
	: [27] Who, therefore (is)			***THE GREATER***?
= ***THE-ONE RECLINING (AT TABLE)***	or			THE-ONE SERVING?
	: (is-it) not			***THE-ONE RECLINING***?
= I, then,	in the midlle of-you am		*like*	THE-ONE SERVING.
– [28] You, then, are the-ones (that) have-persevered		with me	in	MY TRIALS,
– [29] and-I arrange	for you		[a	TESTAMENT],
like arranged	for me	my Father		***A KINGDOM***,
+ [30] so that you-might-eat and drink	at my table		in	***MY KINGDOM***
+ and you-will-sit	***ON THRONES***			
=	***JUDGING***		the twelve tribes of Israel».	

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

The first two verbs describing the attitude of the heads of the nations, «rule» and «have authority over» (42c), are the ones the Septuagint uses to translate Gen 1,28: God blessed them and said to them: 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth; *rule over*-it and *have authority* over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air and all the animals that creep on the earth'.» The first verb had already been used when God decided to create man: «Let us make man in our own image, in our own likeness, and let him *command* the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the beasts, all the wild beasts and all the small creatures that crawl on the earth (1,26). The same verb «to rule over» was to be repeated for the new creation after the flood: «Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth; *have authority over*-it» (Gen 9,1)[9].

The Lord's servant

Right in the middle of his discourse, Jesus shows himself as «the one who serves» (*diakonōn*). Although, in the Septuagint, the songs of the Servant use

[9] See *A New Introduction to the synoptic Gospels*, 162.174.

other terms (*pais* and *doulos*), the link with the songs of the Servant is undeniable, particularly with the fourth[10]. It is especially the contrast between the humiliation of the servant — who will end in death, announced in the celebration of the Passover (19-20) — and his final glorification that comes again in the words of Jesus[11].

INTERPRETATION

Power that perverts the order of creation

According to the design of the Creator, it is the animals, fish, birds and the beasts of the fields, that man must subdue and command. And he is called upon to exercise this dominance not with violence but with gentleness, since no living being, neither man nor animal will cause blood to flow, with everything feeding not on the flesh of others, but on vegetable foods (Gen 1,29-30). But man has completely perverted this order of the Creator and has reached the stage of treating other men, not like brothers, but like animals; and he does not command them with gentleness but imposes his domination on them with violence. And the perversion reaches its peak when violence has to be accepted by those compelled to call their tormentors «benefactors».

«Who is the greatest?»

Every person is king, every person is the greatest; there is no one who does not give orders to another or who is not in some way served at table. Everyone commands, whatever their social standing, and one is always the elder of someone younger. In all these relations, the ones listed by Luke as examples (25bc) like all the others, each one exercises some power. Jesus does not ask his disciples to resign, nor kings to abdicate. He shows them another concept of power (26a), another exercise of the commandment than domination and crushing, so common a temptation at all levels to use one's position to serve oneself and get oneself served (25bc). Power is not wrong in itself; it only corrupts the one who lets himself be corrupted. Everything depends on the way one acts; everything depends on «how» (26a.b.c) one uses it. «You call me Master and Lord, and you do well to do so, for that is what I am» (John 13,13). By making himself «like» the servant (27d), Jesus is still none the less king (29b-30a); on the contrary, that is when he exercises his power most fully.

Jesus' double revolution

Political revolutions are often simply the reversal of roles between the personages of the drama; the servant kept under for too long ends up by

[10] See R. MEYNET, «Le quatrième chant du Serviteur (Is 52,13–53,12)».
[11] Fitzmyer is of another opinion, 1418: «As in 12,37, the image is taken from service at table and not from the motif of the Servant in Second Isaiah».

rebelling, by getting the upper hand and himself becoming the dominating and exploiting character. The important thing for Jesus is not that power should change hands, but that it should change hearts (26). Anyone who might not have understood that the only power is that of serving would not have understood anything about the revolution of the Gospel. When about to live it to the end, at his death, Jesus solemnly delivers to his disciples — like a testament — what represents the heart of his message and which he has not ceased to repeat: «he who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted» (Luke 14,11; see 18,14). These are his first and last desires: to announce, with the desperate force of his last moments, that in order to reign, one has to serve. Only the one who makes himself a servant (26bc) will enter the kingdom of God (29). He alone will be admitted to the table of the king (30a) and be associated with his power as judge (30bc). A twofold reversal by the Wisdom of God: he who will be humbled, by countering the Wisdom of men (25-26), will be exalted at the right hand of the power of God (28-30).

4. The announcement of the denial (22,31-34)

Composition

+ 31 «**Simon, Simon**,	behold	***Satan***	asked-for	*you* (pl)
– to-sift		as wheat.		
+ 32		**I**, though	pleaded	*for you*
– that may not fail		*THE FAITH OF YOU*.		

	And you, then, having returned,			
	strenghten your brothers!»			

+ 33 *But he said to him*:				
. «**Lord**,	with you	I-am-ready		
– to-go	to prison	and to death!»		
+ 34 *But he said*:				
. «I say to-you, **Peter**,	will not crow	today	the rooster	
– until three (times)	you-may-deny		*TO-HAVE-KNOWN ME*.»	

Biblical Context

The disciples will be subjected to temptation by «Satan», as was Job, the servant of God (Job 1–2).

Interpretation

Peter and the others

The prediction is addressed to Peter alone (34), but it also concerns the others. All the apostles will be sifted like wheat (31b) and all will need to be

strengthened in their faith (32c). Now it is precisely the one who denies his master (34) that will have the task of strengthening his brethren again (32c).

Falling and getting up again

Strangely, Peter's return (32c) is predicted before his desertion (34). Jesus certainly speaks of the trial to which Satan submits him (31), but he does not say whether he will give way. One might even get the impression that through his prayer (32) he would save him from falling. Simon's firm protestation of fidelity (33) was needed for Jesus to be as it were forced to announce his threefold denial clearly to him (34).

5. THE SWORDS OF THE APOSTLES (22:35-38)

COMPOSITION

+ 35 And *he-said* to-them:

. «WHEN I-sent you, without **purse**, and **bag**, and sandals,
. anything did-you-lack?»

They *said*: «Nothing»

:: 36 *he-said* to-them:

. «BUT NOW, the-one-who has,
let-him-carry **a purse** and likewise **a bag**,

. and the-one-who does not have,
let-him-sell his clothing and let-him-buy **A SWORD**.

37 *I-say* to-you:

.this Scripture should BE-ACCOMPLISHED
- in *me*:

'With lawless (men) he was reckoned.'

- In fact (all) about *me*
. has COMPLETION.»

:: 38 They *said*:

«Lord, behold here, two **SWORDS**.»

+ He *said* to-them:

«It is enough!»

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

The fourth servant song

The central member of the central part, «With the lawless he was reckoned», is taken from the last verse of the fourth song of the Servant of the Lord that describes his Passion and glorification (Isa 53,12; transl. RSV)[12].

[7c] Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb,	so he opened not his mouth.
[8] By oppression and judgment he was taken away; that he was cut off out of the land of the living,	and as for his generation, who considered stricken for the transgression of my people?
[9] And they made his grave with the wicked although he had done no violence,	and with a rich man in his death, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

[10] Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him;
he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin,
he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days;
the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand;

[11] he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul	and be satisfied by his knowledge
The righteous one, my servant, shall make many to be accounted righteous;	
	and he shall bear their iniquities.
[12] Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great,	and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out his soul to death, yet he bore the sin of many,	**and was numbered with the transgressors**; and made intercession for the transgressors.

Luke is the only one of the evangelists to quote the song of the Servant explicitly (see also Acts 8,32-33; in Acts 3,13.26 and in 4,27.30, he attributes the title of «Servant» to Jesus).

«When I sent you...»

This expression refers to what constitutes the centre of the whole gospel: it actually refers back to the start of the last sequence of the second section, when Jesus sends the Twelve for the first time to teach and heal (Luke 9,2-3); it also recalls the beginning of the first sequence of the third section when the master sends the seventy-two disciples on mission (Luke 10,1).

Lacking nothing

«Lacking nothing» recalls Ps 23,1: «The Lord is my shepherd, I shall lack nothing» (see Deut 29,4).

[12] See P. TREMOTHEDA, *«E fu annoverato fra iniqui»;* for the rhetorical analysis of the fourth song, see R. MEYNET, «Le quatrième chant du Serviteur».

Crossing the desert was a time when the people lacked nothing, neither food nor drink nor clothing nor sandals (Deut 8,4; 29,4); the land to which the Lord was leading his people also had to be «a country where you may eat bread without scarcity and *where you will lack nothing*» (Deut 8,9).

INTERPRETATION

The enigma

If there is an enigmatic text in the gospel of Luke, this is it. When Jesus sent his disciples on mission, he ordered them not to take anything with them and to entrust themselves entirely to divine providence and to the hospitality of those to whom they would proclaim the kingdom of God (Luke 9,1-4). Then why does he now tell them not only to take money and baggage, but also to be armed (36)? That surely sounds very unlike the gospel, especially coming from the pen of the «scribe of the meekness of Christ»! His last reply is also very enigmatic (38d). Does Jesus mean to say that two swords will be enough for the group of the disciples to defend themselves (38b)? Does he on the contrary, as many people think, want to put an end ironically to a discussion of which his disciples have understood nothing? Would he suddenly be changing his attitude in the face of the looming threat of death so as suddenly to become a zealot?

«From now on»

What is sure is that Jesus is announcing a new era. «From now on», it will not be as it has been hitherto; it will even be «the contrary» (36b). Jesus therefore sets out from what the apostles know, from what they have experienced of the previous situation (35bcd). And he tells them so: until now they have lacked nothing (35d). Like the Hebrews in the desert who had lacked neither drink not food, who had marched without wearing out the clothes on their back, nor their sandals on their feet. Because the Lord was «with them»: «The Lord your God has been with you for forty years without your lacking anything» (Deut 2,7). It will be the contrary, from now on, which means that they will lack everything and that they will need purse and bag (36b) and that clothing will be of no use in protecting their body from the threats of the sword (36c). The contrary, which means above all that they will find themselves alone and that Jesus will no longer be with them.

He will perish by the sword

The time for the sword and violence has come; but, contrary to what the apostles, ready to draw the sword, think (38b), if Jesus speaks of the sword, it is of the one that awaits and threatens him. The Servant of the Lord whom he calls to mind (37d) is not the butcher, but the sheep led to the slaughter who does not open his mouth. The end of Jesus is approaching; it will be violent, like that of

the victim led to the sacrifice. His life is going to end in blood, but the sword will shed no other blood than his.

The time of persecution is starting

Jesus' time is coming to an end (37ef) and the Scriptures will find their fulfilment (37bc). He is going to be delivered up to the power of death. But the violence is not going to fall on Jesus alone; the disciples will also be delivered up to it. The time when they could set out without provisions or money, without weapons or baggage is over (35), the time when they were offered lodging and food, when they had no need of stick to defend themselves because there was no one wishing to harm them. Even though they were given all they needed to live (35), from now on they will be threatened with death (36). Like their master, they will be treated like criminals (37d).

Who will defend them?

But perhaps there is another explanation of the words of Jesus. What is the opposite of the previous situation, the time when Jesus sent his disciples, and when they lacked nothing (35)? The situation in which Jesus pronounces these words is not without significance: Jesus has just announced to his disciples that they are going to betray him (21-23; 31-34). «When I sent you» is therefore opposed to «When you forsake me». If the disciples abandon the one who can protect them, they will be able to rely only on themselves. If they want to survive, they will therefore have to provide themselves with money and clothing, and not hesitate to sell their cloak to buy a sword, if they want to save their lives (36). If there is irony on Luke's part, it is perhaps because they were not expecting Jesus' advice to arm themselves; as it was, two of them no longer had enough confidence in their master and had taken precautions (38ab). The rest of the story, an ear cut off and immediately healed by Jesus (49-51), was to show that the two swords would not be much help, except as a lesson the disciples could not forget.

6. WHO IS THE GREATEST? (22,14-38)

COMPOSITION OF THE SUB-SEQUENCE

14 And when the hour came, he sat at table, and the apostles **with him** 15 and he said to them,
«I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover **with you** before I suffer; 16 for I tell you I shall not
eat it until it IS FULFILLED *in the kingdom of God*.» 17 And he took a cup, and when he had
given thanks he said, «Take this, and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you that **FROM NOW ON** I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until *the kingdom of God* MAY COME.» 19 And he
took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, «This is my
body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.»20 And likewise the cup after
supper, saying, «This cup is the new COVENANT in my ***blood***, which is poured out for you.»

21 «But ***behold*** the hand of him *WHO BETRAYS ME* is **with me** on the table.
22 For the Son of man GOES as it has been determined;

but woe to that man by whom he is-given-over!»

23 And they began to question one another, which of them was *THE ONE THAT WOULD DO THIS*.
24 A dispute also arose among them of who was to be regarded as *THE ONE WHO IS THE GREATEST*.

25 And he said to them, «*The kings* of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and
those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you; rather let the
greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.

27 For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves?
Is it not the one who sits at table?
But I am **in-the-middle of-you** as one who serves.

28 You are those who have continued **with me** in my trials; 29 and I ARRANGE for you
[a TESTAMENT], as my Father ARRANGED for me, *a kingdom*, 30 that you may eat
and drink **at my table** *in my kingdom*, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of
Israel.»

31 «Simon, Simon, ***behold***, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat,
32 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail;

and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren!»

33 And he said to him, «Lord, I am ready TO GO **with you** to prison and to death.» 34 He said,
«I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow today, until three times *YOU DENY THAT YOU KNOW ME*.»

35 And he said to them, «When I sent you out with no purse or bag or sandals, did you lack
anything?» They said, «Nothing.» 36 He said to them, «BUT NOW, let him who has a purse take
it, and likewise a bag. And let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one. 37 For I tell
you that this scripture must BE ACCOMPLISHED in me, 'And he was reckoned with transgressors';
for what is written about me has its COMPLETION.»38 And they said, «Look, Lord, here are two
swords.» And he said to them, «It is enough.»

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

In comparison with those in Matthew and Mark, Luke's composition is quite particular: in fact the story of the paschal supper (22,14-20) comes at the beginning of the central sub-sequence, while in the first two gospels it constitutes the centre and therefore the pivotal point of their sequence. In Luke, however, the keystone of its sub-sequence, and hence of all its sequence, is constituted by the discourse on service (25-30)[13].

It is known that the fourth gospel does not recount the paschal meal and that the latter is, so to speak, replaced by the washing of the feet, accompanied by the commandment of mutual service (John 13,1-17). Luke therefore provides the transition between the first two synoptics and the gospel of John.

INTERPRETATION

Judas and Peter

Peter like Judas will forsake Jesus. Jesus knows this and prophesies as well (21-24; 31-34). Both are going to sin, but whereas every bond between Jesus and Judas has been severed, Peter and Jesus stay in contact. Jesus does not even utter the name of Judas; he does not speak to him (21-22). However, he does address the first of the Twelve by name twice (31); the discussion starts (33-34). Jesus announces, at the outset, the treachery by one person but without giving his name (21-22); addresses the second person but without speaking directly about denial; it is just a question of sounding out (31-32). Only after Simon's protestations will Jesus, right at the end, be as it were forced to let the word out (34b). Both will sin but at the start the prophecy is radically different: if Jesus is obliged to see in Judas the one who betrays him (22b), in Simon he somehow sees only the one who is coming back (32b). Their final destinies are in opposition: a curse for the first (22b), a new vocation for the second and the confirmation of his mission among his brethren (32b).

Judas and his brethren

Jesus has not uttered the name of the traitor. Everyone then starts looking for which of them might do such a deed (23); except for Judas of course, who is obliged to play the same game so as not to be unmasked. Everyone starts suspecting all the others, without for one moment imagining that they themselves could be the one in question. This is why the discussion immediately takes a turn: from the question of knowing who the traitor is (23) — that is to say the last of the last — they come round to wondering who is the greatest (24)! If there is any discussion, it is because there must be several candidates for the

[13] See R. MEYNET, *Jésus passe*, 166-169. In Matthew and Mark, the discourse on service is integrated into quite another context: see *A New Introduction to the synoptic Gospels*, 158-182.

post. Could there not be pure and simple identity between the wish to be taken as the greatest and betraying Jesus?

Peter and his brethren

Strangely, Jesus speaks to Simon to predict the trial awaiting the Twelve (31). That is because he represents them. Of all, he is the greatest. The greatest in sin: in fact, if it is true that all will forsake him, only Simon will openly deny him (34b). The greatest also in repentance, and the greatest especially because he is appointed henceforth to strengthen his brethren (32b). He is invested with apostolic primacy at the very moment his denial is predicted, especially when, thanks to the prayer of Jesus, his faith is guaranted to be solid as rock (32a). Simon therefore can here and now receive the name of «Peter» (34b)[14], that rock on which the Church will be solidly built.

The greatest betrays his master

Seeking to be the greatest (24), wanting to dominate others, means entering into Satan's way of thinking and into temptation (31); it means disowning Jesus and betraying his thought and person; believing in Jesus means clinging to his wisdom, imitating his conduct, becoming like the youngest (26), now that the greatest charge has been received, as it was by each of the Twelve apostles (30bc) with Simon Peter at their head (32b).

Blood shed

Jesus knows where he is going (22a) and accepts death in advance. By giving his disciples his blood poured out with the cup (20), he clearly shows which side he is on in the violent conflict that is about to be unleashed. The disciples have also chosen their camp. It is that of kings defending their power by force of the sword (25.38). It will not take long for the prophecy made to Simon to be fulfilled. Was it only a prophecy, with the two swords of the disciples already there (38)? The real prophecy was not the one predicting the denial; it was the one announcing Peter's return (32b). The first of the apostles will be able to strengthen his brethren in sin, thanks to the blood his master will have agreed to shed (20b), for them and for all who are like them.

[14] This is the first time – and also the last – that, in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus pronounces that name.

C. THE DEATH OF JESUS IS PREPARED (22:39-53)

This sub-sequence comprises two passages, «The agony of Jesus» (22,39-46) and «The arrest of Jesus» (22,47-53).

1. AGONIZING, JESUS AGREES TO SHED HIS BLOOD (22,39-46)

COMPOSITION

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* 39 And having-departed,        he-went as usual towards the Mount of Olives;
                        =  the disciples also followed him.

* 40 Once being at to-the place,   he said to-them:
                        =  «PRAY for not        to-enter    into temptation.»
                   ----------------------------------------------------------------
                   : 41 And withdrawing himself from them like a stone throw
                   - and kneeling-down,
                      .  HE PRAYED 42 saying:
     ------------------------------------------------------------------------------
     + «Father,                  if you desire,
       take-away                 THIS CHALICE        from me;

     – Nevertheless not          the desire of-me,
       but yours                 LET-BECOME!»

          [43 APPEARED TO HIM AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN      STRENGTHENING HIM.

     – 44 And HAVING-BECOME      in agony,
       more intensely            HE-WAS-PRAYING;

     + and BECAME                his sweat
       like drops     of BLOOD   falling on the earth.]
     ------------------------------------------------------------------------------
                   - 45 And having-arisen FROM PRAYER
                   : and having-gone towards the disciples,
                      .  he-found them being-asleep of sadness.
                   ----------------------------------------------------------------
* 46 And he-said to-them:

     :: «Why do-you-sleep?
     :: having-arisen,
                        =  PRAY  so-that you  may-not-enter  into temptation.»
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Verses 43-44 are absent in many manuscripts, ancient and from various sources[15]. Without these verses, the construction would be centred on the prayer of Jesus (42b-e).

[15] See the discussion in B.M. METZGER, *A Textual Commentary*, 151.

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Elijah's agony (1Kgs 19,3-8)

The central angel who comes from heaven to «strengthen» Jesus reminds us of the one who «strengthened» Elijah when, threatened with death by Jezabel, he fled to the desert (1Kgs 19,1-2). The points of resemblance between «the agony of Elijah» and that of Jesus are many: just as Jesus goes away from his disciples to pray to the Father, so does Elijah leave his servant (3) to go alone to the encounter with God on Mount Horeb; like Jesus, Elijah prays to the Lord before being comforted by him; Jesus is «strengthened» by «an angel from heaven», Elijah can again walk thanks to the «strength» provided by the food given to him by «the angel of the Lord»; both fall to the ground, then get up (however, it is not Jesus but the disciples who lie down and sleep).

The temptations in the desert

The story of the temptations in the desert (Luke 4,1-13) ends with the announcement of a future encounter between Jesus and the tempter: «Having thus tried every temptation, the devil left him until the favourable moment» (4,13). The «angels» are named in the third temptation: «It is written: "He will give orders to his *angels* concerning you so that they guard you".» It should be noted that this temptation is located on the pinnacle of the Temple visible from the garden of the Mount of Olives, on the other side of the valley of the Kidron.

The Our Father

The contacts between the agony of Jesus and the Our Father (Luke 11,2-4) are so close that one can be seen as the other being put into practice.

Above all, the five occurrences of the root «pray» (*proseuchomai*: 40b. 41c. 44b.45a.46d) refer to the three in 11,1-4. Jesus calls on the Lord, calling him «Father» (11,2). «Pray so as not to enter into temptation» (22,40b), repeated almost word for word in 46d, recalls the last petition of the Our Father according to the short version in Luke (11,4).

It is known that Luke omits the third petition of the Our Father in Matthew: «Your will be done, in heaven as on earth» (Matt 6,10); the prayer of Jesus in the garden closely resembles it: «Yet not my will, but yours be done!» (22,42de).

Lastly, the angel «strengthening» Jesus, at the centre of the story of the agony (43) — especially if one considers it in relation to «the agony of Elijah», to whom bread was given (see above) — may be placed in relation with the gift of bread[16], which constitutes the central petition of the Lord's prayer, even in the short version in Luke (11,3).

[16] See sequence C2, p. 437 *sqq*.

INTERPRETATION

«The disciples went with him»

Elijah leaves his servant at Beer-sheba before venturing alone into the desert, the traditional place of temptation. The disciples accompany Jesus (39b) and he calls upon them to associate themselves with his prayer (40). He moves away from them, to be sure, but it is not «a day's journey» (1Kgs 19,4) that separates Jesus and the apostles, it is the distance «of a stone's throw» (41a). The disciples stay within reach of their master of whom, without however going as far as mortal anguish (44), they share the sadness (45c). Neither they nor he remain standing; they are all overcome by the trial. Still, they do not follow him right to the end. Like Elijah, they lie down in sadness and take refuge in sleep, giving up the struggle. Jesus on his knees stays awake and finds in prayer the strength to face «the agony». They take refuge by being absent in sleep; Jesus faces up to temptation. To the one who keeps his eyes open the angel of strength can appear, not to the one who sleeps. Closed eyes do not see the light. At the end of the story (46), the role of the angel is played by Jesus who wakes his disciples up and calls on them to arise: «Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you» (Eph 5,14).

Jesus faced with temptation

The cup that is presented to Jesus (42c) is the one of agony and death. Jesus did not look for it and he resists it with all the vitality of his being. Like every person sound in body and mind, he wants to be freed from it and he asks this (42bc) «insistently» (44b). He had, however, on several occasions announced that he would be rejected, put to death and that he would rise from the dead on the third day; he had insisted by explaining that it had to be like that because that was what the Scriptures announced. And now that the hour has come, his will falters; this is the moment of temptation. Doubt swells up: is this really God's will? However, he resists it by committing himself to the will of him whom he never ceases to call his «Father». And now he is beginning to exude a mortal sweat «like drops of blood» (44cd).

The reply from heaven

Elijah had been strengthened by food from God in his trial which was to enable him to continue on his way to Mount Horeb. At the heart of the temptation, Jesus is comforted by «an angel from heaven» (43) who will give him strength to go to the hill of Golgotha. He had refused to tempt the Lord by using help from angels which the devil had suggested to him to impose his status as «Son of God» with a spectacular action (Luke 4,9-12). Now that he accepts, in the night and in the solitude, the will of his Father he can receive the comfort of the angel from heaven. Like the bread for which, at the centre of the prayer that

he taught us, Jesus has us ask the Father: there is the source of the strength God gives so that we do not enter into temptation and that his will be done in us as in heaven.

2. Arrested, Jesus refuses to shed his enemies' blood (22,47-53)

Composition

+ [47] Still him speaking,
. behold, a crowd,
. and the-one called Judas, one of-the twelve, was-going-in-front of-them.

: And he approaches Jesus TO-KISS him.

: [48] Jesus said to-him:
«Judas, with A-KISS, the Son of man you-are giving-over?»

[49] *Seeing, those around him, what-was-to-happen, said*:

– «Lord, will-we-strike with THE-SWORD?»

. [50] and one of-them STRUCK the slave of the high-priest
. and **cut-off** his right ear.

---

[51] *And Jesus having-answered said*:

– «Stop, this!» . And HAVING-TOUCHED his ear,

. He **healed** him.

+ [52] Jesus said to the-ones that had-come against him,
+ high-priests, guards of-the temple, and elders:

: «Like against *a bandit*
- you-came-out with SWORDS AND CLUBS.

: [53] Every day *being with you at the Temple*,
- you-did-not stretch-out THE HANDS against me.

+ But this is of-you the hour
+ the power of darkness.»

INTERPRETATION

All take up the sword against Jesus

The high priests and the elders, supported by the chiefs of the Temple guards (52b), have been against Jesus for a long time; they are declared enemies, even if they had not dared so far to take action for fear of the people (53ab). Judas also has chosen his camp, against Jesus, but he pretends to be with him (47d); he remains outwardly one of the Twelve, and he uses his familiarity with Jesus the better to hand him over to the high priests. It is treachery. Still worse, it is the perversion of love, since he goes so far as to use the very sign of love to point out his master to the hatred of his enemies. The high priests are against Jesus, Judas still pretends to be with him. As for the other disciple, the one who draws his sword to defend his master (50), he still thinks he is with him, but that in fact is no longer true. Actually, like the high priests, and like Judas, like all the other enemies of Jesus, he is on the side of violence.

Jesus unsheathes the swords

Judas seeks to hide his treachery with a kiss of allegiance (47d) but Jesus immediately unmasks his real intention which is to deliver the Son of man to his enemies (48). The high priests, the chiefs of the Temple guards and the elders have come by night to apprehend him with swords and clubs (52); by contrasting their present move with the attitude they had adopted when he was with them in the Temple (53ab), Jesus brings to light the deadly schemes they were plotting day by day, hiding them for fear of the people. The disciples themselves are led, threatened with the sword, to reveal the thoughts of their heart: they are ready to draw the sword (49) and, before all the others, one of them has already struck (50). In the presence of Jesus, the violence that is at the heart of every man cannot remain hidden; the power of darkness is unmasked (53cd).

Jesus heals the sword wound

Jesus does not want his disciples to use the sword. He however, the innocent victim, will agree to being treated like a brigand and stricken to death. He will even allow that (51b). Moreover, by his action in favour of the servant of the high priest (51cd), he will proclaim that he is on the side of the victim, not of the executioner; he heals instead of striking, he gives life, as he has always done, even when he is arrested to be put to death. This cure goes further than its first beneficiary, the servant of the high priest, to extend to all who will be freed from violence by the Passion of the Son of man who agreed to bear the world's sin.

3. THE DEATH OF JESUS IS PREPARED (22,39-53)

COMPOSITION OF THE SUB-SEQUENCE

∗ [39] And he came out, and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives;
= and HIS DISCIPLES *followed him*.

[40] And when he came to the place he said to them, «Pray that you may not enter into temptation.» [41] And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed,

> [42] «Father, if it is your will, remove **this chalice** from me; nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done.» [43] And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, *strengthening* him.[44] And being in an agony he prayed more intensely; and his sweat became like drops of **blood** falling down upon the ground.

[45] And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sadness, [46] and he said to them, «Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.»

• [47] While he was still speaking, there came a crowd,
= and THE ONE CALLED JUDAS, ONE OF THE TWELVE, *was leading them*.

He drew near to Jesus to kiss him; [48] but Jesus said to him, «Judas, will you -give over the Son of man with a kiss?»

> [49] And when those who were with him saw what would follow, they said, «Lord, shall we strike with **the sword**?» [50] And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. [51] But Jesus said, «Stop **this**!» And he touched his ear and *healed* him.

[52] Then Jesus said to the chief priests and guards of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, «Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? [53] When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.»

INTERPRETATION

Two opposed groups

On the one hand, Jesus in relation to his Father whose will he accepts (42) would have had to sweat blood (44); on the other, Jesus is in relation to his enemies, the chiefs of his people whose decision he also accepts, paradoxically recognizing the will of his Father in it (51). The disciples accompany Jesus at the start (39); but they leave him very quickly alone in his prayer and in his trial to take refuge in the absence provided by sleep (45). As for Judas, he has already gone through the barrier and ends by handing his master over (47-48). The other disciples, represented by the one drawing the sword (50), rejoins the traitor by taking sides with violence. And, without Luke feeling the need to say so, Jesus is alone in the power of his enemies. His disciples, Judas and the others, disappear into the darkness (53).

The temptation

In what does the temptation of which Jesus warns his disciples consist (40.46)? This is surely the one they succumb to: sadness and taking flight in sleep (45) when faced with the prospect of the Passion they reject. But it is also the temptation to violence (49), which impels one of them to draw the sword (50). By healing the one his disciple wounded (51), Jesus shows that he does not agree that any blood than his own should be shed for the salvation of all, his disciples and even his enemies.

D. CHRIST MAKES A TESTAMENT FOR HIS DISCIPLES WHO ABANDON HIM (22,1-53)

COMPOSITION OF THE SEQUENCE

The authorities	and Judas	prepare	the death of Jesus	1-6
Jesus	and his disciples	prepare	the Passover	7-13

THE PASSOVER	OF JESUS	14-20
The announcement	of the betrayal	21-24
THE SERVICE DISCOURSE		25-30
The announcement	of the denial	31-34
THE SWORDS	OF THE APOSTLES	35-38

In his agony,	Jesus	agrees	to pour out	his own blood	39-46
On being arrested,	Jesus	refuses	to pour out	his enemies' blood	47-53

The first and the last story in the sequence (1-6; 47-53) have repercussions, in the form of prophecies, on each side of the central passage (21-24; 31-34). To the introduction, in which Judas is seen secretly reaching agreement with the high priests, corresponds there, before the central passage (21-24), the revelation by Jesus of his treachery. After the central passage (31-34), Jesus tells Simon of the trial (or «temptation»: *peirasmos*) to which the disciples will be subjected and to which they will succumb in the last passage of the sequence. The perfectly symmetrical arrangement of these four passages — which is proper to Luke — is an invitation to study their relations.

1. Relations between the extreme sub-sequences (22,1-13; 39-53)

[1] Was nearing, then, the feast of the Unleavened bread the one called Passover.[2] And THE HIGH PRIESTS and the scribes were seeking how to get rid of him, they were fearing in fact the people.
[3] Satan entered in JUDAS the one called Iscariot, being from the number of the Twelve.

[4] And ***having departed***, he spoke-WITH THE HIGH-PRIESTS AND THE GUARDS, how he might give him over to them.

[5] And they rejoiced and arranged with him to give him silver. [6] And he agreed and was seeking the right moment to give him over to them, apart from the crowd.

[7] Then came the day of the Unleavened bread in which it was necesary to sacrifice the Passover.
[8] And he sent Peter and John saying: «Once ***departed***, PREPARE for us the Passover so that we might eat.» [9] They said to him: «Where DO YOU WANT that we might prepare?» [10] He said to-them: «Look!: having entered you in the city

WILL MEET-WITH YOU A MAN BEARING A CERAMIC POT OF WATER.

Follow him into the house where he enters.[11] And you will say to the steward of the house: 'Says to you the teacher: Where is the room where I might eat the Passover WITH MY DISCIPLES?' [12] And he will show to you an upstairs room, great (and) furnished; there you PREPARE!» [13] ***Having left*** they found just as he had said to them and they prepared the Passover.

[...]

[39] And he came out, and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; AND HIS DISCIPLES FOLLOWED HIM. [40] And when he came to the place he said to them, «PRAY that you may not enter into temptation.» [41] And ***he withdrew*** from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed,
[42] "Father, if it is your WILL, remove this chalice from me; nevertheless not my WILL, but yours, be done.»

[43] AND THERE APPEARED TO HIM AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN, STRENGTHENING HIM.

[44] And being in an agony he prayed more intensely; and his sweat became like drops of blood falling down upon the ground. [45] And when he rose from prayer, ***he came*** to the disciples and found them sleeping for sadness, [46] and he said to them, «Why do you sleep? Rise and PRAY that you may not enter into temptation.»

[47] While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the one called JUDAS, ONE OF THE TWELVE, was leading them. He ***drew near*** to Jesus to kiss him; [48] but Jesus said to him, «JUDAS, will you give over the Son of man with a kiss?»

[49] And when those who were AROUND him saw what would follow, they said, «Lord, shall we strike with the sword?» [50] And one of them struck the slave of THE HIGH PRIEST and cut off his right ear. [51] But Jesus said, «Stop this!» And he touched his ear and healed him.

[52] Then Jesus said to those who had come out ***against*** him, THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND GUARDS of the temple and elders: «Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? [53] When I was WITH you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.»

2. Relations between the three sub-sequences

Satan and the Son of man

The name «Satan» marks the start of each side (3.31); the one about the «Son of man» marks the end of it (22.48).

«With» and its synonyms

«I am *in the midst of you*», at the centre of the central passage (27), corresponds to the initial terms of the second sub-sequence and of the third: «the apostles were *with* him» (14) and «the disciples accompanied him» (39). The special position of these two sentences shows their importance, confirmed by the long series of «with» to which these sentences belong, as has already been noted both in the central sub-sequence (see p. 734) and in the relations between the extreme sub-sequences (see p. 745). Apart from the extreme passages, everything takes place between Jesus and his apostles, without the intervention of any other man[17].

«Leaving» and its synonyms

In opposition to «with», separation is either announced, or already achieved. In the first sub-sequence, it is firstly Judas who «goes off» (4), then at the command of Jesus, it will be Peter and John (8.13). In announcing the betrayals, Jesus declares that he is «going away» (22) and Peter that he is ready to «go away» with him (33). At the beginning of the last sub-sequence, Jesus goes out and «departs» (39).

«Accomplishing» and its synonyms

We have already noted that, in the central sub-sequence, the pair «may be accomplished» / «may come» in the first passage (16.18) has what corresponds to it in the last passage with the pair «to be accomplished» / «accomplishment» (37) which frames the central quotation. In the next passage, the two occurrences of «to arrive» also frame the central verse (42.44). That same verb comes again at the beginning of the second sub-sequence also (14) and at the beginning of the third (40). Along the same lines are the initial terms of the first two passages: «Now the feast of the Unleavened Bread was approaching» and «Now there came the day of the Unleavened Bread» (1.7). In the last passage we have those two same verbs, in a symmetrical position: «approaching» (47) and «coming-up» (52), without forgetting «arriving» at the beginning of the central part of the same passage (49).

[17] This is reinforced by the fact that, in the account of the celebration of the Passover, Luke replaced with «for you» in 19 and 20 the «for many» in Matthew and Mark (see R. Meynet, *Jésus passe*, 128; *La Pâque*, 142).

[1] Was nearing, then, the feast of the Unleavened bread the one called Passover.[2] And the high priests and the scribes were seeking how to get rid of him, they were fearing in fact the people. [3] *SATAN* entered in Judas the one called Iscariot, being from the number of the Twelve. [4] And ***having departed***, he spoke-WITH the high-priests and the guards, how he might give him over to them. [5] And they rejoiced and arranged with him to give him silver. [6] And he agreed and was seeking the right moment to give him over to them, apart from the crowd.

[7] Then came the day of the Unleavened bread in which it was necessary to sacrifice the Passover. [8] And he sent Peter and John saying: «***Once departed***, prepare for us the Passover so that we might eat.» [9] They said to him: «Where do you want that we might preprare?» [10] He said to-them: «Look!: having entered you in the city will meet-WITH you a man bearing a ceramic pot of water. Follow him into the house where he enters.[11] And you will say to the steward of the house: 'Says to you the teacher: Where is the room where I might eat the Passover WITH my disciples?'[12] And he will show to you an upstairs room, great (and) furnished; there you prepare!.» [13] ***Having departed*** they found just as he had said to them and they prepared the Passover.

[14] And when the hour came, he sat at table, AND THE APOSTLES WITH HIM [15] and he said to them, «I have earnestly desired to eat this passover WITH you before I suffer; [16] for I tell you I shall not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.» [17] And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, «Take this, and divide it among yourselves; [18] for I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God may come.» [19] And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, «This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.» [20] And likewise the cup after supper, saying, «This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.»

[21] «But behold the hand of him who betrays me is WITH me on the table. [22] For THE SON OF MAN ***goes*** as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom he is-given-over!» [23] And they began to question one another, which of them it was the one that would do this. [24] A dispute also arose among them of who was to be regarded as the one who is the greatest.

[25] And he said to them, «The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. [26] But not so with you; rather let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.

[27] For which is the greater, one who sits at table, or one who serves? Is it not the one who sits at table? But I AM IN THE MIDDLE OF YOU as one who serves.

[28] You are those who have continued with me in my trials; [29] and I arrange for you [a testament], as my Father arranged for me, a kingdom, [30] that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.»

[31] «Simon, Simon, behold, *SATAN* demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, [32] but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren! [33] And he said to him, «Lord, I am ready ***to go*** WITH you to prison and to death.» [34] He said, «I tell you, Peter, the cock will not crow today, until three times you deny that you know me.»

[35] And he said to them, «When I sent you out with no purse or bag or sandals, did you lack anything?» They said, «Nothing.» [36] He said to them, «But now, let him who has a purse take it, and likewise a bag. And let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one. [37] For I tell you that this scripture must be accomplished in me, 'And he was reckoned WITH transgressors'; for what is written about me has its completion.» [38] And they said, «Look, Lord, here are two swords.» And he said to them, «It is enough.»

[39] And he came out, and ***went***, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; AND HIS DISCIPLES FOLLOWED HIM. [40] And when he came to the place he said to them, «Pray that you may not enter into temptation.» [41] And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, [42] «Father, if it is your will, remove this chalice from me; nevertheless not my will, but yours, become.» [43] And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.[44] And being in an agony he prayed more intensely; and his sweat became like drops of blood falling down upon the ground. [45] And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sadness, [46] and he said to them, «Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.»

[47] While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him; [48] but Jesus said to him, «Judas, will you give over THE SON OF MAN with a kiss?» [49] And when those who were with him saw what was to happen, they said, «Lord, shall we strike with the sword?» [50] And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. [51] But Jesus said, «Stop this!» And he touched his ear and healed him. [52] Then Jesus said to the chief priests and guards of the temple and elders, who had come out against him, «Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? [53] When I was WITH you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.»

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

The covenant

The word «covenant» (or «testament»; in Greek *diathēkē*) comes once during «The celebration of the Passover» (20) with «the blood», which recalls Exod 24,8: «This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has concluded with you.» This word comes again in the central discourse (29), twice in a verbal form (translated as «to bequeath»; see p. 727) and once in a nominal form, if one accepts the variant reading.

«And now» marks the moment of the fundamental decision in the covenant texts at the end of the historical prologue. This word comes in 18, when Jesus is about to conclude the new covenant; it will be noticed that it is repeated in the symmetrical passage (36) but in another context, the one about abandonment.

A law is given to the disciples, concerning service (26), motivated by the conduct of the lawgiver (27), as in the former covenant: «Be holy because I am holy» (Lev 19,2; 20,7-8; 20,26). The «temptation», which is another major term in covenant texts, is correlatively about not obeying that law.

Blessings and curses accompany the gift of the Law: curse for Judas (22), blessing of the kingdom bestowed as a testament (29-30).

The rite of the conclusion of the covenant is doubly present: through the former Passover which Jesus and his disciples celebrate in memory of the liberation from Egypt; through the establishment of a new sacrificial rite, in the blood of Jesus, a rite that is given as a memorial to be kept: «Do this in memory of me» (19). The blood that is shed, announced and represented at «The celebration of the Passover», appears again at «The agony of Jesus» with the repetition of «cup» and «blood» (42 and 44 as in 20). Symmetrically, the «gift» of his body is made by Jesus in 19, it is carried out at the end (48).

Lastly, in the light of this, it appears that the contrast «to leave»/ «to be with» (with Jesus or with his enemies) has to do with the central question of the covenant. If a covenant is concluded, it really means committing people to staying together despite all the «temptations» or «trials of separation». It is the same with the testament.

All the elements in the texts about the conclusion or rather the renewal of the covenant are present in this sequence[18], but an essential change must be noted. Whereas the former always envisages breaches of the Law as a future eventuality, here it is at the very moment when the treachery is about to take place that the covenant is concluded. Pardon is granted in advance in the words addressed to Simon: «When you have returned...» (32). The temporal, and logical, sequence, the system of «covenant, sin, punishment, repentance, pardon» are completely reversed. That recalls Rom 5,8: «Christ, when we were still sinners, died for us.» And it echoes the new covenant announced in Jer 31,31-34: «Behold the covenant which I shall conclude with the house of Israel

[18] See P. BEAUCHAMP, *L'Un and l'Autre Testament*, I, 235.

[...] I shall put a law within them and I shall write it on their heart. They will no longer have to instruct each other [...] but they will all know me [...] because I am going to pardon their iniquities and no more remember their sins.» The new covenant will rest on the pardon of sins[19].

King David

In the parallel passages to Luke 22,25-30[20], the two other synoptics use the adjective «great» in contrasting it with to «servant»: «the one who wishes to be great among you will be your servant». Luke, however, uses the superlative «the greatest» (contrasting with «the youngest») which ought therefore to be translated by «the eldest». This seems to be an allusion to David, the youngest of the sons of Jesse: it is «the youngest» (1Sam 16,11) who is chosen to reign over Israel, in preference to his «elders»[21].

But Luke is not only alluding to the choice of David as king; the episode of the combat with Goliath is there just as much, since it is without sword that the young David affronts the Philistine giant. What he says when he appears resembles what Jesus declares to those who come for him (52): «You come against me with sword, lance and scimitar, but I march against you in the name of the Lord of Sabaoth».[22]

The Our Father

Apart from the first petition, «hallowed be your name», all the other elements of the Our Father are here: the title, «Father» in 42; the coming of the kingdom in 18, «your will be done» in 42; the «heaven» and the «earth» in 43 and 44; the «bread given» in 19 and also, allusively, in the strength given by the angel (43); Jesus forgives when he «heals» the one coming to strike him in 51. Jesus confronts «temptation» («trials») in 28; he pleaded that his disciples might not succumb to it (32) and he calls on them to «pray not to enter into it» (40 and 46). Jesus begged to snatch his disciples from the grasp of Satan who had claimed them (31-32): that is the last petition of the Our Father.

[19] See P. BEAUCHAMP, *L'Un and l'Autre Testament*, I, 260; sequence B4 is entirely devoted to the new covenant (see above, p. 274-277).
[20] Matt 20,26 and Mark 10,43; for the rhetorical analysis of Matt 20,20-34 and Mark 10,35-52, see R. MEYNET, *A New Introduction to the synoptic Gospels*, chap. II, 158-168; 169-180.
[21] 1Sam 17,13; in the Septuagint, the same words are used.
[22] 1Sam 17,45; should we see in the «stone's throw» (Luke 22,41) a reminder of David's weapon? The link with an ancient text can be done in a formal way by the repetition of a word or an identical expression that then functions somewhat like a blank quotation designed, like a signal, to trigger something off in the reader's mind. The fact that Luke is the only one to use this expression, as well as its opposite «the eldest/the youngest», could support this hypothesis.

INTERPRETATION

«One of the Twelve»

Simon Peter is not named in the episode of the final battle (50); Jesus does not pronounce the name of Judas when he announces his treachery (21-22). Lucan sense of shame? Delicacy on the part of Jesus? Even more than fine psychological points, these omissions could well have real theological value. When Jesus prophesies that he is to be given up, it is of course by Judas, and the curse weighs on him alone. But Judas, of whom it is twice said that he is one of the Twelve (3.47), does he not represent all the others? Does not each betray his master by wishing to be the greatest (23-24)? According to the fourth gospel, it is Peter who struck with the sword (John 18,10), but it is certainly not out of deference towards the prince of the apostles that Luke does not name him; he is in fact getting ready to depict him in parallel with Pilate in an unfavourable light. If one of them struck (50), all suggested it (49). The anonymity underlines the fact that each of the Twelve sided with violence.

«Until death»

Jesus is going away (22). Simon swears he is ready to go with him, to death (33). To the death of others, when the hour comes to prove the worth of his words (50). He is ready to use violence, not to undergo it, to strike with the sword, not to receive blows. By doing so he betrays his master as well as his promise (33). Jesus heals until death (51), until his own death to which he is led under the threat of swords and clubs (52). Not only does he refuse to use the sword (38), not only does he heal the wound caused by the sword but even submits to its power (51).

Satan and the Son of man

The combat goes beyond the Twelve. More than the protagonists, they are involved. At the start of his teaching, rejecting his threefold triple temptation, Jesus had rejected the Devil (Luke 4,1-13); now he comes back. This is again the moment of trial. He attacks Jesus in what he holds most dear, in his work, those whom he has chosen to make his emissaries, his heirs. And Jesus agrees to see those who, in the words of John, he will call his «little children», being tempted. And it will not be one out of Twelve that will fall, the one in whom Satan has set up his dwelling (3), but all will be sifted like wheat, and all will fall, even Simon Peter (31). All will be subjected to temptation and, again, Jesus himself.

The disciples forsake their master

The day of separation is here. Right from the start, Judas has dissociated himself from the master whom he knows to be doomed to failure. He leaves Jesus;

more than that, he is going to enter into a compact with his enemies (4), the people who are only waiting for an opportunity to be rid of him (2) because his presence among them has become intolerable. Judas, however, stays with Jesus so as to hand him over more easily; he alone really deserves the name of traitor because the plays the double game of staying with Jesus while he has already separated from him by selling him; he goes off to conspire with the high priests but he is there on time to be at the paschal table with him (14); he disappears, without anyone noticing, to come back to the Mount of Olives to give the kiss of allegiance to Jesus, thus indicating to those following him where the one to be struck is (47). The eleven others who do not realize much of what is going on stay with Jesus until the end, or almost. As soon as it became clear that any resistance is useless because Jesus opposes it, they disappear. So much so that Luke does not even feel the need to say so. Jesus is alone in the face of his tormentors. Even the one who had sworn he would go with him to death leaves him. Jesus is alone, facing the powers of darkness (53); the time to go off to death has come.

The Lord stays with us

God is with Jesus; in the hour of anguish he does not leave him but strengthens him with the presence of his angel (43). Another messenger of God accompanies the disciples and guides them to the master of house (10); God is with them. It is in his house that with Jesus they meet to eat the Passover. More than ever, Jesus wants to be with them at this time, just as the dying person wants to be surrounded at the supreme moment by his own people. This is because he has a legacy to leave to them before suffering, a testament in their favour, his last will to entrust to them. He wants to stay with them and them to stay with him: through the memorial of his body given and of his blood shed they will remain in communion with him (14-20); if, like him and in memory of him, they keep the commandment of service, the master will remain present among them (25-30). This will be the presence of the one who is leaving, a presence provided in two ways in the rite and the conduct the rite signifies: the kingdom is accomplished in the blood shed, the greatest becomes like the servant. In the memory of Jesus (19), it is God himself who remains with us, since his last wishes are no other than the will of the Father (42).

«I will conclude a new covenant with them»

To avoid the danger of separation and the temptation to give up, a covenant is concluded (20). The oaths are not exchanged at the time of meeting again but just before leaving. The contracts are signed only at the moment of parting company, to guarantee the present agreement against any temptations to future disagreement. Testaments are sealed at the moment of death to prevent any dispute among the heirs. In this way the covenant envisages fidelity, and thereby

takes steps to deal with adultery; it lays down a law and announces infringements of it. Jesus knows that within the hour he will be forsaken by all; that is why he concludes a covenant with them; he knows that within a day he is going to die and that they will not be there to receive his last wishes with his last breath; that is why he makes his testament now. Even before announcing his temptation and his denial to Simon (34), he institutes it to strengthen his brethren (32), as if the sanctity of God and the unfailing nature of his promise were experienced in the depths of sin and infidelity. The wish of the testator can only be put into effect after his death; after his decease the testament takes irrevocable effect. How strange is the power of the one who has lost all power! How strange is the force that causes someone who is irremediably absent to be present in actions! If the covenant is concluded by reason of separation, it is especially so to prevent a final separation, that of oblivion.

«Be sure not to forget»

Be sure not to forget neither the law that you must observe, nor the one who gave it to you nor what he has done for you. Make memory of him, by keeping his commandment and remembering what his life was, by carrying out his last will (26) and recalling his death (19). The first-born Son lived like the youngest one (26), calling on his apostles to imitate him in the service of their brethren; he ended in blood, showing his disciples how not to refuse giving their bodies up to blows. The memory of Jesus is not just a conjuring up of his past; it is the commitment of our future. Making memory of Jesus means doing today what he did in the past, the memory being, more than a thought, an action, that admirable power that is given to the absent person to have a real presence among us. A poem that is not repeated gets forgotten; one can know by heart only what is kept in one's mouth That is why the new covenant contains within it the rite for its renewal (19), putting into our mouths the last words of Jesus with his body given and his blood shed.

«Father, may your will be done»

The kingdom devolves upon the youngest (26). In preference to his elder brothers, David is chosen to judge the tribes of Israel; Jesus, like him, rejecting the illusory force of the sword, faces the power of the prince of darkness (53), knowing that only God will strengthen him (43); the coming of the kingdom of God, the accomplishment of his will, is the cup Jesus must drink (42), the blood that he is going to shed (20). If the disciples remain with Jesus in his trials (28), if day by day they overcome the temptation to extend the kingdom of domination and give way to the power of crushing by force, if they free themselves from the grasp of the Evil One and resist the desire to repay evil with evil, blow for blow (50), but pardon, just as Jesus did by healing the sword wound (51), if, like him, they know how to receive their bread from the hand of

God who daily strengthens them (19), it is because the will of God is arriving on earth as in heaven; it is because the kingdom of God is coming among them; it is because His Name is being sanctified and because they can, following their master, dare to utter it. They will in truth be the sons of him who makes his sun rise on the wicked and on the good and lets his rain fall on the just and the unjust. Admitted to the royal table, they will share with Jesus the inheritance of the Father who is in heaven (30).