

Saul's Last Supper and the Lord's — A Study in Moral Contrast

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Two Last Suppers — Two Men the Night Before Their Deaths

First Samuel 28 records the last night of Saul's life. The Philistines had gathered; Israel was encamped at Gilboa; Saul was terrified. He inquired of Jehovah, but received no answer — not by dreams, not by Urim, not by prophets. And he did what Isaiah 2:6 describes as the practice of the Philistines themselves: he consulted a medium, going to Endor by night, disguised. He wanted to speak with Samuel who was dead.

The Lord Jesus, the night before the cross, also had a profound interest in communicating with someone who was not in the room. He went to Gethsemane and prayed to the Father. The contrast is total. Saul was so insistent on speaking with Samuel that he had eaten nothing all that day and all that night — flesh that wants its own way, demands its own order, says I will not eat until I have done what I want to do. The Lord Jesus ate that last supper with His disciples, and then went to Gethsemane. One was prayer to God; the other was necromancy, consulting an evil spirit. On the night before his death, a wicked man did what Philistines do. On the night before His death, the morally perfect man prayed to the Father.

Seven Contrasts Between the Two Suppers

First: the place. Saul went to a house presided over by a woman with a spirit of Python — not under godly headship but under the spirit of the enemy. The Lord Jesus came to the house of the good man — a man with the goodness of God in

his heart — and the Lord's disciples were to make ready there.

Second: the company. Saul took two servants. The Lord Jesus had twelve disciples. And when the disciples went to that upper room, they came to a place where the Lord was the host. When Saul and his two servants arrived, no one was expecting them, and the woman was startled.

Third: the feet. Saul's servants went into the house of a woman with an evil spirit — their feet were morally defiled. No one washed their feet. The Lord Jesus rose from the table, laid aside His garments, and washed His disciples' feet. And if He had taken off His garments as Saul had taken off his disguise, then Saul's disguise would have been gone. Saul was clothed in other garments — disguised, hypocritical. The Lord Jesus laid aside His garments in love.

Fourth: the will. I will not eat, said Saul — and then was compelled by his servants and the woman. He had no authority in that house; they fed him as someone who needed strength for his journey. With desire I have desired to eat this supper with you, said the Lord Jesus. He was the host, the one who presided, the one who took the bread and the cup and gave thanks. He was not fed; He fed.

Fifth: the table. Saul sat on the bed and ate — no table is mentioned. The Lord Jesus ate at a table: the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. It is the Lord's table. The table gave character to the supper.

Sixth: the knowledge. Saul ate because he did not know what was going to happen the next day. The whole consultation with Samuel was to try to find out the future. He was ignorant and faithless, and so he did what Philistines do. The Lord Jesus knew what was going to happen the next day — that is why He prayed as He prayed in Gethsemane. He was not seeking information. He was in perfect communion with the Father about a cup He knew and dreaded, because He was going to be made sin.

Seventh: the order. Saul demanded to speak with Samuel before he would eat. The Lord Jesus ate the Passover supper and then went to Gethsemane to pray. The flesh insists on its own order. The perfect servant followed the Father's order.

*With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer. —
Luke 22:15*

Every Contrast Shows His Moral Glory

Every single feature of the contrast between these two suppers — the house, the company, the feet, the garments, the will, the table, the knowledge, the order — shows forth the moral glory of the Lord Jesus and the perfection of His person. Nothing He ever did was anything less than perfect. It is not merely that He did not do wrong; He did everything right. And the account of Saul's last supper, which is so dark and terrible, illuminates the last supper of our Lord Jesus Christ as putting light in a dark place and showing what was always there.

This is the one who stands between Moses's institution of the Passover and the breaking of bread that we observe to this day. He presided at both transitions — the first time that the new feast was set, He was there as the one in whose memory it is held. Take Mark, said Paul to Timothy at the end — bring him to me, for he is profitable to the ministry. Come and dine, said the Lord to His disciples on the shore of Tiberias after the resurrection. He who said with desire I have desired to eat this supper with you has not changed His desire. He still desires to be in the midst of His own, still presides at His table, still welcomes those who come.

A Subject Mind — the Antidote to False Doctrine

Matthew 24 is filled with warnings about false prophets and false Christs who shall give great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

Many complicated systems of prophecy arise, many confident declarations of what must happen and when. And Mark 7:25–29 gives the antidote in the simplest form: a Syrophoenician woman, Greek by race, coming to the Lord for her daughter who had an unclean spirit. He said to her: it is not right to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs. And she answered, Yea, Lord, for even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And he said: for because of this word, go — the demon has gone out of thy daughter.

What was the word? Yes, Lord. That was it. No argument, no manipulation, no reasoning with the natural mind. Simple, total subjection: yes, Lord. That is the antidote to being led astray by bad doctrine. The Scripture says we do not know the day or the hour. The Scripture says it is not for us to know the times and seasons. The subject heart says, yes, Lord. The natural mind says, but surely we can figure this out, and begins to construct systems. The woman put herself in his hands and her daughter was delivered. May we put ourselves in His hands, trust in His goodness and love and ability to accomplish all His purposes, and say simply, yes, Lord.