

“THROUGH THE BIBLE”

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LUKE 22:1-71

Luke 20-21 begins Jesus' final week. **On Sunday**, Jesus rode triumphantly down the Mount of Olives into the city of Jerusalem. The masses hailed Him their Messiah. He then got angry and bounced the moneychangers and clerical crooks from the Temple courts. **On Monday**, Jesus was confronted in the Temple, and questioned by the elders. They stubbornly ignored His wisdom, and formalized their rejection. **On Tuesday** Jesus took a day of rest. It was the calm before the storm. **On Wednesday**, the Jews plotted with Judas to betray Jesus. While His disciples prepared for the Passover they would celebrate later that night. Then **on Thursday**, which began at sundown, Jesus ate Passover with His disciples. He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before he was arrested. The next morning He was tried, scourged, and executed by the Romans. It was both the *saddest and gladdest* week in all of human history!

By the time we get to Chapter 22 it's already Wednesday. The disciples are busy preparing for the Passover Seder they'll eat that night. Verse 1, **“Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover.”** At the time of Jesus, Passover was already an ancient custom. Today, 2000 years later, Jews still celebrate Passover much the way Jesus did that night. But on that night Jesus gave the ancient ritual new meaning. After this night the disciples would never look at Passover the same way.

“And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.” Jerusalem was *packed with people* at Passover. A normal population of a couple hundred thousand swelled to nearly two million. The enemies of Jesus saw the crowds that followed Him. They wanted to kill Him, but a public assault might set off a riot. They concocted a scheme...

“Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money.” We don't really know what was in the mind of Judas when he betrayed Jesus, but my hunch is that he had become disenchanted. Perhaps he expected the Messiah to have political aspirations. Jesus had none. He was angry with Jesus for not meeting up to his own expectations. And this is the reason whenever Jesus gets betrayed. When *His will* doesn't match *our expectations* we *bow a knee* or *bristle up* against Him.

At some point a dialogue began between Judas and the Jewish leaders. They put an offer on the table. When Satan entered Judas he went from *depressed* to *possessed*. Anger and hatred filled his heart. It drove him mad. He decided to *take the money* and *take out* His frustrations on Jesus. **“So he promised and sought opportunity to betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.”** With an informant on the inside the Jews would now know His schedule and be able to catch Jesus away from the crowds.

Verse 7, **“Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be killed.”** Each Jewish family chose a lamb to eat. **“And He sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.”** So they said to Him, **“Where do You want us to prepare?”** And He said to them, **“Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters.”** This man would not be hard to spot. In first century Israel carrying water was *a woman's work*. It was very unusual to see a man toting a jar of water on his head.

“Then you shall say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says to you, “Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?”’ Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.” Tradition says this house belonged the family of John Mark. This house was not only the site of the Passover meal, but it played a strategic role for weeks to come. It was the disciples hideout after the crucifixion, when they worried about being arrested themselves. It was where the risen Christ revealed Himself. He passed through the walls of this house. Then on the Day of Pentecost the upper room was transformed - from a *hideout* to a *headquarters*. In that room Jesus turned over the Church to another Comforter, the Holy Spirit. In this room - the *Holy Spirit took over where Jesus had left off!* *There’s never been a more important house!*

Verse 13, “So they went and found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.” The preparations they made included cooking a lamb, and baking unleavened bread. They also purchased the wine, and bitter herbs, and cinnamon paste. These were the symbols that reminded every Jew of their Egyptian bondage, and the freedom God had provided them. “When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.” The Passover Seder is a family time, and the twelve disciples had become Jesus' family. This was an intimate time to share with His men.

“Then He said to them, “With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” As a law-abiding Jew, Jesus had celebrated Passover for each of His 30-plus years, but this would be His last. When a World Series team goes up three wins against its opponent the clubhouse has to be prepared for a victory celebration. If the team doesn't win the next night they “*put the champagne on ice.*” In a sense this is what Jesus is doing – He's put the champagne on ice. Victory is certain, but there's still work to be done. He has to complete a final victory. The cross is before Him. It's not time to pop the cork. After this night He won't participate in the Passover until the victory is secure, and He returns to establish His kingdom.

“Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide *it* among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” The Jews actually drink four cups during the Seder. This may've been the first cup, the *Cup of Dedication*. “And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it*, and gave *it* to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” This was radical. For 1500 years the bread represent the faith and haste of the Hebrews. They exited Egypt before the bread could rise. But Jesus gives this ancient ritual new meaning. “This is My body which is given for you...” When your teeth bite and chew the communion break think of the cat-o-nine-tails that bit into His back, and the torturers who chewed up His flesh.

In the Seder the lamb is followed by a piece of unleavened bread called the “*Afikomen*.” *It's the dessert*. Jesus is saying He is the dessert of life! He not only nourishes, but He delights. In a single serving of Jesus, you not only get the moral fiber of wheat germ, and the spiritual vitamins of broccoli, you also get the soul satisfying taste of chocolate ice cream! When it comes to diet and nutrition, we might as well face it, everything that's healthy tastes like cardboard. But with Jesus you don't have to choose between *what's good for you* and *what tastes good*. He's the source for both!

“Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, “This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” This was the third cup of the Seder, the *Cup of Redemption*. It symbolized the blood of the Passover lamb. This was the blood the Hebrews in Egypt spread on the doorposts and thresholds of their homes. If the blood was applied, the plague of death would pass-over that house. Salvation that night had nothing to do with the moral status of the people inside the house. It all boiled down to the blood. And this is the key to our salvation. Have you put your faith in Jesus. Has the Holy Spirit applied *His blood* to *your heart*. It's all about the blood. *What can wash away our sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

Commentator, J Vernon McGee makes an interesting observation at this point. He writes, “The Lord used two of the most frail elements in the world as symbols of His body and blood. Bread and wine - both will spoil in a few days. When He raised a monument, it was not made of brass or marble, but of two frail elements that perish.” It's a reminder that God's most elaborate accomplishments consist of

the most simple, common, ordinary ingredients. Once again, God uses the foolish things to confound the wise.

Author Bruce Larson goes as far as to say, "We have romanticized the bread and wine as we have the cross. I am convinced that if Jesus came today He might even use coffee and doughnuts." Jesus took everyday stuff and gave it profound, spiritual implications. This is what He does to all of life when you surrender to Him. Suddenly your work, leisure time, friendships, family, even encounters with strangers, take on an eternal significance. Jesus sanctifies the mundane and infuses meaning into everything we do.

Verse 21, "But behold, the hand of My betrayer *is* with Me on the table. And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed! Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing." This always amazes me. Certainly, Jesus knew Judas was the bad apple from the beginning, yet He never tipped His hand. If I'd been Jesus, I would've assigned Judas all the dirty work. "*Judas, you're doing dishes tonight. Judas, you've got permanent latrine duty until you hear otherwise.*" The disciples would've never questioned. The identity of my betrayer would have been crystal clear. But that's not how Jesus treated Judas. He made him the ministry's treasurer. Judas was Jesus' most trusted disciple. In fact, Judas occupied the honored seat at the Last Supper. To the very end, it seems Jesus tried to provide Judas every opportunity to repent.

"Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest." When you compare the Gospels you discover this conversation comes just after Jesus washes His disciple's feet. The disciples have just had the quintessential lesson on servanthood. Jesus has shown them by example that they need to humble themselves and put each other first - yet before He empties the basin of water the disciples break out into an argument over which one of them is greatest. It reminds me of an episode from the TV show ER. Doctor Carter has a patient that dies. He goes to the funeral to apologize to her husband. Apparently, Carter had misled the man. He told him his wife was going to be okay when in fact he knew she wouldn't. He lied. When the two men meet, Doctor Carter begins to apologize profusely. His goal is to absolve his guilty conscience. The grieving husband cuts him off with a single sentence. He explains to the young physician. "*Doctor Carter, today is not about you.*" I'm sure that's what heaven wanted to say to these disciples. Here they are in the shadow of the cross. The salvation of all mankind hangs in the balance, and all they can think about is themselves. I'm sure there are many times when Jesus wants to say to us, "*This is not about you!*"

"And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' Among unbelievers those who manipulate and control folks are considered the good guys. *Might makes right.* Yet Jesus says, "*But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves.*" In God's kingdom the greatest disciple is not the person with the most servants, but who serves the most people. He's the younger. In Oriental culture tremendous rights were afforded the firstborn. A younger sibling was in a subservient position to his elder brother. But this was the measure of greatness – the younger sibling earned respect. It wasn't just given. He gained influence from serving from the ground up.

Verse 27, "*For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table?* At least that's the world's assumption. "*Yet I am among you as the One who serves.*" Up until this point the world was a pyramid. The whole idea was to step on as many people as necessary in order to climb to the top. But Jesus flips over the pyramid. In His kingdom the goal is not to step on people, or climb over people – it's to stoop and serve people. Our goal is to *wash feet* not *put our foot down*.

Verse 28, "*But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*" In this life the followers of Jesus need to follow His example and be servants. But in the life to come we'll also enjoy the reward of Jesus. We'll have exalted positions in His future Kingdom. Each of the Twelve Apostles will rule over one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

In 1995 Ohio State running back, Eddie George, won College football's most coveted award, the Heisman Trophy. He went to New York to receive his prize, but on the return trip the Trophy got stuck in the airport X-ray machine, and crippled a couple of the fingers on the stiff arm hand. It just goes to prove how the world's rewards are fragile and breakable. The higher you climb the ladder of this world the more fragile are the rungs. In one sense, the Heisman Trophy is made of solid bronze, 35 pounds worth, but in another sense it's as hollow as balsa wood.' One day, the world's accolades will long be forgotten, and all that will matter to you is to hear Jesus say, "well done, good and faithful servant."

Verse 31, "And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." Warren Wiersbe points out that in the Greek text the word "*you*" is in the plural tense. Satan wasn't just after Peter he was after all twelve disciples. He wanted to sift them all. He wanted to run them through a sieve. Pulverize them. Chew them up and spit them out. Destroy their faith.

Peter would fail, but his faith wouldn't. A wise man said, "It doesn't matter if you're knocked down 100 times as long as you get back up 101 times." When we *blow it* we struggle to *believe it*... we're tempted to think God is done with us. We need to trust Him to take us back and provide a fresh start. Peter failed, but because Jesus prayed for him, his faith did not. And Jesus is praying for you. Hebrews 7:25 tells us that Jesus "ever lives to make intercession for us." I love how Jesus encourages Peter - He doesn't say, "if you return," but "*when you have returned.*" Its not an "if," but a "when".

"But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." Peter was overconfident – self-confident – that was his problem. "Then (Jesus) said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me." Peter will prove chicken before the rooster crows! I'll never forget Kathy and I walking on top of Jerusalem's walls. We were overlooking the Kidron Valley when we heard a rooster crow in the distance. It was an eerie reminder of Peter's failure.

"And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?" So they said, "Nothing." Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take *it*, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." Jesus is preparing His men for tough sledding. The environment was once charitable. It's about to turn hostile. There's a time for God's miraculous provision, but there's also a time for self-preservation – and that time is now. Jesus entered the city Sunday, on the back of a donkey. They rolled out the red carpet. Now on Thursday He'll leave the city with a cross on His back. Likewise, the disciples had enjoyed a warm reception, but the tide would turn on them too. Sell your sack and buy a sword is a figurative way of saying "Buck up – toughen up. Buckle your seatbelt – you're in for a rough ride."

Verse 37 "For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in Me: '*And He was numbered with the transgressors.*' Jesus quotes Isaiah 53:12. It was a prophetic picture of Messiah's sufferings on the cross... Jesus says, "For the things concerning Me have an end." "So they said, "Lord, look, here *are* two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." They misunderstood. Jesus was speaking figuratively. They thought He was telling them to stockpile an arsenal. Perhaps this is what Peter was thinking later, when he pulls a sword on the man who came to arrest Jesus? From the beginning of His ministry Jesus taught that His kingdom wouldn't be established by force. *God's kingdom advances not by slaying men, but by swaying men.* The sword we fight with is the sword of the Spirit – God's Word.

Verse 39, "Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him." The other Gospels further identify the place as the *Garden of Gethsemane* – which means "oil press." Even today you can visit the garden, and see 2000 year old olives trees. It's mindboggling to think Jesus may've prayed under one of those trees.

"When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done."

Some Bible interpreters believe Jesus was trying to avoid the cross. I don't believe that for an instant. Jesus was born to die. Throughout His ministry He embraced that plight. He talked about it with His disciples. It was His destiny. But *talking about it* and *enduring it* are two different things. I think the rejection He experienced from the very men He was dying to save – even the rejection He would suffer from His own Father – grieved His very soul. The cup He wanted removed was not the cross – but these feelings of rejection. And I believe God removed that cup. He replaced it with His peace.

It's interesting, in Genesis 3 we're told that sin, and the rule of Satan began in a Garden called Eden. In Revelation 22, we discover that when Jesus returns and puts an end to sin, and Satan's revolt, He will remake the earth into another garden. The story of mankind both begins and ends in a garden. But that's not all... sandwiched in between is another garden... called Gethsemane. In this garden the course of human history turned. Here the battle was fought that wrestled the world from Satan and delivered it to God.

Gethsemane was the garden of decision. Through prayer Jesus overcame His pain, His fears, His hurt - and readied Himself for the cross the next day. God took away His cup of pain - the pain of rejection - and filled it with perfect peace. I believe the spiritual battle that delivered us from darkness to light was not won on the cross, it was won the night before in Gethsemane. What happened the next day had already been decided in the garden.

Verse 43, "Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Remember Luke was a physician. In His Gospel he highlights the humanity of Jesus. Here Dr. Luke details the agony He endured. His sweat resembled "great drops of blood." There are two possibilities... First, Luke uses the word "like..." Jesus wasn't literally sweating blood, but His perspiration had the thickness and consistency of human blood. Or second, there is a malady known as "hematidrosis" - where intense emotional stress causes tiny blood vessels in the sweat glands to rupture and expel a mixture of blood and sweat. This could've been what happened.

Its interesting, because of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden all mankind was sentenced to work by the sweat of our brow. In His work of redemption Jesus paid for sin's sweat with the sweat that came from His own brow. Whatever it was that excreted from His pores Jesus had been stretched to His limits. No one has ever experienced the strain and stress He endured.

"When (Jesus) rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow." Jesus was *saving the world*, and His disciples were *sawing logs*. "Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation." They should've prayed with Him. Jesus wasn't the only person about to face severe challenges...

"And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" It's been said, "A kiss is a contraction of the lips due to an enlargement of the heart." That's not always the case. You can feign a kiss. Here's an example... *But it raises the question*. Why was Jesus betrayed by a kiss. Surely, the Temple posse could've recognized Him without Judas. I believe the kiss was Satan's attempt to pour more pain into His cup. Imagine, betrayed by your closest disciple with a kiss – a show of loyalty - of all things. Satan was pouring salt in the wound. He was trying to discourage Jesus – cause Him to abort His mission. Why die for these guys?

"When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" And one of them (didn't even ask. He) struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear." One sword-swinging disciple tried to split the guy's head in two. He wanted to give his hair a permanent part – but he missed – and ended up just lopping off an ear. John 18:10 identifies the victim as "Malchus" and the slasher as "Peter." Verse 51, "But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him." Notice, Jesus' last miracle was to heal a wound inflicted by one of His own servants. Sadly, that's still a miracle He has to work far too often. We've not been called to *slay*, but to *sway*...

“Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, “Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.” Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest’s house.” I’ve been to the dungeon under Caiaphas’ house, and stood in the place where Jesus was most likely was shackled. His final trial has begun.

“But Peter followed at a distance.” You’re always in trouble when you follow Jesus “at a distance.” Peter didn’t want to appear too close... He’s already compromised His allegiance. He’s shying away from his loyalty. Disaster is on the horizon.

“Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, “This man was also with Him.” But he denied Him, saying, “Woman, I do not know Him.” How sad! Big, bad, braggadocios Peter denies Jesus in front of a campfire girl. Notice the all too common progression... First, he followed Jesus at a distance... Then, he warms Himself by the enemies’ fire. He consorts with and takes comfort with the wrong crowd... Finally, He ends up denying His Lord... The key is not to make the first mistake! Follow hard after Jesus. Don’t let a distance grow between you. Bask in His love, experience His power, so when Jesus warms your heart you’re not tempted by the warmth of this world.

“And after a little while another saw him and said, “You also are of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not!” Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, “Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.” Apparently people from Galilee had a distinctive accent. “But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying!” Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.” It wasn’t yet daybreak, but the rooster signaled Peter’s darkness. But I wonder if Jesus wasn’t trying to communicate grace with the rooster’s crow? Was the harbinger of morning a message to Peter? A new day is in store for you, Peter. Is Jesus telling him, “Peter, I’m not done with you yet.”

Yet, I’m not sure at this point Peter could even comprehend “a new day.” The sound of the rooster marked a crushing defeat. The only thing worse is what happens next... Verse 61, “And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.” What a moment that must’ve been. What was said in that one look?

“Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So Peter went out and wept bitterly.” It could’ve been the end of Peter. His guilt, and feelings of failure, were so heavy it could’ve crushed him. But Jesus prayed for him. Peter failed, his faith did not. He would return to strengthen his brothers.

Verse 63, “Now the men who held Jesus mocked Him and beat Him. And having blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, “Prophecy! Who is the one who struck You?” It was common for Roman soldiers to play games that victimized their prisoners – especially those sentenced to execution. At the place where Jesus was tried before Pilate you find engraved in the stones a design known as “The King’s Game.” This beating may’ve been part of that game. It’s often called, “Hot Hand.” Every soldier in the group except one, balled up his fist and cold cocked Jesus. His eyes were covered so He couldn’t prepare for the blows. Then they ripped off the blindfold and made Him guess which attacker hadn’t hit Him. The game was repeated over, and over, and over. It was gross brutality.

Author Phillip Yancey tells of an incident that occurred in the days prior to World War II. Nazi storm troopers arrested an elderly Jewish rabbi and drug him to the police station. In the corner of the room several Nazis were beating another Jew to death. The soldiers decided to have some fun with the rabbi. They stripped him naked and told him to preach the sermon he had provided for the next Sabbath service. He asked for his yarmulke and with a shaky voice began to explain what it meant to walk humbly with God. As he spoke the soldiers jabbed, and poked, and prodded him. Yancey concludes, “When I read the Gospel accounts of the imprisonment, torture, and execution of Jesus, I think of that naked rabbi standing humiliated in a police station.” Its hard to underestimate the shame and indignities that the Son of God suffered to atone for our sins and produce our healing.

Verse 65 is ominous. “And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.” There were indignities Luke couldn’t bring himself to mention. Isaiah 50:6 gives us a detail of His torture even the Gospels don’t mention. “I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.” The bloodthirsty soldiers literally ripped Jesus beard out His facial follicles. Imagine His face. It was puffy and swollen - bloodied and bruised. Jesus looked like a heavyweight boxer who’d gone 15 rounds in a bloody brawl. When Isaiah 53 describes the sufferings of the Messiah it says, “His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” The literal Hebrew reads, “His appearance was not human, and His form not like that of the children of men.” Isaiah is telling us the face of Jesus was so badly beaten He no longer even resembled a human being. His face was a bloody pulp. Jesus looked as if He’d been in a terrible automobile accident, or a airplane crash. If there had been a funeral it would’ve been closed casket.

Verse 66, “As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council...” It was against the Laws of Judaism to condemn a man to death at night, so they waited until daybreak to convene the Sanhedrin and make it official. The Sanhedrin was made up of 71 Jews. It was their Supreme Court.

They assembled “saying “If You are the Christ, tell us.” But He said to them, “If I tell you, you will by no means believe. And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go.” Jesus knew this was a kangaroo court. The trial was rigged. They were after blood, not truth. Despite their unfair treatment, Jesus answers their question, “If You are the Christ, tell us.” He does in verse 69, “Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God.” Jesus quotes Scripture. He draws on Messianic images from Daniel 7:13 and Psalm 110:1. Jesus is warning these Jews to be careful how they judge Him because one day He'll judge them.

“Then they all said, “Are You then the Son of God?” Remember, in the Jewish mindset the son of a bird is a bird – the son of a man is man – thus, the Son of God is God. To say You’re the Son of God was a claim to deity. “So He said to them, “You rightly say that I am.” Jesus even used the name for God that was given to Moses at the burning bush. God identified Himself as “I am that I am.” Jesus is claiming to be the great “I AM” – the God of the Hebrews, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And they said, “What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth.” Often liberals and cults say Jesus never claimed to be God. That’s absurd - that’s the very reason He was crucified. Jesus was God, and because the Jews didn’t want to bow down to Him, they killed Him.