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Sermon Notes

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The Hinge of History: From the Old Covenant to the New

Matthew 26:17-30

This is the account of the last time that God was pleased for His people to celebrate the Old Covenant feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread. God ordained these twin feasts to commemorate the events of the Exodus, the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. These were two feasts in one... and they came to be seen together; the Passover was celebrated only on the first day of the combined feast... with the slaughter of the Passover Lamb. The first time that was done was on the dreadful night of the Exodus from Egypt, the night of the tenth plague, when all the firstborn of Egypt were killed by the angel of the Lord. But the Jews were delivered from this death by the substitution of the Passover Lamb. When the Lamb (a lamb without blemish or defect) was killed, its blood was drained out and collected, and the people dipped hyssop branches in as paintbrushes and painted the blood on the doorposts and lintel of their houses. When the killing angel SAW THE BLOOD, he PASSED OVER those houses and did not kill the firstborn.

So also the Feast of Unleavened Bread commemorated the eating of bread without yeast, eaten in haste... the bread of travelers about to set out on a journey, without time for yeast to rise and give a more comfortable bread... eaten in HASTE as a picture of a people who are aliens and strangers, moving to a new home, the Promised Land. Over time, the yeast became a symbol of evil, of wickedness, that the people of God had to get rid of from their houses and their lives.

For centuries, the Jews had been celebrating this... remembering that night of deliverance from slavery by the power of God. Every generation of God's people were reminded by this feast to LOOK BACK at the Exodus.

But this night, Matthew 26:17-30, was the LAST TIME God would ever be delighted in the sacrifice of the Passover Lamb and the eating of the Unleavened Bread. Jesus that night stood at the HINGE OF HISTORY... as He proclaimed the end of the Old Covenant and the beginning of the New... a New Covenant in His blood.

This New Covenant would be INFINITELY COSTLY... it would be initiated by an act of betrayal so base that we still are revolted by it two thousand years later... the betrayal of Judas. This New Covenant would be INFINITELY COSTLY, because the blood of the perfect Son of God would have to be shed to purchase its blessings.

This morning, we stand at the HINGE OF HISTORY as we study these words. One last time in the Old Covenant, and the proclamation of the New

In that New Covenant we STAND FORGIVEN of all our sins, LOOKING BACK on a greater Exodus—the deliverance of the people of God from the true slavery—slavery to sin and death.

I. Preparations for the Passover (v s. 17-19)

Matthew 26:17-19 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"¹⁸ He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'"¹⁹ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

A. The Feast of Unleavened Bread, Explained, Now Fulfilled

1. What was the “Feast of Unleavened Bread”? How Did It Relate to Passover?
 - a. One of the three times/year pilgrimages to Jerusalem
 - b. In some sense TWO festivals in ONE... “Feast of Unleavened Bread” involves the eating of
 - c. As I just mentioned, the Feast of Unleavened Bread looked back on all the events of the Exodus... and especially the night that the Jews had to eat unleavened bread, eaten IN HASTE
 - d. The Feast would last eight days
 - e. On the first day, the Passover Lamb would be slaughtered by the Law of Moses
2. How Did the Jews Celebrate It? [cf. D.A. Carson, *Matthew*, in EBC]
 - a. Jerusalem filled with people
 - b. Josephus... maybe as many as two million pilgrims around the time of Jesus
 - c. The Feasts had an elaborate ritual involving many elements all of which needed preparation
 - d. After sunset, the “household” would gather in a home to eat the Passover Lamb, which by this time would have been roasted with bitter herbs

- e. The head of the household would begin the meal with a prayer of thanksgiving for that feast day and for the wine... praying over the first of four cups
- f. A preliminary course of greens and bitter herbs was generally followed by a boy in the house asking the questions in the Law of Moses, "What is the meaning of all this?"
- g. The head of the household would then explain the symbolism and recount the history of the Exodus
- h. Then the people would sing the first part of the *Hallel*—Psalm 113
- i. Then the second cup of wine introduced the main course—the Passover Lamb—followed by a third cup, the cup of blessing, accompanied by another prayer of thanksgiving
- j. Then the participants sang the rest of the *Hallel*—perhaps Psalm 114—and probably drank the fourth cup of wine
- k. THUS the preparations needed for all of this were extensive

B. Jesus Gives Directions for the Preparations

- 1. His earnest desire (Luke)

Luke 22:15-16 *And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. ¹⁶ For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."*

John 17:24 *"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory*

- 2. The disciples initiate the question: WHERE SHOULD WE GO TO MAKE PREPARATIONS
- 3. BUT Jesus is way ahead of them!! He has already arranged everything unbeknownst to them

John 14:2-3 *In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*

- 4. What Matthew says:

Matthew 26:18 He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'"

- a. A particular man has been selected as their host for the most significant meal in human history
- b. Note Jesus' poignant statement: "My appointed time is near..." This is the day and hour of His death, planned out from before the Foundation of the Earth; a day referred to multiple times of which it was always said

"My time has not yet come" (John 2:4, John 7:6, John 7:30, John 8:20)

But now HIS HOUR HAD COME!!!

- 5. Luke's amazing account of Jesus' astonishing foresight

Luke 22:7-13 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." ⁹ "Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked. ¹⁰ He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, ¹¹ and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹² He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there." ¹³ They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

ASTONISHING FORESIGHT OF TINY DETAILS!!! More on that theme later!!

C. The Passover Lamb: The Perfect Picture of Christ Now Reaching Its Fulfillment

- 1. By the shed blood of the Passover Lamb, the firstborn of Israel were delivered from death by the angel of the Lord
- 2. For centuries, the Jews had commemorated that deliverance by slaughtering one lamb after another... the annual repetition teaching one central lesson:

Hebrews 10:1-4 The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming-- not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. ² If it could, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. ³ But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, ⁴ because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

- 3. Now at last the fulfillment of that image was about to come true:

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Hebrews 10:14 by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

D. The Obedience of Christ AND the Disciples

1. The disciples did everything Christ told them to do

Matthew 26:19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

2. BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, Jesus did everything the Father told Him to do... the Law of Moses required the Passover Feast, and Jesus OBEYED THE LAW to the nth degree... His perfect obedience to the Law is the righteousness imputed to us

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

II. Prediction of the Betrayer (vs. 20-25)

Matthew 26:20-25 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. ²¹ And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." ²² They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?" ²³ Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." ²⁵ Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

A. The Passover Feast Is Going On

1. Jesus' intimate fellowship with those He loved the most
2. Jewish law said the Passover could not be eaten until after sundown; the Passover lamb was slaughtered at twilight
3. Reclining at table... a scene of peace and fellowship before the storm of wrath and anguish and death

B. Jesus' Deep Sorrow... Not Recorded Here but Very Real

John 13:21 After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me."

1. Jesus was called a “Man of Sorrows” in Isaiah 53... thoroughly acquainted with grief
2. Here, He was deeply distressed, “troubled in spirit” over the betrayal by Judas
3. This was deeply painful to Jesus
4. Vs. 23 focuses on the intimacy of the fellowship

Matthew 26:23 Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me.

5. The issue is not so much a SPECIFIC person at that point, but more like, “Someone who has shared a meal with me will betray me.”
6. The sharing of a meal shows tremendous intimacy; Psalm 41 captures this in prophecy:

Psalm 41:9 Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.

7. Betrayal can only be done by one who was formerly close, formerly a friend
8. BUT PLEASE UNDERSTAND... no surprise here:

John 6:70-71 Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" ⁷¹(He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

C. Judas's Astonishing Wickedness

1. The disciples all respond with humility and deep concern

Matthew 26:22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?"

2. The other disciples were all deeply troubled, and humbly wondered if it would be them... this is an appropriate self-awareness in which you see your own sin
3. Judas does not join in at this moment... but waits a moment later to ask about himself...

Matthew 26:25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

4. None of the other Eleven knew it was him... he hid his wickedness very well; as a matter of fact, in John’s Gospel, when Judas takes a piece of bread to identify him as the betrayer, SATAN ENTERED INTO HIM and Jesus commanded him: “What you are about to do, do quickly.” Judas then left to

betray Jesus... at that time, the disciples thought he was leaving to buy more supplies for the feast

5. Hypocrisy of this wicked man!! Constantly hiding his love for money and thievery and unbelief and wickedness from everyone but Jesus... as we just saw, Jesus knew he was a devil (not WOULD BECOME a devil!)

D. The Mystery of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

Matthew 26:24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

III. The Blood of the New Covenant (vs. 26-30)

Matthew 26:26-30 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." ²⁷ Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom." ³⁰ ¶ When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

A. Old Covenant Fulfilled

1. This is the final act of the Old Covenant... an astonishing moment in history
2. The Passover lamb has been slaughtered, they are eating its meat
3. The unleavened bread has been passed around
4. These actions were all SYMBOLIC... yes, they LOOKED BACK to the events of the Passover and the Exodus... but more than anything, every Passover that had ever been celebrated including the first one symbolized the true Passover, the true Exodus, the true salvation that Jesus was about to work
5. In order to teach this vital lesson, He shocks the disciples while they were eating

B. New Covenant Established

1. He takes the bread, gave thanks, breaks it, and gives it to them
2. Then He speaks these amazing words:

Matthew 26:26 Take and eat; this is my body."

3. The Feast was instituted for symbolic reasons, to teach spiritual lessons

4. But now the Lessons are going to be FULFILLED in His own body
5. The bread is identified as Jesus' body and they were eating it!!
6. Next, He does the same with the cup:

Matthew 26:27-28 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

7. With these words, Jesus inaugurates the New Covenant, about to be fulfilled in His blood
8. The “blood of the covenant” is symbolic language they would have understood from the animal sacrificial system...
9. But now, He has identified a NEW blood (His own) and therefore a NEW covenant... “**MY** blood of the covenant...”
10. And the centerpiece of this New Covenant is TRUE FORGIVENESS OF SINS
11. This blood would be poured out for MANY in the world, not just for the Jews

C. The Significance of Christ's Body and Blood

1. This at last is the very purpose of the INCARNATION!!
2. It was for this very reason that Christ took on a human body
3. By His actual physical body and physical blood, the wrath of God would be atoned for and the forgiveness of sins established

D. The Future Fulfillment: Final Salvation = Feasting Forever

Matthew 26:29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

1. The key word: “anew”... the NEW WORLD that is coming
2. The key concept: He would DRINK after His resurrection!! Jesus would have a physical body after His death
3. AND He would enjoy a feast with them forever in the Kingdom of His Father

E. The Lord's Supper Established: “Do This In Remembrance of Me” (more in a moment)

**Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying,
"This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."**

IV. Lessons and Applications

A. Come to Christ!!! Understand the Body and Blood... and Trust Him

1. The centerpiece of the Scripture: the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ for sinners
2. The Old Testament sacrificial system pointed toward it
3. Christ's actual death fulfilled it
4. Understand the lesson of Christ's body:

Colossians 1:22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation

5. Understand the lesson of the BLOOD

Romans 6:23 the wages of sin is death

Hebrews 9:22 without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

Hebrews 10:4 it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Romans 3:25 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.

Ephesians 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

6. This is the gospel: Christ's body was nailed to the cross, and His blood flowed unto death to pay the penalty for sinners
7. This is the essence of the statement:

Matthew 26:28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

8. The OLD COVENANT is gone forever... The NEW COVENANT era has been opened in the blood of Christ
 - a. The Old Covenant was an era of the external Laws of Moses and of ceremonial sacrifices in the blood of animals... no true forgiveness of sins, but only a PROMISE of a final sacrifice that would come later

- b. The New Covenant is written in the blood of Jesus... shed for sinners, promising complete and total forgiveness of sins and a whole new life, a life in the Spirit

9. Believe in this! Trust in Him!!! Receive forgiveness of sins

B. Worship Christ as He Is Revealed Here

- 1. The gospel was crafted in the mind of God before the foundation of the world for one reason: THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY
- 2. Jesus Christ is the perfect display of God's glory... and especially in the cross

Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

- 3. Worship Him!! Let your heart melt and be elevated at the attributes of Christ on display here... His supernatural knowledge and detailed preparations; His courage in going into Jerusalem specifically to die for us; His love in earnestly desiring to eat the feast with us—not just on one given evening in history, but for eternity in the New Jerusalem; His power in orchestrating all these events exactly according to God's plan; His humanness in the pain of the betrayal with Judas; His wisdom in establishing the Lord's Supper; His grace in giving His body and shedding His blood for us
- 4. WORSHIP HIM!!! (Like they do in heaven...)

Revelation 5:8-9 the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

C. Stand in Awe of God's “Preparations”... and Do Your Part!

- 1. The first part of this text shows Christ ordering His disciples to go and make the extensive preparations needed for the Feast
- 2. But we also saw how the Lord had gone ahead of them in His sovereign power and had prepared a place for them to stay... He spoke of “a certain man” and of how they were to say “The Lord’s time had come”
- 3. Christ MAKES PREPARATIONS... He goes ahead of us and sets everything up

4. All of the Old Testament's rituals—sacrificial system, cycle of Feasts, etc.—were evidence of Christ going ahead of us to prepare us for the true sacrifice
5. Christ's preparations are perfect, and nothing is missing
6. And yet, He includes US in those preparations... He gave commands to the disciples to finish the preparations, to do what was necessary
7. A beautiful picture of Christ and us WORKING TOGETHER to achieve God's perfect plan
8. So... DO YOUR PART... Christ goes ahead to prepare good works for you to do; it is for you to do those good works every day

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

D. Stand in Awe of God's Exhaustive Foreknowledge

1. Recent theologians have questioned God's exhaustive foreknowledge, His ability to know decisions made by people
2. They say this because of an overwhelming commitment to their view of human free will
3. They say that, if a human being is truly to have free will, God CANNOT KNOW ahead of time what that person will do... He can guess, but He cannot know
4. According to them, nothing is foreordained, or else people cannot have free will and cannot be held responsible for their decisions
5. This view is called “Open Theism”: Clark Pinnock and Greg Boyd are leading proponents of it; Pinnock says God limits Himself and thus cannot know the future; Boyd says God knows the aspects of the future that can be known, but some of the future (that determined by free will agents) cannot be known at all... so God is not ignorant of the future simply because IT CANNOT BE KNOWN
6. It is beyond me to wrangle in detail with all that these two (and others) say about these topics... it would be confusing and take a great deal of time to work through the nuances... but let's simply say this: THE BIBLE TEACHES THE EXHAUSTIVE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD OVER FREE HUMAN DECISIONS
7. In the preparations for the Feast, Jesus speaks of a certain man that they will meet going into the city, one carrying a jar of water

Luke 22:10-12 "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters,¹¹ and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'¹² He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there."

8. The reason for this identification is underscored by the fact that there might have been a couple of million Jewish pilgrims in the small city of Jerusalem... it would have been CRAMMED with people!!! The "man carrying the jar of water" is for IDENTIFICATION purposes, so the disciples would know who to follow to what house that had been prepared
9. How did Jesus know that there would be a man carrying that jar of water?? What is the man decided not to carry it after all? What if he decided to carry a basket of figs, or a jar of wine, or go empty-handed? The open theists would say that such a free will decision is beyond the scope of what God can know
10. This becomes even more telling in the case of Judas's betrayal... that is a vital spiritual decision that MUST be free on Judas's part, and therefore that CANNOT BE KNOWN ahead of time
11. BUT clearly, Jesus knows ahead of time that Judas will betray Him, and says it has been written (in Scripture, and in the "book" of God's sovereign plan)

Psalm 139:16 All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Matthew 26:21 And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me."

[Not, "I have a hunch that one of you MIGHT betray me..."; Not, "Three of you will betray me..." No... ONE of you WILL betray me]

Matthew 26:24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him.

Scripture predicted the betrayal, and God's sovereign plan wrote the betrayal in his "book"... it is ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN to happen!!!

12. So, in SMALL THINGS (the carrying of a water jar) and in LARGE THINGS (the betrayal of the Son of God for thirty pieces of silver), everything is EXHAUSTIVELY KNOWN AHEAD OF TIME by God
13. As a matter of fact, Jesus links the proof of His deity to His ability to predict the future

John 14:29 I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

John 16:4 I have told you this, so that when the time comes you will remember that I warned you.

14. God did the same thing in Isaiah... several times in Isaiah 40-49, God challenges the idols to a contest, and the task is simple: PREDICT THE FUTURE... but only God can do this:

Isaiah 43:9-12 Which of them foretold this and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, "It is true." ¹⁰ "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. ¹¹ I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior. ¹² I have revealed and saved and proclaimed-- I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God.

Isaiah 45:21-22 Declare what is to be, present it-- let them take counsel together. Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me. ²² "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.

15. SO... God knows the details of the future

E. Wrestle with the Mystery of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

1. Let's talk about Judas, and let's do the best we can to understand the mystery of the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility
2. At the root of the debate between Arminians and Calvinists is the question of the problem of evil... if God is so God and so all-powerful, why is there evil in the universe??
3. The classic Arminian answer to this question runs like this:
 - a. God created the world good and only desires good things
 - b. BUT God allows people free will, and God never interferes with free will; so to some degree God's hands are bound by our free will; evil happens in God's universe, but it's not His fault because people are just using their free will and God WILL NOT interfere with those decisions
 - c. Why not? Because if God ordains something, and brings it to pass by His sovereign power, they argue, then man is not responsible
 - d. There is NO WAY that a human decision can be ordained by God AND for God to hold man responsible for that decision... if God decrees that man do something, and man does that thing that God decreed, then man is OFF

THE HOOK... not so much “the devil made me do it” but “God made me do it”...

- e. Since that would make God the author of evil, then this cannot be... God CANNOT HOLD PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE for decisions that He has decreed
- 4. YET, in verse 24, it is clear that Judas’s betrayal of Jesus is BOTH decreed by God AND Judas is responsible for it

Matthew 26:23-24 Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. ²⁴ The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

- a. BOTH are taught: “Son of Man will go just as it is written about him” is a statement of divine decree... as Yul Brenner said as Pharaoh in “The Ten Commandments,” “So let it be written, so let it be done.”... the WRITING is not mere prediction, but God’s purpose, God’s will
- b. AND the statement “Woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he’d never been born.” CLEARLY Judas is held responsible for what he did to Jesus... the word WOE means a prophetic condemnation for his sin...
- c. So Divine sovereignty and human responsibility go together
- d. You may not understand how to reconcile them, but just because you can’t reconcile them doesn’t mean that you should drop half of what the bible teaches
- 5. Let’s go beyond this: look at Jesus’ statement, “It would be better for him if he had not been born”... it immediately begs that question, “Then WHY WAS HE BORN????” and more specifically, what was God’s role in his birth?
- 6. Scripture teaches this about God’s role in birth:

Psalm 139:13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

Job 10:10-11 Did you not pour me out like milk and curdle me like cheese, ¹¹ clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and sinews?

- a. Did God do that to Judas? Of course He did!! Only God CAN knit together a human being in his mother’s womb
- b. So, what was God thinking the whole time He was knitting Judas together in his mother’s womb? Open theists would say God was doing it

HOPING FOR THE BEST, perhaps even NOT KNOWING what Judas would do in the future:

7. BUT there is a better, more biblical answer: God knew EXACTLY what Judas (and Hitler) would do, and knit them together in their mother's wombs anyway;
8. Jesus said "It would be better for HIM if he'd never been born"; but clearly it was better for GOD that Judas was born... Judas would play a role in redemptive history that God wanted played... AND God also held Judas RESPONSIBLE for the role that he played
9. This extends to other evil people as well... like Hitler:

Take the case of Hitler's birth:

Boyd argues this: If you claim that God foreknew exactly what Hitler would do, and he created him anyway, it's hard to avoid the conclusion that the world must somehow be better with Hitler than without him. Think about it. If God is all good, and he always does what is best, and if God knew exactly what Hitler would do when he created him, we must conclude that God believed that allowing Hitler's massacre of the Jews and many others was preferable to his not allowing it. And so, he argues, clearly God did not know what was coming with Hitler. He created him, but he didn't see it coming; therefore, he's not responsible for what Hitler did, and therefore the world is not a better place—God has not brought good out of evil.

10. Romans 9 teaches that God knits together in the wombs of their mothers people who are vessels of wrath for a very clear purpose:

Romans 9:22-23 What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath-- prepared for destruction? ²³ What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory, even US...

11. So, God creates vessels of wrath like Judas so that He can put the riches of his mercy on display to us, His elect children
12. So, it was not BETTER FOR JUDAS that God knit him together in his mother's womb, but it was BETTER FOR US
13. Do not settle for BAD THEOLOGY on the problem of evil people and why they were ever born... God knew exactly what they would do, ordained it as part of His sovereign and complex plan, and then holds each person responsible for what they have done
14. The clearest example of this is in the cross of Christ itself... we tend to think of Hitler's holocaust of six million Jews as the greatest display of human wickedness in history, but actually, it was the death of Jesus... the only truly

innocent man that has ever lived!! But the Bible teaches that all of the wicked decisions of men like Judas, Herod, Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate were foreordained by God:

Acts 2:23 [Jesus] was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 4:28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

15. God ORDAINS wicked actions for GOOD PURPOSES, and then holds people accountable for their role

F. Hate the Hypocrisy of Betrayal

1. Despite all of this discussion, we should not minimize the PAIN of this betrayal
2. Jesus highlights that someone close to Him, someone who has SHARED HIS FOOD is going to betray Him
3. The greatest pain of our sin against Jesus is the PERSONAL ASPECT of it, the fact that we have sinned against LOVE
4. We should see a lot of Judas in our own ongoing career of sin after we've come to faith in Christ; no, I'm not saying that our sins are as bad as Judas's or exactly like Judas's... but there is SOME SIMILARITY in the sense of betrayal Christ must feel at our loving Him AND loving sin
5. We have SHARED MANY THINGS with Christ... we have spiritually sat at table with Him in the Lord's Supper, we have received His Spirit in our hearts, we have united our souls with Him, and yet we have also still sinned
6. In all of our sin, there is a sense of BETRAYAL OF LOVE
7. We should learn to HATE that betrayal and increase our sense of loathing for it so that we sin less and less

G. Embrace the Lord's Supper in Spirit and in Truth

1. This passage depicts the facts behind the establishment of the Lord's Supper as an ongoing spiritual experience of the Church
2. When Jesus said of the bread, "This is my body" and when He said of the wine, "This is my blood", He was establishing 1) a theological truth of the NEW COVENANT and the forgiveness of sins in His death; 2) an ongoing pattern of worship for generations of the church to follow

3. That this was meant to be a permanent pattern is more clearly established in Luke and in 1 Corinthians 11

Luke 22:19 *And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*

4. The Lord's Supper, sadly, has been the ground of much needless controversy in the history of the church
 - a. Early on, some in the church thought the statement "This IS my body, This IS my blood" is to be taken literally... this is the doctrine of REAL PRESENCE
 - b. In the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic church married this idea with the Aristotelian concept of substance and accidents to come up with the idea of transubstantiation... that the essence of the bread and wine BECAME the body and blood of Jesus, but it still tasted like bread and wine
 - c. The Protestant Reformation came to reject transubstantiation, but some still held onto real presence; others (like Zwingli) reduced the Lord's Supper to a bare memorial and went too far the other way, so that they celebrated the Lord's Supper only four times a year
 - d. John Calvin proposed a middle way... not real presence, but a spiritual presence... that God has promised to bless the observance of the Lord's Supper with a special measure of His presence and His grace through the Holy Spirit
 - e. So, Christ doesn't descend to us in the Lord's Supper, but the Holy Spirit in some sense does give us a foretaste of heavenly joy... looking forward to the time when these words are fulfilled:

Matthew 26:29 *I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."*

5. So, we partake in the Lord's Supper BY FAITH, not expecting a real presence of Christ's body and blood, but a real experience of Christ spiritual by the word and by the Spirit

6. Just as we are not denying the omnipresence of God when we understand these words

Exodus 3:5 God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."

So we understand that Christ is omnipresent throughout the universe, BUT ALSO SPECIALLY PRESENT in the Lord's Supper

7. Come to the Lord's Supper EXPECTANTLY by faith!!