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**The Messianic Link To The New Testament Cross**

Today we're going to be talking about how the NT presents the cross of Christ. So far we have said that whenever we talk about any fact we are talking about it in a context. It's the context that provides the meaning and interpretation of the fact. And since the context is determined by your presuppositions then ultimately it's your presuppositions underneath that are giving meaning to the facts as they are presented. So now that we're talking about the fact of the death of Jesus Christ we're looking at how the NT interprets the death of Christ. It can be talked about merely as a fact and many people can accept the death of Christ as a historical fact, they believe that Jesus was crucified, and that's great because at least they acknowledge history, which is more than a lot of people do. But what we're trying to do is look at the meaning of the cross from the standpoint of the OT and NT. In the OT we've already prepared the way by saying that the OT looked forward, on the basis of the justice of God, to the substitutionary atonement - that man has to make restitution for that which he has ruined. The problem is man doesn't have assets to make the restitution so it has to come from outside. But what's the source from outside?

All the way from the Garden of Eden forward, God has point after point after point looked forward in time to the cross of Christ. In the garden He had an animal sacrifice and the skin. Adam and Eve had to wear the skin, the leather tunic. Every time they put their clothes on, they had to acknowledge that they're covered by the grace of God. What had they tried to do when they sinned? They tried to make garments for themselves, it was works. So it's very interesting that the way God taught them that our works don't cut it is He had them take their clothes off and put His clothes on that He made; ours are insufficient. It's a very simple lesson and it's very close to home. Day after day after day we try our works and day after day after day we're insufficient.

Only God's tunic is sufficient and day after day after day they had to be reminded of the animal sacrifice for them. They had to learn the lesson that restitution came from a death outside of themselves.

In the OT this topic was linked to the idea of the Messiah. Both of these were tied together, Gen 3:15. The sperm of the woman would ultimately be victorious and He would be the clothing of man. But now we come to the NT and last time we developed the first point about how the NT presents the cross of Christ, and that first way is it uses OT criminal law. We went back to Deut 21:22-23 to show the method of execution. Under criminal law the person whose body was hung until evening was cursed by God, so this person who was cursed by God became sin. The NT authors, under the authorship of the Holy Spirit, pick up the criminal law code out of Deuteronomy and use that criminal law code as the key to say when Jesus Christ hung on the cross He became sin for us. He was cursed of God on the cross just like the person who was executed. This is a very, very radical idea. You really have to sit and think about it quite a long time before it grabs you, but you've got to think through this law code and remember what the apostles in the NT were saying. They were saying that the Messiah became cursed. What they're also saying is that He became cursed not because He sinned. This is our second point. He became cursed for another reason, a stunning reason; He was cursed because He took our sins upon Himself. There's a substitution going on. This is the Amazing Grace we sing about! So the first thing was Deut 21:22-23 and where that truth comes across in the NT is Gal 3:13. Paul in the NT links the idea back to the OT. It's the OT background that helps us understand the cross of Christ.

We want to be careful that we do understand the cross of Christ, because when we started, we already had done two things with the King: His birth and His life. Now we're looking at His death. But when we we're dealing with His birth, what were the doctrinal issues, the truth that we went over and over? It was that He is God and He is man. We quoted a summary of the Chalcedon Creed that Jesus Christ is undiminished deity, united with true humanity. He is truly God and truly man, united in one person, without confusion, so the Creator-creature distinction is preserved forever. All that was to show who this person is who lived and is going to die. The cross of Christ cannot be understood apart from the hypostatic union, because it's the hypostatic union that tells us who it is that's doing the dying. Contrast this to

this quote by a cult, a so-called Christian cult who claims to be Christian but really isn't – they are heretics. This is Russellism which you know as Jehovah's Witnesses; listen to what they say about the cross of Christ. This is one of the signals. Satan has to erase the gospel, and he does it many ways. One of the quickest ways of doing it is to get rid of the truth about who Christ is. That's one way. Another way is to so confuse what is going on in the cross so that everybody winds up totally blind to the gospel. Listen to this, this is what they say happened; they're talking about the cross. "In this ransom work, Jesus was assisted by the 144,000," in the "ransom work" He was assisted by the 144,000? That's interesting, it's not Christ alone on the cross, He's assisted by the 144,000. "We teach that according to Isaiah 53:2 the mystical body of Christ consists of Jesus as the head and of the 144,000 as His body. Like Jesus, these 144,000 sacrificed their right to live in this world earned through their perfect obedience to Jehovah's theocracy, and like Jesus and these alone will receive the immortality of the soul." We could spend hours on each idea here, but the thing that should stand out here is that "like Jesus they earned through their perfect obedience to Jehovah's theocracy," excuse me but no member of the fallen race has ever had perfect obedience to God's theocracy. No one! That's the doctrine of total depravity. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." It's not Jesus and the 144,000, it's Jesus alone, and no one else can die like Him.

Contrast that kind of unbelief with another statement; this is from one of the most famous books on missions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was in the area of missions that heresy in the church first erupted into an explosion in this country during the modernist-fundamentalist controversy. There was a bunch of liberals who combined making a famous book about missions called *Rethinking Missions*. It was published in 1932. Here's what they say: "The original objective of the mission might be stated as the conquest of the world by Christianity...There was one way of salvation and one only, one name, one atonement." You know the verse. Acts 4:12, "there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." They're right. These guys know their stuff. "There used to be one way of salvation and one only, one name and one atonement, this plan with this particular historical center in the career of Jesus Christ must become the point of regard for every human soul. That" says the book, "is passé." 1932! "That is passé. Christianity must now recognize that it has no monopoly on truth...it is clearly not the duty of the Christian missionary to attack the non-

Christian systems of religion...Rather he must pool his resources with other religions, not protesting it if Buddhists and Muslims incorporate Christian ideas without becoming Christians. We desire the triumph of that final truth; we need not prescribe the route." 1932!

What we're talking about here is the birth, life and death of Christ. And what these guys are saying is that He didn't have to die, this cross is not necessary. If I can get to heaven and if I can come into a relationship with God without the cross of Christ, doesn't it say this is unnecessary? That's logic. So the issue now, when we come to the death of Christ and we listen to the NT text, what we're listening for is an explanation of why that is the only way, the only truth, and the only life. That's what we should be listening for. As we come to this section, we've gone through number one; number one is that the NT explains the cross in terms of OT criminal law code, and says that the cross is a place where Jesus Christ was cursed and became sin.

Let's move on to a third point of the NT and to do that we'll prepare by turning in the OT to Ecclesiastes 8. Ecclesiastes is one of the most interesting books of the OT in that every major idea of man, every great idea of man was explored by a man who made Leonardo DaVinci look like an amateur.

Ecclesiastes was written by King Solomon, and he was what we would call a Renaissance man. This guy invented; he was a botanist, he was a biologist, he was a zoologist, he was a military strategist, he was a business man, he was an expert in foreign relations, he was a philosopher, he was a poet, he wrote music, he was the one who established the temple and the temple worship, inherited and amplified from his father, an amazing man.

Ecclesiastes is the Holy Spirit speaking through Solomon about life in general, proving that apart from a relationship with God life is just a vapor.

In Eccl 8:8, notice what he says about how people die. This is the norm and this is the standard for death. "No man has authority to restrain the wind with the wind, or authority over the day of death; and there is no discharge in the time of war, and evil will not deliver those who practice it." He's making a series of statements about life, and notice one of the statements is that no man has the "authority over the day of death." You don't and I don't. We think we do, the idea of suicide, I can choose the day. That's not really true. You can try to kill yourself and do a botched job. So no person has authority over the day of death, Solomon says. You don't have any control over that.

The day of your dying is set up from eternity past in the councils of God and He and He alone decided the question. That's all. So you can get killed by a bullet, a car, cancer or whatever, that isn't under your control because again, we have to salute and say "Yes Sir, You are sovereign."

Ecclesiastes makes this point. However, when you come to the NT, let's see what Jesus says about Himself. Turn to John 10:17, the NT is consistent in witnessing about a strange aspect of His death. Keep in mind Eccl. 8:8 and here comes Jesus and what does He say, "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. <sup>18</sup>No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." Doesn't that sound strange? If you were familiar with Ecclesiastes and you heard Jesus say this, what would you think? What? Who is this guy? This guy is saying He has control of the universe down to the point He controls the very moment of His death. It is not the Romans who are going to kill Jesus Christ on the cross. This is one of those neat little features that somewhere or another I came across. And it shows you how Christ died on the cross, that He chose the moment of His own death.

Turn to John 19:30 where it actually happened, and look carefully at the language John uses to describe what happened. "When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!'" His work on the cross was finished. "And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit." Who's in charge here? The Romans? The Jews? Or Jesus? Jesus chose the exact moment to die on the cross. He did not die what we would call a natural death. That's not true. He chose, the instant that that work was done, the instant that He had paid for the sins of the world, all of your sins, all of mine, that was the instant when He knew that work was finished, was accepted by His Father. He said that's it, I'm checking out. So He displays in the way He dies a strange sovereignty unknown among men that's picked up by another person standing there right near the cross. This did not go unnoticed. Turn to Matt 27:50. Here you have the cross, in verse 50, "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit." See the language, "He yielded up His Spirit." Now in verse 51 things begin to happen in the physical environment, just as soon as that happened, "And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom," and by the way, that wasn't a sheet. If you read Josephus that thing was about 3-4 inches thick and about 60 feet high. That

was one massive rug hanging down there, and all of a sudden it just got ripped from top to bottom, not from bottom up. It wasn't some person that did that, when the barrier between God and man was torn, the barrier that God had put there, now the way was open because the sin problem was taken care of... "And the earth shook; and the rocks were split." These are aspects of the crucifixion people don't think of; there were geophysical disturbances, just like at the Flood, it wasn't just a quiet, solemn day at Calvary. There were astronomical phenomena; the sky was darkened, just like it had been in Egypt. We're talking about impacts of the cross upon nature. Verse 52, "And the tombs were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised," aftershocks in a cemetery here. <sup>53</sup>"And coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many." Now in the middle of that, notice the report in verse 54, "Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus," they are there at the foot of the cross. Do you suppose these guys have seen crucifixions before? These guys are the pros, this was their detail, and he's a senior officer in charge of this detail so he's basically the guy in charge. He's managing the operation. Verse 54. "Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" So it was His unique death, the physical disturbances, all of that triggered in the Roman details mind that, Hey, this is no ordinary person. This Person is in charge not only of His death but of all these things in nature that suddenly occurred? While He's on the cross choosing the moment He dies He's in charge of the universe.

Out of this observation, number two in our study of how the NT shows the cross of Christ, out of all this what is the theological and spiritual point of this, Jesus choosing His moment of death? We find it in Heb 7:27, there's a clause at the end of verse 27; I want you to watch it very carefully. Look at the noun and look at the verb, and look at the object of the verb. It says, "He once for all when He offered up Himself." Who did the offering of the offerings in the OT? It was the priest. What was it that was offered? It was the sacrifice. What Hebrews is telling us here, by that structure, "He offered Himself," is that Jesus Christ is both what and what? He is both the priest and the sacrifice. One of the interesting things beside the fact that He becomes the curse is that He is both the priest and the sacrifice. He lays down His life as a sacrifice, so He takes the role of the OT lamb that was

slain, but then He also takes the role of the OT priest who did the slaying. Fascinating! So the second feature about how the NT pictures the cross of Christ is that it pictures Him as in charge, therefore executing a unique death as both the priest and as the sacrifice.

Now we move to another area of the cross - its effects. Number one, He died under the criminal law code, number two, He did not die for His own sins, number three, He chose the exact moment of His death, a totally unique death, never before witnessed in the human race. Now we come to number four, the cross has a cosmic effect. It is not just for believers. The cross expands to vast reaches. To see one of those turn to John 3:36. We're going to look at two areas where the cross of Christ extends out beyond the domain of the saved. We know that it applies to those who trust in Christ. That's known, but what we're doing now is to show the extent of this atoning work of Christ and the implications it has for the rest of the universe.

In John 3:36 it says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." Combine that with verse 18, "He that believes on Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." We have Jesus Christ as a divider of men, and the basis for condemnation in verse 18 and 36 is men who are unbelievers are condemned on the basis, not just of sin, but of their rejection of the cross. So the basis of condemnation has now changed. One of the cosmic effects toward the unbeliever is that now the unbeliever is condemned because of his unbelief, not because his sins separate him from God. They do, but God has already provided a solution to it. So now because they are rejecting the solution to it, they wind up judged. It changes the basis of condemnation. People do not go to hell because there's no way out, God provided a way out. People are not judged eternally for their sin because that's the only thing that can happen; people are judged eternally for their sin because God provided a means around it and they rejected it, so now the cross separates. This is the offense of the cross; now it separates. It transforms the basis of accusation. Now the basis of accusation is that I have disbelieved in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, which is essentially that He has died for my sins. When I reject that it's the reason why I'm judged. Something is new here. If Christ hadn't have died on the cross, what's the basis of condemnation? It would be our sin. Now that Christ has died on the

cross, we're sinners; moreover on top of that we've rejected the one solution to the whole problem.

There's another aspect to the cross of Christ that goes beyond unbelievers of the human race and extends to the angels. The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ appears to have had an implication in the angelic realm. Turn to 1 Pet 3:19; this is a very difficult passage in the NT. It's been the source of controversy for many years because it's strange. It really is a strange passage, and it challenges us to think outside of the box a little bit. It challenges us to think about the rest of the universe around us and the other parts of God's creation. Verse 18, "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup>in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison," now the interesting thing, "made proclamation" is not really the gospel here, it's an announcement. I'm warning you, this is theological speculation on some truthful verses, but godly scholars have put this together to mean that the Lord Jesus Christ, after He died, He descended into hell, on the third day He rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures. Where did Jesus Christ go when He went to hell? He went to the place of incarcerated angels, a place called Tartarus, known in Greek mythology by the way, as the place where the evil angels are imprisoned. In verse 19 He goes to this place and He makes proclamation to these spirits. Who are the spirits? Verse 20, the spirits "who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water." Going back to the Flood, we pointed out the big struggle in the pre-Flood world was between the sons of God and the daughters of men. There was strange stuff going on. If we went back to the planet prior to the Flood, I don't think we'd recognize the planet, geographically or environmentally, a different world then existed. It appears the human race was ruled by angelic beings; that at one point angelic beings somehow decided they were going to fornicate with human women which resulted in a mixed race of *nephilim*. Talk about genetic engineering—this was going on. And it's been thought that they had a good reason for doing it; the reason was if they could destroy humanity, they could stop the virgin birth, because you would have destroyed true humanity and without true humanity you couldn't get the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether this was some big plot or not, these spirits are in Tartarus and the Lord Jesus Christ is announcing to them, I

made it to the cross, game over; you guys lost, you tried to stop Me and I beat you, it's all over for you forever. And that's the kind of announcement the Lord Jesus Christ made in hell.

We have added confirmation in several other passages in the NT. Col 2:15, the angels are very much involved legally in the cross of Christ. Who says the Bible is dull? Talking again about the cross of Christ and its implications for the angels. Verse 14, "having cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us and which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. <sup>15</sup>When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him." The principalities and powers is a reference to the angelic principalities and powers of Eph 6, so the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross wrecked the legal claim, whatever they had, of Satan and his hordes upon the human race. He took out the legal basis. They understood that, He understood that, the human race may not understand it or even appreciate it, but there's another aspect to the cross in the invisible realm around us. It did something and it did something very, very real and very, very important. It basically destroyed the foundational claim that the evil angels have over the human race.

Another passage, we're skipping all over the place because these verses are all over. In Heb 2:14 the Lord Jesus Christ is said, by the author of Hebrews, interpreting this work on the cross, "...He Himself likewise also partook of the same" nature, flesh and blood, true humanity, there's the hypostatic union that's always involved with the cross, you can't separate the cross from the hypostatic union. That's why we studied the birth of Christ before the death of Christ. "...partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; <sup>15</sup>and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. <sup>16</sup>For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the seed of Abraham." The cross of Jesus Christ does something in the angelic realm, does something to deal with the evil in the invisible realm.

Notice how the early church looked on this defeat of the evil angels. To them this was deeply fantastic. Here's Leon Morris, he summarizes how the early Christians thought about this. This is a great quote: "[This triumph over evil powers] was prized in the early church, as we see from the exuberance with

which it was used and the picturesque, even grotesque, imagery that was employed to express it. Thus Satan was pictured as caught in a fish-hook, and as snared in a mouse-trap.... For the first Christians the victory that Christ had won for them mattered intensely. They were mostly from the depressed classes with little to hope for in this world. And they pictured a host of demons as dominating life anyway. It came as a welcome relief to have assurance that the last word was not with their oppressors, human or supernatural. So the note of victory was sounded with joyous confidence. And we in our day need it no less than they.” There are powerful, powerful truths that surround the cross of Christ; implications for cosmic history, not just little religious things here and there. This is talking about physical matter, it’s talking about the angels that run the universe behind the physical processes of the universe, and the cross of Christ affects the whole of reality.

Finally, a fourth thing, and that is the cross of Christ, because it involved two acts, not one, has a problem with the OT calendar. What’s the problem here? The OT feast of Passover commemorates the Exodus. To get background, turn to Luke 9:31, because the Lord Jesus Christ describes His work in terms of the Exodus. This is Him speaking, He intends that we understand His work as He did, and He understood His work as related to the Exodus. Luke 9:31 says, “who, appearing in glory,” because this is on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah talking to Him, “who, appearing in glory, were speaking of His exodus [departure] which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” That word is picked out for a reason, there’s a connotation to that word. Jesus described His coming death on the cross as His exodus. And the Exodus was commemorated in Jewish homes by the Passover.

So in the afternoon you have Passover meal at sunset, 6:00 p.m. But you have the slaying of the lamb prior to that. We said that the Lord Jesus Christ was both priest and the sacrifice. Critics of the Bible, and you even find them in the Bible department of Christian colleges, will say there’s a contradiction in the Bible, and they love to bring it up. In Genesis 1 and 2, they say there’s a contradiction, two stories of creation, any time any place they can figure up a contradiction... it’d be wonderful to take their own writings and show how many times their own writings contradict but the Bible seems to have a conflict. If you look in John 18:28, hold the place in Luke and turn to John. This is an example of an apparent contradiction, which when studied yields a surprising truth. John 18:28 says “They led Jesus therefore from Caiaphas

into the Praetorium; and it was early; and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium in order that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.”

So they haven't eaten Passover yet, but Jesus is already on trial. Now turn to John 19:14, “Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover,” and He's being crucified. So in terms of this picture, Jesus Christ is being crucified before Passover meal is eaten. Now turn back to Luke 22:7-8, “Then came the [first] day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup>And He sent Peter and John, saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it’.” This is the day before. So now we're talking about sunset the day before, twenty-four hours prior, and what is Jesus doing on this day? He's apparently eating the Passover. Aha, say the critics; we've got a conflict in the Bible. The Synoptic Gospels, which are Matthew, Mark and Luke, are reporting Jesus to have eaten the Passover with His disciples on this day, and then He's crucified, but John, the fourth Gospel, reports that the Passover was eaten the day He was crucified. So this is another one of these little things that are always brought up to try to break your faith.

There's a lesson here. Before you buy into these things, before you get your liver in a quiver and all upset about seeing a contradiction in Scripture, the best thing to do is give God a little credit. He probably thought this through, and if the Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture, there's probably going to be a reason for this. The Holy Spirit is not an idiot; the Holy Spirit actually knows more than all professors do. So we might pay attention to the text and start thinking in terms of the fact that there just might be something in the text that these guys haven't thought about.

Dr. Harold Hoehner at Dallas Seminary did a study, it took him several years. He found after he dug around a little bit, how this makes sense because if you think about John, look at John 18:15, just to place John in this so-called contradiction. What do we know about John? What does it say about John here relative to the people that ran the city of Jerusalem? A very interesting note. “And Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple” this other disciple “was known to” whom? “the high priest,” now isn't that a little interesting feature of the Apostle John. So this guy knows the high priest, and what Hoehner discovered was that if you

studied the text carefully, you discover that the Gospel of John is written very much related to what's going on in Jerusalem. In fact, if you go through the chapters of the Gospel of John you find most of them have not to do with Galilee, but have to do with the city of Jerusalem.

If you read Matthew, Mark and Luke, where are all those actions taking place? In Galilee and round about, yes, some in Jerusalem too, but not as centered. So Matthew, Mark and Luke are writing from a Galilean perspective. The amazing thing that Hoehner discovered was there were two calendars going on, simultaneously in the Jewish community, as to holidays. So let's look at a quote. "The Galileans used a different method of reckoning the Passover than the Judeans." See, these people operated differently, we think of them all as Jews. But they didn't think of them just as Jews. In fact, if you go to Israel today there's the Sephardic Jews, there's the Eastern European Jews, the Russian Jews, there's the Orthodox Jews, there's the liberal Jews, there's the secular Jews, there's the Reformed Jews, and they're all operating differently. So in Jesus' day the Galileans and the Judeans were two distinct cultures. "The Galileans and Pharisees used the sunrise-to-sunrise reckoning whereas the Judeans and the Sadducees used the sunset-to-sunset reckoning. Thus, according to the Synoptics [the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called by scholars the 'synoptic gospels whose viewpoints do not center upon Jerusalem as does the Gospel of John] the last supper was a Passover meal. Since the day was to be reckoned from sunrise, the Galileans, and with them Jesus and His disciples, had the Paschal lamb slaughtered in the late afternoon of Thursday, Nisan 14, and later that evening they ate the Passover with the unleavened bread. On the other hand, the Judean Jews who reckoned from sunset to sunset would slay the lamb on Friday afternoon which marked the end of Nisan 14 and would eat the Passover Lamb with the unleavened bread that night which became Nisan 15. Thus, Jesus had eaten the Passover meal [Galilean reckoning reported by the Synoptics] when His enemies, who had not as yet had the Passover, arrested Him."

Let's take this one step further. You could say well isn't that kind of cute, we got away with that one, but that's kind of cheap, there's a calendar deal here, that doesn't look like how God does it. Let's back up a moment. What did we say about number three? That the Lord Jesus Christ was the priest and He was the sacrifice. Do you know why there were two calendars there? Because

God is sovereign in history, and it was because God is sovereign in history and superintended this calendar mess that was going on, He worked it out so that Jesus Christ could enjoy Passover this side of the cross and be Passover on the cross. If you didn't have the calendar difference this couldn't have happened this way. He could not have installed the New Covenant at the Passover meal the night before when the Passover meal by definition would have had to have been eaten after He died. The Lord Jesus Christ had business to do after He died, He had three days and three nights in the grave, He had to go visit Tartarus, He had a lot of other work to do. So the work before then was that He would install the New Covenant on the Galilean Passover, "This is My body which is shed for you," this is the wine of the New Covenant, He ate the Passover with His disciples the day before, acting there as the catalyst of the New Covenant, the priest that would superintend the New Covenant, then He continued His priestly work by bringing Himself to the cross, choosing the moment of His death, and then after that in Judea, the so-called official calendar; now they could eat the sacrifice because the Paschal lamb had been killed. It's the official calendar of the Judean, Jerusalem-centered Jews that could reflect the Passover based on the lamb that had been slain from the foundation of the world.

So it's not just a cheap calendar trick. The calendars came out of sequence under God's sovereignty in history to allow for this moment. The lesson that we get out of this is that God's timing is to the day... to the day, Jesus died exactly at the right day, the right afternoon, at the right time, to satisfy all of the promises of Scripture. We'll study later on when He rose from the dead; He rose from the dead on exactly the right day that would confirm the Feast of First Fruits. So this is the fantastic plan of God and how he works all the details out, and it should encourage us that in our lives, here He is in charge of all this calendar deal, and it probably caused all kinds of problems between the Galileans and Judeans; you can see the debates in the newspaper, talk shows, you know, what's the right calendar, you guys got the wrong one... and over and above all that God was just simply setting up the mechanism for the redemption to play out just how He planned it.

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