



Understanding the Passion Week
with Jim Allman, Mark L. Bailey, Darrell L. Bock, and Mikel Del Rosario
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Mikel Del Rosario Welcome to The Table podcast, where we discuss issues of God and culture. I'm Mikel Del Rosario, project manager for cultural –engagement at Dallas Theological Seminary, and our topic today is understanding the Passion Week, the days leading up to Easter in the life of Jesus. I have three guests today: Dr. Darrell Bock, senior research professor of New Testament at Dallas Seminary and executive director for cultural engagement at the Hendricks Center. Welcome, Darrell.

Darrell Bock It's my pleasure to be here.

Mikel Del Rosario We also have Mark Bailey, president of Dallas Theological Seminary and senior professor of Bible exposition. Welcome, Mark.

Mark Bailey Great to be with you.

Mikel Del Rosario And Jim Allman. Jim Allman is a professor of Old Testament studies here at the seminary. Thanks.

Jim Allman Thank you.

Mikel Del Rosario Yeah. Thanks for being here. Well, the way we wanna approach our conversation today on the Passion Week is thinking about people who are at these family gatherings around Easter time, and at least for me, these spiritual conversations tend to find me – you know, your skeptical relatives, your friends. And so we wanna talk about the meaning, the significance, and the truth of some of these key events in the life of Jesus as we move into the Easter story, so that we can help our friends at church, our family members, and even our skeptical friends understand the significance and the meaning of these events. So I'm just gonna dive right in, and I wanna start by talking about the Last Supper, and Jim, I wanna ask you how Jesus reoriented this meal, so how we can understand that, so if I can ask you, to steal a line from the youngest Jewish kid, how is this meal different from other meals?

Jim Allman

[Laughter] Oh, yeah. There are some significant changes that occur. One of the problems is we don't know a whole lot about how the Seder went in the first century. The present Seder goes well back into history, but it's not clear that it goes all the way back to the first century, so we're not sure what all went on, but one thing that was common throughout the history of Passover was they told the story of the Exodus. And so here's Jesus coming along, working through the story of the Exodus, and at some point in the evening, he stops and takes the bread, and he breaks it, and he says, "This is my body, which is for you." And that would have been a significant shock to the men around him, because they didn't expect anything like that. Everything should go as it's always gone. It's like having Christmas at the wrong house on New Year's Eve. [Laughter] How do you live with that?

So they're probably as puzzled at that as anything that Jesus said, and then some time later, he took the cup. Were there four cups? I don't know. It's not known whether that was a first-century custom or not, but he took a cup, and he said, "This is my blood," and that was a great departure, so it was quite a shock. This night is different from all other nights because he's redefining what's going on in Passover, that the Passover is no longer merely an animal slaughtered and being eaten by the family. It's something happening with him, and it's a complete reorganization of their thinking.

Mikel Del Rosario

Mm-hmm, and so when we think about how Jesus saw his death, his own death, Mark, how can we understand better the words of Jesus at this meal, helping us understand what he thought about his death?

Mark Bailey

Well, as you know, there's a lot of debate on whether or not the early church put back into Jesus' words the theological significance. We would argue with that and say we think that what he said was original to him, and he had his own consciousness about who he was and what he was doing, but it's interesting that an addition that Matthew makes that the other gospels don't include, when he institutes it, he makes that statement that this is on behalf of others, and it's for the forgiveness of sins. And so the substitutionary nature of atonement and the resultant forgiveness of sins become significant, and so this is done on behalf of others. It's not just he's celebrating himself, and he is doing what he's doing, which will provide the forgiveness of sins. So in between that statement of bread and that statement of the cup, he is making a pretty significant claim to institute what he's doing is going to have salvific implications.

Mikel Del Rosario

It's interesting how Paul connects the two in 1 Corinthians. He says, "Christ, our Passover has been sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast." If we think about the kind of authority then that Jesus is assuming here, Darrell, how do we understand how high this level of authority is that Jesus assumed?

Darrell Bock

Well, he's doing several things. He's first of all affirming that he's about to cut a new covenant, and whether it's worded as, "The covenant, my blood" or, "The new covenant, my blood," everyone knows there's only one covenant left to be activated if the Davidic sign is present and if the Abrahamic promises are being met by the program of God. And so the new covenant is something that is – that requires a death in order to be enacted, and his death is going to do that, but the really shocking thing is here is a rite, a piece of liturgy, if you will, that was laid out in the Pentateuch in the Old Testament, has been celebrated basically the same way for centuries, and Jesus comes in, and as Jim mentioned, all of a sudden, he injects himself into this event.

And you ask yourself, "Who has the authority to change a piece of the Pentateuch like that?" And the natural answer is, well, he either doesn't have that authority, in which case, this could be the Last Supper, or he absolutely does have that authority. And really, the events of the rest of the week are kind of a vote on that question. By the time Jesus gets vindicated at the Resurrection, and God has kind of brought him back to life, if you wanna think of it that way, that's God's statement that, "Everything that we have recorded that you've just heard and said is so, and he has the right to talk about his life and his death in these kinds of terms."

Mark Bailey

And this isn't too dissimilar for what he'd done on a previous occasion in the feast of tabernacles, when he steps up in the temple precinct and said, "I'm the light of the world." In light of the cultural background of them celebrating that and then the feast of dedication or the feast of lights later, he is making some major claims right in the face of Jewish tradition, and this one in his last week sort of culminates a series of those that he's done, but this is no minor one, for sure.

Jim Allman

And not least there is what had to be the most appalling thing that Jesus said to the disciples – "This is my blood. Drink it." That's a change. That represents a massive shift from the Old Testament, so something new is going on.

Darrell Bock

And the early church learned from this lesson, because when we get to some Old Testament texts that naturally would be directly connected to the God of Yahweh to the God of the nation, they get specifically applied to Jesus going into that slot. And so it's the same kind of substitutionary move and the same kind of indication of authority that we're dealing with, so there is a lot going on here between the bread and the cup. [Laughter] There's a lot happening.

Mark Bailey

And he introduced that back in John, Chapter 6, where he said, "If you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you'll have eternal life," and they're wondering, "Are you talking about cannibalism or what?" But in that bread-of-life discourse, he equates that appropriation of bread and the cup with his life, and he uses that eating imagery as a symbol for faith.

Darrell Bock

Absolutely.

Mark Bailey And so in John 6:50 – 35 – excuse me – he says it this way. He said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will not hunger, and he who believes in me will never thirst," and on the heels of that, he says, "But I say this, that you have seen me, and yet you do not believe." And so eating and drinking is put in as a simile – or excuse me – as a metaphor for the appropriation by faith and what he – who he is and what he's going to do.

Jim Allman Nobody there could've ever thought of the Lord's Supper, but nobody reading John can read it without thinking about the Lord's Supper.

Darrell Bock Yeah, and even the image of bread, something as simple as bread is pointing to the sustenance, the spiritual sustenance that Jesus represents. In the ancient world, you didn't survive without bread. It was your food, and so to say, "I am the bread of life," you could almost say, "I am life," and you'd be saying the same thing.

Mikel Del Rosario Mm-hmm, and understanding Christians are in different places when it comes to what exactly is happening when we celebrate the Lord's Supper today, but is that the core connection between the Lord's Supper and John 6?

Darrell Bock By which you mean?

Mikel Del Rosario The idea that by participating with Jesus, that we receive life.

Darrell Bock Yeah

Mark Bailey I think, again, it's the appropriation of Christ by faith, is the emphasis in that discourse of the bread of life. It's interesting, in light of the various views of the Lord's Table, that he practices it before there's ever a death, and which raises the question of what does it really mean then? Did they participate the night before he dies, and what does that mean for theological conclusions with regard to that? There's other podcasts that we've done on the different views of the Lord's Table, so we won't repeat all of that here, but the fact that he interjects the truth of it in John 6, and he practices it with his disciples with the Passover meal before he ever dies says something to the effect of what this means and how it should be taken.

Mikel Del Rosario Now, when we think about the Passover in terms of remembrance, when Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me," how would a Jewish person think about the kind of remembering that was going on, and what might Jesus have meant by that?

Jim Allman It's a fascinating concept in the Old Testament and the New. I always start this by saying when, in Genesis 8, God remembered Noah, had he forgotten him? And the answer is it couldn't be. It's not an option, so what does it mean for God to remember Noah? It means for God to go to work on the basis of what he knows and act on behalf of Noah, so when he says in Hebrews or indeed in Jeremiah 31, "Their sins and their lawless acts, I will remember no more," it's not that he can't remember our sins. It's that he's not gonna act against us in light of those sins.

So if, as Paul does it in the 1 Corinthians 11 passage, he uses memory in both the cup and the bread – "Do this to remember me," the point is if the application of the blood of a bull can cleanse someone from contact with the dead, Hebrews 9 says, "How much more shall the blood of Christ cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" So if I can take the cup at the table and walk away with a defiled conscience, I'm not remembering Jesus, because I'm not acting upon what I know. I'm not trusting the truth of the value of the blood of Christ, so to remember is to act upon what you know, so to so respond to the work of Christ that even though you may not have a clean conscience, you don't act like you don't. You act like Christ's blood is more powerful, more truthful than your own conscience is, and take it serious and live in light of the fact.

Mikel Del Rosario So there's a sense of active participation there.

Jim Allman Oh, absolutely.

Mikel Del Rosario It's kind of like, "Hey, we were all on Mount Sinai together and all came out of Egypt," and so Jesus is applying that kind of thing?

Jim Allman That's the Passover idea, but when we come into the Lord's Supper, that's – this memory issue is critical. For an Israelite, you remember that you were part of Israel, and you're to think of yourself as having participated personally in that event, but now, I'm to think of myself as having personally participated in the work of Christ and received the benefits of it, to live in faith in that. It's a massive idea.

Mark Bailey That introduces the whole theology of the cross in the New Testament – what is the practical out working of it in sanctification of our remembrance of justification, in terms of he died, he bore our sins on his own body on a tree, that we might die to sin and live for righteousness, so the practical out working, and so I think, Jim, like you said, coming to the table, the contemplation of that is all that this means, all that it took. I can never forget, and I must remember, because that'll change the way I live, and that's why to come with any other thought is coming, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 11, unworthily, and we bring judgement to ourselves. Why? Because we have dismissed our concept of sinfulness. We've dismissed the concept of his saviorhood, and we've missed the whole point of coming to that.

Darrell Bock Another powerful thought that strikes me is my very right to sit at the table and take that bread and that cup is the product of his having taken my place, that the only reason I have the right to do this is because of what he's done. And then the flipside of it is you ask what forgiveness of sins is for, and you're thinking Jewishly, well, it cleanses the vessel in some sense, so that now, the spirit can reside in the person, make them a saint, to use Paul's word.

Jim Allman Or a temple.

Darrell Bock Or a temple, and in the midst of that then, they are sanctified and set apart, and so they're launched out into a direction that is supposed to be the product of what it is they're remembering, so they're not only remembering Jesus' death. They should be also meditating on what Jesus' death is for, and that is to mold and shape them into the men and women of God he calls us to be.

Mikel Del Rosario Well, let's move on now to Jesus standing before the Jewish leadership, and Darrell, I can never call this a trial in front of you. [Laughter] This is Jesus' Jewish examination. If that's not a trial, could you explain to us kind of what this is all about?

Darrell Bock

Yeah. It's not a trial because in the end, the Jewish leadership cannot issue a verdict that leads to a conclusion of the matter. They're simply gathering material that justifies their taking a charge to Pilate, who ultimately has the legal responsibility to decide whether Jesus is crucified or not, and so we often call it a trial. That's shorthand for what's going on, 'cause there is a kind of examination, but I like to equate it with kind of like a grand jury investigation. We're justifying why we can take this charge to Pilate, and the key thing here is the Jewish leadership's gotta get this right. The worst thing that would happen would be to be examining this, take it to Pilate, and Pilate look at the evidence and say, "Nope, don't think I should do anything with him here. I'm gonna let him go." That would have been a public relations nightmare for the Jewish leadership, so they're very careful, actually, about how they go about this, even though the text says they bring forward false witnesses. They've got to get, at least to be somewhat plausible, a charge that Pilate's gonna swallow, or else the entire exercise is a waste of time.

Mikel Del Rosario

Mm-hmm, and so probably one of – the key moment here is when Jesus is asked if he is in fact the Christ, and in Mark 14:61, the high priest questioning him said, "Are you the Christ, the son of the blessed one?" "I am," said Jesus, "and you will see the son of man sitting at the right hand of the power and coming with the clouds of Heaven." Now, I think at minimum, he's saying, "Yes, I am the messiah. I'm the son of God," but there's three texts that I want us to take a look at that can help us understand all that's going on in this verse, and the first one I wanna ask about is, Jim, I wanna ask you about Psalm 1:10 and how that plays into this.

Jim Allman

Oh, my. Jesus, as far as the Gospel record is concerned, first quoted it in Luke 20, in the event that's recounted in Luke 20, and it's at the end of somewhat of a debate between himself and the leaders of Israel, in which they're trying to undercut him. They're trying to make him look foolish before the people. When they've all done their best, he responds by saying, "I've got a question for you. Whose son is Messiah?" and they say, "David's." Well, David's a prophet, and speaking by the spirit, David said, "The Lord said to my master, 'Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet.'" I'm thinking of the Hebrew text here.

Darrell Bock

That's exactly right, and what's interesting is when you pronounce this, let's assume that this is verbalized in an environment in which people are sensitive to how names are being used. When you go to do this in Greek, or even perhaps in Hebrew, you're gonna say it in a way in which the ambiguity of the two lord terms is gonna show up, because you're not gonna pronounce the name of God in the midst of articulating the passage, and so there could well be a reflection of that custom going on in the way this has been rendered to us.

Mikel Del Rosario

Well, let's take a look at Daniel 7 now, 'cause this whole idea of riding the clouds plays into this as well, and so Mark, I wanna ask you about Daniel 7:13, where Daniel has this vision, "With the clouds of Heaven, there came one like a son of man." How does that help us understand what Jesus is alluding to here?

Mark Bailey

Yeah. This comes in that great section where, in the Daniel 7 account of the succession of kingdoms, after four gentile kingdoms, now one comes who is totally different from and superior to, and there's some question as to whether he's coming from Heaven to Earth, as one riding on the clouds. Others would say no, because he's going to present himself before the ancient of days, it's actually his ascension, so then comes the question, how can the one called the son of man, one, approach the ancient of days and be given the right to rule in such a way that all worship comes to him? That's the term, and in fact, let me read the text. It says, "And I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of Heaven, one like the son of man was coming, and he came up to the ancient of days and was presented before him."

When this gets quoted in the Gospels, it's always in reference to the second coming, when he comes in the clouds at the second coming in all the Gospel passages, but the question might be, is this an ascension to gain that control and that authority? And some have applied it to the ascension of Christ, because it's through the resurrection and the ascension that he declared him to be both Lord and Christ. And then the Gospel expectation is, "If I am who I am, and I am the son of man, who will come on the clouds, then I've already –" what's presupposed in Jesus' mind is, "I'm going to go get the authority, and I'm gonna come back," and that fits some of his other explanations.

But regardless of whether he's coming from Heaven as the son of man, and it's speaking of incarnation of the son of man, it – he says, "He was presented before him, and to him was given dominion, glory, and a kingdom that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away, and his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed." The very term that's used in this passage is a term of worship in the Aramaic section of Daniel. It's a term that's used of worship that's only worthy of deity.

Mikel Del Rosario Interesting, so Daniel 7:13, and this idea that someone who rides the clouds is doing God's stuff, that's not something that non-divine beings do. Is that right?

Mark Bailey Exactly. Yeah, throughout the Old Testament, the riding-of-the-clouds imagery is heavenly beings who have access to Heaven and the authority of Heaven, and so one like the son of man, therefore we have a human being who has heavenly authority. And so the images are both in terms of enthronement idea that he gets the authority to rule and the ultimate eschatological return to exercise that rule, and so it's very much a strong argument for obviously the deity and the authority of Christ.

Mikel Del Rosario Mm-hmm, and we're seeing this authority just get ratcheted up higher and higher as we keep going here. There's a text now that most people probably haven't heard of. It's 1 Enoch, and most of us don't have our devotions in 1 Enoch, but 1 Enoch 62 talks about this judgment day, and I want to read a brief passage. Then Darrell, I'm gonna ask you to help us with this. 1 Enoch 62:3-5 says, "The high officials shall see how he sits on the throne of his glory. They'll be terrified. The pain will seize them, and they will see the son of man sitting on the throne of glory." Help us understand what this means for the Jewish leadership, hearing this from Jesus.

Darrell Bock Well, the interesting thing about a text like this is we're not suggesting it's Scripture or anything, but it shows you how Jewish people were thinking about this category at the time. This text from 1 Enoch comes from a work that's actually a composite work, of which one of the sections is called the Similitudes or the Parables of Enoch, probably written in the term between BC to AD. Some people even think that this was written in Galilee. Jim Charlesworth at Princeton and I edited a book together in which we talked about the origins of this text and where it comes from, and this is one of the things that we think is quite possible.

And so the point is, if you want to know how the son-of-man figure is seen in ancient times, and you want a Jewish text of the time to show you kind of what they're thinking about, that's it. So when Jim mentioned earlier the priest tears his robe, he's understanding what it is that Jesus is claiming. Now, he doesn't believe it, so he tears his robes, but he understands the claim. If Jesus is not who he claims to be, then what he's uttered is blasphemy, but if he is who he claims to be, then he's proclaiming that God's gonna exalt him, and one day, he's gonna be their judge. So imagine, to paraphrase, it goes like this: "You may think I'm on trial here and that I'm in trouble, but you can do with me whatever you want. One day, God's gonna vindicate me, and after that vindication, you're gonna be looking into my eyes." [Laughter]

That's a pretty powerful statement that he's making, and again, we're back to the question we asked earlier, which is who's able to sit in God's presence and get away with it? And so all this is coming with this territory, so this is a very significant claim. It actually is the reason Jesus got crucified. He got crucified because he said this. "What need do we have of other witnesses?" This was the basis upon which they took the charge on to Pilate, so the real irony is that Jesus is crucified for a statement that he makes that enables him to die for everybody. Now, that is powerful and profound to reflect on. He really took himself to the cross.

Mark Bailey

The irony is I understand that there were three ways you could commit blasphemy. You could commit blasphemy by adding to God what was not true of God – God's capricious, he's inconsistent, you could take away from God attributes, or you could be claiming equality with God. And so Jesus is in one sense claiming to be equal with God, having Godly authority, and so the charge of blasphemy is almost on all sides of that. They're thinking, "He's really done it. This is it."

And the irony in the account is that in the religious trials, they're accusing him of blasphemy, when in reality, for them to deny him being deity is blasphemous itself, so they were accusing him of the very thing they're guilty of, which gives that substitutionary – the one who's being charged with blasphemy is actually gonna die for those who are committing blasphemy. And the charge in the religious – or in the political trials is treason, insurrection, and the irony, by the people saying, "We have no king but Caesar," they've actually committed the ultimate treason themselves as Jews, saying, "We worship – I mean, we will have Caesar as our king." That's as treasonous as you could get from a Jewish perspective, so the ironies are just full throughout the passages.

Mikel Del Rosario Yeah, and this was why you call this the battle of the blasphemies, right?

Darrell Bock That's right, yeah. [Laughter]

Mikel Del Rosario 'Cause it's like this authority is just getting higher and higher. When they think they're offended now, Jesus brings the authority up even higher.

Darrell Bock There basically is a choice being put before them about what's going on here, and the way I describe is it's two trains on the same track, headed in opposite directions that are eventually gonna meet. [Laughter] And so you've got a claim of exaltation coming this way from Jesus, you've got a perception of blasphemy coming this way from the Jewish leadership, and in this trial, they clash, and then the question becomes, at a literary level in the text, who's right? Whose judgment about this is correct? And of course, the rest of the week is the playout on that, and we get God's vote with the empty tomb, and so lo and behold, we get the exaltation that is the sign, yes, Jesus made a claim of exaltation, and God exalted him. Now, in the words of that famous commercial, you make the call. [Laughter]

Mikel Del Rosario So Mark, you mentioned earlier this change of the charge from blasphemy to sedition, when they get him to Pilate. Expand on that a little bit more. Why did they have to switch that up to bring him to Pilate?

Mark Bailey Well, I think it's – there's two – there's a couple of reasons: One, "If we can't really prove him wrong, we've got to find a charge that the Romans will accept," because the Jews were not allowed to put somebody to death. Even though the Herodians and the Pharisees had taken council earlier in his life, how could they get rid of him? So here's this religion, political – there's religious, political coalition again – "We gotta get rid of this guy somehow, some way, and so maybe we can get Rome upset. Maybe we can put the bite on Pilate and Herod to say, 'This guy's so bad, and he's gonna lead a rebellion, and that's gonna cause Rome to get upset, and so you guys better deal with this at a political level, like we've tried to do on a religious level.'" And I think it's the combination of those two that then escalates it from the Jewish leadership to the Roman authorities.

Mikel Del Rosario Mm-hmm. Is it fair to say that his claim of messiahship can be translated to divine sonship, which can go to kingship –

Mark Bailey Sure.

Mikel Del Rosario – which now, it's sedition?

Mark Bailey Yeah, and in fact, Pilate will play with the Jews a little bit – "Here's your king, the king of the Jews. Now, he's not big enough to trump Rome, but he's your king, isn't he?" and he's gonna play with that very idea, but that is the linkage.

Mikel Del Rosario Mm-hmm. Why was it so important for them to bring him to Pilate at this time? It seems like they're pretty rushed to do it.

Darrell Bock 'Cause Pilate was in town. The less time they had to hold onto Jesus, 'cause they didn't know what the popular reaction would be, the better, and the other thing that's interesting about this is that notice now that we've got a buffer in what happens to Jesus when we think about this historically. Who's the person who put Jesus into the Jewish leaders' hands? It's Judas, one of his own. Who's the one who takes care of Jesus on the other end, when we get all done? It's Pilate. He's the one that gives the charge that leads to Jesus' crucifixion, so if you came to the Jewish leadership and said, "You're responsible for Jesus' death," they'd go, "Wait a minute. Slow down, okay, all right? One of his own turned him in, and Rome made the call." And so they've got insulation on both ends in terms of the events.

Now, this has to happen, of course, 'cause only Rome can crucify somebody, so they had to translate the religious charge into a political charge, because if you had come to Pilate and said, "You know what? Jesus has blasphemed our religion," Pilate would've gone, "So?" [Laughter] "This is your problem, not mine, and it doesn't touch on Roman law." But the moment they come to him and say, "He's claimed to be a king, and you didn't appoint him as a king," my joke is the Romans believed in law and order – "You follow our law, or we'll put you in order," [laughter] and so that's exactly what's going on here.

Mikel Del Rosario Yeah. Well, we move now to Jesus' crucifixion, and there's a lot we could say about that, but I just wanna key in on one of the more misunderstood parts of the account, where Jesus cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And on a simple reading of that, many people think, "What is he – is he thinking that Jesus – or rather than God has forsaken him, has really left him?" But if we look at that as an allusion to Psalm 22, we find that there is more to the story with that.

Jim Allman There's quite a lot more. In the first place, this is at the end of the hours of darkness that Jesus cries out, and it may well be that – there are different approaches to this, but it may well be that God had forsaken him, and that's really the mystery of the atonement. What does that mean, for God the father to abandon God the son? How can that happen? I don't even know what it means. I know the meaning of every word I just said. I just don't know what they all mean together. [Laughter]

Mark Bailey Yeah, there's a mystery there.

Jim Allman But Psalm 22 is a psalm in which David presents himself in such deep suffering, and he's opposed by significant people, powerful people who ridicule him – "He trusted in God. Let him deliver him if he takes pleasure in it." I don't know whether Jesus was praying Psalm 22 while he was on the cross, and they picked it up and used that to taunt him, or whether they, without really realizing it, quoted Psalm 22. And here is this one who is suffering profoundly – "I can count all my bones. My heart is melted like wax," just profound suffering. David himself, no doubt, had some such event in his life. We don't have enough of his story to know what it was, but as he recorded it, God led him to record it in ways that anticipate what's going to happen to his greater son.

And in the outcome, it's fascinating. In some of the commentary, Psalm 22 is actually treated as two separate psalms, because people say, "Well, there's no coherence. After verse 21, it's too happy, and it's too dismal before that, so how could there be any unity?" There's an interesting factor in verse 21. The translations go in different directions here, but he says there, "Save me from the mouth of the lion, from the horns of the wild oxen." Then he uses a verb form that's unusual. In Hebrew, we would normally translate it as an indicative, but there's a rare usage of this form that's treated as a request, and so some of our translations read, "Answer me from the horns of the wild oxen."

But what if I should take it as an indicative, as it normally would be, instead of appealing to a rare usage of the form? So, "Save me from the mouth of the lion. Even on the point of the horns of the wild oxen, you have answered me." Now, God has given him an oracle telling him, "I'm going to work," and before David is even delivered, he starts to rejoice as if the deliverance is already complete, so David has an experience of a kind of a metaphorical resurrection. He's gone to the point that looks like death. They're treating him as if he's dead. They're dividing his clothes and casting lots for his raiment, and now, he's rejoicing and talking about all the nations coming to praise God, and so Psalm 22 is a great psalm that Jesus even cites. Some of the Gospel accounts are just full of allusions to Psalm 22, so it is one of those Psalms that Christians have gone back to over and over again to find the life of Christ in it.

Mikel Del Rosario So we're hearing the language of vindication here?

Jim Allman Absolutely, yeah.

Mikel Del Rosario An innocent man being vindicated by God. Why would God vindicate a blasphemer, right?

Jim Allman He's living in full trust in God, but it appears that God has abandoned him.

Darrell Bock

And the sufferer idea is the core image of the way the crucifixion is actually described in the Gospels. When you actually go through the lead up to the crucifixion and when Jesus is before Pilate, there are numerous times in which Pilate says things like, "This man is not worthy of death," and so it's not a flattering picture of Rome. Some critics like to say, "Oh, particularly Luke likes to flatter the Romans." It's not flattering to say of someone, "I've got a judge on the docket who thinks I'm innocent, but he's gonna send me to my death anyway," so there's this, again, more irony in the way this story is told. Here is the innocent one, who really is innocent, but he's suffering as someone who's committed a very serious crime.

Mark Bailey

In fact, Luke goes out of his way, in distinction from the other Gospels, three times to record Pilate's affirmation of innocence and then his fickleness at the end of it all. But I want to go back to what we were talking about a few minutes ago: Who's guilty for the death of Christ, and the irony is that there's a Greek word, *Paradidomi*, that's used, and it's used of Judas delivering him up. It's used of the religious leaders delivering him up. It's used of them delivering him up to the Roman soldiers, who deliver him up to be crucified. And then you find in Romans 8, "God did not spare his son, but delivered him up for us all," and God – and Jesus, in Galatians 2:20, where, "He loved me and delivered himself up for me." And ironically, as John says, quoting Jesus, "No man takes my life from me. I lay it down on my own accord," but all of them did the same – the delivered-up mentality comes all the way through, so you get Jew, gentile, Judas, disciple, betrayer, denier, God the father himself, and Jesus himself that delivers himself up.

Mikel Del Rosario Yeah, wow.

Mark Bailey

And so the guilt coming from who caused Jesus to go to the cross, the answer is yes [laughter], all of the above, all fronts, which of course is what Peter says in Acts 4, that Jew, gentile did exactly what God had predetermined would take place, and so the sovereignty of God supervising all of this for obviously salvation purposes is just marvelous.

Mikel Del Rosario Mm-hmm, and we keep seeing this authority theme come up over and over again – he has the authority to lay it down and the authority to take it back up. And so now, let's talk about the resurrection of Jesus. Early in the morning, some women woke up early to go to see Jesus in the tomb where he had been buried, but what they didn't know is that Jesus got up earlier than them. [Laughter] And so I'm gonna ask you, Darrell, what is the significance of these first witnesses showing up at the tomb?

Darrell Bock Well, the real significance is that in the ancient world, normally speaking, a woman wouldn't count as a witness, so the flipside of this is if this story were being made up and created, which is what some people claim, the public relations meaning for keeping hope alive, because we've got a dead messiah's who's still dead –

Jim Allman Crucified.

Darrell Bock Crucified, that's right. Yeah, that's right. If he goes through a crucifixion, he's not getting up from the dead. "How do we do this? Well, and now we're gonna make up a story to try and keep this hope alive" – it would never have begun with women being the first witnesses to this event. That you would take a culturally questionable category, physical resurrection, tie it to witnesses who don't have cultural credibility in order to make your case that the culture should believe this happened, that would never be put together, so the reason the women are in the story is because they're in the story. [Laughter] That's the only credible explanation for why they're in there.

Women could only testify in very limited circumstances in the ancient world, in certain kinds of cases. That's it. Otherwise, their testimony didn't count for anything, so this is a countercultural move that, interestingly enough, it's so countercultural that it shows that this story is not made up, that there's something going on here that caused the disciples to absolutely change their move from being despondent and in despair to now having all kinds of joy and a realization that something really significant had gone on, and of course, that significance is the vindication of who Jesus is. We often at Easter preach the idea that he's alive, and one day, we'll be alive, but the real message of Easter at its core is God vindicated Jesus and showed him to be who he was, so that everything else that we talk about on Easter actually does matter.

Mikel Del Rosario Mm-hmm. We talk about the tomb being in Jerusalem. How does that, just the physical location of the tomb, further enhance this evidence?

Jim Allman Well, in the first place, it's probably not in Jerusalem. In Jewish cities, they never had burials in the city. It's always outside, so it was at Jerusalem –

Jim Allman I've seen two kinds of tombs from the first century. One is a tomb that they have niches. It's kind of a central open space, and then they dig back into the rock and slide the body back in until it has deteriorated and then gather up the bones in the first century and put it in a bone box. The other is like a small room with what looks like beds cut in the rock, and then the body would be laid out on it. Given the description of the – what the apostles saw after the resurrection, I think it's probably this latter kind, but it looks like perhaps there's a bed there carved out on the rock. The head would be lifted up just like on a bed a little bit, and the feet perhaps, and so it's probably one of those two kinds, but the latter may be better for what we read in the Gospels. There's a door you walk in. They would've rolled a tomb, perhaps a stone across it to seal it.

Mikel Del Rosario A pretty heavy stone?

Jim Allman Heavy enough that the women had no idea how they were gonna open it [laughter], so it was a hard rock place.

Mikel Del Rosario So for the resurrection reports to go out in Jerusalem, even though the tomb was not in Jerusalem itself, the tomb was located –

Jim Allman Close, yeah.

Mikel Del Rosario – fairly close to there, not some far, far-away place that no one could go check this out –

Mark Bailey Just outside the city gate, probably, outside the city.

Jim Allman

And it would've been probably a fairly well-known place. Nicodimas is a very well-known leader in Judaism in the first century, and so it surely would've been a fairly well-known place anybody would've known, pretty much, anybody who was anybody in the city.

Darrell Bock

That's right. Yeah, the controversy about where Jesus is buried still exists with us today, in terms of what the location is, and there's debate about whether the Church of the Sepulchre is the appropriate traditional place. It now does appear that it was located outside the city in the first century, and the interesting thing is that there are records of pagan shrines being built on top of it in order to show the reclamation of a formerly Jewish sacred site, so there are some indications that that location may actually be accurate. So although today, if you walked in, you'd say, "This is surely in the midst of Jerusalem," in the ancient world, it looks to have perhaps been on the outside, so it may actually be the location of where Jesus was buried.

Mark Bailey

When we take teams of people to Jerusalem, we'll take them there, and then we'll take them to what's called Gordon's Calvary or the Garden Tomb, as it's popularly called, and what I like to tell people is, "Take this imagery of the Garden Tomb that's well kept, because it was a well-kept garden, et cetera, and transpose that on the map over to the other location and fix that," because as Darrell says, there's very good early attestation of the site, though it's obviously been fought over for centuries and continues to be.

Jim Allman

Our guide in Israel said he asked the chief archeologist of Jerusalem, "What do you think? Is this the tomb?" at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. He said, "Yes, I think so." He said, "Are you absolutely certain?" He said, "I'm 90 percent certain." "So what about the other 10 percent?" He said, "We'll leave that for discussion." [Laughter]

Mikel Del Rosario

Well, the time has just flown by, but I think what we're seeing here is this theme of authority that keeps coming up, that Jesus is claiming total authority over the representatives of God on Earth, and the resurrection really is the vindication, God's vote, as you say, in the discussion. And so if you could give one sentence on the meaning of Easter for our viewers, you have one sentence, what would you say?

Mark Bailey I love the passage in Romans, where he says he was declared to be the son of God with power through the resurrection of the dead. It is the crowning proof of his identity, and when Paul spoke at Mars Hill, he said that God proved that he had the right to be both redeemer and judge because he had appointed a man, vindicating him by the resurrection, and so it's that resurrection that vindicates him to be both redeemer and judge of all people.

Mikel Del Rosario Yeah. I love how in 1 Corinthians, Paul says that if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then Christianity is false.

Mark Bailey Exactly.

Mikel Del Rosario But the converse is also true, that if Jesus did rise from the dead, he is who he claimed to be, and Christianity's true and eternal life is possible and available to you. So we thank you so much for being with us on The Table podcast. Thank you, Darrell, for being here.

Darrell Bock My pleasure.

Mikel Del Rosario Thank you, Mark.

Mark Bailey My privilege.

Mikel Del Rosario And thank you, Jim.

Jim Allman Thank you for the invitation.

Mikel Del Rosario You guys have a great Easter. We're happy that you joined us. Please join us again next time on The Table podcast here at Dallas Theological Seminary, where we discuss issues of God and culture.