

Jesus had come into town on the tenth day of the month of Nissan to crowds hailing Him as the king. He then cleansed the temple of all the merchandising, which cost the high priest's family, a great financial loss. I imagine the temple guards did nothing because the crowd cheered Jesus' actions. Then He taught for several days in the temple and the crowds came early to listen to Him. One of His last messages was about the corruption of the scribes. These actions, including the resurrection of Lazarus, had caused the high priests and scribes to be determined to have Jesus executed.

¹ Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. ² And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people. Luke 22:1,2 This was politics in its most corrupt form wearing religion as a disguise. The high priest used security as the reason for necessity to execute Jesus. He argued that the Romans would see the masses following Jesus as the Messiah and in response would crush them and end the religious elites' rule over the nation and temple (John 11:50ⁱ). Some of the religious leaders could see through his explanation as a disguise for his greed and even thought Jesus might be the long-awaited Messiah (John 3:2ⁱⁱ). But we must remember, that though this is the pattern of fallen mankind desperate to maintain power, it was God's sovereign will.

The truly ironic thing is the timing. While the nation was clearing their homes of leaven, which was a picture of cleansing our lives of sin, the high priest was planning to execute the incarnate Word, the only begotten Son of God, who had come to save the world from sin. If you have ever wondered about how ugly the depravity of man is, look closely at what was happening in those days and in our own time.

³ Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. Luke 22:3 What a chilling declaration! We can see from Scripture that Judas had struggled with the god mammon, the lust for the false security of money (John 12:6ⁱⁱⁱ). Most of us can attest to its allure, though no one will testify that it satisfies for long. He may have wanted to see Jesus use His power to force out the Jewish leaders and establish a kingdom. Perhaps he thought that if he betrayed Jesus' whereabouts for money, not only would he have more money, but Jesus would then be forced to reveal Himself in power as the Messiah. It was a win-win in his mind. Judas had dismissed Jesus' parable of the vineyard keepers in which Jesus predicted the religious leaders would kill Him (Luke 20:14,15^{iv}).

⁴ He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. ⁵ And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. Luke 22:4,5 Collaborating with the enemies of Jesus must have made Judas' skin crawl, but the lure of money and the dreams of Jesus as king with himself as the treasurer kept him from backing down. The price agreed upon was the price of a slave (Matthew 26:15^v).

What a mess we make when we decide we know how to help Jesus! He knows what needs to be done and how it needs to be done. All we need to do for Him is to listen and obey out of love. It is when we think that we can help Him out or have a better idea that we create problems. When God spoke from heaven in an audible voice, He gave us one command, "Listen to Him" (Luke 9:35^{vi})!

⁶ So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd. Luke 22:6 The deal was struck, and the money was paid. Now Judas just had

to wait for the perfect opportunity when people were not around and when he knew where Jesus would be. He was sure he knew better than Jesus what had to be done.

Satan's promptings are clever and subtle (Genesis 3:1^{vii}). His favorite tools are our pride and selfish longings. He suggests that our selfish actions are altruistic. We say to ourselves, "Sure, we will get something we want out of this, but it is really for Jesus." We imagine we are so spiritual and insightful that God must be rewarding us. And so, we charge headlong to our own destruction.

⁷ Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." ⁹ They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?" ¹⁰ He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters ¹¹ and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' ¹² And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." ¹³ And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

Luke 22:7-13 Jerusalem was extremely crowded on Passover. Some people believe that Jesus was celebrating according to the traditional Jewish lunar calendar as the Essenes did, which would have put them a day before the crowds lined up for the sacrifice. John seems to indicate it was the day before (John 13:1^{viii}), while the synoptics say it was on Passover. It depends on which calendar they were referring to. They believe the man carrying the water jar was an indication of this, for normally women carried water jars. Essene men would carry their own to avoid defilement. The use of "Teacher" may also be an indication. Though not an unusual term, the Essenes did call their founder the Teacher of Righteousness. This would then put Jesus' death on Passover at the very time the priests began slaughtering the Passover lambs. It would also provide cover for the Sanhedrin's actions, for everyone would be busy preparing for the Passover sacrifice and meal the day Jesus was crucified.

This idea begs a few questions. If they were Essenes, they would reject the temple activities, so how did they sacrifice their lambs? However, the Gospels do not mention a lamb as part of the meal. Would the Pharisees be at the crucifixion during the time in which their lambs were being sacrificed? I'm not sure anyone has definitively worked out that this was the case.

Jesus may have used a secretive way of telling Peter and John where to prepare the meal and used the term Teacher instead of His name so that Judas and any others would not know ahead of time where it would be. Jesus certainly did not want those final instructions He was about to give the disciples to be interrupted. All of this is conjecture, but we do know the situation was very tense, and Jesus had already predicted He was about to be betrayed and killed (Luke 9:44^{ix}).

If they were celebrating with the rest of Israel, then it would have taken place on the solar calendar in use on the 15th of Nisan. Peter and John would have waited in a long line for the sacrifice of their lamb. The sacrifice of lambs was overseen by three shifts of priests. Each person would slay their own lamb for a family of ten to twenty people. Scholars estimate there were about 200,000 people in Jerusalem, which would mean over 10,000 lambs. The priest would catch the blood in a gold or silver basin and pour it out at the base of the bronze altar. It went through a drainage ditch, recently discovered in Jerusalem, and into the Kidron Valley. (Picture of the ditch.)

At around 6p.m. the new Jewish day began, and the lambs would be eaten indoors, one lamb for ten or more people. The host would instruct those present on the ingredients of the meal and how each reminded them of their ancestors' captivity in the exodus.

¹⁴ And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

Luke 22:14,15 That evening was the beginning of the new day for Israelites, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. If there was a lamb Peter and John roasted it on a pomegranate spit and set the table with the Passover foods. Jesus' words express how important this ritual meal with the disciples was to Him. His desire for it was an intense longing. And then came the words the disciples refused to hear, "before I suffer." Jesus knew what lay ahead, and that this evening would be His last instructions to them before the crucifixion.

¹⁶ For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves. ¹⁸ For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Luke 22:16-18 The fact that He was about to die was re-emphasized in this verse. It was not a good-bye, but a reminder that life does not end with physical death. They will dine together again when it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. What is going to be fulfilled then? The wedding feast of the Lamb,^{xi} when Jesus claims us as His bride! **This supper with its bread and wine was symbolic of taking Jesus as our sustenance and our joy. It was receiving Him, taking Him in.** And while we do so to a limited extent now when we come to know Him as Savior, the totality of it will be realized when all is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Passover is a celebration of the exodus from slavery in Egypt. By saying, "when it is fulfilled" Jesus is declaring that Passover is just a shadow of what is to come. When the last trumpet sounds, we will be making the greatest exodus of all, from this fallen world to the glorified presence of Jesus and the completion of His work in us (1 Thessalonians 4:16^x). The Wedding Feast of the Lamb is the substance of the Passover shadow (Revelation 19:6-9^{xi}).

Luke leaves out the important lesson that John recording in chapter 13 of his gospel. Jesus demonstrated the extent to which He wanted them to act in showing love toward one another by washing their feet. It was self-abasement out of love to take care of the humblest task for one another (John 13:12-16^{xii}).

Then came the Passover meal. Luke alone mentions sharing the first cup of wine, perhaps because Luke will go on to record the Holy Spirit indwelling the disciples (Acts 2:4^{xiii}). Two cups of wine came before the seder meal. This one was divided among the disciples. It represented them all sharing in His life. That would be experienced to some extent on the upcoming Pentecost and completely when we are one in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said He would not drink it again until He drank it anew with them in His Father's kingdom (Matthew 26:29^{xiv}). As wine is a Hebrew symbol of gladness, Jesus is making a statement. There is joy in heaven among the angels when a sinner is converted (Luke 15:7^{xv}). But Jesus' joy and celebration are presently restrained in anticipation of the day when all who make up His bride sit down with Him at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. Then we will know what true joy is. This is the joy set before Him for which He endured the cross (Hebrews 12:2^{xvi}).

Don't you find that every earthly joy leaves something to be desired? God gives us so many good and satisfying things, but everything falls short. We experience something that after long anticipation we finally can enjoy and talk about how great it was but... there is always a sense that there is more. There *is* more, much more! And we will experience it at the First Supper in heaven, the fulfillment of the Last Supper. We will know even as we are known (1 Corinthians 13:12^{xvii}).

If you will meet the good pleasures that God freely gives us with that understanding, you won't expect too much from them. You won't be as disappointed, for your heart is set on that day to come. It also helps us deal with the pain and heartache of life, to know the experience of real joy is coming. There are no legitimate shortcuts to that day. We are to persevere until then, for God is preparing us and expanding our capacity to receive all that He has for us on the day of that great feast.

¹⁹ And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Luke 22:19 Jesus started a new tradition that the Jews today call the afikomen. The later seder tradition has three wafers of bread placed in a small pouch. The middle one is broken. Half of it would be hidden in the house by the host and the children would hunt for it. I've never heard why there are three or why the second piece is broken and hidden. But we can see Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, was broken and His body buried and that we now like little children seek Him (Matthew 18:3^{xviii}). Somehow Jesus' instruction slipped its way into the Jewish seder.

Originally the bread of Passover is to remember the bread of affliction (Deuteronomy 16:3^{xix}). Jesus made it even more significant by saying, "This is my body which is given for you." He took upon Himself the affliction we deserve (1 Peter 2:24^{xx}).

The Catholic Church believes the bread becomes the body of Christ. This was one area where Protestantism differed. Hebrews see the physical as representing the spiritual. We see these metaphors in many of Jesus' "I Am" expressions and in the parables. It was understood by the disciples that Jesus was saying that His body would be given for their sins and not meaning that the bread would transform (1 Corinthians 15:3^{xxi}).

Then Jesus established the sacrament of communion by telling them to do this in remembrance of Him. When we take the bread, we are to remember how He was afflicted for our sake (2 Corinthians 8:9^{xxii}). The only other ritual that we are asked to do is baptism (Matthew 28:19^{xxiii}). Both communion and baptism remind us of the essentials of our faith. Communion tells us that Jesus took our sins and the punishment we deserve by allowing His body to be broken and blood poured out so that we could have His life in us. Baptism reminds us that our old nature died with Him on the cross, and we have been raised with Him into His resurrected life. Both point to a day when the fullness of what they represent will be experienced in heaven, while also reminding us that we should be walking in newness of life right now (2 Corinthians 5:17^{xxiv}). The Apostle Paul suggests that since Jesus gave His body for us, it is only right that we dedicate our bodies to His service (Romans 6:8-13^{xxv}).

²⁰ And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood." Luke 22:20 This was the third cup of the seder meal called the cup of redemption. The punishment for sin is death, and the life of the flesh is in the blood. Therefore, the spilling out of one's blood is the penalty for sin. Jesus took our sins and poured out His blood to redeem us, but also as a blood covenant. The

Old Testament covenants were sealed with blood, symbolizing a life commitment (Exodus 24:3-8^{xxvi}). Jesus has made a life commitment to forgive the sins of any person who comes to Him by faith. The blood of animals could not take away sin (Hebrews 10:4^{xxvii}). It only showed the seriousness of sin and pointed to the atoning blood of Christ who would come one day as the Lamb of God (John 1:29^{xxviii}).

The old covenant on Sinai was based on us keeping the commandments of God. The New Covenant does bear a similarity to the covenant made with Abraham. In that blood covenant with Abraham, the torn animals represented what would happen to the person who broke the covenant agreement. Each person walked through the blood to declare they would be torn like the animals if they broke the covenant. But God put Abraham in a trance like state so that he was unable to go through the blood. God alone went through. It was a one-sided agreement to be a friend, protector, and provider, but also to give his heirs the land of Israel. (See Genesis 15.)

The cross was the fulfillment of that one-sided agreement, but it was in Jesus' blood. He was torn like the animals. In other words, He was taking the punishment for our breaking the covenant of friendship, our refusal to stand up for Him when His name is attacked, and refusal to obey His commands. When we accept that His blood has been shed instead of ours, we are saying we accept the gracious payment in our place. We enter that one-sided covenant of Jesus willingly being our sin bearer, friend, provider, and protector.

Jeremiah had predicted the coming of this new covenant and its power to change our hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-34^{xxix}). When Jesus declared the cup represented the blood of the new covenant, He was telling them Jeremiah's prophecy was being fulfilled. The old covenant on Sinai was being replaced by a new covenant with better blood, blood that would remove our sins, not just cover them. Hebrews tells us this is the once for all sacrifice that, unlike those sacrifices in the old covenant, never needs to be repeated (Hebrews 10:11-14^{xxx}). Jesus' sinless blood in our place removed all sins of all time, past, present, and future, for all who will accept the exchange of our sins for His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21^{xxxi}). It was one of the most important declarations ever uttered. Did the disciples realize it? Do we?

²¹ But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. ²² For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" Luke 22:21,22 Judas seems to be there for the institution of communion and Jesus' offer to be His sin bearer. He preferred Jesus to be an earthly king. Jesus was warning the disciples of what was coming to help prepare them. He was warning Judas of the damnation that would be his if he went on with his plan. "Determined" does not mean that Judas did not have a choice, but rather that God foreknew his choice (1 Peter 1:1,2^{xxxii}). That may be why he was the only disciple chosen from outside Galilee.

²³ And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this. Luke 22:23 I can imagine the scrutiny and accusations that went around the table. They all loved their Master and would be furious with a betrayer. But the conversation quickly turned from who was the worst to who was the greatest (Luke 22:24^{xxxiii}). How disappointing that must have been for Jesus.

We have by God's sovereign design come to this passage on the first Sunday of the month when we celebrate this meal of which we have just read. Before we take the elements, I will re-read the passage of Jesus' description of each.

Questions:

- 1 What was ironic about the timing of the first two verses?
- 2 What did Judas worship?
- 3 Describe what went on at Passover.
- 4 Why did they arrest Jesus that night?
- 5 Why won't Jesus eat and drink again until the kingdom comes?
- 6 What does the bread and wine represent in Jewish thought?
- 7 What does the Passover foreshadow?
- 8 What will be the greatest exodus?
- 9 How can we keep from expecting too much from the world?
- 10 How does the present Jewish seder picture Jesus?

ⁱ **John 11:50 (ESV)**

⁵⁰ Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish."

ⁱⁱ **John 3:2 (ESV)**

² This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him."

ⁱⁱⁱ **John 12:6 (ESV)**

⁶ He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it.

^{iv} **Luke 20:14-15 (ESV)**

¹⁴ But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.'

¹⁵ And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

^v **Matthew 26:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ and said, "What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?" And they paid him thirty pieces of silver.

^{vi} **Luke 9:35 (ESV)**

³⁵ And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!"

^{vii} **Genesis 3:1 (ESV)**

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?'"

^{viii} **John 13:1 (ESV)**

¹ Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

^{ix} **Luke 9:44 (ESV)**

⁴⁴ "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."

^x **1 Thessalonians 4:16 (ESV)**

¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

^{xi} **Revelation 19:6-9 (ESV)**

⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. ⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; ⁸ it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure" — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. ⁹ And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

^{xii} **John 13:12-16 (ESV)**

¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you

an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.

^{xiii} **Acts 2:4 (ESV)**

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

^{xiv} **Matthew 26:29 (ESV)**

²⁹ I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

^{xv} **Luke 15:7 (ESV)**

⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

^{xvi} **Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)**

² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

^{xvii} **1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV)**

¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

^{xviii} **Matthew 18:3 (ESV)**

³ and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

^{xix} **Deuteronomy 16:3 (ESV)**

³ You shall eat no leavened bread with it. Seven days you shall eat it with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction—for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste—that all the days of your life you may remember the day when you came out of the land of Egypt.

^{xx} **1 Peter 2:24 (ESV)**

²⁴ He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

^{xxi} **1 Corinthians 15:3 (ESV)**

³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,

^{xxii} **2 Corinthians 8:9 (ESV)**

⁹ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

^{xxiii} **Matthew 28:19 (ESV)**

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

^{xxiv} **2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)**

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

^{xxv} **Romans 6:8-13 (ESV)**

⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

^{xxvi} **Exodus 24:3-8 (ESV)**

³ Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do." ⁴ And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. ⁶ And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. ⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." ⁸ And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

^{xxvii} **Hebrews 10:4 (ESV)**

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

^{xxviii} **John 1:29 (ESV)**

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

^{xxix} **Jeremiah 31:31-34 (ESV)**

³¹ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

^{xxx} **Hebrews 10:11-14 (ESV)**

¹¹ And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. ¹⁴ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

^{xxxi} **2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)**

²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

^{xxxii} **1 Peter 1:1-2 (ESV)**

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

^{xxxiii} **Luke 22:24 (ESV)**

²⁴ A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.