

THE MESSIAH'S LAST SUPPER: THE LORD'S SUPPER INSTITUTED

MATHEW 26: 17-30

Introduction: The Lord's Supper – The Passover

This is the passage where Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, one of the ordinances which He charged His followers to practice on a regular basis (Mt. 26:2). He instituted the Supper in verses 26-30. Note that the preparations made in verses 17-25 are the preparations for the Passover. The disciples knew nothing about the Lord's intentions to institute a new ordinance in His name. They thought Christ was preparing to celebrate the Jewish Passover. This is significant, for it shows that Christ tied both His death and the Lord's Supper to the Passover. By so doing, Christ was saying two things.

1. Jewish tradition held that the Messiah was going to redeem Israel during the Passover. In fact, they believed He would redeem them on the very day that God delivered Israel out of Egyptian bondage. By tying His supper to the Passover, Christ was proclaiming Himself to be the Messiah whom Israel anticipated.
2. The sacrificial lamb used in the Passover was a picture of Christ, the Lamb of God, sacrificing Himself for man. By instituting the Lord's Supper on this day, Christ was not only tying His death to the Passover, He was proclaiming two new things:
 - a. He was proclaiming Himself to be the Lamb of God who was to be slain for the sins of men.
 - b. He was proclaiming the Lord's Supper to be the new celebration which was to be observed by His followers. The Lord's Supper was to replace the Passover, a man's celebration of God's deliverance from bondage.

- I. The Lord's Supper was based upon the Passover (vv. 17-19).
- II. The Lord's Supper was used as an appeal to a sinner (vv. 20-25).
- III. The Lord's Supper was given as a permanent ordinance (vv. 26-30).

I. Mathew 26: 17-19 The Lord's Supper and the Passover

The Lord's Supper is based upon and tied to the Passover.

1. The Lord's Supper is tied to the *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, to the first day of the Feast, the day of preparation and the sacrifice of the lamb (see *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, Mt. 26:17).
 - a. It was on the first day of the Feast that the disciples came to Christ. Again, they knew nothing about Christ's plans to institute a new celebration. They just assumed He was going to celebrate the Passover as always. But by instituting the Lord's Supper on this day, Christ definitely tied the Supper to the Passover (see *Feast of Unleavened Bread*, Mt. 26:17).
 - b. It was the disciples who came to Christ. Christ did not have to approach them. They knew that it was His practice to observe the celebration.
 - c. Christ faced *great difficulty* in observing the celebration. He had no home, no place of His own for the observance. But there was a much greater obstacle confronting Him at this particular celebration: enemies within the city were seeking to kill Him. Note His faithfulness in observing the celebration despite this fact.
2. The Lord's Supper is tied to *Christ's death*. Christ said "My appointed time is near." "My appointed time" or "My appointed hour" is a term which Christ constantly used to refer to His death. Jesus was always

focused upon His purpose for coming to earth: to face *His hour (time)*, to die for man's salvation. And now *His hour* [time] has finally come...

- the time when He could really meet man's needs.
- the time when He must die for man's regeneration.

He tied His death to the Passover with the words, "My appointed time [death] is near; I will keep the Passover." And, of course, His death is what the Lord's Supper celebrates (v. 26-28).

3. The Lord's supper is tied to *religious obedience*. Christ said, "I am going to celebrate the Passover." Jewish tradition held that the Messiah was going to redeem Israel during the Passover. In fact, the Jews believed the Messiah would redeem them on the very day God delivered Israel out of bondage to Egypt. By obeying this religious celebration, the Passover, Christ was doing three significant things.
 - a. He was proclaiming Himself to be the Messiah whom Israel had always anticipated.
 - b. He was, again, definitely tying the Lord's Supper to the Passover.
 - c. He was stressing the importance of *religious obedience*, that is, being obedient in celebrating the Lord's Supper.

Thought 1. Christ kept the Passover. *Religious obedience* is important to God: therefore, we are to be obedient and faithful to religious observances. Note how Christ was faithful in His observance, even in the face of death. What a rebuke to us - we who allow the comfort of our homes, the enjoyment of our recreation, the pleasing of our flesh to keep us away from the Lord's Supper and other religious observances!

John 14:21 "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

John 14:23 Jesus replied, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

John 15:10 "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love."

John 15:14 "You are my friends if you do what I command."

1 Cor 11:26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Heb 5:8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered.

Thought 2. The Lord's "appointed time was near." He had to grasp the opportunity while it was at hand. So must we. But the day is coming when it will be too late to celebrate the Lord's Supper. We must celebrate it while we can.

MATHEW 26: 17 FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

This feast is also known as the Passover Feast (see Lev. 23:5-8; Lk. 22:1). However, on the first day of the Passover week, the Feast of Unleavened Bread had special significance. It was the day that all preparations were made to celebrate the Passover. (Exo. 12:1-51, esp. 11-28 for the background of the Passover.) Preparations included securing the lamb and taking it to the temple to be sacrificed.

Preparations also included securing the food and drink items necessary for the Passover and arranging the room for the Feast. But there were two preparations for which the Feast of Unleavened Bread received its name.

1. There was the baking of unleavened bread. On the very night of the Passover, God had told Israel to make final preparations for being delivered from Egyptian bondage. But the Israelites did not have time to bake leavened bread. They had to bake bread without leaven because of the time it takes for leavened bread to rise. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was simply one of the Passover ceremonies by which Israel remembered God's glorious deliverance of their forefathers from Egyptian bondage. (See *Passover and Death of Jesus Christ*, Mt. 26:2).
2. There was a ceremony by which all leaven within the house had to be removed. It must be remembered that leaven was a symbol of evil to the Jews. Therefore, in removing all leaven, they were picturing the need for putting evil out of their lives and households. There was an actual search made throughout the rooms of the house looking for any crumb of leaven that might have fallen upon the floor or between some furniture. Whatever leaven was found, no matter how small a crumb, it was removed from the house. By removing all leaven from their households, the Jews were saying they wanted to be included among the faithful of their forefathers, the faithful who had cleansed their lives and households for the journey of deliverance from bondage. □

MATHEW 26:02

PASSOVER AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST

“As you know, the Passover is two days away - and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.” Mathew 26:02

Note Jesus' words “you know.” The disciples did know both facts. The Passover was only two days away, and Jesus had been telling them for months that He was to be killed. Why, then, was He pointing out facts that the disciples already knew? What Jesus was doing was *revealing* to the disciples that His death was tied to the Passover (Mt. 26:17-19). The Passover throughout history had pictured His death. Christ was fulfilling the Passover with the shedding of His own blood upon the cross.

1. *Historically*, the Passover refers back to the time when God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage (Exo. 11:1f). God had pronounced judgment, the taking of the firstborn, upon the people of Egypt for their injustices. As God prepared to execute the final judgment, those who believed God were instructed to slay a pure lamb and sprinkle its blood over the door frames of their homes. The blood of the innocent lamb would then serve as a sign that the coming judgment had already been carried out. When seeing the blood, God would *pass over* that house.
2. *Symbolically*, the Passover pictured the coming of Jesus Christ as the Saviour. The “lamb without defect” pictured His sinless life (see Jn. 1:29), and the “blood sprinkled on the door frames” pictured His blood shed for the believer. It was a sign that the life and blood of the innocent lamb had been substituted for the

firstborn. The “eating of the lamb” pictured the need for spiritual nourishment gained by feeding on Christ, the Bread of Life. The unleavened bread (bread without yeast) pictured the need for putting evil out of one's life and household. □

II. *Mathew 26: 20–25 Lord's Supper –An Appeal to Judas*

The Lord's Supper was used as an appeal to a sinner. Christ used the occasion of the Supper to appeal to Judas. He gave Judas a last chance to repent of his sin. Christ took three steps with Judas.

1. Christ revealed the sin and the treachery of Judas. It was a shock, for the Lord said the betrayer was a disciple: “One of you will betray me” (v. 21). It was treachery and deception. Judas had tried to hide his sin, and he had done a good job. No one knew about his plot, not even the disciples, his closest associates. But Jesus knew.

The apostles were, of course, stirred: “they were very sad” (v. 22). They became so heavily burdened over the news that they began to question their own loyalty. “Surely not I, Lord?” each began to ask.

The sinner committed a monstrous deception (v. 23). It was the one who “dipped his hand into the bowl.” Imagine the deception: the sinner sat with Christ, partook of the Lord's Last Supper, plotted and was guilty of the most terrible sin.

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

2. Christ warned the sinner of terrible judgment (v. 24). Jesus knew the destiny of the sinner, the terrible fate that awaited him. It would have been better had the sinner never been born.

3. Christ identified the sinner (v. 25). He answered Judas, letting him know that his sin was not hid. Christ knew. Note what Judas called Christ: “Rabbi,” teacher. The other disciples had called Him, “Lord” (v. 22).

Luke 13:3, 5 “I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.” “I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Acts 3:19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Acts 8:22 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.

Thought 1. The Lord's Supper is an occasion that speaks to sinners. It can be used to point out sin for which Christ died and to warn about the consequences of sin if a person does not repent.

Thought 2. Judas sat at Jesus' Last Supper, and he deceptively partook of it with sin in his life. Too many believers do the same. Their close associates and fellow believers may be deceived, but not God. He knows all about the sin.

Thought 3. Judas deceived the apostles. People can deceive others, even family and friends, and never be discovered, but God knows the heart and the sin.

Thought 4. The disciples examined themselves. They looked at themselves to see if they were the sinner. Believers are exhorted to examine themselves before partaking of the Supper (1 Cor. 11:27-28). Examining oneself is necessary. No believer is sinless nor beyond sin. The exhortation is clear: “Do not be arrogant, but be afraid” (Rom. 11:20).

Thought 5. Christ revealed that He was to be betrayed in order to strengthen the faith of the disciples (Jn. 13:19). He revealed His omniscience, that He was truly God (see Jn. 14:29).

Thought 6. Note how Judas tried to continue His deception. Even after the Lord had revealed that a sinner sat among them, Judas turned to the Lord and asked, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" How like so many! They continue to deceive and deceive, ever seeking to satisfy the lust of their sin.

Thought 7. Judas illustrated a significant point: the reason for continuous sin. The reason was unbelief in Jesus. Jesus was not *Lord* to Judas. To Judas Jesus was only a man, a misguided and self-proclaimed messiah.

III. *Mathew 26: 26–30 The Lord's Supper*

The Lord's Supper was given as a permanent ordinance.

1. It was while "they were eating" the Passover meal that Christ instituted the Lord's Supper. He was replacing the Passover with the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is the new ordinance of God to celebrate His deliverance of man from bondage and slavery (see *Passover and Death of Jesus Christ*, Mt. 26:2).
2. In God's eternal plan, the sacrificial lamb used in the Passover had always been a picture of Christ, the real Lamb of God who was to be sacrificed for man. By instituting the Lord's Supper during the Passover meal, Christ was not only tying His Supper to, the Passover, He was proclaiming Himself to be the Lamb of God who was to be slain for the sins of men (v. 27-28; see 1 Cor. 5:7; Rev. 13:8).
3. Christ instituted the Lord's Supper before He died, not after His resurrection. This is very significant. It means that His death was voluntary. He had not yet died; He did not have to die. He could have slipped out of town and escaped, but He chose to willingly lay down

His life for the sins of men. Therefore, the Lord's Supper is the great celebration of *the voluntary* sacrifice of God's Son for man. The broken bread and poured wine picture the *willingness* of God's Son to lay down His life for man's sins.

Christ instituted the Lord's Supper by doing five things.

1. Christ took the bread, His body, and He gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to the disciples (v. 26).
 - a. By taking the bread into His hands, Christ was indicating that His death was a voluntary act. His destiny was in His hands.

John 10:15 "*Just as the Father knows me and I know the Father - and I lay down my life for the sheep.*"

John 10:17-18 "*The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life - only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.*"

- b. By giving thanks, Christ was offering praise for deliverance and for a life full of provision, a provision that came from God Himself.
 - c. By breaking the bread, Christ was saying that His body was to be broken and sacrificed as a victim for man's deliverance (Isa. 53:5). This act was so significant that the early church sometimes called the Lord's Supper simply "the breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42, 46; 1 Cor. 10:16). Under the Old Testament the broken bread pictured the sufferings of the Israelites. Now, under the New Testament, the bread is to picture the broken body of Christ (1 Cor. 11:24).

Isa 53:5 *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

- d. By giving the bread and saying, "Take and eat: this is my body," Christ was saying that He is to be received into a man's life. And that moment of redemption is to be remembered in this ordinance. (see *Lord's Supper*, Mt. 26:26).

John 6:50-51 *"But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven, If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

2. Christ took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples (v. 27).
- a. By taking the cup into His own hands, Christ was again teaching that His death was voluntary (see Jn. 10:11, 17-18).
- b. By giving thanks, Christ was again expressing praise and appreciation for deliverance promised through sacrifice.
- c. By giving the cup and saying, "Drink from it, all of you." Christ was again saying that He must become a part of man's very being if man wished deliverance. Note: the word *offered* (edoken) is in the Greek aorist tense which means that Christ gave the cup *once for all*. He died once and only once, and man partakes of His death once and only once.

Rom 6:6 *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin.*

Rom 6:10 *The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*

3. Christ instituted a new covenant: forgiveness (v. 28). Note the Lord's exact words.

- a. "This is my blood." His blood was to become the sign and symbol of the new covenant. His blood was to take the place of the sacrificial lamb of the Passover.
- b. "The covenant." His blood, the sacrifice of His life, established a New Testament, a new covenant between God and man (see Heb. 9:11-15). Faith in His blood and sacrifice is the way man is to approach God. Before, under the Old Testament or Old Covenant, a man who wanted a right relationship with God approached God through the sacrifice of an animal's blood. The Old Testament believer believed that God accepted him because of the sacrifice of the animal. Now, under the New Testament, the believer believes that God accepts him because of the sacrifice of Christ. This is what Christ said: "This is my blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (see *Forgiveness*, Mt. 26:28; see Eph. 1:7; 1 Jn. 2:1-2; Heb. 9:22). A man's sins are forgiven and he becomes acceptable to God by believing that Christ's blood was shed for him (1 Jn. 1:7; See *Justification*, Rom. 4:22; 5:1.)

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

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

1 John 2:1-2 *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

John 6:54-58 "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever."

- c. Now note the words. "Drink from it, all of you." A man must receive what Christ has done for him. He must drink, partake, absorb, assimilate Christ's blood into his life. That is, a man must believe and trust the death of Christ to forgive his sins. He must allow Christ's death to become the very nourishment, the innermost part and energy and flow of his life (see *Lord's Supper*; Mt. 26:27-28).
4. Christ promised to celebrate the Supper with His followers in the future (v. 29). This is the glorious promise to all genuine believers: they shall sit down with Christ at the great marriage Feast of the Lamb (Mt. 22:1-14). It is the promise of perfection and of being a part of the new heavens and earth, of sitting with Christ in the Kingdom of God which is to be established in the future. Note that Christ again predicted His death.

Rom 8:16-17 *The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.*

Col 3:4 *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

2 Cor 4:17 *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

1 Pet 5:1 *To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed.*

2 Pet 1:11 *And you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

5. Christ and His disciples sang a hymn and departed. Christ closed the Lord's Supper with a hymn. In the midst of great sorrow and perplexity, of a heavy and burdening atmosphere, Christ led His people in a hymn. It was probably the Hallel (Psa. 115-118).

John 15:11 *"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."*

2 Cor 6:10 *Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.*

Phil 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*

Col 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

Thought 1. How do we become sons or children of God and receive eternal life? Christ said (1) by receiving Him (Jn. 1:12), and (2) by feeding upon Him (Jn. 6:53-54, 57-58),

Thought 2. Under the Old Testament (covenant), the blood of Christ was symbolized in the blood of animals. Under the New Testament (covenant), the blood of Christ is symbolized in the wine of the Lord's Supper.

Thought 3. Note the glorious confidence and surety of Christ. In the face of being murdered, He promised that He would sit down with his followers in the coming kingdom. The death of Christ was not the end; it was the beginning of eternal life for the person who really believed in the death of Christ.

MATHEW 26: 26 THE LORD'S SUPPER

The words "Take and eat: this is my body" are not cannibalism (see Jn. 6:52-58). The words simply mean that a man is to receive Christ into his life. A man's deliverance from the bondage of sin and death is by *taking or eating* of Christ's body. That is, the man must receive, partake, consume, absorb, and assimilate Christ into His life. He must allow Christ to become the very nourishment, the innermost part and energy, the very consumption of his being. □

MATHEW 26:27-28 THE LORD'S SUPPER

The words "Drink from it, all of you" (the blood of Christ) mean to receive the death of Christ in place of one's own death. A man's deliverance from sin and death comes by receiving Christ's death as his own. The man must identify with Christ's death. He must drink, partake, absorb, and assimilate the Lord's death. The death of Christ must become the very nourishment, the innermost part and energy, the very flow of his life. (See 1 Cor. 2:2.) □

MATHEW 26: 28 FORGIVENESS (APHESIN)

Forgive means to send off, to send away. The wrong is cut out, sent off, and sent away from the wrongdoer. The sin is separated from the sinner.

There are four main ideas in the Biblical concept of forgiveness.

1. There is the idea of why forgiveness is needed. Forgiveness is needed because of wrongdoing and guilt and the penalty arising from both (see Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 8:1).
2. There is the idea of a *once-for-all* forgiveness, a total forgiveness. A man is *once-for-all* forgiven when he receives Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Belief in Jesus Christ is the only condition for being forgiven *once-for-all* (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 4:5-8).
3. There is the idea of forgiveness that maintains fellowship. Fellowship exists between God as Father and the believer as His child. When the child does wrong, the fellowship is disturbed and broken. The condition for restoring the fellowship is confessing and forsaking the sin (Psa. 66:18; Prov. 28:13; 1 Jn. 1:7).
4. There is the idea of a *releasing from guilt*. This is one of the differences between man's forgiving a man and God's forgiving a man. A man may forgive a person for wronging him, but he can never remove the guilt that his friend feels. And often he cannot remove the resentment he feels within his own heart. Only God can remove the guilt and assure the removal of resentment, and God does both. God forgives and erases the guilt and resentment (Psa. 51:2, 7-12; 103:12; 1 Jn. 1:9).

ROMANS 04: 22
JUSTIFICATION, FAITH, RIGHTEOUSNESS

This is why "it is credited to him as righteous." Romans 4:22

In simple terms *justification* means that God takes the believer's faith and counts it as righteousness (Rom. 4:3; see Gen. 15:6)

When a person *really believes* that Jesus Christ is *his Saviour*, God takes that person's faith and counts it for righteousness (Rom. 4:3, 5, 9, 11, 22, 24). The person is not righteous; he has no righteousness of his own. He is still imperfect, still sinful, still corruptible, still short of God's glory as a sinful human being. But he does believe that Jesus Christ is *his Saviour*. Such belief honours God's Son (whom God loves very much), and because it honours God's Son, God accepts that person's faith for righteousness. God counts that person's faith as righteousness. Therefore, that person becomes acceptable to God. A person's belief - the right kind of belief - is critical.

Gen 15:6 *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Gal 3:6 *Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."*

1 Cor 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

Phil 3:9 *And be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ - the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. □*