



# The Last Supper

Luke 22:7-30

## Remembering the Greatest Servant

- ❑ On the night of Jesus' betrayal<sup>1</sup> and arrest, Jesus had his "last supper" with his disciples. This supper was the Passover meal. The Passover meal was an annual event for remembering what God had done to deliver (rescue, save) Israel from their slavery in Egypt.<sup>2</sup>
- ❑ A "Passover lamb" was sacrificed in late afternoon on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of the religious year,<sup>3</sup> and the Passover meal was eaten after sunset. This Passover meal would be different from any other. Jesus would give it new meaning and significance. Read Luke 22:7-20.
- ❑ While Jesus knew that he would be betrayed, arrested, tried, tortured and crucified, this passage shows that Jesus was in control. Things worked according to God's plan.
  - 📖 After they reclined at the table, Jesus told his disciples, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until after it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God" (*Luke 22:15-16, NIV*).<sup>4</sup>
- ❑ How would the Passover "find fulfillment in the kingdom of God?" Jesus explained by giving new meaning to the cup and bread in the Passover meal.
  1. As Jesus took the bread and cup (in verses 19-20), what did Jesus say about them? What meaning did he give the bread and cup?<sup>6</sup>



- ✠ Bread – "my body given for you"
- ✠ Cup – "the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."<sup>7</sup>



- 📖 "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (*John 1:29, NIV*)
- 📖 "For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (*1 Corinthians 5:7, NIV*).
- 📖 "...you were redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (*1 Peter 1:18-19, NIV*).

<sup>1</sup> 'to betray' someone is to help that person's enemy. Judas Iscariot was one of Jesus' twelve disciples, but he betrayed Jesus by handing him over to the authorities who planned to kill Jesus (*Luke 22:1-6*).

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 12:1-28 records God's instructions concerning the Passover. Exodus 12:29-15:1 records Israel's miraculous 'exodus' (exit) from Egypt. For more information, see 'The Passover & Exodus' in the study series 'God's Promise for the Nations' on the ICF website, which provides a summary of the meaning of the Passover and exodus.

<sup>3</sup> This was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which lasted seven days (Nisan 14-21).

<sup>4</sup> He reiterated his 'last supper' comment after 'taking the cup,' saying, 'For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes' (*22:18, NIV*). This statement points to the future, when Christ returns, the kingdom is consummated (completed), and his disciples enjoy the 'wedding supper of the Lamb' (*Revelation 19:9*).

<sup>5</sup> There were four cups in the Passover meal. The cup in verse 17 was likely the first cup, prior to the meal; though it could have been the third cup, after the main course. The cup in verse 20 was likely the third cup.

<sup>6</sup> The bread and cup represent Jesus' sacrificial death as the 'Lamb of God' (*John 1:29, 1 Corinthians 5:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19*). As the original Passover sacrifices led to Israel's deliverance from slavery to Egypt, the ultimate Passover Lamb's sacrifice provides believers deliverance from slavery to sin and death.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew mentions that Christ's blood is poured out 'for the forgiveness of sins' (*Matthew 26:28*). By Christ's sacrificial death, he inaugurated the 'new covenant' prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34 (*Hebrews 8:6*), which involves forgiveness of sins, a new heart and the indwelling Holy Spirit (*Ezekiel 36:26-28*), and a personal knowledge of God. See 'The New Covenant' in the study series 'God's Promise for the Nations' on the ICF website.

- ❑ “As [Jesus] gathers with [his disciples], they recall in the Passover the last great salvific event, the exodus. They are gathered to look back, but Jesus looks forward to his approaching suffering and a new sacrifice that opens a new era. Jesus...is the like the lamb of the exodus meal.”<sup>8</sup>
- ❑ By saying, “do this in remembrance of me” (22:19), Jesus instituted “the Lord’s Supper”<sup>9</sup> (see 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The “Lord’s Supper” is one of two major ordinances (or sacraments)<sup>10</sup> observed by all Christian churches.<sup>11</sup> The “Lord’s Supper” is “a time of sharing in worship, praise and thanksgiving, remembering our Lord's death until He comes again” (BCF website).

## Realizing that Greatness is Serving



- ❑ After presenting the bread and cup as symbols of his sacrificial death, Jesus spoke of the betrayal that would lead to his death. Read Luke 22:21-30.
- ❑ Though Judas was responsible for his evil act, it was included in God’s plan of salvation (22:22; Acts 2:22-24). God used evil to accomplish his good purpose. God used evil to destroy evil.
- ❑ Jesus’ disciples began to argue about which one of them would be greatest in the kingdom.<sup>12</sup> In response, Jesus said, “[The world’s] kings like to throw their weight around and people in authority like to give themselves fancy titles.”<sup>13</sup> “But you are not to be like that.” (22:25-26a)
  2. In what way are Jesus’ disciples supposed to be different? What is the main difference in attitude? How did Jesus exemplify this attitude? (What was Jesus’ attitude?)<sup>14</sup>
  3. Jesus’ teaching is directed toward the apostles; thus it has direct application to leadership within the church. However, do you think it also applies to believers in other settings, like the university, workplace, and community? If so, how can the believer be “like a servant,” especially in competitive situations?<sup>15</sup> Will this attitude bring “success?”<sup>16</sup> Explain.

## Reflection & Application

- Deeply reflect on what Jesus did for us as “the lamb of God.” What is the appropriate response? Have you responded? As a believer, are you following Jesus’ example of service (John 13:15)? Read John 13:1-17, ask God to change your heart, and commit to being a servant of the Lord.

<sup>8</sup> Darrell Bock, *Luke, Volume 2* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1996), 1728.

<sup>9</sup> Paul called it ‘the Lord’s Supper’ in 1 Corinthians 11:20. Later terms included ‘Communion’ (derived from *koinōnia* in 1 Corinthians 10:16) and ‘Eucharist’ (derived from *eucharisteō* [give thanks] in Luke 22:17).

<sup>10</sup> The other major ordinance is water baptism. They are called ‘ordinances’ because they were ‘ordained’ (commanded) by Christ. Many churches call them ‘sacraments’ (that is, outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace).

<sup>11</sup> BCF observes ‘the Lord’s Supper’ every Sunday at 9 AM in the chapel. Those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are invited to partake of the bread and cup(s) as they are passed around in this special service.

<sup>12</sup> Similar discussions are recorded in Matthew 20:20-28 and Mark 10:35-45, where a couple of the disciples wanted positions of honor, prestige and power in the kingdom.

<sup>13</sup> Eugene Peterson, *The Message* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1993), 174.

<sup>14</sup> The attitude of worldly greatness and rule is self-centered and prideful. It uses power to exploit others and seeks self-advancement and self-glory. Jesus commands an attitude of humility, love, and service. Of course, Jesus is the greatest example of humility, love, and service (see Philippians 2:5-8; Mark 10:45; 1 John 3:16). In John’s account of the ‘last supper,’ Jesus washed the disciples’ feet as an example of humble service (*John 13:1-17*).

<sup>15</sup> Certain attitudes apply to all of the activities of the believer, even competitive ones. For example, consider Luke 10:27 and Colossians 3:23-24. As believers, we should continually love God with our whole being. We should worship the Lord, and serve him only. We should continually seek to glorify God. We should be God-centered, not self-centered.

<sup>16</sup> This leads to the question, ‘What is true success?’ See the article *True Success* on the ICF website.