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**A0616 – April 16, 2006 – Matt 26:26-29 –Passover And The Lord's Supper**

**Matthew 26:26** While they were eating, Jesus took *some* bread, and after a blessing, He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." <sup>27</sup> And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; <sup>28</sup> for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. <sup>29</sup> "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." (=Mark 14:22-25=Luke 22:17-20)

Jesus was a Jew and every year Jesus celebrated the Passover according to the customs of the times, slaying the Passover lamb on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan (Mar/Apr) with the Feast of Unleavened Bread following on the 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> of Nisan. The whole festival came to be known as the Passover or *Pesach* (cf Luke 22:1). While many Christians may not know it Jesus was enjoying the Passover the very night He instituted the Lord's Supper after Judas had betrayed Him and departed. The whole account of Jesus' last Passover and first Lord's Supper took place in the Upper Room. So, a full-orbed understanding of the Lord's Supper can only be found by tracing its Jewish roots in Passover. Jesus used the Feast of Passover to institute "something new in the Passover feast".<sup>i</sup> Any treatment of Passover and the Lord's Supper that does not place Christ's sacrificial death at the center will miss the mark of Scripture. So, what I want to do is develop the historical significance of Christ in the Passover and how Christ instituted something new in the Passover feast, establishing the Lord's Supper spoken of by Paul in 1 Cor 11.

On one hand we might be tempted to look at the Passover in Egypt and assume that is what the Lord and His apostles followed the night before His passion but that is not true. Scholars agree that there are at least two Passovers; the Egyptian Passover and Permanent Passover. Even that is not completely accurate because now, without a Temple and sacrifices, modern Passovers are different than either. But let's start with the institution of

the Passover in Egypt, then we will look at the Passover Christ and His disciples shared in the Upper Room, and lastly, the Lord's Supper.

## **I. THE PASSOVER IN EGYPT**

The Passover in Egypt is described in Exod 12:1-14. It was instituted by God along with a new calendar. So, the Passover is the first celebration of the New Year for it commemorates the birth of a new nation out of Egypt. On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the New Year each household was to take a male lamb, not less than 8 days old and not more than a year old. If the household was small they should join with a neighbor so that as much of the lamb as possible could be consumed on the night of the Passover. The lamb was to be male in order to substitute for the firstborn son on the night of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plague. It was 'life' for 'life'. It was also to be unblemished, the choice of one's belongings, no oddities or markings. It was to be kept apart from other goats and lambs until the 14<sup>th</sup> day when about mid-afternoon the whole assembly was to kill it simultaneously. Then some blood from the lamb was to be taken and put on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses but not on the threshold so that blood would not be trodden under foot. The blood would expiate and consecrate each household an altar. The manner of preparation was roasted with fire. This way the lamb maintained its integrity and when placed on the table it appeared as a lamb and not just as meat. Not a bone was to be broken. It was to be eaten with unleavened bread which symbolized the haste in which they left Egypt in the middle of the night and with bitter herbs which symbolized the bitterness of 400 years of bondage in Egypt. Yet the sweetness of the lamb would overcome the bitterness of the herbs. None of it was to be left until morning. All of it was to be consumed or burned because it is one meal unlike any other meal. It was to be eaten with loins girded so that their long flowing garments would not tangle with the feet when they departed and with sandals on their feet so they would be ready to walk over rough terrain and with staff in hand. Lastly it was to be eaten in haste for they knew not what hour they must depart. It is a Passover instituted by God and kept for God. It is called Passover or Pesach because on that night God would go through the land of Egypt and strike down the firstborn of Egypt, both man and beast, judging all the gods of Egypt demonstrating that He alone was God and thou shalt have no other gods before Me. When God saw the blood He would be propitiated (satisfied) by the blood and would leap over that home so that the angel of death would not enter and destroy. This day was to be a memorial to be celebrated as a permanent ordinance throughout their generations. This is properly known as the "Egyptian Passover".

Further instructions regarding future Passover celebrations are described at the end of this chapter (12:43-51) and elsewhere which omit certain elements. Observing these differences will bring us closer to understanding the Passovers that Christ observed. After the Egyptian Passover there are four notable differences. *First*, the lamb was not taken on the 10<sup>th</sup> day. *Second*, blood of the lamb was not applied to the doorposts for their firstborn had already been spared. *Third*, they did not eat the meal in haste or standing because they were no longer slaves but a free people. This explains why, Christ and his disciples did not eat the Passover in haste with staffs in hand but rather “reclined at the table” (Luke 22:14). *Fourth*, they did not slay the lamb at their own home but in the tabernacle (and later Temple) because Mosaic law forbade sacrifices done outside of the tabernacle (and later Temple) and by any besides the appointed Levitical priests. Thus, Maimonides said, “These things were only for those in the land of Egypt and are not required of later generations.”<sup>ii</sup>

## **II. THE PASSOVER OF CHRIST AND HIS DISCIPLES AND THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD’S SUPPER**

Now we will look at Christ’s Passover and His institution of the Lord’s Supper.<sup>iii</sup> It seems that the following sequence of events took place. On the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, the Lord Jesus sent Peter and John before Him “to prepare the Passover” (Luke 22:8), “when it was evening He came with the twelve” (Mark 14:17) to the “upper room” (Mark 14:15) for the Supper, although He intended “after Supper” to spend the night outside the city. Jesus, knowing that His hour had come (John 13:1), yet “earnestly desiring to eat this Passover with His disciples” (Luke 22:15), kept the location of the Passover secret until evening, knowing that Judas would betray Him and would have Him arrested during the Passover Feast if he knew in advance the location. Thus, Judas and the chief priests do not search for Him in the upper room, but after the Passover they go to the Mount of Olives to the garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives “where Jesus...often met with His disciples”, and thus Judas “knew the place,” (John 18:1, 2). But “when evening had come” Jesus “sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him,” all, as usual at the feast, “reclining,” (John 13:23) John seated at Jesus’ right hand and Judas apparently next behind John, while Simon Peter faced John, and was thus able to “gesture to him” when he wished John to ask the Lord who would betray Him. The disciples being thus arranged, the Lord Jesus “when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He said, ‘Take this and share it among yourselves’” (Luke 22:17). This was the first of four cups taken at Passover over which the first prayer of the service was spoken. Next, all washed their hands, but the Lord here expanded the service into Christian fellowship for He “got up from Supper,” “and began to wash the disciples’ feet” (John 13:4, 5). This was an act of

self-humiliation in preparation for his humiliation on the cross. “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil 2:5-8). Though Peter resisted the Master washing his feet, yet this was necessary in light of the coming self-humiliation on the cross apart from which none of us can have part in Christ. The first part of the “Hallel” had been sung, and He took the “unleavened bread” symbolizing sinlessness and the “bitter herbs,” commemorative of the sorrow and the bitterness of Egypt, but which manifests itself here in Christ’s “troubled...spirit” because of “the root of bitterness” among them, a betrayer, whence Jesus says, “Truly I say to you that one of you will betray Me—one who is eating with Me” (Mk 14:18). The disciples were at a loss as to who and thus, “Peter gestured to” John “and said to him, ‘Tell *us* who it is of whom He is speaking’” (John 13:24) and so John “leaning back thus on Jesus’ bosom” (John 13:25), whispered in Jesus’ ear, “Lord, who is it?” to which the Lord replied, it is “the one for whom I shall dip the morsel and give it to him” (John 13:26). Most likely, Jesus took broken pieces of unleavened bread with bitter herbs between them and dipped it in the common bowl of *charoseth* and gave it to Judas. “And after [Judas] had eaten it Satan entered into him,” and he “went out immediately” for Judas now knew that Jesus was aware of his plot. Thus, Judas did not partake of the Paschal Lamb that night, much less the Lord’s Supper which was now to be instituted and which Judas could have no part, for it is solely for believers. It was at this time that they began to eat the main course, the Paschal Lamb. And, “while they were eating, He took *some* [unleavened] bread, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, ‘Take, eat, this is My body’” (Mk 14:22). The Lord had just made a most striking statement. The unleavened bread taken from Egypt looked forward to His sinless body. He was claiming to be the unleavened bread come down from heaven to be shortly offered up for the sins of the whole world. And after supper they took a cup of wine; the cup of redemption and said, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Luke 22:20). Again, Jesus makes a striking claim. This cup is not just some cup, this cup was the new covenant in His blood which would shortly be poured out for them when He was crucified on the cross. Those who partake of Christ receive certain spiritual blessings under the new covenant made to Israel and Judah in the OT. The old Mosaic Covenant was being done away. Christ would be the mediator of a new and better covenant. His shed blood would ratify the new covenant and form the basis for the forgiveness of sin for all who have faith in Jesus but ultimately to be fulfilled to Israel and Judah in the Kingdom. This is why Paul says, “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break

a sharing in the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup> Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread” (1 Cor 10:16-17). When we partake of the Lord’s Supper and break bread with one another we are sharing in the body of Christ. We are fellowshiping; you with me and I with you and all of us with Christ. When we drink the cup we are sharing in the blood of Christ. We are fellowshiping; you with me and I with you and all of us with Christ in that moment as we proclaim the death of Christ. This is why we eat the bread all at the same time; there is a unity to our fellowship and worship. This is why we drink the cup all at the same time; to promote a unity of fellowship and worship for we are all one in Christ having become partakers in His body and His blood. It is doubtful that the disciples understood all Christ invested in these elements at this time and so He later promised them, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13). And then they “sung a hymn” and “went out to the Mount of Olives” (Matt 26:30). Then it was that the Lord entered the garden of Gethsemane and great heaviness and loneliness came upon Him; when all around seemed to give way, as if crushed under the terrible burden about to be lifted; when His disciples could not watch with Him even one hour; when in the agony of His soul “His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground” (Luke 22:44) and when He prayed “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42). But “the cup which the Father” had given Him, He drank to the bitter dregs; and “when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; <sup>8</sup> Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; <sup>9</sup> And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;” (Hebrews 5:7-9) Thus the “Lamb without blemish and without spot, who truly was foreordained before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:20) — and, indeed, “slain from the foundation of the world” (Revelation 13:8) — was selected, ready, willing, and waiting. It only remained, that He should be actually offered up as “the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:2) Therefore, Paul says, “Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are *in fact* unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Cor 5:7). For...

**Isaiah 53:7-12** He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. <sup>8</sup> By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off out of the land of the living For the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke *was*

*due?* <sup>9</sup> His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth. <sup>10</sup> But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting *Him* to grief; If He would render Himself *as* a guilt offering, He will see *His* offspring, He will prolong *His* days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. <sup>11</sup> As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it and* be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup> Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

Let us pray. “All Thy works shall praise Thee, Jehovah our God. And Thy saints, the righteous, who do Thy good pleasure, and all Thy people, the house of Israel, with joyous song let them praise, and bless, and magnify, and glorify, and exalt, and reverence, and sanctify, and ascribe the kingdom to Thy name, O our King! For it is good to praise Thee, and pleasure to sing praises unto Thy name, for from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God.” “The breath of all that lives shall praise Thy name, Jehovah our God. And the spirit of all flesh shall continually glorify and exalt Thy memorial, O our King! For from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God, and besides Thee we have no King, Redeemer, or Savior,”

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<sup>i</sup> Walvoord & Zuck, *Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 83.

<sup>ii</sup> Maimonides, *Qorbenot*, 10.15.

<sup>iii</sup> The leading events of the night are vividly before us: “the handing of ‘the sop dipped in the dish,’ ‘the breaking of bread,’ ‘the giving thanks,’ ‘the distributing of the cup,’ and ‘the concluding hymn.’”

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