

Lesson 3

The Last Supper

Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:17-20 and I Corinthians 11:17-34

Begin today's lesson asking the Holy Spirit to illumine your mind and to teach you His precepts.

1. What concept from last week's lesson was especially helpful or thought provoking to you?

Read Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:17-20 and I Corinthians 11:17-34 out loud every day this week.

2. As you read the above verses, what initially strikes you?
3. Review John 12:4-8. How could this exchange that we looked at last week between Judas and Jesus have been related to Matthew 26:14-16, Mark 14:10-11 and Luke 22:3-6?

“And 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.’ And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.’”

Matthew 26:26-28

4. Read Exodus 21:32 and Zechariah 11:12-13. What was valued at thirty pieces of silver? What does this tell you about the value placed on the life of Jesus by the chief priests and by Judas Iscariot?
5. Do you think Judas Iscariot made a choice to betray Jesus or was he a pawn in some cosmic scheme of the devil? Discuss.

6. Read Matthew 26:17-19, Mark 14:12-16 and Luke 22:7-13. Jesus eagerly looked forward to eating the Passover meal with His disciples (see Luke 22:15). Which two disciples did Jesus dispatch to prepare the supper and why do think the other disciples did not help?

In Leviticus 23, God ordained seven feasts to be observed every year. Each feast marked a special time of God's historical dealing with His people. The feasts were also tied to the celebration of the agrarian cycles. In addition, each feast also pointed to a future fulfillment.

7. Read about two feasts which together constitute an eight day celebration in Leviticus 23:4-8. What are these two feasts called?
8. From Exodus 12:1-36 tell about the events of the first Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. What does the Passover commemorate?
9. What do you think leaven might represent? See I Corinthians 5:6-8.
10. What do you think the bitter herbs represent?
11. Why do you think the families were instructed to bring the lamb into their households on the 10th of the month but not to slay the lamb until the 14th?
12. What do you think is the significance of the specific command to roast the lamb with fire?

Moses instituted Passover some 1400 years before the time of Christ. Over the years, the children of Israel added new customs to Passover but always kept the basic parameters set forth at the first Passover.

By the time of Christ, Jews who lived within a day's journey from Jerusalem were required to celebrate three feasts in the city: Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Booths. For those Jews who lived far away, it was hoped that they could also make it to Jerusalem for these celebrations, at least once in their lives.

The population of Jerusalem at the time of Christ was probably about six hundred thousand people. But at feast times it expanded to about two million. For Passover, many of these would come to Jerusalem a week early to undergo the ritual of purification. It is an understatement to say that Jerusalem was crowded at Passover.

On the 10th day of the first month (our March-April), each household was required to acquire a lamb for the Passover meal. By the time of Christ most lambs were purchased from the Temple. If someone brought their own lamb, it usually did not pass the Temple inspection certifying that it was unblemished and the owner would be forced to buy a "Temple" lamb. In addition, if foreigners came to the Temple to pay their Temple tax using foreign currency, they would first have to exchange their money at exorbitant rates. This may have been why Jesus drove out the money changers and cried out that "Ye have made it (the Temple) a den of thieves" in Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:15-17, and Luke 19:45-46. This probably occurred on the 10th day of the first month.

By the first century, the Passover meal was a set form of service or Seder. The meal consisted of the roasted lamb, the bitter herbs and unleavened bread. There was also charoseth, a sweet mixture of nuts and apples.

The host began with a prayer said over the first cup of wine, setting aside the special occasion.

Next came the ceremonial washing of hands.

13. What might have the disciples been discussing at this point of the meal? See Luke 22:24 and discuss.

14. Instead of washing His hands, what did Jesus do in John 13:4-16?

15. What was Jesus teaching by these actions?

The food was brought, and the bitter herbs were eaten. The second cup of wine was poured but not drunk. The youngest son (or another designated guest) would then ask prescribed questions about the particulars of the special meal. The host would answer by giving an overview of the history of Israel, focusing on the night of the first Passover, explaining the meaning behind the meal. They drank the second cup of wine and sang Psalms 113 and 114.

After a second ritual washing of hands the host spoke a blessing over the unleavened bread, broke it and dipped it in the bitter herbs and charoseth.

16. Read Matthew 26:21-25, Mark 14:18-21, Luke 22:21-23 and John 13:21-30. Discuss.

17. Do you think there is any significance to the fact that Jesus washed Judas' feet? Discuss.

18. Do you think it is important that Judas had "gone into the night" before Jesus transformed the Passover Supper into the Lord's Supper? Discuss.

19. How do you see the Lord Jesus Christ "reaching out" to Judas in the above passages?

20. What did Jesus say about the unleavened bread in Matthew 26:26, Mark 14:22 and Luke 22:19?

They then ate the roasted lamb making sure not to eat anything else after the lamb.

After supper the third cup of wine was poured. This cup was called the cup of redemption or the cup of blessing. A blessing of thanks was said. The word for "give thanks" in Matthew 26:27 is the Greek word *eucharisteo* from which we get our word *eucharist*.

21. What does Jesus teach about the cup of redemption in Matthew 26:27-29, Mark 14:23-25, and Luke 22:17-20?

A fourth cup of wine was poured and Psalms 115-118 were sung along with a hymn in closing (Matthew 26:30).

22. In I Corinthians 11:23-32 Paul gave instructions about the Lord's Supper. From whom did he receive these instructions?

23. As we take the bread and wine what should we be thinking?

24. From I Corinthians 11:26, what are we doing when we take the bread and wine? How long should we continue to do this?

25. What else must we take the time to do as we take the cup and the bread from I Corinthians 11:27-32? (Note that “unworthy manner” in verse 27 could also be translated “profanely.”)

26. Summarize the purpose of the Lord’s Supper.

27. Why do you think Jesus had so eagerly desired to have this meal with His disciples? See Luke 22:15.

28. Based on your study this week, what do you think God is teaching you or inviting you to do or to be?

Lecture Notes: