

### The Institution of the Lord's Supper

#### Mark 14:12-25

Mark 14:12-25 – *“Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, “Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?”* <sup>13</sup> *And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him.* <sup>14</sup> *Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’”* <sup>15</sup> *Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us.”* <sup>16</sup> *So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.* <sup>17</sup> *In the evening He came with the twelve.* <sup>18</sup> *Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me.”* <sup>19</sup> *And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, “Is it I?” And another said, “Is it I?”* <sup>20</sup> *He answered and said to them, “It is one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish.* <sup>21</sup> *The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born.”* <sup>22</sup> *And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”* <sup>23</sup> *Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.* <sup>24</sup> *And He said to them, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.* <sup>25</sup> *Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”*

#### Background Notes

Passover and Unleavened Bread were two of the annual feasts in the Jewish religious calendar. The whole week following the Passover meal was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so sometimes, as here, Passover was considered the first day of Unleavened Bread. The Passover feast commemorated the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt.

During the Passover a lamb was sacrificed—certainly a spiritual picture of the great sacrifice of Christ as the Lamb of God (1 Corinthians 5:7). The Lord sent two of His disciples into Jerusalem to prepare for the Passover meal. According to Luke 22, the two disciples were Peter and John. The Lord told the Peter and John exactly what they would see and what they were to do and say: when they entered the city, they would see a man coming to meet them, carrying a pitcher of water. They were to follow him.

The man carrying a pitcher of water would be easy to spot, because in those days it was the women who carried pitchers of water. A man carrying water would not be carrying a pitcher - he'd be carrying a big volume of water in large skins. So a man carrying a pitcher of water would be easy to spot. The man would lead them to a house with a large upper room

that was already set up for dining. The owner would give permission for the two disciples to get things ready for the Passover meal that would be eaten by the Teacher and His disciples.

It's possible that the Lord had made some arrangements for the Passover before He sent the two disciples out to follow the man with the pitcher of water. There's a very good possibility that this house was the home of John Mark, because the early Christians met there later. However, I think we also catch a glimpse once more of our Lord's omniscience, particularly because verse 16 emphasizes that the disciples found everything just as the Lord had predicted.

Everyone would have been startled when the Lord said that one of **them** would betray Him! What? *One of us*, one of us who is *eating* with the Lord (a sign of close fellowship)? One of the *twelve disciples* would betray Him? Yes, even one of them. They all questioned this and denied it—including Judas. "Is it I?" "Surely not!" This betrayal by a close friend was of course predicted in one of David's Messianic Psalms, in Psalm 41:9: "*Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.*"

When the Lord said that the betrayer would be the one who dipped with Him in the dish or bowl, what did He mean? In that day they did not use silverware as we do today. They would break off pieces of flatbread and dip the pieces into bowls containing juicy foods and other easily scooped preparations. When all the accounts of the last Passover are put together, it appears that Judas left before the institution of the Lord's Supper (cf. John 13:27).

The Passover *seder*, or meal, was (and is) a liturgical celebration with a number of prescribed steps: prayers, songs, various foods, and wine. Each step has meaning, based on the release of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. When instituting the Lord's Supper, the Lord Jesus selected two of the steps in the traditional Passover meal and filled them with new meaning.

One step was the breaking and passing of unleavened bread – flatbread or pita bread. At this point the Lord "*took bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.'*" It's clear that the Lord was not speaking of His literal body - He was there in His literal physical body. He meant that the bread **represents** His body.

Later in the Passover meal came the "Cup of Thanksgiving." Four cups of wine are taken during the course of the Passover meal, and the third cup is known as the Cup of Thanksgiving. It was likely at this point that the Lord gave thanks and said, "*This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many.*" He took the Cup of Thanksgiving in the Passover Meal, and gave it a rich new meaning. The cup of wine represented His shed blood. Again, this is not to be taken literally - the cup **represents** His blood, the basis of the New Covenant. Hebrews 9:22 says: "*Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.*"

In verse 25 the Lord said, “Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” And then immediately after that, “when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.” It appears that the Lord ended the Passover meal with the drinking of the Cup of Thanksgiving, after giving that Cup new meaning as the cup that represents the Lord’s shed blood. It appears that they never drank the fourth cup, the “Cup of Consummation.” I believe two things are emphasized by this action of the Lord:

- 1) The “Consummation” will not occur until the Lord Jesus returns to this earth in power and glory, when He will set up His kingdom on earth.
- 2) The Passover meal was to be superseded by The Lord’s Supper. That’s why it’s sometimes called the “last” Passover.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The predetermined plan of God does not eliminate the moral responsibility of man.

Verse 21: “*The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born.*” The Old Testament prophecies certainly predicted that the Lord, the Messiah, would have to die. Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, for example, clearly foretold the necessity of the suffering of the Messiah. And yet Judas is still held accountable for his betrayal, even though that betrayal was in the predetermined plan of God. Why? Because the predetermined plan of God does not eliminate the moral responsibility of man.

This same truth is taught in Acts 2:23, in Peter’s sermon at Pentecost: “*Him [that is, Jesus Christ], being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.*”

It’s not easy to understand how the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man fit together - in fact, how they fit together is really beyond our finite comprehension. But the Bible definitely teaches that the predetermined plan of God does not eliminate the moral responsibility of man.

### 2. Someday unbelievers will wish they had never been born.

At the end of verse 21 the Lord said of Judas, “*It would have been good for that man if he had never been born.*” Why did the Lord say that? Because Judas will be in hell forever.

The same is true of every unbeliever today. There is no second chance in hell. Matthew 25:46 says that hell is a place of eternal punishment. Unbelievers may be enjoying life now, but some day unbelievers will wish that they had never been born.

## Practical Application

### Is your house available for the Lord's use?

The Lord needed a large room in which to celebrate the Passover meal, and the owner of a certain house (maybe the home of John Mark) not only offered the large upper room, but also "furnished" it, or made it ready.

Would we do what the owner of that home did? I'm sure we'd all raise our hand and say, "Sure, I'd do that for the Lord!" But **is** your home **really** available for the Lord's use? Or is it possible that you're reluctant to have Bible Studies in your home because someone might spill coffee or Coke on the rug or sofa. It happens! (That's why we have dark-colored carpet in our home! ☺ )

Are you unwilling to have youth activities in your house because of possible breakage? Teens **do** tend to break things, or spill things - even when they don't really mean it! Let me assure you, throwing a football in the living room sometimes breaks a lamp! The question is: Is your house **really** available for the Lord's use?

We could also spiritualize this concept and ask, "Is every room in my life available to the Lord?" Our lives are like a house, and we have various "rooms" or areas of activity in our lives. Is every room or area in our lives furnished and prepared for the Lord's use? Or are some rooms off limits to the Lord? "Well, Lord, you can come into this area of my life, and you can have this area of my life, but there are some things in that "room" I'd rather You didn't see. Let's not talk about that room - that's off limits."

Maybe some of you have read that little pamphlet, *My heart: Christ's Home*. Is every room in our house available to the Lord's use? Not only available, but furnished and ready?

Is your home - and every room - available for the Lord's use?