

• *God's plan*

God had planned that the death of Jesus would take place at Passover time^{□1}. At some stage in the week Jesus had been anointed at Bethany^{□2} and Judas had made plans to betray Him^{□3}.

□1 Matt 26:1-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-2

• *A room prepared for the Passover meal*

Now Luke tells us that the 'day of Unleavened Bread' has arrived^{□1}. It is the Thursday. The disciples are sent to prepare for the feast^{□2}. Jesus will use an upper room in the city of Jerusalem^{□3}. Either God had guided both the owners of the house and Jesus 'by the Holy Spirit' to be ready for each other (as I believe and as in Acts 10:1-23), or Jesus had made an arrangement to use the house of a friend but kept the arrangements secret so that He would not be arrested too soon. It was quite possibly the home of John Mark's parents in Jerusalem. The disciples get the room ready as Jesus wishes^{□4}.

□2 Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14: 3-9

□3 Matt 26:14-16; Mark 14:10-11; Luke 22:3-6

□1 22:7

□2 22:8-9

□3 22:10-12

□4 22:13

• *The final meal of Jesus' earthly ministry*

So the hour comes for the last meal that Jesus will ever have during His earthly ministry. His crucifixion is only a few hours away. He sits at the table^{□1} and tells them how important this last supper is to Him^{□2}. 'I have very much wanted to eat this Passover with you before I suffer,' He says^{□2}. Why is this 'last supper' so important to Him?

□1 22:14

□2 22:15

Jesus wants them to understand His death

• *A sacrifice for sin*

Jesus wants them to understand His death. The Lord's Supper helps us to understand the cross. It makes us realise that the death of Jesus was a sacrifice for sin. It was not some kind of accident. It was the will of God for His Son Jesus, who was dying as a Passover lamb. Just as God 'passed over' the sins of each family in which the firstborn took shelter under the blood of the lamb, so God passes over the sins of all who put their faith in Jesus and His blood.

Jesus wants fellowship with His disciples before He goes to heaven

• *A real human being*

• *Last-minute help and instruction to His disciples*

Jesus wants fellowship with His disciples before He goes to heaven. Jesus was a man, a real human being. Although He was the Son of God, He was also a real human being. He liked to spend time with people. He enjoyed being with His disciples. Now, during these last hours of His life, He wants to be with His friends and fellow-workers. He wants to talk to them about the things of God. Many things were happening all in this short space of time. Jesus shared His words about love^{□1}, gave a warning to Peter^{□2}, told them about Scripture being fulfilled^{□3}. The 'Farewell Discourses' start during this time^{□4} and then continue as Jesus goes towards Gethsemane^{□5}. Jesus wants to use this occasion to give last-minute help and instruction to His disciples. He is thinking of them to the very end of His life^{□6}. So He says, 'I have very much wanted to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.'

□1 John 13:31-35

□2 22:31-34

□3 22:37

□4 John 14:1-31a

□5 note John

14:31b

□6 see John 13:1a

• *Jesus – calm in the face of suffering*

Jesus knows about His very imminent death but stays cool in trouble. He says, 'I have ... wanted ... this ... before I suffer.' He knows something of the great suffering ahead of Him, yet He is leaving Himself in the hands of God.

The last supper is prophetic

Jesus knows that the last supper is prophetic. The 'eating' will be 'fulfilled' in the kingdom of God^{□1}. So will the drinking of the cup of wine. Jesus takes a cup and gives it to them. It is a foretaste of a banquet they will have in heaven^{□2}.

□1 22:16

□2 22:17-18

This gives us an idea of what heaven is

• A place of ease and comfort

• A place of fellowship

• A place of provision

• The first cup reminds us that we are on our way to heavenly banquet

• Jesus is absent, physically, from this world until it ends

• The final stage of the kingdom of God will come

• A banquet with our Lord Jesus Christ

This gives us an idea of what heaven is. Heaven is described in many ways. Among other thing it is like a banquet.

Heaven is a place of ease and comfort. The time for resting is not now in this life. There will be relaxation in heaven. Heaven will be a party, a banquet. At a banquet you relax in comfort while people bring food to you as you need it. Jesus brings us to His banqueting table; His banner over us is love.

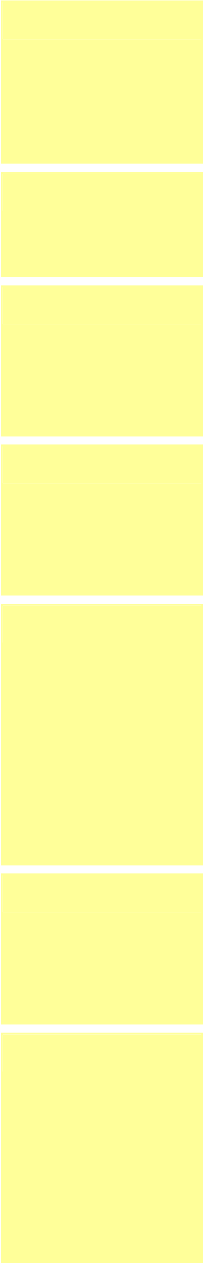
Heaven is a place of fellowship. We will have time to sit and talk and share. There is a lot of 'meal symbolism' in the Scriptures. When we open our heart to Jesus He 'has supper' with us (Revelation 3:20). Heaven will be a place where we banquet with Jesus.

Heaven is a place of provision. Just as at a banquet the servers set good things on the table for us, so heaven will be the place where God finally and fully meets all our needs and continues to satisfy us for ever.

There is an aspect of the Lord's Supper that Luke specially emphasises. This is the first cup of Luke 22:17 (before the cup of Luke 22:20 which is different) which draws our attention to the fact that we are on our way to a heavenly banquet. At the Lord's Supper we have a foretaste of this heavenly banquet. We sit down in a leisurely manner with our Lord Jesus Christ and we have fellowship with Him. We share the joys of what He is doing for us.

The Lord's Supper looks forward to the Second Coming of Jesus because it reminds us that Jesus is absent, physically, from this world and that we shall not meet Him in His glorified body until the end of the world.

Eventually the final stage of the kingdom of God will come. When it finally comes in power the kingdom will be glorious and Jesus will be its King in a visible manner. Now the kingdom is working more quietly and is only slowly gaining victory over sin and darkness. But a day of final victory is coming. On that day we will enjoy a banquet with our Lord Jesus Christ.



 <p>slices.org.uk</p>	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
<p><i>These specially reformatted chapters "Slices of Bread" produced by Sovereign World Trust are available in three categories as set out below</i></p>		
<p>Slices for the Nations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For pastors, libraries and colleges in those parts of the world where resources are scarce and unaffordable In the fullness of time the whole series will be made available free of charge Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or available to download from the <i>Slices</i> web site 	<p>Slices for Sponsors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those in more prosperous circumstances who can afford to contribute to the development of this material and its distribution with a small monthly donation The same material as Slices for the Nations Weekly emailings of 3 - 4 Slices or by download from the <i>Slices</i> web site 	<p>Slices for Everyone / Slice of the Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For those who wish to sample the material or dip into it from time to time, a proportion of the PTTB series is available free of charge Slices for Everyone (as a download) or Slice of the Week (attached to a weekly email) The remainder of the PTTB material is available to Sponsors and those eligible to receive Slices for the Nations
<p>To subscribe please contact: slicesofbread@sovereignworldtrust.org.uk stating which category fits your situation. Further details are at www.slices.org.uk Details of the availability of <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> books and how they may be purchased can be found on www.ibtr.org.uk</p>		