

The Passover

The story moves forward. It is now **Thursday**. Jesus has one more day to live. The two feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread^{☞1} were observed together one after the other. Sometimes the period is called 'the Feast of Unleavened Bread'. The 'first day' was the Thursday, and was the day when the lambs were sacrificed^{☞2}.

☞1 see 14:1

☞2 14:1 2a

Matthew, Mark and Luke portray Jesus as eating the Passover meal at Passover-time, yet John portrays Jesus as **dying** at Passover time. There are a number of possible explanations but the one that seems most likely is that Jesus kept the Passover meal one day early.

• **God's Provision and guidance**

Jesus sends two disciples to get the provisions^{☞1}. They will meet a man who will guide them through the streets of Jerusalem to a householder^{☞2} who will provide the accommodation that they need^{☞3}. There seems to be supernatural guidance at this point. A man has been led by God to provide what is needed. Jesus is led by the Holy Spirit to know what to do.

☞1 14:13a

☞2 14:13b

☞3 14:14-15

It works out as Jesus says[☞] and at evening they begin to keep the Passover meal^{☞2}.

☞1 14:16

☞2 14:17

• **Jesus shows great love for Judas**

Jesus shows great love to Judas. He warns the disciples of betrayal^{☞1}. This is in effect giving a warning to Judas, yet it is also giving him time to change his ways. By not mentioning his name Jesus avoids publicly disgracing him. No one yet knew that Judas was different from the others. No one thought of saying 'Is it Judas?' They all said 'Is it I?'^{☞2}. Also it seems that Judas was present during the Lord's Supper. Jesus was still treating him with amazing love. Jesus' words emphasize the seriousness of his sin^{☞3}, the impossibility of defeating God's plan^{☞4} and the terrible destiny awaiting the betrayer^{☞5}.

☞1 14:18

☞2 14:19

☞3 14:20

☞4 14:21

☞5 14:22

• **The Last Supper**

The Last Supper takes place. After giving thanks He takes the symbols of His coming death. The bread stands for Jesus' dying in His body. The wine stands for blood atonement, which inaugurates a new covenant. The breaking of bread stands for Jesus' suffering. The blood is poured out for many. 'Many' is a Hebrew way of saying 'everyone' (since Hebrew does not have a precise way of saying 'every person'). The eating and drinking stand for persistent faith in the atoning blood of Jesus. We get life and energy by feeding on Jesus and what He did for us on the cross.

Verse 25 lets the disciples know that this is how they and their successors must live until Jesus returns. From now on they will be living by faith in a crucified Saviour. Not until after His return in glory will they dine again with Him in precisely this way, when He is literally and physically present.

The meal ends with worship and singing and they begin to walk to the Mount of Olives^{☞1}. Judas has left earlier (as John 13:30 shows). In Mark's Gospel there is no instruction that the meal should ever be repeated. Mark is not inviting us to meditate on the institution of the Lord's Supper as a ceremony that would later take place in the church. We know of that from Luke 22:19b but not from Mark's Gospel.

☞1 14:26

An invitation to look at the cross

1. Gratitude

2. Our sins in His body

3. A blood-sacrifice

4. A new covenant

5. Great suffering

6. For the entire human race

7. Persistent faith in the blood of Jesus

Mark is inviting us to look at the original cross itself.

1. **The cross invites our gratitude.** Jesus began with giving thanks. How grateful we should be for the cross of Jesus. Love so amazing, so divine...!

2. **Jesus carried our sins in His body.** There was something very literal and physical about the atoning death of Jesus. In some way our sins were literally laid upon the body of Jesus as He was hanging upon the cross. *'He bore our sins in his body...'* ¹.

3. **Jesus' death was a blood-sacrifice.** The wine was red- coloured, I suppose. It looked like blood and it spoke of Jesus' literally shedding His blood like one of the animals of Old Testament sacrifice.



4. **Jesus' death started off a new covenant.** A covenant had to be initiated with a sacrifice. A covenant was a relationship in which an oath is given. Our being in covenant with Jesus means that there is a fixed relationship between us and Him. He is asking us to live a life of persistent faith in Him, and as we do so He will give us an oath in which He swears to bless us. And it all takes place by the blood of Jesus. It is by the blood of Jesus that we get our first forgiveness. It is by the blood of Jesus that we get daily cleansing. It is by persistent faith in the blood of Jesus that we live constantly for God, so that He says *'I swear I will bless you'*.

5. **Jesus' death involved great suffering.** He was broken in His sufferings. Although not a bone of His body was broken He was broken within by the sufferings He endured. There was disgrace, ridicule, loneliness, shame, pain, and – worst of all – abandonment by the Father.

6. **Jesus' death benefits the entire human race.** It was for 'many'. It has taken place for everyone. Everyone is invited to respond to Jesus in the faith that He has died for them.

7. **What is being asked of us is that we live by persistent faith in the blood of Jesus.** We are to *'eat Jesus' body'* and *'drink His blood'*. This means that we are to persistently get liveliness and confidence by a never-ending trust in the blood of Jesus. When we pray, when we sin, when we are weary, when we are suffering, in every situation, we turn in faith to the Jesus who is in covenant with us by means of the atoning blood.

¹ 1 Peter 2:24

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