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# Banquet in the Wilderness: The Last Supper

## Luke 22:1-23

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### Review

Tonight we continue our series on the Lord's Table. Last we considered the Passover. This week we consider the Last Supper. Next week we will take a look at the Lord's Table. And the last Sunday of March we will consider the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. As I mentioned last week, I hope it is already obvious that all four of these meals or table events in scripture are interconnected. Our series follows the flow of redemptive history through the pages of scripture.

I failed to mention last week that there is actually a fifth week in this series. The first Sunday of April is Palm Sunday and we will be observing the Lord's Table on that day. I trust our series will inform that observance, especially as we remember his death and resurrection through what is called Passion week and the Resurrection holiday.

By way of quick review, before we begin our look at the Last Supper this evening, here are some of our conclusions from consideration of the original Passover which preceded the great Exodus of Israel from Egypt.

Among the things that we learned last week, we learned that:

**Redemptive history was precipitated by the Passover.** The first Passover was the only Passover of its kind. Subsequent Passovers were celebrations and commemoration.

**The Passover is God's judgment of Egypt.** God exacted punishment on a rebellious Pharaoh, an oppressive people, and their false gods.

**The Passover is God's salvation of his people.** God single-handedly acted on behalf of his people. God changed the will of the obstinate Pharaoh who begs Israel to leave. The Egyptian people lavished their belongings on their slaves as they drove them out of the land. God protected Israel from the wrath poured out on the firstborn. Israel was delivered from Egypt.

**The Passover was the beginning of Israel as a people.** When Passover night was over, Israel's redemption was its creation as a nation. History had a new calendar. Human history will forever be centered around Israel.

**The Passover was an atonement sacrifice.** A life is exchanged for a life. The death of the lamb gave life to the firstborn son. The blood on the doorposts spared the inhabitants inside the house from God's wrath.

**The Passover was both commemoration and celebration as a feast.** While the original Passover anticipated what God was about to do, subsequent Passover meals celebrated what God had done in Egypt. The Passover is a banquet in which Israel acknowledged its dependence on God for salvation, satisfaction and sustenance.

**The Passover anticipated rest in the Land flowing with milk and honey.** Not only did the Passover commemorate what God had done in Egypt, it also looked forward to what he was going to do in Canaan. The banquet in the wilderness was the land flowing with milk and honey in miniature. The meal itself symbolized rest in the land.

**The Passover was a proclamation.** The Passover wasn't merely an event. It was also word. As Israel participated in the sacrifice and meal, they were to proclaim its meaning to their children and to each other. The Passover was Israel's deliverance from slavery and from Egypt's judgment in picture form.

**The Passover was participation in a past event.** Participation in the Passover was participation in the exodus. It was in the Passover that the people of Israel will be given their identity.

I repeat these things tonight because as we consider the Lord's Supper, it is these things that will be the Supper's backdrop.

Very few of us, if any of us, will have the opportunity to pick the exact time of our departure here on earth. And based on the uncertainty of the divine timing of such a departure, very few of us will have the opportunity to plan a farewell dinner or plan our farewell comments to our friends. Last words become famous because of their infrequency and their unlikelihood. Much has been made of Christ's last words on the cross and certainly, his so-called seven words or utterances are important. But tonight we are going to take a look at what Christ considered to be his farewell moment with those who knew him the best. Turn in your Bibles to Luke 22. What we have in Luke 22 is precisely this: a farewell meal that is carefully planned to accentuate the importance of what is about to happen in the lives of those who eat it. **Introduction**

Luke 22 is the beginning of what theologians call the Passion narrative. This is where the story of the last hours of Christ's ministry begins. In fact, the gospel books, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all build their storylines around these events. The entire gospels are centered on the passion story, so that here in Luke, the first 21 chapters are setting up what is about to take place. Luke, the Christian historian, has been chronicling for his friend Theophilus and the early church the unfolding of the great redemption of lost Adam and his posterity by one called Christ. This man is no mere man. This man is the expected Son of Man of the Old Testament, whose glory is in His suffering. This Son of Man has come eating and drinking (Luke 7:34) with the outcasts of society, the demon-possessed, the blind, the poor, the lepers, the sinners and the tax collectors. It is not the noble, the great, the wealthy, the evangelically religious who validate this Wisdom come from God, but these outcasts (Luke 7:35). It is this Son of Man who has come to seek and to save the Zacchaeus's of his day, \*the lost\*.

And it is this Son of Man who comes proclaiming the arrival of God's kingdom that Luke presents as Israel's promised Messiah. This, to Israel's consternation, is not the Messiah that it, the wayward son of God, had envisioned. Israel wanted glory. Israel wanted deliverance from political repression. Israel had its eyes on material power and earthly glory. And this is not the kind of Messiah it was looking for or wanted.

Israel was not the only group of people having a hard time coming to grips with an upside down kingdom with an ironic Messiah. It soon will be apparent here in Luke 22, that those closest to Jesus are themselves struggling with perspective and unmet expectations. When, after Christ's death, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus tell the stranger walking with them "we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21), they were surely speaking for all of the disciples. For years, the disciples listened to Jesus not only speak of the coming of the kingdom, but they had watched him bind the wounded, healed the sick and the lame as if that kingdom was indeed present among them. But things were not turning out the way they had expected. In Luke 9:51, Luke tells us that "when the time came near to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusa-

lem.” Throughout the rest of Luke, Christ is on this death journey to Jerusalem (Luke 13:22). Christ is the beloved Son being sent to the vineyard Jerusalem where the wicked tenants will give him a certain death. And along the way, the hopes and dreams of the disciples in this Messiah are about to be challenged beyond belief. So much so, that Christ warns them at the end of Luke 21 to “watch themselves lest their hearts be weighed down...” (Luke 21:34).

And if a Gentile such as Theophilus was himself wondering about these things, the opening passages of Luke 22 begin to answer the question: if Jesus was really truly the divine Messiah, why did he go and get himself killed? If it didn’t make sense to the Jews, it certainly didn’t make sense to the Gentiles, the Greeks and Romans, whose god Zeus mocked the weak and vulnerable and the servant minded. What kind of a divine being would willingly succumb to mortal men on behalf of other mortal men? What does this kind of Messiah have to say to Theophilus? Let us consider Luke 22.

## An Ominous Note

This is what God’s word proclaims to us in Luke 22 beginning with verse 1:

<sup>1</sup> Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called the Passover. <sup>2</sup> And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to put him to death, for they feared the people.

The story of the Last Supper begins on an ominous note. The Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which Luke says is the Passover. Notice that by this time in the course of Israel’s history, what God had said about the necessity of the Passover beginning the Feast of the Unleavened in Exodus 12 has evolved into the Feast and the Passover becoming interchangeable terms. This was precisely God’s intention in Exodus when he placed the Feast of the Unleavened Bread in the midst of both the story of the Exodus and its interpretation in the Passover.

But there is a conspiracy afoot. This storyline of the chief priests and the scribes wanting to put Jesus to death covers nearly the entire book of Luke. No sooner does Christ’s popularity begin to rise in Luke 4, than his own hometown is ready to throw him off of a cliff (chapter 4, verse 28). In chapter 5, it’s the chief priests and scribes who are grumbling about Christ’s brazen willingness to declare sins forgiven and the fact that he chose to eat with tax collectors and “sinners”. In chapter 11, Luke tells us that the religious leaders’ response to Jesus’ prophetic curses against them was that they began “lying in wait to catch him”. By the end of chapter 13, we find out that **Herod** the pseudo ruler over Jerusalem was trying to kill him. Finally in chapter 19, Luke relates to us that the **religious leaders** are themselves out to destroy Jesus and in chapter 20, the religious leaders are looking for a way to arrest Jesus. But they couldn’t because they feared the people.

Typically, Jerusalem at the Passover would have hundreds of thousands of people within the city. It is apparent from the text that the people have no clue what the religious leaders are up to, though one gets the idea from some of the hints dropped by Luke along the way that in due course, **the people** (“unbeknownst” to the religious leaders) would be willing to go along with the evil plan.

## A Traitorous Bargain

<sup>3</sup> Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve. <sup>4</sup> He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them. <sup>5</sup> And they were glad, and agreed to give him money. <sup>6</sup> So he consented and sought an opportunity to betray him to them in the absence of a crowd.

The religious leaders catch the break they need to get their hands on Jesus. Judas is the solution to their dilemma. They don't have to arrest Jesus in public, though Jesus nails them on this bit of hypocrisy when he suggests they could've arrested him at any time in the temple; Jesus is stating for all to see that the Pharisees are indeed afraid of the people and cowards in their arrangements for his arrest. The officers mentioned here were those who were in charge of handling the temple funds. Thus, the money ultimately used to pay off Judas came, in part, from the widow's mite dropped in the temple coffers one chapter previous in Luke chapter 21.

Judas, however, is not working alone. After the temptations in the wilderness, Luke tells us that Satan had left Jesus until he had an "opportune time" (Luke 4:13). And this is \*that\* opportune time. Satan has been absent from Luke's story and now he is back to correct his earlier failure.

A sinister and traitorous bargain had been struck. There is an unholy trinity, so to speak, at work here. The religious leaders who have wanted Jesus dead for the longest time now see their chance to make it happen. Satan, who has been attempting to bruise the heel of the seed of the woman throughout redemptive history sees his opportunity. And Judas, who is embittered, lends his helping hand. The outside forces and a spiritual force join up with a force on the inside. One who is in Christ's intimate inner circle.

Judas knows where Jesus and his disciples will be eating. He also knows where they will be alone without the crowds. Judas knows a location and a time when an arrest can be made. The haunting words of an agonized Psalmist come to mind from Psalm 55, verse 12:

<sup>12</sup> For it is not an enemy who taunts me— then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me— then I could hide from him. <sup>13</sup> But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. <sup>14</sup> We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng.

Christ and Judas had shared intimate fellowship within the walls of the temple; the irony is that the very throng with which Christ enjoyed worshipful solidarity was a throng not only keeping the religious leaders at bay but was also the throng Judas was employed to circumvent.

## The Last Supper is Redemptive History

Verse 7...

<sup>7</sup> Then came the day of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. <sup>8</sup> So Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat it." <sup>9</sup> They said to him, "Where will you have us prepare it?" <sup>10</sup> He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters <sup>11</sup> and tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" <sup>12</sup> And he will show you a large upper room furnished; prepare it there." <sup>13</sup>

And they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.<sup>14</sup>  
And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him.

It is in Deuteronomy that Israel is told that the Passover feast is to be celebrated “at the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name dwell in it.” Here it is unmistakable: Christ is choosing and orchestrating these events. Just as Christ had set his face toward Jerusalem, Christ is setting his face toward the Passover. And just as Christ sends two disciples to find the colt that will carry the Messiah-King into Jerusalem and to the Temple, here Christ sends two disciples to find a room and prepare Passover for a Lamb that will be slaughtered.

Luke notes that Peter and John are sent on the day “when the Passover lamb was to be slaughtered”. Josephus tells us that this usually happened on the day leading up to Passover, between 3 and 5 in the afternoon, and then the Jews would begin eating the Passover at 6:00pm, which was the start of a new day. This is in keeping with God’s directions to the people at the very first Passover: kill the lamb at twilight, and eat the meat the very same night. The idea was for Israel to eat the lamb almost immediately because the people were supposed to be ready to leave on a moment’s notice.

There were three tasks typical of the Passover in Jerusalem: a site had to be chosen where the family could eat the meal, the house had to be purged of impurities, and the Passover lamb had to be inspected by the priest and then slaughtered in the forecourts of the temple. The Passover is the only Old Testament sacrifice prepared by the worshipper outside of the tabernacle and temple. The worshipper was responsible to come up with his own lamb for his family and he was to sacrifice the lamb without aid of a priest. And, by this time in Israel’s history, the residents of Jerusalem were obligated to provide rooms for those visitors coming to Jerusalem for the Passover. This included Jesus and his disciples. Thus, Peter and John accomplish their task, but in doing so have prepared a Passover that will be far more than a meal around roast Lamb. They are preparing a meal at which another, far greater Lamb is being prepared for the slaughter.

More than \*just\* the Passover is in view with Luke here. Luke uses the word “hour” to describe this moment in time. For Luke, use of the word “hour is more than a chronological reference”. Luke, wants us to see what Peter and John apparently don’t: that a huge moment of salvation history has arrived. This isn’t just \*a\* moment in salvation history. THE moment in salvation history has arrived. God’s people are again on the precipice of a New Exodus and here in Luke 22 it is unfolding right in front of our eyes.

## The Last Supper Celebrates the Past

Continuing in verse 15...

<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” <sup>16</sup> For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” <sup>17</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves.” <sup>18</sup> For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” <sup>19</sup> And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>20</sup> And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”

While the disciples are oblivious to the monumental occasion, Christ, the divine orchestrator of this event is not. This isn't just a Passover. This is the Last Passover. Christ earnestly, or more literally, intensely desired to eat this Passover with his disciples because after this night, there will be no more Passovers. For one last time, this feast commemorates God's great act of redemption for his people in the original Passover and exodus.

## **The Last Supper Points Forward to the Future**

The Passover is no longer about the past. It is about the future, both immediate, and not so immediate. Because Christ is fulfilling the Passover, it is becoming obsolete. Not only is this the Last Passover feast, Christ is the Last Passover lamb.

In verses 16 and 18, Christ says he will not eat of the meal or drink of the vine until the coming of the kingdom. He is pointing his disciples not to a past event in the Exodus, but forward to another banquet. Here I believe Christ has both their immediate future and distant future in mind. I think it is a mistake, as I was taught growing up, to see this "coming of the kingdom" in verses 16 and 18 as being totally pushed out to the future. The kingdom is already/not yet. The New Testament tells us that Christ's Kingdom was inaugurated with a New Covenant, which we will look at in just a moment, at his death, resurrection, and ascension. Even as Christ speaks these words to the disciples, the kingdom of heaven that was at hand during Christ's ministry is rushing in. In just a few weeks, Christ will be exalted and on his throne forever.

Thus, the Last Supper is already and not yet. Christ points forward to a future banquet that has its beginnings in this supper. The fruit of the vine, especially, is a celebration of God's kingdom, a kingdom that for the disciples is already changing their Passover observance. Even as the disciples partake of the Old Testament Passover, with the Passover Lamb they are partaking of this future banquet, and even more so, they are to long for the day when the future Passover will be celebrated in all of its glory. But... more on this point in the next two weeks.

## **The Last Supper Anticipates the Present**

Over time, the Passover in Jewish practice had come to mean more than just a commemoration of the Exodus. It also looked forward to a future deliverance of the Messiah. The imperfections of the original exodus and occupation of the land was obvious to Israel. Something new, something better was expected. What was unexpected was that it was this suffering Messiah who will lead His people to freedom from sin and death.

In this last Passover, Christ anticipates what is about to take place in redemptive history. Just as the Old Testament Passover interpreted the exodus for Israel, so now this Passover, this Last Supper is interpreting the events that are to follow. This is a banquet in the wilderness anticipating a new exodus and the coming of a new creation.

In the midst of the disciples that night, Christ is fulfilling all that the Passover was ever meant to be. And even as the Passover is fading away in this moment of redemptive history, something new is taking place. No longer for the disciples is this just another Passover. Christ, in the midst of a different kind of family, one that revolves around Him, rather than the familial bloodlines, introduces some new changes to the feast of the Passover that will forever alter how it is to be observed.

First, this meal will no longer be about the Exodus. Instead, the focus of this observance is going to be about himself. Notice the personal pronouns throughout these verses: verse 16, I will not eat of it; verse 18, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine; verse 19, this is my body; and verse 20, the new covenant of my blood.

No longer will the reference point of this feast be the Exodus, Israel's redemption from slavery and escape from the death of the firstborn sons. The reference point will forever be Christ and the New Exodus in the cross and resurrection. Christ does not command the disciples to repeat the Passover. He commands them to reconfigure their thinking about the Passover. The Passover as they know it is forever altered. It is of those things that are fading away.

Second, this meal will no longer be about the Old Covenant. The Passover was one of the important ways that God maintained in real time and space his covenant with his people. Both Hezekiah and Josiah recognize this in the Old Testament. Josiah is especially acutely aware that Israel unfaithfulness lie partly in its failure to keep the Passover. And it is through this new feast that the disciples will participate in the New Covenant. In verse 20, Christ says the cup filled with the fruit of the vine symbolizes the new covenant in his blood. At least four Old Testament references are in view here, all of which are swallowed up into Christ's fulfillment of the Passover and its covenant. Both Isaiah 42:6, and Isaiah 49:8 speak of Christ as being a Covenant to his people. Isaiah 42:6 says "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations." And Isaiah 49:8 says "<sup>8</sup> Thus says the LORD: "In a time of favor I have answered you; in a day of salvation I have helped you; I will keep you and give you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages..." Christ the Passover Lamb, with his disciples in this event that precipitates redemptive history, declares himself to be the New Covenant with his people. It is Christ that is God's promise to His people. It is Christ that is God's bond with his people. Christ himself is the treaty between vassal and king bringing the war that exists between God and his people because of sin to an end.

And Jeremiah 31:31-33 is also being fulfilled right before the disciples eyes: "<sup>31</sup> "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, <sup>32</sup> not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. <sup>33</sup> But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Oh disciples, oh Theophilus. That moment of salvation has arrived. This is the moment of a new covenant. The lamb of the Old Covenant is no longer the sacrifice of the covenant. Christ, the Passover Lamb, is the New Covenant sacrifice. The exodus and its Passover no longer define the people of God. They are defined by a new heart that comes with the new covenant.

Both Exodus and Hebrews tell us that covenants are ratified, or enforced, in blood. Here in the Last Supper, Christ is telling his disciples that there is a new covenant and his blood is its ratification, and this ratification is symbolized by the cup of this feast. This is a reminder that the death of this Passover Lamb, even as it inaugurates a new kingdom with a new covenant, is an atonement sacrifice. The atonement sacrifice validates the new covenant. The backdrop for the new covenant, just like the old, is sacrifice for sin. There cannot be a new creation without the

death of the lamb. There cannot be a new covenant without judgment being exercised on sin. There cannot be a new covenant without a life exchanged for a life.

And Christ changes the stipulations. Gone will be the lamb and bitter herbs. The wine, which had been added to the feast in the past few hundred years since the exodus and the unleavened bread will be retained, albeit with the new interpretation. Because the Old is fading and the New is arriving, the fruit of the vine and the bread will memorialize this new exodus. It is through this \*food\*, Christ's feeding of his disciples and their dependence on him for sustenance will be pictured.

This broken bread symbolizes Christ physical body which will be broken in just a few short hours. The cup of the fruit of the vine, or wine, symbolizes Christ's blood that will be shed during the Passover, while at the same time points forward to the celebration of Christ's kingdom. As Christ breaks the bread and offers the cup, Christ proclaims that it is His death that will be the means by which the salvation foreshadowed in the Old Testament Passover. Who would have thought that the Sabbath rest of Canaan, foreshadowed in the sustenance and satisfaction of the unleavened bread, would find its fulfillment in the brokenness, suffering and death of the Messiah?

The original Passover was merely a shadow that fades away. It was imperfect. A life was exchanged for a life, but the life exchange in reality accomplished nothing. A sheep ultimately cannot atone for sin. It was merely a shadow, a downpayment, a stand-in, for the real thing Christ Jesus. Christ, both the Lamb and the firstborn, will be the perfect sacrificial atonement, paying the debt of sin, winning forgiveness for his people, and satisfying God's wrath in averting judgment.

And like the original Passover, there is a posterity element to this meal. Christ says "do this in remembrance". Just as the Israelites were to proclaim the meaning of the Passover and exodus to their children, so too Christ's disciples, his new family, are to perpetually proclaim the meaning of the Last Passover.

By setting this meal within the context of the Passover, both Christ and the one who then chronicles it, Luke, are going to great pains to show us that Christ's death that follows the meal is not merely a political death. It is a religious death. It is a Passover death. Christ's death is an atonement. Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:7 interprets this rightly: Christ is the Passover Lamb.

In the succeeding chapters, Luke is going to follow Christ away from this table, into the night, and to his death on the cross. For the disciples and Theophilus, the early Christian church, and all who join them at the table, there will be no death angel tonight or any other night. Christ, the Passover Lamb has been slain. God has seen the blood on the doorpost of Christ's body. While those in Christ have been spared, God had exacted his judgment on a firstborn Son, his own.

<sup>21</sup> But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. <sup>22</sup> For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" <sup>23</sup> And they began to question one another, which of them it could be who was going to do this.

This portion of Luke's narrative ends with a jolt. Luke does not give this account of the very Last Supper the sweet Disney ending. This Last Passover that pushes out the Old and ushers in the New is suspended, and it is suspended in gathering darkness. Even in this banquet that points forward to a future banquet, Christ anticipates his own suffering. Even though this is a feast



anticipating a new banquet, this Last Passover is not a time of sweet fellowship. This is a moment of betrayal, death and suffering. Christ, the Passover Lamb, is about to ascend the altar where he will satisfy God's wrath, win salvation for His people, and seal the destruction of his enemies. Indeed, this is a banquet table in the wilderness being prepared in the presence of his enemies.

**Conclusion** **The Last Supper is a farewell meal.** Not only is Christ saying farewell to his disciples, he is saying farewell to the law, the Old Covenant, the Old Testament sacrifices, indeed the Old way of doing things.

The Last Supper is divinely orchestrated. Just as in the original Passover, God acted on behalf of his people in delivering them from Egypt and the deaths of the firstborn sons, Christ unilaterally, or without the aid of anyone including his people, acts on behalf of His people and their salvation.

**The Last Supper is the last Passover.** After Christ's meal with his disciples, there will never be another Passover (from God's perspective) looking back at the original Passover and exodus.

**The Last Supper precedes and anticipates redemptive history.** Just as the Passover in Exodus immediately preceded a great historical event in the redemption of a people, so too this Passover immediately precedes THE greatest historical event in the redemption of His people. This redemptive history has its climax in Christ's suffering, death on the cross, his resurrection and his ascension to heaven.

**The Last Supper is a proclamation.** This is not a passion play. In the broken bread and cup, Christ death is preached to those constantly in need of his gospel of grace via the work he has done on behalf of his people.

**The Last Supper is a new exodus.** With the first exodus of Israel no longer a reference point, in the Last Passover, Christ, the Passover Lamb, leads his people to their salvation.

**The Last Supper begins and anticipates the Lord's Table and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.** More on this in the next two weeks.

**The Last Supper involves a new family.** Christ doesn't celebrate the Passover with his physical family as was the custom. There is now a new family whose common bond is Christ the Passover Lamb.

**The Last Supper's sacrifice is the Lamb of God, Christ, the Passover Sacrifice.** Christ not only is the sacrifice, he is the firstborn son on whom God's justice falls. Christ, the Lamb, lays down his life, in exchange for the lives of those who partake in the meal. And in doing so, Christ holds the death angel at bay because it is on Christ judgment falls.

**The Last Supper is an Old Covenant meal.** When Peter and John sacrificed the lamb and made the other Old Covenant preparations for the Last Supper, little did they know that this would be the last time they would need to do so. Never again will there be bitter herbs. Never again will there be the sacrifice of a lamb.

**The Last Supper is a new covenant meal.** In instituting the bread and the wine, the suffering Messiah declares that it is he who is the New Covenant. It is he who is the New Covenant rest.

It is he on whom the participants in the Last Supper are to feed because he is their salvation, he is their satisfaction, and he is their sustenance.

What are we supposed to learn from this text? What is it teaching us?

## Lessons

**Christ is the fulfillment of all that the Passover was ever meant to be.** The original Passover looked beyond the first exodus and the first Canaan to something bigger and better. After all, in the first exodus, the people are no sooner in the wilderness than they are grumbling and complaining. The first generation died in disobedience. Even in Canaan, Israel did not completely obey and eventually they were carted off to the exile and the temple was destroyed. The Passover was a summary of the incomplete sacrificial and ceremonial worship of the tabernacle and temples. It pointed forward to a day when there would be a final sacrifice, one lamb, on whom the Lord would lay the iniquity of us all.

**It is no accident that Christ's death and resurrection occurred during the Passover observance.** Christ wants his disciples to look beyond the Passover to its purpose and its intention. Christ identifies himself with the Passover so that it is Him and not the original exodus giving meaning to the Supper and its correlating events.

**Christ, the Passover lamb, provided salvation for his people and executed judgment on his enemies in his death and resurrection.** Christ, the Passover lamb, has spared the lives of his people in satisfying God's wrath and keeping the death angel at bay with his blood proclaimed on the doorposts of his own body.

**Christ, the living bread of the Passover, provides eternal satisfaction and sustenance to the downtrodden;** the tax collectors, sinners, lepers, the blind, the demon-possessed, the poor and the poor in spirit, forever unified in the corporate and assembled family. Already, Christ has gathered around him the poor, the weak, the blind, the disabled, and the hungry as he had promised earlier in Luke 14. Just as Christ intensely desired to eat Passover with his disciples, his disciples desperately needed Christ's sustenance. Judas will betray him. Peter will deny him. We know about Thomas's unbelief. The two unnamed disciples on the road to Emmaus will second guess him. And before the Last Passover meal is complete, all of the disciples will embroil themselves in a squabble over who is the greatest. Indeed, this feast is for the least of these in desperate need of an unblemished Passover Lamb who will be their salvation.

And **the Last Supper is for posterity.** Just as the old Passover participants were to pass the meaning of the Passover from generation to generation, so too those participating in the Last Supper were to proclaim the meaning of the Last Supper from generation to generation in remembering Christ's death. This proclamation at the Last Supper, according to Luke 24:47, offers "repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." When the disciples read Exodus, they will read, "When the children say to the disciples 'what do you mean by this slavery to Christ and taking up your own crosses', you shall say, 'It is the sacrifice of Christ, the Lord's Passover, for he passed over our lives of his people the church in our bondage to sin and death, when he struck sin, death, and Satan, but spared our eternal lives...Remember this day in which you came out from bondage to sin and death, out of the house of slavery, for by a strong hand, Christ brought you out from this place... You shall tell your sons on that day, 'It is because of what Christ did for us when we came up out of bondage to sin and death'". Generation after generation, in all the people groups of the world, is to know that the Last Supper proclaims Christ's great act of deliverance for his people.

## Response

Oh disciples, oh Theophilus, oh early church, oh participants with them at the Table, this is the legacy of the Last Supper. This Last Supper is your identity in Christ, the suffering Messiah who bids you come and drink his cup of suffering and find your satisfaction and sustenance and salvation in Him.

- Let us rejoice in God's Great Act on our behalf in Christ Jesus who spared us from judgment and saved us for His glory.
- Through the Word proclaimed in sermon and in the Lord's Table, let us feed on Christ, our salvation, our satisfaction, and our sustenance.
- Let us place our hope, in this broken and fallen world, on the Passover Lamb who was broken on our behalf.
- We are a pilgrim people, wandering through this desert land that is not our home. Let us look forward to the day when, in the ultimate land flowing with milk and honey, the New Jerusalem, we will see our Passover Lamb face to face.