

## **Bi123 The Gospels 2**

### ***Lesson Bi123-14 The Last Supper***

Times of fellowship are important events for believers. This is especially true when the purpose is to say farewell to someone. This was the situation when the disciples arranged their last meal with Jesus. The disciples didn't realize what was happening at the time, but Jesus made it a memorable event. The Passover meal served to remind them of God's deliverance of his people from bondage in Egypt. As the true Passover lamb, Christ was about to give his life to atone for sin.

It was the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed between 2:30 and 5:30 in the afternoon. Jesus sent out Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." They asked him where he wanted them to do that. He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there" (Luke 22:7-12).

They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. No doubt the disciples had made Passover preparations for Jesus in the past. When they asked him where, he didn't give them a location. Rather, he told them what to look for, a sign—not a sign on a building—but an unusual event that would catch their attention. The sign would be a man carrying a jar of water. This was not ordinary in Israel, since it was normally women who carried water. They follow his directions, and it happened just as he promised. He was giving them practice in following his words, not just their own ideas. As a true prophet, he told them what would happen, even down to the small details.

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." People in those days ate their meals while reclining on benches facing the table, not seated on chairs. Jesus had looked forward to this Passover meal, because it began the central event of God's plan. His death would provide the perfect sacrifice for sin.

He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him!" They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this (Luke 22:14-23).

The traditional Passover meal consisted of drinking wine twice, then eating the roasted lamb, along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and then drinking two more times. As he had done in the past he broke the bread and passed the cup to all the disciples present.

This time was different, however, for he assigned new meaning to the bread and the fruit of the vine. In doing this he changed the meaning of the meal. Now we call this celebration the Lord's Supper. He declared that the bread represented his broken body and the wine represented his blood shed as the sacrifice for sin. The meal represented the new agreement he established between God and man through his death. Animal sacrifice would no longer be needed, for it never really purchased forgiveness. He told them to keep observing this meal until he returned.

Even though the plan of redemption was set in motion by God, there still would be a special punishment for the betrayer. The disciples looked for the guilty party. This led to another discussion; they tried to determine which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:24-27).

Jesus answered their argument by contrasting how earthly rulers become great and how they would become great. Kings often misused their authority to abuse their subjects. Under the rule of Jesus, however, the greatest person is the one who serves others, not themselves. Jesus would serve them by giving his very life. He then encouraged them with the promise that they would rule with him, and sit at his table in heaven.

Finally Jesus warned Peter of his soon-coming denial, saying to him, "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death."

Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me" (Luke 22:31-34).

This story is **important** because it reminds us that the death of Christ was a part of God's plan to save people from destruction. Jesus instituted the communion meal or Lord's Supper as a reminder of this great truth.

The **main truth** of this story is that Jesus came to earth to die for sin, by giving his life. We celebrate the Lord's Supper to remember that truth.

Let's **review** this lesson—

1. Why did Jesus want to celebrate the Passover with the disciples?  
A. [Pause] If you said Jesus wanted to celebrate the Passover with the disciples before he suffered death for sin, you are correct.
2. What do the bread and the cup represent in the Lord's Supper?  
A. [Pause] If you said the bread represents his broken body and the fruit of the vine represents his shed blood, you are correct.

3. Who did Jesus say was the greatest in his kingdom?
  - A. [Pause] If you answered that the greatest among them would be the one who served others and not themselves, you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to learn the story of the Lord's Supper so you can tell it to someone else. After telling the story, ask this question, "What motivated Jesus to die on the cross, to have his body broken and his blood shed?"