

"On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, 'Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?' So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, 'Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, "The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.' The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover." Mark 14:12-1

After the Hebrews had been 400 years in slavery in Egypt God finally sent his servant Moses to redeem them. They were reluctantly, released by Pharaoh only after God has chastened Egypt with a series of increasingly severe plagues. Nine had come and gone but Pharaoh's heart was obdurate, the tenth plague was the death of the first born sons of the land; only with this was Pharaoh's will broken and he let God's people go. There was the offer of mercy to any family who did what God had said, that is, to kill a year old male lamb without a blemish "between the evenings," and sprinkle its blood on the door. In every home where this was done the first-born would be spared. The people in that home took shelter under the blood. They believed that with that covering the arrows of death wouldn't destroy them. With the blood over them the sword of God wouldn't smite them. "When I see the blood I will pass over you," said God.

Every family who kept the commandment of God was spared. The Passover centered on a meal which consisted of the lamb roasted whole, bitter herbs - vegetables like horseradish and chicory - and especially unleavened bread, some thing that is not like bread at all; it is like a water biscuit, a cream cracker. It was much quicker to prepare than bread, and doing everything in haste was the motif of that first Passover. The next day they were to leave their homes in Goshen, Egypt forever, setting out on a journey across the wilderness to the promised land. So another aspect of the Passover consisted of eating the meal while dressed for a journey.

While there were those other elements to the Passover feast, it was on the blood alone that their safety depended. God never said, "When I see you eating unleavened

bread with shoes on your feet, and a staff in your hand I will pass over you." How easy for anyone to look like a pilgrim, but deliverance did not come in dress and food but in the blood sprinkled on the door. They could take uneaten vegetables and unleavened bread with them for the journey but not any of the lamb. If any remained in the morning it was to be burnt. It was life and salvation! Salvation in the physical sense as God was physically delivering the people out of Egypt. Of course in this we see the great picture of spiritual salvation that will be fulfilled in Christ.

God only looks at the blood not at anything else. People today offer to God what he doesn't require. They say, "I trust in Christ and do the best that I can. I trust in Christ and lead a good life, and so I hope to be saved." That is not God's way. He didn't say, "When I see the blood and you dressed to travel", or "when I see the blood and you eating the lamb, I will pass over," or "when I see the blood and you eating unleavened bread I will pass over." Even in the picture form and only regarding physical salvation it was the blood. It is enough for God to see the blood, and then he passes over because the blood pointed forward to the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. The blood gave all the glory for the deliverance of all God's people to the Lord Jesus. Those in heaven have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb and therefore they are before the throne of God.

When God looked at the doorposts he saw the blood and passed over that first-born. The life of the lamb was accepted instead of the first-born's life. When God saw the blood he knew death had been there already. The sentence, "The soul that sins shall surely die," had already been passed. What more of a sentence could be passed? There is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. They have died, because Christ died in them. What the Head has done the members have done. They died in him; they were crucified in him.

Don't say, "We all believe that Christ died." The demons and fallen angels believe that Christ died. That is mere history. Do you think the fallen take the blood and plead it before God? That is what a sinner may do by the grace of God, but that is not what

the any demon ever does. I am saying don't rest in the idea of, "I am a Christian because I believe that Christ died." That will never save you. You must be trusting in Jesus; you must be trusting in his blood; you must be hiding under the blood. You must be saying, "You are my hiding place." What are you doing with the blood of Christ? That is the focus of the Passover. The warning in Hebrews is that to not believe properly is to walk all over the blood of Christ, to demean it.

The Passover and deliverance from Egypt was henceforth commemorated in an annual feast. It became the most important of the three feasts that were held in Jerusalem to which all the people in Israel had an obligation to attend, and Jesus himself since a child had gone to those feasts. It commemorated not simply a deliverance, but a deliverance that made a nation out of a cringing rabble. God had made the most powerful man in the world surrender and let the people go.

The historic event of the Passover changed the Jewish calendar. The month in which it occurred was the first month of the year. "This month shall be the beginning of months unto you." In Israel each new day began at 6 pm. So the 13th of the month of Nissan, which was the day for the preparation of the Passover, began on our Wednesday at 6 pm. The 14th of Nissan, the Passover day itself, began at 6 pm on the Thursday. In other words, Friday the 14th had actually begun at 6 pm on Thursday the 13th. So the events of this chapter, which Mark says took place, "on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb," (v.12) I believe occurred on the Thursday before Good Friday. You remember that there were no clocks in Jerusalem, and calendars also varied from country to country and even within a country there might be an official and unofficial calendar.

Jerusalem at this time is packed with pilgrims there for the Passover. Each group who traveled there, as well as the local population, needed an unblemished lamb as a sacrifice. Each lamb was taken to the temple to be killed there. Josephus records that on one Passover in Jerusalem 33 years later 255,600 lambs were slaughtered in the temple in a couple of days as over two and a half million were present in Jerusalem.

Every priest and Levite was as work, the altar and the preparation areas were covered with blood. The worshippers would come with their lambs to the temple, cut the lamb's throat and two long lines of priests carrying gold or silver bowls, would gather some blood from each lamb and sprinkle it on the altar. Then, the slain lamb carried back by the pilgrim to where the family or friends were staying and there it was roasted over an open fire on a spit. The spit went right through the lamb with the head legs and tail still attached to the body. All that preparation needed to be done ahead of the Passover meal itself

Christ had great anticipation about eating this Passover with his disciples, and had communicated that to his men, but nothing seemed to have been arranged. Wasn't Jesus aware of all that needed to be done? We are occasionally in that condition; there is some big event ahead of us and yet God seems to be doing nothing. Perhaps it's an operation we are waiting to have, or a homecoming - does the Lord know about it? We were expecting some sign that he was involved. So the disciples finally approached Jesus about it, but they did so without frustration or any note of complaint in their voices. Two years earlier they might have said to him something like this, "Don't you care that we perish?" Now they show complete trust in him; the years of being in the school of Christ had matured them. "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" (v.12) Notice, incidentally, how they saw it as a feast for Jesus to eat; it was his Passover and he was the head of it. Later on during the meal he would say, "This is my body."

When the Lord Christ responds he shows that he is in complete control of every event; "he sent two of his disciples, telling them, 'Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, "The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.' The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had

told them" (vv.13-16). "The disciples left," we are told. No quizzical look on their faces; no protestations; they heard the word of Jesus and did it. The Lord who was speaking to them had proved over three years that he had absolute and infallible foreknowledge. He knew when the temple would be destroyed; he knew details of the end of the world. How much more did he know where they would be having supper that evening. So off went the two men (we know that it was Peter and John, Luke 22:8) taking one of the possible routes to Jerusalem and deciding to enter it by one of its gates. There were dense crowds everywhere, and Jesus had not told them where they bump into this man carrying a jar of water, but their Savior is Lord of those apparently unpredictable choices which we make moment by moment. We take a certain route at a certain speed as we go shopping it is all planned by God. Christ had ordained every step Peter and John would take, and he'd told them exactly what the outcome would be, that they were going to meet a man carrying a jar of water. That spectacle would be a little unusual as it was the task of Jerusalem women to bring the water from the spring at Siloam to the home. A man carrying a sizable water-pot would stand out even in that large crowd.

Even in a seemingly insignificant detail like the choice of the room for the Passover meal the Lord showed His sovereignty. He went to Jerusalem at this particular time, to celebrate the Passover, and to inaugurate the Lord's Supper saying, "This is my body and it is to be broken for you." Those words make no sense if Jesus' life was being taken from him by forces outside of his control.

There was this serving man who was sent on an errand that morning, "Take that jar to Siloam and collect some water for the household." He had no idea that God had appointed him to lead two men to the place the Passover would be held

The man whom Peter and John followed led them to the house where he worked and there they introduced themselves to the owner. Surely he must have known Jesus because they simply told him, "The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" (v.14). Mark tells us that the disciples "found

Why did Jesus choose to reveal to the men the location of the room in such a way? "The chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some sly way to arrest Jesus and kill him" (v.1). Then we are told that Judas had gone to them to betray Jesus and that he was watching "for an opportunity to hand him over" (v.11). There was a price on Jesus' head, but he didn't want his arrest to take place until after the Passover meal, and so he didn't tell Peter and John the location of the Upper Room with Judas listening in. Nobody knew the location, not even the two men, and so Jesus bought a few more hours of absolute privacy with his disciples. There were crucial lessons he still had to teach them, for example, there was that great discourse recorded for us by John in chapters thirteen through sixteen, concerning the coming of the Spirit, the vine and the branches, the grief of the disciples being turned to joy. There was a special lesson he must teach them about being servants and washing one another's feet, and again he needed to teach them about the meaning of his death in the institution of the Lord's Supper. He had to have a few precious hours of uninterrupted teaching with the Twelve.

On that Passover Day Jesus Christ and the ten apostles entered the Upper Room to see the results of Peter and John's preparation. This was the sight and odor that met them, the entire lamb, head to tail, roasted lay before Christ; there were the bitter herbs; there was the unleavened bread; there was the wine (later to be used in the installation of the Lord's Supper); and there was a bowl of salt water to remind them of the crossing of the Red Sea and the tears of slavery they had shed in Egypt. Everything was laid out exactly as the law of Israel required. Then the Lord Jesus began the Passover by giving thanks and then saying to these young men who had given up everything to follow him with the deepest affection, "with desire have I desired to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer." Then he took them through the feast step by step, referring to the Scripture narrative, omitting nothing by way of detail or in spirit. Jesus was longing, yearning, to finish perfectly what he had been sent into the world to do. He has to fulfill the law because he must fulfill all righteousness. He must

institute the Lord's Supper - the symbol of the new covenant - but he cannot do that until he has followed the way of the Old Testament to the very letter. The Bible train is here moving from one track to another. This is the end of the Old Testament, and here is the beginning of the New. They are joined in the Upper Room. After this Passover it is good-bye fleshly Israel and welcome spiritual Israel. Jesus is here switching the points that alter the track from Old Testament to New. The altar is the Old; the table is the New Testament. Both exist because of his blood. Christ does everything right. He obeys the law perfectly. He does it all according to the rules of the law.

He possessed no other lamb's blood for the sin that he was going to bear. He is the sacrificial lamb. No blood of goats, no ashes of a heifer sprinkling us can take away the guilt of man's sin. The Son of God must shed his own blood. He must die under the wrath of God. His own blood will open the way to God. God's only begotten Son is God's only appointed Redeemer. He alone bears his people's sins. Only Christ can carry such a burden. He alone has been sent to make atonement. He satisfied everything God's law required.

Christ proved Himself to be the servant. Service of God involves justice and righteousness (Is 32:17) as well as worship, and the Servant of the Lord (Christ) is the one who particularly portrays those characteristics.

The servant concept is turned on its head because of Jesus. Jesus is Lord (Jn 13:13; Acts 10:36; 1 Cor 12:3), and to be a servant of Christ is to confess him as Lord. Yet also "the Son of man came not to be served but to serve" (Mt 20:28). This service was not just symbolic; it involved low-status tasks like washing feet (Jn 13:1-17) and led eventually to his death. The Master voluntarily puts himself in subjection to his own disciples, and the concept of servant leadership is born.

From now on we are sharing in the blessings of the New Covenant, which is in his blood. He is the New Covenant Person. The New Covenant Person gives life.

2Co 3:6* who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The Old Covenant had power to do nothing. The Living New Covenant Person has the power to do everything

The Old Covenant had a limited purpose for a limited time to a specific people the Living New Covenant Person has an eternal purpose for all people.

The OC gave conditional guarantees of blessing and curse the Living New Covenant Person is the guarantee of blessing and curse.

Under the OC God was known by the written Covenant and the witness of Gods acts and the results. Under the NC God is known in and through Christ and His life. All of our hope is in Him. We are born again to LIVING HOPE

The OC was a ministry of death by the written code of the letter of the law and the NC person is life and liberty.

Christ our Covenant is the New Covenant Person. He is all of these things that are spoken of in the Old Covenant and all are fulfilled in Christ the New Covenant.