

THE MESSENGER



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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The Lord's Supper

by Dempsey Collins
continued

About 1500 years after the Passover was instituted Jesus “our Passover” (I Cor. 5:7) was preparing to observe the feast for the last time in His earthly life. In Luke 22:7-13 we read of this preparation.

Vs. 7 “Then came the day of unleavened bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.”

The feast of unleavened bread began properly on the 15th day of Nisan (first month of Jewish calendar) and lasted seven days, but this was the 14th day of Nisan, the day on which the paschal lamb was slain. However, it was common to blend or combine the Passover feast and the feast of unleavened bread, and to look upon both as one great festival since the two feasts ran together or were back to back and unleavened bread was also eaten during the Passover. Thus the terms were used interchangeably to describe the entire eight days (Matt. 26:17; Mark 14:12; John 18:28).

The historian Josephus further confirms the above by sometimes speaking of the feast of unleavened bread as beginning on the 15th (Ant. 111 10.5) and other times as beginning on the 14th (Wars V. 3.1). He also sometimes reckons the feast as lasting seven days (Ant. 111 10.5) and at other times as lasting eight days (Ant. 11 15.1). The Rabbinists say that all the leaven was carefully removed from the houses on the evening before the 14th of Nisan. To the present day leaven is removed from the houses of Jews on the night between the 13th and 14th. Hence as already pointed out, the day could very fittingly be called the first day of unleavened bread.

Luke 22:8 “And He sent Peter and John saying, Go and prepare the Passover for us that we may eat it.” Mark simply says “two disciples” (14:13). While Matthew has the disciples taking the initiative of asking about the feast, Luke is the only one who names the disciples who prepared the Passover. Such a responsibility included finding a place inside the city of Jerusalem as required by the Law (Deut. 12:1-9; 16:1-17, esp. vs. 7, 16). This is also a model of the Lord's Supper as the Passover was to be observed in the Kingdom. Jesus tells specifically where to go. Vs. 10 “And He said to them, behold when you have entered the city a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water, follow him into the house that he enters.” It was the custom in the east for women to bring water and unusual for a man to do so; hence, this sign was a peculiar one. Only by miraculous knowledge could Jesus have given this information. Vs. 11 “and ye shall say to the owner of the house, the “teacher” (from *didaskō*) as to a disciple or learner. Since Jesus reveals himself as “the teacher” to the man, he is perhaps a disciple himself. This, however, does not necessarily mean that any previous arrangements had been made between Jesus and the owners.

Vs. 11 cont., “says to you, Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with my disciples.” It was customary for the residents of Jerusalem to open their houses for guests during this feast. In this verse and the next, Jesus further shows His divine knowledge by telling them in detail what they would find and what the owner would provide. Vs. 12, “And he will show you a large, furnished, upper room, prepare it there.” Vs. 13 “And they departed and found everything just as He had told them.” “And they prepared the Passover.”

With the last words of this verse we continue the responsibilities Peter and John had in preparing the Passover. Having secured a place to observe the feast they must now prepare the feast. This included securing a lamb, having it sacrificed, cooking and setting the meal . . . AN ALL DAY JOB!!

1. The Passover Lamb

- a. The lamb was usually bought from merchants in the city by those who had travelled to Jerusalem. This made it much more convenient for those who had to travel long distances. Such buying and selling had even been brought into the temple area (Matt. 21:12; Mark 11:16).
- b. The lamb was to be killed and offered at twilight or literally “between the evenings” (Ex. 12:6). The Jewish day is reckoned from 6:00 to 6:00 or from sunset to sunset. Thus the next day began at 6:00 p.m. according to the Jews. Hence “between the evenings” or at “twilight” according to Rabbinical teaching is at about 3:00 p.m., but before sundown. The meal could then be eaten in the evening any time after 6:00 p.m. Josephus says the sacrifice was made between the 9th and the 11th hour or 3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. This agrees with Rabbinical teaching. Our own time which is the same as the Roman time in the Bible is reckoned from 12:00 to 12:00.
- c. At the temple, each worshipper slit the throat of his own lamb, a priest caught the blood and passed it down a row of priests to the altar where it was poured out on the base.
- d. One lamb was offered for each company. A company, we are told, consisted of not less than 10 or more than 20 persons.

2. The Passover Meal

- a. The unleavened bread was baked. Bread baked hurriedly to remind them of their quick departure from Egypt. Leaven is a type of evil (I Cor. 5:6-8).
- b. The lamb was roasted (Ex. 12:8, 9). It was to be roasted rather than boiled in order that it might remain whole (Ex. 12:56).
- c. A bowl of salt water was prepared (this to remind them of tears shed in Egypt).
- d. Bitter herbs were gathered (Ex. 12:8) and cleaned. (This was to remind them of the bitterness of their Egyptian bondage, or the harsh treatment they endured under the lash of the Egyptian taskmasters.)
- e. The Charosheth was prepared. (This consisted of a paste of apples, dates, pomegranates and nuts and was to remind them of the clay used in making bricks.)
- f. Four cups of “fruit of the vine” were set on the table with the other items (This was to remind them of the four promises of Ex. 6:6-7).
 - 1) “I will bring you out of Egyptian slavery and bondage.”
 - 2) “I will redeem you with great judgments.”
 - 3) “I will take you for my people.”
 - 4) “I will be your God.”

As we shall see, Jesus took two of the Passover elements and gave them spiritual and memorial significance in the New Covenant Kingdom.

to be continued

NOTES & NEWS:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

“...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” James 5:16