

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

Conclusion

Luke 22:7ff continued.

Vs. 14 “And when the hour had come he reclined at the table and the apostles with Him.” All things have now been made ready for the observance of the feast. Peter and John await the others. “And when the hour had come.” Some ask, “What hour?” God had commanded the feast to be observed at a specified time. The 14th of Nisan in the evening (Ex. 12:16; Joshua 5:10). From vs. 7 we learned it was the 14th day of Nisan or the day on which the Passover lamb was to be sacrificed and now the right hour has come to eat that sacrifice. There was no irregularity in the time of their eating the Passover. Jesus observed the meal Thursday evening. He instituted His supper the same evening, was betrayed and led before four illegal assemblies all through the night. In the final proceeding He was brought back to Pilate who for fear of the Jews gave Him up to be crucified on Friday morning. Jesus hung on the cross from the third to the ninth hour, i.e. from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Thus He died on Friday, was buried and remained in the tomb Friday, Saturday, and arose on Sunday (Matt. 12:40; John 2:19). Again, our time today is the same calendar time as the Romans in the first century. This is how we can reckon our first day to be the same as theirs.

Vs. 14 continued. “He reclined at table.” The custom of reclining at table then was very different from our own customs today. They did not sit on chairs or benches, as the famous painting of Leonardo da Vinci suggests, but rather they would lean upon one elbow and then fully extend their bodies away from the table. Word ‘recline’ is from ‘anapipto’ – “to lie back, lie down” (Thayer). “The guests’ position was to recline with the body’s upper part resting on the left arm, and the head raised, a cushion was at the back, and the lower part of the body stretched out. Thus the head of the second guest was opposite the breast of the first guest, so that if he wanted to speak to him in secret he would lean upon his breast” (Matters and Customs of Bible Lands by Fred H. Wight, pg. 64). An understanding of this custom throws light on a few other passages: John 13:23-25 - John leaned back upon Jesus’ breast; and Luke 7:38 - it explains how the woman took her position behind the feet of Jesus to wash them.

Vs. 14 “And the apostles with Him.” Who then was present at the feast? It says, “The apostles were with Him.” Matthew 26:20 says this included all the twelve. Thus all twelve were present during the Passover feast. But did all, particularly Judas, remain through the institution of the Lord’s Supper? (cf. Luke 22:21, 22; Matt. 26:20-25; Mark 14:17-21 and John 13:30)

King James Vs. 15 “And he said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” “Earnestly and intensely have I desired to eat this Passover” (Amplified). Why such earnestness on the part of the Lord for this particular Passover feast? He had observed all others in keeping with the law of Moses. Because it was to be His last before He suffered, the time when He would commemorate the occasion of man’s deliverance from sin.

Vs. 16 “For I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.” Jesus would not eat again the Passover in its literal use, but in a spiritual sense He would eat it “in the Kingdom of God”. The law with all of its models and shadows found its fulfillment in Christ and His kingdom the church; hence, what is about to be instituted at

this feast will later be observed by the Lord in a spiritual sense when the antitype vanishes in the presence of the type. “Until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom”. When the shadow or model becomes the final reality. Note Matthew’s account given after the supper’s institution in Matthew 26:29. “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom.” Matthew’s account points out clearly two very important facts about the new supper:

1. It was placed in the Kingdom and that is where it is to be observed. Thus, when the church/kingdom began so would the Lord’s Supper.
2. The words “with you” indicate it is to be a communion between the Lord and all of his disciples and as we shall see, a communion which is to be continued throughout the generations of God’s people until the end.

In summary of vs. 14-16, Jesus, though He dreaded the cross, was looking forward to the victory over death and the establishment of the Kingdom, the Church. The Lord with His disciples partaking of two elements from and after the Passover meal is a figurative expression denoting the communing of Jesus with His disciples around the Lord’s table in the church.

Vs. 17, 18 “And having taken a cup, when He had given thanks, He said, Take this and share it among yourselves, for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the Kingdom of God comes.” In McGarvey, “Luke brings out the parallelism between the Passover and the Lord’s Supper. Each consisted in eating followed by drinking, and the closeness of the parallel is emphasized by the use of almost the same words with regard to the cup.” (Pg. 646) After eating the Passover meal Jesus took the cup of blessing, the fruit of the vine, gave thanks and distributed the contents to the others. This, or drinking periodically, was the normal manner throughout the Passover meal. After eating, vs. 16, and drinking, vs. 17-18, Jesus speaks of His figurative eating and drinking in the Kingdom.

JESUS COMMUNION SUPPER

Memorials are very natural, common and universal. Every class of people have memorials. The civilized and the savage, the ignorant and the learned, the rich and the poor, all have relics and memorials. America has her Independence Day, Memorial Day and many others. Other countries have their day peculiar to their national history. Every tombstone in every cemetery is a monument to two facts:

1. That somebody lived and was loved;
2. That somebody has died and is lovingly remembered.

The Lord’s Supper is also a monument, a memorial service. Jesus knew well of man’s inclination to forget. An inclination admitted by all. For even the best of memories fail and the best of people forgotten. (Jer. 2:32 – Man can even forget his Creator; Eccl. 12:1). Thus we have monuments, pictures, tombstones and such to remind us. The Lord instituted His supper as His only monument to keep us from forgetting His great and wonderful sacrifice. Thus Jesus set up His own monument, not a statue of Liberty, not His face carved in the side of a mountain, not even a tombstone in a lonely graveyard, but a simple supper. Those who partake have their minds carried back to that awful night in Gethsemane, to the cruel mob, to the next morning as Jesus stood before Herod and Pilate, to the jagged nails that pierced His hand and feet, to the tremendous suffering and agony Jesus endured throughout the entire ordeal, to His very last words “it is finished, Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit,” (John 19:30; Luke 23:46) to the spear that pierced His side, and the blood that was shed for you and me. As the song suggests, “Lest I forget Gethsemane, lest I forget Thine agony; lest I forget Thy love for me, Lead me to Calvary” (Sacred Selections, pg. 299). It is to serve as a constant reminder of the vents of His death. Paul said, “as oft as ye eat this bread” (I Cor. 11:26).

As we continue our study beginning in vs. 19 of Luke 22 we find that Jesus took two of the Passover elements and gave them spiritual and memorial significance in the Kingdom/Church.

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