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What events occurred during the Last Supper?OverviewThe Last Supper represents one of the most significant events recorded in the New Testament, marking the final meal Jesus shared with His disciples before His crucifixion. This occasion is detailed in multiple Gospel accounts (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-38; John 13-17), each providing important insights. Although each Gospel writer contributes unique details, they collectively portray Jesus deliberate presentation of Himself as the Passover Lamb and the institution of a new covenant established in His blood.Historical ContextJewish tradition required the celebration of the Passover meal in remembrance of Israels deliverance from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 12). People from across the region streamed into Jerusalem to observe the feast, offering sacrifices and partaking in the festivals customs. Around this time, Roman authority tightly governed the region, and tensions were high due to messianic expectations among the Jewish people.Jerusalems population swelled significantly during Passover, heightening the anticipation around any revered teacher or prophet who might be in the city. Jesus reputation as a miracle-worker and teacher caused considerable stir, especially because many recognized Him as fulfilling Messianic prophecies.Events Leading Up to the Last SupperBefore the meal took place, Jesus fame had grown due to His teachings and miracles, such as raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11:38-44). Animosity against Him similarly increased among the religious leaders who believed He threatened their authority. Jesus had entered Jerusalem triumphantly (Matthew 21:1-11), an event remembered as the Triumphal Entry. He challenged corrupt practices in the Temple, driving out money changers (Matthew 21:12-13). Multiple confrontations with religious leaders ensued (Matthew 23:1-36).These circumstances set the stage for His final evening with the disciples before His arrest and subsequent trial.Location of the Last SupperThe meal occurred in what is traditionally called the Upper Room, a large furnished room in Jerusalem (Luke 22:12). Although the exact building can be a point of debate, many scholars and archaeologists identify sites in Jerusalems present-day Old City as possible locations. The Gospels describe disciples Peter and John preparing the Passover there at Jesus instruction (Luke 22:8-13), ensuring they had the necessary food, wine, and the setting for the meal in accordance with Jewish customs.Passover CelebrationsThe Passover meal included roasted lamb, bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and wine, recalling the swift departure from Egypt. Family and friends ate while reclining at the table, a cultural practice signifying freedom compared to previous bondage.Matthews Gospel records the disciples asking Jesus, Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover? (Matthew 26:17). This demonstrates their understanding of the meals importance. Mark similarly highlights their question, and Luke includes Jesus instructions to follow a man carrying a water jug to find the Upper Room (Mark 14:12-16; Luke 22:7-13).ParticipantsAll twelve disciples attended the Last Supper with Jesus. These included Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew (Nathanael), Matthew (Levi), Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus (Judas son of James), Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot (Matthew 10:2-4; Luke 6:13-16). Each disciple witnessed the momentous instructions and prophecies Jesus offered during the meal.Foot WashingOne of the most striking elements of the Last Supper, recorded uniquely in Johns Gospel, is Jesus washing the disciples feet before the meal. John 13:4-5 states, [Jesus] got up from the meal, laid aside His outer garments, and wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples feet.This act not only demonstrated humility but also underscored the call to serve others rather than aspire to personal status. He spoke these words: You call Me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, because I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one anothers feet (John 13:13-14). Foot washing thus became a model for servant leadership.Institution of the New CovenantDuring the meal, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and passed it to His disciples, saying, Take and eat; this is My body (Matthew 26:26). He then took a cup of wine and said, Drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 26:27-28).Lukes account records Jesus calling it the new covenant in My blood (Luke 22:20). This was the profound moment that formed the basis of what believers refer to as Communion or the Lords Supper. It signified a transition from the old sacrificial system (Hebrews 9:11-15) to a new covenant grounded in Jesus once-for-all sacrifice.Announcement of BetrayalAnother solemn highlight of the Last Supper is Jesus revelation that one of the closest followers would betray Him. The Gospels record Him stating, Truly I tell you, one of you will betray Me (Matthew 26:21). This troubled the disciples, who questioned who among them would do such a thing.Johns Gospel provides a more intimate moment where Jesus dips bread and hands it to Judas Iscariot (John 13:26). After this, Judas departs to carry out his plan with the chief priests (John 13:27-30). This fulfills prophecies such as Psalm 41:9 foretelling betrayal by a trusted companion.Prediction of DenialsJesus continued to prepare the disciples for what would unfold, even foretelling Peters denial: Truly I tell you, Jesus declared, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times (Matthew 26:34). Although Peter professed he would die before abandoning Jesus (Matthew 26:35), the events of that night-in courts where Jesus was tried-ultimately fulfilled His prediction.Discussion on ServanthoodLuke records that an argument arose among the disciples about who among them was the greatest (Luke 22:24). In response, Jesus taught them that true greatness lies in serving others, reiterating what He visually displayed in the foot-washing. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who leads like the one who serves (Luke 22:26). This reoriented the disciples priorities toward humility and sacrificial love.Final Teachings and EncouragementJohns Gospel preserves some of Jesus final teachings and prayers during the Last Supper. Chapters 14-17 in particular detail Jesus promises about the Holy Spirit, the call to abide in Him, and the High Priestly Prayer for unity among believers (John 17:20-23). These passages underscore Jesus concern for His disciples spiritual well-being, their love for one another, and their mission in the world.Significance and Theological Implications1 Corinthians 11:23-26 reiterates the account of Jesus words at the Last Supper and underscores the ongoing commemorative nature of the bread and the cup. This practice in the church reminds believers of the cost of salvation and the new covenant, uniting them in remembrance and hope.Church historians and archaeologists verify the historical plausibility of such a gathering in Jerusalem and affirm the consistent textual tradition of this narrative through a wealth of Greek manuscripts. The Dead Sea Scrolls, while they chiefly contain Old Testament segments, demonstrate the careful transmission of Scriptural documents in the broader Jewish culture of the era. Later discoveries like the Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus show that the New Testament portions, including the Gospels, align in reporting these key events.ConclusionThe Last Supper encapsulates Jesus final moments of teaching, intimacy, and heartfelt prayer with His disciples prior to His crucifixion. As the final Passover meal He observed on earth, it became the foundation for the new covenant of grace and redemption, symbolized through bread and wine.The humility He demonstrated in washing His disciples feet and the weighty prophecies of betrayal and denial point to both the human frailty of His closest companions and the divinity of Jesus, who knew future events. This powerful event remains central in Christian devotion, grounding believers in the remembrance of His sacrifice and in living out the servanthood He so vividly exemplified.AnswerThe Last Supper is what we call the last meal Jesus ate with His disciples before His betrayal and arrest. The Last Supper is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 26:1730; Mark 14:1226; Luke 22:730). It was more than Jesus last meal; it was a Passover meal, as well. One of the important moments of the Last Supper is Jesus command to remember what He was about to do on behalf of all mankind: shed His blood on the cross thereby paying the debt of our sins (Luke 22:19).In addition to predicting His suffering and death for our salvation (Luke 22:1516), Jesus also used the Last Supper to imbue the Passover with new meaning, institute the New Covenant, establish an ordinance for the church, and foretell Peters denial of Him (Luke 22:34) and Judas Iscariots betrayal (Matthew 26:2124).The Last Supper brought the Old Testament observance of the Passover feast to its fulfillment. Passover was an especially holy event for the Jewish people in that it commemorated the time when God spared them from the plague of physical death and brought them out of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 11:113:16). During the Last Supper with His apostles, Jesus took two symbols associated with Passover and imbued them with fresh meaning as a way to remember His sacrifice, which saves us from spiritual death and delivers us from spiritual bondage: After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. And 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 (Luke 22:1720).Jesus words during the Last Supper about the unleavened bread and the cup echo what He had said after He fed the 5,000: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. . . . I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. . . . Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink (John 6:35, 51, 5455). Salvation comes through Christ and the sacrifice of His physical body on the cross.Also during the Last Supper, Jesus taught the principles of servanthood and forgiveness as He washed His disciples feet: 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 22:2627; John 13:120).The Last Supper today is remembered during the Lords Supper, or communion (1 Corinthians 11:2333). The Bible teaches that Jesus death was typified in the offering of the Passover sacrifice (John 1:29). John notes that Jesus death resembles the Passover sacrifice in that His bones were not broken (John 19:36; cf. Exodus 12:46). And Paul said, Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law, including the feasts of the Lord (Matthew 5:17).Typically, the Passover meal was a family celebration. However, at the Last Supper, the apostles were alone with Jesus (Luke 22:14), which suggests that this particular meal has specific meaning for the church, of which the apostles became the foundation (Ephesians 2:20). While the Last Supper had implications for the Jews, it was designed for the church as well. Today the Lords Table is one of two ordinances observed by the church.The Last Supper was rooted in the Old Covenant even as it heralded the New. Jeremiah 31:31 promised a New Covenant between God and Israel, in which God said, I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people (Jeremiah 31:33). Jesus made a direct reference to this New Covenant during the Last Supper: This cup is the new covenant in my blood (Luke 22:20). A new dispensation was on the horizon. In Gods grace, the New Covenant applies to more than Israel; everyone who has faith in Christ will be saved (see Ephesians 2:1214).The Last Supper was a significant event and proclaimed a turning point in Gods plan for the world. In comparing the crucifixion of Jesus to the feast of Passover, we can readily see the redemptive nature of Christs death. As symbolized by the original Passover sacrifice in the Old Testament, Christs death atones for the sins of His people; His blood rescues us from death and saves us from slavery. Today, the Lords Supper is when believers reflect upon Christs perfect sacrifice and know that, through our faith in receiving Him, we will be with Him forever (Luke 22:18; Revelation 3:20). Rosemary Bardsley 2025 Chapters 22 to 24 are mostly historical narrative reporting the final events Judas arrangement to betray Jesus, the last supper, Jesus prayer, Jesus arrest, Peters denial, the trials, the crucifixion and burial, and the resurrection and post-resurrection appearances. We will look at Judas betrayal and Peters denial in the next study. A. THE LAST SUPPER Luke 22:7 38 The original instructions for the feast of Unleavened Bread/Passover are found in Exodus 12 and summarized in Leviticus 23:4 8. The annual Passover feast commemorated two historic events that occurred on the night of the original Passover: (1) the angel of death passed over the Israelite homes when he saw the blood of a perfect lamb applied to their doorways; (2) God brought the Israelite slaves out of Egypt. A two-fold redemption occurred on that one night: redemption of the firstborn from death, and redemption of the Israelites from slavery. This ritual was an annual reminder of Gods historical redemptive action. But, as Jesus indicated when he celebrated the Passover with his disciples, it was also a predictive symbol of his death: The Passover bread symbolized his physical body which was killed. The Passover cup symbolized his shed blood. The entire ritual pointed ahead to a far greater redemption: he, the perfect human, died so that those who believe in him can be set free from spiritual death (separation from God) and from spiritual slavery (bondage to sin and Satan). Jesus said to his disciples in Luke 22:15 I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. This was the final predictive Passover the final death of an animal substitute to obtain the forgiveness of sins necessary to secure the life of others. When we study the Scriptures we realize that this death, the death of the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29), existed as a reality in Gods mind before the first Passover lambs were slain in Exodus; and even before that (Revelation 13:8). When Jesus said that he had been eagerly desired to eat this final Passover, that longing, that saving plan of the triune God, had been in place before the world began (1Peter 1:18 20). And now, on this very day, Jesus would suffer: he would die as our substitute, the one real substitute of whom all previous substitutes were mere shadows. There is also another aspect of what Jesus said here that takes us back into the history of Gods dealings with Israel. In Luke 22:20 called the cup the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. The concept of covenant permeates the Old Testament, where we read of covenants with Noah, Abraham (Isaac & Jacob), and David. We also read of the covenant established at Sinai. But all of these covenants are secondary and servants to the ultimate covenant for which they all prepared the way. The prophets called this a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31 - 34), an everlasting covenant (Isaiah 55:3; Ezekiel 37:26), a covenant of peace. This covenant, Jesus says, is in my blood the blood that he knew would be shed before the next sunset. The new covenant, anticipated by and fulfilling all previous covenants, is about to be established. Read Luke 22:7 20. Answer these questions: What do you think Jesus meant by the kingdom of God in verses16 & 17? According to Jesus in verse 19, why do we eat the bread in a Communion service? According to verse 20, what does the cup remind us of? How do you regard the Lords Supper/Holy Communion as a formal ritual duty? Or as a powerful reminder of the love and grace of our Saviour? Judas was still at the table when Jesus instituted Holy Communion and gave it to his disciples, and Jesus knew that he was about to betray him. What does this say to churches that tell Christians not to take Communion if there is sin in their hearts? Is Holy Communion a message of grace to sinners, or a privilege for the righteous? Explain your answer. A.1 The kingdom of God 22:16, 17 In Jesus two references to the kingdom of God he is talking about something still future. We have seen several times in Luke that, although the kingdom is present wherever Jesus is, and wherever his gospel is preached, and although the kingdom can be entered in this present era, and is already ours in this present era, there is a significant future aspect of the kingdom. The consensus of opinion is that Jesus is here referring to the final, future kingdom of God, that is, to the new heavens and new earth, the eternal state in which there is permanent, face-to-face fellowship with God. Matthew reports that Jesus said I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Fathers kingdom (Matthew 26:29). Hendriksen paraphrases Matthews statement: until in the kingdom of my Father ... I shall enter into everlasting, festive fellowship with you. He comments: then both Passover and eucharist will reach their fruition. ... We see, therefore, that communion not only points back to what Jesus Christ has done for us but also forward to what he is still going to mean for us. Drinking new wine in my Fathers kingdom in all probability must be interpreted as a symbol for the glorious reunion and never-ending festivities awaiting the children of God in the hereafter. (p911f, The Gospel of Matthew, Baker, 1973). Leon Morris comments on Matthew: Jesus is looking forward to the end of this world system and the setting up of the perfect kingdom of God. Then, and not till then, he will have table fellowship with the little group. The words mark a solemn farewell to the familiar intercourse they had been having during the time of Jesus ministry here on earth, but also are a sure indication that at some unspecified time in the future that fellowship will be renewed. (p662, The Gospel According to Matthew, IVP, 1992. Paul, perhaps with these words of Jesus in mind, teaches us that when we partake of communion we proclaim the Lords death until he comes 1Corinthians 11:26. But access to that kingdom, to all aspects of the kingdom both present and future, is only available because of the death that Jesus is about to suffer. In his death Gods plan of salvation, set in place before the creation of the world, is about to be brought to its completion. Without this sin-bearing death no one is qualified to inherit the kingdom; without this death we remain under the dominion of Satan. (See Colossians 1:12 14; 2:13 - 15) B. THE DISCIPLES FAILURES Luke 22:23 46 B.1The first failure Luke 22:1 - 6We will look more fully at Judas and his failure in the next study. His biggest and definitive failure was his failure to believe that Jesus Christ was the One he claimed to be, and that Jesus words not only about himself, but about the nature of his kingdom, were true. His failure was an expression of his unbelief. But the other eleven believed, as Peter confessed on their behalf on two reported occasions Luke 9:20 and John 6:68, 69. Their failures here in Luke 22 were neither fatal nor final. B.2 The second failure Luke 22:23 30When Jesus told them that one of the twelve was about to betray him, the disciples started discussing which of them it might be. That seems to have led to a bit of bragging which resulted in a dispute about who was greatest. We have already seen that Jesus teaching and example outlaws our human quest for power and position. And even here at the last Passover, according to John, we see Jesus demonstrating the servant heart. What do these verses say about this?Luke 9:46 48: Luke 18:15 17: John 13:2 17: Luke 22:25 26: Luke 22:27: There is ultimate greatness for these faithful apostles, but it is not in this world; it is in an as yet future kingdom (Luke 22:28 30). B.3 The third failure Luke 22:23 30The third failure pre-dated, and probably was the reason behind, their discussion of personal greatness. This is their failure to actually listen to what Jesus had just told them. He had, by means of the Passover ritual, mentioned his impending suffering and death, including a sense of divine purpose in that suffering and death. How did Jesus communicate his awareness of Gods purpose?22:15: 22:16: 22:17: 22:19: 22:20: 22:21: 22:22: But what he said did not immediately impact them; all they could think about was their own personal desire for greatness. B.4 The fourth failure Luke 22:31 34 Peters up-coming failure is predicted by Jesus. We will look at his failure in the next study. B.5 The fifth failure Luke 22:39 46 By the time Jesus is praying on the Mount of Olives it seems that the disciples have come to some awareness that Jesus is leaving them that he is in fact going to suffer horrendously and be killed. Luke tells us that they went to sleep while Jesus was praying exhausted from sorrow verse 45. Luke reports this only once; other gospel writers tell us it happened three times (Matthew 26:36 46; Mark 14:32 42). From Johns gospel we know that after Jesus had instituted Communion and after Judas had left them, he taught them all that is contained in John 13:31 38 and John 14 to 16 and then prayed John 17. These chapters contain several references to his approaching death and his return to the Father. And Jesus knew that their hearts were troubled (see John 14:1, 27). It was only after all of that that Jesus and the eleven apostles went to the garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, where he prayed and the apostles slept. C. JESUS Luke 22 gives us some insights into the person of Jesus, and helps us to understand who he is and what that means. C.1 His divine knowledgeIt is clear that Jesus knows things that no mere human being knows. Read Luke 22:8 46. What did Jesus know that others did not and could not know?Verse 10 12: Verses 15 20: Verse21, 22: Verse 29, 30: Verse 31 - 34: Verse 37: Verses 40, 46: Jesus knew both the insignificant detail of our comings and goings, and the grand macro reality of Gods eternal plan, and all things in between. He also knows our hearts whether there is true faith there or not, and how vulnerable we are to temptation. C.2 His changed instructionsIn verse 35 Jesus refers back to the apostles original mission trip in his name (see Luke 9:1 6), when he had given them certain instructions. Now, in verse 36, he changes his instructions to completely the opposite. Previously it seems that they went on the mission trip without any physical means of support; but the changed instructions include the means of physical support and protection. Immediately after these changed instructions Jesus quotes from Isaiah 53:12 he was numbered with the transgressors, and says that that is about to be fulfilled: he, the one who was recently welcomed into Jerusalem by an adoring crowd (Luke 19:28 40), would soon be the object of the crowds scorn and mockery. The apostles of a perceived transgressor would not enjoy the same welcome and popularity as they had previously as disciples of a miracle-working prophet. The change of his status would mean a change in theirs. C.3 His prayerWe have seen in previous chapters of Luke that Jesus was committed to going to Jerusalem, with the knowledge, indeed the intention, of there, on this Passover day, dying as a sacrifice of atonement in fulfilment of the eternal purpose of God, set in place before the creation of the world. We have seen this in section A above when we looked at the Last Supper. How does Jesus see his death as fulfilment?Verses 15, 16: Verse 20: Verse 22: Verse 37: But although he knows that his death has been decreed by God before the world began, and he came to fulfil that purpose, he still shrinks from it. Although he knows that he will go through with it, yet he wishes there was some other way. Consider how Jesus, being fully human and fully God, would feel:The physical pain: The degradation of such a death: The mockery that he would experience from the time he was arrested to the time he died: Peters denial: Rejection by those he came to save (the rejection of his love): The load of our sin and guilt upon him: The Fathers rejection: The punishment/penalty of our sin: C.4 His final instruction to the apostlesJesus, feeling the pressure of what he knew was about to happen to him, knew also that these eleven apostles would soon also experience something of what he himself would suffer. Knowing himself the pressure of the temptation to give in and give up on Gods agenda, he knew that these men would likewise feel like giving up. So he said to them, before he prayed pray that you will not fall into temptation (verse 40), and then afterwards, Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation (verse 46). Notice the difference in these two instructions the first is pray that you will not and the second pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The first is what they were to pray, the second is why they were to pray. The temptation above all temptations, the pressure above all pressures, will be for them the temptation/pressure to stop believing in Jesus Christ. Ways of Christian living - Edexcel God and authority in Christianity Tonight, we continue our study of Lukes Gospel with Luke 21:1-22:38. These readings give us Lukes account of the institution of the Last Supper. You can join us any time on our journey. Until now, Luke has not given his readers a calendar. He has not told us how long Jesus has been in Jerusalem, nor has he told us of Jesus plan to be in Jerusalem during the celebration of Passover. We do know that the Passover festival was one of the great pilgrimage festivals of Judaism before the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD (about 37 years after the events of the Crucifixion). Passover is an eight-day festival celebrating Israelite liberation from slavery in Egypt. Ex. 12. The basic story is that God instructs the Israelites to sacrifice a lamb, to paint its blood on their doorway, and when the Destroy comes through Egypt to kill all the firstborn, it will skip the houses with the blood. Ex. 12:12-13. The central focus of the celebration is the Passover meal, which consists of the lamb, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. Ex. 12:8. (The more elaborate Jewish Seder meal only arose after the destruction of the Temple.) The purpose of the meal is to re-tell the story of liberation, particularly to your children. Ex. 12:24-27. Jesus takes this Passover meal of liberation from slavery and turns it into a celebration of his sacrifice to obtain liberation from the slavery to sin. It is only in Lukes Gospel that Jesus uses the language that he is instituting a new covenant (or new testament in the KJV), echoing the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-33. Jesus is creating something new. Like the Passover instructions in Exodus, Jesus is explicit that this meal should likewise be repeated to both remember and teach about the event (the Crucifixion). Unsurprisingly, Lukes telling of the event is very similar to Pauls teaching on the Last Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. The Last Supper marks the culmination of Jesuss life and teachings. In this last teaching, he does not give his disciples a list of theological principles to memorize, but he gives them an action to follow and a meal to share. In the Last Supper, we have the complete summation of Jesuss teachings about who he is and who we are to become. The Last Supper comes after Jesuss teaching on the Apocalypse. It is this meal that marks the dawn of the New Age. In the final part of our reading this week, we can experience Jesuss loneliness as he goes to the Cross. Imagine the scene. Jesus had been teaching in the Temple for days. He has just celebrated the holiest Jewish feast with his closest disciples and has transformed the meaning of that feast to point toward him and his upcoming sacrifice. He tells them that he will soon be betrayed. The disciples begin to question who that will be. This discussion, however, soon turns to the question (once again) as to who is the greatest. Jesus must again correct the disciples understanding and to further tell Peter that he will betray him. In his final instructions to the disciples, he tells them that for their next missionary journey (unlike their first), they will need to be fully supplied because this time, they will only encounter hostility. Jesus sees what is going to happen, and he sees that his disciples still do not understand. He is alone. SCHEDULE: Next week is the Good Friday account from Luke. On April 15 is our annual Christian Seder Dinner. All are welcome, including guests, but RSVP is required. Dinner is a traditional Mediterranean food of lamb and vegetables, and we use the Jewish Passover seder service as a framework for our Holy Week remembrance. Dinner is at 6. The menu is soup, salad, and breadsticks. Discussion about 6:45. Hope to see you here! Jerusalem is built as a city * that is at unity with itself;To which the tribes go up,the tribes of the LORD, * the assembly of Israel, to praise the Name of the LORD.For there are the thrones of judgment, * the thrones of the house of David.Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: * May they prosper who love you.Psalm 122:4-6 by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson Audio (26:21) Gospel Parallels 234, 236 Free E-mail Bible Study Apostle Peter: Disciple Lessons from the Rock James J. Tissot, 'The Last Supper: Judas Dipping His Hand in the Dish' (1886-94), gouache on gray wove paper, Brooklyn Museum, New York. "7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.8 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.' 9 'Where do you want us to prepare for it?' they asked. 10 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, 11 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?" 12 He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there.'13 They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. 14When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.15 And he said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.' 17After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among you. 18 For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'19 And 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.' 20 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.'" (Luke 22:7-20, NIV)In this lesson we consider a few verses in which are hidden the power of the Gospel. If you were raised in church, you've heard these words hundreds of times. I encourage you, however, to set aside what you "know" and come as a simple disciple, listening afresh to Jesus' words as if for the first time. You're in for a treat!Chronology of the Lord's Supper"Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed." (Luke 22:7)There is some controversy about which day of the week that Passover occurred on. As I explain in my short essay on "The Chronology of Holy Week" in Appendix 2H, Luke seems to indicate that Jesus ate the Passover meal with his disciples on Thursday evening, following a sacrifice of the Passover lambs in the temple on Thursday afternoon. Peter and John Prepare the Passover (Luke 22:8-13) James J. Tissot, 'The Man Bearing a Pitcher' (1886-94), gouache on gray wove paper, Brooklyn Museum, New York. "Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, 'Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.' 'Where do you want us to prepare for it?' they asked. 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 upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there.'They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover." (Luke 22:8-13) Finding a room in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover meal wasn't easy with all the crowds of Pilgrims. Jesus now gives some peculiar instructions. Normally women would be carrying jars (keramion, "an earthenware vessel, (water) jar"979), while men would be carrying leather bottles or skins (askos).980Jesus' instruction sounds like some kind of pre-arranged signal, perhaps in order to hold the meal in secret, in a place unknown to his enemies. Edersheim comments, "Evidently, neither the house where the Passover was to be kept, nor its owner, was to be named beforehand within hearing of Judas."981There could also be a reference to Jesus' supernatural knowledge, similar, perhaps, to Jesus' instructions for obtaining a donkey for the triumphal entry (19:30-31). An upper room would be an extra room, built onto the flat roof of a typical Palestinian house. It was probably "furnished" (Greek strnny, "to equip something with appropriate furnishings"982) with carpets and cushions on which guests would recline for their meal. Edersheim speculates that this was probably the house of a follower, perhaps St. Mark's parents' home (cf. Mark 14:51-52; Acts 12:12).983He supposes that all that is needed for the meal is already in the upper room -- wine for the four cups, cakes of unleavened bread, and the bitter herbs. All Peter and John would need to do would be to sacrifice the Passover lamb at the temple. Either Peter or John would have personally cut the lamb's throat at the appropriate time in the temple service. The lamb would then be roasted on a pomegranate wood spit, and the lamps prepared for the room.984 Jesus instructs the disciples to convey this message: "The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" (verse 11). Many hosts in crowded Jerusalem would combine several families of pilgrims for a Passover meal. But Jesus is asking for a private meal with his disciples only.Jesus' Words about the Passover (Luke 22:14-16)"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.'" (Luke 22:14-16)It was customary to recline at the Passover meal. Guests would lean on their left arm and eat with their right, legs splayed out behind them. Often I have wondered at Jesus' words to his disciples in this passage. The KJV translates it literally, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." The doubling of the word "desire" reflects the Hebrew infinitive absolute, a grammatical form indicating intensity -- "earnestly desired" (RSV, NASB). Why was Jesus' desire so great? Verse 16 indicates the answer -- that this will be his last meal with them. The Passover meal is special -- special to Jesus -- and he is so grateful to have the Twelve around the table with him for this final occasion. As host of the meal, Jesus begins to speak the ancient words of the Passover meal, telling of Israel's Exodus from Egypt by God's strong hand. For Jesus, this Passover meal looks forward to its fulfillment in the Great Feast in the Kingdom of God at the End Time (Luke 13:28-29; 14:15; 22:30; Revelation 19:9). The Cup (Luke 22:17-18)Most Christians are familiar with the Words of Institution given by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, since they are usually the words incorporated into our observance of the Lord's Supper:"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took (lamban, Aorist tense) bread, and when he had given thanks (eucharistе, Aorist participle), he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper [he took] the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)The order in Corinthians (and in Matthew and Mark) is "Bread - Cup." But according to the NIV text, Luke's account is "Cup - Bread - Cup." Why? Apparently in Luke's record, Jesus uses an earlier cup in the meal to emphasize the fact that he will not eat the Passover with them again until the Great Feast in the Kingdom of God. In Matthew and Mark this emphasis comes after his only saying about the cup (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25). Here is Luke's telling of the incident:"After taking (dechomai, Aorist participle) the cup, he gave thanks (eucharistе, Aorist participle) and said, 'Take (lamban, Aorist imperative) this and divide it (diameriz,Aorist imperative) among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.'" (Luke 22:17-18)The liturgy for the Passover meal consisted of four cups of wine, each with its own blessing and words of explanation. Jesus doubtless utters the ancient words, but at points in the ritual, he distinguishes the cup and the bread with a new meaning related to his own ministry. Because of the centrality of these passages to our Christian worship, let's examine the verbs in verse 17:The Greek verb dechomai here has the sense "to take something in hand, grasp."985It is similar to the usage of the verb lamban in 1 Corinthians 11:23. I don't see much significance in the difference. The Greek verb eucharistе means, "to express appreciation for benefits or blessings, give thanks, express thanks, render/return thanks."986A prayer of thanksgiving was uttered whenever Jews partook of food, and there was an established prayer to be used on this special occasion, probably, "Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the world, who has created the fruit of the vine!"987Notice that Jesus echoes the words "fruit of the vine" in verse 18 as he proclaims that he will not drink of it again until the Kingdom comes. Greek lamban is used in its most common definition, "to get hold of something by laying hands on or grasping something directly or indirectly, take, take hold of, grasp, take in hand."988The disciples are told to grasp the cup.Greek diameriz means "to distribute objects to a series of persons, distribute, share with someone."989It sounds like they were to take the cup, each taking a sip, then passing it on to the next person around the table. The Bread that Is His Body (Luke 22:19a)"And he took (lamban) bread, gave thanks (eucharistе) and broke (kla) it, and gave (didmi) it to them, saying, 'This is my body given (didmi, present passive participle) for (hyper) you; do this in remembrance of me.'" (Luke 22:19)Part of the Passover meal used unleavened bread. The host would hold the thin loaf of bread and break it, retaining some of it for later in the ritual meal. On this occasion, Jesus forever changes the meaning of the bread. Before this, unleavened bread reminded the Jews that there hadn't been enough time for the bread to rise, so sudden was their Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 12:19; 39). Now and forever after it signifies the broken body of our Lord. Jesus' thanksgiving on this occasion is doubtless the ancient Jewish blessing over the bread: "Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the world, who has caused bread to come forth out of the earth."Jesus' breaking of the bread (Greek kla) was normal enough as their host, but it was in this act that Jesus was recognized after his resurrection in the town of Emmaus (Luke 24:30-31). He also broke (Greek katakla) a boy's five loaves and fed 5,000 and later 4,000 (9:16; Mark 8:19-20). The disciples' practice of the Lord's Supper came to be called "the breaking of bread" (Acts 2:42, 46; cf. 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16).990In Luke, Jesus describes the bread as "given for you," literally "being given" (present passive participle) on your behalf." The Greek preposition here is hyper, which is "a marker indicating that an activity or event is in some entity's interest, 'for, in behalf of, for the sake of someone/something.'"991Though it isn't developed further in this context, the idea is one of a ransom, where one life is given in exchange for another. Jesus spells this out in Mark's Gospel: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45; Matthew 20:28; cf. 1 Timothy 2:6; Hebrews 9:15)The Real Presence of Jesus in the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19a)One question that has divided theologians for centuries is the meaning of the simple verb in: "This is my body." The Greek verb is the present active tense of eimi, the verb "to be," and describes a close connection with, "frequently in statements of identity or equation." Here it is used in an explanation "to show how something is to be understood, 'is a representation of, is the equivalent of.' The verb serves as a copula. It is usually translated "mean" in the formula "this or that means, that is to say."992Roman Catholic scholars, from the time the doctrine of transubstantiation was declared a dogma in 1215 AD, insist that Jesus means that the bread is in very fact and true reality his body. In other words, they take the verb "to be" extremely literally. They contend that though the consecrated bread looks like bread in its "accidents," the bread or "host" is in true reality or "substance" the very body of Jesus Christ. That is why they take such care not to drop or spill the elements in the mass and why the devout genuflect before the presence of the consecrated host in a Catholic sanctuary.993Protestant scholars take the verb "to be" figuratively, so that Jesus is saying "This signifies or means my body." However, Martin Luther taught "consubstantiation," that the actual body and blood of Christ exists "in, with, or under" the elements of bread and wine, transformed by the Word of God (The prefix "con-" means "with."). A few Protestants do protest too much and repeatedly declare the elements of the Lord's Supper to be "mere symbols." Why? Those aren't Jesus' words. In such a callous declaration, these Protestants may be expressing a thoroughly "reformed" doctrine, but not the words of Scripture.There is a real presence of Jesus with his people as we partake of the elements. Partaking of the elements constitutes a spiritual feeding on Christ himself. Jesus surely intended, in its fuller understanding, his discourse on the Living Bread (John 6:25-59) to amplify his disciples' understanding of the Lord's Supper.994And in this teaching Jesus is graphic to the extreme: "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever" (John 6:53-58).This teaching was so literal and so strong that John records, "From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him" (John 6:66). My dear friend, when you next partake of the Lord's Supper, remember to feed on Jesus in this act of Communion. Paul, too, indicates that partaking of the bread and the cup are a participation (Greek koinnia, "sharing") in the body and blood of Christ, in the same way that a Jewish priest who ate a portion of the sacrifice participated in the sacrifice itself (1 Corinthians 10:14-18). There is more here than "mere symbols."A Textual Variant (Luke 22:19b-20)Nearly all the ancient manuscripts, as well as most of the ancient versions and Fathers contain the "longer" reading of this passage. But the Western Text (D) and a few Italian manuscripts omit the following words: "'... 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.'" Were they in the original text as Luke wrote it? Quite probably. Though omitted in the RSV, the longer text is restored in the NRSV, and is shown in the KJV and most other modern translations (NIV, NASB, TEV, JB, etc.).995Do This in My Memory (Luke 22:19b)Some