

Matthew 27:17-29

Introduction: From our previous text, there's a plot to kill Jesus, a plan to betray Him and a full week of activities of millions of people who are coming for the passover event. For our sermon today we have three distinct points.

1. The Passover Observance - Vs. 17-19
2. The Announcement of the Betrayer - Vs. 20-25
3. The Lord's Table Instituted - Vs. 26-29

THE PASSOVER

We spoke about this last week from Exodus 12:1-3 concerning the reason Israel celebrated the passover. It was the heart of deliverance from Egypt (10th plague). Some guidelines for the Passover:

1. Selecting a lamb without blemish
2. Sacrificing the lamb at twilight
3. Applying the blood to the doorposts
4. Roasting the lamb not eating raw
5. Eating all the lamb that night and not eating the leftovers
6. Eating in haste, Exodus 12:11, "Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste—it is the Lord's Passover."

Also no foreigner outside of Israel was allowed to participate and a servant living within a household had to be circumcised to participate. The passover required the killing of a lamb and its blood to be applied. And this event taking place was the "last passover" as they knew it. The lamb would not be sought after and sacrificed year after year, because Jesus was now the passover lamb. 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, "Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Note: unleavened bread has no yeast to rise.

As this truth should not be set aside nor forgotten, Christ's blood He shed on the cross as the passover Lamb must be applied (by your repentance towards God) so that He sees the perfect sacrificial lamb's blood and not you. The entire Bible is about redemption.

THE BETRAYER ANNOUNCED

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Imagine for a moment eating at the table with the Lord and the announcement that one of you is going to betray Him. One of you is a devil. One of you is not who you say you are (vs. 21). Without further study, we all know that Jesus knew His betrayer. Matthew Henry makes this comments, *“He knew all things that should befall him, and yet did not draw back. He foresaw the treachery and baseness of a disciple of his own, and yet went on; took care of those that were given him, though he knew there was a Judas among them; would pay the price of our redemption, though he foresaw some would deny the Lord that bought them; and shed his blood, though he knew it would be trodden under foot as an unholy thing.”*¹ Again we underscore the idea that God uses the wicked hearts of men to fulfill His divine plan. And He does so here, by using Judas to eventually lead the religious leaders to Him in the Garden.

We have two responses, one from the disciples and of course the one from Judas. How did the disciples take this news? They were deeply grieved, the Authorized says, *“exceeding sorrowful.”* The words describe the depth of grief and fear and shame that it could be one of them.

The response was *“Lord, is it I”* or *“Surely not I Lord.”* The disciples did not ask if it was Judas. *It is possible for a hypocrite to go through life not only undiscovered, but unsuspected.*² We are to suspect ourselves in our walk with the Lord. We are to look carefully at our life. Again Ephesians 5:15-17 is an affirmation of this, *“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”* It also important to note that the Lord’s Table is going to be instituted and a valued point is for us to *“examine ourselves.”*

The traitor is at the table with us, and this makes this treachery even more hideous. The Psalmist David addresses in his sickness the enemies and false friends he had, Psalm 41:9, *“Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.”* The warning and judgment to the traitor is serious, vs. 24 of our text, *“It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.”* This ought to be a warning to believers to stay the course, keep walking the narrow way and be obedient to the commands of our Lord.

Judas even appears to be as the others, *“is it I”* he asks. This was clear who he was now. *They who are contriving to betray Christ, will, some time or other, betray themselves, and their own tongues will fall upon them.*³ Too often men will come week after week to church, hear, see and witness the work of God, but they in the end, when confronted, will bolt. Today you may very well be one of the

¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_026.cfm

² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_026.cfm

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crowd in appearance, but your heart is not right. You should ask yourself this very question too, “Is it I?”

THE LORD’S TABLE INSTITUTED

The Lord’s Table points to the ultimate deliverance of God’s people from slavery to sin and death. The Passover looked back to the temporary rescue of Israel from Egypt and for us it looks forward to the eternal and spiritual promise of the new covenant. The lamb slaughtered during the passover foreshadowed the spotless lamb of God who died on the cross. 1 Peter 1:18-19, “**Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.**” Hebrews 9:25-26, “**Nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**”

The church practiced this often (Acts 2:42), and congregational meals were developed known as “love feasts”, and we see this in Jude 12a, “**These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves.**” These meals were concluded with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. But there was a disrespect and partiality shown in these meals that developed over time. 1 Corinthians 11:27-32, “**Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.**” The Christian should be pursuing holiness at all times, 1 Peter 1:15-17, “**But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, You shall be holy, for I am holy. If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth.**”

A traditional passover meal would have four cups of wine passed around the table. After the first cup, bitter herbs would be dipped in a fruit sauce and eaten while a message was given explaining the passover. Then the first part of Psalms 113-118 would be sung. After the second cup, unleavened bread would be broken and passed. It was at this point where Jesus said in Luke 22:19, “**And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.**” Then a roasted lamb would

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be eaten. After prayer, a third cup was passed and the rest of Psalms 113-118 would be sung. It was here where we find in Luke 22:20, “**This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.**” The fourth and final cup was passed before leaving, and looked forward to the coming kingdom.⁴

VIEWS ON THE LORD’S TABLE

The Catholic view is the substance of the elements of the Lord’s Table is transformed into the physical body and blood of Christ at the moment of the priests blessing (transubstantiation). It is taken from John 6:35 where Jesus says “**I am the bread of life.**” However, it should be taken in context of the other I Am’s of Jesus, the door, the life, the light. The problem with this view is it’s a repeated action, therefore denying the once and for all sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, cf John 19:30, “**It is finished.**” The Lord’s Table is to be understood as a memorial of what has been done and what is to come.

HOW WE OBSERVE AND WHY

When we observe the Lord’s Table we rejoice in His sacrifice, but we look forward to what is to come in eternity. Again 1 Corinthians 11:26, “**For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.**” And He mentions this truth in our text, vs. 29. Celebrating the Lord’s Table anticipates the hope of Jesus’ return, the joy of heaven, and the future glories of the marriage supper of the Lamb, “**Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.**”⁵

In conclusion, what does the Lord’s Table do and mean for us today?

1. Commemorates Jesus’ substitutionary sacrifice symbolized by the elements of the bread and the cup.
2. Reminds believers of the historical truths of the gospel.
3. Prompts believers to repent of known sin.
4. Causes them to rejoice in their redemption from sin and their saving union with Christ.
5. Motivates them to continue waling in obedience to the Lord
6. Reminds them to hope in His imminent return.

⁴ Much was taken from John MacArthurs Biblical Doctrine book, pp. 788-89

⁵ Revelation 19:9; NASB