



A copy of this lesson is posted in Adobe pdf format at <http://cranfordville.com> under Bible Studies in the Bible Study Aids section. A note about the [blue, underlined](#) material: These are hyperlinks that allow you to click them on and bring up the specified scripture passage automatically while working inside the pdf file connected to the internet. Just use your web browser's back arrow or the taskbar to return to the lesson material.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**Quick Links to the Study**

I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

II. [Message](#)

- a. [Passover Meal, vv. 14-18](#)
- b. [The Lord's Supper, vv. 19-20](#)
- c. [Prediction of Betrayal, vv. 21-23](#)

\*\*\*\*\*  
 As we return to the regular Sunday School lessons based on the Formations series, we pick up in the midst of an eight lesson study on Jesus based on the Gospel of Luke under the heading, "A Risen Savior."

The pericope under consideration in this lesson relates the establishment of what has come to be called in evangelical tradition "the Lord's Supper." Interestingly, all three synoptic gospels contain narratives depicting the same event, but, although the Gospel of John alludes to the supper, it is not directly described. Instead, in Paul's first letter to the Corinthian communities of faith, he inserted an account of this event as a basis for addressing a problem with the way this was being handled by believers in Corinth (1 Cor. 11:23-25). Historically, his account is the first of these four accounts to be put in written form. 1 Corinthians was written in the middle fifties of the first century, while the synoptic gospels came into written expression in a period from the middle sixties to the late eighties of the first century. Thus a comparative study of all four accounts is important for correct, detailed understanding of the individual perspective of each NT writer.

For an earlier Bible study on the Lord's Supper based primarily on [Matt. 26:17-30](#) as the foundational passage, go to [NT Bible Studies](#) in the [Spiritual Resources](#) section of [Cranfordville.com](#). Elements of that study will be incorporated into this study.

**I Context**

Once more, we will take a look initially at the settings of this passage, both historically and literally. Such is necessary for more accurate understanding of the passage and its religious meaning. The first part of the historical context material is copied from previous studies, since the material is the same for this Lukan based study as with the previous ones.

**a. Historical**

Two levels historical exploration are important to the interpretative process. *First*, we need to explore the composition of the gospel document this passage occurs in, and second we need to locate the occurrence of this event in the public ministry of Jesus. Both of these issues pose challenges, but honest study of scripture needs to learn as much as can be legitimately gleaned. This knowledge helps prevent distorted interpretation of the meaning of the scripture passage.

Regarding the compositional history of the Gospel of Luke, let me summarize a lot of Lukan scholarship by the following. William Beard in the *Interpreter's One Volume Commentary on the Bible* (iPreach online) summarizes the basic issue this way: "According to tradition this gospel was written by Luke, 'the beloved physician' and travel companion of Paul (Col. 4:14; Philemon 1:24; 2 Tim. 4:11). Actually the tradition is not very old. It appears first in the writings of Irenaeus, who was a theologian living in Gaul during the latter part of the 2nd cent. The Muratorian fragment (ca. A.D. 200), a document which presents an official list of Christian scriptures, supports the

same conclusion.” With the acceptance of this early church tradition -- although not all do and since the gospel itself makes no effort internally to identify its author -- then the issue becomes trying to locate a setting for the writing of this gospel. Again Bill Beard summarizes quite effectively these questions:

“The exact date and place of the writing of this gospel cannot be ascertained. Since the author uses Mark as a source and since he seems to have accurate knowledge of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans (19:41-44; 21:20-24; see pp. 1029-31) he evidently wrote after A.D. 70. He must have written before 140, when his gospel was included in the canon of the heretic Marcion. Since the situation of the church reflected in the gospel fits well the political situation of the reign of the Emperor Domitian (81-96), a date from about 85 to 95 is most likely.

According to one tradition Luke wrote his histories in Rome. Another locates his writing in Greece. Since there is a correlative tradition that the evangelist died in one of the Greek provinces, this latter tradition has better support. Any of these locations assumes the traditional authorship and bears the same burdens. Perhaps all we can say is that the gospel was written from some locale where Greek was the primary language and where cultured readers like Theophilus (1:3) would be at home.”

According to [Luke 1:1-4](#), this gospel -- and subsequently the book of Acts (cf. Acts 1:1) -- were dedicated to a Theophilus who as a patron supported the cost of producing these documents as well as the making of copies of them for distribution to various Christian communities in the late first century world. Evidently [Theophilus](#) was a wealthy Roman who had become a Christian and wanted to contribute to the spread of Christianity by supporting Luke’s writing of these two documents. The gospel preface ([Lk 1:4](#)) suggests the purpose of the document was “so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.”

The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts together stand as a two volume testimony of the beginning of the Christian religion with its founder, Jesus Christ, and the first three decades of the beginning of this movement in its spread from Jerusalem to Rome from AD 30 to AD 61. The author was closely associated with the apostle Paul. For the gospel account Luke made use of a variety of sources, as he indicated in [Lk 1:1-3](#), since he was not personally present with Jesus during his earthly ministry. Modern scholarship generally concludes that among these sources are the gospels of Mark and perhaps also Matthew, although more likely the material in Luke, that is also found in Matthew, may very well be drawn from a common, unknown source. That is generally called the Q document from the German word Quelle meaning source. Thus with at least Mark and Q in front of him, along with notes from interviews with various people around the earthly Jesus, Luke set out to tell his story of Jesus in a way that would enhance understanding of the enormous significance of this Jewish carpenter from the little village of Nazareth in the northern Palestinian province of Galilee. As best as we can determine, this happened sometime in the 70s or perhaps early 80s of the first Christian century, possibly while Luke was living in Rome.

One important aspect here is the contextual setting for this event. From the outline of the [life of Christ](#) [<http://209.238.128.31/Christot.htm>] posted at Cranfordville.com comes the basic summary. This episode took place on Thursday evening of this final week of Christ’s earthly ministry (note section **V. G.** in the outline below).

	<b>Matthew:</b>	<b>Mark:</b>	<b>Luke:</b>	<b>John:</b>
<b>V. Final Week and Crucifixion</b>	21:1-27:66 (34%)	11:1-15:47 (34%)	19:29-23:56 (20%)	11:55-19:42 (33%)
A. Friday, arrival at Bethany	-	-	-	11:55-12:1
B. Saturday, prophetic anointing	26:6-13	14:3-9	-	12:2-11
C. Sunday, Messianic Manifestation	21:1-11	11:1-11	19:29-44	12:12-19
D. Monday, Messianic Authority	21:12-19	11:12-18	19:45-48	12:20-50
E. Tuesday, Controversy and Teaching	21:20-26:16	11:19-14:11	20:1-22:6	-
F. Wednesday, rest (no record)				
G. Thursday, farewells				

	26:17-46	14:12-42	22:7-46	13:1-18:1
H.	Friday, Redemptive Accomplishment			
	26:47-27:61	14:43-15:47	22:47-23:56	18:2-19:42
I.	Saturday, Guard posted at the Tomb			
	27:62-66	-	-	-

One helpful observation from the above listing concerns the importance of these seven days in the life of Christ. Out of an approximate two and one-half year public ministry, these final seven days of activity, before arrest and crucifixion occur, take up an inordinate amount of space. Some 34% of the total content of Matthew, along with 34% of Mark, 20% of Luke and 33% of John. One other point becomes clear from a study of the large picture in the life of Christ outline: these seven days contain more material common to all four gospels than any other single segment in the entire story of Jesus in the four gospels. In interpretative history this section of the story of Jesus is known as the Passio Christi (the Passion of Christ). The Latin word Passio means 'suffering' and so the label alludes to the Suffering of Christ, especially climaxed in his death on the cross on Friday of these days.

Notice from this outline that no record of what Jesus did on Wednesday of this week is given. Since he and his disciples returned to Bethany each evening to spend the night, we can assume that the day was spent there with his close friends. The events on Thursday that are described in the four gospels occurred in the evening hours, apart from the alluded to preparation activities of his disciples in getting things ready for the Passover observance during that evening.

On that Thursday a number of events are described by all four gospel writers. A listing of them follows and is taken from the [same source](#) at Cranfordville.com.

Mt. 26:17-46	Mk. 14:12-42	Lk. 22:7-46	Jn. 13:1-17:26
152. <i>Last Supper Preparations</i> 26:17-19	81. <i>Last Supper Preparations</i> 14:12-16	138. <i>Last Supper Preparations</i> 22:7-13	59. Last Supper: Disciples' feet washed 13:1-20
153. <i>Prediction of betrayal</i> 26:20-25	82. <i>Prediction of betrayal</i> 14:17-21	139. <i>Passover meal</i> 22:14-18	60. Last Supper: <i>Prediction of betrayal</i> 13:21-30
154. <i>Institution of Lord's Supper</i> 26:26-30	83. <i>Institution of Lord's Supper</i> 14:22-26	140. <i>Institution of Lord's Supper</i> 22:19-20	61. The new commandment 13:31-35
155. Prediction of Peter's denial 26:31-35	84. Prediction of Peter's denial 14:27-31	141. <i>Prediction of betrayal</i> 22:21-23	62. Prediction of Peter's denial 13:36-38
156. Gethsemane 26:36-46	85. Gethsemane 14:32-42	142. <i>Dispute about greatness</i> 22:24-27	63. Question of Thomas 14:1-8
		143. <i>Future role in the Kingdom</i> 22:28-30	64. Request of Philip 14:9-14
		144. <i>Prediction of Peter's denial</i> 22:31-34	65. The promise of the Spirit 14:15-21
		145. <i>Two swords</i> 22:35-38	66. Question of Judas 14:22-24
		146. Gethsemane 22:39-46	67. Parting words of comfort 14:25-31
			68. Abiding in love bears fruit 15:1-17
			69. Expecting the hatred of the world 15:18-16:4a
			70. Being encouraged and taught by the Spirit 16:4b-15
			71. Paradoxical discipleship 16:16-24
			72. Overcoming the world 16:25-33
			73. High priestly prayer 17:1-26

A careful reading of the above listing reveals how closely Matthew followed Mark in composing his depiction of these events. Luke, also using Mark as one of his sources, followed Mark with the first and last pericopes (#s 138 and 146), but between these two developed his narrative by inserting additional material and by rearranging the sequence of some other items. Luke reversed pericopes 140 and 141 from his

Marcan source. Also, he added new pericopes (#s. 139, 142, 143, 145) that are not found at this point in his Marcan source. The Johannine gospel contains only two out of fourteen pericopes that overlap with the synoptic gospel accounts: pericopes 60 and 62. Thus John's account has a very different tone and orientation to it in comparison to the synoptic gospels. Among the synoptic accounts, Luke is the one with the greatest diversity. Essentially he took the core Marcan structure and added more details. These details mostly highlight the Jewish Passover observance, more than is found in Mark and Matthew.

Since our focus is on the Lukan narrative in this study, we will bring in the parallel texts as they relate to material in Luke's narrative.

One other matter of historical concern has to do with where this event took place. The scripture texts do not directly indicate the location of this dinner with precise reference. [Mark 14:12-16](#) (paralleled by [Mt. 26:17-19](#) and [Lk. 22:8-13](#)) indicates that Jesus instructed his disciples to go into Jerusalem and there they would find a man carrying a water jar (quite unusual for a man to be doing this). He would take them to his home where they would prepare the room for the Passover celebration. According to the scripture narratives it happened as Jesus indicated it would, but the man is never identified by name. Consequently, we do not know who he was or exactly where in the city he lived.

Traditionally this place is known as the upper room. On the map of the ancient city of Jerusalem on the following page, this is thought to be located in the southwest quadrant of the old city, not far from the house of Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest. If correct, this would be the place where the disciples would again gather after Jesus ascended into Heaven, as recorded in [Acts 1:12-14](#).

### **b. Literary**

The literary issues for our passage largely relate to the nature of the Passion narrative of the four gospels. As a literary type or form (often called a [genre](#)), this section of the four gospels, and especially the synoptic gospels, stands in greater uniformity than anything else in the gospels. Most scholars are convinced this is due in large measure to the religious importance of the depiction of the final seven days of Jesus' earthly life. In the preaching of the gospel by early Christian leaders (especially as described in the book of Acts), the heart of their preaching to non-Christians was the emphasis that Jesus died for the sins of humankind and was raised from the dead on the third day. For a summary of that, see Paul's declaration in [1 Cor. 15:1-11](#). This tradition about Jesus was among the first to be committed to memory and orally transmitted to new Christians who committed it to memory as a foundational part of their understanding of Jesus Christ. Thus when the gospel writers began writing their stories of Jesus, starting some thirty to forty years after Jesus had lived on the earth, this material was already well established in the various Christian communities around the Mediterranean world.

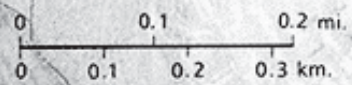
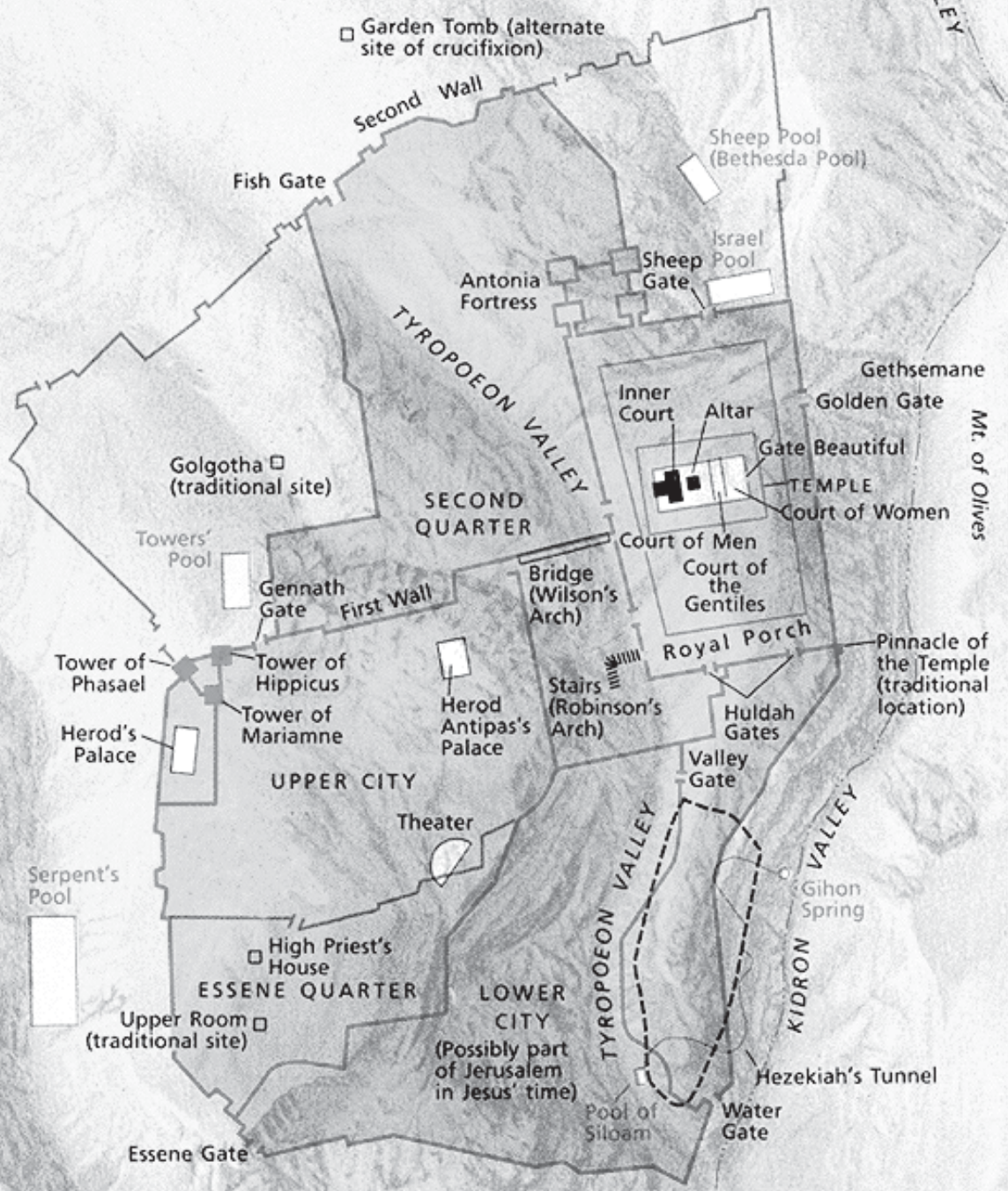
## **II. Message**

The [internal literary structure](#) of the Lukan passage flows, in the larger context, from preparation for the supper (vv. 7-13), to the Passover meal (vv. 14-18), to the Lord's Supper (vv. 19-20), to the prediction of betrayal (vv. 21-23). It is at this point that we note the distinctiveness of Luke's narrative over against Mark and Matthew's accounts. All three begin with a narrative about the preparational activities instructed by Jesus. But Mark and Matthew move to the prediction of betrayal, followed by the institution of the supper. This is followed by first by the prediction of Peter's denial and then by the narrative describing the departure from the Upper Room and the walk to Gethsemane just outside the old city of Jerusalem to the east. See the map on the following page for the geographical location.

But Luke places the prediction of betrayal after the institution of the supper rather than Mark and Matthew who have it before the supper. This historical point created by this is whether or not Judas participated in the observance of the supper or not. Because of this difference between the two traditions, we can't say with certainty one way or the other. Also Luke inserts, after the prediction of betrayal, a couple of pericopes dealing with greatness (vv. 24-27) and a future role in the Kingdom (vv. 28-30), before picking up the Marcan sequence of the prediction of Peter's denial. See the [chart on page three](#) for the parallel listing of these pericopes.

The other very noticeable Lukan distinctive is his much more prominent emphasis upon the obser-

- City walls in Jesus' time
- - - "City of David"
- The "Old City" (surviving walls, built in 16th century)



vance of the traditional Jewish Passover meal, than is found in the other accounts. Verses 14-18 in Luke have no parallel in any of the other accounts. We will explore this in more detail below.

### a. Passover Meal, vv. 14-18

#### The Greek NT

22:14 Καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο ἡ ὥρα, ἀνέπεσεν καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι σὺν αὐτῷ. 22:15 καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς, Ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα φαγεῖν μεθ' ὑμῶν πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν. 22:16 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐ μὴ φάγω αὐτὸ ἕως ὅτου πληρωθῇ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ. 22:17 καὶ δεξάμενος ποτήριον εὐχαριστήσας εἶπεν, Λάβετε τοῦτο καὶ διαμερίσατε εἰς ἑαυτούς. 22:18 λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν, [ὅτι] οὐ μὴ πίω ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου ἕως οὗ ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλθῃ

#### NRSV

14 When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 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<sup>F177</sup> until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

-----

FOOTNOTES:

F177: Other ancient authorities read [never eat it again]

#### NLT

14 Then at the proper time Jesus and the twelve apostles sat down together at the table. 15 Jesus said, "I have looked forward to this hour with deep longing, anxious to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. 16 For I tell you now that I won't eat it again until it comes to fulfillment in the Kingdom of God." 17 Then he took a cup of wine, and when he had given thanks for it, he said, "Take this and share it among yourselves. 18 For I will not drink wine again until the Kingdom of God has come."

#### Comments:

The beginning time reference sets up the supper as having taken place at "the proper time" (NLT). This more solemn language (ὅτε ἐγένετο ἡ ὥρα) replaces the language of Mark "when it was evening" (14:17; ὀψίας γενομένης), which Matthew also uses (26:20). With the apostles present, together they eat the traditional Jewish Passover meal.

The Jewish tradition of celebrating the Israelite deliverance from slavery in Egypt under Moses' leadership goes back to a very early period of Jewish history. For a helpful background see Duane A. Garrett's article on "Feasts and Festivals of Israel" in the online [Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#). J.C. Rylaarsdam in the *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (iPreach online) provides a helpful description of the typical Jewish observance at the beginning of the Christian era before the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D.:

The observances of Passover Eve proper consisted of two parts: the ritual slaughter of the sheep and goats at the temple with the sacrificial sprinkling of the blood against the altar, and the domestic meal and its role of fellowship and historical commemoration. For the host of pilgrims without residence in the city, the procuring of a "room" (Mark 14:15) and the purchase of a sheep for sacrifice were the first important preparations upon arrival. The feast brought a great influx of trade to the sacred city. Wine and spices were needed for the feast; and many who came from abroad brought foreign wares for sale, resulting in a holiday "business rush" (cf. Matt. 21:12). The lamb and the room were procured by the head of a "company" or family groups. The minimum number permitted for a group was ten (Pes. 7.13 ff); often the companies were much larger. Since the entire sheep had to be eaten, its size corresponded to the size of the group. Every member had to eat an amount of the meat as large as an olive. In the case of very large companies, every member first received such a small token portion from the lamb of the sacrifice. Thereafter non-ritual roasts were provided for the meal itself.

At the temple all twenty-four divisions of priests were in attendance, though normally there was only one. The first ceremonial action consisted in the removal of leaven. This was done in the morning, and its completion was indicated by the ritual burning of leaven by the priests. Work ceased at noon. The daily afternoon sacrifice at the temple was made an hour earlier than usual (Pes. 5.1). At about 3:00 P.M. the slaughtering of the Passover sacrifices began, announced by a threefold trumpet blast sounded by Levites. While some Levites sang the Hallel, others slew the sacrificial animals and bled them in gold or silver trays held by the priests. Then they flayed and

dressed the animals. The priests meanwhile tossed the blood against the great altar and burned the portions of fat on the altar (Pes. 5.5-10). The tossing of the blood was the heart of the sacrificial action; originally it was probably a rite to protect, or substitute for, the first-born. But now it was a means of declaring or releasing the redeeming action of God for his whole people.

The dressed animals, with legs unbroken and head attached to the carcass, each wrapped in its own skin, were returned to the worshipers. Each company went to its house or room. The animal was spitted on a stick of pomegranate wood, with its head and legs folded into the cavity of the rump, and roasted in a portable clay oven.

The meal was served on low tables around which those who partook reclined on cushions (cf. Matt. 26:20), in the manner of a solemn banquet, and all were dressed in festive white. After the blessing the meal opened with a first glass of wine. This was followed by the eating of the lamb with bitter herbs dipped in harosheth, a paste of mashed fruits and nuts. Following a second glass of wine a designated "son" of the family asked the ceremonial question: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" This introduced the recital in song and story of the historical redemption of Israel from slavery in Egypt. It continued with the story of the subsequent crises and deliverances of Israel's long history and ended with a prayer for the redemption of the land from the occupying power of Rome. Following this prayer, which was later changed into a prayer for a return to Jerusalem, the formal commemoration was over. Gatherings could continue informally or members of one group could leave to greet those of another, groups having been kept carefully separate up to this point (Pes. 9.10).

The Thursday evening meal by Jesus and his disciples followed the traditional pattern in so far as we can determine from the gospel accounts. In typical fashion of that era, they "reclined at the table" (ἀνέπεσεν καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι σὺν αὐτῷ), that is, they lay on individual couches leaning on their left elbow and used their right hands to reach for the food and drink on a horseshoe shaped table that was placed in common bowls and cups. [Leonardo da Vinci's](#) famous painting of the last supper is an interpretation of this event within the framework of sixteenth-century Italian custom, not first century Jewish mealtime custom.

But Jesus gave new meaning to this sacred ritual among Jewish people (vv. 15-16): "I have looked forward to this hour with deep longing, anxious to eat this Passover meal with you before my suffering begins. 16 For I tell you now that I won't eat it again until it comes to fulfillment in the Kingdom of God." He will suffer death as the sacrificial lamb atoning for the sins of humanity. Thus the Lord's Supper celebration will begin celebrating a new deliverance, that of the sinner from slavery to his sinfulness that otherwise would doom him to eternal damnation. Jesus' suffering is an important motif for Luke; see 9:22; 24:46; Acts 1:3; 3:18. The further declaration of Jesus in verse sixteen looks forward to the coming Messianic Age at the close of human history. When the Kingdom of God is fully established in the Second Coming of the Messiah, Jesus will then again celebrate this festival of deliverance.

Some fifty plus years later, John envisioned this moment in Rev. 19:6-10 with these words: "6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready; 8 to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure"— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. 9 And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are true words of God." 10 Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." But now it is a wedding feast that anticipates a glorious future for the bride (the people belonging to Jesus) and the groom (Christ himself). This is truly a "they lived happily ever after" story. His bride has been cleansed and made fit to share eternity with the Lord.

From this we who follow Jesus as Savior and Lord take comfort and look forward to the future with firm confidence. Our Savior has indeed suffered as a sacrifice for us, as the [Mel Gibson movie](#) has so graphically portrayed in recent weeks. But Jesus looked beyond the suffering to stress its achievement in bringing his people into a wonderful reunion at the close of the age.

Luke next moved toward the sequence of bread-cup that is found in the accounts of Mark, Matthew, and Paul (1 Cor. 11:23-25). The Lukan sequence of cup-bread-cup has puzzled both modern scholars and ancient copyists of the New Testament text. Although the earliest and most reliable, known copies of Luke's gospel reaching back to the third century AD contain verses 17, 18, 19, 20 in this order, alternative forms show up in the history of text copying. Bruce Metzger, in *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New*

Testament has a very helpful summary (p. 148) of this issue:

The Lukan account of the Last Supper has been transmitted in two principle forms: (1) the longer, or traditional, text of cup-bread-cup is read by all Greek manuscripts except D and by most of the ancient versions and the Fathers; (2) the shorter, or Western, text (read by D <sup>it<sup>a</sup>, ff<sup>2</sup>, i, l</sup>) omits verses 19b and 20 (τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν... ἐκχυνόμενον) thereby presenting the sequence of cup-bread. Four intermediate forms of text, which appear to be compromises between the two principal forms, are the following: (a) two Old Latin manuscripts (<sup>it<sup>b</sup>, e</sup>) modify the shorter text by placing ver. 19a before ver. 17, thus securing the customary order of bread-cup; (b) the Curetonian Syriac reads the same, but is enlarged with the wording of 1 Cor. 11:24 added to ver. 19a; (c) the Sinaitic Syriac is still further expanded, chiefly by the insertion of "after they had supped" at the beginning of ver. 17 and "this is my blood, the new covenant" (ver 20b) between verses 17 and 18, as do also <sup>l</sup><sup>32</sup>, two Sahidic manuscripts, and one Bohairic manuscript....

It is obvious that the chief problem is concerned with the merits of the two principal forms of text, since each of the other can be accounted for more or less satisfactorily as modifications of either the short or the longer form.

The best explanation of the most likely original wording gravitates toward the longer version of cup-bread-cup, although absolute certainty of the original wording of Luke's account cannot be achieved. In this understanding, this first cup is to be closely associated with one of the Passover cups in the traditional Jewish celebration, whose celebration goes back to [Exodus 12:1-13](#) in the initial reference to Passover.

### b. Lord's Supper, vv. 19-20

#### Matt. 26:26-30 (NRSV)

26 While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

29 I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

30 When they had sung the hymn, they

#### Mk. 14:22-25 (NRSV)

22 While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." 23 Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. 24 He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.

25 Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

26 When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

#### Lk. 22:19-20 (NRSV)

19 Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had 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." 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

#### 1 Cor. 11:23-26 (NRSV)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

#### Comments:

Even a quick comparison of these four accounts reveals several things. First, the core aspect of the cup and the bread institution is essentially the same across all four accounts. Second, the three gospel accounts emphasize that these elements, as symbols of the body and blood of Jesus, are based on the establishment of a new covenant (Mt. 16:28; Mk. 14:24; Lk. 22:20). But Paul stresses the bread and the cup as reminders of Christ's death. Third, Luke has earlier -- before the bread -- inserted the eschatological assumption of future celebration with Jesus (14:18), while Mark, Matthew, and Paul express it after the



bread and cup. Paul says the least about this future dimension than do the synoptic gospel writers.

The bread that Jesus used was a part of the Passover bread celebration. Probably it was unleavened, in light of the Passover celebration forbidding the presence of leaven and since unleavened bread was to be used in the Passover celebration according to Exod. 29:2; Lev. 2:4; 8:26; and Num. 6:19. Picking up the loaf of bread he offered a prayer of blessing on it (καὶ λαβὼν ἄρτον εὐχαριστήσας ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων...). Although Mark and Luke use the verb expression εὐλογήσας (having blessed) rather than Luke's εὐχαριστήσας (having given thanks), they will switch over to Luke's verb with the cup reference. Both express both gratitude to God and ask for His blessing. In the later developing Roman Catholic view, this prayer of blessing by a properly ordained priest during the Eucharist celebration would be understood to turn both the bread into the actual body of Jesus, as well as the similar prayer turning the wine in the cup into the actual blood of Jesus. This is a later interpretation of these verses, but without sufficient basis in the scripture texts themselves to be justified as accurate to the original intention of the gospel writers or of Paul.

Then, in traditional fashion, Jesus, functioning as the host for this meal, broke off a piece of it for each of those present and handed the pieces to them. As he was distributing these pieces to the disciples around the table, the words were spoken, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Interestingly, Luke is closer to Paul's wording here, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24), than he is to either Mark, "Take; this is my body" (Mk. 14:22), or to Matthew, "Take, eat; this is my body" (Mt. 26:26). In both Luke and Paul especially, the act of eating the bread is an act of remembering that Jesus died on the cross in great physical suffering for sinners.

Next, came the ritual with the cup of wine that followed the same pattern of blessing, and sharing out of a common cup with each disciple present. The shedding of the Passover lamb's blood was an important symbol of the "blood of the covenant" that God had with the Israelite people (cf. Exod. 34:8; Lev. 17:11-14). First came the initial instructions of Moses to the Israelite slaves to slaughter a lamb and smear its blood over the door ways on their homes to cause the angel of death to "pass over their home" during that fateful night in Egypt ([Exod. 12](#)). Here, in the tradition of [Jeremiah 31:31](#), Jesus establishes a "new covenant" as the basis of this celebration in the future: "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah." Although [the Essene community at Qumran](#) claimed it possessed this new covenant (cf. 1QpHab 2:4-6), Jesus instead claimed it for the Christian community. But this new community in covenant with God would not be based on the shedding of the blood of a lamb; rather, on the basis of the shedding of Christ's own blood. Luke's language of "pouring" out his blood is even more graphic of this atoning death by Jesus.

At this point Mark and Matthew insert the promise of future observance of this ritual by Jesus and his disciples at the close of the age. Then they conclude their narrative with a reference to the traditional Jewish singing of the Hallel Psalms (Pss. [111-117](#)) as the concluding prayers of Passover observance.

Certainly, we can learn much from these verses. We are reminded of the enormous sacrifice of Christ for us as sinners. We find in this initial celebration a model that is to be followed by all who are committed to Christ. A periodic celebration that both looks back to Christ's sacrifice and looks forward to future celebration with him in eternity should take place in the community of believers. How frequently this celebration is to be done is left undefined by Paul's words "as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup" (1 Cor. 11:26). But, more importantly, it is to be done on a regular basis as a deeply meaning expression of worship.

### **c. Prediction of Betrayal, vv. 21-23**

#### **Matt. 26:21-25 (NRSV)**

21 and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." 22 And they became greatly distressed and began to

#### **Mk. 14:18-21 (NRSV)**

18 And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with

#### **Lk. 22:21-23 (NRSV)**

21 But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table. 22 For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but

#### **Jn. 13:21-30 (NRSV)**

21 After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." 22 The disciples looked at

say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" 23 He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." 25 Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" He replied, "You have said so."

me." 19 They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, "Surely, not I?" 20 He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. 21 For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born."

woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!" 23 Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.

one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. 23 One of his disciples — the one whom Jesus loved — was reclining next to him; 24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. 25 So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?" 26 Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. 27 After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "Do quickly what you are going to do." 28 Now no one at the table knew why he said this to him. 29 Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, "Buy what we need for the festival"; or, that he should give something to the poor. 30 So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.



### Comments:

All four gospels record this event, with John providing the greatest amount of detail and Luke providing the least. As discussed above, Mark and Matthew place this event before the instituting of the Supper, evidently so that Judas is not present when the Lord's Supper is established by Jesus. Luke, on the other hand, places it after the instituting of the supper, but Luke is likely more intending to be more topical than chronological. This view is based on [his insertion of two additional teachings](#) of Jesus (#142 on greatness, vv. 24-27, #143 on the Kingdom, vv. 28-30) before picking up the Markan sequence with the prediction of Peter's denial (#144, vv. 31-34). But he again interrupts that sequence with another insertion (#145, on two swords, vv. 35-38) before the departure to Gethsemane (#146, vv. 39-46) that matches Mark and Matthew in their sequence. These [Lukan insertions](#) here have gospel parallels elsewhere in both Mark and Matthew, thus suggesting a thematic guideline for Luke at this point. The dominate emphasis in these assertions is to point to the struggles of the disciples in being faithful to him, especially during a time of persecution and

suffering.

The first of these emphases in Luke then became the depiction of [Judas](#)' betrayal of Jesus. In Luke, Jesus merely indicated the presence of the betrayer as the one who "is with me, and his hand is on the table," while Mark has "one who is eating with me." John simply depicts Jesus saying, "Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me." This prompted discussion among the disciples regarding who this individual might be, reflecting evidently disbelief that someone in their group would be capable to such an action. John's narrative suggests that uncertainty prevailed so that Peter asked Jesus directly, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus' answer, "It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish," although to us seems clear, wasn't sufficiently clear to the disciples so that they could identify Judas as the one. The reference to dipping the bread in the bowl provided no clear signal since the practice of dipping one's hardened piece of bread into a liquid sauce was a common meal time practice. And all of this would be done from a common bowl that everyone would be using.

The challenge of this passage is profound. Our initial response is to raise the question of how could someone who had spent so much time with Jesus and had worked so closely with him turn on him in betrayal? If Jesus already knew what Judas was going to do, why didn't he stop him? At best, why did he allow Judas to participate so intimately right up to the end?

The marvelous dynamic at work in this text is the affirmation that, although humans may act with harmful intent against others, the Divine will and power can work to use even that harm to bring about the Heavenly Father's desire. God has the marvelous ability to fulfill His desire even through the evil deeds of we humans. In spite of whatever may have driven Judas to betray Jesus ([The views](#) range all the way from greed to an honest effort to provoke Jesus to messianic action), God worked out His plan of redemption through these actions. That's the good news of these verses.

But one should quickly notice that this didn't relieve Judas of responsibility for his evil actions. Jesus indicated in his declaration that, for the betrayer, he would have been better off to never have been born (Matthew and Mark). This was a powerful allusion to the eternal judgment of God that Judas would face when he stepped into eternity. Luke's "woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!" gets at the same idea with prayer language invoking God's wrath upon Judas.

Judas stands as a powerful warning to us about the potential for evil that lurks inside of each of us. Even though we walk closely with Jesus, we still have the capability for evil that is mind boggling. If we take our eyes off the spiritual mission of God or attempt to take shortcuts to get spiritual things done, we can unleash this powerful evil force in our lives as well.

Even though the other disciples weren't the target of Jesus' prediction here, Peter would become the bull's-eye for Jesus' prediction of denial following the supper. With the arrest in Gethsemane later on during that night, the other disciples would turn in cowardly fear fleeing the authorities while Jesus was being taken into custody. None of them would come away with clean hands.

