

## EUCHARIST AS A PASSOVER

### **Passover**

- if there is going to be a new exodus, there needed to be a new passover

Exodus: 12 tribes of Israel were delivered from slavery by the Lord.

-passover was not only a memorial, it was also a liturgical ritual. It made present God's salvific work

Exodus 12: 1-6

### Celebrating the first passover:

**Step 1.** Choose an unblemished lamb

Exodus 12:6

**Step 2.** Sacrifice the lamb

- do not break the bones

- this was a priestly action, this is what priests of old did. All 12 tribes were priestly until most fell into idolatry and Moses chose only the Levites and ordained them because they alone responded to Moses' call to renounce idolatry and come to the Lord's side. (Exodus 32:39) From this point until the time of Jesus only Levites could offer sacrifices for the people.

**Step. 3.** Spread the blood of the lamb (Exodus 12:7)

Blood was poured into a basin, then it was spread on the wood of the doorposts (permanent sign), this was done using the hyssop branch.

Deliverance from death through the blood of the lamb.

**Step. 4** Eat the Flesh of the lamb

The sacrifice was not completed with the death of the lamb, but with the eating.

The passover was not an open table but a covenant feast. Only Israelites could eat of it.

**Step. 5** Keep the Passover as a “Day of Remembrance”

This was not just a one time feast.

### Passover at the time of Jesus

#### Differences in the Passover during the time of Jesus:

##### **1. Passover Sacrifice in the Temple**

- first difference is the location. In the original passover the lambs were sacrificed and eaten in the homes. In the time of Jesus they were sacrificed in the Temple and eaten in the city of Jerusalem. Original passover every father could offer the sacrifice, in the time of Jesus only Levites. Changes are explained in Deuteronomy 16:5-7.

Two Things stand out here:

- Passover is not just a meal but a sacrifice. It is the “sacrifice of the Lord's Passover” (16:5)

- Only in the temple could this sacrifice be offered, where God had chosen to dwell.

After the destruction of the Temple in the 1st century the Levitical priesthood ended. Without the Temple and the priesthood, Judaism after 70AD was forced to change. Instead of the Temple the synagogue emerged as the primary place of Jewish worship (synagogue from Greek “gathering place). In place of priests rabbis emerged as primary leaders (rabbi from Greek “my great one” or “my teacher”). Even though synagogues and rabbis existed before the destruction of the temple, they were subordinate to the central sanctuary and its priests.

What this means is that Judaism in the time of Jesus was much more like Catholicism (priests, leading worship centred on sacrifice), whereas rabbinic Judaism after the Temple's destruction was much more like Protestantism (Scripture teachers, leading worship without blood sacrifice).

**2. Crucifixion and the Passover Lambs.** The second difference between original passover and passover during the time of Jesus was the crucifixion of the lamb.

**3. Participation in the First Passover.** The third important difference is that in Jesus time Jews saw participation in the Passover as a memorial by which they remember and make present the deliverance that had taken place.

**4. The Passover of the Messiah.** Final difference is that some traditions tied the passover to the coming of the Messiah. The messiah comes on the Passover night and He will redeem people on that night.

### **Jesus and the Passover**

#### **Jesus Passover Similar from the Jewish Passover:**

1. Celebrated on Passover night, when the sacrificed lambs were being eaten (p. 69)
2. They celebrated it in Jerusalem, and not in the town of Bethany where they were staying. This fits with the tradition that it had to be eaten within city walls.
3. Celebrated at night.
4. Drank wine during the supper, which was required for a passover, and different from the water which was usually drunk with ordinary meals.
5. Jesus explained the meaning of bread, which again points to the passover. The fathers would answer the questions of the young regarding the meaning of the unleavened bread.
6. They ended by singing a hymn, Psalm 118, known as the great *Hallel*, sung towards the end fo the passover meal by the Jews.

#### **Jesus Passover Different from the Jewish Passover:**

1. Not celebrated within a family, with the father leading. Jesus acted as host and leader of the twelve even though he was not their father.

2. The focus was normally on God's covenant with Abraham, the exodus from Egypt, and the entry into the promised land of Canaan. Jesus speaks of the “new covenant”, prophesied by Jeremiah to be fulfilled in the age of salvation (Jer. 31:31-33).

3. Normally the focus was around the body and blood of the sacrificial Passover lamb. Instead, Jesus shifted the focus away from the body and blood of the Passover lamb (of which there is no mention) and turned it toward his own body and blood.

**All of this means that Jesus is the new Passover lamb of the new exodus. “This is the Passover of the Messiah and I am the new sacrifice”.**

What this means is:

Signs of the new Passover:

1. Jesus kept the Jewish Passover but He **altered it**, thereby instituting a **new Passover**.

2. Jesus command for his actions **to be repeated**. Just as the first passover was to be repeated. Jesus was restoring the original priesthood of the twelve tribes of Israel (12 apostles to do this in memory of him)

You have to eat the lamb – Jesus saw himself as the Paschal Lamb, which must be eaten for the sacrifice to be completed. Did Jesus mean we must eat his flesh truly or symbolically? In the context of the passover we have to say truly.

### **EUCHARIST AS A NEW MANNA**

When Jesus gave the most detailed teaching on the Eucharist in John6:35-59, he spoke of the manna of the exodus, the supernatural bread from heaven.

#### **Manna in the desert**

Once Pharaoh stopped pursuing the chosen people, the focus shifted from running away to arriving at the promised land. And people started complaining (when people are restless they complain) p. 79

Why not eat the cattle that they left Egypt with? We can speculate that it is because they still saw them as God. After all, it would not be long until they create for themselves the golden calf.

God responds to their complaints by giving them manna from heaven. p. 80

Four Qualities of manna:

1. The manna in the desert was no ordinary bread. It was miraculous bread from heaven, given directly by God to his people for them to eat. Sceptics today make up other explanations: desert insects, tamarisk plant substance, etc. Nothing in the book of Exodus suggest this though. On the contrary: they always gathered a litre's worth (not matter how much or little there was) and it never lasted them more than a day. It happened every day until the arrived in the promised land,

then it stopped. Israelites did not know what it was, which is why they called it manna (from Hebrew word *man hu*, meaning “what is it?”)

2. It was a double miracle. Not only bread from heaven, but also flesh from heaven. In the morning they ate manna, in the evening they ate the flesh of the quail that covered the camp. This too was miraculous.

3. They not only consumed it, they also preserved it, by placing it in the Tabernacle. God commanded Moses to place some of the manna in the Ark of the Covenant. p. 84

By doing this God was saying that manna is not only miraculous but also holy. The purpose was not so that people may eat it but look at it. It was reserved so “that they may see the bread.”

4. It had a distinctive flavour. It tasted like wafers made with honey. (Ex16:31)

honey – foretaste of the promised land. Connection between manna and promised land.

Temporary miracle. As soon as they reached the promised land and could celebrate the passover, the manna ceased. (Joshua 5:10-13) p. 85

Once the exodus was complete, they no longer needed a promise of its completion.

Manna – great sign and remembrance of the Exodus, and will become a reality with the new exodus and new Moses (Messiah)

#### **Jewish tradition taught this about Manna:**

- that it was not only miraculous but also preexistent, that it existed before the fall of Adam and Eve.

- that it was a supernatural reality kept on high in the heavenly Temple for the feeding of God's people.

- that when the Messiah finally came he would bring back the miracle of manna.

#### **Jesus And The New Manna**

Jesus spoke of manna from heaven on at least 2 occasions:

1. Our Father

give us this day our *daily* bread. Discussion about the word *epiousios*, and what it means.

Literally it means *epi* (above) and *ousia* (substance). Supernatural, or as St. Jerome translated it “super-substantial” bread. Jerome is not alone, also St. Cyril, St. Cyprian (heavenly bread, bread of salvation).

If Jerome was correct, then Jesus is speaking about “manna from heaven” here.

2. Bread of life discourse

After the feeding of 5000 people ask Jesus to perform another miracle for them. What miracle? Manna from Heaven. This would be a sign of the new Moses. (Jn6:30-34)

They wanted manna but not just for 40 years but for always.

This request causes Jesus to launch into the bread of life discourse proper. Jn6:48-58 climax

Jesus is speaking here of the Last Supper (this is accepted by all Christian scholars).

The teaching on the Eucharist here is directly in the context of the new manna from Heaven.

**Can the new manna be symbolic if the old manna was real? The old cannot be greater than the new, and real is greater than symbolic.**

If you eat it you will live forever – the only other reference in the Jewish Bible to being able to “eat and live for ever” is in Genesis regarding the tree of life.

This teaching is hard.

He must have meant it literally since they were all leaving. The disciples took him literally. This was scandalous to the Jews, “who can hear it”.

Did they misunderstand Jesus by taking him too literally? NO, because when this happened before Jesus would always explain.

Jesus gives the apostles 2 keys to understand his teaching: (p. 108)

**1. The mystery of Jesus' Divine Identity:** *“What if you were to see the Son of man ascending to where he was before?”* NO ordinary man can give another his flesh to eat. But Jesus is no ordinary man but a Heavenly Messiah.

Other instances of claiming his divinity: forgiving sins, something greater than the temple is here, the son of man is the Lord of the Sabbath, before Abraham was, I AM.

What Jesus is saying is that you cannot grasp the Eucharist before you grasp and accept His claim of Divinity.

**2. The Mystery of the Resurrection:** *“What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail”*. These have to be taken together, not separate. We see here that Jesus is not speaking about eating dead flesh (cannibalism) but eating the living flesh, resurrected body raised to life by the power of the Spirit. This is the only clue that the new manna is miraculous.

Jesus links the eating of his body and blood with resurrection: “and I will raise him up”.

Just as the Pharisees rejected Jesus because they did not recognize his supernatural origin but instead judged him only according to his appearance, so too Jesus' disciples did not believe his Eucharistic teaching because they did not understand the supernatural nature of the new manna from heaven, they judged it only by its appearances.

### **Drinking blood**

The very reason God forbids drinking blood in the Old Covenant is the same reason Jesus commands his disciples to drink his blood. The life of the flesh is in the blood. Life of animals belongs to God, which is why Israelites could not drink the blood. To share in the life of Jesus one has to drink his blood.

### EUCCHARIST AS THE BREAD OF THE PRESENCE

How did Jesus think God would be worshipped once the new exodus had begun?

Would there be a new Tabernacle, as in the first exodus? If so, what sacrifice would be offered in it? In the second century AD Rabbi Menahem of Galilee taught that “In the World to Come all sacrifices will be annulled, but the thanksgiving sacrifice will never be annulled”

Jesus saw the messianic fulfilment of the Bread of the Presence.

### **The bread of the Face of God**

After giving the 10 commandments God gives detailed description of how the people are to worship Him. All this revolves around the central place of worship: “the tent of the meeting”, also known as the Tabernacle (Ex26).

God commands Moses to make 3 sacred objects to be kept inside the Tabernacle:

1. The Ark of the Covenant
2. The golden Lamp stand, known as the Menorah
3. The golden table of the Bread of the Presence

Moses saw the pattern for making these in a vision on Mount Sinai. This means that these are heavenly realities (they exist in heaven).

Arc of the Covenant – God is not anti-gold or anti-statue

Golden Lamp stand – this seven branch candelabra was to be burning always as the only source of light.

Golden Table – for the Bread of the Presence. Description Ex25:23-24,29-30, p. 120

- bread was not the only item on the table, but also sacrificial drink offerings of wine. Bread and wine of presence. This wine was to be drunk in the sacred meal of bread and wine.

- The most literal translation of the Hebrew word *panim* is face, bread of the face. The bread then is the visible sign of God's face. This was to be a memorial of seeing God's face on mount Sinai (Moses and the elders).

### **The bread of the “Everlasting Covenant”**

Bread and wine are not just of God's presence, but of the covenant. (Leviticus24:5-7) p.123

- sign of the “everlasting covenant” between God and Israel, established through the events on mount Sinai. Memorial and sign, this is why there are 12 cakes for the 12 tribes.

- perpetual offering, to be continually present before the Lord in the Tabernacle. Even though Israelite are no longer on Mount Sinai, God is still with them. As long as the bread of the Presence was inside the Tabernacle, the flames of the Menorah were to be kept burning continually alongside it.

- the bread of the presence was not just a symbol; it was also a sacrifice. There were 2 types of sacrifices in the OT: 1)bloody sacrifice and 2) unbloody sacrifice, of bread and wine. Prophet Ezekiel actually refers to the golden table as an altar. This bread was therefore both meal and sacrifice, a gift of God to his people, and a gift of the priests to God.

- not just a sacrifice, but a “most holy” sacrifice, which Leviticus says was to be offered up | every Sabbath day” by Aaron the High Priest. Sabbath, then, is not just a day of rest but also a day of sacrifice.

Displaying of the bread to the people and saying “Behold the love of God”.

This shows that it symbolized the covenant with God and fulfilled the commandment that the people should see the face of God 3 times a year. The bread of the presence was the earthly sign of God's face.

The Eucharist not just as a new passover, but also as a new Bread and Wine of the Presence.  
Comparing the 2: p. 143

**Just as God was truly present in the Temple of Moses, now Jesus was truly present in the Eucharist.**

### EUCCHARIST - THE FOURTH CUP AND THE DEATH OF JESUS

Jesus not only looked to the past events in the history of Israel, namely Passover, Manna from Heaven, and Bread of the Tabernacles; He also looked forward to his Passion and Death.

#### **Eucharist and the Paschal Mystery**

The Last Supper was in the context of a passover meal. But Jesus did not finish it until his death on the cross.

4 cups:

1st cup – Introductory Rites.

2nd cup – The proclamation of Scripture

3rd cup – The eating of the meal

4th cup – Concluding rites

How many cups are at the last supper?

p. 159 Lk22:14-20

2 cups are visible here. But which of the four?

“a cup after supper” refers to the **3rd cup**, known as the cup of blessing, which was to be drunk after a meal. St. Paul confirms this in 1Cor11:16: “The cup of blessing which we bless...”

This means that the prior cup mentioned must be the **2nd cup**. Jesus also explains the meaning of the meal after drinking this cup, just as was the custom at passover. The difference is Jesus speaks of the future event and Jewish explanation speaks of the past.

Then Jesus said: “I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. Then they sung a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives”

(Mk14:24-26

Jesus does not finish the passover meal.

In Gethsemane Jesus prays: “Father, let **this cup** pass from me, but not my but your will be done”.

By the time the passover will be finished, Jesus will be killed. This is what happens to the passover lamb, they die.

Jesus refuses to drink the wine mingled with gall and he refused it.

And then on the cross he says:

“I thirst” p. 166

He drinks and says: “it is finished”. **The 4th cup.**

Implications of this interpretation:

Jesus extended the last Passover meal to include his passion and death. The last supper then was not just a symbolic enactment of how he was going to die. It was a prophetic sign that actually set his passion and death in motion.

For a Jew of Jesus' day, to have a sacrifice you need a priest, an offering and a liturgy. None of these were present at calvary. It was the last supper that made early Christians refer to Christ's death on the cross as sacrifice.