

Mike Lewis

Background:

Jesus has made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, taught in the Temple, greatly antagonised the Pharisees, Scribes etc. and is now about to eat the Passover meal as part of the Jewish Festival of Unleavened Bread with his disciples (and maybe others)

Scripture:

Read Exodus 12: 1-32; 13: 3-10

Matthew 26: 1-5; 14-35; Luke 22:1-34; John 13:1-35

(No need to read Mark as it is very similar to Matthew)

Note that the events surrounding Jesus' last earthly Passover vary from Gospel to Gospel. Matthew and Mark are very similar. Luke shows some differences, some of which may be highly significant, but John's gospel is very different, and we will examine this more closely. N.b. we will be studying John 14-17 in the coming weeks

Questions for Discussion:

1. Was the Festival of Unleavened Bread at that time a Celebration, a Commemoration or what? With what expectations do you think the disciples were approaching it?
2. Table 1 is an outline 'Timeline' of the events around the time of the Passover based on a comparison of the four Gospels.
 - a. What can we learn from Matthew/Mark that we cannot learn from Luke or John?
 - b. What can we learn from Luke that we cannot learn from Matthew/Mark and John?
 - c. What can we learn from John that we cannot learn from the synoptics?
 - d. What reason(s) can you think of to explain why John *includes* the foot-washing event but *leaves out* the bread and wine event?
3. Table 2 compares what Protestant Christians today call the Last Supper, the Communion, the Eucharist (= "expression of gratitude, rendering thankfulness") and Anglo-Catholics, Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians call the Mass. Note carefully what each of the gospel writers have written.
 - a. From a *spiritual* point of view, what can we glean from what each writer has included (or missed out) ?
 - b. What is contained in the 'new covenant'?
 - c. How should we relate what is recorded in Scripture to what we, as (SDA) Christians, believe about the Communion Service and how we "do it".
 - d. Some consider the foot-washing ceremony as currently practised to be outdated. What, if anything, should take its place to demonstrate humility?
4. What parallels, if any, do you see between the Exodus account of the first Passover and its immediate aftermath (the selection and killing of the lamb, the lamb's blood being put on the doorway to protect the house from the Destroying Angel, the first Passover meal and Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt to worship the Lord) and the Passover recorded in the Gospels and its immediate aftermath (the Last Supper through to the Ascension) ?
5. What does all this mean to you personally?

Table 1 Timeline

Matthew, Mark	Luke	John
2 days before Passover Jesus tells of his forthcoming crucifixion; authorities plotting Jesus' arrest and death	Passover "drawing near, authorities looking for a way to put Jesus to death.	<i>Not mentioned</i>
		Foot-washing <i>before</i> the festival of Passover
	The one who serves	The one who serves
Eating the Passover Meal on the "1 st day of Unleavened Bread"	Eating the Passover Meal	<i>Not mentioned</i>
Betrayal announced		Betrayal announced
		"Love one another!"
		Peter's denial predicted
		Jesus' Great discourse & Prayer
Last Supper	Last Supper	<i>Not mentioned</i>
	Betrayal mentioned	
	Dispute regarding the Greatest	
Depart for Mount of Olives		
Peter's denial predicted	Peter's denial predicted	
		Depart for Kidron Valley

Table 2 – Last Supper Variations

Matthew	Mark	Luke	Paul (1 Cor 11)
		"Earnestly desired to eat this Passover before I suffer "	
		Next time eat it in Kingdom of God	
		Took a cup, thanks, (you) divide it, next time Kingdom of God	
Took loaf of bread, blessing, broken, take eat, this is my body	Took loaf of bread, blessing, broken, take (eat), this is my body	Took loaf of bread, thanks, my body given for you, do in remembrance of me	Took loaf of bread, thanks, broke it, this is my body that is (<i>broken</i>) for you. Do in remembrance of me.
Cup, gave thanks, drink, my blood of the (new)* covenant poured out for many for forgiveness of sins	Cup, blessing, my blood of the (new)* covenant poured out for many	Cup poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood	Cup (after supper), this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. ...you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes
			Must NOT be unworthy: examine yourselves!
Next time: – in Kingdom of God	Next time: – in Kingdom of God		(*) 'new' is in some ancient manuscripts

Table 3 – The Exodus Passover and the Gospel’s Passover

Exodus	Synoptic Gospels / Christian Era
Only for Israelites (not even servants)	No restrictions stated
Circumcision required	Baptism required; Paul: Examine yourselves
Lamb’s bones not to be broken	Jesus’ bones not broken
Reminder of the Lord bringing Israelites out of Egypt	New covenant sealed, forgiveness of sins, reminder and proclamation of Jesus’ death
Blood actually applied on doorway – sign of God’s ‘passing over’ the house	Actual blood of Jesus poured out on the land, symbolic blood of the new covenant Spiritually applied
Destroying Angel forbidden to destroy anyone in the house	God’s people Spiritually (and often physically) protected
Midnight: destruction and escape	Sins forgiven, salvation for God’s people now and at the end of time