

The Last Supper

Message 1 of 5 in the series: "24 Hours That Changed History"

A. 24 hours before He was crucified, Jesus instructed two of His disciples to go and prepare a place for all of them to have a last supper together celebrating the Passover.

"On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples asked him, 'Where do you want us to go to prepare the Passover meal for you?' So Jesus sent two of them into Jerusalem with these instructions: '**As you go into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him.** At the house he enters, say to the owner, "The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?" He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal.' So the two disciples went into the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there." Mark 14:12-16 (NLT)

1. Jesus was cryptic in His directions because He didn't want Judas to betray Him before He could give some important final instructions to His disciples. "**The leading priests and the teachers of religious law were still looking for an opportunity to capture Jesus secretly and kill him.** 'But not during the Passover celebration,' they agreed, 'or the people may riot.' ...Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, went to the leading priests to arrange to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted when they heard why he had come, and they promised to give him money. So **he began looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus.**" Mark 14:1b-2 & 10-11 (NLT)

Life Application: "The Lord directs the steps of the godly. **He delights in every detail of their lives.**"
Psalm 37:23 (NLT)

2. It is significant that Jesus was crucified at the time of the Passover celebration. This feast was a yearly reminder that the Israelites gained freedom from slavery in Egypt when the angel of death passed over their houses because they were marked by the blood of a sacrificial lamb. "Announce to the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each family must choose a lamb or a young goat for a sacrifice, one animal for each household... The animal you select must be a one-year-old male, either a sheep or a goat, with no defects. Take special care of this chosen animal until the evening of the fourteenth day of this first month. Then the whole assembly of the community of Israel must slaughter their lamb or young goat at twilight. They are to take some of the blood and smear it on the sides and top of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the animal. That same night they must roast the meat over a fire and eat it along with bitter salad greens and bread made without yeast... On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of Egypt. **I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I am the Lord! But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign,** marking the houses where you are staying. **When I see the blood, I will pass over you.** This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt. This is a day to remember. Each year, from generation to generation, you must celebrate it as a special festival to the Lord." Exodus 12:3, 5-8, & 12-14a (NLT)

Note: When He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins, Jesus offered Himself as a Passover lamb for the whole world. "The next day John (the Baptist) saw Jesus coming toward him and said, '**Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**'" John 1:29 (NLT)

B. During His last supper with His disciples, Jesus informed them that one of them would betray Him.

"In the evening Jesus arrived with the Twelve. As they were at the table eating, Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, **one of you eating with me here will betray me.**' Greatly distressed, each one asked in turn, 'Am I the one?' He replied, 'It is one of you twelve who is eating from this bowl with me. For the Son of Man must die, as the Scriptures declared long ago. **But how terrible it will be for the one who betrays him.** It would be far better for that man if he had never been born!" Mark 14:17-21 (NLT)

Note: Judas was never a committed follower of Jesus; he was only a pretender. "Then Jesus said, '**I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil.**' He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him." John 6:70-71 (NLT)

WARNING: Judas proved that it's possible to be religious, hear sound Bible teaching, witness miracles, and yet, not be born again. "**Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven,** but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that

day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, **'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'**"
Matthew 7:21-23 (NIV)

Life Application: "Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine." 2 Corinthians 13:5a (NLT)

C. During His last supper with His disciples, Jesus explained that through His death on the cross He would be mediating a new covenant (testament) between Holy God and sinful people.

"As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, 'Take it, for this is my body.' And he took a cup of wine and gave thanks to God for it. He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And he said to them, **'This is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice for many.** I tell you the truth, I will not drink wine again until the day I drink it new in the Kingdom of God.'" Mark 14:22-25 (NLT)

1. The old covenant needed to be replaced because no one could keep it.

"Then Moses went down to the people and repeated all the instructions and regulations the Lord had given him. **All the people answered with one voice, 'We will do everything the Lord has commanded.'** Then Moses carefully wrote down all the Lord's instructions... Then he sent some of the young Israelite men to present burnt offerings and to sacrifice bulls as peace offerings to the Lord. Moses drained half the blood from these animals into basins... Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people. Again they all responded, **'We will do everything the Lord has commanded. We will obey.'** Then Moses took the blood from the basins and splattered it over the people, declaring, **'Look, this blood confirms the covenant the Lord has made with you in giving you these instructions.'**" Exodus 24:3-8 (NLT)

"But now **Jesus, our High Priest... is the one who mediates for us a far better covenant with God,** based on better promises. If the first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no need for a second covenant to replace it. But when God found fault with the people, he said: 'The day is coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. **They did not remain faithful to my covenant, so I turned my back on them, says the Lord.**'" Hebrews 8:6-9 (NLT)

2. The new covenant is way better!

"But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord: **I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people... And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.** When God speaks of a 'new' covenant, it means he has made the first one obsolete. It is now out of date and will soon disappear." Hebrews 8:10-13 (NLT) (*see also Jeremiah 31:31-34*)

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (NIV)

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Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. How important is it that we celebrate Easter every year? How do you plan to celebrate Easter this year?
2. Read Exodus 12:1-14 & 28-30 & John 1:29. Why do you think Jesus was crucified during a Passover celebration? Was this just coincidence?
3. Read Mark 12:1-16. Why was Jesus so cryptic in His directions to the disciples who were preparing a place to celebrate Passover? What do you think motivated Judas to become a sellout?
4. How was it possible for Judas to witness all that Jesus said and yet only pretend to be His disciple? (John 6:70-71) Is it possible for people to pretend to be followers of Christ today? (Matthew 7:21-22, 2 Cor.13:5)
5. Discuss the following differences between the old covenant (testament) and the new (Hebrews 8:6-13):
 - The Old Covenant was dedicated with the blood of animals sprinkled on the people (Exodus 24:5-8)
 - The New Covenant was dedicated with the blood of Jesus. (Mark 14:22-25)

- The Old Covenant demanded endless repetition of imperfect sacrifices. The New Covenant provides a once and for all, perfect sacrifice of the Son of God Himself. (Hebrews 10:1-12)
- The Old Covenant was written by God on tablets of stone. (Exodus 24:12 & 34:1) The New Covenant is written by God on the hearts of His people. (Jeremiah 31:31-34)
- The Old Covenant was confined to the descendants of Abraham. The New Covenant is extended to all nations and races under heaven. (John 3:16 & 7:37-39)

6. Spend some time as a group praying for our church. Ask God to examine our hearts and prepare us for Easter.

7. Quotations to consider:

“Judas heard all of Christ’s sermons.” Thomas Goodwin

“We do not know the exact motivation behind Judas's betrayal. What is clear is that Judas allowed his desires to place him in a position where Satan could manipulate him.” Life Application Study Bible notes

“In the Old Testament, the New Testament is concealed; in the New Testament, the Old Testament is revealed.” Augustine