

How Jesus Broke 15 Centuries of Hebrew Tradition

And He took the cup and gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then He took the 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." In like manner, He took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you" (Luke 22:17-20).

By the time Jesus reaches His final week, He has already been run out of His hometown as a prophet without honor. Jesus ominously begins talking openly about His impending death. Jesus sits down with His Jewish disciples to eat the traditional Passover meal that God's people have been eating ever since their deliverance from bondage and slavery in Egypt as recorded in Exodus.

Today we call this meal the "Last Supper," and it has been memorialized in the painting by Leonardo da Vinci. Passover is about forgiveness and deliverance. Passover memorialized the night in Egypt when in faith God's people painted the doorposts to their home with the blood of a lamb.

The lamb had to be unblemished, showing its purity, and slaughtered as a substitute in the place of the sinner. The Israelites painted the doorposts with the blood as an act of faith, showing that the household believed they were sinners deserving death but that through the death of a substitute without spot or blemish they received forgiveness and God's wrath passed over them. Conversely those who were not covered by the blood of the lamb saw death come to their home.

This ritual foreshadowed the coming of Jesus in John 1:29 when John the Baptizer said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” Reflecting back, Paul would later write in 1 Corinthians 5:7, “Even Christ, our Passover, has been sacrificed for us.”

Sitting at the Passover, Jesus broke with 15 centuries of tradition. The Scriptures to be read and words to be spoken had remained virtually unchanged from generation to generation. However, everything was about to change at the cross of Jesus.

As Jesus was eating, His suffering was beginning. He has endured every category of suffering and has compassion for you. What kinds of suffering have you endured? {eoa}

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