

“This is My Body ... My Blood”

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Matthew 26:20-30 (Cf. Mk 14:18-25; Lk 22:15-23; Jn 13:21-30)

¹⁷ Now on the **first day of Unleavened Bread** the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Where will you have us prepare for you to eat **the Passover?**” ¹⁸ He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, ‘**The Teacher says, My time is near. I’m keeping the Passover** at your house with my disciples.’” ¹⁹ And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

²⁰ When it was evening, he **reclined at table with the twelve.**

²¹ As they were eating, he said, “Truly, I tell you, **one of you will hand me over.**”

²² And deeply grieving, one after another they began asking him, “**It’s not me, is it, Lord?**”

²³ He answered, “One who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will **hand me over.**

²⁴ **The Son of Man** goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is handed over! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”

²⁵ Judas, who would hand him over, answered, “**It’s not me, is it, Rabbi?**”

He said to him, “You have said so.”

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took a **loaf**, and after blessing it broke it and **handed** it to the disciples, and said, “**Take, eat; this is my body.**”

²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he handed it to them, saying, “**Drink of 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 not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in **my Father's kingdom.**”

³⁰ And when they had sung a **hymn**, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Daniel 7:13-14

¹³ “I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a Son of Man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

Matthew 20:25-28

²⁵ But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them.... ²⁶ It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, ²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Exodus 24:8

⁸ And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant that Yahweh has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

Isaiah 53:1, 4-5; 11-12

¹ Who has believed our message? | And to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed? | ...

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs | and carried our sorrows; [Mt 8:17] | yet we esteemed him stricken, | smitten by God, and afflicted. | ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; | he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, | and with his wounds we are healed. ...

¹¹ ...By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, | make many to be accounted righteous, | and he shall bear their sin. |¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, | and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, | because he poured out his life to death | and was numbered with the lawless; | yet he bore the sin of many, | and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Jeremiah 31:31-32, 34

³¹ "Behold, the days are coming, declares *Yahweh*, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah,³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares *Yahweh*. ...³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know *Yahweh*,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares *Yahweh*. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

A Passover of Deliverance and Betrayal

It's the time of the great festival of Israel's birth as a people, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (Exo 19:6), of God defeating the oppressive gods of Egypt, of deliverance. But a story with a dark side of betrayal and sin. Israel made a golden calf at Sinai; brought on a new exile of 40 yrs in the wilderness. The betrayal of God's deliverance continued till sins piled up in the great exiles of Assyria and Babylon. Now the Romans! People longed for a new Exodus.

Jesus came to confront Jerusalem, Priests, Romans at this feast looking back and forward.

People understood confrontation, but Jesus was doing something beyond all expectations.

He wants to prepare his disciples for something they have no ready resources to grasp.

He knows they see him in a frame of traditional hopes and can't envision what will happen.

He gives them memories in advance, experiences they reflect on, that grow in meaning.

Handing Over Jesus and Jesus Giving Himself

Matthew surprisingly describes this Passover in the briefest possible way. Why not elaborate and explain? Every word of description carries a depth of layers of meaning, a frame for living reenactment. It's not in repeating doctrines but in being there again that power flows.

We saw Jesus turn the woman's anointing toward burial, rejecting the disciples' confident judgment. Judas planned to hand over Jesus to the priests. Jesus knows but includes Judas.

At the meal, Jesus says one of them will hand him over (*para-didomi*). The disciples are grieved but not confident: No "I know it's not me," but rather "It's not me, is it, Lord?"

They sense that they are in a realm they don't understand. Jesus is not acting as they would. He speaks not of his being trapped or suffering, but of the plight of the betrayer, like Job, better not to have been born. The "Son of Man," (God's king over all nations, embodying Israel, Dan 7:13-14) has a journey and work, to give himself, to redeem (Exodus).

Bread and Cup – Body, Blood

Without explanation, Jesus takes the most commonplace parts of the meal and speaks simple words that lock those simple things in the disciples' hearts to be experienced and shared. He gives (*didomi*) them a piece of bread and a cup and in them he gives himself.

"*My Body*" – a broken loaf. Like the broken body of the Servant (Is 53). Broken by violence, the brokenness of our lives. Broken for sharing. Broken to reunite us in one new humanity.

He takes a cup with thanks. They all share it. Then he says: "*This is my blood of the covenant*" (Exodus), my life poured out (like the Servant embodying and serving all). Here is the new covenant (Jer 31) that both set us free from enslaving power and breaks the grip of idolatrous sin that corrupts life. The inbreaking of God's kingdom is beginning now!