

# The Passion of Jesus

## Jesus' Last Passover

*Matthew 26:17-29*

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# Jesus' Last Passover

## Scripture

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem took place on Sunday. We call that day "Palm Sunday." There was tremendous excitement and anticipation by the people for what Jesus was about to accomplish. They were expecting him to deliver them from their Roman oppressors.

Opposition to Jesus quickly grew. By Wednesday of that week the Jewish religious leaders were seriously plotting to have Jesus killed. The Roman leaders were very concerned about any uprising from the Jews. The city of Jerusalem had tens of thousands of visitors during the Passover, and the Roman authorities wanted no trouble.

Meanwhile, on Thursday, the first day of Unleavened Bread, Jesus had his disciples prepare for the Passover.

Let's read about Jesus' last Passover in Matthew 26:17-29:

**<sup>17</sup> 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?" <sup>18</sup> He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.' " <sup>19</sup> And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.**

**<sup>20</sup> When it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. <sup>21</sup> And as they were eating, he said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me." <sup>22</sup> And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, "Is it I, Lord?" <sup>23</sup> He answered, "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. <sup>24</sup> The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by**

whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”<sup>25</sup> Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

<sup>26</sup> Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.”<sup>27</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you,<sup>28</sup> for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.<sup>29</sup> 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.” (Matthew 26:17-29)

## Introduction

When I first came to the United States, I discovered this country’s distinctive holidays. One of those was Thanksgiving. As a student, I was thoroughly engrossed in my academic studies when I learned that there was going to be a four-day holiday coming up. “Great!” I thought, “Now I will be able to catch up on a lot of work.” When my fellow classmates learned that I had no plans for Thanksgiving, they took pity on me. I was invited to spend Thanksgiving with a friend. Well, I soon discovered that Thanksgiving is a wonderful holiday!

The holy day of Passover was one of three great festivals in ancient Israel. The Passover meal was the highlight of the seven-day pilgrimage festival.

## Lesson

Jesus’ last Passover in Matthew 26:17-29 teaches us about the institution of the Lord’s Supper.

Let's use the following outline:

1. What Happened at Jesus' Last Passover? (26:17-29)
2. What Does Jesus' Last Passover Mean for Us?

## I. **What Happened at Jesus' Last Passover? (26:17-29)**

First, what happened at Jesus' last Passover?

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem took place on Sunday, the first day of the week. On Thursday, **the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where will you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?"** (26:17). The disciples knew that they needed a room big enough for at least thirteen people, and probably more.

Jesus said, **"Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples' "** (26:18). Jesus had likely pre-arranged with someone to use a room in his house. We know from Mark and Luke that it was "a large upper room furnished" (*cf.* Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12). **And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover** (26:19).

Now, the Passover meal included lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and wine. The Passover commemorated the Lord passing over all the people in Egypt. The people of God gathered in families and killed a lamb, and sprinkled the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintel of their houses. When the Lord saw the blood, he passed over them and did not kill the firstborn in that home. The Passover meal included telling the story of the Passover, discussing the story, drinking four cups of wine, eating unleavened bread, partaking of the meal (which included lamb), and reclining in celebration of their freedom from Egypt.

When evening came, Jesus and his disciples reclined at table for their meal. In Matthew's Gospel, there is an account of Jesus saying that one of his disciples would betray him. The disciples were understandably sorrowful, asking in turn if he would be the one to betray Jesus. Eventually, Jesus affirmed to Judas that he would be the one to betray him (26:20-25). That happened later that night, just as Jesus said it would.

**Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body" (26:26).** At a certain time, the bread was taken and blessed and distributed. That is what Jesus was doing at this point in the Passover meal.

After the meal has been eaten, the third of four cups of wine was drunk. There is a prayer of thanks for the meal just eaten and for the cup about to be drunk. So, Jesus **took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you" (26:27).** This is normal practice for the Passover meal. However, then Jesus added the following words, **"...for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 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"** (26:28-29). No doubt this raised the disciples' eyebrows.

This is what happened at Jesus' last Passover.

## **II. What Does Jesus' Last Passover Mean for Us?**

Second, what does Jesus' last Passover mean for us?

The Passover meal that Jesus ate with his disciples before his betrayal later that evening and his crucifixion the next day was not only his last Passover, but it was also the very final Passover ever to be celebrated. Jesus changed the meaning of

the Passover meal. He instituted the Lord's Supper.

So, let's briefly examine the meaning of the Passover and also the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

*A. The Meaning of the Passover*

First, let's look at the meaning of the Passover.

After 430 years in Egypt (*cf.* Exodus 12:41; Galatians 3:17), God commanded Pharaoh through Moses to release his people who were now slaves in Egypt. Pharaoh refused to let them go. So, God sent a number of plagues. After nine devastating plagues, Pharaoh's heart was still hard and he refused to let the people of God go free. That is when God sent a tenth plague in which the firstborn of every family would die.

But God promised to protect those who belonged to him. He told his people to kill a lamb at twilight and to sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintels of the house. When he saw the blood on their homes, he would pass over and no one in that house would be killed. Moreover, the people were to eat the lamb standing up and ready to leave Egypt (Exodus 12). The blood served as a sign that the people belonged to God and that they were under his protection from death.

God also told his people that they were to commemorate the Passover every year. They were to remember their great deliverance from bondage in Egypt by God's power. They were to tell the story to their children so that they would never forget their great deliverance from slavery.

So, the Passover taught God's people that by the blood of the lamb they experienced protection from death and an exodus from bondage in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land.

That is the meaning of the Passover.

*B. The Meaning of the Lord's Supper*

And second, let's look at the meaning of the Lord's supper.

When Jesus gathered with his disciples for that last Passover, his disciples had no idea what was about to happen. As Jesus was going through the liturgy of the Passover, he changed it! I am sure that the disciples were taken aback. I am also sure that at that moment they did not properly understand what Jesus was doing. It was not until after his resurrection (and probably during his forty days of instruction), that they understood the full meaning of what Jesus was doing.

Jesus could change the meaning of the Passover because he had the authority to do so.

Jesus said of the bread, **“Take, eat; this is my body”** (26:26). The bread eaten in the Lord's supper now represents the body of Jesus that was broken for our sins.

Moreover, of the wine, Jesus said, **“Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 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”** (Matthew 26:27-29). The wine drunk in the Lord's supper now represents Jesus' blood, which was shed to pay the penalty for our sins.

## **Conclusion**

Just as the blood of lambs protected the people of God from death in Egypt, so the blood of Jesus protects us from eternal death. So, let us give to God that his judgment has passed over us and fallen on Jesus. Amen.

# Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church  
is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ  
and membership in his church family,  
develop them to Christlike maturity,  
equip them for their ministry in the church  
and life mission in the world,  
in order to magnify God's name.*

## Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can  
be found at:

1. [www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons](http://www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/sermons).
2. [www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/freddy-fritz-sermons-11181.asp](http://www.sermoncentral.com/contributors/freddy-fritz-sermons-11181.asp).
3. [www.sermonaudio.com/source\\_detail.asp?sourceid=Fred-dyFritz](http://www.sermonaudio.com/source_detail.asp?sourceid=Fred-dyFritz).

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