

THE BLOOD COVENANT

Luke 22:1-38

Key Verse: 22:20

"In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'"

Study Questions:

1. What did the Passover celebration commemorate? (Ex 13:8-10; Dt 6:20-25) What were the religious leaders doing? What did Judas do? (1-6) According to Luke, why did he do this? How did Judas show himself to be an opportunist? What is an opportunist?
2. Who prepared the Passover for Jesus and the disciples? How did these disciples exemplify faith, obedience and humility? (7-13) Why did Jesus eagerly want to eat the Passover with his disciples? (14-23) When would he eat it with them again? (Rev 19:9)
3. How is Jesus like the Passover lamb? (Ex 12:12-13; Isa 53:7; Jn 1:29) Read verses 17-19. What does the broken bread mean? (Jn 6:35; 2Pe 1:4b) Read verse 20. What is the meaning of the cup? (Lev 17:11; Heb 9:14,22; Mk 10:45) What is the blood covenant?
4. What sad and shocking prophecy did Jesus make? (21-23) What blinded Judas to Jesus' love? What did the disciples dispute about? Why? What did Jesus teach them about human greatness and true greatness? What was Jesus' example? (24-27)
5. Read verses 23-38. What did Jesus promise those who learn his serving life? What was Peter's spiritual condition? How did Jesus help him? (31-37; Isa 53:12) Why didn't they understand? What does the Last Supper teach about the power of Jesus' blood?

Before the crucifixion, Jesus ate the Passover in a large upper room. We call this event "The Last Supper." Through the Last Supper Jesus taught his disciples the meaning of the new covenant of blood. May God somehow teach us to know the spiritual meaning of the new covenant of blood.

First, Judas, an opportunist (1-6).

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching. The chief priests and teachers of the law were supposed to teach their people and children the meaning of the Passover, as Moses had commanded. (Ex 13:10; Dt 6:20-25) But they were carried away by their conspiracy to get rid of Jesus, completely ignoring their spiritual duties. (1,2) In ancient times, as was customary, followers of a teacher loved their teacher more than themselves. It is totally unbelievable that Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, betrayed Jesus. Both Luke and John saw Judas' betrayal quite simply. They said, "Satan entered into Judas." (Lk 22:3; Jn 13:27) Here we learn that anyone captivated by Satan becomes as evil as the devil. Judas went to the chief priests and officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They made a deal. Since then, Judas watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present. (4-6) Verse 6 says, "...and watched for an opportunity." This phrase well describes Judas' character. He was an opportunist. In history, opportunists have thought they were smart. But mostly their lives ended up tragically. Judas Iscariot was so tragic that he could not but commit suicide by hanging himself on a tree. Judas should have committed himself to Jesus. But it was too late. Here we learn that uncommitted people are all opportunists.

Second, the new covenant of blood (7-23).

Now it was the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed (7). Look at verse 8. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover." It was customary for them to eat the Passover. But they could not afford a room in which to do so. So they asked Jesus, "Where do you want us to prepare the Passover?"

Look at verses 10-12. "He replied, 'As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house, "The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" He will show you a large upper room, all furnished. Make preparations there.'" It was not unusual for the disciples to hear this sort of command from Jesus. When Jesus had to make the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, he told two of his disciples to go out and untie a colt that belonged to someone else and bring it to him. They

did exactly as they were told to do. (19:29-34) This time was the same: As soon as the disciples were told to find a room, they said, "Yes, sir, aye aye, sir!" and left. They were Peter and John. Their obedience was indeed remarkable, for the city of Jerusalem, as well as its satellite towns, was packed with pilgrims, with no room left. They were ordinary men, but they were extraordinary men because of their obedience. They left and began to look for a room, and found it just as Jesus had told them. They say that this was Mark's house. Peter had such an attitude from the beginning. One day, early in the morning, Jesus said to Peter, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Peter said, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."(Lk5:4,5) Despite his abruptness, it was his humbleness that made it possible for him to grow in Jesus as the greatest man who ever lived.

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." (15) It seems that Jesus wanted to eat a big Passover with his disciples just once. But it was not so. What Jesus really wanted was to teach them the true meaning of the Paschal lamb at the Passover time.

The Passover had historical meaning. (Ex 12) It commemorated the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. Their life in Egypt was misery itself. Just to eat three meals a day, they had to undergo forced labor day after day. They worked hard and did not eat enough. So their skin clung to their bones. Their drained bodies were full of marks of whipping. Their lives in Egypt were an exact picture of slavery to Satan, and a description of hell.

God had mercy on his people and decided to deliver them. But Pharaoh, king of Egypt, did not let the Israelites go. God sent plagues on Egypt, one after another. As each plague came, Pharaoh promised to let the people go. But when the plague abated, he changed his mind. The plagues were repeated nine times. Finally God gave Pharaoh a choice: either let the people go, or see God strike down all the firstborn of all kinds in Egypt. (Ex 12:29) Pharaoh did not listen to God's words through Moses. In this way, he invited the plague of death. No firstborn was exempt, not even the firstborn of Pharaoh the king. Pharaoh was a symbol of the power of sin. In the meantime, the Israelites were to slay a lamb. With a bunch of hyssop they were to smear the lintels of their doorposts with the blood of the lamb, and

when the angel of death saw the doorposts marked with the blood of the lamb, he passed over that house. We call this the Passover. In this way God saved the Israelites from the death plague. In this way God made the Exodus possible for the Israelites.

Therefore, to eat the Passover was to remember God's grace of deliverance from the yoke of slavery in Egypt. In order to eat the Passover they had to slay a defectless, one-year-old male lamb and sprinkle its blood on their doorposts to remember their deliverance. They also roasted the meat of the lamb and ate it. They dried the bones to be used as firewood. They dried the skin and used it as paper. The Paschal lamb was completely sacrificed. The complete sacrifice of the Passover lamb symbolizes the complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 16. "For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." Verse 16 implies that Jesus himself is the Paschal Lamb at this Passover. In John 1:29, John the Baptist said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Isaiah also prophesied concerning the Paschal Lamb. Isaiah 53:7 says, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."

Now, it was the Last Supper with his disciples before he would suffer. Jesus would eat no more Passover meals until the coming of the kingdom. Finally, their fellowship will be consummated in the great Messianic "Wedding Supper" to come. Revelation 19:9 says, "Then the angel said to me, 'Write: "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!"' And he added, 'These are the true words of God.'"

Look at verse 19. "And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'" The Israelites satisfied their stomachs by eating the meat of lambs. Likewise, men can really satisfy themselves when they take the body of Jesus. Otherwise, human life is too tiring. One young man said, "I am tired of the cross of mission." But he was not tired because of the cross of mission. He was tired because of his life of sin influenced by the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. (2 Pe 1:4b) People are tired because of their sins. They are thirsty because of spiritual dehydration. But

when we participate in the divine nature, we are greatly satisfied, for Jesus is the living water welling up to eternal life. (Jn 4:13,14) As John 6:35 says, Jesus is "the bread of life." When we eat the bread of life, we can be abundantly happy.

Look at verse 20b. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." Jesus came to the world to die on the cross to shed his blood for many as a ransom sacrifice. (Mk 10:45) When he had to ransom his people from their sins, Jesus had to sacrifice himself by shedding his blood, because only his blood can satisfy the demand of sin. Sin demands only lifeblood. (Lev 17:11; Heb 9:22) No one else's blood could meet the demand of sin because all other people's blood is sinstained. For example, one young man wanted to quit the life of sin in order to restore himself in the holiness of God. But he failed, because he did not depend on the blood of Jesus but on his own willpower. He could not control his abnormal sinful desires, because his sinsick blood was circulating in his soul. He went back to his old life of sin after 6 years of conflict. No one can ransom such a person. Only the blood of Jesus can deliver man from the power of sin. If one goes to the hospital for treatment, his doctor first checks his blood, because sick blood makes a person sick. Likewise, only the blood of Jesus transfuses our sinstained blood. When we believe that the blood of Jesus has power to heal the sinsick soul, we can be healed. We should not despair because of our sins; we must have faith in the power of Jesus' blood. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all our sinful desires. When we are healed from our sinsickness by the blood of Jesus, we can come to realize that God loves us until he sent his one and only Son to the world to die on the cross to save us from our sins. Romans 5:8 says, "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." God promised to send his one and only Son to shed his blood for our sins. We call this the blood covenant.

While they were eating the Passover, Jesus said in verse 21, "But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table." He was Judas Iscariot. He was eating the Last Supper with Jesus. But he could not realize God's love, because he was blinded by his selfishness. Selfishness blinds us from realizing the love of God. Selfishness causes us to come under "woes." Jesus said in verse 22, "The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him."

Third, the truly great man in the kingdom of God (24-38).

To the disciples, the Last Supper was the most precious time to learn the meaning of the Paschal Lamb. Still they were on the level of dog-fighting. A dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. (24) What did Jesus say to them? Look at verse 25. "Jesus said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors.'" Rulers of the world exercise power and authority over people by oppressing and squeezing them. At the same time they expect the people under them to respect and flatter them by saying, "You are the best Benefactor, sir." But in the spiritual world, the concept of greatness is quite opposite to that of worldly greatness. Look at verse 26. "But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves." In the spiritual world, greater people are obliged to serve the needy, humbling themselves like servants. Read verse 27. "For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves." This explains how Jesus served people in accordance with the constitution of the kingdom of God.

Look at verse 28. "You are those who have stood by me in my trials." In this verse, "in my trials" refers to Jesus' entire earthly ministry. They had seen how Jesus served people as his expression of serving God. Jesus promised his disciples that if they learned how to serve God and serve his people as Jesus had done, they would attain power to rule in the kingdom of God, together with Jesus, sitting on thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel. Thank God for this promise! We, the children of God, must learn how to serve others. Read verses 29,30. "And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

What was Peter's spiritual condition at the time? He did not understand Jesus' glorious promise; he was still spiritually harebrained. Read verses 31, 32. "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." Jesus knew that he would stumble. But Jesus prayed that Peter would stand up again and help his brothers spiritually in the future. Peter was not happy about Jesus' words and said,

"Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." (33) Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me." (34)

When Jesus saw that his disciples were not at all spiritual men, he helped them prepare for the future without him. Jesus asked, "Did you lack anything when you were with me?" (35) "Nothing," they answered. Then Jesus said to them in verse 36, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one." This verse does not mean that they should buy swords and fight, but that they must prepare themselves spiritually to meet upcoming hardships and sufferings without Jesus.

Jesus told them about what was going to happen to him. Look at verse 37. "It is written: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment." This is a quotation from Isaiah 53:12. This prophecy would be fulfilled in the body of Jesus. How great is the love of God that he included his one and only Son as one of the transgressors to save us from our sins! But his disciples did not understand the spiritual meaning of his words. So they said, "See, Lord, here are two swords." Here we learn that human beings are very slow to understand spiritual things.

In this passage we learn the meaning of the Last Supper. Especially, we learn that Jesus' blood has power in it. May God help you believe the power in the blood of Jesus.