

Drink of It, All of You

Matthew 26:17-30

Jason Van Bommel

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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 at hand. I will keep 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 And as they were eating, he said, “Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”²² And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another, “Is it I, Lord?”²³ He answered, “He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me.”²⁴ 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.”²⁵ Judas, who would betray him, answered, “Is it I, Rabbi?” He said to him, “You have said so.”

²⁶ 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.”²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you,²⁸ for this is my blood of 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.

– Matthew 26:17-30, ESV

Introduction: More Than Meets the Eye

Sometimes, there's so much more going on than meets the eye. We may observe a conversation between two people and we know that there's more going on than what is being said out loud, a hidden connection or a series of inside jokes, perhaps. When reading a book, sometimes you can get a subtle feeling that something strange is going on with a character, but you're not sure until everything is revealed.

The Gospels can be this way. We read them and see one level of activity happening on the surface, but when we start to connect the dots behind the scene, layers of meaningful significance start to show themselves to us. To get these connections and uncover these layers of meaning, sometimes we need to read the broader context of a passage and at other times we need to dig into the Old Testament background behind certain events and expressions. The extra time spent considering, digging, connecting dots and researching backgrounds pays off when we see wonderful things we had missed before.

Today's passage is full of such hidden insights, waiting to be uncovered. We'll only have time to uncover a few of them this evening, but hopefully you'll be inspired to uncover more on your own.

I. **The Passover (vv. 17-19): ‘The Teacher says, ‘My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’**

The first hidden insight comes from the fact that these events take place during Passover and that the Last Supper is a Passover meal. Jesus and His disciples had shared Passover meals before, but on this night, the true meaning behind all Passover meals - eaten by Jewish families for almost 1,500 years - would be revealed, and

the promises pictured in this meal would be fulfilled within hours of this Last Supper between Jesus and His disciples.

Passover was the annual remembrance of God's deliverance of His people from bondage in Egypt. It was the birthday of the Jewish nation and the national celebration of freedom from slavery and of the identity of Israel as God's covenant people, His chosen ones. At the heart of the Passover celebration every year was the slaying of the Passover Lamb and the sharing of a meal of Lamb, bitter herbs, bread and wine.

When God delivered His people out of slavery in Egypt, the blood of the slain lamb marked them as belonging to God and shielded them from God's judgment. The plague of the death of the firstborn passed over the houses of all who were marked by the blood of the Lamb; because the Passover Lamb had died, the family was protected and the firstborn in that household did not die.

But deliverance from slavery in Egypt was not enough. God's people remained enslaved to sin and the fear of death, and they would need to be delivered from this slavery, too. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, "*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*" (ESV)

On this Passover, it was Jesus' disciples who took the initiative in asking Jesus where He wanted to celebrate the Passover meal together. The first hint that this Passover meal would be different from all the others they had ever eaten comes in Jesus' instructions, They are to "*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.'*"

"My time is at hand." – At the wedding in Cana in Galilee in John 2, Jesus had told Mary, "My hour has not yet come." In John 7, Jesus told His brothers, "My time has not yet fully come." But now He instructs His disciples to tell this "certain man" that "The teacher says, 'My time is at hand.'" It is now the time for Jesus to enter His role as the Passover Lamb. In I Corinthians 5:7, the Apostle Paul writes, "*Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.*" This is the time that was now at hand for Jesus.

As the Passover Lamb, Jesus sheds His blood to deliver His people from slavery and to shield us from the judgment of God. He dies in our place, so that His blood can protect us and deliver us from judgment and bring us into freedom as the children of God.

II. The Betrayal (vv. 20-25): "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me."

But before Jesus gets to the explanation of how His body and His blood save His people, He first deals with the painful reality of betrayal. Few things in life are more painful than being betrayed by someone close to you. Jesus expresses His betrayal using the intimate and painful language of Psalm 41. In the ESV, Psalm 41:9 says, "*Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.*"

This background is an indication that it's not just the Passover Lamb that points ahead to Jesus and His work, but the Psalms do, too. Psalm 41 speaks of His betrayal by Judas, as do Psalms 55 and 109. Psalm 118 predicts that the stone which the builders rejected will become the chief cornerstone and points ahead to Palm Sunday, as we saw this past Sunday. Psalm 22 speaks powerfully of the death of Jesus on the cross. Psalm 16 speaks of His resurrection from the grave. Psalm 2 speaks of His reign over the nations. Psalm 110 speaks of

Jesus as both priest and king forever, seated at the right hand of God the Father. Over and over, the Psalms foreshadow the life, righteousness, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

Yet there's something else for us to see in Jesus' words about His betrayal. Not only does He make a reference to Psalm 41, but He also slyly and yet directly identifies Judas as His betrayer, in a way that only Judas seems to understand. This is important because by looking at Judas and affirming to him, "You have said so," Jesus actually sets into motion His own betrayal and death. We can understand this when we look back at verses 3-5 of Matthew 26, where "*the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and plotted together in order to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people."*

The Jewish religious leaders did not want to put Jesus to death during the Passover feast. They paid Judas his 30 pieces of silver and they wanted to wait until after the feast to capture Him, but they were not in charge. Jesus was. He knew He had to die during Passover as the Passover Lamb for the people of God. He sets things into motion when He lets Judas know that He knows what is happening, forcing Judas to go out and betray him that night, before the other disciples can intervene to stop him.

III. The Lord's Supper (vv. 26-28)

With the Passover meal underway and the betrayer put on the spot, Jesus now stops the Passover meal to institute something new, the Lord's Supper. Jesus would have given thanks at the beginning of the meal, but now He stops during the meal, most likely toward the end of the meal and does something new, something that wasn't part of any Passover meal these disciples had ever had before.

A. The Sustenance: "Take, eat; this is my body."

We read "*Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."*

The unleavened bread of the Passover meal is striped and pierced, and Jesus took and broke it. Holding this striped, pierced and broken bread, He said to His disciples, "Take, eat; this is my body." Jesus didn't mean that the bread was literally His physical body. After all, He was sitting right there with them around the table.

So, what did He mean? Just as the bread was unleavened, so Jesus was without sin. Just as the bread was broken, so Jesus' sinless body would be broken. Just as the disciples needed to take the bread and eat it, so they needed His perfect righteousness and His suffering in their place to be theirs. By faith, they needed to feed their souls on Him, just as they fed their bodies on the bread.

Think about the difference between the Passover meal and what Jesus is now implementing in the Lord's Supper. The Passover had four elements: lamb, bitter herbs, bread and wine. Well, Jesus the Passover Lamb has already been slain – He knew the cross was hours away – and so no Lamb needs to be killed anymore. The bitter herbs represent tears and suffering, bitterness and sorrow. Jesus shed His tears and suffered, He knew the bitterness and the sorrow we deserve, and so we do not eat the bitter herbs, for Jesus ate them for us. What we do eat is bread, which represents life and the body of Christ. Our life is in Christ. He is our nourishment, our righteousness, our everything.

B. The Sacrifice: "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Then, we read, “*And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”*”

“My blood of covenant” – This language is very significant. A covenant is a relationship with God founded on His promises. But how can a sinful people be in relationship with a holy God? How can God remain just and holy and yet have children who belong to Him who are sinful and wayward?

When God gave His people the Law of Moses, the Law included sacrifices that needed to be made. The blood of the sacrifices was sprinkled on the people and they were told “This is the blood of the covenant.” It was a reminder to them of their guilt before a holy God and of the penalty for their guilt. For God to be holy and just, He must punish wrongdoing.

Jesus said “*my blood of covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.*” Hebrews 9:22 says, “*without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*” Ephesians 1:7 says, “*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.*”

Our sins need to be forgiven for us to have a relationship with God. Our sins must be punished and dealt with. Jesus took our sins. He shed His blood in our place. He drank the cup of God’s wrath that we deserve, so that we may drink the cup of God’s blessing that He deserves.

IV. The Coming Day (v. 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.”

And then Jesus makes a statement which must have been shocking and sobering to the disciples: “*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.*” Wine was a normal part of the evening meal in Jewish culture. For Jesus to say that He would not drink wine again is to basically say that He’s not going to eat dinner again.

But in the midst of the sobering reality of His coming death is a stirring promise: Jesus will drink wine new with us in His Father’s kingdom. These words mean that the Lord’s Supper is not just a time for us to look back and remember the death of Jesus in our place on the cross, but it’s also a time to look ahead to the day when we will sit with Him at the banquet feast and drink wine together in the kingdom of God.

Paul says of the Lord’s Supper in I Corinthians 11:26, “*For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*” And so when we take the Lord’s Supper by faith, we are looking back at the cross, looking up to Jesus for forgiveness and nourishment, and looking ahead to His coming again. His death on the cross cleanses us from all sin. His life is our life. His coming again is our hope. Thus, the Lord’s Supper, when taken in faith, anchors us completely in Jesus, for our forgiveness, for our righteousness, for our life and for our eternal hope. We feed our souls on Him as we feed our bodies on bread and wine.