

The Last Supper Of Jesus

'Melchizedek, king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High' (Genesis 14:18).

When Jesus gave the bread and wine to His disciples at the Last Supper, He was performing the rite that had begun with Melchizedek. Melchizedek was both king and priest as we can see in the above verse. Jesus is also our King and Priest Who followed after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 7:1). The approximate date of the Last Supper can be worked out by reading the scriptures. 'This month will be to you the beginning of months. It will be the first month of the year to you' (Exodus 12:2). 'The first month is the month Nisan' (Esther 3:7). 'In the first month (of Nisan), on the fourteenth day of the month is the Lord's Passover. On the fifteenth day of this month (Nisan) there will be a feast and for seven days you will eat unleavened bread' (Numbers 28:16 & 17).

It may seem strange to modern people why the Lord God would want His people to refrain from eating yeast in bread for one whole week. We need to understand the ancient bread-making process for this to have meaning. If flour becomes moist, after a few days it becomes acidic and ferments as fungus in the form of yeast naturally grows in it, which is the normal process of decay. When fermented or sour dough is baked, the decayed mixture gives the bread a strong flavour. Each day as fresh bread was being prepared, some of the old sour dough was added to the new mixture to cause it to rise. That was 'leavened' bread. Leavening is caused by natural decay, which gives an image of sin resulting in the spiritual decay of mankind. Eating unleavened bread was an ancient 'prophecy in action' to indicate, hundreds of years in the future, we would be told to spiritually 'devour' the pure sinless body of Jesus, called the Bread of Life (John 6:48). God did not allow the fleshly body of Jesus to decay but He was resurrected before that could happen (Acts 13:37). For that reason, the Israelites were instructed to eat pure unleavened bread.

The unleavened bread was consumed with grape juice. All fruit juice in those days was called in Hebrew, 'iin' the English equivalent of 'wine', which simply means 'fruit of the vine' and not always made from grapes. Black currants and some other fruit also grow on vines. Since drinking alcohol was considered sinful, common or unclean it is unlikely Jesus drank anything alcoholic. 'Do not drink wine nor strong drink, you, nor your sons with you when you go into the Tent of Meeting, so you do not die. It will be a statute forever throughout your generations. You are to make a distinction between the holy and the common and between the unclean and the clean. You are to teach the children of Israel all the statutes God has spoken to them by Moses' (Leviticus 10:9 to 11). When Jesus offered His disciples the bread and wine it would have been unleavened bread and non-alcoholic grape juice mixed with water. Jesus instructed us to eat unleavened bread and drink fruit-off-the-vine juice regularly to recall His sacrifice on the cross until He returns to earth. The Feast of Passover was celebrated at the first full moon of spring. The Passover meal was eaten at dusk and the food eaten was the same as the Lord instructed the ancient Hebrews in Moses' day.

Every year during the month of Nisan (March or April in the modern calendar) the Jewish people held their celebration of Passover. The Feast of Passover was instigated by the Lord Himself as a prophecy in action that would be revealed by Jesus when He was to come to earth as the pure, unblemished male Lamb of God. The word 'Passover' is the English equivalent of the Hebrew word 'Pesach', which means 'to pass over'. The Bible reveals to us the initial reason for the Passover feast. 'The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt saying, "This month (Nisan) will be to you the beginning of months. It will be the first month of the year to you. Speak to all the congregation of Israel and tell them, 'On the tenth day of this month (Nisan) they will take for themselves every man a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for each household and if the household is too little for a whole lamb, then he and his neighbour next door will take one according to the number of the souls. You will make your count for the lamb according to what everyone can eat. Your lamb will be without blemish, a year old male. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats and you will keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel will kill it at evening. They will take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel on the houses in which they will eat it. They will eat the flesh that night, roasted with fire and eaten with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs. Do not eat it raw nor boiled with water, but roasted with fire with its head, its legs and its inner parts. You will let nothing of it remain until the morning but what remains of it until the morning you will burn with fire. You will eat it with your waist girded, your shoes on your feet, your staff in your hand and you will eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover for I will go through the land of Egypt during that night and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and animal. Against all the (false) gods of Egypt I will execute judgments. I am the Lord. The blood will be to you for a token on the houses where you are and when I see the blood, I will pass over you and there will no plague be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt ... You will take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is collected in the basin and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood in the basin and none of you will go out of the door of his house until the morning. God will pass through to strike the Egyptians and when He sees the blood on

the lintel and on the two doorposts, God will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to strike you” (Exodus 12:1 to 13; 22 & 23).

Jesus had spent His entire life walking and living freely amongst the Jewish people but as His ministry was drawing to a close, it was no longer safe for Jesus to walk freely amongst His people. It was fear of the Roman Empire that caused the Jewish leaders to want Jesus killed. The Jewish leaders said, “If we leave Jesus alone like this, everyone will believe in Him and the Romans will come and take away both our place (as leadership) and our nation (Israel).” Caiaphas, who was high priest that year said to them, “You know nothing at all nor do you consider, it is advantageous for us for one Man to die for the people so the whole nation not perish.” He did not say this of himself, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not only for the nation but so He might gather together into one (Body) the children of God who are scattered abroad. From that day they decided to put Jesus to death. Jesus could no longer walk openly among the Jews but departed from there into the country near the wilderness to a city called Ephraim. He stayed there with His disciples’ (John 11:48 to 54).

Jesus had strongly desired to share His final Passover with the disciples (Luke 22:15). Jesus Who as God on earth knew details that no normal person could have known. He most certainly had supernatural knowledge regarding that Passover. Firstly, He gave Peter and John startling directions that only supernatural insight could have given Him. ‘On the first day of unleavened bread, the disciples asked Jesus, “Where do You want us to prepare Passover?” Jesus said to Peter and John, “Go into the city (Jerusalem) and there you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him and wherever he enters, tell the master of the house, ‘The Teacher says, “Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples? My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house.” He will himself show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Prepare for us there.” His disciples went into the city and found things just as Jesus had said to them. The disciples did as Jesus commanded and they prepared the Passover’ (Matthew 26:17 to 19; Mark 14:12 to 16; Luke 22:8 to 13). The preparations for Passover were carefully organised by the apostles in exact accordance to prophecies written a couple of thousand years earlier. How did the man with the pitcher know to prepare the upper room? How did Jesus know which house it was except by divine instruction? After two thousand years it is impossible to know exactly where that room was. It was probably burned to the ground during the fires of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Some religious people claim they know where it was but after all this time, that would be impossible. We can be sure the upper room was somewhere in Jerusalem, probably where the Essenes lived. They were the devout Jewish people who gave us the Dead Sea Scrolls, so they were correct in their beliefs. Guests were usually accommodated on the upper floor of a two-storey house during Passover. It would have been laid up with the finest of linens, the best crockery and glassware that was used in the first century. People did not use cutlery. The master of the house would have one large knife to cut slices of meat off the roast lamb to serve around. People ate with their fingers using very good manners. They drank soup and gravy out of their small bowls.

The atmosphere at the Last Supper would have been heavy with foreboding. Jesus had made several mysterious and alarming comments in the weeks previous to the Passover. The apostles had asked many questions. Betrayal was in the air. Jesus was already troubled in Spirit before He sat down with His twelve apostles. For the last time ever, the Victim our Saviour Jesus, and Judas His betrayer sat down to eat together and both would be dead within two days – and Jesus knew it. Jesus is our Lord and our God but He was at that time, God in human form and as a Man in human form, He was about to suffer a terrible, terrifying series of tortures before His cruel death on that Thursday (in our calendar). It was going to be a chilling drama in the spirit world played out in the natural world on earth. The devil believed he was getting rid of His nemeses once and for all time. Had the devil realised what a stupid thing killing Jesus was and how the devil was going to be utterly defeated, he would never have murdered the Lord of Glory.

The Last Supper was the last Passover for Jesus with His apostles and was a prelude to His mock trial, death and resurrection. A sense of gloom seemed to be present. The last Supper was recorded in the four Gospels and holds a crucial place in the hearts of Jesus’ followers. The apostles finally realised that would be the Lord’s farewell dinner and their close, earthly, human friendship with Him was about to be torn from them. Peter had protested at Jesus’ constant references to His death only to be told in strong words, his protest was of the devil. ‘Jesus began to show His disciples He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests and scribes, and be killed and the third day be resurrected. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him saying, “Far be it from You Lord! This will never be done to You.” But Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me. You are not focusing on the things of God but on the things of men” (Matthew 16:21 to 23). Jesus did not tell His disciples exactly how He was going to die but He did give a few hints. “Before I am lifted up,” indicated the cross. Jesus knew what was in store for Him. He is the Word of God and in the Word the description of His death is made clear to the exact detail. It was so distressing He sank into a deep depression for a short time and God had to send an angel to strengthen Him.

Jesus and the disciples reclined at a low table. 'When evening had come He was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples' (Matthew 26:20). In those days, it was common for people to sit on mats to relax as they ate. Some people in the Middle East still to this day sit on mats to eat their dinner. An atmosphere of confusion and tension seemed to surround the Last Supper. Although Jesus never showed any fear of what was about to happen to Him, He did most certainly reveal His feelings of dread at the upcoming crucifixion. He knew exactly what was going to happen to Him (John 13:1). The ancient prophets prophesied details of His terrible torture and death. Jesus knew He would be lashed, have His beard torn out and would be humiliated and spat on. 'I gave My back to the strikers and my cheeks to those who plucked off the hair. I did not hide My face from shame and spitting' (Isaiah 50:6). Jesus knew He would be rejected by many (but not all) of His fellow Jews. 'He was despised and rejected by men. A man of suffering and acquainted with disease. He was despised as one from whom men hide their face and we did not respect Him' (Isaiah 53:3). He knew He was going to be stabbed, beaten and whipped. 'He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought our peace was on Him and by His lashings we are healed' (Isaiah 53:5). Jesus knew He was the human sacrifice for all humanity. 'All we like sheep have gone astray. Everyone has turned to his own way and God has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, yet when He was afflicted He did not open His mouth. As a Lamb led to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers is mute, so He did not open His mouth' (Isaiah 53:6 & 7). Jesus knew He was going to be considered a criminal. "I tell you what is written must be fulfilled in Me. 'He was counted with the lawless' (Isaiah 53:12). What concerns Me has an end" (Luke 22:37).

During the feast Jesus told the disciples He would be betrayed by one of them. That seemed to send a shockwave through the group who all asked Jesus if the betrayer could be themselves. Of course Judas knew he was the betrayer because he had already organised the treachery and mockingly asked, "Is it me, Rabbi?" Judas was actually possessed by the devil himself and his actions were prophesied by King David. 'Yes My own familiar friend in whom I trusted, who ate bread with Me, has lifted up his heel against Me' (Psalm 41:9). Jesus said, "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen but so the Scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me'" (John 13:18). 'When evening had come, Jesus was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples. As they were eating He said, 'Most certainly I tell you, one of you will betray me.'" They were exceedingly sorrowful and each began to ask Him, "Is it me, Lord?" He answered, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish is the one who will betray Me. The Son of Man goes (dies) as it is written of Him but woe to that man through whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would be better for that man if he had not been born." Judas who betrayed Him said, "Is it me Rabbi?" Jesus said to him, "You said it" (Matthew 26:20 to 25). That meant, "You know you are!" We can almost imagine Jesus virtually spitting out those words because both Jesus and Judas knew he was the betrayer but the other eleven disciples seemed oblivious to the extent of Judas' evil heart.

All four Gospels record the same conversation. 'As they sat and were eating Jesus said, "Most certainly I tell you, one of you will betray me, he who eats with me." They began to be sorrowful and to ask Him one by one, "Surely not I?" Another said, "Surely not I?" Jesus answered them, "It is one of the twelve, he who dips with Me in the dish"' (Mark 14:18 to 20). "'Behold, the hand of him who betrays Me is with Me on the table. The Son of Man indeed goes (dies) as it has been determined but woe to that man through whom He is betrayed!" They began to question among themselves, which one of them it was who would do this thing' (Luke 22:21 to 23). "Most certainly I tell you, one of you will betray Me." The disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke. One of His disciples whom Jesus loved (John, His first cousin) was at the table leaning against Jesus' chest. Simon Peter beckoned to John and said to him, "Find out and tell us who it is of whom He speaks." Leaning back as he was on Jesus' chest asked him, "Lord, who is it?" Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the piece of bread He gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. After he ate the piece of bread, Satan entered into him, then Jesus said to him, "What you have to do, do quickly." No man at the table knew why Jesus said this to Judas ... Having received that morsel Judas went out immediately. It was night' (John 13:21 to 28 & 30). The sauce in which Jesus dipped the unleavened bread was a dish of bitter herbs and olive oil, the recipe used to remember the bitterness of being slaves in Egypt. The recipe was given to the Israelites by the Lord God when He first told them about Passover. Jesus was troubled in spirit (John 13:21). When we are in the company of someone in such deep distress, it brings a troubling atmosphere and that is what the Last Supper with Jesus would have been like. It would not have been a happy, party atmosphere like the previous Passover feasts they had enjoyed with Jesus.

Jesus knew He was going to be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver that would end up being tossed to a potter and later the potter's field was purchased with the blood money. 'God said to me, "Throw it to the potter, the handsome price I was valued at by them!" I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter in the house of God' (Zechariah 11:13). The following portion of scripture is taken from all four Gospels. 'Two days before the feast of the Passover, the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might seize Jesus by

deception and kill Him but they feared the people. They said, "Not during the feast because there might be a riot of the people." The devil had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him then Satan entered in to Judas, one of the twelve disciples who wanted to deliver Jesus to them and went to the chief priests and said, "What are you willing to give me, so I can deliver Him to you?" When they heard it they were glad and promised to give Judas money. They weighed out for him thirty pieces of silver. From that time he sought an opportunity to conveniently betray and deliver Jesus to them in the absence of the crowds' (Matthew 26:14 to 16; Mark 14:1 & 2; 10 & 11; Luke 22:2 to 6; John 13:2). Judas had walked side by side with Jesus for over three years but had never committed himself to God in the way the other eleven apostles had done. Jesus called him a devil. 'Jesus said, "Did I not choose you, the twelve and yet one of you is a devil?" He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve disciples' (John 6:70 & 71). 'Judas was a thief and having the money box, used to steal what was put into it' (John 12:6). Jesus knew Judas was part of the Master Plan so He never gave him away but He did tell His disciples Judas was only fit for eternal destruction and would going to the lake of fire. Jesus called Judas the 'son of perdition' or the son of destruction and added, it would have been better for Judas if he had never been born. We have no choice regarding our birth, but Judas did have a choice regarding his own actions. Judas cared nothing about poor people and even stole money from the Lord's purse (John 12:6) before betraying Jesus.

After Judas left the Last Supper to go and do His dirty deed, the tension seemed to ease. They all relaxed. Jesus gave us the New Covenant written in His blood and asked all believers to regularly take the broken bread and cup of blessing to remember His life and death until He returns. 'As they were still eating the Passover meal, Jesus took bread, gave thanks for it and broke it. He gave pieces to the disciples and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves and eat. This is My body. Do this in memory of Me." He took the cup, gave thanks and gave a sip to them saying, "All of you drink it for this is the New Covenant written in My blood, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins." They all drank a sip from the same cup' (Matthew 26:26 to 28; Mark 14:22 to 24; Luke 22:17, 19 & 20). The symbolism and our attitude regarding the bread and cup are important to God. If we have sin in our lives we may fall terribly ill and some could die, that is how seriously the Lord considers this holy form of worship. 'As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again. Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks the Lord's cup in a manner unworthy of the Lord will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself and so let them eat of the bread and drink of the cup. Those who eat and drink in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to themselves, if they do not discern the Lord's body. For this reason, many among you are weak and sickly and not a few died. If we discern ourselves, we would not be judged. When we are judged, we are punished by the Lord so we may not be condemned with the world. Therefore my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait one for another. If anyone is hungry let them eat at home lest your coming together be for judgment' (1 Corinthians 11:26 to 34). The communion cup and unleavened bread took root immediately and is still practiced today. Although there are differences around the world in the method used, the original concept is always the same. Bread representing the body of Jesus and grape juice or fruit of another vine represents the shed blood of Jesus. This action is vital for the unity of Christians all over the world no matter what denomination or building we choose to worship and meet together, the bread and cup of blessing are always sacred. Jesus prayed for unity amongst His followers making them One in unity with Him and with God (John 17:21 to 23). The Bible refers to a body of dedicated believers as 'the Lord's Body' (1 Corinthians 11:29). Jesus referred to the disciples and all subsequent followers as 'friends' and He prayed a long prayer for the remaining eleven men and all of us who have accepted Jesus as our Lord. It was as though all of His future Body of believers were all crammed into that upper room. We are one in unity and must suffer with Him. He told us all to love one another just as He had loved us.

In His humility, Jesus washed the feet of His disciples just after they ate their last meal with Him. Judas was out preparing to betray Him so he missed out. Jesus washed their feet to symbolise their being washed spiritually. 'Jesus arose from supper and laid aside His outer garments. He took a towel and wrapped a towel around His waist. He poured water into the basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them dry with the towel that was wrapped around Him. He came to Simon Peter who said to Him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" Jesus answered him, "You do not understand what I am doing right now but you will understand later." Peter said to Him, "You will never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also wash my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "Someone who has bathed only needs to have his feet washed but is completely clean. You are clean but not all of you." He knew Judas would betray Him therefore He said, "You are not all clean." When He had washed their feet, He put His outer garment back on and sat down again. Jesus asked them, "Do you know what I have done for you? You call me, 'Teacher' and 'Lord.' You say so correctly for so I am. If I, the Lord and the Teacher have washed your feet you also ought to wash one another's feet. I have given you an example so you should do as I have done to you. Most certainly I tell you, a servant is not greater

than his Lord, neither one who is sent, greater than He who sent Him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them' (John 13:4 to 15).

There was so much tension during the Last Supper the disciples began to argue about childish things as some people do when they are on edge. Tension creates a bad atmosphere and it must have been an evening quite out of the ordinary. Jesus had to step in and quell the aggression and He did that by inferring they should humble themselves and be servants like Him then He told them briefly about their future life in heaven. 'There arose a contention among the disciples about which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, "The kings of the nations lord it over the people and those who have authority over them are called benefactors. Not so with you. For one to be greater among you, let him become as the younger, and one who is governing as one who serves. Who is greater, one who sits at the table or one who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? But I am in the midst of you as One Who serves. You are those who have continued with Me in my trials. I confer on you a Kingdom even as my Father conferred on Me so you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom. You will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:24 to 30).

The Last Supper ended with a song of praise. 'When they had sung a hymn they went out to the Mount of Olives' (Matthew 26:30). Even after the supper was over, tension hung in the air. Jesus told Peter he would deny Him three times then Jesus said they would all scatter and leave Him to face the terror alone. 'Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me tonight for it is written, "I will strike the Shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered," but after I am raised up (resurrected) I will go before you into Galilee." Peter said to Him, "Even if all will be made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble." (In Mark 14:29, "Although all will be offended, yet I will not.") Jesus said to Peter, "Most certainly I tell you that tonight, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." Peter said to Him, "Even if I must die with You I will not deny You." All of the disciples said the same thing' (Matthew 26:31 to 35; Mark 14:30 & 31). 'The Lord said, "Simon, Simon, behold Satan asked to have you so he might sift you as wheat but I prayed for you so your faith would not fail. When you have turned again (back to God) establish your brothers (fellow Jews)." Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, I am ready to go with You both to prison and to death!" Jesus said, "I tell you Peter, the rooster will crow today after you deny that you know Me three times" (Luke 22:31 to 34).

Then Jesus and the eleven disciples walked from the Mount of Olives across the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane. It would have been dusk but not yet dark. Jesus wanted His disciples to watch and wait with Him for an hour before His arrest but after all that tension, confusion and distress, they were all so filled with grief they could not stay awake. Anyone who has known genuine deep grief knows it is an overwhelming and exhausting emotion. It saps the energy out of the person who is grieving and that is what happened to the disciples. Jesus was miserable and filled with sorrow, and He wanted their support but they were too sad to be able to give Jesus the support He needed. 'When Jesus rose up from His prayer He returned to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief' (Luke 22:45). 'Jesus said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray ... Stay here and watch with Me ... He returned to the disciples and found them sleeping and said to Peter, "What? Could you not watch with Me for one hour? Watch and pray you do not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak ... He returned again and found them sleeping for their eyes were heavy. He left them again, went away and prayed a third time saying the same words. Then He said to the disciples, "Sleep on now and take your rest. Behold the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going. Behold he who betrays Me is at hand" (Matthew 26:36 to 46). 'Judas who betrayed Jesus knew the place, for Jesus often met there with His disciples' (John 18:2).

Jesus revealed His dread by making certain comments, even asking God three times to prevent the crucifixion from happening. He was so distressed, God had to send an angel to strengthen Him. 'Jesus took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be sorrowful and severely troubled. He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." He went forward a little, fell on His face and prayed saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from Me, yet not My will but Your will be done ... A second time He went away and prayed saying, "My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, your will be done." He left them again, went away and prayed a third time saying the same words' (Matthew 26:37 to 39; 42 & 44). 'Jesus took with Him, Peter, James and John, and began to be greatly troubled and distressed. He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even to death." ... He went forward a little, fell on the ground and prayed, if it were possible the hour (of suffering and death) might pass away from Him. He said, "Abba Father, all things are possible to You. Please remove this cup from Me. However, not My will but Your will." ... Again He went away and prayed, saying the same words ... He came the third time and said to them, "Sleep on now and take your rest. It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Mark 14:33 to 36; 39 & 41). 'Jesus withdrew from them about a stone's throw. He knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you

are willing, remove this cup from Me, yet not My will but Yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. Being in agony He prayed more earnestly. His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground’ (Luke 22:41 to 44). The poor Man must have been going through a terrible time. Jesus was obviously filled with apprehension regarding His upcoming torture. He was so filled with anguish, as He prayed, blood vessels broke under the skin and mixed with His perspiration caused a condition called Hemathidrosis so it looked like great drops of blood was pouring out of His pores. He did not want to suffer the torture and crucifixion but ultimately submitted to God’s will.

We know what happened next. While Jesus was still speaking, Judas with dozens of soldiers carrying swords and clubs with the chief priest and elders of the Jewish people. Judas said, “Hail Rabbi,” then kissed Jesus on the cheek as a sign to the soldiers, He was the One they were after and they took Him away (Matthew 26:47 to 50). Jesus could have stopped it all happening by calling on angels to get Him out of there. “I could ask My Father and He would even now send Me more than twelve legions of angels,” (Matthew 26:53) but Jesus knew it was God’s will for Him to be sacrificed for mankind. ‘In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, “Have you come out as against a robber with swords and clubs to seize Me? I sat daily in the temple teaching and you did not arrest Me but all this has happened so the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled ... But this is your hour and the power of darkness” (Matthew 26:55 & 56; Luke 22:53). When the evil men came looking for Jesus, He humiliated them just to prove He really did have the power of God. Jesus spoke the Name of God the Father, ‘I AM’, and at His spoken word they all fell over backwards. ‘Jesus, knowing all the things that were happening to Him said to them, “Who are you looking for?” They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said, “I AM He.” When He said to them, “I AM He,” they went backward and fell to the ground. Again He asked them, “Who are you looking for?” They said, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus answered, “I told you, I AM He” (John 18:4 to 8).

All of the disciples left Jesus and fled. ‘A certain young man (that was Mark) followed Him having only a linen cloth thrown around himself over his naked body. The young men grabbed him but he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked’ (Mark 14:50 to 52). Then all the other disciples left Jesus and fled. Following the accounts from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the eyewitnesses who wrote the Gospels did not gloss over what was said. It seems Simon Peter had a bit of a foul mouth. ‘Peter followed Jesus from a distance to the court of the high priest and sat with the officers to see the end. He was sitting with the officers and warming himself in the light of the fire. They had kindled a fire of coals in the middle of the courtyard for it was cold, and had sat down together, Peter among them ... A servant girl or maid saw Peter as he sat in the light and looking intently at him said, “This man was with Him. You were with Jesus the Galilean! You were with the Nazarene, Jesus! You are one of this Man’s disciples?” Peter denied Jesus saying, “Woman, I am not. I do not know Him. I do not know what you are talking about. I neither know nor understand what you are saying.” He went out on the porch and the rooster crowed. When Peter had gone out onto the porch someone else saw him and said to those who were there, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth. You are one of them! This is one of them. You are one of His disciples.” Peter answered, “Man, I am not!” Again Peter denied it with an oath, “I do not know the Man.” After about one hour had passed another man confidently affirmed saying, “Truly this man was with Him for he is a Galilean! Surely you are one of them for your speech (accent) shows it and makes you known. You truly are one of them for you are a Galilean. I saw you in the garden with Him.” Peter began to curse and to swear, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about! I do not know the Man! I do not know this Man of whom you speak!” Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. The Lord Jesus turned and looked at Peter. He remembered the Lord’s words to him, “Before the rooster crows twice you will deny Me three times.” When Peter thought about that he went out and wept bitterly’ (Matthew 26:58, 69 to 75; Mark 14:54, 66 to 72; Luke 22:54 to 62; John 18:17 & 18, 25 to 27). Roosters do not usually crow at night but this one did. The Lord had changed Simon son of Jonah’s name to Peter, which means ‘Rock’ (Matthew 16:17 & 18). Simon Peter had denied the Lord three times then after His resurrection Jesus painfully questioned Peter three times using the name Simon, not Peter. ‘Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, do you love Me more than these (as one loves the Father)?” Peter answered, “Yes Lord. You know I love You (as a close friend with deep personal devotion).” Jesus said, “Feed My lambs (spiritually feed My new converts).” Jesus asked Peter a second time, “Simon, do you love Me?” Peter said, “Yes Lord. You know I love You.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep (be a shepherd to My flock).” Jesus asked Peter the third time, “Simon do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because Jesus asked him the third time. Peter replied, “Lord, you know everything. You know I have a deep love for You.” Jesus said, “Feed My sheep (spiritually feed mature believers)” (John 21:15 to 17).

Judas had seen Jesus escape from the soldiers and Jewish leaders many times by slipping into the crowds so he may have assumed the same thing would happen again – Jesus would slip away in the night and he would keep the blood money. It did not happen that way. Jesus was arrested. As soon as Judas realised the trouble his betrayal had caused, he was filled with remorse and tried to return the money. Had Judas repented of his actions he would have been numbered with the original twelve. Peter denied Jesus three times but he repented of that sin and went on to do great things for God. All of the apostles ran away and

scattered in fear but they all repented. Instead of repenting of his sin, Judas hung himself and the force of that caused his intestines to fall out of his body onto the ground. He was buried in the potter's field bought with the 30 pieces of silver. It was a terribly sad end of a young man filled with promise. 'When Judas, who betrayed Jesus, saw that Jesus was condemned, felt remorse and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders saying, "I have sinned and I betrayed innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? You see to it." Judas threw down the pieces of silver in the sanctuary and departed. He went away and hanged himself. The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury since it is the price of blood." They concurred and bought the potter's field with the money to bury strangers in. That field was called, 'The Field of Blood'. What was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled. "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him upon whom a price had been set, Whom some of the children of Israel priced and they gave the money for the potter's field as the Lord commanded me"' (Matthew 27:3 to 10). 'Brothers, it was necessary this Scripture be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas who was guide to those who took Jesus. He was numbered with us and received his portion in this ministry. This man obtained a field with the reward for his wickedness and falling headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines gushed out. It became known to everyone who lived in Jerusalem, in their language (Hebrew), that field was called 'Akeldama,' that is, 'The field of blood' (Acts 1:16 to 19).

Crucifixion is one of the most cruel and inhumane ways to torture and kill someone. Only a mentally deranged despot could order such a thing to be done another human being. No normal person could bring themselves to do that to another person, but many thousands of people were killed that way. That shows us the Roman leaders of the day were not rational people and had no respect for human life. We only need to look at the insane practice of forcing slaves to be gladiators to see how cruel and ruthless the ancient Romans were. In modern times, people like that are called psychopaths. We can only imagine the dread in the heart of Jesus as He was about to face such a cruel ordeal imposed on Him by a mob of crazed, psychopathic madmen. Jesus made no attempt to conceal His anxiety. It was during that tense moment Jesus said we were to take communion to remember His life and death. Our righteous was no longer by shedding the blood of animals, it was through Jesus and it was now a blood covenant sealed or ratified with His blood, likened to a holy marriage and not to be broken for eternity. Without accepting the blood and cross of Jesus and His sacrifice, there can be no remission of sin. We all need to turn to God but we have a Mediator Who covers our sin so we can enter into the presence of God, our Holy of Holies, freely, boldly and without fear, without the need for a priest (Ephesians 3:12; 1 John 3:21).

The Last Supper was the culmination of Jesus' work. It ushered in the end of His ministry and life, and it ushered in the ministry of the apostles. From then on, God would entrust Jesus' ministry to the apostles who in turn gave the mandate to every believer on earth to continue the work Jesus began. Jesus rose from the dead on the Sunday morning and that Sunday evening held the very first post-resurrection meeting with His remaining eleven disciples and many other people. 'When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week and when the doors were locked where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, "Peace be to you" (John 20:19). Jesus overcame the world (John 16:33), He stripped the devil of his power (Colossians 2:15) and left with us a legacy of eternal hope. He is the one and only way into the Kingdom of God. Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Amen and God bless you.

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