



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #286

Thursday... Day of Instruction and Arrest: The Last Supper

Jesus Institutes “The Lord’s Supper”

MK 14.22-25 (Parallel Texts: MT 26.26-29; LK 22.17-20; I Cor. 11.23-26)

(Note: The superscript ID for the I Cor. text is ^P, for Paul.)

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^P For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed--

^L took the (3rd) cup (of the Passover meal), gave thanks and said, *“Take this and divide it among you.”*

22 ^M While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, *“Take it ^{MT} and eat; ^M this is my body, ^{P/L} which has been given permanently for you. I command you to keep on doing this in remembrance of me.”*

23 In the same way, after supper, he took a cup, saying

24 *“This is the new covenant in my blood, ^M which is poured out for many ^{MT} for the forgiveness of sins.*

^P I command you to keep on doing this, every time you are drinking it, in remembrance of me.

^M And when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

25 Jesus said: *“Truly I tell you, there is no way I will ever drink again from the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new ^{MT} with you in my Father’s kingdom--^M the kingdom of God.”*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in “blended texts” as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This “superscript ID” is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	An Upper Room in Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus’ Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	D. Thursday: Day of Instruction and Arrest
	The Last Supper

Title	Jesus Institutes "The Lord's Supper"
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COMMENT:

Today's reading completes the "Last Supper" portion of Jesus' last night on earth in the flesh. He ended his last Passover by instituting his own, "new covenant" memorial supper for his disciples. This memorial is one of two ordinances that are observed by all Christians, which are (1) baptism and (2) the Lord's Supper. Different denominations may add other ordinances (or sacraments) to these two, but these two are observed in common as a minimum by all followers of Jesus.

Water baptism is a once in a lifetime experience. On the other hand, the Lord's Supper is an ongoing observance. Jesus did not mandate the frequency of His Supper, just that we continue to observe it. Daily, weekly, quarterly, and annual patterns are all followed by some Christians. The key is that we have a regular, ongoing pattern of partaking in this simple observance in remembrance of him.

Today's reading is unique because it includes words from the Apostle Paul found in I Cor. 11. As future readings will include words drawn from Biblical books other than the gospels, a brief explanation concerning this practice is in order.

Our goal in the DAILY JESUS NEWS is to cover all the events and sayings of the complete life of Jesus, according to the Scriptures. The four gospels include the vast majority of this information, but not all of it. Because the life of Jesus includes everything that he has said and done since his ascension, and everything he will say and do in the future according to the Scriptures (the Book of Revelation), a complete study of his life must include all of this information. Including all Scriptural content of Jesus' past, present, and future life and ministry makes the DAILY JESUS NEWS publication unique among compilations of the life of Christ.

Paul's record of the institution of the Lord's Supper is a case in point. His first letter to the Corinthians was probably written in 56 AD. This predates the publication of Luke and John to be sure, and possibly Mark and Matthew, too. In other words, Paul's written expression of what happened when Jesus instituted his supper is among the original, and therefore most important accounts of that night. His words should therefore be included in a Scriptural summary that seeks to blend the content of all the parallel accounts into one text. In the same way, future DJN readings will include content from Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation.

Now we will return our attention to the Lord's Supper. Luke's mention of Jesus taking the cup and distributing it before the Lord's supper allows us to place the institution of the Lord's Supper after the third of four "cups" in the Passover ceremony. Each of these "cups" of wine had a different meaning in the Passover observance.

Jesus took a sheet of the unleavened, flat bread (wafer) that was used in Passover, broke it, and distributed it among the disciples. After saying a prayer of thanks, he explained that it represented his body, which he gave permanently (Greek perfect tense) for us. In other words, the sacrifice of his body was a one time thing, but the results that he accomplished through it remain forever. Then he commanded us to continue to remember him whenever we eat the bread in this memorial. The supper is about him, and what he accomplished for us.

In the same way he next took the cup, gave thanks, and distributed it among the disciples. He said this represented his blood of the new covenant, which was shed for the forgiveness of our sins, and that we must drink it in remembrance of him.

Passover was a covenant memorial meal, which was common in ancient cultures. We do much the same thing today when we observe the anniversary of a marriage, which is a covenant, or promise between two people. The anniversary does not create the marriage, but it celebrates, remembers and renews the promise that established the relationship.

In the same way, the Passover Supper was an annual anniversary remembrance of the way God had saved his people from slavery in Egypt, and then established a covenant with them through the shedding of blood. The Passover commemorated that covenant.

The Lord's Supper is also a covenant remembrance and renewal meal. Jesus shed his blood to establish a "new" covenant. There are four specific promises in the new covenant--all made by God toward us, including the forgiveness of sins, which makes all the rest of the promises possible for us. When we observe the Lord's Supper it is important to remember Jesus as the Maker of the new covenant in his blood, and give him thanks, praise and glory for the price he paid to make the new covenant of grace possible for us as a free gift.

Different Christian denominations and groups hold many different views and practices concerning the Lord's Supper. However, the foundational truths come directly from our Lord in this key passage. The things he said and commanded hold all Christians in unity as the common foundation for the additional dimensions of meaning we see in the Supper. However we may differ in the details, we all hold these words of Jesus in common, and they bind us together in unity in the Body of Christ.

APPLICATION:

Have you memorized the four new covenant promises?

The new covenant was prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34, and quoted and explained in the Letter to the Hebrews, especially 8:7-13. The four promises from God in the new covenant should be basic information for every follower of Jesus. After all, he died to establish these four promises for us. It is no small thing.

If you have not done so already, please memorize the four new covenant promises, and think about them every time you observe the Lord's Supper.

How often do you observe the Lord's Supper? What does it mean to you? How can you more fully obey Jesus' command to eat the bread and drink the cup "in remembrance of me?"