

## Handout 1: Luke Lesson 14

It was God's plan to set the sacrifice and resurrection of the Christ within the context of three annual sacred feasts. These feasts remembered the salvation and redemption of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt and the celebration of the Israelites as the "first fruits" of the covenant people in the Promised Land (Ex 12-13; Lev 23:4-14):

- The Passover sacrifice on Nisan 14<sup>th</sup> (Lev 23:4-5)
- The pilgrim feast of Unleavened Bread on Nisan 15<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> (Lev 23:6-8)
- The feast of Firstfruits on the day after the Sabbath (Saturday) on the first day of the week (Sunday) during the holy week of Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:9-14).

The annual feasts were always set within the liturgy of the daily Tamid sacrifice. The Passover sacrifices took place during the afternoon liturgical service of the Tamid that was normally from 3-5 PM. For the Passover, the afternoon liturgy was earlier so the Passover sacrifices could begin at 3 PM (Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, 6.9.3 [423]). There was an exception if the day of the Passover sacrifice fell on a Friday, Preparation Day for the Sabbath. In that case, the Tamid was offered even earlier so that there was enough time for the people to prepare for the Sabbath restrictions: *If, however, the eve of Passover [meal] coincided with the eve of the Sabbath [Friday], it [the Tamid] was slaughtered at half after the sixth hour [12:30 PM] and offered up at half after the seventh hour [1:30 PM] (Mishnah: Pesahim, 5:1D).*

The groups offering a Passover sacrifice could not be less than 10 or more than 20. If the size of the Passover victim was not sufficient to feed the number of people in a group, then a *hagigah* festival peace offering, a male or female animal from the flock or herd, was also sacrificed at the same time. The peace offerings were made all week long at the Temple and were what the pilgrim groups ate together each day (*Mishnah: Pesahim*, 6:3-6:4; *Mishnah: Hagigah*, 1:1-1:6; Dt 12:5-7, 11-13; Jn 18:28). A relative or even one's slave (if he was a Jew) could present the animal for sacrifice since the Passover sacrifice was not a pilgrim festival (*Mishnah: Pesahim*, 8:1-8:4). The groups that represented their households assembled at the Temple with their animals at noon. The different groups were divided into three large divisions in fulfillment of Exodus 12:6: *And the whole assembly of the congregations of Israel shall slaughter it ... (Mishnah: Pesahim, 5:5A-B):*

- "whole" = division #1
- "assembly" = division #2
- "congregation" = division #3

While the sacrifices were taking place, the Levitical choir sang Hallel Psalms 113-118. Psalms 113-117 recounts the story of the Exodus liberation, while Psalm 118 gives joyous thanksgiving to God the Savior and speaks of the Messiah as "the stone which the builders rejected" which "has become the cornerstone" (Lk 20:17). As the Levitical choir sang the first line of each verse of the Hallel Psalms, the people repeated every opening line, but to the other lines the people responded with "Hallelujah," "Praise God, Yahweh!" However, when the Levitical choir came to the 118<sup>th</sup> Psalms, the congregation not only repeated the first line but also repeated three additional lines that promised the coming of the Messiah (*Mishnah: Pesahim*, 5:7): *We beg you, Yahweh, save us [Hosanna]! We beg you, Yahweh, give us victory! Blessed in the name of Yahweh is he who is coming! (Ps 118:25-26 NJB; emphasis added).*

The Hallel Psalms were repeated until all the animals of a division had been sacrificed, including the *hagigah* festival communion offerings. The animal's fat was put in a bowl where it was salted before being placed on the altar fire, and its blood poured out at the altar (*Mishnah: Pesahim*, 5:7-10). When all was completed for the first division, the second division entered the Court of the Priests, and the same ritual of sacrifice was repeated. When all the animals had been sacrificed, the Passover service was concluded by the burning of incense on the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place of the Sanctuary. The skinned body of every Passover lamb or goat-kid and free-will *hagigah* festival offering was taken by each group back into to city of Jerusalem to be prepared for the sacred meal at sundown.

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## Handout 2: Luke Lesson 14

### **The ancient Passover Meal and the changes Jesus made at the Last Supper**

Four communal cups of red wine, each mixed with a little water, were consumed during the meal.+ Each cup represented the blood of the victim that redeemed the Israelites from death in the first Passover and one of the four ways God promised to redeem His people from slavery in Egypt in Exodus 6:6-8 (NJB): *So say to the Israelites, "I am Yahweh...*

1. *I shall free you from the forced labor of the Egyptians* –Cup of Sanctification
2. *I shall rescue you from their slavery*—Cup of Forgiveness
3. *I shall redeem you with outstretched arm and mighty acts of judgment*—Cup of Blessing/Redemption
4. *I shall take you as my people and I shall be your God*—Cup of Acceptance

If a person became ritually unclean or could not reach Jerusalem in time, he could keep the feast a month later on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Iyyar (*Mishnah: Pesahim*, 9:1; Num 9:9-10).

The order of the sacred feast:

- On the 14<sup>th</sup> all leaven has been removed from the premises and checked again between 11:30 and noon.
- The faithful fasted from just before the afternoon liturgical service until sundown.
- The Passover victim (male lamb or kid) must be roasted on a pomegranate spit—no bones can be broken; the *hagigah* festival offering is also roasted (male or female from the flock or herd).
- Guests (in a state of ritual purity) arrive at sundown and recline around a U-shaped table or couches in a U shape with small tables. Men reclined on couches and women and children sat on the floor (Mt 26:20 and Mk 14:18 = reclined; Lk 22:14 = “leaned back”; Jn 13:23 “reclining”).
- The first communal cup, the Cup of Sanctification, mixed with a little water, is poured out.
- The host prayed the Kiddush blessing over the first communal cup and then the first cup is passed to those present.
- The first ritual hand washing.
- The food is brought in on large communal platters: the rounds of unleavened bread, the two kinds of bitter herbs, fruit mixed with cinnamon and red wine called *haroset/charoset*, the meat of the *hagigah* peace offering and the Passover victim.
- The first dipping of bitter herbs in salt water or vinegar.
- The second cup of red wine mixed with a little water is poured. The Cup of Forgiveness then remains on the table in front of the host.
- The food is removed to heighten anticipation.
- The youngest male asks the ritual questions: “How is this night different from all other nights?” For on all other nights we eat leavened or unleavened bread. But this night all of the bread is unleavened. For on all other nights we eat diverse vegetables, but on this night only bitter herbs. For on all other nights we eat meat which is roasted, stewed, or boiled. But on this night all the meat is roasted. For on all other nights we dip our food one time, but on this night two times.”
- The host tells the story of Israel’s history from Abraham to the Exodus Passover and the covenant at Sinai.

- The food is returned and the host explains the symbolic nature of the food and ends with a concluding benediction.
- The blessing and passing of the Cup of Forgiveness and the assembly sings Psalms 113-114.
- Second ritual hand washing. It was probably at this time that Jesus washed His disciples' feet (Jn 13:2b-12).
- The host offers two prayers over 3 rounds of unleavened bread that are wrapped separately and stacked with the middle round broken.
- The host dips a piece of the unleavened bread in the *haroset* and passes the "sop" to his most honored guest reclining to his left (Jn 13:26-30).
- The host passes the platters of unleavened bread and *haroset* around the table.
- The platter with the meat of the *hagigah* festival offering is passed and eaten.
- After consuming the other food, the platter with the meat of the Passover victim is passed last and carefully eaten—no bones are to be broken (Ex 12:46; Num 9:12; Jn 19:36).
- The third ritual hand washing.
- The pouring out and blessing of the third cup of red wine mixed with a little water: The Cup of Blessing/Redemption and the cup of Jesus' Blood (1 Cor 10:16). One may drink from individual cups between the first and third cups but between the third and fourth cups no wine can be consumed.
- The fourth cup of red wine mixed with a little water, the Cup of Acceptance, is poured out, blessed and passed as the company sings the last of the Hallel Psalms 115-118.\*
- The meal is concluded by midnight in the singing of Psalms 136, praising God, and the final benediction by the host who then announces: "It is finished" (completed or accomplished)—God's command for His covenant people to celebrate the Passover in a sacred meal is accomplished for another year.

\*Jesus will take the fourth cup, the Cup of Acceptance, from the altar of the Cross and will then announce: "teltelestai" = "It is finished"—declaring the Old Covenant completed and finished as He promised in Mt 5:18 and Lk 22:18).

+ We still add a little water to the Cup of Blessing that becomes Jesus' Precious Blood in the Mass. The red wine and water prefigure the blood and water that flowed from the side of Christ on the Cross (Jn 19:33-35).