

1029 Last supper (2) - Participants, and the objective of breaking bread and drinking cups with how to carry them out

(Verses refer to those in NASB unless otherwise specified, and by Whirlwind.)

Last time we talked about the foreknowledge that happened in the preparation of that Passover. All the four Gospels mention the Last supper. That is, Matthew 26:20-35, Mark 14:17-31, Luke 22:14-38, and John 13:1-17:26. What information could we derive from them? First, we can see the participants were the twelve apostles, including Judas who betrayed Jesus. Then, we'll have a series of discussions regarding what happened in the Last supper according to the corresponding verses. Since only the Gospel of Luke mentions the time order, this topic will be based upon it, but we have to make sure there is no contradiction with other Gospels and add things mentioned in them but not in the Gospel of Luke. We only talk about four of them here: (1) Giving thanks before the supper (Luke 22:14-18); (2) Having the supper (Matthew 26:26); (3) Breaking bread in remembrance of the Lord (Luke 22:19); (4) The new covenant set up by drinking cup after the meal (Luke 22:20).

First, we can see the participants were the twelve apostles, including the Judas who betrayed Jesus. Talking about the order of events happened, we'll be basically depend on the Gospel of Luke since only this Gospel mentioned the order as said in Luke 1:3-4, "it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught." Thus, this topic is basically based upon the Gospel of Luke, but to make sure that there is no contradiction with other Gospels and add the events they mentioned but not in Luke. We'll have a series of discussions regarding what happened in the Last supper according to corresponding verses. As mentioned earlier, we only talk about the first four here.

Before we talk about these four, let us discuss who the participants were. In Luke 22:14, it says, "When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him." It also says in Matthew 26:20, "Now when evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the twelve disciples." Thus, the supper included Judas who betrayed Jesus. From the other verses, we can see that the twelve was chosen by the Holy Spirit as said in Acts 1:2, "until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen." How can Jesus be sure that He had to choose these twelve? In Luke 6:12-13, it says, "It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when the day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles." We can see that He is just like us and needed the leading of the Holy Spirit, and to confirm it in the whole night prayer.

To complete the discussion of this paragraph, we must emphasize that He is the complete God. Regarding this point, we can use a simple example to illustrate it. If a prince at present lives like a beggar, he is still a prince by birth right. Therefore, because Jesus is one of Holy Trinity, He is still God even during the period that the Word became flesh. So, He is completely man and also completely God. He is different from us only in one point that

He starts with no sin due to immaculate conception, and we are contaminated by sin. Starting with no sin is just like what happened to Adam and Eve. But Adam and Eve chose disobedience, and He chose to obey to death. Furthermore, He "...has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."(Hebrews 4:15) He fulfilled the salvation, and resurrected. "So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit."(1 Corinthians 15:45) "and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man."(John 5:27) During the period of the Word becoming flesh, He never used divinity.

(1) Giving thanks before the supper (Luke 22:14-18)

In Luke 22:14-18, it says, "When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes."" It is reasonably assumed that this is to give thanks before the supper since Jesus didn't say "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood." as said in Luke 22:20.

In 1 Corinthians 11:20-22, it says, "Therefore when you meet together, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, for in your eating each one takes his own supper first; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I will not praise you." Here, we can see that people had to start the meal together. Thus, it is reasonable to assume to signal the starting together by giving thanks before the meal.

(2) Having the supper (Matthew 26:26)

According to Matthew 26:26, it says, "While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."" It uses the past progressive tense. Apparently, in the middle of the supper, the bread was broken.

(3) Breaking bread in remembrance of the Lord (Luke 22:19)

In Luke 22:19, it says, "And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Breaking bread is after starting the meal. But in this place, the time isn't mentioned and just the order. Therefore, this verse isn't contradicted to Matthew 26:26.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:23-24 the objective of breaking bread which is from revelation, "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me."" Here, it doesn't mention the order either. Therefore, the order is given according to what we discussed before.

(4) The new covenant set up by drinking cup after the meal (Luke 22:20)

In Luke 22:20, it says, "And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood."" In 1 Corinthians 11:25, it also says, "In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.""

In fact, when breaking bread and drinking cup happened isn't as important as its meaning as said in 1 Corinthians 11:26, "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." "Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly."(1 Corinthians 11:27-29) Here, it tells us the way to carry them out.