

June 3-9
New Testament Lesson # 22
“Continue Ye in My Love”
John 13-17
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I. What we call The Last Supper was actually a Passover Feast. And we should understand everything about that Passover Feast had for centuries pointed to Jesus the Christ, **and to this time. He was now to fulfill all its witnesses.**

A. The Passover Lamb and the way it was prepared pointed to Him.

* It had to be a young, male lamb, **absolutely without blemish.**

* It had to be **roast with fire** [As witness of the excruciating things He would soon suffer].

* **No bone of it was to be broken** [As witness that He would yield up His Spirit before they could break His bones, showing that He had power over His own death, and thus had Power to restore His own Life].

* It was to be **eaten with bitter herbs**, as witness of the bitterness of all that He endured.

There were many ways He endured the bitterest of circumstances, as shown by His being given vinegar to drink (John 19:29-30). And as had been prophesied (Psalms 69:21) “in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink”).

Elder Christofferson in April Conference 2019 quoted the Bishop of Durham, Dr. N. T. Wright, showing why the “bitterness” of it all has so much meaning:

“...In the greatest irony of history, [Jesus] himself underwent cruel and unjust judgment, coming to the place which symbolized and drew together all the myriad cruelties and injustices of history, to bear that chaos, that darkness, that cruelty, that injustice, in himself, and to exhaust its power.”

II. The discrepancy between the Synoptic Gospels and John regarding the timing of the Passover Feast can be resolved.

A. Matthew, Mark and Luke make the Last Supper a Passover Feast, which means the Passover lambs would have already been offered. But John puts the slaying of the lambs as occurring just as the Savior was hung upon the cross (John 19:14). There are many reasons why **these could all be true.** Central to them is that Passover lambs were slain on two days. According to Josephus, the number of lambs needing to be slain by that time of Jewish history would have been enormous. So it is likely it required more than one day.

B. Note: Other Jewish Holy Days have become two day events, such as Rosh Hashanah.

III. The Last Supper was an Amazing Night of Love!

A. Jesus demonstrated His great love by kneeling down and washing the feet of His disciples. This was an act which slaves usually performed. Please note that the common foot ware was sandals, that the disciples always walked, and they walked through a very dusty landscape. This means that all those feet would have been filthy!

B. In washing their feet, Jesus manifests His love. But this act also foreshadowed a far greater cleansing --- to cleanse them through His Atonement.

C. Thus when Peter was repulsed with the idea that the Savior should wash his feet, and pulled away, saying “Thou shalt never wash my feet,” the Savior replied, “If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me (John 13:8). We must all submit to the cleansing of the Lord’s Atonement.

IV. The Savior's Final teachings to His disciples this night were full of love.

A. All of the teachings of the Savior that night called for and radiated His Love.

1. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; **as I have loved you.** By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye have love one for another" (John 13:34-5).
2. There could not be more beautiful statement made to one's disciples.

V. When the Savior offered the Disciples a Cup of Wine while introducing the Sacrament during the Feast, it was in essence, as a loving betrothal.

A. It was the tradition that when a bridegroom desired a certain woman to be his bride, he would offer her a cup of wine. If she partook of that cup, **she was manifesting to him that she was willing to take upon herself his name and to become his wife.** Thus it was an act of betrothal.

"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the new testament...." (Matthew 26:26-8).

We really ought to recognize how as we partake of the cup in our sacrament, we commit that we are "willing to take upon ourselves the name" of Jesus Christ.

B. We should understand that the covenant made at Sinai was as a marriage contract between Jehovah and Israel. Old Testament prophets and events had repeatedly emphasized that **Jehovah was as a bridegroom to Israel**, and *there were severe consequences for not keeping the covenant to worship Him and Him alone.* Therefore the prophets often called the Israelites "adulterers." It really meant they worshipped the things of the world, and not the Lord.

But now He was offering His New Israel a New Covenant, and a New Betrothal!

C. **The cup He did not drink anticipated His return, and the Future Wedding Feast**
"I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom" (Matthew 26:29).

VI. Furthermore, it was the Israelite tradition that after a bridegroom and his bride were betrothed, the bridegroom then went away to prepare a place in his father's compound for the bride.

- A. Thus the Savior, the True Bridegroom said, "In my father's house are many mansions...**I go to prepare a place for you.**"
- B. And He has indeed gone away. And His work right now is preparing a place for His righteous Saints to inherit with Him --- among His Father's many mansions.

VII. He further showed His love by **providing for us all after He was gone.**

A. In His absence, He would not leave us comfortless, but out of love would send a Comforter.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16).

B. When this Comforter would come, it would be a great blessing. "When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he will not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."

C. The Holy Ghost is a Gift of Love. It is the Gift the Lord gave to us after He was gone, to Comfort us, to Guide us, and to Shew us what is to come --- until He Himself Returns!

VIII. Furthermore, Jesus, testified that if we remain always connected to Him, **through Him we could bear Good Fruit, and in abundance!**

A. In doing so He explains how that will come to pass and **why even His most precious Saints often suffer trials.**

“I am the Vine and Ye are the Branches. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: **and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit** (John 15:1-2).

B. And He tells us why this is important. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit” (v. 8).

C. I know that in more than one trial, while feeling great heartache and distress, I have found myself suddenly overcome with a feeling, not just of peace, but of Love for my Father in Heaven. For the Spirit bore witness that this was not only from Him, but that these trials were given in Love, and would bring forth good fruit. And in every case, it did indeed do so.

IX. The Savior showed His deep Love through His Great Intercessory Prayer

A. Jesus Christ was the True High Priest. Whenever an offering was to be made, the High Priest offered a prayer, offering it to the Lord.

B. So here in essence, is Jesus giving that High Priest’s Offering Prayer, just prior to going out and **Making Himself the Offering!**

X. But that Prayer had enormous meaning for all His disciples as well.

A. Jesus beautifully prayed for all His disciples, and that specially included Us [“Neither pray I for these alone, **but for them also which shall believe on me through their word,**” (v. 20)]”

And His great prayer was that all His Disciples would become “One.”

“That they all may be One; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us...” (John 17:21).

This prayer has so much significance. We should recognize it first shows that when the Savior constantly talked about His Father and Himself being “One,” it did not mean physically, as so many others teach. For here we see that He is praying that *all* His disciples enter into that very same kind of Oneness. He is obviously not praying that His disciples become physically One with the Father and Himself, as such a belief would imply.

Rather, He is obviously praying that they [and We] would all one day become One in purpose, and above all, “One in Love” for each Other and for God.

XI. But there is one other especially beautiful aspect of this prayer.

After Jesus prayed so powerfully to the Father that His disciples and all of us become One, as He and the Father are One, Jesus then went out into the Garden of Gethsemane. And there He began the works of the At-One-Ment: The very works that would Make us One.

Through Him, we can return into the presence of the Father, from whom we have all been cut off due to Adam’s and our own transgressions

And through Him, we can **indeed become One with the Father and Himself in Love.**