

**BIBLE STORY: JESUS CELEBRATES THE PASSOVER**  
Matthew 26:17-19, 26-30

**Central Thoughts**

- Jesus is our true Passover Lamb, who was slaughtered for us upon the cross and who gives us to eat of His body and to drink of His blood in the Lord's Supper.
- The Old Testament Passover and all the Old Testament sacrifices came to an end when Jesus died once for all upon the cross and gave Himself to us in the Lord's Supper.
- Because He fulfilled the Old Covenant for us, the New Testament in Jesus' blood is the promise of the forgiveness of sins for Jesus' sake.
- Jesus' body and blood gives us the blessings of "the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation" that He earned for us in His death upon the cross.

**Discussion Questions**

What happened in the Old Testament Passover?

*The lamb was slaughtered, its blood was smeared on the doorposts and lintels of the homes of the children of Israel, and the people roasted the lamb and ate it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. By the blood of the Passover lamb, the Lord redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt.*

What did the children of Israel do each year to celebrate the Passover?

*They slaughtered, roasted, and ate the lamb with unleavened bread and grape wine.*

Why does Jesus tell His disciples that the Passover is two days away and that the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified?

*Because He is the true Passover Lamb who was delivered up to death to redeem us from sin, death, and the power of the devil.*

Why is Jesus careful to instruct His disciples about preparing the Passover?

*Because the Old Testament Passover would be fulfilled in the shedding of Jesus' blood upon the cross and in the Sacrament of the Altar by which we eat of His body and drink of His blood for the forgiveness of all our sins. All that happened in Jesus suffering and death unfolded according to the Scriptures.*

What did Jesus do as they were eating the Passover?

*He instituted the Lord's Supper. He took the unleavened bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them saying, "Take, eat; this is My body."*

What is the cup that Jesus took from the Passover meal called? (See 1 Corinthians 10:16.)

*The cup of blessing*

Why is it called "the cup of blessing"?

*Because the blessing of the Lord comes to us through this cup.*

What did Jesus say of the contents of "the cup of blessing"?

*"Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."*

What does "shed for many" mean?

*The blood of the one covers the sin of many. Though it is the blood of only one man, since it is the blood of Christ it covers the sins of all.*

What is a covenant or testament?

*A promise from the Lord made in blood*

Why is this called "My blood of the new covenant [or testament]"?

*Because it is Jesus' true blood and because the shedding of His blood accomplishes what the sacrifices of the Old Covenant could not accomplish: forgiveness of sins. It is called "new" because it completely fulfills the demands of the "old" covenant. Jesus died once for all, and His blood is the source of eternal salvation.*

What does Jesus promise in the shedding of His blood?

*The remission (or forgiveness) of sins*

What does the Catechism say is the benefit of eating and drinking Christ's body and blood?

*"These words, 'Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins,' show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.*

When would Jesus drink of the fruit of the vine with them again?

*On that day when He would drink it new with them in His Father's kingdom. After Jesus established the Father's kingdom in His death and resurrection, He ate and drank with the disciples during the forty days between His resurrection and ascension.*

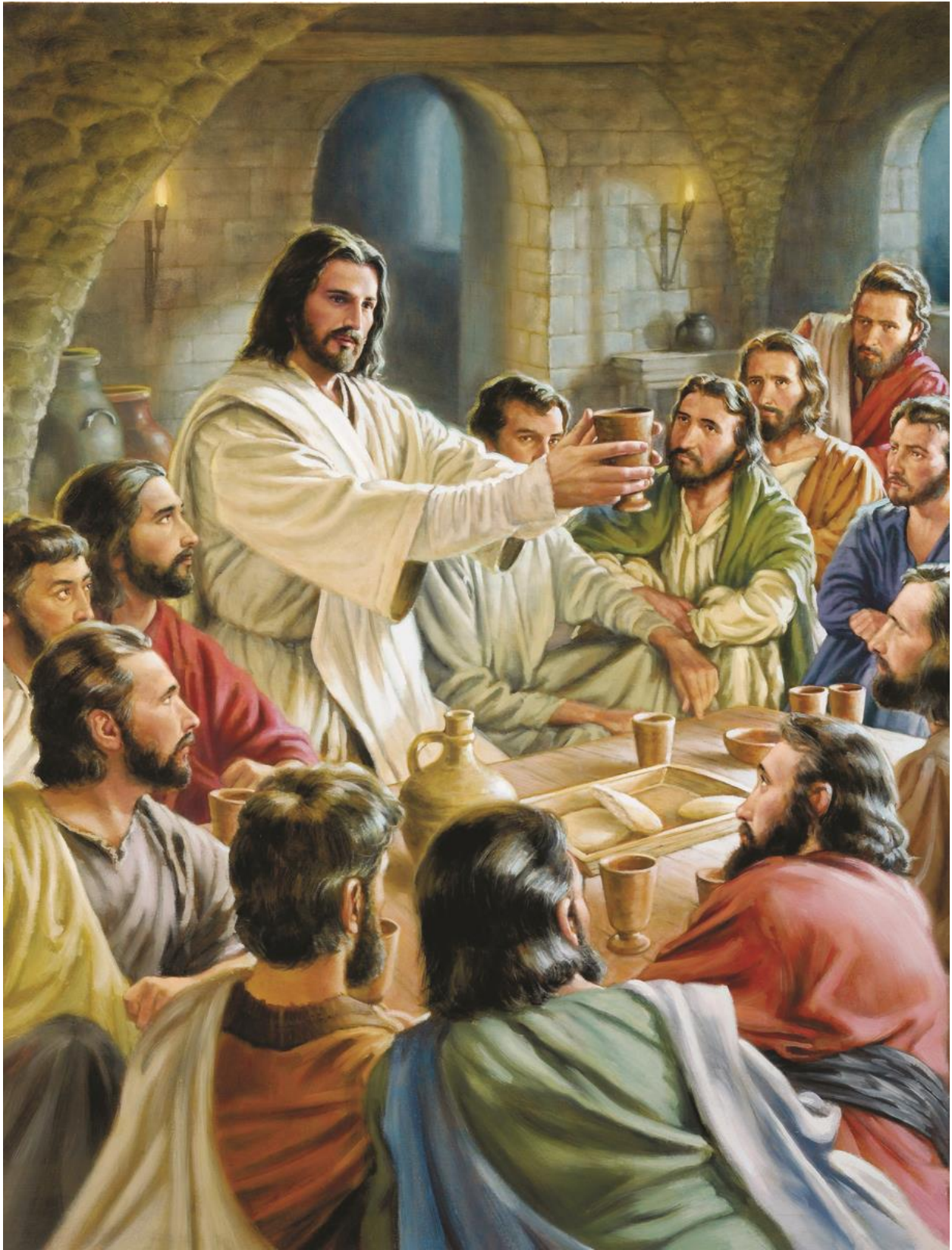
### **Meditation on the Bible Story**

The Lord's Supper is at the center of the events of Holy Week because it is the Sacrament of our Lord's suffering and death for our salvation. In the Sacrament of the Altar all the benefits of Jesus' death for our salvation are distributed to us in His body and blood for us Christians to eat and to drink. Through the Lord's Supper we receive the promise of the New Testament in Jesus' blood: "forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation." Jesus is our true Passover Lamb. He was slaughtered for us upon the cross and He offers us His true body and blood to eat and to drink for the forgiveness of sins. By His sacrifice for us upon the cross, Jesus fulfills all the demands of God's Law, and every sacrifice of the Old Testament comes to an end.

The "Christian Questions and Answers" from the Catechism teach us that our faith rests upon the sure and certain promises of the New Testament in Jesus' blood: "He died for me and shed His blood for me on the cross for the forgiveness of sins." How do we know this? "From the holy Gospel, from the words instituting the Sacrament, and by His body and blood given [us] as a pledge in the Sacrament." The Word of Christ "convinces [us] to believe" that His "true body and blood ... are in the Sacrament." We desire to receive the Sacrament so "that [we] may learn to believe that Christ, out of great love, died for [our] sin, and also learn from Him to love God and [our] neighbor." Through the reception of His body and blood in the Sacrament we, as penitent believing Christians, learn to "love one another as He has loved us."

### **Prayer on the Bible Story**

O Lord Jesus, we give thanks to You that on the night You were betrayed You instituted the Lord's Supper from the Old Testament Passover and showed Yourself to be the true Passover Lamb. You redeemed us from slavery to sin, death, and the power of the devil through Your body and blood that was given and shed for our forgiveness upon the cross. Prepare us faithfully to eat and to drink of Your body and blood in the Lord's Supper, that we might receive every blessing of salvation that You won for us in Your suffering and death upon the cross. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.



**Jesus Celebrates the Passover**  
Matthew 26:17-19, 26-30