

Chapter 23: Love One Another As I Have Loved You

Reading Outline:

- Luke 22:1-38
 - John 13-15
- (Parallel accounts: Matthew 26:1-35; Mark 14:1-31)

1. Tuesday, April 4, 30 A.D. Continued
 - 1.1. Jesus Foretells His Betrayal and Crucifixion
 - 1.2. The Plot Against Jesus
 - 1.3. Judas Becomes the Betrayer
2. Wednesday, April 5, 30 A.D.
3. Arrangements for the Passover Meal and the Feast of Unleavened Bread
4. Who is the Greatest Amongst You?
5. The Ordinance of Washing of the Feet (First New Gospel Ordinance)
6. One of You Shall Betray Me
7. A New Commandment: Love One Another
8. Peter to Deny Christ
9. The Sacrament (Second New Gospel Ordinance)
10. "I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" and "I Am the True Vine"
11. Conclusions

1. Tuesday, 4 April, 30 A.D. Continued

The concluding events of the Tuesday, April 4, 30 A.D. are important pieces in bringing about the final outcome of the death and crucifixion of Jesus Christ that He had foretold His disciples on the Mount of Olives. The prophecy of His betrayal and crucifixion is only recorded by Matthew. The meeting of the Jewish leaders, aided by the offer of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus, becomes crucial in the fulfillment of Jesus prophecy. These latter two events are found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.

1.1. Jesus Foretells His Betrayal and Crucifixion

Jesus concludes His Olivet Discourse with the following prophecy:

Matthew 26:1-2

- 1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,**
2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

Jesus on previous occasions had told His Apostles and disciples of His eventual death; they had been unable to consider it. He now reiterates it once again along with its pending reality. I assume once

again they were limited regarding their ability to receive the message. In just two days, Jesus was going to be betrayed and crucified! Surely, they must have wondered, if they can kill Jesus, how soon before others would also be called upon to forfeit their lives? Each one had heard what He said. No one had anything else to say as they were now lost in their own thoughts.

1.2. The Plot Against Jesus

Matthew 26:3-5

**3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,
4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty [treachery, cunning], and kill him.
5 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be any uproar among the people.**

While Jesus had been meeting with His Apostles and disciples on the Mount of Olives, the religious rulers, under the direction of Caiaphas, the high priest, had assembled to consider how they might put Jesus to death. The fervor of their murderous rage and anger toward Jesus had now reached its climax. They were going to kill Jesus! It was no longer *if*, it was *how* were they going to commit this heinous deed.

1.3. Judas Becomes the Betrayer

Mark 14:10-11	JST, Mark 14:31-32
<p>10 And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.</p>	<p>31 <u>Nevertheless, Judas Iscariot, even one of the twelve, went unto the chief priest to betray <u>Jesus</u> unto them; <u>for he turned away from him, and was offended because of his words.</u></u></p>
<p>11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money [Matthew 26:15 And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver] And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.</p>	<p>32 And when <u>the chief priests</u> heard <u>of him</u> they were glad, and promised to give him money; and he sought how he might conveniently betray <u>Jesus</u>.</p>

We might ask, “How could one of the twelve betray Jesus?” He was one who had accompanied Him during most of His earthly ministry. One who witnessed the many miracles and healing He had performed. One who had heard His words and felt His love. How is it possible one, who had been His friend, could also betray Him?

Joseph Smith states,

“From apostates the faithful have received the severest persecutions. Judas was rebuked and immediately betrayed his Lord into the hands of His enemies, because Satan entered into him. There

is a superior intelligence bestowed upon such as obey the Gospel with full purpose of heart, which, if sinned against, the apostate is left naked and destitute of the Spirit of God, and he is, in truth, nigh unto cursing, and his end is to be burned. When once that light which was in them is taken from them, they become as much darkened as they were previously enlightened, and then, no marvel, if all their power should be enlisted against the truth, and they, Judas like, seek the destruction of those who were their greatest benefactors. What nearer friend on earth or in heaven, had Judas than the Savior? And his first object was to destroy Him.”¹

It seems to me that Judas was willing to betray the Savior because possibly he was initially offended by something Jesus had said to him, or thought he had said, and instead of resolving his hurt feelings toward Him, he allowed them to fester. As he continued to dwell upon the perceived injury he had received from the Savior, all thoughts of love and fondness toward His Lord began to diminish. His feelings became dominated by feelings of hatred and murderous rage. At this point, “destitute of the Spirit of God,” he is ripe for Satan to enter into him. When we reject “the Spirit of God,” we then become vulnerable to “the spirit of evil” of which Satan is its author. Without our sincere repentance, we then become one of Satan’s disciples willing to do his bidding. Such is the lesson that Judas teaches all of us.

2. Wednesday, April 5, 30 A.D.

Throughout this chapter we focused on the last week of the Savior’s life, I have chosen to follow the dating for the events provided by Monte S. Nyman. There is, however, disagreement with his chronology of the day’s events. He offers the following rationale for his choice regarding the day of the event.

Monte S. Nyman states,

“Most harmonies and commentaries list Wednesday as a day of ‘no record.’ This listing probably comes because of the traditional ‘Good Friday’ as the day of Christ’s crucifixion. However, in this harmony, the traditional events of Thursday of the last week of the Savior’s life are listed under Wednesday, and the traditional events of Friday are listed on Thursday. Some Bible scholars consider this listing because of there being a double Sabbath in certain years of the Jewish calendar. They consider John 19:31 as a reference to such a day, ‘for that Sabbath day was a high day.’ James E. Talmage suggests this as a possibility in his great work, *Jesus the Christ*, 618-619).

“Another consideration was the prophecy of Christ concerning the prophet Jonah being ‘three days and three nights in the whale’ as a sign of Christ being ‘three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.’ (Matt. 12:39-40, see also JST, Mark 8:12, the Prophet Joseph’s addition to the text). The Book of Mormon also strongly implies three full days of his being in the spirit world (see 1 Nephi 19:10; 2 Nephi 25:13; 3 Nephi 8:19-23; 10:9). The crucifixion on Friday evening and the resurrection on Sunday does not fulfill the prophecies of the Savior or of the Book of Mormon. While the time period is not as significant as the events themselves, an explanation for the departure from the usual time table is given.”²

With the above explanation, I will proceed with the events that occurred during the last days of Jesus’ life. The order is certainly less significant than the events themselves.

3. Arrangements for the Passover Meal and the Feast of Unleavened Bread

By the time of Christ, the feast of the Passover (1 day) and the feast of the Unleavened Bread (7 days) had been combined into one feast of eight days.

E. Keith Howick states,

"The blood of the Passover lamb redeemed God's chosen people from the angel of death as it passed over Egypt; so, too, the blood of the Son of God will ransom all mankind from the angel of death (sin) and thus open the way for entering God's kingdom...From the Exodus forward, the children of Israel had celebrated the Passover in the similitude of Christ's sacrifice."³

Bruce R. McConkie adds,

"...all of the sacrificial similitudes of all ages [beginning with Adam to the present] combined to bear testimony of the infinite and eternal atoning sacrifice--the sacrifice of the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world."⁴

The offering of a lamb without blemish was designed to teach God's covenant people to look forward to the great Atonement to be offered by His Son, even the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. Abinadi, a prophet in the Americas, taught,

B/M, Mosiah 13:27-28

27 And now ye have said that salvation cometh by the law of Moses. I say unto you that it is expedient that ye should keep the law of Moses as yet; but I say unto you, that the time shall come, when it shall no more be expedient to keep the law of Moses.
28 And moreover, I say unto you, that salvation doth not come by the law alone; and were it not for the atonement, which God [Jesus Christ] himself shall make for the sins and iniquities of his people, that they must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses.

While there were those in Israel who understood that the purpose of the law of Moses was to strengthen their faith in the Messiah who would come and redeem Israel; many were only focused on the law and its sacrifices and missed its real purpose.

The Feast of the Unleavened Bread was to remind the children of Israel that as their ancestors had fled in haste from Egypt, there had been no time for their bread to rise. This now become an important part of the Passover meal.

E. Keith Howick states,

"The Passover meal consisted of at least three courses: first, the Passover lamb, representing God's 'passing over' the houses of the children of Israel that had been sprinkled with lamb's blood, thus sparing their first born; second, unleavened bread, which represented the haste with which the children of Israel had left Egypt; and third, bitter herbs, which represented the bitter lives led while the children of Israel were in bondage." The blood of the Passover lamb redeemed God's chosen

people from the angel of death as it passed over Egypt; so, too, the blood of the Son of God will ransom all mankind from the angel of death (sin) and thus open the way for entering God's kingdom."⁵

Jesus now prepares to partake of the Passover meal with His Apostles and disciples. First preparations must be made. They would need a room to accommodate them and food to be prepared.

Luke 22:8-12

8 And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat.

9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10 And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

11 And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?

12 And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

The good man of the house, who surely had been spiritually prepared, offered the upper room of his house to two individuals who would follow him to his house that day. He would only know them by their stating, "The Master saith unto thee." The city must have been overflowing with many having come to Jerusalem in order to participate in the Feast of the Unleavened Bread and to partake of the Passover meal. It is a miracle that there was one in the city who had a room yet available and would make it available to servants of God.

E. Keith Horwick adds,

"To properly prepare for the meal...they [Peter and John] had to acquire a male lamb, one year of age and without blemish. At about two [2:00 P.M.], the blast of horns announced that the priests and Levites in the Temple were ready, and the gates of the inner courts were opened that all might bring their lambs for examination, and might satisfy the priests as to the number intending to consume each. Peter and John would have lined up with the other men inside the temple courts, the lamb draped across their shoulders... [Once the lamb had been slaughtered by the priests,] skinned and dressed in the temple, with the tail, fat, kidneys, and liver set apart for use at the altar. The rest of the animal... [would be] roasted on underground oven in preparation for the Passover meal."⁶

Peter and John would have taken the roasted lamb back to the room for the Passover. A table would be set with the unleavened bread, wine and bitter herbs ready to be served. Once preparations were made, Jesus and the others would soon be arriving.

E. Keith Howick concludes,

"The feast began immediately after the sun had officially set and the stars appeared. This event was proclaimed by trumpet blasts from the temple on what was designated as the beginning of the fifteenth of Nisan."⁷

Matthew 26:19-20

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover.

20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

Each of the three gospel writers, (Matthew, Mark, Luke) record only the Twelve are in attendance.

4. Who is the Greatest Amongst You?

As they gathered around to partake of the meal, according to Luke, a strife arose among the twelve. The issue involved, "Who was the greatest amongst the twelve?"

Early in their mortal ministry, the question had arisen (Mark 9:33-34) and later on, the mother of James and John had even gone so far as to request to Jesus that her sons should be granted the first and second positions in the Lord's kingdom (Matthew 20:20-28). Jesus had on both occasions stated that he who is the greatest amongst you, let him be your servant.

Luke 22:24-27

24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25 And he said unto them, The king of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that does serve.

27 For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

On this special occasion, Jesus reiterates his answer, "he that is greatest among you, ... [is] he that doth serve" (Luke 22:26).

In the world in which we live there is often great focus and competition regarding who is the best; Who is first? It is easy to get caught up with the intense competition that exists and the rewards that are offered to those who are honored as "Number 1." Who is "Number 2" is often given little or no consideration. Their names are quickly forgotten. Surely, not all can be the best or the greatest, but one thing we can all do is render service to someone. In heaven's measurement, unselfish service to another is greater and lasts longer than being Number One ever did. It was something the Apostles also had to learn.

5. The Ordinance of Washing of the Feet (First New Gospel Ordinance)

Jesus initiates, with the Apostles, the sacred ordinance of the washing of the feet.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

“To keep things in proper perspective, however, it is important to emphasize that the washing of feet came in the course of the meal, and not at the beginning, and it was not simply an illustration of Godly humility, [as some have assumed] devised by Jesus to demonstrate his teachings about precedence, but was in fact the introduction of a new gospel ordinance.”⁸

It is due to this being a new gospel ordinance that made Peter’s rejection and then overzealous request, noteworthy.

John 13:7

7 Jesus answered and said unto him [Peter], What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

Bruce R. McConkie continues,

“If we judge right, Peter was the first one to have his feet washed, as he should have been, he being the senior apostle, and the future president of the Church. John’s phrase, ‘Then cometh he to Simon Peter,’ means, not that he came to him after the others, but either he came to him from across the table or from the place where the basin and water for purification had stood... Since it was common for slaves and servants to wash the feet of guests, Peter’s objection [and misunderstanding] was to the Lord of heaven, as though he was merely a slave, washing the feet of one so unworthy as he deemed himself to be... [Peter did not understand that] the act of the washing of the feet is far more than the cleansing and refreshing of dusty and tired pedal extremities. It is an eternal ordinance, with eternal import, understood only by the enlightened saints.”⁹

E. Keith Howick states,

“[It was] by this ordinance [that] the Apostles [and others may] become ‘clean every whit’... In the latter days, it was restored with the same significance as when instituted by the Savior at his last supper (see D&C 88:137-141).”¹⁰

We are aware that Judas Iscariot also took part in this sacred ordinance. We recall the words of Jesus to Peter,

John 13:10-11

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

Rodney Turner states,

“What thoughts [must have] besieged the young apostle as he looked down upon the quiet Galilean? What emotions swept through him when his eyes met the eyes of the knowing Lord? What could

Jesus have done more calculated to move the alienated disciple with compassion and swerve him from his dark intent than the simple act of kneeling before him in humbleness of services? But it was to no avail. The Judean apostle had surrendered his will to another master. His course was fixed. He was committed to betrayal."¹¹

6. One of You Shall Betray Me

Jesus knew in advance that Judas Iscariot had previously entered into an agreement with the Jewish religious leaders to betray his Lord and Master. What amount had been selected by the Jewish religious leaders for Judas to betray his Master?

The Life and Teachings of Jesus and his Apostles (Institute) Student Manual states,

“They could have said one piece of silver or a thousand. Judas had not come to haggle but to betray. What amount, then, should they set? With devilish cunning they chose the sum which in their law was the fixed price of a slave. ‘Thirty shekels of silver’ would recompense an owner for the death of ‘a manservant or a maidservant.’ (Exodus 21:28-32). Thirty pieces of silver! Such would they pay for the life of their God—no more and no less. And by so doing all men ever after would know that they esteemed him as the basest of men.”¹²

James E. Talmage states,

“Before [however] Judas sold Christ to the Jews, he had sold himself to the devil; he had become Satan's serf, and did his master's bidding.”¹³

Following the washing of each of the apostle's feet, including Judas Iscariot, Jesus now stated to each of those gathered.

John 13:21-22

21 ...he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 Then, the disciples [Apostles] looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

It is clear that the Apostles did not know who the betrayer was. In fact, Mark records,

Matthew 26:22

22 And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

Boyd K. Packer states,

“...these men were apostles. They were of apostolic stature. It has always been interesting to me that they did not on that occasion nudge one another and say, ‘I'll bet that [it] is old Judas. He has surely been acting [strange] lately...Rather it is recorded... [they] ‘began every one to say unto him, ‘Lord, is it I?’ (Matthew 26:22).

“Would you, I plead, overrule the tendency to disregard the counsel and assume for just a moment something apostolic in attitude at least, and ask yourself this question: Do I need to improve myself? Should I take this counsel to heart and act upon it? If there is one weak or failing, unwilling to ‘Follow the brethren, Lord, is it I?’”¹⁴

Matthew 26:25

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

Obviously, no one had understood Jesus' statement of affirmation to Judas' guilty inquiry for we learn that next Simon Peter made an effort to get John's attention.

John 13:24-28, 30

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him [John], that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake.

25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 Jesus answered, he it is, to whom I shall give a sop [morsel, mouthful], when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

27 And after the sop, Satan entered into him. Then said, Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

30 He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

Fredrick W. Farrar states,

"And so, from the lighted room, from the holy banquet, from the blessed company, from the presence of the Lord, he went immediately out, and--as the beloved disciple adds, with a shudder, letting the curtain of darkness fall for ever on that appalling figure--'*and it was night.*'"¹⁵

7. A New Commandment: Love One Another

Bruce R. McConkie states,

“And so, with Judas out groping in the boundless night that enveloped his sin-blackened soul, Jesus can turn to the law of love as a prelude to instituting the sacrament of love.”¹⁶

John 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Rodney Turner states,

"The truest, purest expression of love is sacrifice. In willingly laying down his life, the Son testified to all the world of his love for his Father (John 14:31). By that same act, Jesus demonstrated the supernal affection he felt toward those he called friends (John 5:13) ... [H]uman love is to divine love as the moon is to the sun. Only as we permit the Spirit of God to magnify our capacity for acquiring and internalizing divine attributes do we overcome the negative aspects of our fallen nature and grow toward perfect love.

"Where the Lord is concerned, love and obedience are inseparable... [O]ne's love for the Lord is directly proportionate to one's obedience to his commandments. To love him is to obey him. To obey him is to know him. To know him is to be one with him and to possess eternal life (John 17:3). Such is the formula for exaltation [Receiving all blessings from the Father]."¹⁷

Bruce R. McConkie adds,

"A new commandment! Love one another! Yea, and an old commandment, one in force from the beginning, one that dwelt with God in eternity before ever the foundations of the earth were laid! Indeed, it was a new and an everlasting commandment--new each time it fell from divine lips; everlasting because it had lain at the root of all saving fellowship from the beginning, from the day when Adam first glorified in the name of Christ, to that present moment... If now [these eleven] would manifest, one toward another, that love upon which the everlasting gospel is founded, then all men would recognize them for what they were: apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁸

8. Peter to Deny Christ

After having taught the Apostles the importance of having "love one to another" (John 13:35), Jesus had reminded His Apostles of His departure. Peter's response:

John 13:36-37

36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterward.

37 Peter said unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

These verses are yet further reaffirmation of the devotion Peter had expressed at the beginning of the Passover meal.

Luke 22:31-33

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift [JST. the children of the kingdom] as wheat

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he [Peter] said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison and to death.

Like each of us, in the absence of the realities of persecution and adversity, our willingness to sacrifice is near 100 percent. Like Peter, however, our sincere desire alone is not enough when the realities of life impinge upon us. Jesus reminded Peter then (Luke 22:34) as He does once again of the challenge he will face and its outcome.

John 13:38

38 Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

It is important to understand that despite Peter being forewarned yet again (Matthew 26:34), he will deny knowing the mortal Jesus. He is not however guilty of denying his testimony of Christ as the Son of God. The former is clearly serious. The latter would be unforgiveable were it a sin against the Holy Ghost. It is not. The gift of the Holy Ghost, meaning the abiding of His spirit with the righteous, had not yet been given, nor would it be until after Jesus' death. He is however guilty of lying, which is forgivable. after the process of repentance.

9. The Sacrament (Second New Gospel Ordinance)

E. Keith Howick states,

“When Christ gave his life for mankind, animal sacrifices authorized by the Lord, as it was practiced from Adam to the time of Christ, ceased. At the Last Supper, the Lord instituted a new ordinance to replace it. The new ordinance was called the Sacrament.”¹⁹

Mark 14:22-23	JST, Mark 14:20-24
<p>22 And as they did [of the Passover meal], Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take eat: this is my body.</p>	<p>20 And as they did eat [of the Passover meal], Jesus took bread and blessed <u>it</u>, and brake, and gave to them, and said, Take it, and eat.</p>
	<p>21 <u>Behold, this is for you to do in remembrance of my body; for as oft as ye do this ye will remember this hour that I was with you.</u></p>
<p>23 And he took the cup, and when he had given it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;</p>	<p>22 And he took the cup [of wine], and when he had given <u>thanks</u>, he gave it to them; <u>and they all drank of it.</u></p>
<p>28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.</p>	<p>23 <u>And he said unto them, This is in remembrance of my blood which is shed for many, and the new testament which I give unto you; for of me ye shall bear record unto all the world.</u></p>

	<u>24 And as oft as ye do this ordinance, ye will remember me in this hour that I was with you and drank with you of this cup, even the last time in my ministry.</u>
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The insight, offered by the Joseph Smith Translation, is we partake of the bread and water, “in remembrance of my body/my blood.” As we do so, we make a covenant with Christ to always remember Him and to stand as a witness of Him and His Gospel.

E. Keith Howick states,

“Although the New Testament does not record specific instructions regarding the sacrament, the Book of Mormon does (3 Ne.18:3-11). No doubt the Lord gave the same instructions to the Apostles of the ancient Church as he did to the Nephites and to the latter-day prophets of the Restoration... These include: 1) To remember the body and blood of Christ; 2) To take upon us the name of Christ; 3) To always remember him; 4) To keep the Lord’s commandments, and 5) To receive God’s blessings. Providing we have partaken of the sacrament worthily and continue to live righteously, God has promised us that he will grant us his Spirit to be with us... (See 3 Nephi 18:3-11; Moroni 4,5; D&C 20:75-79).”²⁰

As we weekly partake of the Sacrament, we also have the opportunity to renew the covenants we made when we were baptized. In this manner, each Sunday as we partake of the Sacrament, we again seek forgiveness from our sins and strive again to be more like Christ in our daily lives. As we covenant to remember Him and keep His commandments, we are then blessed to have His spirit to be with us. Our Baptismal covenant and the Sacrament join together to assist us in our desire to become more like Our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

Following the introduction of the Sacrament, He announced to His Apostles,

Mark 14:25

25 Verily I say unto you, [JST. Of this shall ye bear record for] I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

We learn, through modern revelation. this event involves a special meeting to be held with the Savior and His noted servants, including His apostles at a future date.

Doctrine and Covenants 27:5, 13

5 Behold, this is wisdom in me; wherefore, marvel not for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you on the earth...

13 ... [for] I will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"Having so announced, the Lord named others, who would be present to partake of the blessed emblems in the great assemblage that is to come together at Adam-ondi-Ahman incident to the return of the Son of Man to rule and reign in righteousness among men on earth. Those named were: Moroni, Elias of the restoration, who is also identified as being Gabriel or Noah; John the Baptist, Elijah, Joseph who was sold into Egypt, Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Michael who is Adam, and Peter, James and John. The New Testament promise was that Jesus would partake of the sacrament with [also] the eleven who first ate the bread and drank the wine in the upper room.

"To all this the latter-day word adds: "And with all those whom my Father hath given me out of the world," which is to say that the righteous saints of all ages, from Adam down to that hour, will all assemble with the Lord Jesus in that great congregation just before the great and dreadful day of the Lord arrives."²¹

What a wonderful privilege it would be to be numbered among the "righteous saints" to be invited to attend this special sacrament meeting.

10. "I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life" and "I Am the True Vine"

As Jesus prepares His Apostles for His departure, He teaches them important truths.

John 14:1-4

- 1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.**
- 2 In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.**
- 3 ...that where I am, there ye may be also.**
- 4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.**

Thomas, being unsure as to where the Lord is going and uncertain as to his knowing the way, tells the Lord: I (we) do not know where you are going or the way. Jesus responds:

John 14:6

- 6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.**

Throughout His mortal ministry He has taught the people the first principles of the Gospel. These are: 1) Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; 2) Repentance; 3) Baptism for the remission of sins; and 4) The gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. They are the first principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and as such must be accepted and complied with by all who would become followers of Jesus Christ. There is no other way. Salvation comes by no other source than through Our Lord, Jesus Christ and compliance with His teachings.

When the children of Israel sinned against God (Jesus Christ, the God of the Old Testament) and Moses in the wilderness, dire results occurred.

Numbers 21:6, 8

6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

The Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Christ, offers yet further insight.

B/M, 1 Nephi 17:41

41 And he did straiten them in the wilderness with his rod; for they hardened their hearts, even as ye have; and the Lord straitened them because of their iniquity. He sent fiery flying serpents among them; and after they were bitten he prepared a way that they might be healed; and the labor which they had to perform was to look; and because of the simpleness of the way, or the easiness of it, there were many who perished.

Let us not be like the children of Israel. If we fail to comply with these simple ordinances and follow Christ, we shall suffer spiritual death.

Jesus offers the analogy of the relationship between the husbandman or one who cares for the vineyard, the vine and the branches of the vine.

John 15:1-2

1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth [purifies] it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

In this analogy, the branches that sprout from the vine may be cut off and destroyed because they were unfruitful (disobedient) and destroyed (progress halted). They may also be purged and pruned (tried, tested) so that they will then bring forth fruit more abundantly.

John 15:4-5

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

The branch (Apostles) is dependent upon the vine (Jesus Christ) in order to receive the necessary nutriment in order to bring forth the fruit (build the kingdom of God on earth). If the branch were to be severed from the vine, it would certainly die and then be discarded by the husbandman as having

no worth. Only when the branch is connected to the vine, does it have the potential to bring forth fruit.

John 15:7-9

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

As the Apostles remain faithful and obedient in preaching the words Jesus had taught them, they will be given the support and direction they need to be able to perform the very miracles He has performed. As they bring others to a knowledge of the eternal truths, they will bring glory to God, the Father, and to themselves. They will be known as His authorized servants upon the earth and continue in His love.

These blessings are also available to each member of the Church of Jesus Christ as they are also willing to keep His commandments, and comply with the saving ordinances He has established. These include, serving our fellowmen, caring for the poor and needy, and enduring to the end. Only the disobedient are denied these blessings, unless they take the necessary steps of repentance.

10. Conclusions

As this day concludes, Jesus may have reflected upon both the events and His teachings to His Apostles. The day has not been, however, without disappointment. His Apostles had begun the day still in rivalry as to whom was the greatest amongst them. Hopefully, they now understand that he who is the greatest is the one that serves others, rather than themselves. He also taught them the importance of loving one another as a way to demonstrate their love of Himself and His Father. He was saddened as one who had been with Him during His mortal ministry and heard His teachings and felt the spirit, would also be the one who would betray Him. How tragic for Him who no longer would enjoy the fellowship with the other eleven nor receive the blessings that could have been his.

Jesus had also given His Apostles two new Gospel ordinances: Washing of the feet and the Sacrament. Each ordinance is designed to bring those whom He loves ever closer to His Father and His kingdom. As they keep the commandments and remember Him, they will always have His spirit to be with them.

How He loved His band of friends. They had been so faithful and humble. He had tried to prepare them for the days that yet lay ahead. In all ways, He had taught them that He is the only way, and teaches all truth that leads to eternal life. He had clearly marked the path they were to follow. He had also taught them that like the branches on a vine, if they would continue to derive strength and nourishment from Him as their branch, they would be successful in honoring their sacred calling.

We have also been taught and reminded once again that while there may be many roads to Rome, there is only one path to the Holy of Holies. Only as we follow Christ and His teachings will we be able to return to Our Father in Heaven. Jesus Christ is the way to the Father and our obtaining eternal life. Like each of the Apostles, the choice is ours.

Footnotes

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- ¹ *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 67.
- ² *New Testament Restoration Harmony: The Complete Guide to the Four Gospels*. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, Inc., 2006, 327.
- ³ *The Mission of Jesus The Messiah*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990, 102.
- ⁴ *The Mortal Messiah: Book 4*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 50.
- ⁵ *The Mission of Jesus The Messiah*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990, 96.
- ⁶ *The Mission of Jesus The Messiah*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990, 92.
- ⁷ *The Mission of Jesus The Messiah*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990, 92-93.
- ⁸ *The Mortal Messiah: Book 4*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981.
- ⁹ *The Mortal Messiah: Book 4*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 37-38, 40.
- ¹⁰ *The Mission of Jesus The Messiah*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990, 99.
- ¹¹ “The Farewell of Jesus” in *Studies in Scripture 5*. Edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986, 407.
- ¹² *The Life and Teachings of Jesus and His Apostles (Institute) Student Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978, [Second Edition, Revised], 159-160.
- ¹³ *Jesus The Christ*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1915, [Thirty-fifth Edition, 1963], 592.
- ¹⁴ “Follow the Brethren,” in *That All May Be Edified*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982, [8th Printing, 1996], 237.
- ¹⁵ *The Life of Christ*. London: Cassell & Company Limited, 1874; and Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994, 562.
- ¹⁶ *The Mortal Messiah: Book 4*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 48.
- ¹⁷ “The Farewell of Jesus,” in *Studies in Scripture*, Vol. 5. Edited by Kent P. Jackson and Robert L. Millet. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986, 419-421.
- ¹⁸ *The Mortal Messiah: Book 4*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 50.
- ¹⁹ *The Mission of Jesus The Messiah*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990, 102.
- ²⁰ *The Mission of Jesus The Messiah*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990, 103-105.
- ²¹ *The Mortal Messiah: Book 4*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981, 65-66.