

# **First Serve**

Studies in the Gospel of Mark

Text

Mark 14:12-25

Topic

At the last supper Jesus tells His disciples  
He won't drink wine until He can drink it with us in His kingdom

Title

*"Because You're Mine, I Wait for Wine"*

Introduction

When the article is titled, *America's 14 Strangest Mascots in High School Sports*, you've got to read it.

In the interest of time, I'll give you the top five:

- #5 Webb HS in Tennessee - the (Webb) Feet
- #4 Aniak HS in Arkansas - the Halfbreeds
- #3 Frankfort HS in Indiana - the Hot Dogs
- #2 Watersmeet HS in Michigan - the Nimrods
- #1 Poca HS in West Virginia - the (Poca) Dots

Don't shout it out; just think about it. What would you choose as the mascot for Christians?

With reverence, you should choose, as our mascot, the Lamb.

"Lamb" is the favorite title given to Jesus in the most triumphant book of the Bible, the Revelation of Jesus Christ. He is called "the Lamb" about twenty-eight times.

When He first appears in Heaven, the apostle John says,

Rev 5:6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a **Lamb** as though it had been slain...

Not just a Lamb; one that appeared to have been sacrificed.

Thinking back to His coming to earth, Jesus was born with lambs, and He was first attested to by shepherds out in their fields, tending their flocks.

When He was introduced to begin His ministry, John the Baptist declared, "Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

This imagery would mean a great deal more to us if we were first century Jews; and if it were Passover season. It was then, annually, at the Temple, when tens of thousands of lambs were sacrificed one-by-one by the priests on the altar. Their meat would then be taken by the offerer to be the main course for a very special celebration - the Passover meal.

In our verses, Jesus and His twelve disciples were celebrating their third Passover together. It would also be their last, because Jesus was about to go to His death on the Cross.

Jesus took advantage of the Passover to reveal two incredible truths to His disciples:

1. He revealed that He was the Lamb being slain for their sins; and,
2. He revealed that He was the Lamb Who would come again for their salvation.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 God Prepared Himself The Lamb To Take Away Your Sin, and #2 God Prevailed Himself The Lamb To Come Again For Your Salvation.

### #1 God Prepared Himself The Lamb To Take Away Your Sin

(v12-21)

In the Garden of Eden, in the aftermath of Adam and Eve's willful disobedience, God explained that He would Himself come into the world of men in order to atone for sin. To show them what it would entail, God killed animals on their behalf, in their place, as substitutes; then He clothed Adam and Eve with their skins.

It's a good bet the animals God killed were lambs.

Fast forward to Abraham. In the twenty-second chapter of Genesis, God tells Abraham to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah. At one point Isaac questions his dad, asking him, "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" (v7).

Abraham answers, "My son, God will provide Himself the lamb" (v8).

Modern translations read, "God will provide *for* Himself the lamb." But that takes away the prophetic aspect of what Abraham said.

Abraham, prophetically, says, "God will provide **Himself** the Lamb." In other words, God would come in human flesh and offer **Himself** in our place, as our substitute, as the Lamb.

(Some centuries later, it would be on that very spot that God the Father sacrificed His only begotten Son, Jesus, as He died on the Cross).

Fast forward from Abraham to Moses. Tasked with delivering the Israelites from Egypt, through him God brought a series of ten plagues to convince Pharaoh to let them go. The final plague was the death of the firstborn throughout the land. A death angel was coming, and the only way to be saved was to sacrifice a lamb for each household, then put its blood on the doorposts.

The homes that were covered by the blood of the lamb were *passed-over* by the death angel. To commemorate their deliverance, God instituted the Feast of Passover.

Hundreds of thousands of lambs had been sacrificed from Genesis up to the third Passover Jesus celebrated with His disciples. All that was about to change.

Mar 14:12 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they killed the Passover lamb, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?"

Passover was celebrated on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan (March-April), the first month of the Jewish religious year.

The Passover observance was immediately followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread, in commemoration of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of the month.

The Jews commonly referred to the entire period of time as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, rather than insisting that Passover was its own, separate feast. In verse twelve, it was the 14th of Nisan, Passover, the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

His disciples asked Jesus where they'd be eating their lamb. Normally this was a family meal, or family and friends. The twelve, eating Passover with Jesus, indicated a deep, intimate fellowship between them.

By the way: In the first century, the Passover feast could only be eaten in Jerusalem, and venues to do it, for travelers, were at a premium.

Mar 14:13 And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him.

Mar 14:14 Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" '

Mar 14:15 Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us."

The word that comes to mind, reading these instructions, is *clandestine*. Why all the secrecy?

We know from the previous verses in this chapter that the religious leaders were seeking to arrest and murder Jesus. Judas had agreed to betray the Lord to them. A Passover dinner while the multitudes were all indoors might be a good place to seize the Lord, so Jesus went full secret agent.

Judas handled the finances for the ministry. I'd venture that he normally made the Passover arrangements. Not this time. The Lord didn't want Judas to know where the meeting would take place. The other Gospels tell us that Jesus sent Peter and John on this strange mission.

It would be odd to see a male servant carrying a pitcher of water. He was their initial signal. Everything else would fall into place.

Jesus knew these things supernaturally. He hadn't made any arrangements beforehand, but God the Holy Spirit had gone ahead of Him. The master of this house either knew, by some revelation, that Jesus would need the room; or, for some reason he couldn't fathom, no one had approached him to rent out the space.

God is always working behind the scenes to provide for His will to be done. If we remain sensitive to the Holy Spirit (like Jesus was), and obedient (like Peter and John were), and perform our regular work (like the servant did), and wait on the Lord (like the master of the house did), we will be part of this great adventure of spreading the Gospel.

[Mar 14:16](#) So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

I don't want to get super-technical, but I should mention that there is debate among good Bible scholars as to whether or not this meal really was a Passover meal, or just a regular meal on the day *before* Passover.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, in their Gospels, present it as taking place on Passover, on Nisan 14.

John, however, insists that Jesus was being crucified just at the time the Passover lambs were being slain in the Temple, putting it a day before the dinner.

There are several ways to reconcile this. The most credible way is explained by this quote I came across:

Thursday night is the Passover celebration for all of the Galilean Jews. In the Galilee, they celebrated their Passover on Thursday because they mark the Passover day from sunrise to sunrise. The Judean Jews in the south celebrated their Passover on Friday because they marked the Passover day from sunset to sunset. This difference we know from the writings of the Jewish Mishnah...

I would also suggest that there is a practical argument. Josephus, the often quoted Jewish historian who was alive at the time, suggests that as many as a quarter of a million lambs were sacrificed at Passover. That's probably exaggerated. The most conservative guess I ran across was twenty-thousand lambs.

A LOT of lambs needed to be slaughtered in a very compressed period of time. It may have been a practical necessity to extend Passover to more than one day.

[Mar 14:17](#) In the evening He came with the twelve.

What was the Passover like? How was it celebrated? Many of us have been to the presentation of what is called a Passover Seder. The word "Seder" means *order*. A Passover Seder follows a certain order as you work through the meal.

**Many of the rituals in the modern Passover Seder were definitely not part of the first century observance.**

The Bible gives very little instruction about the order of service. Most of what is in a modern Seder is extra-biblical tradition.

For example, after the conclusion of the modern Seder's prayers, it is a custom to pour a cup of wine for Elijah, and open the front door of the home to see if he has come.

That custom was added much, much later in history, and was not something Jesus did with His disciples.

As far as the meal itself, the only elements we can be certain of in the first century are the lamb, the bitter herbs as a dipping sauce, unleavened bread, and diluted wine.

One Jewish historical source described the Passover Jesus would have celebrated this way:

[After the meal] Jesus says the Motzi [the blessing over the bread]; He says Kiddush [the blessing over the wine] and then they sing Psalms (Hallel). In other words, the entire order is Shulchan Aruch [the meal itself], Motzi, Kiddush, Hallel... *and it's over!*

I'm not trying to take anything away from the importance of the meal. I just think we need to be careful when it comes to the many things that have been added to Passover.

I hate being a downer by telling you all this. But you know what was a real downer? What Jesus told His disciples.

Mar 14:18 Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me."



*That's no light dinner conversation.* That's awful. Can you even fathom the weight of it? One minute you're enjoying Passover and the next you are outed as a potential traitor.

Jesus knew it was Judas, so why trouble the other eleven?

Jesus' comment is a good example of how to "hear what the Spirit is saying." It was only meant for one, but all contemplated it.

There is always something just for you as the Word is taught; but you must take it all in to discover what is uniquely yours. Sift through it to find your particular treasure.

Mar 14:19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, "Is it I?" And another said, "Is it I?"

"Sorrowful" was not the usual feel of Passover. It was intended to be joyful. This one was different entirely than any they'd ever celebrated in their lives.

Kudos to them for asking, "Is it I?" Even though the true translation is more like, "It's not me, is it?", at least they were entertaining the possibility that in a moment of weakness any one of them might betray the Lord.

It was a "but for the grace of God, there go I" moment of clarity.

Mar 14:20 He answered and said to them, "It is one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish.

Jesus' answer only added to their misery. He wasn't giving them a clue. He meant to emphasize the heinous nature of the betrayal.

It was one of them, a person who even at that moment, while eating dinner with Him, was lying in wait to hand Him over to death.

In his Gospel, John lets us know that he asked Jesus directly, and that he found out it was Judas. The others did not suspect.

Mar 14:21 The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him...

Stop there for a moment. The entire Old Testament pointed to the coming Son of Man Who would be God's final lamb. God promised it, and He provided Himself for it.

But, simultaneously, Judas could have repented:

Mar 14:21 ... but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

This is a "woe" of sorrow, indicating "that man" might have chosen otherwise. As I explained at some length last week, God's providence does not necessitate pre-determining Judas' fate as the betrayer who would be damned to Hell.

Judas was not predestined for Hell. God doesn't do that. He's big enough to provide for His plan without that kind of cruelty.

"Never been born" isn't the kind of thing you'd say if someone was predetermined from eternity past to do this terrible deed. You'd say he "needed to be born." But, as I said, God provides for His plan without entrapment.

Jesus was about to be betrayed. He would be killed. It would unfold just the way the prophet Isaiah said when he wrote,

Isa 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth.

At that moment, in that upper room, Jesus was fulfilling God's promise to provide Himself the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, "led as [THE] lamb to the slaughter."

Did the twelve realize all this? Probably not; but everything they needed to put it together was right there, in that room.

## #2 God Prevailed Himself The Lamb To Come Again For Your Salvation

(v22-25)

The Passover meal was over, but Jesus was just getting started. He did something wonderful with some bread and a cup of wine - something we still do today.

Mar 14:22 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Mar 14:23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

Mar 14:24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many."

Question: Did Judas partake of this bread, and this wine?

Most competent Bible scholars say, "No, Judas certainly did not partake of this part of their supper."

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Mark 14:12-25

*"Because You're Mine, I Wait for Wine"*

The Passover meal must have been over when Jesus spoke to the eleven about the bread and the wine. Jesus didn't change Passover; He fulfilled it, and then He established something brand new.

The writer to the Hebrew Christians described the change saying,

Heb 10:5 Therefore, when [Jesus] came into the world, He said: "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU DID NOT DESIRE, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME.

The "sacrifice and offering" of the lambs through the centuries were a temporary measure until Jesus came. He was God in human flesh; that's the "body... prepared for" Him. In that incarnation body, He was God's final Lamb.

Throughout the centuries, Christians have debated the exact meaning of the body and blood of Christ. The eleven guys sitting around that table would have understood that Jesus was using figurative language. The bread represented His body; the wine represented His blood.

Instead of getting lost in theological arguments, I like the simplicity of what William MacDonald said:

He "took" - humanity upon Himself; He "broke" - He was about to be broken on the cross; He "gave" - He gave Himself for us.

We can't get so caught up in discovering what the bread and the cup mean that we forget to do what Jesus said to do with them. We must "take" and "eat."

How are we supposed to "take" and "eat?" Obviously the exhortation is, first and foremost, spiritual. We are to appropriate Jesus' death on the Cross by believing He is our Savior.

As to how, practically, we observe this, the apostle Paul gives us valuable instruction on just what Jesus meant by "take" and "eat."

1Co 11:23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread;

1Co 11:24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

1Co 11:25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

1Co 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.

In Corinth, at least, the church gathered weekly, on Sunday night, for a pot-luck. After eating, they would take bread and wine together. Simple; but powerful.

We have a lot of freedom regarding the bread and the wine. Paul said "as often as you eat... and drink." There's no instruction on how often, so it's up to us.

- There's no instruction on how to serve the elements, so it's up to us.
- There's no instruction on whether or not children may partake, so it's up to us.
- There's no instruction on where to serve the elements, e.g., only in a church service, or in your own home, so it's up to us.

- There's no instruction on the type of bread, or the potency of the wine, so it's up to us.

We've chosen, for now, to share the elements as we gather on the last Wednesday night of every month. We like to have you come forward and get the elements for yourself - to receive them for yourself.

We also have the elements upstairs, in the Prayer Room, every Sunday morning.

We encourage you to share bread and the cup at home as often as you like.

We can get lost in the details, e.g. demanding the bread be unleavened, or that we use wine and not grape juice.

It's not a ritual that must be performed in a prescribed manner, with just the right elements. It's a memorial, and the Lord has graciously given us a great deal of freedom to enjoy it.

In verse twenty-four of Mark fourteen, Jesus mentioned a "new covenant." It implies an old covenant; and that old covenant was the Law of Moses.

Passover is a good example of the old covenant. You sacrificed a lamb, in your place, and God could receive you into His presence. But your sins were only temporarily covered; and you needed to keep on sacrificing lamb after lamb.

Under the new covenant, God sacrificed Himself the Lamb for you, and when you believe, He receives you into His presence justified, having been forgiven your sins.

In the new covenant He gives you His Holy Spirit, to indwell you, and to empower you.

Jesus said His blood "was shed for many." It doesn't mean it is restricted to a certain group. It's a comparison. What one man did by dying affects the entire larger group - the "many."

Jesus is the Savior of all mankind - especially those who believe.

Mar 14:25 Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

This statement is Jesus' promise He prevails as the Lamb. About to be betrayed, then murdered, He spoke of His ultimate victory over Satan, sin, Hell, and death as something already accomplished.

He was specifically envisioning His future return to the earth to establish the promised Kingdom of God.

We see this in the Revelation. He steps forward, as the Lamb Who was slain. He opens the seals on a seven-sealed scroll. As He does, the seven-year Tribulation unfolds upon the earth, until finally He comes back in triumph.

When He does - come back, that is - there will be a great feast upon the earth. Jesus said He would fast from drinking "the fruit of the vine" until He can drink it with us in that glorious celebration.

It's a token of His love for us; it's romantic, for lack of a better word.

Is there something you really, really want to do, as a couple?  
Let's say the opportunity came for one of you to do it. Would you take the opportunity?

Now I'm sure your spouse would graciously say, "Go ahead; I don't mind." But I'd recommend you pass, because it's not the doing of it that is important. It's the doing of it together.

Jesus is saying, "I can't wait until we're together, on the Millennial earth, feasting, and fellowshiping."

Mean time, Paul said "we proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." We should therefore emphasize His coming whenever we share the elements - remembering His excitement to see us in person at that table.

If the disciples were paying attention, they could have gone from despair to delight.

- They despaired at the announcement of Jesus' betrayal by one of them at the table.
- They could delight at the pronouncement of the future feast involving eleven of them, and multitudes of others.

Are you desperate today? Has some illness, or injury, or injustice, assailed you?

God prevailed Himself the Lamb to come for your salvation. He has begun in you a good work, and will perform it until the day you are with Him.

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have a seat reserved at the table, and a glass of wine waiting for you to drink with Jesus.