

Common Bread

Matthew 26:26-30 on January 1, 2023

Pastor Jerry R. A. Johnson



Please read Matthew 26:26-30 before going further in this transcript.

Matthew 26:26 begins, “While they were eating....” Jesus and His Twelve disciples were eating the annual Passover meal. Not only were they eating this meal, but so also were thousands of other Jews who had eaten this meal for generations. This meal went WAY back in Israel’s history, back over 1,400 years, back to the time of the Exodus from Egypt.¹ Matthew 26:17 tells us that “On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” So the Passover meal is the meal that Jesus ate with His disciples, and it occurred on the eve of the Festival of Unleavened Bread. In other words, this particular meal fit within a particular historical context. This meal “commemorated the final plague in Egypt in which the first-born of the Egyptians died, but the Israelites were spared [because God provided for their redemption, by allowing them to sacrifice a lamb and put its blood on the doorframes of their homes].”²³ (This blood would cause the angel of death to “pass over” their homes.) The Passover meal led right into the Festival of Unleavened Bread, an annual celebration that lasted a full week.⁴⁵ Now, to many of us Gentiles, it seems like overkill to spend an entire week celebrating something so common as bread! But bread held a lot of meaning for the Jewish people, especially unleavened bread (bread without yeast). In its historical context, unleavened bread was all that the Israelites had time for. At the time of the Exodus, they didn’t have time to sit around and wait for the dough to rise.

In fact, when they ate the Passover meal Exodus 12:11 specified, “THIS is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD’s Passover.”⁶ The Passover was an annual remembrance, practiced for centuries by the Jewish people. It passed on this remembrance from one generation to the next. Exodus 13:8 describes how fathers would tell their children, “I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came

¹ This history was, of course, interrupted by their time in exile. Merrill C. Tenney, Gen. Ed., “*Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Zondervan, Vol 2, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976, p. 522.

² Merrill C. Tenney, Gen. Ed., “*Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Zondervan, Vol 2, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976, p. 522.

³ See Exodus 12:7-8, 12-15.

⁴ “The 14th of Nisan (“NIGH san” W. Murray Severance and Terry Eddinger, *That’s Easy for You to Say: Your Quick Guide to Pronouncing Bible Names* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997), 123.) (March-April), it was also called the preparation of the Passover. The Passover meal was eaten the evening of the 14th after sunset – and therefore technically on the 15th, since the Jewish day ended at sunset. The Festival of Unleavened Bread lasted seven days, from the 15th to the 21st of Nisan (see Leviticus 23:5-6), but in the time of Christ the entire period, Nisan 14-21, was referred to under that name.” *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, pp. 1640-1641 footnote on Matthew 26:17.

⁵ “During his public ministry Jesus may have attended as many as four Passovers... Pilate had a custom of releasing a prisoner at the feast (Matthew 27:15).” Merrill C. Tenney, Gen. Ed., “*Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Zondervan, Vol 2, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976, p. 525.

⁶ See Exodus 12:33, 39; and Deuteronomy 16:3.

out of Egypt.”⁷ ⁸ So eating unleavened bread was meant to remind them of the time in their history when they needed to hurry up and get out of Egypt. (“Get out of Dodge” if you will.) Eating the Passover was a memorial meal, a time of remembering God rescuing them from slavery in Egypt. So let’s keep this history in mind as we move through today’s text. Jesus and His disciples were celebrating this Passover meal at the Last Supper. This meal would have included roasted lamb, greens and bitter herbs, 4 different cups of wine, and unleavened bread. So here’s a question, why did Jesus choose BREAD to represent His body? Wouldn’t the bitter herbs have been a better reminder of His bitter death? Or, since John’s Gospel tells us that Jesus is the LAMB of God who takes away the sin of the world,⁹ then why didn’t He choose the lamb meat to symbolize His body?¹⁰ Why did Jesus choose the bread?

Well, perhaps He wanted to choose something more practical for the coming wave of Gentiles, who wouldn’t be as familiar with lamb? Or perhaps He wanted to choose something more affordable than lamb? After all, meat is expensive, and God has always made Himself approachable, accessible to all, rich and poor alike.¹¹ ¹² It could have been a simple decision of convenience, and making it accessible to all peoples. Lamb is not nearly as readily available as bread, especially in certain climates and regions of the world. All kinds of different ethnicities would soon be coming to faith through the upcoming world-wide declaration of the gospel in the book of Acts. But are any of these reasons really compelling? Would this key ordinance of the church really be established for such pragmatic or common-sense reasons? Maybe. But there may be a more meaningful and theologically rich reason behind Jesus’ choice of bread.

Matthew 26:26 says, “While they were eating, Jesus took bread,¹³ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” The phrase “this is my body” is not at all shocking to you and me. But keep in mind, that up to this point, for Jesus’ disciples, the Passover meal had been progressing just like any other Passover. The preparations had been made just like they might have expected, just like every other year. They were reclining at the table, eating the same foods they had eaten every other year, and enjoying each other’s

⁷ Traditionally, early on in the Passover meal, a young boy would ask what all of this tradition means. Then the head of the household would share the history of Passover, citing various texts about God’s deliverance of His people from Egyptian bondage. This is referred to as the *Haggadah*. See D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 597.

⁸ Also early on in the meal, they would sing the first part of the Hallel. Psalm 114 makes particular reference to Israel coming out of Egypt and all the earth trembling at the presence of the Lord; the Lord who turned the rock into water in the desert.

⁹ See John 1:29.

¹⁰ It’s interesting to note that the lamb meat is never specifically mentioned in the accounts of Jesus’ Last Supper. See discussion by D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 603.

¹¹ This point was driven home to me during a trip to BD. We ate rice three times a day! Rice, rice, and more rice. Meat was a luxury we enjoyed only once a day, and for many of the locals, meat was only eaten once a week at most.

¹² Consider 1 Corinthians 11:20-22.

¹³ Likely referring to a loaf of bread. D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 601.

company.¹⁴ But all of a sudden... Jesus does something very strange, something very different from anything they'd EVER heard at the Passover meal before. New Testament scholar D.A. Carson says it this way: "The words 'this is my body' had NO place in the Passover ritual; ...they must have had STUNNING effect."^{15 16} (That's NOT how the ritual goes Jesus!) You see, Jesus knew something that His disciples had not yet comprehended: His BODY was about to be crucified. And His crucifixion would happen DURING the Festival of Unleavened Bread. This annual festival that had been celebrated for over a thousand years would soon take on a whole new dimension! Both the Passover Meal and the Festival of Unleavened bread were merely prequels, merely foreshadowing of a much greater BREAD than they had ever imagined.

Yes, they'd eaten unleavened bread for centuries in memory of their rush to get out of Egypt. Yes, they remembered how God provided their ancestors with manna (bread from heaven) during their wandering in the wilderness. And yes, Jesus had already been redefining COMMON BREAD all throughout His ministry, with statements like "I am the bread of Life," not to mention warning them about guarding against the YEAST of the pharisees (referring to false teaching) and His feeding of the 5,000 (with a miraculous provision of fish and BREAD.) You see, Jesus had a way of transforming everyday "common bread" into something extraordinary.^{17 18} During the Last Supper, He was doing it once again. He wanted His disciples, all of His disciples, including you and me, to think of HIM when they thought of bread. He wanted them to remember that He alone is the One who can sustain us, feed us, and provide for us, spiritually, physically, emotionally, and so on. Jesus was taking the memorial bread of the Passover, and giving it a new and deeper significance. You might say that "Jesus interprets his coming death, as the new Passover, inaugurating God's new exodus [from sin]."^{19 20} Just as the Passover had been an annual reminder for the Jews of their protection and rescue, back in Egypt, so also now the Lord's Supper would become a regular reminder of our protection and rescue from sin through Jesus' vicarious death. The new ordinance that Jesus initiates at the Last Supper has a direct link with

¹⁴ Except for Judas maybe!

¹⁵ "...an effect that would grow with the increased understanding gained after Easter." D. A. Carson, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 601.

¹⁶ Obviously, this wasn't Jesus actual flesh because Jesus was standing there in the flesh. He was wearing His flesh. In Luke 22:19 Jesus says, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." This "is" means "represents or signifies." *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1748 footnote on Luke 22:19.

¹⁷ I want to be careful here. I am NOT by any means suggesting transubstantiation.

¹⁸ It was "not an elegant or extravagant meal, but an unbelievably ordinary one. How many times had Jesus eaten bread with his friends? They had it with every meal – literally hundreds of times, multiple times a day.... In the Lord's Supper, we eat the same kind of meal we've always eaten to remember that the short, simple, unremarkable life we have is fused with a profound and hidden purpose and potential." Marshall Segal, p. 3, [The Hands That Made the Meal: What the Supper Says About Ordinary Work | Desiring God](#)

¹⁹ *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2050 footnote on Mark 14:22.

²⁰ Later on, in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, Paul uses the illustration of unleavened bread as a word picture for not allowing wickedness and insincere faith to contaminate the church. 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 says, "...Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? 7 Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

redemptive history. Carson summarizes it this way: “As the bread has just been broken, so will Jesus’ body be broken; and just as the people of Israel associated their deliverance from Egypt with eating the [Passover] meal... so also [Jesus’ followers] are to associate Jesus’ redemptive death with eating [the Lord’s Supper].”²¹

Matthew 26:27-28 goes on, “Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks,²² he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you.”²³ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” This was probably the third of the four cups of wine served at the Passover meal, which is called the “cup of blessing.” To be clear, this was not just grape juice, this was actual wine, but it was probably diluted with “...a double or triple quantity of water.”²⁴ More importantly, this cup symbolized redemption and here Jesus connects it to His own blood which was about to be shed for their salvation.²⁵ This phrase “blood of the covenant” alludes to Exodus 24:8,²⁶ “Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.” The context here was the covenant God set up with Israel at Mount Sinai, not long after their exodus rescue from Egypt. So the Ten Commandments and other Old Testament laws would have likely come to mind for Jesus’ disciples. Every Jewish person knew that the covenant between God and His people was ratified in a very particular way: “by the shedding of blood.”^{27 28 29} (In this case, the blood of animals.) But in Matthew 26, Jesus is now referring to HIS blood of the covenant, a NEW covenant.³⁰ This is Jesus’ new and better covenant.

We learn more about this in Jeremiah 31:31-34, “The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. [You see, the new covenant is not an external list of rules, but rather an internal covenant, God’s law will now be written on human hearts/minds.]

²¹ D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 601.

²² The reference in verse 27 to Jesus giving thanks is where the Catholics get their word “Eucharist.” It’s from the Greek word “εὐχαριστέω” “give thanks.” “① to show that one is under obligation, be thankful, feel obligated to thank.” William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 415.

²³ Luke 22:20 and 1 Corinthians 11:25 specify that this was “after the supper.” *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1748 footnote on Luke 22:20.

²⁴ D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 601.

²⁵ NIV Zondervan Study Bible, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 1989 footnote on Matthew 26:27.

²⁶ See discussion by D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 602.

²⁷ D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 602.

²⁸ Hebrews 9:22 says, “...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

²⁹ The old covenant was sealed by splashing animal blood against the altar and sprinkling it on the people. See Exodus 24:6-8.

³⁰ See Luke 22:20 and 1 Corinthians 11:25 for the word “new.”

Verse 34 continues... “No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the LORD,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the LORD. “For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.” Jeremiah 31:34 is echoed by Jesus’ words about the forgiveness of sins in Matthew 26:28,³¹ “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” He shifts their attention from what happened in their past, to a focus on what was about to happen in their present. The blood of grapes would now represent the blood of the Savior and what He was about to purchase with His own blood. In other words, this new covenant was about to be put into effect through the shedding of Jesus’ blood on the cross.³² Lives would now be transformed from the inside out, actions would be governed through changed hearts and minds.³³ So in Matthew 26:28 Jesus is anticipating how His blood would be poured out on the cross. He’s predicting His own substitutionary atonement for our sin, an atonement that His blood, His death, would purchase.

Jesus’ word choice, “poured out for many,” would have been a powerful statement in light of what was going on in Jerusalem that day.³⁴ You see, this was the day when thousands upon thousands of lambs were being sacrificed. And the blood of each lamb was being poured out on the altar.³⁵ The blood was collected in basins which were passed along through a line of priests; the final priest in the line would then pour out the blood at the foot of the altar.³⁶ OH how the blood flowed on this particular day! It was a foreshadowing that had been going on for centuries: the final, all-sufficient sacrifice for sin was about to be poured out through Jesus’ blood shed on the cross.³⁷ Once Jesus’ work on the cross was finished, there would no longer be any need for more blood to be poured out! By the way, in verse 28, this little word “for” is a powerful word! “FOR many” and “FOR forgiveness”; it’s a clear declaration that Jesus acted as our “Representative and Substitute.” As one author puts it, “these prepositions speak of a place which OUGHT to be ours, that WE ought to have taken this place, that we have been taken from it, that it is occupied by another, that this other, acts in this

³¹ D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 602.

³² See discussion in *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1281 footnote on Jeremiah 31:31.

³³ This new covenant would go on to fulfill the demands of the old covenant, and achieve its purpose in a way that the external law never could. Jesus talks about this in Matthew 5:17, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” See also the following verses in Matthew 5:18-20.

³⁴ “Poured out for MANY.” “Whereas the historic Exodus was limited to the experience of one people, the Christian Exodus is open to the nations of the world.” Merrill C. Tenney, Gen. Ed., “*Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976, p. 611.

³⁵ The Passover lambs were killed at twilight on the 14th of Nisan. See Exodus 12:6.

³⁶ “The priests took the blood [of the lambs] and passed it in basins along a line until it was poured out at the foot of the altar [accompanied by the singing of the Hallel from Psalms 113-118].” D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 597.

³⁷ “Jesus followed custom but reinterpreted the Passover in terms of the Messianic event: the Messiah took the role of the paschal lamb.... From henceforth the bread and the wine of the seder become the signs of the Messiah’s sacrifice upon the cross. The paschal meal becomes a Messianic meal.” Merrill C. Tenney, Gen. Ed., “*Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1976, p. 609.

place, as only HE can, in our cause and interest.”³⁸ What a wonderful thing to celebrate on New Year’s Day; the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on our behalf!

In Matthew 26:29 Jesus concludes, “I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” From a modern perspective, Jesus’ choice of wine might seem a bit challenging. After all, wine can be expensive. And, the alcohol can make it a bit prohibitive for some of us, especially those of us who are from more conservative backgrounds. In fact, even during His own earthly ministry, Jesus took a few hits on this very issue. In Luke 7, Jesus admits that some people called him a glutton and a DRUNKARD. With these challenges in mind, it does make you wonder why Jesus maybe wouldn’t have used something a bit more palatable to represent His blood. Perhaps He could have just used actual grapes right off the vine, or simply used water, or maybe even milk. That being said, wine was a much more common drink in that day and age, especially in that region of the world. In part, wine was consumed for health reasons, because good, clean drinking water wasn’t always readily available.³⁹ So wine was actually fairly pragmatic, and even convenient and affordable in Jesus’ day, because it was so commonly available. It was also likely red in color which makes its symbolism all the more vivid.

But the most obvious explanation for why Jesus chose wine to represent His blood is that it was already right there in front of them, all throughout the Passover meal. “The four cups were meant to correspond to the fourfold promise of Exodus 6:6-7.”⁴⁰ The LORD’s words to Moses are recorded for us in Exodus 6:6-7, “Therefore, say to the Israelites: ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. 7 I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians.” So the four promises were “I will bring you out (of Egypt),” “I will free you (from slavery),” “I will redeem you,” and “I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God.” Each of these was celebrated in succession with one of the four cups of wine. “The third cup... is... associated with redemption (verse 6); ...the fourth cup corresponds to the promise ‘I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God’ (verse 7).”⁴¹ That last one, in verse 7, is reminiscent of Revelation 21, which talks about the new heaven and earth where God will dwell among His people. That’s what Jesus is promising in Matthew 26:29, “...I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on UNTIL that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” D.A. Carson calls this a “veiled farewell” and notes that:

³⁸ Karl Barth as quoted in Morris, referenced by D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 603.

³⁹ This may very well be why the Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach. See 1 Timothy 5:23.

⁴⁰ D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 604.

⁴¹ D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 604.

“The Lord’s Supper... points both to the past and to the future, both to Jesus’ sacrifice at Calvary and to the messianic banquet.”⁴² ⁴³ I appreciate how writer Marshall Segal says it: “When Jesus served the Supper, he was not throwing a pity party for all he would lose and suffer; he was setting the table for all we would gain and enjoy forever.”⁴⁴ You see, even though we refer to this meal as “the LAST Supper,” there’s actually another supper still to come, at the end of this age. Revelation 19:9 proclaims, “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!”⁴⁵ That future supper will include every believer who’s ever celebrated and commemorated the Lord’s Supper over these past 2,000 years. (*Not to mention those who put faith in the Messiah before He came.*) We’ll all gather together in an enormous banquet hall and feast at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.⁴⁶

Earlier this week, I gained a whole new appreciation for the words of Matthew 26:30, “When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”⁴⁷ I confess, that in the past, I’ve only given this verse a cursory read before moving on. Yes, it’s amazing to think about how cool it must have been to sing worship songs with Jesus. And yes, I do “laugh out loud” when I imagine the terrible singing voices of the early disciples! (*Can you imagine? The hymns probably sounded more like raucous sea shanties!*) But this week I took some time to dig in a little deeper. What I learned is that even though verse 30 doesn’t give us the name of the actual hymn, that doesn’t necessarily mean we can’t try to deduce which hymn it was. You see, during the Passover meal, there’s a longstanding tradition among the Jews of singing the Egyptian Hallel Psalms (“Hallel” meaning “praise,” as in “Hallel ujah.”).⁴⁸ They’re called “Egyptian” because they celebrate God redeeming His people out of Egypt. Now, I’ve been aware of these Hallel Psalms for some time now, but I never really thought all the way through the ramifications.

Psalms 113-118 make up the Egyptian Hallel: Psalms 113-114 were traditionally sung before the Passover meal. Psalms 115-118 were sung after the meal.⁴⁹ Therefore, in all likelihood, Jesus and His disciples sang one or more of Psalms 115-118 before

⁴² D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 604.

⁴³ Carson also notes that “As the people of God in the OT prospectively celebrated in the first Passover their escape from Egypt, anticipating their arrival in the Promised Land, so the people of God here prospectively celebrate their deliverance from sin and bondage, anticipating the coming kingdom.” D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 603.

⁴⁴ Marshall Segal, p. 4, [The Hands That Made the Meal: What the Supper Says About Ordinary Work | Desiring God](#)

⁴⁵ When we all get to heaven, there’s going to be a celebration! In the NFL they celebrate with a jug of Gatorade. The Indy 500 celebrates with a bottle of milk. But in the middle east, they grow delicious grapes, and according to Matthew 26:29, when we all get to heaven, Jesus is planning on drinking from the fruit of the vine. And if any of us don’t care for real wine, then I’m sure there’ll be a glass of sparkling grape juice for us.

⁴⁶ See *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1748 footnote on Luke 22:16.

⁴⁷ The Mount of Olives is located a short distance east of Jerusalem, where Jesus would soon be crucified. “Directly east of Jerusalem, it rises to a height of about 2,700 feet, some 200 feet higher than Mount Zion. Its summit commands a magnificent view of the city, and especially of the temple (now the site of the Dome of the Rock).” *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1678 footnote on Mark 11:1.

⁴⁸ These are referred to as the Egyptian Hallel Psalms, “Hallel” meaning “praise.” *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1641 footnote on Matthew 26:30.

⁴⁹ “Psalm 115-118 after the meal (when the fourth cup had been filled).” *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 988 footnote on Psalms 113-118.

heading out to the Mount of Olives; there were very likely the hymns they sang.^{50 51} I read through all of these Psalms this week with that in mind: Amazing!⁵² This week, if you want to dive in a bit deeper, I encourage you to read through the Hallel Psalms. Begin with Psalms 113-114 and think about Jesus and His disciples singing them together. And when you read “Who is like the LORD our God?” Keep in mind: the Lord Jesus, who is fully God, was right there in their midst singing with them. Then, go on to read Psalms 115-118 and think about the words that compare the LIVING God with idols of silver and gold. Again, when you read “They have hands, but cannot feel, feet but cannot walk.” Keep in mind: Jesus’ feet were right there walking among them, and His hands would soon feel the nails being driven through them at the cross.”^{53 54} With this historical context in mind, it’s a POWERFUL read! The Egyptian Hallel ends with Psalm 118. Psalm 118:14 proclaims, “The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.” Let’s join God’s people in remembering and celebrating our salvation: For them, it was their salvation from Egypt. For us today, it’s our salvation from sin. Let’s celebrate the Lord’s Supper on this New Year’s Day as a memorial meal, as a reminder of how the Lord Jesus is our strength and our defense. May this bread and this juice remind us once again that Jesus has become our salvation!

⁵⁰ See *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 1141 footnote on Psalms 113-118.

⁵¹ Even if Jesus and His disciples didn’t happen to sing these actual hymns during the Last Supper, it’s certainly a good reminder that our Old Testament is the very Bible that Jesus read while He was on this earth.

⁵² I might also mention that they likely sang antiphonally. “Jesus as the leader would sing the lines, and his followers would respond with ‘Hallelujah!’ Parts of it must have been deeply moving to the disciples when after the resurrection they remembered that Jesus sang words pledging that he would keep his vows (Psalm 116:12-13), ultimately triumph despite rejection (Psalm 118), and call all nations to praise Yahweh and his covenant love (Psalm 117).” D. A. Carson, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew-Mark*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2010, p. 604.

⁵³ These hymns “celebrated God’s past deliverance in anticipation of the future restoration of Jerusalem and the temple.” *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2050 footnote on Mark 14:26.

⁵⁴ These hymns were a “celebration of redemption.” *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 986 footnote on Psalms 111-119.