



# CHRIST'S FINAL PASSOVER

Christ's commission was nearly finished. He had brought His Father's message of the soon-coming Kingdom of God. The sick had been healed and the training of His disciples was nearly complete.

In the last lesson we learned about Christ's prophecies of end-time events that will precede His Second Coming. In this lesson we will see how Christ observed the first New Testament Passover with His disciples, setting an example for His Church to follow today.

## THE PLOT TO ARREST JESUS

Jesus Christ very plainly told His disciples that in two days He would be arrested and crucified. This would occur just before the Days of Unleavened Bread. The Passover and the following seven days of Unleavened Bread were also collectively known to the Jews at this time as "the Feast of the Passover." It was one of the major festivals of the year, and a time when financially able Jews from all over the Roman world traveled to Jerusalem (Matthew 26:1-5; Luke 22:1).

Knowing that Jesus would come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, the religious leaders plotted to arrest and kill Him. Their problem, however, was how to do this without causing a riot. Only days before the people had enthusiastically welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem (Luke 22:2).

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### ABOUT OUR COVER . . .

The bread and wine. Christ instituted these important emblems for the Passover service.

YES Photo

The scribes and Pharisees knew that they would be held responsible by the Roman authorities for any disturbances during the Passover period. The last thing they wanted was the military might of Rome descending upon them. Yet, as we have seen, the anger of many of them against Christ was beyond reason. Only His death would satisfy that anger, which was caused by His teachings and denunciation of their hypocrisy.

Their dilemma was partially and unexpectedly solved when one of Christ's disciples—later possessed by Satan—decided to betray Christ.

"Then one of the \_\_\_\_\_, called \_\_\_\_\_, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye \_\_\_\_\_ me, and I will \_\_\_\_\_ him [Christ] unto you?" (Matthew 26:14-15.)

As the treasurer, Judas had been stealing money from the fund that was used to pay Christ's expenses and help the poor. Undoubtedly an attitude of dishonesty and rebellion had filled Judas' mind (John 12:6).

Judas allowed Satan to influence him to betray Christ. All of Christ's teachings and Judas' relationship with the other disciples were not on his mind—only greed and hostility that eventually led him to betray his very Creator.

Perhaps you have experienced a time when you were offended by another person. Remember how it developed in your mind until you became very angry and resentful?

The Apostle Paul exhorts us to be careful to not become bitter: "Looking \_\_\_\_\_ . . . lest any root of \_\_\_\_\_ springing up

\_\_\_\_\_ you, and thereby many be  
\_\_\_\_\_” (Hebrews 12:15).

The chief priests were only willing to pay 30 pieces of silver as the price of Jesus’ betrayal. Judas greedily accepted the money and began to watch for opportunities to deliver Christ to the religious authorities (Matthew 26:15-16).

### **CHRIST CRUCIFIED ON PASSOVER**

It is commonly supposed today that Jesus was crucified on Friday and was resurrected at sunrise Sunday morning. This would place Christ’s final Passover season with His disciples on Thursday evening. The Bible shows this to be impossible!

What did Christ say about the length of time that He would be in the grave?

“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a \_\_\_\_\_; and there shall no \_\_\_\_\_ be given to it, but the \_\_\_\_\_ of the prophet

\_\_\_\_\_ [Jonah]: For as Jonas was \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in the whale’s [fish’s] belly; so shall the Son of \_\_\_\_\_ be \_\_\_\_\_ days and \_\_\_\_\_ nights in the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_” (Matthew 12:39-40).

Christ’s only sign that He was the Messiah was that He would remain *exactly* three days and three nights inside the tomb. If He failed in this sign, He must be rejected as an impostor. Basic math shows us that Friday afternoon to sunrise Sunday morning *cannot* add up to three days and three nights. Satan has concocted this story to deceive people into disbelieving Christ.

Jesus knew that the daylight portion of a day is equal to 12 hours. With three days of 12 hours and three nights of 12 hours, we have a total of 72 hours that Christ had to be in the tomb (John 11:9).



Notice how the Bible defines the time required to complete three days. Summarize Genesis 1:5, 8, 12-13 on the lines below. \_\_\_\_\_

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In order to be three days and three nights in the grave, Christ had to rise from the tomb at the same time of day that His body was buried and the tomb closed.

Let's notice some other scriptures that show that Christ was to be buried and rise three days

and three nights later. Write out each verse on the lines below. (Matthew 27:63) \_\_\_\_\_

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(Mark 8:31) \_\_\_\_\_

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(Mark 9:31) \_\_\_\_\_

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(John 2:19-21) \_\_\_\_\_

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The Garden Tomb is typical of tombs in use at the time of Christ.

(I Corinthians 15:3-4)

Jesus was buried about sunset on the same day He died. According to the laws observed by the Jews, all dead (crucified) bodies had to be taken down before the beginning of a Sabbath or feast day. He had died shortly after 3 p.m. or the “ninth hour” (Luke 23:44, 52-54).

The crucifixion day was also the “preparation day” (Matthew 27:62). The Apostle John records that this preparation day was prior to a Sabbath—a “high day” or holy day—one of seven annual holy days. It was the holy day beginning the Days of Unleavened Bread (John 19:31, 42).

Christ was crucified on the Passover—the same day that Passover lambs had been slain every year (I Corinthians 5:7). He was crucified on the fourteenth of Nisan, the first month of the Hebrew calendar. And this Passover was the day before—and the preparation for—the feast day, or annual Sabbath day which occurred on the fifteenth of Nisan (Leviticus 23:5-6; Numbers 28:16-17).

The Hebrew calendar shows that in the year Christ was crucified, A.D. 31, the fourteenth of Nisan was Wednesday. The annual Sabbath or first holy day of Unleavened Bread was Thursday. Therefore, if Christ was buried late afternoon on Wednesday, the resurrection had to occur shortly before sunset Saturday—exactly three days and three nights later.

When Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre on the first day of the week, it was still dark. This was before dawn on Sunday morn-

ing. When she arrived, the tomb was already open. Jesus was not there! (John 20:1.)

Notice what the angel said to Mary: “He is not \_\_\_\_\_: for he [Christ] is \_\_\_\_\_” (Matthew 28:6).

Christ had already risen from the dead late Saturday afternoon, before sunset! It was not, then, a Sunday resurrection at all, but a Saturday resurrection—exactly three days and three nights after Christ was buried.

If you would like to know more, write for the free booklet *The Resurrection Was Not on Sunday* by Herbert W. Armstrong.

It is important that we have this chronology firmly established in our minds as we continue our study of Christ’s Passover with His disciples.

### Do You Remember?

1. The Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread were collectively called by the Jews the \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why were the Jewish religious leaders afraid to arrest Christ in public? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Give two contributing factors that influenced Judas’ decision to betray Christ. \_\_\_\_\_
4. How much did the religious leaders pay Judas to betray Christ? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What sign did Jesus give that He was the Messiah? \_\_\_\_\_
6. On which day of the week was Jesus crucified/resurrected? \_\_\_\_\_

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7. What time of day was Christ resurrected?

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### THE SERVANT IS THE GREATEST

Before the Feast, Christ sent two of His disciples into Jerusalem to prepare for the Passover. Peter and John went ahead of the others to meet a man with whom the use of a room had been arranged (Matthew 26:17-19).

At dusk on Tuesday evening, Christ sat down with His disciples. This was the beginning portion of the fourteenth of Nisan. It was a time of great emotion and meaning for Jesus Christ. He knew it was the last Passover season He would be with His disciples before His death. He would not observe another Passover with them until after His Second Coming (Matthew 26:29; Luke 22:14-16).

As the disciples talked among themselves, a debate arose about which of them would be the most important in the Kingdom of God. Christ explained to them that the desire for greatness and power over others was a trait exhibited by the rulers of this world. He went on to explain that greatness in God's eyes was based on a person's desire to serve others. Christ exemplified this attitude of service by giving His own life for all mankind.

Nevertheless, because the disciples had remained true and faithful to Christ, they would be given power and authority in His soon-coming Kingdom. When Christ returns to this earth, the resurrected apostles will sit on thrones ruling the 12 tribes of Israel (Luke 22:24-30).

Jesus knew that Satan had influenced Judas Iscariot this night to carry out his plan of betrayal. But Christ loved His disciples greatly and now, even at the last, was going to perform an act of love and humility toward them (John 13:1-3).

### CHRIST WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

Christ got up from the table, took off his

robe and wrapped a towel around His waist. This was much the same way a lowly slave would have done. Christ then poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel.

Peter protested at Christ demeaning Himself in this way, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet? . . . Thou shalt never wash my feet" (John 13:6, 8).

Jesus explained to Peter that unless he allowed his feet to be washed, Peter could not be considered a part of God's Church.

What was Peter's reaction to this statement?

"Simon Peter saith unto him, \_\_\_\_\_, not my \_\_\_\_\_ only, but also my \_\_\_\_\_ and my \_\_\_\_\_" (John 13:9).

Christ then answered Peter and said, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, *but not all*" (verse 10).

Christ was implying that one of the disciples was unclean because He knew that Judas planned to betray Him.

Why did Christ wash the disciples' feet?

"For I have \_\_\_\_\_ you an \_\_\_\_\_, that ye should \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_ have done to you" (John 13:15).

Following Christ's example and command, the members of God's Church perform this act of foot washing each year at the New Testament Passover service.

What did Christ tell His disciples about the commands He had given them?

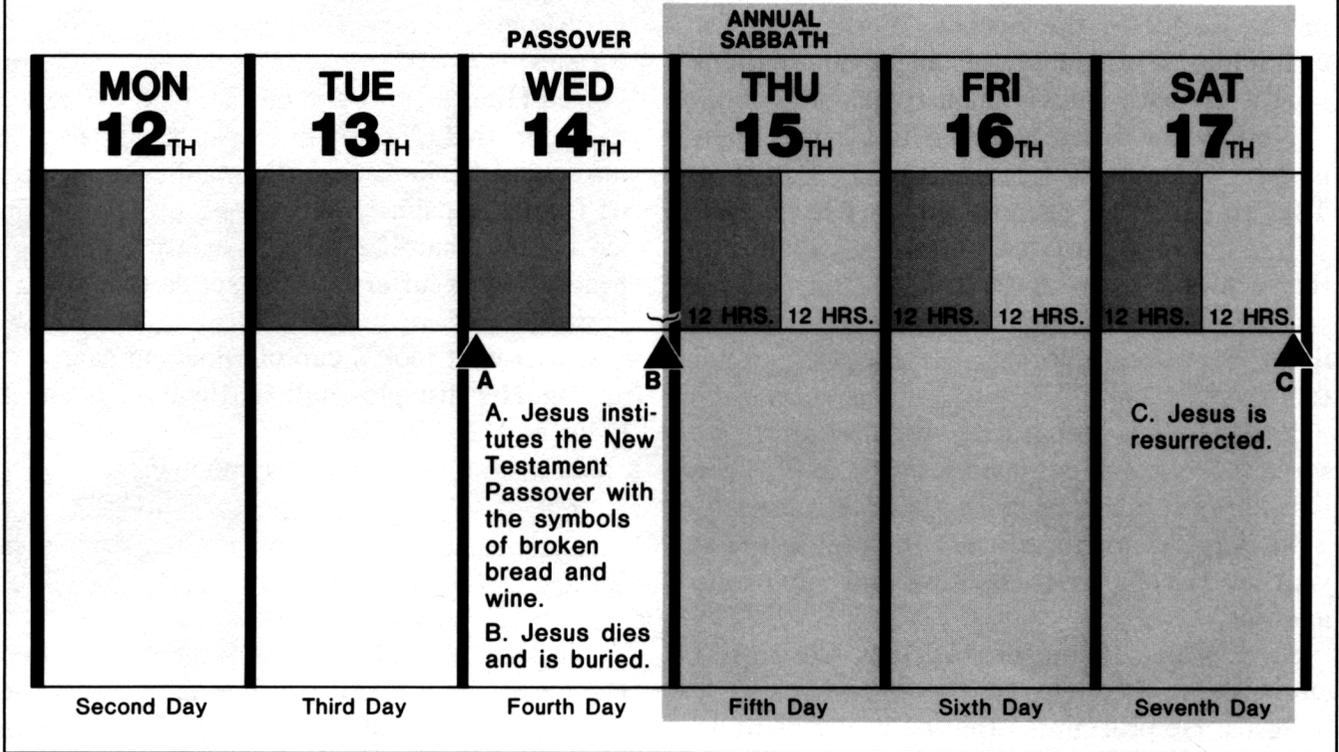
"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to *wash one another's feet*" (John 13:14).

Christ also commanded them to teach others to do the same: "Go ye therefore, and \_\_\_\_\_ all nations . . . \_\_\_\_\_ I have \_\_\_\_\_ you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

### JUDAS BETRAYS CHRIST

Jesus again returned to the subject of the one who would betray Him. He told the disciples that the prophecy written by King David in Psalm 41:9 would be fulfilled. Christ explained

# EVENTS OF CRUCIFIXION WEEK



that this would be a further proof for them to know that He was the Son of God (John 13:18-19).

We can know a great deal about the mind and character of God by studying the words and actions of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 10:30 that He and the Father were one. They were in total agreement with one another. By knowing and understanding Christ, we can also know and understand God the Father.

As the reality of what Judas was about to do came again to Jesus' mind, He was troubled. He told His disciples that one of them was going to betray Him. The disciples began looking at one another, wondering who could be the betrayer (John 13:21-22).

Peter beckoned to John, who was sitting beside Christ, to ask Him who it was. Jesus told John He would dip the bread into the sauce "sop" and give it to the one who would betray Him. When he did, Christ gave it to Judas Iscariot (John 13:23-26).

At that moment Satan possessed Judas. Je-

sus then turned to Judas and told him to hurry and do the deed quickly. Actually, Christ was speaking directly to Satan as well. But the other disciples thought that Jesus was urging Judas to do some errand. Judas left at once, going out into the night (verses 27-30).

## A NEW COMMANDMENT

Now that Judas had gone, Jesus began to reveal the most meaningful aspects of the New Testament Passover. He told them that He would soon return to His Father. But He wanted to give them a commandment by which all Christians are to live. They are to love one another, just as Christ loved them and sacrificed His life for them.

What further purpose would this attitude of love serve?

"By this shall \_\_\_\_\_ know that ye are my \_\_\_\_\_, if ye have \_\_\_\_\_ one to another" (John 13:35).

Christ explained that respect and love—an *outgoing* concern—toward one another would

be the very hallmark of a true Christian. How different this is to the attitude of most people in the world! In the Second World War, for example, "Christians" of all denominations fought on both sides—against each other!

Notice how different this is to Christ's command: "This is my \_\_\_\_\_, That ye \_\_\_\_\_ one another, as I have loved \_\_\_\_\_. Greater love hath no \_\_\_\_\_ than this, that a man \_\_\_\_\_ down his \_\_\_\_\_ for his \_\_\_\_\_. Ye are my \_\_\_\_\_, if ye do whatsoever I \_\_\_\_\_ you" (John 15:12-14).

Part of the preparation for the Passover service for baptized members of God's true Church is meditating upon these words. True Christians rededicate themselves each year at the Passover to love and serve one another.

Sensing the theme of love that Christ was emphasizing, Peter loudly professed his loyalty to Jesus. He proclaimed that he would be quite willing to die for Jesus. Doubtless he meant this and was sincere in his words. Christ told him, however, that under different circumstances, he would deny Him three times before the night was out! (Luke 22:33-34; John 13:37-38.)

## THE BREAD AND WINE

During this very special Passover, Christ instituted the symbols of the bread and wine: "And when the hour was come, he [Jesus] sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, *This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me*" (Luke 22:14, 19).

Christ commanded that Christians break and eat (unleavened) bread each Passover in remembrance of Him. It was, then, a *memorial*—an annual observance in memory of His death (Exodus 13:10).

This broken bread symbolizes the body of Christ that He offered to be beaten and broken from the Roman scourging. Christ's beating

took place so that our physical sins could be forgiven and our diseases and afflictions healed. Christ actually *paid* the penalty for our physical sins.

God Himself, through Christ, paid that price in order that He might perform for us the miracle of healing. God is so willing to relieve us from the pain, suffering and affliction that sin causes, that He gave His only Son to be beaten and to suffer in our place so that we can be healed.

Christ next took a cup of wine and shared it among His disciples, telling them to drink it (Matthew 26:27).

What was the wine to symbolize?

"For this is my \_\_\_\_\_ of the new \_\_\_\_\_ [covenant], which is \_\_\_\_\_ for many for the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_" (verse 28).

Christ explained that the wine represented His blood—His life. It was poured out that the death penalty could be paid for all those who repent of their sins and strive to be in God's Kingdom.

Paul tells us that everyone has sinned, and that the wages of sin is death. All mankind therefore, having sinned, is under the death penalty. Christ, having lived a sinless life, freely gave His life to pay that death penalty in our stead (Romans 3:23; 6:23).

Christ commands His followers to drink the wine each year at the Passover service to remember the sacrifice He made for us. We remember that Christ bled to death at His crucifixion so that our sins could be forgiven. This was a great act of love and service by both Christ and His Father.

In John 3:16 we read, "For God so \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_, that he gave his only \_\_\_\_\_, that whosoever believeth in \_\_\_\_\_ should not \_\_\_\_\_, but have \_\_\_\_\_ life."

The Passover is a time when we remember how Christ gave His life so that we could be given the opportunity for salvation and eternal life in His Kingdom.



YES Photo

Christ commands that Christians break and eat bread in remembrance of Him.

The agreement on the part of a Christian to obey God's laws and to work hard at living a sin-free life enables God to remit the death penalty. This is called the New Covenant. The Old Covenant was an agreement between God and the people of ancient Israel. It was broken by the Israelites when they rebelled against God. The New Covenant is now between God's true Church (spiritual Israel) and God.

Through Christ's sacrifice, those whom God calls have access to Him through Christ. This enables us to go to God and ask Him for the things that we need (John 6:44; 14:13-14; 16:23).

We in God's Church today follow this same pattern for the Passover service as established by Jesus Christ. After opening com-

ments by God's minister, members wash one another's feet. Upon returning to their seats, each person eats a small piece of unleavened bread that has been broken and blessed. Following the eating of the bread, another blessing is asked before each person drinks a small amount of wine, symbolizing the shed blood of Christ. Finally, portions of Christ's last words to His disciples are read before the service is closed with a hymn.

For additional information, write for the free booklet *How Often Should We Partake of the Lord's Supper?* by Herbert W. Armstrong.

### **CHRIST CONTINUES TO INSTRUCT HIS DISCIPLES**

After instituting the important emblems of the bread and wine, Christ continued to in-

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struct His disciples. As the time of His arrest drew close, He again began to tell them about the future.

Christ told them He was going back to His Father to prepare governmental positions for them in His Kingdom. He also told them that there were many important offices and positions of responsibility. These offices will be filled by Christians who have died throughout the ages and who will be in the first resurrection. Others will be filled by members of God's Church who are alive and remain faithful to God at the return of Jesus Christ (John 14:1-3; I Corinthians 15:51-52).

Christ said that if they would remain obedient to Him, He would ask God to send them the Holy Spirit. He described God's Spirit as a "Comforter" and as the "Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17).

God's Holy Spirit is the very power of God. It is *not* a person or being. It is the power which God gives to a truly converted and baptized individual. When united with the human mind, empowered by the "spirit in man," which we have from conception, the Holy Spirit provides us with a complete mind. It enables a human being to reason and think the way God does. It guides a human mind to understand and bring to mind God's laws and His way of life. It also enables a person to understand the true potential of human beings.

The unconverted mind, influenced by Satan, does not have God's Spirit dwelling in him. He cannot understand spiritual things.

"For what \_\_\_\_\_ knoweth the \_\_\_\_\_ of a \_\_\_\_\_, save the \_\_\_\_\_ of man which is \_\_\_\_\_ him? even so the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ knoweth no \_\_\_\_\_, but the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_" (I Corinthians 2:11).

Paul goes on to say in verse 12: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world [Satan's attitude], but the spirit which is of God; that we might *know* the things that are freely given to us of God."

Later in His talk to the disciples, Christ said

that God's Spirit would lead them to the truth and help them to understand it. God's Word, the Bible, *is truth*, and we understand it by God's Spirit. As Herbert W. Armstrong once wrote, the Bible is a coded book which cannot be understood except with the proper key. That key is God's Holy Spirit (John 16:13).

Christ further explained that God dwells in true Christians through His Holy Spirit. He lives His life, the way of love, in us by His Spirit. And, in turn, those who love God are obedient to Christ's words. If we love God, we must keep His commandments (John 14:15, 23-24).

One of the fruits or results of being led by the Holy Spirit is peace. Christ told His disciples not to be fearful, but to live according to His way of life (John 14:27; Philippians 4:6-7).

What other fruits of being led by God's Spirit does Paul describe? Write out Galatians 5:22-23 on the lines below. \_\_\_\_\_

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Your parents may instruct you to obey God's laws with specific conditions as to how this should be done. Perhaps this is in regard to observing the Sabbath. They may explain to you that it is wrong to participate in school sports on the Sabbath. You may not understand why you should not be involved. It seems like an exciting thing to do since some sports are exciting and healthy activities.

God's Spirit gives the added perspective of God's mind to *understand* how and why His Sabbath day should be kept. Although you do not have God's Spirit until you are a baptized member of God's Church, you do begin to see the benefits of the Sabbath as you enjoy the results of keeping it.

After Christ had finished speaking, He and His disciples sang a song to conclude the Passover service.



YES Photo

The Garden of Gethsemane where Christ and His disciples walked shortly after the Passover service.

Leaving the house where they had observed the Passover, Jesus and His disciples walked east from the city of Jerusalem. They went down into the Kidron Valley, crossed a stream and then climbed up the west slope of the Mount of Olives. They continued on through the garden area among the olive trees called the Garden of Gethsemane.

In our next lesson we will learn about Christ's arrest, trial and crucifixion.

**Do You Remember?**

1. What is the significance behind the ordinance of foot washing at the Passover service? \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. What do the emblems of the bread and wine represent? \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. Why was Judas Iscariot not present for the taking of the bread and wine? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_
4. What is a covenant? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. In which ways would God's Holy Spirit lead and help true Christians? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**BIBLE MEMORY**      Hebrews 13:8

## PASSOVER WORD SEARCH

Find the key  
word or phrases  
related to Christ's  
final Passover  
in each of the  
scriptures below  
and write them  
on the blank lines.  
Then find each  
word or phrase in  
the word search  
puzzle. Then, try to  
find others not  
listed below.

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1. \_\_\_\_\_ (John 13:1)
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\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (John 13:5)
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(John 13:34)

7. \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 22:17)
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