

repeatedly with interruptions from the crowds; it is not a long smooth discourse such as that in Matthew. There was the healing of the dumb man (11:14), an interruption by unbelievers (v. 16), the cry of a woman (v. 27), the Pharisee's invitation (v. 37), the man with his family dispute (12:13), Peter's question (v. 41), those with the question about the slain Galileans (13:1), the deformed woman, healed be it noted, in a synagogue (vv. 10-17), attempts by the Pharisees to frighten Jesus (v. 31), the meal with the Pharisee (14:1), and the crowds moving with Jesus (v. 25), not sitting quietly on a hillside. That two quite separate invitations to dine were received, and accepted (11:37; 14:1), is strong evidence that at least two separate days were involved.

During that period in Jerusalem, Jesus began preparing his disciples for the shattering experience of his arrest and death. He spoke of himself as the good Shepherd, giving his life for the sheep (Jno. 10:11), and of laying down his life (v. 17). Luke records his allusion to death and resurrection in "the sign of Jonas the prophet" (11:29), and also his ominous words, "I have a baptism to be baptized with" (12:50). This is strong evidence that this section of Luke's record is late in Jesus' public ministry. Furthermore, the reference to "these

three years" in the parable of the fig tree (13:6-9) would be meaningless unless the parable was given at the end of Jesus' three-year ministry.

Most important of all, however, is the great cry of lament over Jerusalem (13:34). This must have been uttered in (or in view of) the city, and, what is more, during the last visit to Jerusalem before his triumphant entry a week before the crucifixion. The prophetic words uttered on that occasion—"Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (v. 35)—had their initial fulfilment as Jesus returned to Jerusalem riding on the ass (19:38). Matthew records that Jesus repeated the lament again shortly before his death (23:37-39); his words will again be fulfilled to the full when he returns to Jerusalem in due time as King of the Jews.

The conclusion to be drawn, therefore, is that during those two months Jesus made a long, sustained effort to reach the hearts of the Jerusalem population. He was fearless in his denunciation of the leaders and heartwarming in his appeals to the common people who gladly listened. Much of his earlier teaching was recalled, especially that great statement of Christian principles, the Sermon on the Mount.

The Last Supper

Carlo Barbaresi

THE LAST SUPPER must have been a focal point in the life of the Master. At the moment of his baptism there began 3½ years in which he fulfilled the mission of his heavenly Father. This began with the temptation in the wilderness, his trials continuing with increasing intensity up to and including the time he hung on the tree.

With desire

During his ministry Jesus developed a strong love for those twelve men he had chosen to follow him, and for the women and the other disciples who had gathered around him. He looked forward therefore to that time of solace he would have with the twelve in the meal they would share before his final agony at the hands of the Jews and the Romans. Hence his words in Luke 22:15: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer". "Desire" is the Greek *epithumia*, meaning "to fix the desire upon, desire earnestly, long for, denoting the inward affection

of the mind rather than the external object" (Bullinger). The Master had earnestly fixed his desire upon this time of communion with his apostles. It was the last such opportunity he would have with them in his mortal life, and a foretaste of the celebration in the Kingdom. How important is this feast to us? It is a time for us to look backwards to his crucifixion and forwards to his coming.

The time of the Last Supper

We read in Luke: "And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him" (22:14). Matthew says, "when the even was come" (26:20). The Last Supper must have been celebrated as the thirteenth day of the month Abib passed and the fourteenth commenced, for the Jewish day commenced in the evening (Gen. 1:5). The crucifixion would have taken place almost twenty-four hours later, at even on the fourteenth. The Last Supper would have taken place in the hours of darkness, followed by the

Master's prayers in the garden and then his arrest. By the time day broke, Jesus was before the council (Lk. 22:66).

As Jesus sat down with the twelve he foresaw a long period when they would not have the strength of his presence with them (v. 16), hence the value of this feast, to bring him to remembrance. As we consider his words we need to consider their implication to the apostles and to ourselves. No doubt they would have seen the full import of the feast only after the crucifixion.

His body

The partaking of the bread is to bring to mind the body of Jesus. The remembrance of the Master's body is twofold. Firstly there is what he did in his body, hence his words quoted from Psalm 40: "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast Thou prepared me" (Heb. 10:5). He truly came in the flesh, but in that body, in contrast to Adam, he came to do the will of his heavenly Father, as we see from verses 9 and 10: "then said he, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first [covenant], that He may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all". We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus symbolised in the emblem of the bread.

The other significance is that we are members of his body. This is a compelling part of the memorial meeting. The apostles did not come to it as onlookers, but as partakers. So it is with us. The Lord Jesus Christ is our living head and we are members of his body, and nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ. Hence the words in Ephesians 4:14-16:

"that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love".

His life poured out

The wine represented Jesus' poured out blood, or life, as we see from Leviticus 17:11: "For the

life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls".

As the blood provided a covering for the lives of Israel, so the blood of Christ provides a covering for us. But Matthew adds that it is for the remission of our sins (26:28). Moreover, it is "the new testament [covenant] in my blood". In Christ we are brought into the bonds of the new covenant, namely the Abrahamic covenant (Gal. 3:15-18), whereby God's Word must be written in our inward parts and in our hearts. For those who do this, God says, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:33,34). The apostles had the Holy Spirit, the Comforter; we have the completed Word. How important that this should be written on our hearts!

There is another aspect to the blood of Christ, namely, that we are redeemed by his precious blood (1 Pet. 1:18,19). We are thus no longer our own, for we have been bought with a price, "therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit [mind], which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20).

The presence of Judas

Judas Iscariot must have partaken of the emblems, but afterwards the Master showed that the hand of his betrayer was on the table with him, which led the eleven to enquire who this was. Jude speaks of false brethren being present at the table, "spots in your feasts of charity" (v. 12). The Master left no doubt as to who was the betrayer, for he gave the sop to Judas. He then went out, Jesus saying to him, "That thou doest, do quickly". Then we read, "it was night" (Jno. 13:26-30).

Prior to Judas leaving, Jesus had washed their feet (which must have included Judas), showing that their feet were to be beautiful feet used in a life of service in taking the gospel message to the Roman world and in ministering to the ecclesia. This was no doubt in response to the strife among them, "which of them should be accounted the greatest" (Lk. 22:24). The significance of the washing is another aspect of the feast of remembrance, for, as the Master emptied himself in a life of service (Phil. 2:7), so we should lay down our lives for one another as we come together.

Conclusion

The Master earnestly fixed his desire on this time of communion with his apostles. So should we each week have that same earnest desire to meet with our brethren and sisters to bring to remembrance our absent Master.