

Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist

Dr. Brant Pitre

The New Exodus

First Exodus

1. Deliverer: Moses
2. Israel: Released from Egypt
3. Journey to Promised Land
4. Worship of God: Tabernacle
5. Ultimate Destination: Jerusalem

New Exodus

1. New Deliverer: Messiah
2. Israel and Gentiles: Released from the Sin, Exile, and Death
3. Journey: New Promised Land/New Eden
4. Worship of God: New Temple
5. Ultimate Destination: New Jerusalem

(Example Texts: Isaiah 11, 40, 52-53, 66; Jeremiah 3, 23, 30-31; Ezekiel 20, 36-37)

New Passover

1. In order to have a New Exodus, you must first have a New Passover
2. Old Testament Passover:
 - a. Sacrifice of the Lamb (Exodus 12)
 1. Father from each of 12 Tribes was priest over his family (cf. Exodus 24)
 2. Male Lamb, unblemished was sacrificed
 3. Dip hyssop branch in blood
 4. Spread blood on the doorposts of the home
 5. Eat the Lamb
 - b. Later Jewish Passover
 1. When Passover was Child would ask the Father:
 - a. “Why is this night different from other nights?”
 - b. “Why do we eat unleavened bread and roast lamb?”
 2. Father’s Answer: “It is because of what the LORD did for *me* when I came out of Egypt” (Exodus 13:8)
 3. Passover spiritually *brought them back to participate* in First Passover: “In every generation a man must so regard himself as if he came forth himself out of Egypt, for it is written [Exod 13:8]. Therefore we are bound to give thanks....” (Mishnah *Pesachim* 10)
3. Jesus’ New Passover:
 - a. The Last Supper: What is missing? (Mark 14; Matt 24; Luke 22)
 1. No Levitical Priest to Sacrifice (cf. Exodus 32)
 2. No Lamb mentioned
 - b. The New Passover:
 1. New Priests: Jesus and 12 Apostles (representing 12 Tribes)
 2. New Lamb: Jesus replaces Lamb with himself
 3. New Sacrifice: Unleavened Bread (Body) and Wine (Blood) offered
4. Why did Jewish Christians believe Eucharist was Jesus’ body and blood?
 - a. Eucharist, like the Old Passover, participated in the New Passover of Jesus
 - b. You had to *eat* the Lamb to complete the sacrifice
 - c. St. Paul: “Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the feast!” (1 Cor 5:7-8)

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New Manna

1. If Jesus inaugurates a New Exodus, what food is given for the journey?
2. Old Testament Manna:
 - a. The Manna in the Wilderness (Exodus 16)
 1. Israel cries out for food; they want to go back to Egypt
 2. The LORD says: “Behold, I will rain down bread from heaven for you”
 3. In the Morning: “Bread” from heaven (Manna)
 4. In the Evening: “Flesh” from heaven (Quail)
 5. Manna: white, tasted “like wafers made with honey”
(A foretaste of the promised land: “milk and honey”)
 6. “The Grain of Heaven” and “The Bread of Angels” (Psa 78:21-25)
 - b. The Manna in the Tabernacle:
 1. Placed in a Golden Urn perpetually “before the LORD” in the Ark
(Exod 16:33-34; Heb 9:6)
3. Jesus and the New Manna:
 - a. The Lord’s Prayer: “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matt 6:11; Luke 11:3)
 1. What kind of bread?
 - a. Daily: “Each day”
 - b. Supernatural: “Give us this day our *epi-ousios* bread”
 1. Greek: *epi* (“on, upon, above”)
ousios (“substance, being, nature”)
 - c. St. Jerome: “Give us this day our *supersubstantial* bread”
 - c. Both daily *and* supernatural: just like the Manna
 2. “Taken literally, (*epiousios* – “superessential”)... refers directly to the Bread of Life, the Body of Christ” (CCC 2837)
 - b. The Bread of Life Discourse (John 6)

Jesus said: “I am the bread of life. *Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.* This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man might eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and *the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.*” The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” So Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, *and I will raise him up at the last day.* For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink.... *This is the bread which comes down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died;* he who eats this bread will live forever.” Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?” But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at it, said to them, “Do you take offense at this? *Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending where he was before?*”
4. Why did Jewish Christians believe the Eucharist was Jesus’ body and blood?
 - a. They knew it is *supernatural* bread *from heaven*
 - b. They knew it is his *risen* body and blood

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New “Bread of the Presence”

1. Worship of God in First Exodus: Tabernacle
2. Old Testament “Bread of the Presence” (Commonly mis-translated “Showbread”)
 - a. God Instructs Moses to Build the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:10-40)
 1. Three Key Symbols of God in Tabernacle
 - a. Ark of the Covenant: Throne of Invisible God
 - b. Golden Lampstand (Menorah): 7 Tongues of Fire
 - c. “Bread of the Presence”: Set on Golden Table
 - b. The Bread of the Presence in the Tabernacle (Leviticus 24:1-9)
 1. 12 Cakes of Bread
 2. Set out each Sabbath by Priests on behalf of Israel
 3. “A Perpetual Due”: to be “continually” “before the LORD”
“as a covenant forever”
 4. Lampstand Candles must be “kept burning continually”
with the Bread of the Presence
 5. Veiled when carried out of Tabernacle (Num 4:1-15)
 6. “Bread of Presence”: Literally “Bread of the Face”
(Heb *lehem ha pannim*)
 7. An “Unbloody Sacrifice” (Heb *minchah*) of
Bread *and wine* (Exod 25: 29; Mal 1:11)
 - c. David and His Men Partake of the Bread of the Presence (1 Samuel 21:1-6)
 1. Priestly abstinence: David and his men can only eat the bread if they
have not had sexual relations
 2. Only Priests can eat the Bread of the Presence
3. The New Bread and the New Temple (Matt 12:1-8)

At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck ears of grain and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, “Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.” He said to them, “*Have you not read what David did, when he was hungry, and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him to eat nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? Or have you not read in the Torah how on the Sabbath the priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the Temple is here.*”

4. Why did the first Jewish Christians believe in the Real Presence?
 - a. The Eucharist was the New “Bread of the Presence”
 - b. Jesus has laid claim for himself and his followers, just as David did, to the
priesthood (cf. 2 Samuel 6)
 - c. Jesus is the New Temple: his disciples will offer the New Bread of the Presence
 - d. The New Temple: “the temple of his body” (John 2:19-22)