

THE LAST SUPPER

The Final Evening in Mark

Jesus, disciples, and the Jewish trial (14:1-72)

This moment in the story is made up of 11 scenes, alternating between negative and positive responses to Jesus. In the sixth (central) scene, Jesus celebrates a meal and gives himself unconditionally to the disciples who will flee, deny and betray him (see 14:17-31: betrayal [vv. 17-21], supper [vv. 22-26], flight and denial [vv. 27-31]).

The Supper in Mark

[A] The Plot (14:1-2)
 [B] The anointing of Jesus 9vv. 3-9

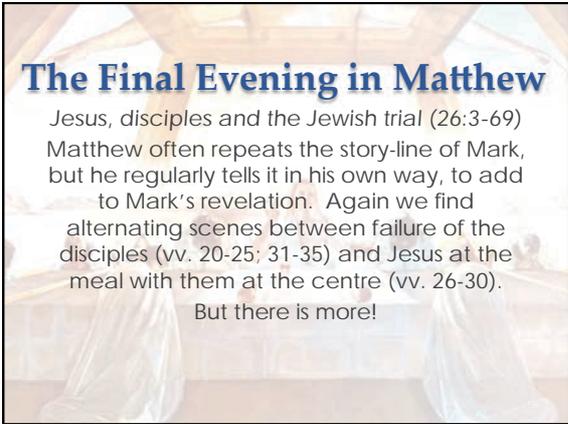
[A] Judas joins the plot (vv. 12-16)
 [B] Jesus prepares for a meal

[A] Prediction: the betrayal of Judas*
 [B] Jesus and disciples at the table (vv. 22-25)*

[A] Prediction: Denials and flight (vv. 26-31)*
 [B] Jesus in Gethsemane (vv. 32-42)

[A] Judas betrays; disciples flee (vv. 43-52)
 [B] Jesus' self-revelation (vv. 53-65)

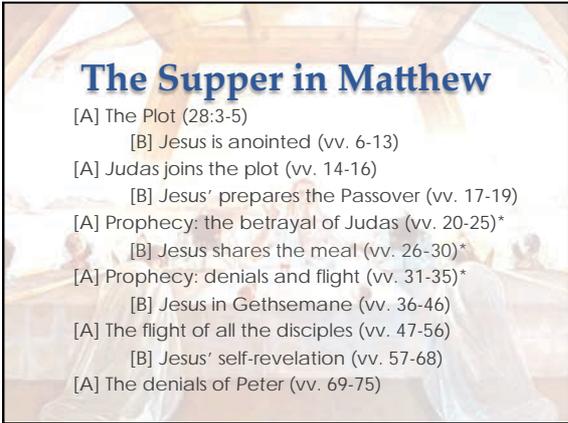
[A] Peter denies Jesus (vv. 66-72)



The Final Evening in Matthew

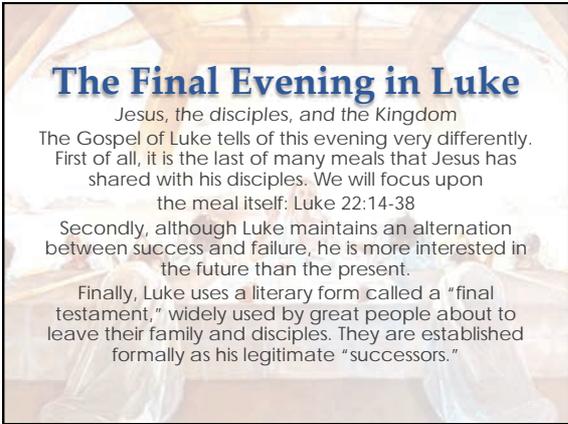
Jesus, disciples and the Jewish trial (26:3-69)

Matthew often repeats the story-line of Mark, but he regularly tells it in his own way, to add to Mark's revelation. Again we find alternating scenes between failure of the disciples (vv. 20-25; 31-35) and Jesus at the meal with them at the centre (vv. 26-30).
But there is more!



The Supper in Matthew

[A] The Plot (28:3-5)
 [B] Jesus is anointed (vv. 6-13)
 [A] Judas joins the plot (vv. 14-16)
 [B] Jesus' prepares the Passover (vv. 17-19)
 [A] Prophecy: the betrayal of Judas (vv. 20-25)*
 [B] Jesus shares the meal (vv. 26-30)*
 [A] Prophecy: denials and flight (vv. 31-35)*
 [B] Jesus in Gethsemane (vv. 36-46)
 [A] The flight of all the disciples (vv. 47-56)
 [B] Jesus' self-revelation (vv. 57-68)
 [A] The denials of Peter (vv. 69-75)



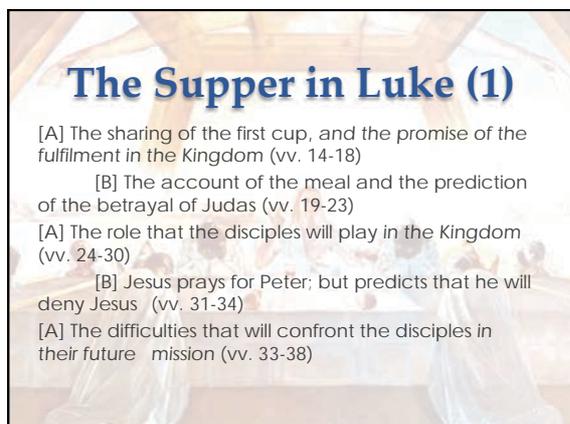
The Final Evening in Luke

Jesus, the disciples, and the Kingdom

The Gospel of Luke tells of this evening very differently. First of all, it is the last of many meals that Jesus has shared with his disciples. We will focus upon the meal itself: Luke 22:14-38

Secondly, although Luke maintains an alternation between success and failure, he is more interested in the future than the present.

Finally, Luke uses a literary form called a "final testament," widely used by great people about to leave their family and disciples. They are established formally as his legitimate "successors."



The Supper in Luke (1)

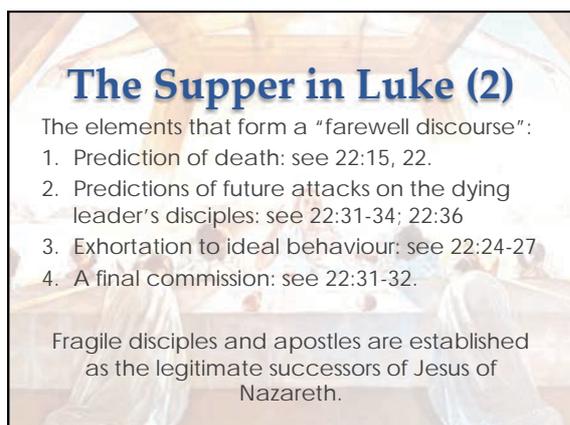
[A] The sharing of the first cup, and the promise of the fulfilment in the Kingdom (vv. 14-18)

[B] The account of the meal and the prediction of the betrayal of Judas (vv. 19-23)

[A] The role that the disciples will play in the Kingdom (vv. 24-30)

[B] Jesus prays for Peter; but predicts that he will deny Jesus (vv. 31-34)

[A] The difficulties that will confront the disciples in their future mission (vv. 33-38)

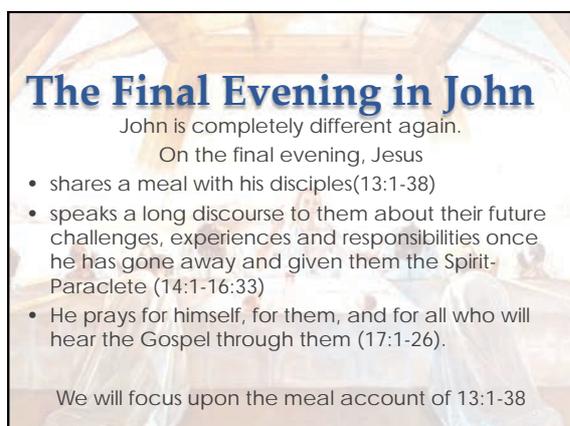


The Supper in Luke (2)

The elements that form a "farewell discourse":

1. Prediction of death: see 22:15, 22.
2. Predictions of future attacks on the dying leader's disciples: see 22:31-34; 22:36
3. Exhortation to ideal behaviour: see 22:24-27
4. A final commission: see 22:31-32.

Fragile disciples and apostles are established as the legitimate successors of Jesus of Nazareth.



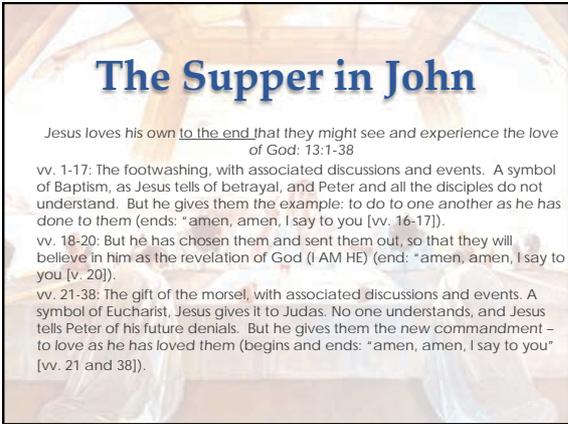
The Final Evening in John

John is completely different again.

On the final evening, Jesus

- shares a meal with his disciples(13:1-38)
- speaks a long discourse to them about their future challenges, experiences and responsibilities once he has gone away and given them the Spirit-Paraclete (14:1-16:33)
- He prays for himself, for them, and for all who will hear the Gospel through them (17:1-26).

We will focus upon the meal account of 13:1-38



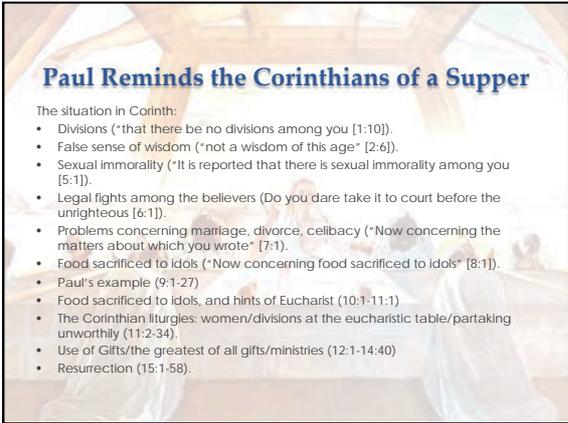
The Supper in John

Jesus loves his own to the end that they might see and experience the love of God: 13:1-38

vv. 1-17: The footwashing, with associated discussions and events. A symbol of Baptism, as Jesus tells of betrayal, and Peter and all the disciples do not understand. But he gives them the example: to do to one another as he has done to them (ends: "amen, amen, I say to you [vv. 16-17]).

vv. 18-20: But he has chosen them and sent them out, so that they will believe in him as the revelation of God (I AM HE) (end: "amen, amen, I say to you [v. 20]).

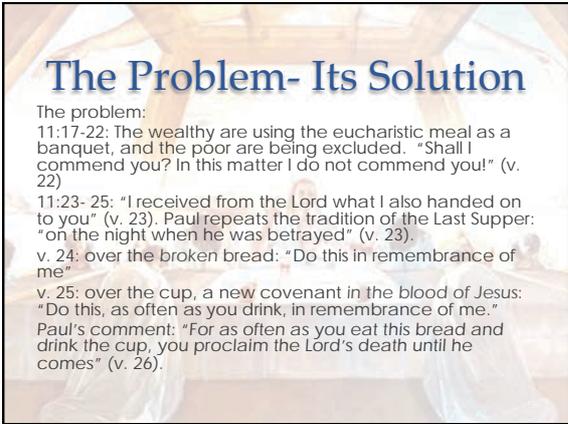
vv. 21-38: The gift of the morsel, with associated discussions and events. A symbol of Eucharist, Jesus gives it to Judas. No one understands, and Jesus tells Peter of his future denials. But he gives them the new commandment – to love as he has loved them (begins and ends: "amen, amen, I say to you" [vv. 21 and 38]).



Paul Reminds the Corinthians of a Supper

The situation in Corinth:

- Divisions ("that there be no divisions among you [1:10]).
- False sense of wisdom ("not a wisdom of this age" [2:6]).
- Sexual immorality ("It is reported that there is sexual immorality among you [5:1]).
- Legal fights among the believers (Do you dare take it to court before the unrighteous [6:1]).
- Problems concerning marriage, divorce, celibacy ("Now concerning the matters about which you wrote" [7:1).
- Food sacrificed to idols ("Now concerning food sacrificed to idols" [8:1]).
- Paul's example (9:1-27)
- Food sacrificed to idols, and hints of Eucharist (10:1-11:1)
- The Corinthian liturgies: women/divisions at the eucharistic table/partaking unworthily (11:2-34).
- Use of Gifts/the greatest of all gifts/ministries (12:1-14:40)
- Resurrection (15:1-58).



The Problem- Its Solution

The problem:

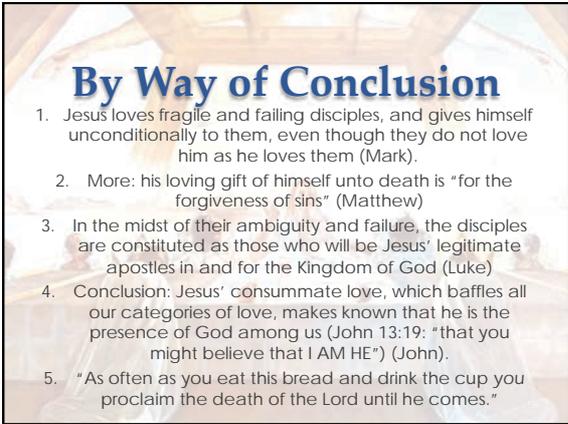
11:17-22: The wealthy are using the eucharistic meal as a banquet, and the poor are being excluded. "Shall I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!" (v. 22)

11:23- 25: "I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you" (v. 23). Paul repeats the tradition of the Last Supper: "on the night when he was betrayed" (v. 23).

v. 24: over the broken bread: "Do this in remembrance of me"

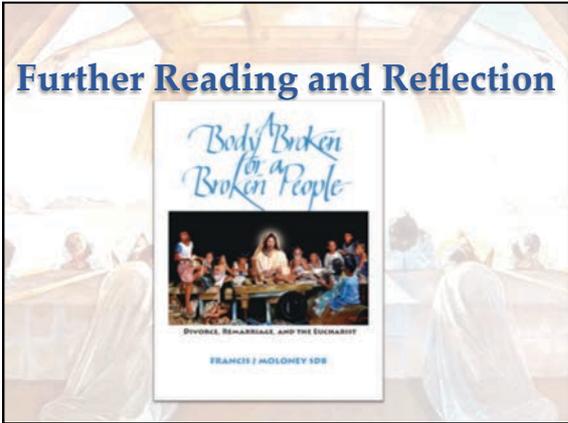
v. 25: over the cup, a new covenant in the blood of Jesus: "Do this, as often as you drink, in remembrance of me."

Paul's comment: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (v. 26).



By Way of Conclusion

1. Jesus loves fragile and failing disciples, and gives himself unconditionally to them, even though they do not love him as he loves them (Mark).
2. More: his loving gift of himself unto death is “for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew)
3. In the midst of their ambiguity and failure, the disciples are constituted as those who will be Jesus’ legitimate apostles in and for the Kingdom of God (Luke)
4. Conclusion: Jesus’ consummate love, which baffles all our categories of love, makes known that he is the presence of God among us (John 13:19: “that you might believe that I AM HE”) (John).
5. “As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes.”



Further Reading and Reflection

