

New Geneva Theological Seminary

God's Redemptive Plan as Told by Eating

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BY
Tim Wilson
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Contents

Introduction	3
The First Covenant and the First Bite.....	3
Between Adam and Moses	5
Moses and the Law	6
The Passover	6
Manna	8
The Meal on the Mountain	10
The Sacrificial System	11
The Dietary Restrictions	12
The Prophets	13
The New Testament	15
The Reverse of the Curse	15
Jesus the True Passover Lamb.....	17
The Elimination of the Dietary Restrictions	18
The Marriage Feast of the Lamb	20
Conclusion	21
Bibliography	22

Introduction

Eating is important in the Bible. From the fall to the sacramental meals of the old and new covenants to the marriage feast of the lamb there is very little progress made in redemptive history without eating. This paper will focus on what eating shows us about God's redemptive plan. Starting with the curse after the fall we will look at each epoch and discover what new revelation about God's plan was revealed through eating. Jesus taught that the Scriptures "testify about [Him]" (John 5:39 NASB). And Paul said, "Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—**things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.**" (Col 2:16,17 NASB emphasis mine). Taking this principle we will look at how food was a shadow or type of Christ in the Old Testament and how it was fulfilled by Him in the New. We will see that eating in the Bible unites the Old and New Testaments by showing the continuity of God's redemptive plan from the creation of the world to the marriage of the Church to Christ.

The First Covenant and the First Bite

After creation God blessed man telling him that "every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you..." (Gen 1:29 NASB). God had provided for man, giving him all the trees of the garden as food. However, in chapter two God gives one restriction to man; "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'" (Gen 2:16-17 NASB).

This first negative command of not eating was a test of obedience. God gave this command to man to remind him that although he ruled the earth, yet even he was subject to a higher Lord. In

commenting on this Calvin says that “God designed that the whole human race should be accustomed from the beginning to reverence his Deity.”¹

As long as they kept this covenant, food would be provided for them without any pain. We know this because after the fall part of Adam’s curse was the he would eat only “in pain” and “by the sweat of [his] face” (Gen 3:17-18 NASB). Before the fall, though commanded to labor, Adam did not have to toil hard for his daily sustenance. Once Adam and Eve did sin however, this sweet labor God had given was changed into a painful experience.

With the first covenant we can also see an aspect of God’s redemptive plan that will later come into play. This aspect is that of the physical nature of man. God had provided for man in such a way that, had man kept the covenant, he would have been provided for in his physical state. Kenneth Myers says that “Originally we were tied to the earth: we were created from the dust of the earth, and we were given the fruit of the earth to eat. We can’t survive without an attachment to the earth.”² He then goes on to argue that through eating we see that God’s concern for man is not just spiritual, but also physical. God provided food for a material man. He says “Whenever we display indifference to or suspicion of the physical world, we’re betraying a kind of Gnosticism. Whenever we think of our salvation as a way to escape the limitation of human nature (including the limitations of our embodiment) instead of a pilgrimage of faithfulness within the good limits of our createdness, we’re thinking like Gnostics.”³

As we look at covenantal meals throughout the Bible these meals will become spiritualized as they refer to a new spiritual life. This is their soteriological meaning. From an eschatological stand point however, the physical is never far behind. These covenantal meals will also show that God’s ultimate

¹ John Calvin, “Commentary on Genesis - Volume 1,” *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, n.p. Online: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom01.viii.i.html>.

² Kenneth A. Myers, “More than Meets the Mouth,” *Modern Reformation* 18, no. 5 (July/August): 21.

³ Myers, “More than Meets the Mouth,” 20.

purpose is not merely the salvation of the soul, but also of the body and the whole creation with the new earth.

Between Adam and Moses

There is little new revelation through eating in the period between Adam and Moses. We do see after the flood an expansion of what is acceptable to be eaten to “every moving thing that is alive” (Gen 9:3 NASB). It is interesting that God does not restrict which animals may be eaten as He does with the Israelites. The restrictions were put in place to show something about Israel that was not applicable here. This is a concept that will be fleshed out much more in the period of Moses.

In the time of Abraham through Joseph no new information is given about eating as it relates to God’s plan. However, there are several examples where men have a meal when making a covenant with each other. While not directly related to the topic, I will cover these briefly here to set the foundation for the covenant made between Moses, the Israelites, and God.

The first example is found when Isaac renews Abraham’s covenant with Abimelech. In Genesis 21:22-34 Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant with each other. Then in Genesis 26:26-31 this covenant is renewed: “let there be a sworn pact between us, between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, that you will do us no harm ... he made them a feast, and they ate and drank” (Gen 26:30 NASB). Again when Jacob and Laban were making a covenant to be at peace with each other, Jacob “offered a sacrifice in the hill country and called his kinsmen to eat bread. They ate bread and spent the night in the hill country” (Gen 31:54 NASB). In both of these instances the eating of a meal or feast together was part of sealing a covenant. When God later does this with the Israelites they would understand the meaning of such meals.

Moses and the Law

It is during the time of Moses and the forming of the Israelites into God's people that meals are most often used to demonstrate aspects of His redemptive plan. This new revelation came in five ways: the Passover, the meal on the mountain, manna, the sacrificial system, and the dietary restrictions.

The Passover

The Passover demonstrates more than any other meal in the Old Testament the redemptive nature of God's covenant with Israel. It is through the Passover meal that the Israelites were saved from Egypt. Vos notes that "The exodus from Egypt is the Old Testament redemption. This is not an anachronistic, allegorizing manner of speaking. It is based on the inner coherence of Old Testament and New Testament religion itself. These two, however different their forms of expression, are yet one in principle. The same purpose and method of God run through both."⁴ In other words, not only do the Passover and the exodus look forward to and typify Christ and his salvation, but they created real salvation for the Israelites.

The Passover reveals five new themes in redemptive history. First, it reveals that grace is given out of the sovereign choice and purpose of God alone.

For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments—I am the LORD. 'The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt. (*Exod 12:12-13* NASB)

Moses reveals here that God is coming through to judge "the gods of Egypt." He is executing judgment against the Egyptians because of their idolatry. However, Joshua 24:14 makes it clear that the

⁴ Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*, East Peoria, IL, William B. Eerdmans Publishing,, 2007: 109.

Israelites had also started worshiping idols in Egypt as well. “The Egyptians were judged with respect to their idolatry, and the Israelites were rescued and spared, in spite of having become associated with their oppressors in idolatrous practices. It is plain that the principle of sovereign grace alone will account for such facts.”⁵ In choosing the Israelites God provided a means for them to atone for their sins so that they may escape the coming judgment.

Second, it revealed that the lamb with which the atonement was made needed to be unblemished (Exod 12:5). While we see other sacrifices starting as early as Genesis 4, this is the first time that the requirement of being unblemished is explicitly stated. The word for “unblemished” is also used to mean blameless or without defect. For sin to be atoned for a lamb pure, blameless, or without defect, must die.

Third, it revealed the objective nature of salvation. An unblemished lamb must be slain and cooked; the blood of the lamb must be put on the door posts (Exod 12:6, 7). Without these acts none of the Israelites would have been saved, no matter how much they desired salvation. It is the death of their lamb alone to which they could point to as their source of salvation. This act was outside of them. It was not done in them or to them. Instead, it was outside of them and done for them.

Fourth, it revealed the subjective nature of salvation. While the atonement happened outside of the members of each family, the lamb still had to be eaten for salvation to be received (Exod 12:8). Through the eating of the lamb, the salvation that was wrought by its death was received and became part of the person.

Fifth, it demonstrated the truth that leaving behind the old life is part of salvation. This was revealed through the eating of unleavened bread (Exod 12:8). The practice of making bread at that time was such that they would take a piece of the dough before baking it and save it as a starter for the next

⁵ Vos, *Biblical Theology*: 113.

batch. As such the bread represented a tie to the past. “God was telling them that He didn't want them to take any part of their Egyptian life and implant it into their new life.”⁶ When the Israelites left Egypt this was to remind them that they were to leave behind their idolatry and worship God alone.

Manna

The next major revelation through food during this period came through manna. Manna was sent to provide sustenance for the people as they traveled through the wilderness (Ex 16). It was during their 40 years in the wilderness that God provided most directly for the Israelites. The giving of manna in the wilderness demonstrated four new aspects of God’s redemptive plan.

First, it demonstrated that God’s redemptive plan includes a reversal of the curse given immediately after the fall (Gen 3:14-19). As mentioned above, part of the curse was “By the sweat of your face you will eat bread...” (Gen 3:19 NASB). However, here in the wilderness this was reversed. “While they lived on manna, they seemed exempt from the curse sin has brought on man, that in the sweat of his face he should eat bread.”⁷ God provided food for the Israelites daily. The people had no need to till the ground, to plant seed, or to harvest. Each morning the manna was there and they had only to pick it up.

Second, God provided it because of His plans, not because of the Israelites’ faith or obedience. He didn’t provide it because of their obedience, but while they were being disobedient. In Exodus 16:2 “The whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.” These were the same people who had just seen God bring them out of Egypt through the ten plagues. They had just witnessed the destruction of the Egyptian army. God had already provided water for

⁶ John MacArthur, “The Last Passover (Part 1),” n.p. Online: <http://www.biblebb.com/files/MAC/2382.htm>

⁷ Matthew Henry, “Concise Commentary on the Bible,” n.p. Online: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/henry/mhcc.v.xi.html#v.xi-p14.1>

them from the rock. Yet, they didn't trust in God's provision. However, God's provision was not based on their obedience, but on His own character.

In Exodus 6:5 God says that He remembered His covenant with Abraham and that He would "bring [the Israelites] out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and [He would] deliver [them] from their bondage" (Exod 6:6 NASB). God's sovereign grace is seen here yet again. God did not save the Israelites from Egypt based on their obedience to Him. As mentioned above they were worshiping the idols of Egypt. Nor was His sustaining provision based on their obedience; rather God was being faithful to the promise he had made to Abraham. He was building the Israelites into a nation so that "all the nations of the earth will be blessed" (Gen 18:18 NASB).

Third, while God provided manna out of the Israelites' disobedience and unbelief, its daily nature was meant to teach them to trust and obey Him. Moses explicitly commanded the Israelites "Let no man leave any of it until morning. But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul" (Exod 16:19-20 NASB). They were forced to trust in God's unchanging faithfulness; only when they trusted God's promise would they obey. When reviewing God's provision for them Moses says, "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD" (Deut 8:3). A few verses later we see the outcome of trusting in God's word: "Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him" (Deut 8:6 NASB).

Fourth, the daily sustenance was a sign that it was God who had saved them. "So Moses and Aaron said to all the sons of Israel, 'At evening you will know that the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt'" (Exod 16:6 NASB). Had the Israelites somehow managed to escape the Egyptians on their own

they would not have received manna. Each time day when they gathered it, they were to be reminded that their freedom from slavery was not because of anything they had done, but because God was faithful to His covenant.

The Meal on the Mountain

After having received the law Moses and the elders went up onto the mountain to seal the covenant with God. “[T]hey saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank” (Exod 24:10-11 NASB). Notice that as with the covenants, between Isaac and Abimelech and between Jacob and Laban, mentioned above, eating and drinking before God sealed this covenant. The conditions had already been set (Exod 20-23), the people had accepted the conditions by saying, “All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do” (Exod 24:3 NASB), and Moses had sprinkled the people with blood saying, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you...” (Exod 24:7 NASB). This pattern of eating and drinking before God became a pattern throughout the theocracy. We see it repeated when the covenant was renewed for various reasons. In Deuteronomy 27 as the Israelites were getting ready to enter the Promised Land Moses instructs them to build an altar on Mount Ebal and “shall sacrifice peace offerings and shall eat there, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God” (Deut 27:7 NASB). We see it again with Ahab and Elijah. After God’s demonstration on Mount Carmel Elijah instructs Ahab to “Go up, eat and drink, for there is a sound of the rushing of rain” (1 Kgs 18:41 NASB). Roberts believes that Elijah “sends Ahab back up the mountain to eat and drink and to validate the covenant that has been renewed between Yahweh and the people and between Yahweh and the king”⁸.

⁸ Kathryn L. Roberts, “God, Prophet, and King: Eating and Drinking on the Mountain in First Kings 18:41,” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 62, 2000: 643.

Roberts says that God gave this sign to the people to assure them that the covenant was sealed and that they were His people.

“In the account given in Exodus, this eating and drinking on the mountain with Yahweh is ‘the essence of the sealing of the alliance.’ After the terrifying display witnessed by Moses and the elders of Israel on the mountain in this account, and by the people at the foot of the mountain (Exodus 19), the eating and drinking on the mountain served to reassure the participants that a true covenantal relationship had been established between them and God. The meal signified not merely that the people of Israel had accepted the covenant with God, but, more importantly, that this dangerous god was affirming relationship with Israel. The ceremonial meal is a ‘sign that the weaker is taken into the family of the stronger, a reassuring gesture on the part of the superior toward the inferior and not a pledge by the latter.’”⁹

The Sacrificial System

In the sacrificial system, instituted in the first seven chapters of Leviticus, the peace offerings were unique in that they included a meal to be eaten before God. The idea was that the offerer would burn part of the offering as a “food offering to the Lord” (Lev 3:11 NASB) and then would eat the rest. This was to create a virtual meal with God, symbolizing peace with Him. Vos says “‘Peace’ is in Scripture a far more positive conception than it is with us. The peace-offering accordingly symbolizes the state of positive favor and blessedness enjoyed in the religion of Jehovah, which at all times includes more than the sacrificial relief obtained from sin...The state of peace in its two-sided significance is symbolized as a gift of Jehovah, for it is He, not the offerer, who prepares the meal. Hence the meal is to be held at the tabernacle, the house of God.”¹⁰

This was a reminder to the Israelites that God desired more than just getting rid of the negative aspect of sin. He also desired to have a relationship with them in which they were at peace with Him

⁹ Roberts, “God, Prophet, and King”: 638.

¹⁰ Vos, *Biblical Theology*: 170.

and could have communion with Him. While atoning for sin was important, salvation did not stop there. The end result of salvation is fellowship with God – enjoying Him and being at peace with Him.

The Dietary Restrictions

The final revelation by eating, in this period, is through the dietary restrictions placed on the people so that they would be ceremonially clean. Over the years there has been much confusion over the reason for these restrictions. Many have focused on practical matters such as health. This has been unfortunate because it obscures what these restrictions were revealing about God's people.

In Leviticus 11 these restrictions are given in detail and in Deuteronomy 14 they are again summed up. By placing these restrictions on the people, God was teaching them that they were a separate and holy nation. “For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. ‘For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy’” (Lev 11:44-45 NASB). And again, “For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. You shall not eat any detestable thing” (Deut 14:2-3 NASB).

In New Testament language these laws were in place to remind them that they were in the world, but not of it (John 17:14-16 NASB). These restrictions made it difficult for them to share meals with those outside the faith. As we have seen in the peace offering and the meal on the mountain, meals at that time were used to have communion together.

In the OT the food laws symbolized and embodied Israel's status as a covenant people. No doubt their consciousness of this symbolism waxed and waned in different periods, but during the exile and afterwards the ordinary Israelite must have been constantly

reminded of his position as a stranger among the nations by these food laws, which made it difficult for him to eat with Gentile neighbors¹¹.

The Israelites were to be different from the world. They were not to seek to be accommodating or relevant by imitating the culture around them. They were not to have fellowship with those who were not inside the covenant family. It also meant that when they got together to have a meal they were reminded that God had called them as a nation, not as individuals. They were not alone, but could have fellowship with all those whom God had called.

The Prophets

The prophets started the process of spiritualizing much of what had been taught through physical signs. While only a few passages about eating and food are relevant to the topic, it is true that the prophets spiritualize eating as well. Two main themes are taught: that of the universality of God's salvation and that of the free and gracious nature of God's salvation. Both of these themes can be seen in Isaiah.

In Isaiah 25:6 we find the universality of God's salvation. By universality, I do not mean all men, but all kinds of men. The theme of Abraham being a blessing to the whole earth is picked up in this passage. "The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain..." (Isa 25:6 NASB). First of all notice the reference to the mountain. This is a reference back to the covenantal meal of Mount Sinai in Exodus 24:11. As mentioned above God had made sealed the covenant with Israel on the mountain through eating and drinking. The Israelites reading this passage would have recognized this reference. However, it is also a reference forward to the new covenant of Mount Zion.

Just a few verses before, Isaiah makes reference to Mount Zion saying "For the LORD of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and His glory will be before His elders" (Isa 24:23 NASB). This meal is a celebration of the Lord reigning. "As in ancient times (1 Sam. 11:15; 1 Kings 1:9, 19, 25) it was

¹¹ Gordon J. Wenham, "The Theology of Unclean Food," *Evangelical Quarterly* 53.1 (January/March 1981): 11.

customary after a coronation to sacrifice and to celebrate a sacrificial meal, so also after the Lord takes up His reign in Jerusalem, there is to be a festal meal. It is the Lord, however, who provides the banquet, for all is of His grace.”¹² So while looking back to God setting apart Israel as His people, Isaiah is also looking forward to a new covenant when people from all nations will be called to be part of God’s covenant.

Young further states that “What the world will receive from Him is not the paltry, disappointing philosophy of men, but the precious truth of the everlasting Gospel. To a world covered with the darkness of sin, there will break forth the rays of true light, for in His light the world will see light. What he offers will truly satisfy, bless, and enrich mankind.”¹³ Isaiah sees here, with amazing clarity, the fulfillment, not of the covenant with the Israelites, but the previous covenant with Abraham (Gen 12:3; Gal 3).

The theme of the free and gracious nature of God’s salvation is found in Isaiah 55:1,2. “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost” (Isa 55:1 NASB). The sweat and pain included in Genesis 3 which was reversed physically in manna, is here reversed spiritually. Isaiah teaches here that not only does man not have to pay for salvation, but even if he wanted to he could not because he has “no money.”

But how can one buy without money? The language is evidently designed to point out that the water, wine, and milk are obtained not by human purchase but by divine grace, the free gifts of God... Indeed, there was a price paid that man might have water, wine and milk; and that price consisted in the fact that the chastisement of our peace was

¹² Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* 2, 19-39 (Grand Rapids, M.I.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 193.

¹³ Young, *Isaiah*: 193.

upon the Servant of the Lord. As a result of that transaction one may eat and his soul will be filled.¹⁴

Young is here speaking of Isaiah 53:5 “...The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.”

Isaiah continues the metaphor by commanding that we not labor “for what does not satisfy” (Isa 55:2 NASB). He contrasts that which does not satisfy with that which does. That which does satisfy comes freely having been paid for by God. That which does not satisfy must be earned. Isaiah, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, foresees Ephesians 2:8,9, “for by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

The New Testament

The New Testament brings clarity and fulfillment of all the themes we have been following. While there are also many new themes introduced, I will constrain this section to those already introduced in the Old Testament. These group themselves under four headings.

The Reverse of the Curse

As we have seen, the curse caused man to work hard for his food. This part of the curse was reversed temporarily and physically with manna in the wilderness (Exod 16). Isaiah then spiritualizes it teaching that that which satisfies comes freely from God – it is not through sweat and pain that it is received (Isa 55:1-2). Jesus applies this theme to himself in the Gospel of John. “Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal” (John 6:27 NASB). Notice the near quote of Isaiah -- the food which one works for perishes, but that which comes from God brings eternal life. Jesus then

¹⁴ Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah* 3, 40-66 (Grand Rapids, M.I.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 375.

applies this directly to himself by saying, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst” (John 6:35 NASB). Jesus then takes it all the way back to manna: “Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh” (John 6:49-51 NASB).

This has two implications. First, by applying the Isaiah passage to himself, Jesus was teaching that He was the suffering servant and that the free gift of life giving food only comes through Him. He is the one who will buy this food with His life and give it freely, without labor, to all who come to Him. While we must still labor for physical food, Christ has already done the work for our spiritual food.

Second, just as manna was the daily sustenance of the Israelites in the wilderness, so Christ is the daily spiritual sustenance of His church. The Israelites had to trust God to daily provide manna for them. Likewise Christ did not die only to “get us saved” but also to sustain us. This food that He gives is His body. It has been said that Christ is not the runway that gets us off the ground, but the engine which constantly powers our flight. In other words we should not see Christ’s sacrifice on the cross as only providing a start to our faith, but also providing the means to daily preserver in the faith.

Many Christians today are willing to trust Christ for their initial salvation, but not for their daily sustenance in the faith. Instead they trust in works: daily devotions, fasting, praying, scripture memorization, etc... While these are all very good and commanded, they become idols when we put our trust in them instead of Christ. Just as the Israelites were sustained despite their unbelief so Christ can sustain us despite our small faith. Salvation is of grace from start to finish. We are saved by grace and we are sustained and sanctified by grace.

Jesus the True Passover Lamb

The New Testament clearly teaches that the Passover typified Christ. Jesus himself recognized it as he replaced the Passover with the Lord's Supper. "While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins'" (Matt 26:26-28 NASB).

Many of the same themes from the original Passover are present here. First, God's sovereign grace is seen. Notice that Jesus does not say, "My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for **all** for forgiveness of sins." Rather He says that it is for **many**. As the Passover lamb was a means of salvation for the Israelites and not the Egyptians so Christ's death was for His chosen people alone. In Jesus' high priestly prayer He says, "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth" (John 17:19 NASB). Who are the "they" in this passage? In the next verse Jesus describes them as the disciples and "those also who believe in Me" (John 17:20 NSAB). Christ is here again limiting His death to those who believe.

Second, we see that the unblemished Passover lamb foreshadowed Christ. Peter says that we have been redeemed "with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ" (1 Pe 1:19 NASB). He lived the perfect life; He was blameless. The writer of Hebrews says the Christ was "tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15 NASB). He lived the life we should have and died the death we deserved.

Third, the main work of salvation is still outside of us. As with the Passover lamb, Jesus' death is the objective part of redemption. This means that the Gospel is not what happens in us or to us, but it is the work of Christ in His life, death, and resurrection. This is an important truth for us today as we live in a subjective world and often think of the Gospel as what is done in us.

Fourth, the New Testament still maintains the subjective side of salvation as well. It is applied by the Holy Ghost by the regeneration of person's heart, granting them the faith to trust Christ as savior (1 John 5:1).

Fifth, leaving behind our old life is still part of salvation. Paul says, "Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7 NASB). Notice that Paul refers to the unleavened bread of the Passover and then ties it to Christ's death. The reason we should clean out the leaven is that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor 5:17 NASB). No longer should we live as we did before Christ.

Along with these five points, Jesus instituted a new meal – the Lord's Supper. This new meal replaced the Passover meal just as baptism replaced circumcision. As baptism replaces a bloody sign with a non-bloody sign so the Lord's Supper also replaces a bloody sign. This is because Christ, the Passover Lamb, "died to sin once for all" (Rom 6:10 NASB). No longer do we look forward to the death of the true Passover lamb, but we look back and remember what has already been done for us.

The Elimination of the Dietary Restrictions

The dietary restrictions kept the nation of Israel separated from the other nations. They were the people God had chosen to bring the promised Messiah. While God was working through them alone, the dietary restrictions stayed in place. However, Isaiah foretold of a time when "all peoples" would be part of the covenant (Isa 25). Christ also quotes the Isaiah passage when He says "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 8:11 NASB). The time had come. Christ had fulfilled the law and established a new covenant. However, after His ascension the disciples were proclaiming the Gospel only to the Jews.

In Acts 10:10-16 Peter has a vision in which he is reminded of the universality of God's salvation. This vision consisted of a sheet being lowered from Heaven and "in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air" (Acts 10:12 NASB). God commands Peter to "kill and eat" (Acts 10:13 NASB). When Peter refuses, citing the dietary restrictions in the ceremonial law, God replies with, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy" (Acts 10:15 NASB).

If we understand the dietary restrictions as anything other than what has already been mentioned then this passage will be confusing. However, if we understand the restrictions as a means to keep the nation of Israel set apart this passage makes perfect sense. Just as the dietary restrictions are removed so also God has expanded His covenant to include the Gentiles. Peter understood and when invited to a Gentile's house he went. Later, his first epistle Peter would quote from Exodus and Deuteronomy, applying these passages to all Christians.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. (*1 Pet 2:9-11 NASB*)

The new covenant of Christ did make a new nation, but it was not an earthly nation. It was a spiritual nation of those who had received mercy. This new nation is chosen by God and set apart just as Israel was. Notice that there is still the idea of being aliens and strangers in the world. Also, the idea of not having fellowship with those outside of the covenant is still present in the New Testament (1 John 1:7).

The Marriage Feast of the Lamb

The final meal in redemptive history is the Marriage Feast of the Lamb found in Revelations 19:7-9. It is towards this meal that all the others have pointed. Even when instituting the Lord's Supper Jesus looked forward to eating this meal saying, "I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matt 26:29 NASB).

Again the theme of being a holy nation, set apart is brought forward. In the feast the bride has been made ready; she is clothed "in fine linen, bright and clean" and "the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev 19:8). The feast is only for those who have been invited (Rev 19:9), which brings back the idea of being a chosen nation in Deuteronomy 14.

The marriage feast in many ways is the final end to which the rest of the Bible has been pointing. As Jonathan Edwards said,

The creation of the world seems to have been especially for this end, that the eternal Son of God might obtain a spouse towards whom he might fully exercise the infinite benevolence of his nature, and to whom he might, as it were, open and pour forth all that immense fountain of condescension, love, and grace that was in his heart, and that in this way God might be glorified.¹⁵

The Marriage Feast of the Lamb also shows the final triumph over the curse of Genesis 3. Creation is renewed; no longer does man have to work in pain. Also, man's relationship with God is not based on works, but on grace. In this way man is in a much better state than he was in the garden. In the garden man could only stay there as long as he obeyed. However, on the new earth God's unchangeable grace is the maintaining force of the relationship. Man's freedom to sin has been removed.

¹⁵ Jonathan Edwards, "The Church's Marriage to Her Sons, and to Her God," *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, n.p. Online: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/edwards/works2.iii.ii.html>.

Conclusion

Looking at eating through the Bible shows that while the Old Testament was veiled in shadows, it was not a different plan of salvation from what we know in the New Testament. The Father's ultimate plan has been to call a people unto Himself, make them holy through the death of His Son, and wed them to His Son. During this process He provided for men both physically and spiritually, reversing the curse and providing food without labor. He gave them signs which were to teach about the coming Messiah. He demonstrated that salvation was through His sovereign grace alone in both the Old and New Testaments. All this He has done for His own great Glory, showing His love, mercy, and grace by drawing men to Himself and binding Himself to them in a covenant.

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