Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.”

9 “Where do you want us to prepare for it?” they asked.

10 He replied, “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters,11 and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ 12 He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.”

13 They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. 15 And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among you. 18 For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”

19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.”

20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.21 But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table.”

22 The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!” 23 They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

Roxanne lived in a dysfunctional home in a rough part of major city. Parents were addicts who routinely neglected their children’s basic needs. Roxanne lived an immoral life on the streets, became a gang leader’s girlfriend, and participated in theft and other crime.

Another girl, who had been in the same trap, told her about the freedom, peace and hope she had found in Jesus. This led to a transformation of her life. It is a long story.

Now she is married with a family. She even serves on the Christian Education Committee at church. One night at a meeting they were discussing problem. A mother had withdrawn her child because neighbor kids from rough homes were recruited for Sunday school. “She didn’t want her child associating with that kind of kids,” she said. Throughout the discussion Roxanne was silent. Then she was asked for her opinion. All she could think was, “If you only knew where I’ve come from and what I have done, you wouldn’t be asking my opinion.”

We all have secrets we would be embarrassed to reveal. Hidden guilt! It may have had to do with family experience, youthful indiscretion; broken marriage vow; drinking problem; ruined a friend’s reputation; stole something; cheated in a business deal; secret lustful thoughts; sin of jealousy you don’t seem to be able to conquer, etc.

If people knew our secrets we may never be able to face them again. People are quick to judge and condemn. They find pleasure in using people’s secrets against them. By contrast, tonight we see how our Lord deals with the terrible secret his disciple Judas is hiding. He reveals that he knows the secret to give Judas a chance to repent. Later he institutes a meal that offers the forgiveness of all sins. As we have been visiting PLACES OF THE PASSION throughout this Lenten Season, tonight we find ourselves at THE LAST SUPPER, A PLACE OF FORGIVENESS.

Within the circle of our Lord and his disciples TWO PREPARATIONS were underway. Judas was secretly preparing to betray his Master. Already he had arranged it and collected his 35 pieces of silver. All that remained was to lead the soldiers to Jesus. Judas apparently doesn’t know where they will eat the Passover so he must wait until later, under the cover of darkness.

The other preparation is directed by Jesus—preparation for the Passover. 7 Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover.” The Day of Unleavened Bread, also called Preparation Day, was the day the Passover lambs were sacrificed. The Festival of Unleavened Bread lasted seven days. Passover took place on the first day. Unleavened bread was bread without yeast. Yeast symbolized corruption or sin. Once
yeast is added it makes its way throughout all the dough and can never be removed. This is exactly what Adam and Eve’s sin did to the perfect humanity God created. Changed, corrupted throughout, impossible to remove! The Feast of Unleavened bread reminded Israel of this. They were to rid their bread, and even their houses, of yeast as a reminder of the need to rid their lives of the corruption of sin, something that could not be accomplished by the descendants of Adam and Eve. Once sin got into humanity it spread to all and no one could remove it.

God does not remove sin from us until the resurrection. But God takes away the penalty we have earned. This is ultimately what the Passover is about. The Passover commemorated God’s miraculous deliverance from slavery in Egypt. This deliverance was prophetic of the greater deliverance to come through the Messiah. As their ancestors were saved from divine judgment by the blood of the Passover lamb, so the blood of the true Passover, Jesus Christ, would give all who believe immunity from eternal judgment. While the disciples did not fully understand, all of this was in the mind and heart of Jesus as he prepared for the Passover.

He used Peter and John to make preparations for the meal. They were to purchase a lamb and everything else for the Passover meal. When they asked where they were to make these preparations Jesus did not give them an address. Instead he said: “As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him to the house that he enters, 11 and say to the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ 12 He will show you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make preparations there.”

11 They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

As this night features two preparations, it also provides two meals. Both are arranged by Jesus.

First, the Passover, a meal consisting of a roasted lamb and a variety of food items reminding them of the life of slavery in Egypt. Luke makes no attempt to describe the whole Passover meal or its meaning. However, he does report that this Passover was different. There was an end and a beginning.

This was the end of our Lord’s Passovers. “When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table.” And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” This was his last Passover, but it was also the fulfillment of the Passover. At this Passover the blood of the true Passover Lamb was to be shed. The offering would be made on a cross. The historical purpose of the Passover would come to fulfillment and therefore conclusion or ending. The Passover meal would no longer be celebrated among God’s people.

A new covenant was established in the blood of Christ and a new Meal was given for remembrance. Luke describes this: “And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”

Passover was a meal of remembering the time when God redeemed their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. The new meal of the new covenant was in remembrance of Jesus, remember his body offered on the cross and his blood shed on the cross. By his body offered and his blood shed God provided redemption from sin for all the children of Adam and Eve. Whenever we partake of this meal we remember Jesus and believe his words of promise that through his body offered and his blood shed we are delivered from the vengeance of God upon our sins. The sins that may be hidden to others are not hidden to Jesus. The sin that Judas tried to hide was not hidden from Jesus. He said: “But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table.” The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man who betrays him!” They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this. He knew. He told Judas he knew. But his response was to take the secret sin of Judas and the entire world on himself and pay for it by the sacrifice of his innocent body and blood. In the Lord’s Supper he gives to us all the forgiveness he purchased by the sacrifice of his innocent body and blood.

We are forgiven and freed from the eternal consequences of our sin, but, like yeast in dough, that sin has permeated our whole flesh. Like what was symbolized in the Festival of Unleavened Bread we must strive to rid our lives of it by confessing our sins and seeking the renewing power of God’s forgiveness. We have the...
comfort of knowing that while we cannot rid our lives of sin, the Passover Lamb has shed his blood to protect us from the eternal consequences of it.

CONCLUSION

As Judas secretly prepared to betray his Master, his Master openly prepared to pay for all the sins of the world, whether secret or revealed. As the covenant nation of Israel prepared to eat the Passover Meal, Jesus prepared for its fulfillment by his death. By instituting a new meal for the new covenant, the Lord’s Supper, Jesus gave us a meal for remembering him and for receiving the soul renewing blessing of forgiveness, life and salvation. Truly the Lord’s Supper is A PLACE OF FORGIVENESS. AMEN