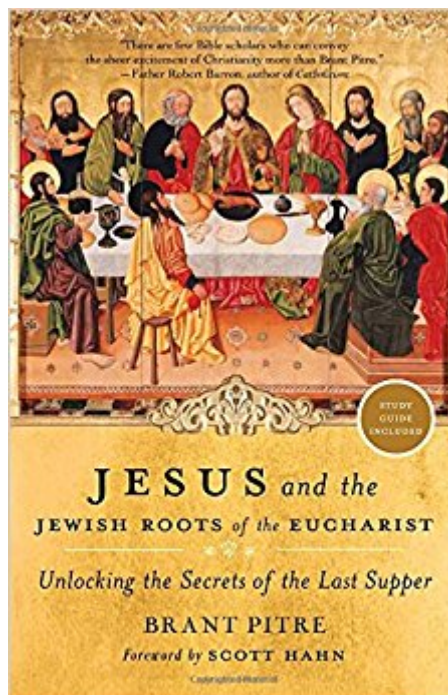




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Jesus And The Jewish Roots Of The Eucharist: Unlocking The Secrets Of The Last Supper



Synopsis

In recent years, Christians everywhere are rediscovering the Jewish roots of their faith. Every year at Easter time, many believers now celebrate Passover meals (known as Seders) seeking to understand exactly what happened at Jesus's final Passover, the night before he was crucified. *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* shines fresh light on the Last Supper by looking at it through Jewish eyes. Using his in-depth knowledge of the Bible and ancient Judaism, Dr. Brant Pitre answers questions such as: What was the Passover like at the time of Jesus? What were the Jewish hopes for the Messiah? What was Jesus's purpose in instituting the Eucharist during the feast of Passover? And, most important of all, what did Jesus mean when he said, "This is my body" | "This is my blood"? To answer these questions, Pitre explores ancient Jewish beliefs about the Passover of the Messiah, the miraculous Manna from heaven, and the mysterious Bread of the Presence. As he shows, these three keys—the Passover, the Manna, and the Bread of the Presence—have the power to unlock the original meaning of the Eucharistic words of Jesus. Along the way, Pitre also explains how Jesus united the Last Supper to his death on Good Friday and his Resurrection on Easter Sunday. Inspiring and informative, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* is a groundbreaking work that is sure to illuminate one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian faith: the mystery of Jesus's presence in "the breaking of the bread."

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Customer Reviews

“In the Mass we are in the ‘blood of the new and everlasting covenant’ Christ fulfills the rites of the old covenant. This beautiful book by Dr. Brant Pitre shows us that fulfillment in loving detail. We gain an appreciation of what was, so that we can see, ever more clearly, what ‘is now and ever shall be.’ Clear, profound and practical – you do not want to miss this book.” – Dr. Scott Hahn, author of *The Lamb’s Supper* and *Signs of Life*

“In *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* Brant Pitre pairs together the Jewish Scriptures and the Jewish tradition to frame the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper, and to provide a fresh look at the heart of Christian practice – the Eucharist. By taking us back to the Jewish roots of our faith, Pitre gives us a powerful lens through which to see anew the bread of the presence, the manna, the Last Supper, and ultimately the meaning of Christian Eucharist. Pitre’s mastery of Scripture and the Jewish traditions makes him the perfect guide for anyone seeking to understand the climax of Jesus’ ministry, the Last Supper and the first Eucharist.” – Dr. Tim Gray, President of the Augustine Institute

“For Christians, it is impossible to understand ourselves apart from Christ. And here, we see how we cannot truly realize the richness of the Eucharist apart from its meaning in light of the Jewish covenant with God. What an exquisite view of the Eucharist as a personal encounter with Christ and the first Eucharist as a humanity-wide encounter with God!” – Carl A. Anderson, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus and the New York Times bestselling author of *Our Lady of Guadalupe*

“With *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist* Brant Pitre puts the Eucharistic Christ into thrilling context by examining the realities of Jewish life in the first century. Believers and non-believers alike will better appreciate the rich cultural, traditional and scriptural wells from which Eucharistic understanding has been drawn and developed since Jesus of Nazareth first proclaimed, ‘My flesh is real food, and my body real drink.’” – Elizabeth Scalia, Managing Editor (Catholic) at *Patheos.com* and the blogger known as *The anchoress*

“Captivating, clear and compelling, this book shows how the Eucharist is at the heart of Jesus’ messianic mission. After guiding readers through ancient Jewish hopes for a new Exodus, a new Passover, a new manna and a new temple, Pitre demonstrates step-by-step how Jesus’ institution of the Eucharist fulfills those eschatological expectations. This book is a must read for anyone studying the Biblical foundations for the Eucharist.” – Edward Sri, Provost of the Augustine Institute and author of *Men, Women and the Mystery of Love*

“Rare is the book that demands to be read by beginners and scholars alike, but Brant Pitre has written such a book, combining sparkling prose with profound insight into Scripture’s meanings and contexts. Guided by Pitre, we enter into the ancient Israelite

prophetic expectation of the fulfillment of the original Exodus through a new Passover, new manna, new priest-king, and new Temple. Pitre shows us how age-old controversies over the Eucharist as sacrifice, meal, and real presence are illumined by Jesus in the Gospels. This exciting and inspiring book fills a major gap in biblical studies.

—Matthew Levering, Professor of Theology, University of Dayton, and author of *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist*

BRANT PITRE is a professor of sacred Scripture at Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, Louisiana. He is the author of *Jesus the Bridegroom*. Dr. Pitre is an extremely enthusiastic and highly sought-after speaker who lectures regularly across the United States. He has produced dozens of Bible studies on both CD and DVD, in which he explores the biblical roots of the Catholic faith. He has also appeared on a number of Catholic radio and television shows, such as *Catholic Answers Live* and *EWTN*. He currently lives in Louisiana with his wife, Elizabeth, and their five young children.

From the Hardcover edition.

Here, Author Brant Pitre pulls together Rabbinical commentaries and Old Testament text to describe the Last Supper as it would have been understood by 1st century Jews (Christ and his apostles). Pitre explores the carrying forward of Old Testament prototypes into Christ's institution of the Eucharist, stressing that such prototypes - by biblical logic - HAD TO BE FULFILLED in Christ's Last Supper. This immediately raises several questions: For example, why was there no slaughtered lamb served (none is mentioned in any Gospel) at the Last Supper, which entree immemorial Mosaic tradition absolutely demanded for fulfillment of a ritual Passover meal? (If, as the synoptics recount, the Last Supper *was* a traditional Passover meal, there *had* to be a slaughtered lamb served and that lamb *had* to be eaten. Not symbolically eaten. Not figuratively eaten. But actually eaten.) Pitre next proposes, based on the above, the synoptic Gospels' testimony, and the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, that the Last Supper involved what was arguably Christ's most spectacular and central miracle - the actual transformation of bread and wine into his body and blood and that transformation's RE-occurrence throughout subsequent time for humanity's new "exodus" from sin: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat". By Pitre's logic, the Passover lamb served *was* the transformed bread and wine themselves, the bread and wine WERE "the slaughtered lamb", the Passover Lamb of God, Christ's transubstantiated flesh and blood, the manna from heaven. And here is the crux: Had Christ been speaking merely figuratively ("This is my body... This is my blood...") when he broke bread and passed the cup, then the Last Supper would

have FAILED TO FULFILL biblical logic and prophetic prototypes because the Mosaic Covenant was founded on blood. REAL blood. Not symbolic or figurative blood. It was not "symbolic blood" or "figurative blood" that caused the Angel of Death to pass over the Israelites on the first Passover in Egypt. It was BLOOD. Despite the Jewish taboo against consuming blood, because the blood is the life, Pitre opines the disciples *would* have followed Christ's injunction to "drink" for that selfsame reason: in the blood was "the life" of the soon-to-be-resurrected Christ, the new Moses, the New Covenant Messiah prophesied by Moses. Pitre's speculation on "the fourth cup" idea is almost heartbreaking (and potentially the missing link between Pitre's thesis and Pope Benedict XVI's commentary). The fourth cup was that mandatory fourth and final cup that had to be drunk to consummate a traditional Passover meal. The idea is Christ intentionally interrupted "his Passover" Meal to delay its consummation until his last moment on the cross when he said, "I thirst" and "explicitly requested a drink" (p. 167). Concluding the Last Supper-Passover meal on the cross united the Last Supper with the Passion: "A bowl full of sour wine stood there; so they put a sponge full of wine on hyssop and held it to his mouth. **When Jesus had received the wine [the fourth cup], he said, 'It [the Passover Meal] is finished'; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit"**. Recommended for a deepened understanding of the Eucharist, the Passion, and the Paschal Mystery. Be sure in this regard to see — Marie-Julie Jahenny - The Breton Stigmatist, How Christ Said the First Mass or the Lord's Last Supper, The Evidence For The Papacy: As Derived From The Holy Scriptures And From Primitive Antiquity, With An Introductory Epistle (1870), and — The Great Sacrilege.

Yes, this book on the Eucharist was certainly a home run. Pitre pulls you in early on and keeps you interested as he "unlocks" the secrets to understanding the Eucharist as Jesus and his disciples understood it. You will be reading excerpts of rabbis from New Testament times that leave no doubt as to how a Jew would have interpreted Jesus' actions and words. What I also appreciate about this book is Pitre's ability to repeat important concepts without sounding repetitive. He is excellent at recapping his points in such a way that, if you hadn't yet understood what he's getting at, you definitely will now. The outlined review at the end of each chapter as well as an additional study guide in the appendix make this book very easy to return to. I can't wait to read another book by this author.

Over the years, I have read the Old and New Testaments and have heard them through the readings at Mass and various Bible studies, but without a thought of how it was viewed by the Jews,

(including Jesus) in the days that they were experienced. I always thought of the New Testament as more relevant and the Old Testament with lesser regard. I finally realize how important both are and how the Old Testament lays the foundation from Creation, the fall of Adam, on through the Mosaic Covenant, whereas, in the New Testament, Christ fulfills the promise of the Old Covenant by establishing a New Covenant at the last Supper, which culminates with His suffering and Death on the Cross and ultimately His Resurrection. This book offers so much!! It has given me a better understanding of the circumstances surrounding our Salvation history. I would encourage anyone who has an interest in the Eucharist, certainly every Catholic, to read it. It has drawn me closer in my commitment to the Lord, as I now see Christ's Sacrifice and the Eucharist with new eyes of appreciation.

Faithful Catholics and faithful evangelicals alike will find plenty of illumination about 'the Last Supper' in this book. Too many Christians overlook the fact that the 'messiah' had to have been 'Jewish', as were his disciples and the early saints of the Catholic Church. This book is in agreement with careful modern scholarship about the historical Jesus and about the 'end time' he and other preachers of his time (John the Baptist, for example) thought was almost at hand. Jesus wanted to offer a Reformed view of his faith and he eagerly sought evidence that he might be the Messiah. He tested his beliefs step by step as he took the actions that prophecy revealed the Messiah would take. The enactment of a 'New Passover' was one such step and it led Jesus to tell his followers that, in the new Passover, the unleavened bread was 'his' body and the wine was 'his' blood. He was the 'Paschal lamb' who was sacrificed once and for all mankind. This book carefully and repetitiously tells this story in detail. This book is worth owning.

The author sets out a very thorough overview and exposition of the biblical, Jewish, and patristic roots of the Eucharist. Highly recommended for anyone who wishes to understand Christian sacramental theology and its roots in the Jewish tradition. I only have one very minor complaint. As an Orthodox Christian reader, I did notice the author's simplistic division of Christian traditions into Catholic and non-Catholic (presumably Protestant). It might have been helpful to acknowledge that some other traditions (e.g. Orthodox, Anglican, et al.) share similar beliefs with Catholics. Otherwise, though, this was a very interesting and informative read.

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