

# The Lord's Supper



**The Forum Terrace Church of Christ**

**Young Adult Wednesday Night Bible Class**

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# Phrases and Titles of the Lord's Supper

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Almost every denomination, with the exception of two, observe something which they call the Lord's Supper. The Quakers (Friends) practice a religion which does away with all externals, thus they have done away with the Lord's Supper as well as water baptism.

One of the distinguishing features of the Society of Friends from most other Christian bodies is the absence of the observance of the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper from its religious practices....The Quaker ideal is to make every meal at every table a Lord's Supper. Again, the reality lies, not in the nature of the material substance, but in the way it stirs the heart of every partaker. The Quakers, and all Christians, are called upon to remember Christ every time bread is broken. (<http://www.firstfriendswhittier.org/welcome/sacraments.html>)

The second denomination which does not observe any form of the Lord's Supper as outlined in the Bible is the Christian Scientists. They prefer to observe a breakfast like the one Jesus ate with His disciples by the sea of Galilee in John 21. Mary Baker Eddy wrote,

"This spiritual meeting with our Lord in the dawn of a new light is the morning meal which Christian Scientists commemorate. They bow before Christ, Truth, to receive more of his reappearing and silently to commune with the divine Principle, Love. They celebrate their Lord's victory over death, his probation in the flesh after death, its exemplification of human probation, and his spiritual and final ascension above matter, or the flesh, when he rose out of material sight.... Our Eucharist is spiritual communion with the one God. Our bread, 'which cometh down from heaven,' is Truth. Our cup is the cross. Our wine the inspiration of Love, the draught our Master drank and commended to his followers" (Science and Health, p. 35).

However, those who truly regard the authority of the New Testament will practice the Lord's Supper according to the manner instituted by the Lord on the night he was betrayed.

## Scriptural Titles for the Lord's Supper

In this lesson we will endeavor to investigate the terms and phrases used in the Bible to describe the Lord's Supper. From these we can gain a clearer understanding of its significance for the present day Christian. By way of contrast we will next look at some of the man-made terms used to refer to the Lord's Supper. First, a look at scriptural phrases:

### ► The Lord's Supper

Paul complained to the church at Corinth: *"Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper"* (1 Cor. 11:20). They should have been eating the Lord's Supper. They thought they were eating the Lord's Supper. However, they were not because they had changed it into a man-made meal by not partaking of it in the correct manner.

The supper is the Lord's not theirs. The word *"Lord's"* comes from a Greek word used only twice in the New Testament: *"Lord's Supper"* (1 Cor. 11:20) and *"Lord's Day"* (Rev. 1:10). This is interesting from the stand point that there is a strong connection between the *"Lord's Supper"* and the *"Lord's Day"*. *"Supper"* is from *deipnon* which meant the main meal of the day. No doubt, for the Christian, the Lord's

Supper is the main meal on the Lord's Day. The Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:29), the Lord's blood, the Lord's bread, the Lord's cup (11:27), and the Lord's death (11: 26), all were a part of the Lord's supper (11:20) on the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10) which is Sunday, the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). It must be remembered that this Supper is the Lord's. It is the supper which originated from Him and belongs to Him. It is not man's supper or the church's supper. No man or church has authority over the time, frequency, elements, manner of partaking, etc. only the Lord has this authority. After all, it is His supper.

► **The Table of the Lord**

In the previous chapter Paul refers to the Lord's Supper as the *"table of the Lord."* He wrote, *"You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons"* (1 Cor. 10:21).

In Malachi 1:7 *"the table of the Lord"* is the altar. In the New Testament, it can only be the Lord's Table in the sense that the symbols, the bread and fruit of the vine, are representative of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. It is a feast on the table not a sacrifice on an altar. The cross was the altar upon which the Lamb of God was sacrificed. Today, we have a sweet invitation as God's children to commune with the Lord around His table.

► **Communion**

It is the communion with the blood of Christ and the body of Christ. It is translated from the Greek word *koinonia* which means a sharing, a joint participation or fellowship with someone in something. It is a "fellowship supper" with Christ. When we partake we are recognizing the spiritual fellowship we have through the sufferings of His body, represented in the bread, and the shedding of his blood, represented in the cup. Remember, it is a communion (fellowship) with Christ, but it is not the only means of communion with Christ. Merely partaking of the Lord's Supper once a week does not maintain our communion (fellowship) with Christ (see 1 John 1:7-10).

► **The Breaking of Bread**

In the New Testament the phrase *"breaking of bread"* refers to both a common meal or a spiritual meal. Obviously 1 Corinthians 10:16 is speaking of a spiritual meal. *"...the bread which we break is it not a communion of the body of Christ"*. On the night in which Jesus was betrayed, He ate the Lord's Supper with His disciples (Luke 22). Following His resurrection Jesus ate a common meal with two of his disciples (Luke 24:30,35). Twice it is used in the same context refer first to a spiritual meal, then a common meal. *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers....And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart"* (Acts 2:42,46). *"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight...When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed"* (Acts 20:7,11). Since this phrase can be used in both senses, we must consider the context to see which meal is intended. In both Acts 2:42 and 20:7 the writer mentions *"breaking of bread"* in the same sentence as things which are definitely part of a worship service. Therefore, these passages must be referring to a spiritual rather than a physical meal.

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society teaches that Acts 20:7 was just a common meal. If it was just a common meal why did Paul remain in Troas for seven days? (20:6). Obviously, he wanted to worship with the brethren, which included partaking of the Lord's Supper. If those of Acts 20:7 were just eating a common meal why is it specified that they ate on the first day of the week? Didn't they eat common meals on other days of the week? If it is a common meal, why did they gather together for it? If it is a common meal why is it separate from Paul's eating or breaking bread in verse 11? Paul condemned the Corinthians for eating common meals in the assembly in 1 Cor. 11:22, *"What? have you not homes to eat and drink in?"* If it was a common meal then Paul participated in the very thing he condemns. The fact that this *"breaking of bread"* was done in the assembly shows that it was a spiritual meal. In Acts 2:42 the meal was in the assembly thus spiritual. In verse forty-six it was in their homes, thus a common meal. In Acts 20:7 it was done in the assembly thus a spiritual meal, and in verse eleven

it was done after the assembly had broken up, thus a common meal.

"*The breaking of bread*" also includes drinking the fruit of the vine. "*Breaking bread*" is a figure of speech called a *synecdoche*, in which a part of something is used to represent the whole. To "break bread" referring to a common meal can include not only bread but also vegetables, meat, etc. Or is man to live by bread alone? Let's suppose you are traveling with a group of friends. One of them suggests, "Let's stop and get a bite to eat." What do they mean? Just one bite? Would one bite suffice for the entire car load? What if they were thirsty? Wouldn't this statement include getting drinks as well as several bites of food for several people? Why of course it would. It is interesting to note that the very first example of a synecdoche given in Webster's New World Dictionary is the use of bread for food. The first phase of the Lord's Supper is literally breaking bread and followed by the drinking of the fruit of the vine. Our spiritual meal includes both eating and drinking (1 Cor. 11:28).

### **Unscriptural Titles for the Lord's Supper**

So far in this lesson we showed that there are four acceptable titles or phrases of description for the Supper in which the Lord Jesus Christ instituted on the night in which he was betrayed. They are: "*Lord's Supper*" (1 Cor. 11:20), "*table of the Lord*" (1 Cor. 10:21), "*Communion*" (1 Cor. 10:16), and "*breaking of bread*" (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Now consider a couple of the man-made titles given to this Supper.

#### ► **Eucharist**

The word is brought over from the Greek language. *Eucharistia* derived from *eu*, meaning "well, good" and *charizesthai*, meaning "to show favor", and derived from *charis*, meaning "favor, thanks". The noun form of this word is not used in the scriptures as a title to the Lord's Supper. However the Gospel writers (Matthew 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:17,19) and Paul (1 Corinthians 11:24) use its verbal form "to give thanks" in describing the manner in which we are to partake of the Lord's Supper.

The first reference of calling the Lord's Supper "*the Eucharist*" is in Justin Martyr's First Apology: "And this food is called among us Eucharistia". Later this term was used by Martin Luther and his contemporary Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss reformer. "For Zwingli, the Lord's Supper is essentially Eucharist, thanksgiving. It is a joyful remembrance and public acknowledgment of all that Christ has done for us. Taking part in it, we openly proclaim that we are numbered among those who live on Christ's benefits (Jacques Courvoisier, Zwingli: a Reformed Theologian).

But the Lord's Supper is not the only thing that involves "thanksgiving". We could also refer to our daily food as Eucharist for it too is sanctified by giving of thanks (1 Tim. 4:4; Mark 9:6). Furthermore, all things require giving thanks (Ephesians 3:20). Thus, to call the Lord's Supper the Eucharist is to single it out as "THE THANKSGIVING" of the Christian life. Yes, it involves thanksgiving, but it is not the Thanksgiving. This idea is never taught concerning the Lord's Supper. This is not to say that we cannot be thankful while partaking of the Lord's Supper or express thankfulness in prayers for what Christ has done.

#### ► **Sacrament**

The religious term "sacrament" comes from the Latin *sacramentum* meaning "oath, a solemn engagement". In ancient times, it was used of the pledge deposited in a temple by parties to a lawsuit, also of a soldier's oath of allegiance to his commander. This word does not occur anywhere in the entire Bible.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia a sacrament is "an outward sign of inward grace, instituted by Christ for our sanctification" (vol. 13, p. 295). In the 12th century Peter Lombard felt there should be but seven sacraments while others felt there should be thirty. The Council of Trent in 1547 A.D. set the number of sacraments at seven. Today, the seven sacraments of Catholicism are: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. Therefore, the whole idea of sacraments is of human origin.

The infallibly safe guide line to go by is to use terms to describe the Lord's Supper which are found in the scriptures. The scriptural terms and phrases mentioned above will always accurately describe the Lord's Supper. Terms and phrases of men often reflect man's traditions and misunderstandings about

the Lord's Supper. Calling Bible things by Bible names is a safe and wise habit.

**Questions:**

1. What two denominations do not observe something called the Lord's Supper?
2. When was the Lord's Supper instituted and by whom?
3. What was being corrected by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:20-22?
4. What is the meaning of the Table of the Lord in Malachi 1:7?
5. Who are we fellowshiping with during the Lord's Supper?
6. Does breaking of bread only refer to the Lord's Supper? Is it limited to only the bread?
7. What type of meal is being referred to in Acts 2:46? How do you know?
8. What type of meal is being referred to in Acts 20:7? How do you know?
9. What are the four names found in the scriptures for the Lord's Supper? What verses?
10. What is Paul describing in 1 Corinthians 11:24 when using the verb form of eucharist?



11. Can thanksgiving be used in the prayers led during the Lord's Supper? Explain.
12. During what other meal should we offer a prayer of thanksgiving?
13. What term and its derivatives are not even found in the bible but are used by some denominations for the Lord's Supper?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. Why is it important to call the things of the Bible by the proper names given in the Bible?
2. What are the difference meanings of breaking of bread found in the Bible? What are similar figures of speech we might use today in reference to meals?

**Homework:** Ask someone you know what their denomination calls the Lord's Supper and what scriptural proof they have for the name.

# Institution of the Lord's Supper at the Passover Feast

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## Institution of the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper was instituted or originated by Christ's authority on the night in which He was betrayed. It was during the final Passover feast before Jesus' death and therefore referred to as the Last Supper. All three synoptic Gospel record this event (Matt. 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:17-20; 29-30). The Lord's Supper is considered by the Gospel writers as a major event in the life and death of Christ and therefore should not be minimized as insignificant.

When instituting the Lord's Supper Jesus *"gave it to the disciples"* (Matt. 26:26). It was to be taught by the apostles to their disciples (Matt. 28:18-20). Later it was revealed to the apostle Paul. The apostle *"born out of due season"* (1 Cor. 15:8). Although he was not present with Jesus when the Supper was instituted, later he wrote *"I have received of the Lord"* (1 Cor. 11:23). Then he gave the Lord's instructions concerning the Supper to the church at Corinth.

Since the Day of Pentecost when the church was founded by the apostles the Lord's Supper has continued to be observed. The newly baptized disciples *"continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers"* (Acts 2:42). Later at Troas learn that Paul met with the brethren there to partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). This Supper though abused was practiced by the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 11:17ff). In the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* it is written in about 80-120 AD of the early saints: "But every Lord's day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread and give thanksgiving" (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7).

Although the Lord's Supper was instituted nearly two thousand years ago, Christians of our day are still required to observe it just as Christ commanded. When Paul reminded the Corinthians saints of Christ's instructions concerning the Supper, he said repeated Jesus' command *"this do..."* which is the same as "do this."

## The Connection of the Lord's Supper with the Passover

Why did Jesus chose to institute His memorial feast during the Passover feast? There is a close connection between the two events. By use of typology the type would be the original Passover feast of the Jews in the Law of Moses and the antitype it symbolized: the Lord's Supper. Paul used this figure of speech (typology) to teach the similarities between the saints at Corinth and the Israelites in the wilderness under Moses. Though the scriptures tell us of many type-antitype relationships none are clearer and as forceful than that of the Passover feast and the Lord's Supper.

### ► Both are a Commemoration of Salvation from Death

On a little church in Germany stands a stone lamb which has an interesting history: When some workmen were building the roof, one workman fell to the ground. His companions hastened down expecting to see him killed. But he was unhurt. A lamb was grazing below when he fell on it, crushing the lamb. He was so grateful that he made an image of the lamb in stone and placed it on the building as a memorial.

Both the Passover meal and the Lord's Supper were memorial feast which involved the sacrificial lamb which saved men from death. After Joseph had been forgotten by the Egyptian rulers, God's chosen people were held captive in Egypt for many generations. God sent Moses to command Pharaoh

to let His people go. God had sent nine plagues on Egypt to motivate Pharaoh to obey Him. The final plague was designed to bring death upon all the first born living in the land of Egypt. For the Israelite families to be spared from the plague the Passover feast was to be observed.

The Passover was to be observance was to be on the fourteenth day of the first month (Lev. 23:5). Its frequency was thus yearly. This is in contrast with the Lord's Supper which is to be observed on the first day of the week, thus its frequency was weekly. A second time of the year was reserved for those ceremonially unclean to observe the Passover (Num. 9:6-11). It appears that Christ always observed the Passover (Mt. 26:17-20; Lk. 22:15; Jn. 2:13,23).

While the Egyptians slumbered death came over them, but the Israelites ate the Lord's Passover. While the world and unfaithful slumber, and while the denominations don't observe spiritual death comes over them, but we observe the Lord's Supper. Without the blood of the lamb of God applied to our souls through baptism we would be lost. When the Lord returns with His angels; the second death will not Passover you.

► **Both Involved a Sacrificial Lamb**

Moses was to tell *"all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. ... Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. Then they shall eat the flesh on that night... It is the Lord's Passover'"* (Ex. 12:3-8).

If the Passover Lamb is the type, Jesus Christ is clearly the antitype. He is referred to as our Passover Lamb in several places in the New Testament (1 Cor. 5:7; Jn. 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:18,19; Rev. 5:12). Just as the lamb had to be chosen beforehand, so Christ had been chosen before the foundation of the world. (Ex. 12:3; Eph. 1:4,7). Christ as chosen by God just as the lamb had to be chosen by the father of the family (Ex. 12:3; Jn. 3:16). The Passover lamb was shut up four days to be closely examined as to whether it was a fit sacrifice (Ex. 12:6). Christ entered Jerusalem on the day that the lambs were shut up. Christ's whole life was an examination to see if he were a suitable sacrifice (Jn. 8:46; 18:38). Jesus was examined by the Sadducees and Pharisees in His last week. He was on trial several times (Lk. 23:14). Even Pilate found no fault in Him. Jesus, like the lamb, had to be without blemish (Ex. 12:5; 1 Peter 1:19; Heb. 7:26). Jesus was without any sin in His life making Him the perfect human sacrifice for sinful man. None of the bones of the Passover lamb were to be broken (Ex. 12:46). According to prophecy none of the bones of Christ were to be broken (Ps. 34:20). At the cross the Roman soldiers did not break His legs because He was already dead when they came to break them (John 19:32, 36). The lamb was in the prime of its young life and Jesus was only about thirty years of age at His death. Both were a male in the prime of their life. Both the Passover Lamb and the Lamb of God saved via the shedding of blood (Ex. 12:23; 12:7; Mt. 26:28).

However, there are difference to be noted between the two lambs. Jesus as the Lamb of God is a greater victim, bringing greater spiritual blessings, such as, redemption, a once for all time sacrifice, an everlasting inheritance, etc.

► **Both Involved the Use of Unleavened Bread**

God further instructed the Israelites concerning the elements of the Passover meal. *"Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it...Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel"* (Ex. 12:8,15). In the Passover it was used in remembrance of bread baked hurriedly. The haste of their flight hindered them from preparing their food. Unleavened bread and crackers keep better than leavened bread for travel. The Feast of Unleavened Bread for the seven days following, namely, the 15th to the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the first month. Unleavened bread was to be eaten for seven days, to remind them of having been thrust out of Egypt so suddenly that they had to take the dough before

it was leavened. During the feast all leaven was even to be removed from their homes. "We know that the Jews were extremely punctilious in this respect, and searched their houses minutely, lest in a dark corner some particle of leaven might be unsuspected; for leaven was regarded as a symbol of corruption and of the self-propagating power of evil" (Pulpit, 1 Corinthians, 186).

Unleavened was also used because leaven or yeast was a symbol of evil and corruption (1 Cor. 5:8). Whereas unleavened bread was a symbol of purity.

- ▶ **Both Involve a Cup of Grape Juice**

When Jesus instituted the Lord's supper He took two elements of the Passover and gave them spiritual significance in the New Covenant in this new feast. Unleavened bread is the body of Christ in the Lord's supper. In the Passover the blood of the lamb was to remember their salvation from death which came to the first born during the tenth plague upon Egypt. The Jews called it the "*cup of blessing*" (1 Cor. 10:16). In the Lord's Supper the cup of grape juice represents the blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

- ▶ **Both Involve Specific Participants**

The Passover feast for found all the children of Israel (Ex. 12:42). No foreigner was to partake of it with them (12:43). It was only for those were circumcised (12:48) and those who had been purified (2 Chr. 30:15-19). Slaves and resident aliens were permitted to join the meal, provided they had been circumcised (12:44, 48). Those who observed the first Passover were required to stay in the house.

Corresponding to the Lord's Supper those who partake of the Lord's Supper are to be His disciples in His Kingdom (Mark 14:25; John 3:3-5). Those who partake of it are those Christians who are gathered together with one another as a congregation (Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:20). It would thus require the partakers to have been baptized into the kingdom or body of Christ (Acts 2:38, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13). These have been purified (1 Peter 1:22). They are the ones who are also circumcised of heart (Col. 2:11).

- ▶ **Both Provide an Opportunity to Teach**

The Passover meal was to be an objective lesson for many generations of Jews to remember who they are and where they came from and more importantly who saved them. "*So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What is this?' that you shall say to him, 'By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.'*" (Ex. 13:14,15).

The Lord's Supper provides the participants and opportunity to teach. Paul wrote the Corinthians, "*for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes*" (1 Cor. 11:26). The Christian proclaims or preaches about the Lord's death and his faith that Christ will come again. Christian parents will often have their children inquire as to why dad and mom are eating crackers and juice. This gives the parent a chance to explain the meaning behind the Lord's Supper.

- ▶ **Both Looked Forward With Anticipation**

The Jews looked forward to the day when they could observe the Passover feast in the Promise Land. The Christians looks forward to partaking of the feast until the Lord returns (1 Cor. 11:28). It will be at that point the saved will enter in to the "Promise Land" which is Heaven.

- ▶ **Both Involve Consequences with Neglected**

There were consequences for the Jew who neglected the observance of the Passover feast. The Law of Moses clearly states: "*but the man who is clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person shall be cut off from among his people, because he did not bring the offering of the Lord at its appointed time; that man shall bear his sin*" (Num. 9:13). Later King Jeroboam was condemned by God because he changed the date of the Passover's observance. "*Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. So he made offerings on the altar which he had made*

*at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense” (1 Kings 12:32,33).*

The church at Corinth has abused the Lord's Supper and were condemned by Paul. He warned them of the consequences of not partaking of the Lord's Supper in a proper manner. *“For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world” (1 Cor. 11:30-32).*

Many denominational churches have changed the day and frequency of the Lord's Supper. The Catholic church has moved it from the first day of the week to any day of the week. Others only observe the Lord's Supper once or twice a year instead of weekly.

Christians, by forsaking the assembly, have neglected the Lord's Supper (Heb. 10:25f).

### **Questions:**

1. How did Paul know about the institution of the Lord's Supper?
2. When was the first time church observed the Lord's Supper?
3. Why did Jesus chose to institute His memorial feast during the Passover feast?
4. What is typology?
5. With regard to which plague sent by God against Egypt was the Passover instituted?

### **Matching:**

- |           |                   |    |                                       |
|-----------|-------------------|----|---------------------------------------|
| 6. _____  | observed annually | a. | symbolized corruption and evil        |
| 7. _____  | Passover Lamb     | b. | sinless                               |
| 8. _____  | without blemish   | c. | Roman soldiers did not break His legs |
| 9. _____  | no bone broken    | d. | represents the blood of Christ        |
| 10. _____ | unleavened bread  | e. | proclaim Lord's death                 |
| 11. _____ | leaven            | f. | observed weekly                       |

- |     |  |    |                               |
|-----|--|----|-------------------------------|
| 12. | _____ cup of blessing                                      | g. | circumcised of heart          |
| 13. | _____ for the circumcised                                  | h. | represents the body of Christ |
| 14. | _____ teaching others                                      | i. | Jesus, the Lamb of God        |
| 15. | What did King Jereboam change with regard to the Passover? |    |                               |

**Application & Discussion:**

1. There were consequences to abusing or neglecting the Passover feast. What are the consequences to abusing or neglecting the Lord's Supper?
2. What leaven should we remove in our lives in preparation of observing the Lord's Supper?

**Homework:** Use the fact that you observe the Lord's Supper every week as a teaching opportunity.

# Place of and Participants in the Lord's Supper

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## Proper Place

Where should the Lord's Supper be partaken? The Jews were required to observe the Passover at Jerusalem. A specific geographical location has nothing to do with acceptable worship in the Christian dispensation. Jesus made this perfectly clear in His conversation to the woman of Samaria at the well. The Samaritans worshiped on Mount Gerizim and the Jews at Jerusalem. She asked Jesus where the proper location should be.

*The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:19-24).*

Although there may not be a specified physical location for the partaking of the Lord's Supper, there is a proper spiritual place to observe it. This spiritual location is based upon one's relationship to God and one another. Jesus said on the night He instituted the Lord's Supper "...I drink it new with you in the Father's Kingdom" (Matt. 26:29) and "...at my table in my kingdom" (Luke 22:29,30). Jesus makes it clear that His Kingdom is yet in the future. The coming of the Messianic Kingdom has long been prophesied in Daniel 2, Joel 2; and Isaiah 2. Both John and Jesus and His disciples preached that the kingdom was at hand or coming soon (Matt. 3:1,2; 4:17). The Kingdom was established on the Day of Pentecost. The newly formed partook of the Lord's Supper in Acts 2:42 when *"they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."* Although Jesus did not partake of it with them in physical form at Pentecost, He did communion with them spiritually. Every time Christians partake of the Lord's Supper they are communion with Christ (1 Cor. 10:14-22). The real issue is not so much the physical location of the observance what whether those who observe are in the Kingdom. Jesus tells us how to get into His Kingdom in John 3:3,5: *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*

Although the church at Corinth had been abusing and misusing the Lord's Supper, Paul made it very clear that they were to observe it *"when you come together as a church...when you come together in one place...when you come together to eat"* (1 Cor. 11:18,20,33). So the Lord wants us to come together as a congregation of worshipers to eat the Lord's Supper.

## Proper Partakers

Who did Jesus intend to be partakers of His Supper? This is a question which has plagued the religious world for centuries. Originally, Jesus partook of it with His twelve disciples on the night in which He was betrayed. This included Judas Iscariot who had already made plans to betray Jesus. Jesus knew his plans to betray Him, yet had allowed him to partake of the Supper (Lk. 22:21). This doesn't

really show us who should partake of it today, because the kingdom had not been established when Lord's Supper was instituted.

First, Jesus intended the Supper to be observed by those in the Kingdom or the church. Jesus placed the Lord's Supper in the kingdom (Mk. 14:25) and in the church (1 Cor. 11:18). We are baptized into the Kingdom (Jn. 3:3-5) and into the church (1 Cor. 12:13). This not only shows us that the kingdom and the church are one and the same, but it also tells us that only those in the kingdom or church have spiritual access to the Lord's Table.

The Lord's Supper is intended for those who have a spiritual relationship with Christ. All communion springs forth from union, thus there can be no communion with Christ unless one has union with Him. Only those who have been baptized into Christ have union with Him, Gal. 3:27. Those who are united with Christ are saints because they are: "*washed, sanctified, justified*" (1 Cor. 6:11); "*partakers of the divine nature*" (2 Pet. 1:4); "*partakers of a heavenly calling*" (Heb. 3:1); and "*partakers of Christ's sufferings*" (1 Pet. 4:13). Thus, partakers of the Lord's Supper.

The memorial of Christ's death and sacrifice has great meaning for those who have remission of sins through the blood of Christ. Why should an alien sinner commemorate the shedding of Christ's blood for the remission of sins (Ac. 2:38)? What does one have to do with the death of Christ if he has not been baptized into Christ and thus into His death (Rom. 6:3-5)? All the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in the world will not remove sin. The Lord's Supper does not remit sin nor change the fact one has not obeyed the gospel (Mk. 16:16). How can a sinner have a communion with His body and blood (1 Cor. 10:16)? It is for those who have been saved by His blood and brought into covenant relationship with him in his body. Thus, for an alien sinner to partake of the Lord's Supper would be like a communist celebrating the Fourth of July.

Finally, the Lord's Supper is intended for those who look forward to the Second Coming of Christ. (1 Cor. 11:26). The Lord's Supper is a proclamation by everyone who partakes that the Lord will come again and in this they hope. Why would a sinner want the Lord to come while he is in this lost state?

## **Denominational Concepts on Proper Partakers**

- **Close Communion**

Some Baptist denominations teach what is known as "close communion". "What is close communion? Close, strict or restricted communion is...that which does not invite all indiscriminately to the Lord's Table, but restricts the privilege to a particular class. But ordinarily the term is applied to the practice of Baptist churches, which invite only baptized believers walking in orderly fellowship in their own churches. And by baptized believers they mean, immersed believers; not admitting sprinkling to be baptism at all" (Edward T. Hiscox, *The Standard Manual For Baptist Churches*, p. 110,111).

There are several problems with this concept. First, while baptism is necessary, only scriptural baptism for the remission of sins will do. They are inconsistent in that they will permit the same man to sing, pray, and give, but at the same time exclude him from the Lord's Supper. Although Judas was in sin, his eating of the supper with the Lord did not mean Jesus endorsed everything Judas was doing. The inconsistency of the Baptists in recognizing the unimmersed as Christians, and yet refusing to commune with them, is hard to take without grinning from ear to ear.

- **Closed Communion**

Other Baptist denominations practice "closed communion". This limits who are proper subjects to partake of the Supper to congregational boundaries. "Some Baptists believe the participation should be limited to the membership of the local church observing the ordinance, but probably most Baptist churches invite other Baptists to participate." (Joe T. Odie, *WHY I AM A BAPTIST*, pp. 108-9).

This is still an inadequate answer to our question. This concept puts communion on the bases of our physical location with men and not our spiritual position with God. When Paul was at Ephesus, he could say to the brethren at Corinth, "*The cup of blessing which we bless...the bread which we break...*" (1 Cor. 10:16-17). If the church of God at Corinth could not close the communion to Paul in Ephesus how can any one try to limit this spiritual meal to the confines of physical walls.



- **Open Communion**

Others practice what is called "open communion". "Open, free or mixed communion is, strictly speaking, that which allows anyone who desires, and believes himself qualified, to come to the Lord's Table, without any questions being asked, or conditions imposed by the church in which the ordinance is observed. But ordinarily the term is applied to the practice of the greater part of the Pedobaptist churches, which hold that sprinkling is lawful baptism, and invite, not all persons, but members of all evangelical churches, whatever their view of church order and ordinances; holding them all as being baptized because they have been sprinkled" (Hiscox 110).

This concept is also unscriptural. This so called "Open Communion" is actually closed to the infants who have been sprinkled. Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 11:28 is not saying that each man is to determine for himself whether he is a Christian. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Paul was speaking to saints to examine how they partake of it, not whether they were worthy to partake of it. They openly commune, but they close all avenues that might lead to true spiritual fellowship by clinging to their denominational beliefs. They fail to teach the gospel plan of salvation.

- **Communion in One Kind**

For many years the Catholic Church has practiced what they call "communion in one kind". This is where the priests drink the wine and eat the bread, while the lay members eat the bread only, believing that both flesh and blood is contained in the blessed bread. James Cardinal Gibbons has given the following definition of communion in one kind: "The Church teaches Christ is contained whole and entire under each species; so that whoever communicates under the form of bread or wine receives not a mutilated Sacrament or a divided Savior, but shares in the whole Sacrament as fully as if he participated in both forms. Hence, the layman who receives the consecrated Bread partakes as copiously of the body and blood of Christ as the officiating priest, who receives both consecrated elements." This doctrine was developed in connection to the doctrine of transubstantiation. This is a belief that the bread turns into the literal flesh and the cup turns into the literal blood of Christ.

If partaking of the bread suffices for partaking of the fruit of the vine then why did Paul make such a distinction between the two in 1 Corinthians 10:16? *"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"* When Jesus instituted the Supper He said, *"Drink ye all of it"* (Mt. 26:27) *"And they all drank of it"* (Mk. 14:23). Note, Jesus did not partake of the cup and allow them to only partake of the bread. Abusing any part of the Lord's Supper is to be guilty of both the body and the blood of Christ (1 Cor. 11:27). This passage doesn't show any distinction in who partakes of what, instead it indicates whoever is eating of the body is also the one drinking the cup. Therefore, they have fallen prey to the abuse they wished to avoid.

### **The Bible Position on Proper Partakers**

Which the above represents the Biblical position? None of the above even come close to the scripture answer. One cannot close that which has never been open and he cannot open that which has never been closed.

Certainly, every Christian has the right to partake and the command to partake. However, the church is without authority to refuse anyone whom they judge unworthy. No congregation in the New Testament was ever given policing powers at the Lord's Table. The only time the scriptures contemplate a sinner attending a service where Christians are gathered for worship (1 Cor. 14:23-25) it tells us nothing about including or excluding him for the emblems on the Lord's Table. The first time we hear of excluding someone for partaking is about fifty years after the close of the New Testament. It is found in the writings of the early Christian writer, Justin Martyr: "...no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is living as Christ hath enjoined."

Today, no congregation can hire or select a bouncer to keep sinners for partaking. No Christian

has a right to stand in judgment over those assembled and decide who can partake and who cannot. If we have the right to bar one from the Lord's Supper because he is an alien sinner in order to be consistent we must prohibit him from singing and giving. If a congregation is to bar one from the Lord's Supper then they can and must bar them from the whole assembly. Brethren, we are to teach them, not police them, concerning the Lord's Supper.

On the other hand, every congregation must be careful not to leave the impression it makes no difference who communes with the Lord and fellowships with His Body. If one partakes thinking he is communing with the Lord he is mistaken and needs to be taught the plan of salvation.

### **Questions:**

1. What did Jesus tell the woman at the well (John 4) as to the correct place of worship for the Jews under the Old Testament?
  
2. What location did Jesus specify as to where we are know to worship God?
  
3. When was Jesus kingdom established?
  
4. How does one become a part of the Kingdom?
  
5. True    False            The Lord wants us to come together as a congregation of worshipers when we eat the Lord's Supper.
  
6. How partook of the Lord's Supper when Jesus first instituted it?
  
7. True    False    Sometimes the church and the kingdom are the same thing in the New Testament.
  
8. Why would the Lord's Supper have little meaning to someone who is not a New Testament Christian?
  
9. What is Close Communion? What are some of the problem associated with this view?

10. What is Closed Communion? What are some of the problem associated with this view?
11. What is Open Communion? What are some of the problem associated with this view?
12. What is Communion in One Kind? What are some of the problem associated with this view?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. What should a congregation do if an atheist comes in and partakes of the Lord's Supper?
2. What can someone do to make sure they are the kind of proper participants in the Lord's Supper that Christ is look for?

**Homework:** When the local saints assemble to observe the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day be there.

# Day and Frequency of the Lord's Supper

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Just when is the Lord's Supper to be observed? Many modern denominations observe it monthly, quarterly, yearly, and on days other than on Sunday. Catholics observe every day of the week. Some observe it on Monday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. To most people when and how often one observes is inconsequential. If nothing more had been said than "this do in remembrance of me," then congregations would have been at liberty to select their own day, hour, and frequency. However, the Bible does give us a required day and frequency of the Lord's Supper's observance.

## The Day of Observance

Jesus said that he would partake of it again on *"that day"* (Mt. 26:29). The word *"day"* may refer to a specific day of 24 hours or the word *"day"* may also refer to a general period of time. *"That day"* is the Kingdom would exist. The Kingdom or church as established on the day of Pentecost. Pentecost came on a Sunday. The feast day of Pentecost was fifty days after the Passover which as on a Sabbath. So exactly seven weeks plus one day would make it Sunday. By necessary inference the Bible teaches the Lord's Supper is to be observed on Sunday, the first day of the week. The Lord said he would not eat of the Supper until He ate anew with His disciples in His kingdom. The disciples ate of it on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:42). Therefore, Christ intended that the Lord's Supper be observed on the Lord's Day.

The first time individuals could be baptized into the church as on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38,41). The first time people could be born again into the kingdom was on the Day of Pentecost. The first time baptized men and women partook of the Lord's Supper was on the Day of Pentecost. *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers"* (Acts. 2:42).

Sunday it is a day of divine worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Paul stayed a whole week in Troas just to get a chance to worship with the saints there. *"Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight"* (Acts 20:7). The fact that Luke mentions the day of the week at all is significant. Elsewhere he rarely identifies a day, unless it is a Sabbath or a special feast. His word for *"came together"* is important too. It is a semi technical term the New Testament uses for Christians gathered together for worship (1 Cor. 5:4). So this was not a special meeting convened to hear Paul (who had already been in town six days). Worship can take place at any time, but God has set a specific day in which we all must come together to worship. There are divinely approved examples where others worshiped God upon other days (Acts 16:25; 20:36; 21:5). There are some items of worship that God has not specified the particular time or limited it to a particular day, such as, to study (2 Tim. 2:15). The example of the noble Bereans shows us that every day is acceptable (Acts 17:11). We are commanded to engage in singing whenever merry (Js. 5:13). Paul and Silas gave us an example of singing and praying (Acts 16:25). Prayer is to be made without ceasing (1 Th. 5:17). There are certain items of worship which are to be done only at a divinely specified time, such as, the Lord's supper (Ac. 20:7) and giving (1 Cor. 16:1,2). Churches may have as many meetings as they desire, but as concerning the Lord's Day meeting they have no choice.

Sunday is the day we show *"His death till He comes"* (1 Cor. 11:26). Homer Hailey wrote, "The day was the Lord's day, the supper was the Lord's supper. The Lord's supper was observed on the first day of the week (Ac. 20:7). Surely the Lord's Supper was observed on the Lord's Day, and if so it must

follow that the Lord's Day was the first day of the week. The Lord provided this new name for a new day on which this new religious service was observed."

The Lord's Supper should be observed upon the first day of the week because of the great events which took place upon that day. Christ was raised upon the first day (Jn. 20:1; Mk. 16:9). On the Sabbath, the son of Man lay in the tomb. The world was dark. The faithful were in despair. There was no hope. Then on the first day of the week Christ rose triumphantly from the dead. Six of the eight New Testament references to the first day of the week refer to the resurrection. Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9); then to another Mary (Mt. 28:9,10). He met with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-35). He met with the apostles with Thomas absent (Jn. 20:19-25). He appeared to the apostles with Thomas present (26-29). The first day of the week is the day that the Holy Spirit came in the baptismal measure (Acts 2:1-4). The first day of the week is the day the first gospel sermon was preached, (Acts 2:14-36). It is the first day that remission of sin was received by those responding to the Gospel (Acts 2:37-41). Sunday is the birthday of the church (Acts 2:47). Peter refers to it as the beginning (Ac. 11:15). The beginning of the kingdom (Mk. 9:1; Ac. 1:6; 2:3,4). Beginning on the first day of the week Jesus sat on the throne of David (Ac. 2:28-35.) Christ's rule as high priest and king was announced as beginning. (Zech. 6:13; Ac. 2:29-36). It was the first day of the week when the New Covenant went into effect (Is. 2:3; Lk. 24:47, 49, Ac. 2:38).

Some denominations have it on the Thursday night before Easter Sunday. Because they say Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on a Thursday night before he arose that Sunday. The fact that something is not forbidden doesn't necessarily make it right. In fact, our authority for any practice should not grow out of the fact that it is "not forbidden" but from the fact that we can provide a "thus saith the Lord". In other words, where is the passage that authorizes it? Where in the New Testament do we find authority for the Lord's supper on Thursday night. Since the apostles were guided into all truth (Jn. 16:13), we should follow their approved examples (Acts 20:7; 2:42). One needs to remember that the supper was instituted before the Lord's death and in concert with the Jewish Passover. To argue, therefore, a Thursday observance would be to argue for a combination Supper-Passover meal. If Thursday was a day to partake than why did Paul wait a full seven days in Troas (Acts 20:6,7). "The observance of the supper on any other day not only lacks authority, but is a meaningless performance in that it signifies a dead hero instead of our risen Savior." (A.M. Trice, Around the Lord's Table, p. 46). If the church can do one thing without authority then it can do anything and everything without authority.

Others say that Paul took the Lord's Supper on Monday in Acts 20:11 when visited the Church as Troas. The reference to breaking bread is to a common meal. Luke, Paul and others had already took the Lord's Supper in verse seven. In verse eleven only Paul is said to have eaten. Did he eat two meals? If it was the Lord's Supper did Paul partake of it twice. Once with one another and once without others.

### **The Time of Day for Observance**

Although the Lord's Day, first day of the week or Sunday is specified as to the day of observing the Lord's Supper, nothing is said in regard to the time of day. In the absence of a specified time of the day it seems that any hour contained in the twenty-four hours of the first day of the each week would and must be acceptable. The generic command to partake of the Lord's Supper upon the Lord's Day requires a time. Therefore, the hour is left to the judgment of the local leadership or elders of each local congregation. The hour is purely a matter of expediency that may vary from congregation to congregation. Simply because the Lord's Supper is observed by a number of congregations during the morning hours of 10-12 a.m. does not dictate to any other congregation when they should partake.

### **The Frequency of Observance**

The frequency of an event is very important. For example, taking one's medicine at the wrong time and frequency can result either being dangerous or ineffective. Not paying your bills on time may be the difference between being homeless or having a home. It could mean the difference between

driving or walking to work.

The frequency of partaking the Lord's Supper is important. If God did not tell us how often to partake of it, one might observe the Lord's supper only once in his life and be done with it forever. Jesus commanded men to observe the Lord's supper saying, *"This do in remembrance of me"* (1 Cor. 11:24). His instructions for obeying the command "this do" are inadequate and incomplete if He didn't tell us how or how often. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper He didn't specify a day, time, or frequency (Matt. 26:26-29). But He indicated a frequency. *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me...for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup"* (1 Cor. 11:25,26a).

The early church observed the Lord's Supper with regularity or frequency. On Pentecost, first day of the week, 3000 souls were added. They *"continued steadfastly...in the breaking of bread"* (Acts 2:42). *"Steadfastly"* means "to give constant attention to a thing." Thus, to continue steadfastly denotes regularity or frequency. They did not observe the Lord's Supper sporadically in a hit-and-miss fashion. The phrase would have little meaning if it pointed to a memorial feast which was observed once a year or once every six months. To continue steadfastly in prayer didn't mean they prayed quarterly or annually. Or what would it mean to they early Christians continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine by having a sermon once a year? The frequency of its observance was so well known to Theophilus (too whom the book of Acts was written) that it was useless to write him the details.

To discover what was meant by *"continuing steadfastly...in breaking of bread"* one must look to the rest of the book of Acts and the epistles. When Paul was on his third preaching journey. He had collected funds to relieve the needs of the poor among the saints in Jerusalem from Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia. With a group of brethren, he was taking these funds to Jerusalem. Paul and his companions came to Troas and waited seven days because they knew the brethren were meeting Sunday and the purpose of that assembly being the breaking of bread. *"But we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them at Troas, where we stayed seven days. Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight"* (Acts 20:6-7). Their partaking of the Lord's Supper on that day is an approved precedent. if it had been wrong, Paul would have condemned it.

How can we know God's will concerning the frequency of observing one of His commands? If a certain day of the year is given (specific month and day) observance is yearly. The Jews understood that the Day of Atonement was an annual event. *"Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord"* (Lev. 23:27). Everyone knows when we mention Independence Day is on July 4<sup>th</sup> or the fourth of July that it is celebrated annually not monthly or weekly. After all how many fourths of July are there in any give year? One. If the day of the month is given, the observance is monthly, *"At the beginnings of your months you shall present a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish"* (Num. 28:11). If the landlord tells you your apartment rent is do on the first day of the month you understand he expects a payment every month or monthly not every week or once a year. If the day of the week is given the observance is weekly. One of the Ten Commandments states *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"* (Ex. 20:8). Which Sabbath Day was to be regarded as Holy? All of them. There was one every week of in the Jewish calendar. If a lady says, "Monday is my wash day" she don't mean quarterly or annually, she means weekly. If a fast food chicken restaurant says "Closed Sundays" we don't stand there and say "which Sunday? I wonder which Sunday they are closed." Though they didn't say every Sunday. we understand it to mean every time there is a Sunday. The Lord's Supper was not to be observed yearly for the month and day of the year are not given. Not monthly for the day of the month is not given. But the day of the week is given, therefore the Lord's Supper is to be observed weekly. "If Acts 20:7 is not authority for the Lord's Supper, then we have an incompleteness of revelation. If God hasn't told us all we need to know, then He hasn't told us at all".

The church at Corinth observed the Lord's Supper on a weekly basis. It was commanded of the first century Christians to eat the Supper as often as they met together upon the first day of the week. (1 Cor. 11:20,25,26). It was commanded that they meet together upon the first day of every week. *"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come"* (1 Cor. 16:1,2). Therefore, it was commanded of the first century Christians to eat the Lord's Supper upon the first day of every week. The phrase *"upon the first day of the week"* (*kata mian sabbatou*) is translated "upon the first day of every week in the following English translations: New American Standard, New International, and the Revised Standard.

### **Early Christians and the Day and Frequency**

On what day and how often did the Christians of the first couple of centuries observe the Lord's Supper? It is clear from their writings that they observe it every Lord's Day. "But every Lord's Day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving." (Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, XIV, Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 7, p. 381). Justin Martyr wrote, "And on the day called Sunday, all who live in the cities or in the country gather together in one place,...Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgiving, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each" (Justin Martyr, First Apology, LXXII, (114-165 A.D.) Ante-Nicene Father, Vo. 1, p. 186).

Interestingly, most Bible scholars agree that the Lord's Supper was observed every first day of the week by the early Christians.

- Augustus Neander (Lutheran): "As we have already remarked, the celebration of the Lord's Supper was still held to constitute an essential part of divine Worship every Sunday, as appears from Justin Martyr..." (General History of the Christian Religion and Church, Vol. 1, P. 460).
- Thomas Scott (Presbyterian): "This ordinance seems to have been administered every Lord's Day; and probably no professed Christian absented Themselves..." (The Holy Bible with Notes, Observations and References, Vol./ 5, P. 729).
- A.C. Hervey (Episcopalian): "This also (Ac. 20:7) is an important example of weekly communion as the practice of the first Christians" (The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 18, P. 143).
- P. Dodderidge (Congregationalist): "It is well known that the Primitive Christians administered the Eucharist every Lord's day" (The Family Expositor, Vol. 5, P. 207).
- R.A. Torrey (late president of the Moody Bible Institute): "It is true that I personally believe that the Lord's Supper ought to be partaken of every Lord's day, and have said so in the church, and presume to have said so in the lecture-room."
- John Calvin, the protestant reformer and founder of the Presbyterian church, "And that custom which enjoins believers to communicate only once a year, is unquestionably an invention of the devil, whoever were the persons by whom it was introduced...I have sufficient reason for complaining that it was the artifice of the devil that introduced this custom, by which, by prescribing one day a year, renders men slothful and careless all the rest of the time." (Calvin's Institutes Vol. 2, Chp. 4, sec. 46, pp. 580,581).

Why do these scholars agree with the writings of the early Christians and not with their denominations? Honest Bible study produces men who stand with the Bible even against the traditions of men.

### **Arguments Against Weekly Observance**

Some will argue against the weekly observance of the Lord's Supper because "it would lose its meaning if we observed it weekly". Just the opposite is true. Those who observe it only once a year pay more attention to the Easter Bunny, than Christ. These same denominations have a fellowship dinner in the fellowship hall every week, and play without ceasing. They take up a collection even when it is not the first day of every week. They *"continue steadfastly"* in things not authorized in the apostles

doctrine and hesitate to do that which is authorized to "*continue steadfastly*" in. What logic teaches us that the less we do it the more significant and spiritual it becomes. This is not true for the other acts of worship. We are to "*pray without ceasing*" (1 Th. 5:17). Prayer can thus lose its meaning, so do we violate this passage also? Maybe these churches are greedy for the Lord's money and thoughtless about the Lord's sacrifice. If less is better, why not eat the memorial meal once in a lifetime. "When the Lord's Supper loses its meaning to a child of God, it is not the fault of the Lord's Supper or anything the Bible says about it. The problem has nothing to do with the frequency. The problem lies with that person."

Some denominations will argue that the Lord's Supper should be kept annually on what is called *Good Friday* or *Easter Sunday*. Christ it is said, is the Christian's Passover; the Passover was observed annually, therefore the church should eat it once a year at the time of Jesus' death.

The Church of God teaches "Jesus set us an example, and by following His example and observing this sacred ordinance at the same time he did the same time the Passover always was observed, commanded to continue forever - we do continue to remember His death, annually, on the very anniversary of His crucifixion. It is the most solemn and sacred occasion of the year - especially when observed at this correct Scriptural hour" Lest us return to the faith once delivered. Let us humbly and obediently observe this solemn, sacred ordinance as we are commanded, and at the time set apart in the Bible, after sundown on the 14th of Abib or Nisan, sacred Hebrew Calendar" (Herbert W. Armstrong, *How Often Should We Partake of the Lord's Supper*, pp. 10,12). Jehovah's Witnesses teach the same. The Passover also was followed by the feast of Unleavened Bread, so should New Testament Christians observe this Jewish feast? It involved eating lamb and bitter herbs, should we do the same under the New Testament. The Old Law was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14). Jesus' blood is the blood of the New Covenant not the Old (Matt. 26:28).

Still others will argue: "Only Acts 20:7 teaches us the frequency." "When God speaks the truth one time, there is not enough power in hell and earth combined to make it false." (Around the Lord's Table, p. 20). There are several things the bible only states once, but that doesn't make them false. Furthermore 1 Corinthians 11:26 and 16:1,2 also teach the frequency by necessary inference.

No other day, whether annually, monthly, or weekly, is given any prominence in New Testament teaching like that of the first day of the week. Find a week in which there is no first day and that will be one Sunday in which the Lord's Supper does not have to be observed.

### Questions:

1. When are the various times or frequencies of observing the Lord's Supper among the denominations?
2. What was day was Jesus referring to when He mentioned "that day" in Matthew 26:29?
3. How do we know the day of Pentecost fell on a Sunday?



4. What day of the week must Christian gather to worship God? Why?
5. List the great events which have taken place on the first day of the week which makes this day special for New Testament Christians.
6. Why do some denominations observe the Lord's Supper on a Thursday night before Easter Sunday?
7. Did Paul partake of the Lord's Supper on a Monday in Acts 20:11? Explain.
8. What time of day on the Lord's Day can Christians meet to observe the Lord's Supper? Why?
9. In the Old Testament if the day of the month was given, then observance of the feast was to be...
  - a) daily
  - b) weekly
  - c) monthly
  - d) yearly
10. If the day and the month of the year are specified, then the observance of the feast was to be...
  - a) daily
  - b) weekly
  - c) monthly
  - d) yearly
11. If the day of the week is specified, then the observance of the feast was to be....
  - a) daily
  - b) weekly
  - c) monthly
  - d) yearly

12. When did the church at Troas meet to partake of the Lord's Supper?
13. When did the church at Corinth meeting to partake of the Lord's Supper?
14. What was the frequency of observance of the Lord's Supper at the church of Corinth?
15. According to the early Christian writers and historians what day and how often did the early Christians partake of the Lord's Supper?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. Some argue that if the Lord's Supper is observed weekly it will lose its significance? How would you deal with this argument?
2. How would you answer the argument: "Only Acts 20:7 teaches us the frequency. Therefore it is not binding on Christians."

**Homework:** Remember the Lord's Day and the Lord's Supper belong to the Lord every week.

# Elements of the Lord's Supper

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When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He did so at the Passover feast He was observing with His disciples. Often this is referred to as The Last Supper. It was during this supper that Jesus took two of the Passover elements and gave them spiritual and memorial significance under the New Covenant and in the New Kingdom (the church). Every meal has a menu of food. The Passover had several items of food and drink required of the Jews. Jesus only took two of these elements and added to His supper. The Lord's Supper only consists of a food (solid) and a drink (liquid). Jesus chose unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. By comparison with most meals, this would be considered physically insignificant. Considered spiritually, it is most magnificent.

## Unleavened Bread

By necessary inference, we conclude that the bread used for the Lord's supper should be unleavened. The Lord's Supper was instituted during the Passover Feast which was also part of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Matt. 26:17). The Mosaic Law legislated that leaven must be put out of one's house during the seven day observance of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:15,19,20). Anyone who ate leavened bread during this feast would have sinned and rejected by Israel. Jesus was perfect and did not sin (Heb. 4:15). Therefore, He took no leavened bread or even leaven (yeast) with Him to the Passover. His disciples were sent to make ready for the Last Supper. Part of the preparations would have been the removal of all leaven from the upper room. The only bread available to Jesus to take up and use for the institution of the Lord's Supper that night would have been unleavened.

The term "*unleavened*" simply means "without leaven." According to Webster's Dictionary the term "leaven" is "that which raises, any substance used to produce fermentation, as in dough or liquids, to make light by a leavening agent," In his Greek lexicon W.E. Vine writes, "Leaven, sour dough, in a state of fermentation was used in general in making bread." According to the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, "the leaven consisted, always, so far as the evidence goes, of a piece of fermented dough kept over from a former baking." Better Homes and Gardens describes leavening agents as "substances that form bubbles of gas (carbon dioxide) which expand when a batter or dough is heated. Their action makes baked products light and affects that grain and texture. Leavening agents include yeast, baking powder, and soda plus food acid." Keep in mind the salt is not a leavening agent. "*No grain offering which you bring to the Lord shall be made with leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to the Lord made by fire...And every offering of your grain offering you shall season with salt; you shall not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. With all your offerings you shall offer salt*" (Lev. 2:11,13). The Jews used plain flour never self-rising flour because leavening agents are already added to it. The specified ingredients here are flour, oil and salt.

Jesus gave unleavened bread a spiritual and symbolic meaning. Unleavened was a symbol of purity. It had been used in the Passover in remembrance of bread baked hurriedly under God's commands before the Exodus from Egypt. Jesus said, "*this is my body*" in reference to the unleavened bread. It pictured the broken body of Christ which suffered upon the cross. His body would have been as pale and lifeless as unleavened bread.

## Fruit of the Vine

Jesus next took a cup containing grape juice and made it part of the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:27-29). The phrase "*fruit of the vine*" meant in the language of the day, the juice or fruit of or from the grapes

(Lev. 25:5). There is no evidence that would indicate the use of the fruit of any other vine than that of the grape. The word "vine" is used fifty-six times in the Old Testament and thirty-two times in the New Testament and always means grape vine.

The terms "cup" and "fruit of the vine" are used interchangeably in Luke 22:17-18: "*Then He took **the cup**, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of **the fruit of the vine** until the kingdom of God comes.*" They divided the fruit of the vine. Jesus took "the cup" and said, "divide it among yourselves." Therefore, the cup is the fruit of the vine. Jesus blessed the contents, not the container.

The fruit of the vine had great spiritual and symbolic meaning in the Lord's Supper. It was used in the Passover Feast to remember the salvation from death received by those who put blood over their doors in Egypt. Jesus used the fruit of the vine to symbolize His blood, which was shed in death for the salvation of men and the ratification of the New Testament. "*Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, 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. 26:27-29).

### **Did the Passover Meal Include Fermented Wine?**

Did the Passover meal include fermented wine? This is indeed a legitimate question for New Testament Christians since Jesus took "*the cup*" and blessed it when He instituted the Lord's Supper at the end of our Lord's last Passover meal. Keep in mind that even if the Jews of the first century did use fermented wine at the Passover it would not prove that Jesus did. If they did, this would only prove to many that He most likely did institute His Supper using fermented wine. Consequently, some would argue that today Christians must use fermented wine at the Lord's Table. "The Anglican bishops at the Lambeth Conference ...declared, 'that the example of our Lord necessitates the use of fermented (and therefore alcoholic and intoxicating) wine in the administration of the Lord's Supper'" (Ferrar Fenton, "The Bible and Wine" p.17).

Some Reformed Jews of today will use alcoholic wine. However most Orthodox Jews who are far more conservative in their approach to the Bible will only use unfermented wine. Nonetheless, "there is no divine authority for the use of wine at all, fermented or unfermented, at the Passover; and at what period it was introduced by the Jewish priests no one appears to know" (Ferrar Fenton, "The Bible and Wine" p. 17). "The wine used would of course be unfermented..." (John Kitto, Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature, 1845 edition, s. v. "Passover," vol. 2, 477).

If used, grape juice, not fermented wine, would have been necessary for the Passover feast. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on the Passover, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The "fermented thing" was to be removed from every home and place where the Passover was to be observed (Ex. 12:15; 13:6,7). The fermenting process is basically the same for bread and wine. In both, yeasts act upon the sugar in the bread or wine to produce a bubbling, rising effect. In reference to the Passover, Fenton says, "But all agree that the Almighty God absolutely forbade even the presence of leaven (yeast, ferment, leaven) at the Passover, because it is the cause of putrefaction. It putrefies or rots fruit, corn, vegetables, etc., etc., and is the emblem of corruption, disease, and death, and not of life" (Ferrar Fenton, "The Bible and Wine" p. 18). According to the Jesus (Matt. 16:6; 12) and Paul (1 Cor. 5:7,8) "leaven" represented that which was symbolic of moral corruption because of the putrefied effect of the fermentation process. "Fermented wine is not a product of the vine. Chemically it is entirely different from the sweet and unfermented grape juice. Fermented wine is 14% alcohol, and it is other constituents that are not found in the fresh grape juice. Alcohol does not grow on the vine. It is not a vine product. Alcohol is the product of decay the product of fermentation. It is produced by the process of spoiling" (Charles Wesley Ewing, The Bible and Its Wines (Denver: Prohibition National Committee, 1949), p. 17). The conclusion is "...the communion service then instituted by him as a memorial would be the unleavened bread and the unfermented wine of the Seder service." (The Jewish Encyclopedia, 1904 edition, s.v. "Jesus," vol. 5, p. 165).

"The Jews do not, in their feasts for sacred purposes, including the marriage feast, ever use any kind of fermented drinks...Fermentation is to them always a symbol of corruption." (William Patton, Bible Wines. Laws of Fermentation (Oklahoma City, n. d.), p. 83). The offerings and the sacrifices of the Law were a type of the blood of Christ. All of these offerings excluded the use of "leaven" and therefore were free of anything associated with corruption. How could the "*precious blood of Christ*" (1 Pet. 1:18,19) be symbolized by the corrupted wine instead of the purity of the fruit of the vine?

Neither Christ or any of the writers of the New Testament use the word "wine" in reference to the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-29). The terms "cup" and "fruit of the vine" are used interchangeably in Luke 22:17,18. In fact, the Bible uses only the phrases "the cup" or "fruit of the vine." Fenton tells the meaning of the "'fruit of the vine,' e.g., the offspring of the vine, or that which is borne of the vine. Now, the vine does not bear intoxicating drink. The fruit of the vine is not intoxicating. There is no alcohol in the fruit of the vine. It is pure, good, wholesome, and health-giving, a beautiful emblem fo the life and strength-giving grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Intoxicating wine is the emblem of the disease, sin, and death" (Ferrar Fenton, "The Bible and Wine" p.17). Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century, in retelling the story of Joseph interpreting the dream of Pharaoh's butler said, "He therefore said that in his sleep he saw three clusters of grapes hanging upon three branches of the vine...and that he squeezed them into a cup which the king held in his hands; and when he had strained the wine, he gave it to the king to drink...God bestows the fruit of the vine upon men for good; which wine is poured out to him and is a pledge of fidelity and mutual confidence among men" (Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 2, 5,2, trans. William Whiston, Josephus Complete Works (Grand Rapids, 1947), p. 48).

The use of fermented wine was forbidden to be used by the priests (Lev. 10:8-10). How is it that our High Priest who has a better high priesthood encourage the use of intoxicants under a better covenant with better sacrifices would encourage his priests to use it?

Scholars inform us the Passover included four cups of "fruit of the vine." If each of the disciples was to drink all four cups. And if all the cups were filled with fermented wine they would have been intoxicated by the end of the Passover meal. Drunkenness will keep one out of the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19f). Why would the Son of God encourage His disciples on the night in which He was betrayed to get drunk? (Eph. 5:18). Why would Jesus bless a cup of fermented wine that the Law instructed a Jew not even to look upon? (Prov. 23:31).

Regardless of all these facts, some still look to Paul's statement to the Corinthians as proof that the early church used intoxicating wine during the Lord's Supper. "*For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk*" (1 Cor. 11:21 ). The phrase "and another was drunk" does not prove that intoxicants were used on the Lord's Table at Corinth. Even if it did, the intoxicants were a part of their own carnal feasts which Paul was condemning and not a part of the a legitimate observance of the Lord's Supper. The Greek word used here for "*drunk*" is *methuein*, meaning when men have well drunk, drunk plentifully. It is describing the amount they drank instead of their mental or physical condition. Furthermore, grape juice does not naturally turn into fermented juice without the assistance of a human winemaker. Dr. Lawson Winton describes the process, "By definition, grapes were the fruit of the grape vine. The grape is composed of an outer skin, juice vesicles, and sometimes seeds. When the grapes are hanging on the vine the juice is unfermented, and hence, unfermented juice is truly the fruit of the vine. In order to obtain fermented juice, the grape skin must be broken and the yeast spores contact the juice. Alcohol is not found in the whole grapes on the vine, so fermented juice is not the fruit of the vine, but rather the fruit of bacteria acting on the juice. By this reasoning, fermented juice is no longer fruit of the vine, but something different and, hence, unscriptural for use in the Lord's Supper."

Others will argue that the early Christians did not have any way of keeping fresh grape juice for the observance of the Lord's Supper and would naturally had to use fermented wine. Even if this were true, today, we do not have to worry about having pure fruit of the vine. The Welch Company has long provided a means of preserving the juice of the grape for use in the communion through their bottling processes. The Jews and early Christians had several means of assuring grape juice at the Passover

feast and the Lord's Supper. Some would seal it in a jar and sink it to the bottom of a cool fish pond. Others used the boiling method to destroy the yeast and made a paste to be re-hydrated for use later. The filtration method strained the skin and pulp containing most of the yeast or bacteria. Some would simply take a fresh bunch of grapes and squeeze it into a cup to assure the use of fresh unfermented grape juice.

The conclusion: no faithful Christian would attempt to observe the Lord's Supper using fermented wine. God will not accept fermented wine with unleavened bread any more than he will accept grape Kolaid with hotdog buns. Besides the burden of proof is on those who advocate intoxicating wine on the Lord's Table.

### **Substitutions, Additions and Subtractions**

Since time of Cain, Nadab and Abihu, and King Jereboam man has felt it necessary to change the commandments of God in regard to worship. This is often true with regard to the elements of the Lord's Supper. Consider

A group of federal penitentiary inmates in Marquette, Mich. Who had filed a suit for the right to eat pizza in their religious services. Eating the pizza was supposedly done in commemoration of Christ's death, or done in commemoration of Christ's death, or was, apparently, their "Lords' Supper". Leonard H. Lundberg, a spokesman for the group, said, "It doesn't matter if we order a couple of canned hams, a pizza or whatever, as long as the ritual of the church is involved." Lundberg and his group are members of the Universal Life Church. He continued, "What's the difference between pizzas and wine and wafers? Whatever a group feels commemorates the body of God in Christ should be allowed."

This line of argument might work in the court of law of religious rights, however, it will not work with Jesus who specified what He wants in His Supper.

The Mormons teach that: Water is commonly used instead of wine in the sacramental services fo the church. "It mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory - remembering ...my body,...and my blood" . (Doctrines and Covenants, Sec. 27, p.40). It seems to have mattered to Jesus and Paul.

From the Associate Press dispatch on April 23, 1969, in St. Louis, Missouri: "the use of hamburgers nd soft drinks at Communion is acceptable if those items have religious significance for the communicant," says Methodist Bishop James Thomas of Des Moiones. "It is proper to say that this honored sacrament must be interpreted with meaning and vitality in every age', Bishop Thomas said at a session of the First United Methodist Convocation on Worship. 'We are determined not to continue doing things that have no meaning in this modern world.'" Just how did unleavened bread and fruit of the vine loose its meaning given be the Lord? And just how did hamburgers and soft drinks obtain meaning?

The Broadway Church of Christ in Lubbock Texas reported in its paper Advance: "one Sunday, a child was happy beyond words that the preacher had taken time out so that everyone could have fool-Aid and cookies. It was the Lord's Supper." It appears he has instituted a Lord's Supper for children.

This kind of adding to and subtracting from and substituting for God's Word is condemned throughout the whole Bible. Jesus never said "do you on thing; when it comes to the Lord's Supper. He said, *"this do."* What Christ specifies excludes everything except what has been specified. We need to do all with His authority not a our own. *"And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him"* (Col. 3:17). God gave strong warnings against adding and taking away from His Word. *"For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book"* (Rev. 22:18-19).

Remember it is the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Table not ours. It is the Lord's blood and body being memorialized not our own. It is the greatest of insults to the host of the feast to tamper with his provisions for His meal.

**Questions:**

1. Where did the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine come from which Jesus used when instituting the Lord's Supper?
2. What is the Feast of Unleavened Bread? When was it observed?
3. What was to be completely removed for the house before the observance of Passover?
4. True False Salt is a leavening agent.
5. What was unleavened bread a symbol of?
6. What does unleavened bread represent in the Lord's Supper?
7. What is the fruit of the vine?
8. What does it represent in the Lord's Supper?
9. Did the Passover meal include fermented wine? Explain.
10. True False Orthodox Jews will only use unfermented grape wine at the Passover meal.

11. List the passage(s) of scripture that refers to "wine" in the Lord's Supper.
12. Does Paul's use of the phrase "*and another was drunk*" in 1 Corinthians 11:21 prove that intoxicants were used on the Lord's Table at Corinth? Explain.
13. Can Welch's Grape Juice turn into wine if left out on a warm Sunday afternoon? Explain.
14. What do the Mormon's use instead of fruit of the vine?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. Why is grape Kool-Aid unscriptural for use on the Lord's Table?
2. What other foods were served at the Passover meal? Why are they not included in the Lord's Supper?

**Homework:** Each Lord's Day focus on the meaning of the elements in the Lord's Supper.



# Significance of the Lord's Supper

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## Part One

The church at Corinth had many problems. Paul took them on one at a time. He expounds God's Will upon division, church discipline, taking one another to court, marriage to unbelievers, eating meats sacrificed to idols, and women and head coverings. When we come to the eleventh chapter of 1 Corinthians, Paul is treating the matter of abusing the Lord's Supper. What they called the Lord's Supper did not even remotely resemble what Jesus instituted. They had made a common meal out of this memorial meal which Jesus instituted for Himself. Having criticized the Corinthians for their abuses of the Lord's Supper, Paul now turns to present the proper method for observing the Lord's Supper. It was not of human devising, but divinely instituted, and resulting in a mandatory practice binding on all Christians.

Their abuses had reduced the significance of the Lord's Supper to a common meal. Instead of promoting unity and fellowship, it was divisive and opposed to joint participation of a spiritual family. Within this text Paul sets forth the correct significance of the unique feast. In this lesson we will deal with the first component of its design: A Commemoration of Christ's Death.

### Commemoration of Christ's Death

Paul wrote, *"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me'"* (1 Cor. 11:23,24).

God's religion has always been a religion of memorials and remembrance. The rainbow was set in the sky to remind us of God's promise never again to destroy the earth by flood (Gen. 9:8-17). God also ordered the making of a pile of stones to testify to the miraculous crossing of the Jordan (Josh. 4:1-6). The Passover reminded the Israelites of their deliverance from the death of the firstborn in the tenth plague which resulted in them being freed from Egyptian bondage.

Man has had a universal need for memorials. He has used these to commemorate various events or persons in history. The uncivilized and the sophisticated; illiterate and educated, destitute and affluent, etc. America has her Independence Day and Memorial Day. There is the Washington Monument and the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials. Every tombstone in every cemetery is a monument to two facts. First, that somebody lived and was loved; Second, that somebody has died and is lovingly remembered.

A memorial service is for the purpose of reminding a group of people of some noted person and whose memory those people hold in reverence. Man is prone to forget. There is a high price to pay for forgetting. To think that men could actually forget what Jesus has done for us might seem unlikely, but there is little doubt that we would have forgotten if we did not have this memorial to keep the work of Jesus pre-eminent in our minds. If we forget His sacrificial death for us, we will forget our past condition without Him, and enter sin again.

Man needs simple reminders not to forget. Small mementos can powerfully bring back memories as anyone who treasures a small belonging left them by a departed parent can testify. Before his death, my Dad gave me his router. I have never used it, but it happens to be a memento which carries precious memories. Pictures we treasure forever keeps the memories fresh and vivid. The Lord's Supper is a spiritual reminder we cherish weekly.

However, Jesus left no statues or personal relics of Himself. He even left us an empty tomb.

Christ did not leave any physical evidence of His presence among us. Had he done so, throngs of people would at this moment be standing in a trance in front of a sandal or a piece of cloth. Instead, all he left was the Lord's Supper. It is not a faded photograph, a piece of clothing (such as, the Shroud of Torin claimed to be the burial clothing of Jesus), a tool used while working as a carpenter or some letter written to a disciple. But by this very simple symbol, we can bring back again before us the Savior broken for us, His blood shed for us, His love so great, dying to give us life. In this Jesus is not just a dusty historic figure, but He is vividly real.

Just what should the Lord's Supper remind us of about Jesus? Memorials not only stir memory but honors great lives, commemorates great deeds, and also inspire us to action. 1) It reminds us of His mission *"for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Lk. 19:10). 2) This memorial reminds us that He went to the cross willingly, knowing it was what the Father wanted Him to do, and that it was the only way to save sinful men. Such selfless sacrifice deserves to be remembered. 3) The Lord's Supper reminds us of His great love for us. *"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Rom. 5:8). 4) In eating the bread we remember His body, so beaten and bruised and disgraced for us. 5) By drinking the cup, we see His blood, shed as he hung suffering on the cross, *"poured out for many unto remission of sins"* (Mt. 26:28). How easily we should be able to fill our minds with these scenes.

There is no dispute that the Lord's Supper is the greatest memorial ever conceived. It is exceptional in its perseverance. All pictures fade with time. Monuments crumble into dust. Yet, the Lord's Supper is as fresh as the elements used. Consider its singularity of elements used. Who would have conceived of a memorial that was made, not from marble, steel, concrete, etc., but of grape juice and unleavened bread. Furthermore, a memorial peerless in preserving its relevance. How many Americans can remember why we have the Statue of Liberty? No one knows what the monuments upon Easter Island represent. Do you know what the Eiffel Tower commemorates? Yet, the Lord's Supper when partaken of in a worthy manner has not lost its significance.

### **Authorization of the New Covenant**

As mentioned above man is such a forgetful creature that he needs memorials. However, memorials tend to lose their significance over time, unless we are put in remembrance of its genuine meaning. The Lord's Supper is not just a commemoration of Christ Jesus' death, but it is also is a symbol of the authorization of the New Covenant.

Paul continued to relay to the church of Christ at Corinth the message he received from Jesus about the Lord's Supper. *"In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me"* (1 Cor. 11:25).

In an upper room of a house in Jerusalem on the night of His betrayal, Jesus gathered His disciples around Him for the last time to partake of the Passover feast. The Old Covenant, of which the Passover was a part, was about to end. Soon a New Covenant, ratified by the blood of Christ, was to be given. This last supper which Jesus used to institute the memorial feast of the New Testament, foreshadowed the closing of the Old with its animal blood and the instituting of the New with the blood of the Lamb of God. Yet, it was more than just a foreshadowing. It was also a promise by Jesus Christ who was about to shed His blood upon the cross. According to Paul, He has fulfilled His promise, having nailed the Law of Moses to the cross. *"having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross"* (Col. 1:14).

Thus, the Lord's Supper stands as a reminder each Sunday that we are not under the Old Covenant, but the New. The Lord's Supper is to remind us that we are not Jews, but Christians. It tells us that we are no longer responsible to the Old, but bound to the New. Anyone who is holding on to the Old by way of tithing, instrumental music, Sabbath-keeping, etc. and practicing the Lord's Supper is walking on two different sides of the cross at the same time. Paul went on to so warn the church at Colossae, *"so let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ"* (Col. 2:16-17).

Not only did Christ take away the Old Law, but established a second which is superior to the first (Heb. 8:6-13). The Old made nothing perfect, the New makes its subjects perfect. The Old had an imperfect priesthood, the New has a perfect one. The Old was for Jews, the New is for all nations. The Old *"a remembrance made of sins year by year"* (Heb. 10:7); the New: *"their sins will I remember no more"* (Heb. 8:12). Continual sacrifices were necessary under the Old, but now one sacrifice by one man (Christ) for all men once and for all. The blood of Christ ratified the New, whereas the Old was ratified by the blood of animals. The Hebrew writer quotes Jeremiah's (31:31-34) prophecy that the Old Covenant was to cease and the New one was to be established. *"In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away"* (Heb. 8:13).

When Moses instituted the Lord's covenant with Israel, He took the blood of young bulls and sprinkled it on the altar and on the people who entered the covenant. *"And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words'"* (Ex. 24:8). The use of blood to enact covenants was most common in ancient times. "...covenants were ratified in different ways; sometimes, for instance, the contracting parties were held to be bound by eating salt together; sometimes by partaking together of a sacrificial meal; sometimes by passing between the divided pieces of slaughtered animals; and especially by the use, still prevalent in many parts of the world, of blood, as by each of the parties tasting each others' blood, or smearing himself with it, or letting it be mingled with his own blood, or by dipping their hands in the blood of the slaughtered animal". (James Hastings, Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible). The superiority of the New is seen in the fact that man's blood, and not animal blood was used. Not just any man's blood, but the sinless Son of God's blood.

We should reflect on all the blessings of the New Testament in contrast to the Old when partaking of the Lord's Supper. When we do, we will thank God for Christ's willingness to sacrifice His blood. Furthermore, we should have a firm resolve to remain obedient to the terms of His covenant.

### **Proclamation of the Gospel**

The significance of the Lord's Supper must be clearly understood each time it is observed. Although most denominations practice the Lord's Supper in some form, most of them do not observe it every first day of the week as is required in the New Testament pattern. They often argue that frequent observance would lead to the loss of meaning and importance to the observer. This is a point we need to consider. If we aren't careful the Lord's Supper can lose its significance. Through a frequent observance it can become commonplace and we can partake of it without worshiping in spirit. It is good, therefore, for us to be reminded of its meaning. Next, we are reminded that the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of the Gospel. Paul wrote, *"for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes"* (1 Cor. 11:26).

Every time we partake of this memorial feast we are preaching. The word *"proclaim"* is from the Greek word *katagello*. According to Young it means "to tell thoroughly". Vincent says "The Lord's death is preached in the celebration..." (Word Studies of the New Testament, Vol. 3, p. 252). It is in the present tense verb indicating that the preaching is continual or habitual. Thus, every time we partake each Sunday we by example are preaching.

The observance itself becomes a sermon. Not everyone can be an oral proclaimer of the Gospel, but every man, woman, boy or girl in the church can preach a sermon in the act of observing the Lord's Supper. "Actions speak louder than words" when we are partaking the Lord's Supper. No sermon on these subjects could be more convincing than the whole congregation partaking of the Lord's Supper in joint participation.

Just what are we preaching? It provides us an opportunity to preach several things. It is just like the Passover was used as an opportunity for Israelite parents to teach their children. *"And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?'"* (Ex. 12:26). If a visitor does not understand what the Lord's Supper is, upon seeing the feast observed he would in all likelihood ask its

meaning, thus giving the Christian an opportunity to teach him about Christ. What are we doing? What does it mean? We must be ready and willing to give such an answer (1 Pet. 3:15). We preach Christ as the Son of God, His mission, His suffering in His body, His death, His blood, His resurrection, His New Covenant, that the kingdom has come, and Jesus will come again.

On the other hand, failure to partake is a denial of the Gospel. The Gospel teaches the importance of partaking. Christians are commanded to partake. To fail to partake rejects the Gospel commandment. The whole Gospel message is summed up in the Lord's Supper. For nineteen centuries the Lord's Supper has been a monument to that momentous event: His sacrifice for our sins. When the saint willfully absents himself from the table of the Lord, to an extent he thereby denies his faith in all that Jesus should mean to him. Those who fail to take the Lord's Supper, silence a great witness.

You may have never considered the important silent sermon you have been preaching each Sunday. However, it is a powerful message to the world that Christ died, arose, and paved the way for your spiritual life.

**Questions:**

1. How had the Corinthians abused the Lord's Supper?
2. List some other memorials used in the Bible?
3. Why are memorial so important and necessary?
4. Just what should the Lord's Supper remind us of about Jesus?
5. What Covenant were Jesus and His disciples living under when He instituted the Lord's Supper?
6. When partaking of this spiritual meal what should it remind Christians about the Old Testament?
7. What connection is there between the New Testament and blood of Christ?

8. In what ways is the New Testament superior or better than the Old?
9. The word "*proclaim*" could be translated \_\_\_\_\_ in 1 Corinthians 11:26.
10. List the various lessons the Christians proclaims each time he partakes of the Lord's Supper.

**Application & Discussion:**

1. What makes the Lord's Supper the greatest of memorials of all time?
2. What message does the Christian preach when he neglects the observance of the Lord's Supper?

**Homework:** Keep on preaching the non-verbal sermon via the Lord's Supper every Sunday.

# Significance of the Lord's Supper

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## Part Two

### Anticipation of the Lord's Return

In the eleventh chapter of his first epistle to the church of God at Corinth Paul indicates that it is a commemoration of Christ's body which agonized and His blood which was shed upon the brutal cross of Calvary. Next, he recognized the Lord's Supper as the celebration of the blood which was the authorization of the New Covenant. In verse 26, he declares that the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of the Gospel: *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."* Also, found in this passage is an anticipation of the second coming.

Each time we partake it shows that we believe Christ will come again. For nearly two thousand years Christians, under persistent assault from Satan have been looking for His Coming with eager expectancy. It is quite clear that Christ did prophecy that He would come again. *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory"* (Mt. 25:31).

By the partaking of the Lord's Supper we show that Jesus has already come the first time. A group of about 600 Samaritans still wait for the coming of the Messiah. Every year they gather for Passover at their temple at Mount Gerizim in Israel, still convinced that they have the true faith. They pray for the coming of the Messiah, not realizing that He came over two thousand years ago. The faithful partaking each Lord's Day the Lord's Supper wait for His return.

The Lord's Supper is to last for a specified period of time - *"till He come"*. When that time is, no one knows. He will come as the thief in the night. Paul told the Thessalonians, *"for you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief"* (1 Thess. 5:2-4).

Yet, one thing we know for certain, the Lord's Supper will end when He does come. Why? Because the Supper as a form of spiritual communion will become obsolete. Heavenly fellowship with Christ will be like a constant feast, instead of a weekly, five minute snack. Thus, the Supper looks backward to the death of Christ and forward to the time when He will come again.

As we partake, not only are we proclaim a belief that He will come again, but we declare that He has not yet come. Consider the logic of the syllogism which follows: As often as the Lord's Supper is observed, it proclaims the Lord's death till He come. The Lord's Supper is still being observed. Therefore, the Lord has not come a second time.

Despite this plain teaching there are some that teach that Christ's Second Coming has already taken place. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses have taught for years that He returned in 1914, but they still observe. Max King taught that He came in Judgment of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Again, those that follow his teaching continue to partake of the Lord's Supper in clear violation of 1 Corinthians 11:26. The Supper is to be observed til He comes. Once He has come the partaking of the Communion of the first day of the week is to cease.

We wonder when, but we must wait until the Lord comes again. Until that time we must observe the Lord's Supper. Though we do not know when He will come, we do know some things which are going to take place when He does. Now we meet Him weekly in the Lord's Supper. When He comes again we will meet Him in the air. Not Jerusalem! Not San Francisco! Nor some other great metropolis! Paul also

told the Thessalonians *"for this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord"* (1 Thess. 4:15-17). The rest of the world will be burned up. *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up"* (2 Peter 3:10). When He comes again all the saints will be rewarded, that is, those who have been waiting and partaking. When He comes again the kingdom will be delivered back to God. Only those in the Kingdom and obeying the laws of the kingdom will be saved. *"Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power"* (1 Cor. 15:24).

When He comes again all opportunity to partake will cease. Hence, if you have not been partaking of the Lord's Supper, you have been disobedient to the gospel. Hence, *"...when the Lord Jesus is reveal from heaven with His might angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. these shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power"* (2 Th. 1:7b-9). When He comes may He find you prepared and partaking each Lord's Day.

Since we do not know when, we must always be prepared for the Second Advent of Christ may be at any moment. Paul warned that He will come like a thief in the night (1 Th. 5:4). The Lord's Supper serves as a habitual weekly reminder to be ready. *"Watch therefore for ye know not the day nor the hour"* was spoken by Jesus to the ten virgins, five of whom had been wise and five foolish (Mt. 25:1-13). Each time the saint eats the Supper, he should be reminded afresh to keep his lamp full and ready, for his very act of eating is declarative of his faith in the Lord's return *"till He come"*.

The Lord's Supper is the greatest memorial ever made, a pronounced confirmation that we are now under the New Testament, an illustrated proclamation of the gospel, and a regular reminder of the Second Coming of Christ.

### **Communion With Christ and One Another**

Paul told the Corinthians that *"the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread"* (1 Cor. 10:16,17). Just what is the communion? The word *"communion"* means "sharing" from the Greek word *koinonia* meaning "communion, fellowship, joint participation, having together in common, to share with someone in something." In the context, communion with Christ is contrasted with communion with idols or demons. Thus, we have fellowship in the death of Christ when we partake of the bread and cup.

When we break the bread, we are partaking of *"the communion of the body of Christ"*. Why do we have a sharing together with or something in common with the body of Christ? 1) Because Jesus said *"This is my body which is broken for you..."* (1 Cor. 11:24). 2) Because He tasted of death for every man. His body hung undeservingly where ours deserved to hang. He suffered the pain, separation, humiliation, and death due our flesh. 3) Because in like manner to Christ's death, burial and resurrection, our bodies are lowered into the watery grave of baptism as His body was lowered into the grave (Rom. 6:3-5). 4) Finally, we bare the marks of His crucifixion on our *"bodies"* (Gal. 6:17).

Similarly, when we drink the cup we are partaking of *"the communion of the blood of Christ."* The blood of Christ was *"poured out for many unto remission of sins"* (Mt. 26:28). His blood remits or forgives us of our sins. From the Greek word *aphesis* meaning "a sending away, letting go". He has sent them far away from us. It was shed for many which means *"all men"* (cf. Rom. 5:18,19), *"taste of death for every man"* (Heb. 2:9), *"He died for all"* (2 Cor. 5:14,15), *"gave His life a ransom for many"* (Mk. 10:45), *"Who gave himself a ransom for all"* (1 Tim. 2:6), and *"He bare the sins of many..."* (Is. 53:12). It reminds us that it is the blood of Christ that gives us access to the new and living way and the throne of God.

*"Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh" (Heb. 10:19,20).*

Communion with the Lord can only begin when we die to the world (Rom. 6:3-7). Each time we partake we are affirming that a covenant exists between God and us; examining ourselves, mourning our failures, repenting and seeking forgiveness. We should show weekly a more determined effort to keep it. Let us not fall into the trap of the Israelites, they wanted the blessings given under the covenant, but they soon forgot that it included obligations. Sometimes people reason that they have failed God, so they do not observe the Lord's Supper. This is exactly what Satan wants. We should reason that we need forgiveness and because we are His, we have available to us a remedy for sin. We should seek that forgiveness and try our best to live up to that covenant we made with God.

Furthermore, we are sharing the meal with Christ each Lord's Day. *"for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God....for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes"* (Lk. 22:16,18).

The Lord's Supper is a foretaste of heavenly communion. Here, we commune with Christ once a week, there in eternity we will communion with Him without the physical supper. Into this heavenly communion none will be received except those who have communed with the risen Savior upon the first day of every week while upon earth.

### **Manifestation of Unity**

According to the apostle Paul, whenever a group of Christians assemble to observe the Lord's Supper they manifest the unity which they have with one another through the body of Christ. *"For we, though many are one bread and one body, for we all partake of that one bread"* (1 Cor. 10:17). Just as Christian unity is enhanced by our having the *"mind of Christ"* (Phil. 2:5), that attitude is never more fully symbolized than through the emblems of His suffering. Our minds are brought to dwell on that which reconciles us to God, and to one another.

The United States is a "melting pot" of nationalities. Your one dollar bill has the Latin phrase *E. Pluribus Unum* which means "out of many, one". Consider the Lord's church as a kind of spiritual "melting pot." The power to bring diverse people together is the power of the cross. Whether rich or poor, black or white, educated or uneducated, white collar or blue, city folks or country, etc. When we observe the Lord's Supper together it honors the cross where Jesus' blood was shed and His body persecuted. His sacrifice paved the way for us to be united into one spiritual family with God as our Father.

In almost all nations the act of eating together has long been thought of as a symbol of unity. For centuries, relationships have been expressed and confirmed by this rather simple exercise of eating together. In the 23rd Psalm David said, *"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies"*. The custom in the East was to ratify treaties or agreements through the fellowship of a meal. Spiritually, the agreement recognized is the New Covenant purchased with Christ blood. Furthermore, in modern times holidays provide occasions for a family to gather and eat and strengthen and renew their ties. It is a unifying family meal. As we gather around the Lord's Table we confirm that fact that we are "brothers" and "sisters" in Christ. These are not mere titles nor terms for an empty relationship.

Unity is an important aspect of the *"one body"* (Eph. 2:14-17). The one bread of the Lord's Supper symbolizes the one body, the church of Christ. The one bread is a perpetual reminder that the Lord established only one body. Joint participation signifies a relationship in the one Body.

Communion reminds us of the need to mend our relationships. Some will eat the Lord's Supper while hating a brother, never having fellowship with other brethren at other times, or even while preparing to split the church. We need to remove all disunity that may hinder us, before we worship (Mt. 5:22f). We need to be giving *"diligence to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace"* when we eat (Eph. 4:3).

Often times as I was growing up there would be little fights and tempers which would erupt between any number of the six children in the family. When we came to sit together around the table it would not take my father long to figure out that somebody was mad at someone else. He would ask



us what the problem was and inform us to put our fight aside and not to bring it to the supper table. Even husbands and wives must confront their anger at each other when they come to the table to hold hands and pray with thanksgiving for the food. Brethren, must do the same. Thus, churches that eat together stay together.

Instead the partaking as if it were a spectator sport or a group of total strangers eating at a restaurant, we should demonstrate our love for one another when we partake. Simply eating it together doesn't prove that we love one another. For a husband and wife can sleep, eat, and live together without loving one another. Christians can eat the Lord's Supper together and then *"bite and devour one another"* (Gal. 5:15). True communion means we have *"hearts ... knit together in love"* (Col. 2:2). It was Abraham Lincoln said, "I don't like that man, I need to get to know him better." Along these lines Longfellow wrote, "If we could read the secret history of our personal enemies, we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility." Remembering these things at the Lord's Table should help us be understanding with each other.

As by the circulation of the blood every member of our body is kept unceasingly in most vital connection with the others, so does the Body of Christ. The blood of Christ symbolized in the cup represents the blessings purchased for all of us. This should remind us that we are all helpless sinners in desperate need of salvation. We are humbled at the awful cost of our redemption. When the cup hits your lips say in your heart: "That's God on that shameful cross! He bore our sins in His body. He shed His blood in my place. He shed His blood for that sister and this brother".

In conclusion, the Lord's Supper reminds us of the need to remove all the hindrances to unity, such as, self-centeredness (1 Cor. 13:4), promoting our own opinions (2 Tim. 2:14) prejudice (Ac. 7:57; 17:11), pride (Rom. 12:3; Pr. 16:18) for all ground is level at the foot of the cross, envy (1 Cor. 3:3), denominationalism or "division" which originally referred to tears in a garment or cracks in a foundation (1 Cor. 1:10), "dissension" (Gal. 5:20) meaning "a standing apart", murmuring (Js. 5:9), false teaching (Rom. 8:32), thriving on controversy (2 Tim. 2:14), party spirit (Gal. 5:19-21) and even forsaking the assemblies which shows we don't care for our common heritage, love each other, and support of unity.

A body chopped into little pieces would be a grisly sight. The body of Christ not joined together as one at the Lord's Table is no less horrible. As you partake of the communion, think: "How close am I to my brothers and sisters sitting around me?"

### Questions:

1. How long will Christians partake of the Lord's Supper? Why?
2. Can one properly partake of the Lord's Supper if he believes Christ has already come again? Explain.
3. Why can no one know when Christ will return?
4. True False By observing the Lord's Supper each Christian proclaims that Jesus has not yet returned.

5. What will become of the Kingdom when Christ returns?
6. The term "*communion*" is *koinonia* in the Greek which also means...
7. Why do we have a sharing together with or something in common with the body of Christ?
8. Why do we have a fellowship together in the blood of Christ?
9. At what point does one begin their fellowship with Christ and with one another?
10. How is the Lord's Supper a manifestation of unity?
11. What things can hinder our unity in Christ?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. What applications can be made about the Lord's Supper being the only fellowship meal authorized by Christ for the New Testament church?
2. How important is unity in the Body of Christ? Explain.

**Homework:** Whenever partaking of the Lord's Supper meditate on the fact that He could return at that very moment.

# Significance of the Lord's Supper

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## Part Three

### Affirmation the Kingdom Has Come

Many view the Kingdom as something in the distant future. Premillennialists feel that Christ failed in his first attempts to establish the kingdom, so as an after thought He established the church. One day, they say, He will come again and will establish His kingdom and rule on earth for a thousand years. This reign will take place at Jerusalem upon the throne of David.

However, the Kingdom was established and the Lord's Supper proves it. Consider the following syllogisms: 1) The Lord's Supper, after Jesus instituted it, was not to be observed until the kingdom of Christ was established. *"And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel"* (Lk. 22:29,30). 2) The church in Corinth observed the Lord's Supper. *"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took break; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes"* (1 Cor. 11:23-26). 3) Therefore, the kingdom of Christ had been established and was in existence then. Again, 1) The Lord's table was to be in the Kingdom. (Lk. 22:29,30). 2) The Lord's table was in the church in Corinth. *"You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons"* (1 Cor. 10:21). 3) Therefore, the church in Corinth was the kingdom of Christ in Corinth.

We can partake of the memorial in the kingdom and the church today, because they are both one and the same. After all, Christ is the king of the kingdom and head of the church. Christians are citizens in the kingdom and members of His church. The apostles' doctrine is the law of the kingdom and the rule of the church.

Those that believe that the kingdom is not the church, but is to be established in the future, can never observe the Lord's Supper properly for we are only to partake of it with Christ in His kingdom, but this must cease when He comes again. Paul clearly told the Corinthian brethren that *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes"* (1 Cor. 11:26).

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper with His disciples after they had eaten the Passover meal. *"But I say to you, 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"* (Matthew 26:29). Notice the prophecy of Jesus in this passage. He promised to eat of it again when the kingdom had come. All prophecies must be exactly fulfilled. If this prophecy had not come true, it would mean Jesus was a false prophet and consequently not the Son of God.

When would Jesus partake of the Lord's Supper with His disciples again? Jesus said when His kingdom had come. So, when did the Kingdom come? If we find the day the Kingdom came, we will be able to find the day when Jesus communed with the apostles.

The Kingdom could not have been established before John the Baptist. After His baptism by John Jesus went out *"preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel'"* (Mark 1:14,15). Earlier John had preached the same. *"John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!'"* (Matt. 3:1). The phrase *"at hand"* tells the time of this message's

fulfillment. It was close enough to the hand, one could reach out and touch it.

Neither could the Kingdom of promise have been established before the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When Jesus had commissioned the Seventy disciples to send them out preaching, He told them *"whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 'The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you'"* (Luke 10:10-11). When Jesus sent out the Twelve disciples He told them "as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matt. 10:7). After Peter proclaimed of Jesus, *"You are the Christ the son of the living God"* Jesus promised to build His church and gave to the disciples the keys of the kingdom (Mt. 16:16-18). He also promised, *"Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom"* (16:28).

In Mark's gospel the afore quoted passage in Matthew has some addition information. Here Jesus says, *"assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power"* (Mark 9:1). The Kingdom was promised to come with power. This power was to begin at Jerusalem and its source is from Heaven. As part of the Great Commission speech Jesus promised, *"behold, I see the Promise of My Father upon you but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endured with power from on high"* (Luke 24:49). Just before His ascension into Heaven Jesus again promises, *"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..."* (Acts 1:7a). After witnessing the ascension of the Christ the eleven *"...returned to Jerusalem..."* (Acts 1:12a). Ten days later *"when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, a sound as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"* (Acts 2:1-4). The Kingdom could not have come before he Holy Spirit of promise was sent with power.

If the Kingdom came before Pentecost, then it had no King. Christ was King only after His death and resurrection. "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne" (Acts 2:29-30). You cannot have a kingdom with the King.

If the Kingdom came before Pentecost, then it had no throne (Acts 2:30).

If the Kingdom came before Pentecost, then it had no citizens. Three thousand were added to the church or kingdom on the day of Pentecost.

If the Kingdom came before Pentecost, then it had no High Priest. Jesus was of the tribe of Judah and not of the tribe of Levi where the high priesthood originated. He could not be a priest on earth (Heb. 8:4). He has ascended into Heaven to be our High Priest.

Jeremiah prophesied of Coniah (a shortened form of Jehoiachin, 37:10 and another form is Jeconiah, 24:1; 27:20; 28:4; 29:2): "For none of his descendants shall prosper, Sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah." Jesus was a descendant of Coniah (Matt. 1:12). Therefore Jesus could have never ruled on the throne of David in Judah. He is on the throne of David on the right hand of God since the day of Pentecost. Could Jesus have been a king on earth? NO! He could only be a king after His ascension.

Could Jesus have partaken of the Lord's Supper during the forty days between His resurrection and His ascension into Heaven? He did eat with a few (not all eleven) of His disciples by the sea shore of Galilee. Some of the disciples came to the beach where Jesus was "they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.'... Jesus said to them, 'Come and eat breakfast.' Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, 'Who are You?' —knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish" (John 21:9-13). They ate FISH. The Lord's Supper only has two elements authorized by Jesus: unleaven bread and fruit of the vine, NOT FISH. So NO! This was not the Lord's Supper.

Jesus also ate food with two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-27). These two men were not even of the eleven apostles to whom the promises had been made at the last Passover feast when promised them, "I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God" (Luke 22:16). One of these men was named "Cleopas" (Luke 24:18) who was not one of the Twelve.

Before His ascension Jesus appeared alive to his disciples and *"He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?' So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence"* (Luke 24:40-43). Again, the Lord's Supper has only unleaven bread and grape juice, NOT FISH and HONEYCOMB! Why did the Lord eat fish on two different occasions after His resurrection and also some honeycomb? To demonstrate that He was not a ghost or spirt but that He was alive.

Furthermore, the church or Kingdom was established in Jerusalem after the Lord's resurrection and ascension. The Day of Pentecost is the Kingdom's birthday. As promised, Christ is on David's throne and is now king (Acts 2:30-33). It was on this day and in Jerusalem that repentance and forgiveness of sins was to be preached (Lk. 24:46-49). On this day Peter preached what Christ had commanded him (Mk. 16:15,16; Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 17:3). All necessary elements for the establishment of the kingdom were present on Pentecost. It was the beginning of Christ's Kingship, when He sat on His throne, gave the Law through the preaching of the Gospel, and had three thousand citizens enter it by means of obedience to the Gospel. For a kingdom to exist it must have a king, a throne, a law, and citizenry. It was on Pentecost in about 29 AD in Jerusalem all these elements for the Kingdom of promise came to fruition.

As noted in the passages studied, every passage before Acts 2 points forward to Pentecost as to the beginning of the Kingdom/church and every passage afterward Acts 2 points back to Pentecost for the beginning of the Church/Kingdom.

The answer to our question as to when Christ fulfilled His promise and partook of the Lord's Supper with His disciples: Christ partook of the Lord's Supper with His apostles on the Day of Pentecost. It was on this day three thousand became citizens of the Kingdom, when they were baptized. From that day "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers"* (Acts 2:42). This *"breaking of bread"* refers to the partaking of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17ff). Since the promise made by Jesus at the Passover feast the disciples had not partaken of the Lord's Supper. Christ fulfilled His promise at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Ever since whenever the saints gather on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper they are communion with the Lord (1 Cor. 10:14-22).

Jesus promised to partake of the Lord's Supper anew in the Kingdom (Matt. 26:29; Luke 22:16) was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost after His resurrection and ascension when the apostles were gathered in Jerusalem for the establishment of the Kingdom/Church (Acts 2:42).

### **Publication of Our Faith**

What is one of the most effective ways of announcing: "Lord I believe, World I believe, Brethren I believe"? All Christians can do so by gathering with the saints on the Lord's Day to partake of the Lord's Supper. Paul wrote, *"For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."* (1 Cor. 11:26).

Every time we partake of the Lord's Supper it is a public demonstration to God we believe that 1) He sent His Son as promised, thus we no longer look forward to the coming of the Messiah among the Jews; 2) Christ died for me, therefore refuting the Calvinist doctrine of Limited Atonement; 3) Jesus was the Son of God, not an imposter, not just a prophet or just a mere man; 4) our King established the kingdom like he promised, thus we do not look for an earthly kingdom to be established when He comes again as do the Premillennialist; and 5) the Father will one day send His Son back at the last day as He has promised.

No greater object lesson can be found which demonstrates to the world that we believe in Christ

than when we partake of this memorial supper. Let the skeptics account for its existence. If it celebrates a myth, let them tell us who fooled the first group into sitting down to the table to celebrate that which never existed. Why a new word was coined to point out the peculiar relation of this supper to the Lord. It is called the *kuriakos* supper. This word, not found in Greek literature previous to this, is defined: "Of or belonging to the Lord; relating to the Lord" (Thayer).

When a group of believers eat the bread and drink the cup on the Lord's Day they are proclaiming to the world that 1) Jesus was the Son of God; 2) Man is in sin and in need of a Savior (Rom. 3:23); 3) Jesus died for all men to be free from sin; 4) Jesus did rise from the dead; 5) it is our relationship with the cross that brings us the blessings of salvation; 6) we have communion with Jesus every week, Christ is still alive, He is not dead; 7) the kingdom has come and we are in it; and 8) Jesus will come again, thus they must be prepare to meet the Lord in Judgment.

Not only do we demonstrate to God and preach to the world whenever we partake of the emblems of the Lord's Supper, we also manifest certain encouragements to each other. Every time you partake of the Lord's Supper to show other participants that 1) Jesus is the Son of God; 2) we still find forgiveness through Him; 3) we are in the kingdom; 4) we believe in unity, thus we are brothers; 5) we are in spiritual fellowship with each other; and 6) Christ will come for us again.

When it comes to the Lord's Supper actions do speak louder than words. Each time a Christian participates in the Lord's Supper he is making a proclamation before the God of heaven, the world filled with sinners, and the church composed of his fellow brethren. Thus, to fail to partake of this power memorial is to sinfully silence a potent proclamation of faith.

#### Questions:

1. What do premillennialists teaching about the establishment of the Kingdom?
2. Complete the syllogism:
  - A The Lord's Supper, after Jesus instituted it, was not to be observed until the kingdom of Christ was established.
  - B The church in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost observed the Lord's Supper.
  - C Therefore \_\_\_\_\_
3. Can someone properly partake of the Lord's Supper if they do not believe the Kingdom has been established? Explain.
4. What did John the Baptist, Jesus, and His disciples preach concerning the coming of the Kingdom?
5. Could the Kingdom have been established before Christ death, burial and resurrection? Explain.

6. Could the Kingdom have been established before Christ's ascension into Heaven? Explain.
7. Could the Kingdom have been established before the Day of Pentecost? Explain.
8. Could the Lord's Supper have been observed the second time before the day of Pentecost? Explain.
9. Jesus ate with his disciples by the sea of Galilee after His and before His ascension. Could this have been the eating of the Lord's Supper? Explain.
10. Jesus ate with two disciples on the road to Emmaus. Could this have been the eating of the Lord's Supper? Explain.
11. When did the disciples eat the Lord's Supper in the Kingdom? Why?
12. What beliefs are we publishing to the world every time we observe the Lord's Supper?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. Do we eat the Lord's Supper with Christ every Sunday? Explain.
2. Can we have true faith without observing the Lord's Supper? Explain.

**Homework:** Use the Lord's Supper as the starting point to teach someone about the Kingdom and your faith.

## False Benefits of the Lord's Supper

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Most of the false benefits some have claimed to be derived from the Lord's Supper originated with the Catholic Church. The Catholic church's authority is not derived from the Scriptures, they are a source of authority. However, many denominations has adopted and adapted the traditions of Catholicism in relation to their practices surrounding the Lord's Supper.

### As a Sacrament for Salvation

Are the sacraments necessary for salvation? They are according to the Catholic Church. "The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation." (Pg. 292, #1129). Just what are these sacraments? "There are seven sacraments in the Church: Baptism, Confirmation or Chrismation, Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony" (Pg. 289, #1113). This is a vain attempt to earn salvation via a system of good works. *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..."* (Isaiah 64:6). Salvation comes through Christ and not through the traditions of men with their man-made sacraments. One is saved by faithful obedience. Faithful obedience does involve being baptized for the remission of sins and remembering each Lord's Day the blood which was shed for the remission of sins.

### As a Sacrifice During the Mass

For years you have heard Catholics talking about Mass. What makes the Mass so important in their religion? It is the special benefits that they receive in the sacrifice of the mass. "What, then, is the Mass? The Mass is the perpetual Sacrifice of the new Law, in which Christ our Lord offers Himself by the hands of the Priest, in an unbloody manner, under the appearances of the bread and wine, to His Heavenly Father, as he once offered Himself on the Cross in a bloody manner" (Joseph Deharbe, a Complete Catechism of the Catholic Religion, p. 267). This tradition of Catholicism began with the early Christian writers. It was first set forth by Cyprian, in this letter, in which he speaks of the priests offering the Lord's Supper as "a true and complete sacrifice to God". Cyril of Jerusalem also wrote that is the "holy and most awful sacrifice...the bloodless service of the sacrifice of propitiation." The Catholic church often uses the early Christian writers for their authority. They refer to them as the Church Fathers.

The only problem with this religious tradition is that there is not one shred of evidence in the New Testament to support it. The fact that the Catholic church says their priests offer up a sacrifice in the Lord's Supper as did the Levitical priests upon an altar is not fact, but error built upon error. The scriptures teach that Jesus was offered up once for all. *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God"* (Heb. 10:10-12). There is no authority for a special priesthood to officiate in a continual sacrifice of the Lord. The Lord's Supper is not a sacrifice of His Body and Blood. It is rather a memorial of the sacrifice. If the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice of the Mass then Christ must often suffer contrary to the teaching of Hebrews 9:25-26: *"not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."*



## **For Forgiveness of Sins**

As a result of the Sacrifice of the Mass, Catholicism claims that the participants receive forgiveness of their sins. "The chief purpose of the holy sacrifice of the Mass is to apply practically to our souls individually those merits and graces which the sacrifice of the cross had already gathered and prepared for all mankind: it is a channel or secondary fountain of the effects of redemption..." (J. Faa Dibruno, Catholic Belief, p. 80). "If a person approached it in good faith, forgetting that he was in mortal sin...with attrition, the sacrament would restore him to grace. By arousing love of God it does directly remit venial sins for which one is sorry, the Sacrament itself has power to sanctify, indefinitely, for it is Christ acting in us,..." (New Catholic Ency., Vol. 5, pp. 607,608). "The Holy Eucharist is not only a food, but an antidote, whereby we may be freed from daily faults and preserved from mortal sins" (Bertrand L. Conway, the Question Box, p. 257).

Never did Christ teach that the fruit of the vine brought forgiveness of sins to the partaker. When He instituted the Lord's Supper He said that it was His blood which brings forgiveness of sins. *"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"* (Mt. 26:28). The symbols are not needed to atone for sin unless Christ's blood is insufficient. The blood of Christ must come in contact with the sinner in order to save him for his sins. The sinner does not come in contact with the blood through its symbol on the Lord's Table (i.e. the fruit of the vine), but in baptism. There is an undeniable connection between the baptism and the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ was shed for the remission of our sins (Mt. 26:28) and baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). We are washed in His blood (Rev. 1:5) and our sins are washed away in baptism (Acts 22:16). We are justified by his blood (Rom. 5:9) and by baptism (1 Cor. 6:11). We are sanctified by His Blood and by baptism (1 Cor. 6:11). Our conscience is purged by His blood (Heb. 9:14) and by baptism (1 Pet. 3:21). The spiritual cleansing agent is His blood (1 Jn. 1:7) and our souls are cleansed through baptism (Eph. 5:26). His blood was shed in His death (Jn. 19:34) and we are baptized into his death (Rom. 6:3). The blood of Christ and baptism is said to bring us forgiveness of sins, not the Lord's Supper. The blood is what saved us from sin, baptism is when. As a child of God it is still his blood that cleanses us from sin, not the Lord's Supper *"but if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin"* (1 Jn. 1:7).

Today, many brethren treat the Lord's Supper as if it brings forgiveness of sins when they partake of it. Those who come to worship only to partake of the Lord's Supper on Sunday morning and then fail to show up on Sunday night, show an inappropriate concept of the Lord's Supper. Others come to worship, but leave as soon as they have partaken of the Lord's Supper. This shows they think that the Lord's Supper provides them with special benefits that the other acts of worship do not.

## **To Preserve from Future Sin**

Catholicism not only teaches that the Eucharist has the power to cleanse them from past sins but to also preserve them from future sins. "For this reason the Eucharist cannot unite us to Christ without at the same time cleansing us from past sins and preserving us from future sins" (Pg. 351, #1393). "By the same charity that it enkindles in us, the Eucharist preserves us from future mortal sins" (Pg. 352, #1395).

There is not such mention of this benefit from the Lord's Supper in the New Testament. However, it is the Word of God studied, meditated upon, and obeyed which keeps one from falling into sin. The Psalmist wrote, *"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You"* (Psalm 119:11) and *"how can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word"* (Psalm 119:9) and *"The Lord shall preserve you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul"* (Psalm 121:7). Paul wrote, *"and the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!"* (2 Timothy 4:18).

## **As a Means of Conveying Spiritual Graces**

Another false concept that denominations have developed around the Lord's Supper is that it

blesse the partaker with spiritual graces. "The Holy Eucharist gives us the grace to resist temptation, just as good as food keeps the body from sickness, weakness, and early death. Temptations, if they were not resisted, would produce sickness and weakness within the soul, and if they were serious things they would bring death to the supernatural life of the soul" (Conway 183).

While it is true that observing the Lord's Supper strengthens us, it is not meant as some kind of supernatural booster shot to protect you from spiritual diseases. The only time the Lord's Supper is mentioned in connection with spiritual illness is not when people were failing to partake of it, but when they were partaking of it in an unworthy manner (1 Cor. 11:27-33). Furthermore, these graces are not obtainable by merely gulping a little juice and chewing up a mere bread crumb once a week. Rather, the scriptures teach that we must grow in these graces (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

### **For Physical Healing**

Those who believe in miraculous healing today have attributed physical healing to the observance of the Lord's Supper. "The vicarious suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ paid for the healing of our bodies, the same as for the salvation of our souls, for 'with His stripes we are healed' (Is. 53:5). Mt. 8:17 reads '...Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses'" (Divine Healing, United Pentecostal Church Manual, p. 24).

Consider the prophecy about Jesus in Isaiah 53:4,5. *"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."* Certainly these prophecies have been fulfilled. Matthew 8:16,17 tells us the verse 4 was fulfilled during the personal ministry of Jesus. *"When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."* No where does the Bible teach that the Lord's Supper has any part in fulfilling this prophecy. According to 1 Peter 2:24-25 the spiritual healing of verse five was fulfilled by the death of Jesus *"who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls."*

If the Lord's Supper can heal physical illness why is there so much sickness among God's faithful servants in the New Testament? Paul had physical infirmities (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Why did Paul take pleasure in His infirmities, if all He needed was the benefits of the Lord's Supper? Timothy had *"oft infirmities"* (1 Tim. 5:23). Why did Paul prescribe medical treatment for Timothy's oft infirmities, when he could have simply told him to partake of the Lord's Supper? Furthermore, Trophimus got sick (2 Tim. 4:20) and Epaphroditus almost died of sickness (Phil. 2:25-30). If healing is in the symbols of atonement why don't all receive it? Why is there a large percentage of sickness among God's faithful servants today? Surely, this concept is the product of the fertile imagination of those to love to twist the scriptures to prove their beliefs.

### **For Physical Health**

There are some who believe that continued physical health is a by-product of observing the Lord's Supper. This concept can be confronted with the same questions asked above. Why do faithful servants of God get sick today?

The belief can be seen by those who only show up on Sunday to partake and those who take it to the sick. Their justification for this comes from 1 Corinthians 11:30 which they believe talking about physical health. But Paul was dealing with a spiritual problem. The spiritual consequences of weakness and sickness were caused by the spiritual abuse of the Lord's Supper. The Corinthians were failing to partake of it in a discerning manner, not an unhealthy manner.

### **To Communion with and Assist the Dead**

If you are Catholic partaking of the Eucharist or Lord's Supper can given you a chance to assist those who have died. "The Eucharistic sacrifice is also offered for the faithful departed who 'have died in Christ but are not yet wholly purified, so that they may be able to enter into the light and peace of Christ'" (Pg. 345, #1371). "In the Eucharist, the Church expresses her efficacious communion with the departed..." (Pg. 420 #1689).

Again, nothing is found in the New Testament which can support this tradition. Paul wrote, *"for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' So then each of us shall give account of himself to God"* (Romans 14:10b-12a). The Bible offers not second chances. *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). In Jesus' parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus He indicated that the Rich Man could not be helped any Lazarus just as Lazarus could not help his five brothers. The reasons: first, there was a great divided or gulf fixed between those in Paradise and torment and the living had the Law to help them Luke 16. When rich farmer died with a bumper crop it was that night his soul was required of him. This offered no time for others to assist him in preparing for Judgment (Luke 12:15f).

### **Questions:**

1. What are sacraments?
2. Why cannot the Lord's Supper be viewed as a sacrifice being made at the Lord's Table?
3. What are the connections between the blood of Christ and baptism?
4. Why cannot the Lord's Supper bring forgiveness of sins to the observant?
5. What helps to preserve us from sin?
6. What are spiritual graces? How are they obtained?
7. Does Isaiah 53:4,5 teach that the Lord's Supper gives physical healing? Explain.

8. Did early Christians suffer from physical illness? Were any one them told to observe the Lord's Supper to be made whole?
9. Is 1 Corinthians 11:30 speaking of physical health? Explain.
10. What do Catholics claim about the Lord's Supper and the dead?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. Is there anything the living saints can do for the dead? Explain.
2. What does the Lord's Supper have to do with our salvation: past, present, and future?

**Homework:** When partaking of the Lord's Supper focus on you spiritual well-being not your physical.

# Abuses of the Lord's Supper

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## The Catholic Doctrine of Transubstantiation

According to Webster Transubstantiation is the "doctrine held by the Roman Catholic church that the 'whole substance' of the bread and wine in the Eucharist is, by reason of consecration, changed into flesh and blood of Christ..." (Webster's Encyclopedia of Dictionaries, p. 295). The term comes from the prefix "trans" meaning "to change" and from the Latin word *substantia* which means "substance" Hence the word means "a change in substance."

The Catholic Church claims that "when our Lord said: 'this is my body' through His Almighty Power, the entire substance of the bread was changed into His body; and when he said: 'This is My blood' The entire substance of the wine was changed into His blood...That simply means that the color, taste, weight and shape of bread and wine—whatever else appears to the senses remains the same after the change of the entire substance of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. This change is called 'Transubstantiation'." (Father Smith Instructs Jackson, p. 150,154). They further teach that through the officiating "act of the priest" who "places the body and blood of Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine upon the altar" (Roman Missal, p. 9). "Not only is it the true body of Christ, to wit: All that is proper to the human body—the bones, the nerves, contained in the sacrament - but further, Jesus Christ whole and entire."

According to historical evidence this theory was developed by three characters of the third century: Gregory of Nyssa (a theologian who was a bishop of the small town of Cappadocian in Nyssa and who died in 394) and John Chrysostom (a patriarch of Constantinople who was born in 345 and died in 407) and John Damascenus (a pope who served from 36-384). It was first referred to by Cyril of Jerusalem who about 47 A.D. delivered the Catechetical Lectures: "Since he himself was declared and said of the bread, This is my body, who shall dare to doubt any longer? And since he was affirmed and said, This is my blood, who shall hesitate, saying, that it is not his blood?...With the fullest assurance let us partake of the Body and Blood of Christ.. What seems bread is not bread, though bread by taste, but the body of Christ, and what seems wine is not wine, though the taste will have it so, but the blood of Christ". The word "transubstantiation" was first being used by Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours (1055-1133). The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 declared, "This body and blood are really contained in the sacrament of the altar under the species of bread and wine, the bread being transubstantiated into the Body, and the wine into the Blood, by the power of God."

Not only does the Bible never mention or teach this doctrine many scriptures stand in opposition to it. Jesus said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you"* (John 6:53). Although it may appear that this my support Transubstantiation verse sixty shows the disciples response: "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" Consider what Christ really meant. *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life"* (6:63). Did Jesus really teach cannibalism? Drinking blood was against the express letter of the law (Lev. 17:10-14) and against the teachings of the New Testament (Acts 15:20-21). Jesus was using a figure of speech known as metaphor. A metaphor "makes an implied comparison between things which are not literally alike" (Webster 236). It is used abundantly though the Bible. As when Jesus said *"I am the door"* (John 10:7) or *"you are the salt"* (Matt. 5:13). When the lamb was set upon the table the master of the house spoke these words: *"This is the passover..."* The sacrificial lamb with which the Jews celebrated the Passover was not the passover itself but only a symbol or sign of it. We use metaphors in every day speech. We show a picture of our mother

an say, "This is my mother." We point to a map and say, "this is where I live." After referring to the cup as His blood, He then called it "the fruit of the vine," showing that it had not made a literal change, but that he had simply used a figure of speech. The fruit of the vine represented His blood and the unleavened bread represented His body. A chemical analysis would show that there has been no change as well as a taste test would do the same. When God turned water into blood it was obvious (Ex. 7:19-25). When Jesus turned water into wine the change was obvious (John 2:1-10). "*This do*" was a command for them to partake, not a miracle to perform. Jesus will be with us when we partake, but it is not Him who we are literally partaking (Matt. 28:20; 8:20; Heb. 13:5). His presence is always spiritual today, never physical. Someone has well said that God can make man out of dust, but no man can possibly make God out of a piece of bread. Some bribees of men eat human flesh, but no bribe or nation of people on earth have ever been known to eat that which they conceived to be their God.

### **The Lutheran Doctrine of Consubstantiation**

When Martin Luther attempted to reform the Catholic church he rejected many of their doctrines he believed were contrary to the Bible. To deal with Catholicism's doctrine of Transubstantiation he formulated a new doctrine: consubstantiation. The prefix "con" means "together, under or in." Thus, consubstantiation means to change together. The only difference is that Transubstantiation is a literal change while Consubstantiation is a mix-mingling of the flesh with the elements. Like, turning a cookie into a chocolate chip and simply adding chocolate chips into a cookie. The latter is easier for some to swallow. It can be met with the same arguments used against Transubstantiation.

### **The Doctrine of Intinction**

The practice of Intinction involves taking the bread and dipping it into the cup to soak up the juice and then both elements of the Lord's Supper are partaken of at the same time. This is found mostly in the Roman Catholic church. However, Congregational churches, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodist and a few Baptists denominations have been known to practice Intinction during the Lord's Supper. The Eastern Orthodox varies slightly in that they put both on a spoon and then the priest gives it to each observant of the Lord's Supper.

This practice was first known of around 340 A.D. in the writings of Julius I. It is believed to have been utilized to help in giving communion to the sick. Others claim that it is more practical of a practice in that it does not require the cleaning or disposal of individual communion cups.

Some go to John 13 for scriptural justification for the practice. However, the context shows a different picture. Jesus prophesied, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me*" (13:21). The disciples all wondered who this could be. "*Jesus answered, 'It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.' And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. ...Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night*" (13:26,27,30). Jesus would not have dipped it into the cup but one of the dishes at the Passover feast.

The major problem others have with the practice of Intinction is that it violates Jesus' clear command to both "*eat this bread and drink this cup*" (1 Corinthians 11:26). Intinction subtracts from Jesus' Command. Taking two actions and substituting it with one. Those Christians wishing to follow the Lord's Supper as it was instituted should follow the pattern Jesus set forth in the Word. We need to make a distinction between the cup and the bread unlike Intinction.

### **Communion Peddlers**

Some practice taking the Lord's Supper to those in hospitals, at home sick, etc. Historically this dates back to the time of Justin Martyr: "And on the day called Sunday, all who live in the cities or in the country gather together to one place,...Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the presider in like manner offers prayers and thanksgiving, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution

to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacon.” Later it became a practice of the Catholic church. This was done because the believed eating it had benefits to the partaker, such as, good health and forgiveness of sins. Some say it is doing a good work, but that is how the Lutherans justify infant baptism.

The place of eating the Lord’s Supper is in the local assembly of the Saints. Paul waited seven days at Troas to partake of the Lord’s Supper with the brethren. *“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight”* (Acts 20:7). Paul made it very clear that they were to observe it *“when you come together as a church...when you come together in one place...when you come together to eat”* (1 Cor. 11:18,20,33). So the Lord wants up to come together as a congregation of worshipers to eat the Lord’s Supper.

In The Old Testament the Passover was to be observed in Jerusalem. It was only observed in Jerusalem during the assembly. Only those who assembled ate. Those unable to come and partake the first time could partake on the fourteenth day of the second month in Jerusalem. All fragments of the Passover were burned after the assembly.

Where is the authority to take the Lord’s Supper outside the assembly of the saints? There is no divine command, approved apostolic example, or necessary inference. All that is said concerning this practice in the scriptures is the sum total of nothing. So we do nothing, without authority. When one is not able to participate in worship he is not required to partake of the Lord’s Supper by himself at home. Whatever excuses one from partaking in the other acts of worship excuses him from the Lord’s Supper. This concept makes the Lord’s Supper a sacrament and more important than the other acts of worship.

### **Bread Breakers**

Some argue that one must break the bread before it is passed out to be partaken. To break bread refers to eating, not a symbolic gesture. Jesus broke the bread so that He could eat of it. We know that He drank of the cup (1 Cor. 11:25). We have no record of Him eating the bread unless the fact that He broke it meaning to break off a piece to eat. *“Breaking bread at home”* (Acts 2:46) was eating their food at home. *“To break bread”* (*klasai artou*) is the literal rendering of the Hebrew idiom (*paras lechem*) and it means ‘to partake of food,’ and is used of eating (as in a meal). The figure (or idiom) arose from the fact that among the Hebrews bread was made, not in loaves as with us, but in round cakes about as thick as the thumb. These were always broken, and not cut. Hence the origin of the phrase to break bread.” (E.W. Bullinger, *Figure of Speech Used in the Bible*, p. 839). The one presiding at the table does not function in a priestly manner nor does he in some mystical manner take the place of Jesus. He merely helps at the Lord’s Table and directs the assembly as a leader. Paul said it is the bread which *“we break”* (1 Cor. 10:16) not “he breaks.” The only reason for the one who presides at the Lord’s Supper to break the bread literally is to eat some of it himself.

### **One Loafers**

Just to be clear a one loafer is not talking about a brother who one wears one shoe when serving the Lord’s Supper. It refers to the number of pieces of bread served at the Lord’s Supper. *“In the communion service there shall be...But one loaf or unleavened bread...from which all participants shall break and eat as opposed to the official breaking of the loaf into two or more sections before being passed out to the participants...”* (Old Paths Advocate, Feb. 1948). The number of loaves is an aid to the general command to eat. When Paul was separated from the Corinthians by the Aegean Sea he could still say *“for we all partake of the one bread”* (1 Cor. 10:17). It would take one big loaf to accomplish that. Paul was referring to what the one bread symbolized (the one body) not the number of loaves. Christians all over the world partake of *“one bread”* without partaking of the same loaf. A loaf is of bread with twenty-five slices is still *“one bread.”*

**Questions:**

1. What is Transubstantiation?
2. When and where did this doctrine originate?
3. What do both the Old and New Testaments teach about the drinking of blood?
4. What does metaphor have to do with the elements used at the Lord's Table?
5. Did Jesus teach the literal eat of His flesh and drinking His blood in John 6? Explain.
6. When a true miracle is performed in the Bible, how obvious was it?
7. What is Consubstantiation and how is it different from Transubstantiation?
8. What is Intinction? What is it unscriptural?
9. Where is the authority to take the Lord's Supper outside the assembly of the saints? Should the Lord's Supper be taken to the sick? Explain.
10. Why did some say the bread must be broken ceremoniously at the Lord's Table?



11. What does breaking of bread mean?

12. Who are the one loafers?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. If Paul was in Ephesus writing to those in Corinth how could they have eaten of the same literal "one bread"?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. List practices in the Church of Christ which may have been derived from Catholicism and denominationalism.

**Homework:** Regularly examine the attitudes and manner of the congregation's observance of the Lord's Supper to make sure it is not being abuses by the teachings of men.

## The “One Cup” Argument

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Some take the words of Jesus literally. *“Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you’”* (Matt. 26:27). These brethren claim that Jesus only used one cup at the institution of the Lord’s Supper at the Passover meal. Therefore, He commanded that all the saints throughout the ages should only use one cup when observing the Lord’s Supper. They are often referred to as “one cuppers”. Some of these congregations are so serious about their only being one cup at the Lord’s Supper that they will not accept any leadership which will not adhere to this belief. “In the communion service there shall be but one cup (or drinking vessel) from which all participants shall drink, during any service as opposed to the use of two, three, four, or individual cups...No preacher, teacher, or leader who is not in full agreement with the above named principles shall be allowed to have any part or lot in the teaching, preaching or leadership of said church” (Old Paths Advocate, Feb. 1948).

### Arguments for Using Only One Container

Several arguments are offered to support the idea that multiple containers are contrary to the Word of God. It is argued that Jesus’ use of an article proved he only used one cup. Jesus used phrases like “the cup”, “this cup”, and “that cup.” If this is true then every time a definite article is used in the scriptures it could on reference the singular. Jesus said, *“And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!”* (Matt. 10:14-15). Did Jesus mean just a single house or city? Perhaps he meant all homes and cities which rejected His word. If “the” cup means we can have only one container, then what about “the vine” in *“fruit of the vine.”* Would that mean only “one” vine? Would each congregation have to have its own vine, so they would know that the grape juice they are using came from “the vine”? The text shows that “the cup”, “that cup,” and “this cup” is not one container, but the contents: “my blood” and “the fruit of the vine.”

Another argument for using only one container in the Lord’s Supper goes like this: “The phrase ‘drink ye all of it’ (KJV) means ‘all of you drink (ek) out of it.’ it means ‘to put to the lips’.” The same expression is used in John 4:12: *“Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?”* Does that mean that Jacob, his children, and his cattle put their lips to the well to drink. Remember, the well was deep (4:11). Why could they not put their lips to pails or cups or any other container and drink. Does the phrase *“eat of the bread”* (1 Cor. 11:28) mean that every member has to put his lips to the bread?

They also argue that multiple containers for the fruit of the vine were invented and patented by Dr. John G. Thomas in 1894. And first used in the Presbyterian Church in Lima, Ohio. It was not until some twenty-five years later according to G.C. Brewer that individual communion cups were introduced into the church of Christ. Their conclusion is that multiple containers were too new to be scriptural. This would exclude anything used in worship which was not invented by the first century. The use of lights, projectors and white boards to teach, songs books for singing, etc. would be excluded from the assemblies.

### Metonymy

The fact, is the phrase “one cup” is never used in the New Testament to refer to the Lord’s Supper. Even if it was it would not prove that we were to use one container. The Bible uses the figure

of speech called “metonymy.” Those who refuse to recognize the usage of the figurative language of the Bible will make mistakes such as demanding one cup.

The term “metonymy” is from two Greek words, *meta*, indicating change, and *onoma*, a name thus metonymy is a change of name. “A word or phrase used in metonymy as a substitute for another” (Webster’s New World Dictionary, p. 895). “a figure by which one name is used instead of another, to which it stands in a certain relation” (Bullinger 538). “The use of one word for another that it suggests...the container for the thing contained...” (Webster’s New International Dictionary, p. 1549).

So as the example given above the container or cup can stand for the thing it contained. For example, if someone were drinking coffee and ask another if they wanted a cup. They would automatically understand they were being offered coffee and not just an empty container. In everyday speech metonymy is often used. Another example is our references to life as a journey or a walk or a race.

Metonymy is often found throughout Scriptures. When Jesus said “*they have Moses and the prophets*” (Luke 16:29). Moses and all the prophets were long dead. Jesus meant that they had the Scriptures which these men had authored. When the Hebrew writers said, “*Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled...*” (Heb. 13:4). He was not talking about the literal bed but the intimate relationship was not defiled by sin.

In metonymy, the thing named does not have to be present with the thing suggested. It is true all liquid necessitates a container or containers of some sort, but not because metonymy requires it. If it is said that “The White House issued an embargo on oil.” By “White House” we mean president, and he could have issued it from any other place or building and the metonymy would still be correct. Paul said we are to partake of the “*Lord’s table*” which is obviously a figurative expression (1 Cor. 10:21). Since “the table” is named could one partake without the literal table being present? By use of metonymy Paul was referring to the contents on the table: fruit of the vine and unleavened bread not just a literal table.

Also the thing named is not an inherent part of the thing suggested once the figure of metonymy has been established. “*Noah...prepared an ark for the saving of his house*” (Heb. 11:7). This does not mean that the literal house of Noah was on the ark. House often is used for family. Noah saved his family on the ark. The house or container suggests the contents which were members of Noah’s family. If it takes both the container and the contents to constitute “*the cup of the Lord*”, then we would have to drink both the container and the contents in order to follow Paul’s instructions in 1 Corinthians 11:26: “*for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.*” And even if one could drink the container what would the other disciples drink?

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one thing is substituted for another due to their close association. A house can stand for the members of a family. A cup can stand for the contents. The cup at the Lord’s Supper stands for the fruit of the vine.

Jesus used three expressions “*the cup*”, “*my blood*”, and “*the fruit of the vine*” to represent the same thing, that is, the content. The cup is the fruit of the vine in Matthew 26:26. The fruit of the vine is not the container. Therefore, the cup is not the container.

The cup is the blood of Christ. “*For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*” (Matt. 26:28). The container does not remind us of the blood like the red grape juice in the container. Therefore, the cup was the fruit of the vine, not a container.

The disciples drank the cup. “*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes*” (1 Cor. 11:26). They drank the fruit of the vine. “*For I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes*” (Luke 22:18). Therefore, the cup was the fruit of the vine not the container.

Jesus told them to divide the cup among themselves. “*Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, ‘Take this and divide it among yourselves’*” (Luke 22:17). They divided the fruit of the vine. “*Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you’*” (Matt. 26:27). Therefore, the fruit of the vine is the cup, not the container.

## **Multiple Containers Present at the Institution of the Lord's Supper**

Perhaps the strongest argument for the use of individual or multiple containers is that they were used when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper during the last Passover meal. At the Passover, Jesus *"took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves'"* (Luke 22:17). This indicates they had their own cups. At the Jewish Passover "a cup of red wine mixed with water, was poured out for each guest...at the passover supper each participant had his own cup to drink from ..." (Hastings Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. 2, pp. 326,327). "Wine is on the table with drinking cups fro each person present, big or little..." (Jewish Services in Synagogue and Home, Lewis Dembitz, p. 358).

If "cup" means container did Jesus mean for them to take a hammer and break it and distribute the fragments? Or divided the contents of the cup into their cups? If guests are given a pitcher of tea at dinner and told to "divide it among yourselves," will they pour tea into their individual glasses and drink it?

Multiple containers are authorized as aids to the general command to partake. We are at liberty to use any size, any kind whether glass, plastic, paper or silver, and as many as we want that may be convenient. The one "cup" is still the one cup (contents which is the fruit of the vine).

## **One Container Too Large For Early Church**

Three thousand were added to the church when it was established on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41-47). From the Sunday on they partook of the Lord's Supper or *"breaking of bread"* (Acts 2:42). How large of a cup would it take to serve grape juice to three thousand Christians. If the individual communion cup holds about 10milliliters, then it would take 30 liters of grape juice for a congregation of three thousand. Imagine trying to lift fifteen two liter bottles of Dr. Pepper. Since a liter of liquid weights about 2.2 pounds then the container used at Pentecost would have to hold 66 pounds of grape juice. Added to this is the weight of the container itself which would have not been the light plastic we use today. Imagine passing a container of liquid around each Lord's Day that weighed at least 70 pounds.

Consider the fact that the church at Jerusalem continued to grow. *"However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand"* (Acts 4:4). This would be added to the number those saved at Pentecost bringing the congregation up to about eight thousand. You will notice that the five thousand only included the men who were saved. Add a conservative two thousand for the women and you have a staggering 10,000 saints to serve on Sunday. This would require a container holding 100 liters of grape juice and would weight 220 pounds plus the weight of the container. God's commandments are not burdensome or too hard to bear (1 John 5:3) but this "one container" demands more than almost any Christian can handle. We have not even begun to calculate the amount of time it would take to serve these numbers while using just one very large container.

## **Summary**

Every Lord's Supper should just have "the cup." The cup is the contents, that is, the fruit of the vine which represents the blood of Christ. A cup alone does not represent anything about Christ.

Brethren who believe in only one container should be referred to as the "one container brethren" instead of the "one cup brethren."

## **Questions:**

1. How important is the using only one container for the juice in some Churches of Christ?

2. What argument for "one cup" is developed from the phrases "*the cup*", "*this cup*", and "*that cup*"? What is the problem with this argument?
3. Does the newness of a technology exclude it from being used in our worship assemblies? What does determine how and with what we worship God?
4. Define "metonymy".
5. By use of metonymy the cup represents the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Give our own examples of metonymy used in every day speech.
7. Give other uses of metonymy found in scripture.
8. Just what does it mean that Noah saved his "house" by building an ark?
9. Give evidence showing that multiple containers were present at the Institution of the Lord's Supper.
10. How large of a container would it take to serve 3000 people the fruit of the vine?

11. How large of a container would it take to serve 10,000 people the fruit of the vine? What problems might this present?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. Calculate the amount of time it would take to serve 3000 Christians the fruit of the vine just using one large container.
  
2. Read Matthew 20:21-23 below. Be reading to discuss what the what the container represents and how this passage helps refute the arguments of those who demand the use of one container in serving the Lord's Supper.

*21 And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." 22 But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." 23 So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father."*

**Homework:** When partaking of the fruit of the vine make sure you are focusing on the contents of the cup and not the container.

## **Manner of Partaking the Lord's Supper**

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The Corinthian church had a lot of problems: division, fornication, suing each other, eating meats sacrificed to idols, the covering. They were guilty of some serious sins, but Paul condemns them in I Corinthians 11 for being *"guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord."* What! Killing the Son of God. How? They had been abusing the Lord's Supper by partaking of it in an unworthy manner.

Can observants of the Lord's Supper bare the same guilt today? Most denominational churches have long since corrupted the observance of the Lord's Supper by making it an observance once at Easter. As individual Christians we can make the same mistake as the Corinthians and the denominations by failing to show proper reverence in partaking.

### **Partaking in an Unworthy Manner**

The saints at the church at Corinth were corrupting the Lord's Supper. *"Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you"* (1 Cor. 11:20-22). The way in which the Corinthians are unworthily observing the memorial was that they treated the Lord's table as though it were their own. They were coming together to satisfy their hunger, and not to feed on the blessings of the body and blood of Christ. Perhaps this was a remnant of their hedonistic, pagan meals at the temples in Corinth.

Paul says this abuse of the Lord's Table is the same as being guilty of murdering the Son of God anew. The man who tramples on the flag of his country, insults his country; and he who treats with indignity the representative of a sovereign, thereby offends the sovereign himself. In like manner, he who treats the symbols of the Christ's body and blood irreverently is guilty of irreverence toward Christ. They are united in the spirit with those who put Him to death. This is not the only time this warning is given. *"If they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame"* (Heb. 6:6).

Paul warns them of spiritual consequences. *"For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep"* (1 Cor. 11:30). Many Biblical commentators have expressed the opinion that these sicknesses and deaths were physical judgments of God sent to chastise the Corinthians. Paul is not speaking of physical illness. Instead, he is describing their spiritual condition which had resulted from their abuses of the Lord's Supper. They are indifferent, lukewarm and are of no real value to the church. They receive little, if any, spiritual strength when they assemble with the saints at the hour of worship. Reverence in worship imparts spiritual strength. Those who properly partake receive that spiritual strength necessary to keep them from that spiritual illness that characterized the Corinthians.

This judgment or chastening of the Lord is a temporal judgment not the final Judgment. *"But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world"* (1 Cor. 11:32). We need to have a proper attitude toward all chastening of the Lord (Heb. 12:5-f). If those who are abusing the Lord's Supper do not change their unworthy manner of partaking, God will judge them in the end and they will face eternal punishment.

### **Proper Manner**

#### ■ **Worthily**

Paul said, *"therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner*

*will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord"*( 1 Cor. 11:27). Some have the view that they are such great sinners that they are unworthy of partaking of the Lord's Supper. That is true of all sinners. No one is worthy of the sacrifice of the body and blood of the perfect, Son of God. However, the term "*unworthily*" is an adverb and not an adjective. It is not describing the person who is partaking but the manner. For example the America Standard Version renders it "*in an unworthy manner*." The worthiness of the partaker is not under consideration. How one partakes of the Lord's Supper is Paul's focus in this verse. All of us have sinned and do sin and will sin. No one will ever reach place in their spiritual life where they can boldly claim: "I am worthy of the Lord's Supper and what the emblems represent." No one can ever pray: "Father, may we be worthy of the sacrifice Jesus made for us." Saving grace has been extended by God to all men. All have been saved by grace. And it is by the grace of God we partake of this memorial. Partaking of the Lord's Supper will involve this understanding: "I am unworthy, but I can partake of it correctly discerning His body." The Lord's Supper only holds meaning for those who have sinned, been redeemed, and know that they are unworthy.

All need to come to the Father in heaven with the attitude of the prodigal in the parable: "*I am no more worthy to be called thy son*" (Lk. 15:21). This feeling of unworthiness can help us partake of it in a worthy manner. So, remember Paul is talking about the manner of eating and drinking, and not your feelings of unworthiness.

#### ■ **Introspectively**

Paul goes on to describe the proper manner of partaking. "*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged*" (1 Cor. 11:28-31).

The word "*examine*" or in other translations "*prove*" is from *dokiaso* meaning in classical Greek putting money to the test to find out whether it is genuine or not. Thus, one examines to find whether he is in a genuine state of seriousness, reverence, and devotion.

Self-examination is necessary in all areas of self-improvement, whether it be sports, business, grades in school, health or spiritual growth. Paul would explain to the Corinthians its importance in the next letter. "*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified*" (2 Cor. 13:5). Regular self-examination is necessary to know whether we are in the faith. If one is in the faith not then he is "*disqualified*" or "*reprobate*", there is no middle ground. The word in the Greek for "*disqualified*" is *adokimai* meaning "not approved, rejected". In the technical sense it was applied to metals as denoting that they will not bear the proving or examination to which they are subjected, but are found to be something other than what they were purported to be.

The saints at Corinth were in terrible spiritual shape. They had a party spirit (1:12,13;3:1-4;11:8); accepted fornication (5:1); brethren going to law against one another (6:1-8); and not to mention an improper manner of partaking of the Lord's Supper. An incorrect life does not lend itself to a correct manner of partaking. Not being unworthy of partaking of the Lord's Supper is one thing no one can change but they had not right to be content with their unworthiness or partaking in an unworthy manner.

Sometimes people reason that they have failed God, so they do not observe the Lord's Supper. This is exactly what Satan wants. When you think you have failed God go to Him in prayer seeking forgiveness. If one does this every day of the week. Come Lord's Day he will have a great appreciation for the grace of God which came via the body and blood of our Lord.

When preparing one's heart in partaking of the Lord's Supper examine yourself with the following questions:

- ▶ Do I fully appreciate what Christ has done for me, Rom. 5:6-10?
- ▶ Do I truly desire to follow Christ, to be the kind of Christian I sought to be?
- ▶ Do I love my fellow participants?



- ▶ Do I liberally, sacrificially give to the Lord as He has give to me?
- ▶ Do I really want the Lord to return?
- ▶ Do I really want to go to heaven?

#### ■ **Discerningly**

Next Paul tells them *“for he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body”* (1 Cor. 11:29). *“Discerning”* in this text “signifies to separate, discriminate.” The one observing the Lord’s Supper must look at the elements to learn what they represent by separating the material from the spiritual.

Discernment requires our undivided attention. Yet keeping our thoughts from straying is a difficult task. Failing to rid our mind of worldly thoughts will make this impossible. The goal is to find some appropriate thoughts on which to concentrate. Thoughtless partaking makes our worship empty and vain.

The partaker needs to discern the meaning of oneness and unity symbolized in this memorial feast. The Corinthians were all baptized into the one body (1 Cor. 12:12,13). They were all one bread, one body (10:17). The one body is the church (Col. 1:18). Instead they had contention (1:11) and divisions among them when they came together in the church (11:18). Each one was eating his own supper (11:21). Proper discernment would have made this impossible.

Each observant must discern the cup or fruit of the vine as representing Christ’s blood. The blood means remission of sins and cleansing to us (Mt. 26:28). It is the blood which put the New Testament in effect.

When partaking the worshiper must understand and think upon the bread as representing the Lord’s body. It is this body which Christians are members and making up the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:17). Always remember it is the body of Christ that suffered in our place: the scourging, the crown of thorns, the mocking, the trials, the smiting, the carrying of the cross, the crucifixion, the forsaking by God, the darkness, and the death.

Discerning between a common meal and a memorial feast is essential to properly partaking of the Lord’s Supper. It is as if it were the blood and body of Christ lying in front of us on the table as in an open casket. We are paying our respect to one who died for us. The men who help with the Lord’s Supper are as pall-bearers.

Discernment involves one’s meditative abilities in order to receive any blessings. Most meals may be properly eaten without conscious concern for the nutritional properties of the food, the body will be nourished with or without discernment.

#### ■ **Gratefully**

Paul reminds the Corinthians that when Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper he prayed a prayers of thanksgiving as an example of how to properly partake. *“and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me’”* (1 Cor. 11:24). The word *eucharisteo*, which means “to give thanks” is the root word from which the word Eucharist is derived. Derrel Shaw once asked, “What should be our thoughts as we are privileged once each week to partake of this supper of Divine origin? Should we be sad and dejected because of the suffering and shame of the Lord Jesus upon the cross? Filled with remorse because it was the sin of man which made it necessary for Him to go there? Of should this be an occasion of joy? Perhaps the thoughtful Christian eats with mixed emotions, but surely not as being overcome with sorrow.” When partaking of the Lord’s Supper one should thank God:

- ▶ For sending your Son.
- ▶ For His the sacrifice of his life.
- ▶ For rising him from the dead.
- ▶ For removing the old and establishing the new covenant.
- ▶ For the kingdom.

- ▶ For the fellowship this symbolizes.
- ▶ For the unity among brethren which this demonstrates.
- ▶ For the church.
- ▶ For washing away our sins in his blood.
- ▶ For promise to send him back one day.

Remember, the way we treat the gift or even the representation of the gift, demonstrates our attitude toward the Giver.

#### ■ **Prayerfully**

*"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body'"* (Matt. 26:26). The word *"blessed"* in this verse *eulogeo*. According to Thayer it means "to consecrate a thing with solemn prayers; to call God's blessings on a thing, pray him to bless it to one's use, pronounce a conservatory blessing on it" (Thayer 259). Notice that *"blessed"* in Matthew 26:26 and *"had given thanks"* in Luke 22:19 are referring to the same act of Christ. They are also used interchangeably in Mark 6:41 and John 6:11. It is also used in reference to a common meal, (Lk. 24:30). Thus, there should be prayers that offer thanks for the Lord's Supper according to the example of Christ and the teaching of Paul.

If we partake of it prayerfully we will also show that we are partaking of it discerningly, trustingly, humbly, penitently, and gratefully. Prayer helps set the mind in the worthy manner. It points the direction of where our thoughts are to be directed. Some bring everything into their prayer from asking for forgiveness to praying for the sick to such an extent that the Lord's Supper is overshadowed. One new convert even prayed: "we thank you Lord for the meal we are about to receive and may you bless it to the nourishment of our bodies. Others need to avoid some of the many repetitious expressions and sayings they have heard over years. Prayers should have personal closeness, freshness, originality, and naturalness. When Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper (Mt. 26:26-29) He limited His prayers to the specific occasion. If we limit the wording to thanksgiving for it and for what it means to us it will be easier to maintain its significance and properly direct the minds of those about to partaking of this meal.

The church at Corinth had turned the Lord's supper into a social meal and had, no doubt, assembled for social reasons. Impure motives often account for irreverence in worship. What about the irreverence of boys and girls, older women and men, engaging in note writing, and idle chatter and giggling as the supper is being served. Others come to be entertained. What about the church kitchen with the aromas from the coffee urn and the roast are wafted to the nostrils of those who are partaking?

The meeting house is not a place to eat and to drink in. Rather it is a place for the church to assemble to worship God, to teach the Gospel of Christ. There are many ways one can improperly partake. Jesus made it clear how to partaking of the Lord's Supper properly if only one will give heed to His commands.

#### **Questions:**

1. What serious sin does Paul accuse the Corinthians of in the eleventh chapter of 1 Corinthians?
  
2. How can we crucifying Christ anew?
  
3. Is the sickness and death in 1 Corinthians 11:30 physical or spiritual? Explain.

4. Is the judgment in 1 Corinthians 11:32 current or the final Judgment? Explain.
5. Is "*unworthy*" in 1 Corinthians 11:27 describing the observant of the Lord's Supper or the manner in which he is observing it? Explain.
6. Why is self-examination so important to proper observance of the Lord's Supper?
- 7.. If someone examines themselves and feels they are unworthy what can they do before they partake in a worthy manner?
8. What are worshipers to discern when partaking the Lord's Supper?
9. For what should the Lord's Supper invoke thankfulness in the hearts of the participants?
10. Upon what should the prayers at the Lord's Table be focused?

**Application & Discussion:**

1. Could someone who claims to be worthy of the Lord's Supper be able to partake of it in an unworthy manner? Explain.
2. Could someone who claims to be unworthy of the Lord's Supper partake of it in a worthy manner? Explain.

**Homework:** Starting Monday examine yourself, meditate on the body and blood of Christ, be thankful in prayer for Christ, so that by the time Sunday arrives it will be easy to partake of the Lord's Supper in the worthy manner.