
THE LORD'S SUPPER

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The ordinance of the Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus the night before His crucifixion and is to be observed by "The Church" (believers only) until the end of time. This ordinance is in remembrance of Christ's death and resurrection whereby believers obtain salvation through Jesus Christ.

Jesus' gave a memorial that would stand as long as the earth remains. He chose very common materials: bread and grape juice. Wheat and grapes will grow in almost every part of the world. Jesus' memorial can be observed around the world. Jesus knew that the permanence of His memorial would depend on the love of God in the hearts of His people.

Man made monuments such as the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, etc. are to remember the one in whose honor it was built. All such memorials eventually crumble or decay.

I. The Lord's Supper given

A. ***The occasion.*** The occasion that Jesus chose to institute the Lord's Supper was the annual Passover Feast of the Jews. Since it was the last Passover before Jesus' death, He especially wanted to eat this feast with His apostles (Luke 22:15,16).

The new institution was very simple. Jesus took bread and gave thanks; broke it and gave to the Apostles saying, "this is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). When they had eaten the bread, Jesus took a cup containing the fruit of the vine, gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. 26:27, 28).

B. *The elements used.*

1. **The bread.** The bread that Jesus used in the Lord's Supper was presumably the unleavened bread of the Passover Feast. *References:* Deut. 16:3,4; Exod. 12:39; 1 Cor. 5:6-8.

2. **The fruit of the vine.** The second part of the Lord's Supper is referred to as the "cup" or "fruit of the vine" (Mark 14:23,25; Matt. 26:27,29) or "blood of the grape" (Deut. 32:14).

Whether the cup contained fermented or unfermented grape juice is a debated question. With so many ways of preserving, unfermented juice certainly is more fitting and in keeping with the total meaning of the Lord's Supper.

II. The Names

A. ***Breaking of Bread.*** The most frequently used term in the New Testament is the Breaking of Bread. In Acts 20:7 it speaks of the disciples coming together on the first day of the week “to Break Bread.” *References:* Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 10:16; Matt. 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, 1 Cor. 11.

B. ***Table of the Lord.*** Paul reminds the Corinthians, “Ye can not partake of the Table of the Lord, and of the table of demons” (1Cor. 10:21, ASV). This name reminds us that the Table belongs to Christ. He gave it in the first place; He is also the host at every meal; He is present at the meal. Jesus gave the precious promise that “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

C. ***The Lord's Supper.*** The Lord's Supper is perhaps the most familiar term used today. It is called the *Lord's Supper* because He is the one who gave it. He invites His children to come and eat. He is the rejected when a Christian fails to be present at this meal. As one partakes, it is Christ who is the source of spiritual food. It is Christ who invites “this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). It is also Christ alone who can debar a child of God from this Table.

The name Supper was no doubt given because it was at an evening meal that Jesus gave it (see Acts 20:7).

D. ***The Communion.*** The term “Communion” is often applied today to the Lord's Supper. The word “Communion” is a description of what takes place. Paul reminds the Corinthians, “The cup of blessings which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?” (1Cor. 10:16). The word Communion means to share, or participate in. Paul is saying that when we drink the cup or eat the bread, that we share or participate in the blessings and benefits of the Lord's death on the cross. We also share the meal with Christ as our host. It is a communion or sharing in the finest sense of the word.

III. When to partake

When Jesus gave the Lord's Supper He did not specify the time or frequency of observance. He simply said, "Do this in memory of Me."

References: Acts 2:42, 46; Acts 20:7.

The Scripture imply that as often as the early church met together, which was weekly, they observed the Lord's Supper. They continued this practice for two centuries. *References:* Acts 20:7,16; 1 Cor. 16:2

In 1Corinthians 11, Paul chastises the Corinthians for their abuse of the Lord's Table in these words, "when therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's Supper" (1Cor. 11:20, ASV). Their conduct about the Table prevented them from truly eating the Supper in an acceptable manner.

IV. The Significance of the Lord's Supper

A. ***A memorial of Christ's death.*** A memorial should serve at least three functions. These are admirably done in the Lord's Supper.

1. It satisfies the desire of the heart to do some tender, loving thing for the Master. (1 Cor. 11:24).

2. By frequent observance, it does not permit us to forget but like a timepiece of the soul, summons believers to the foot of the cross.

3. It constantly reminds of the significant fact of Christianity which is "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3).

B. ***A proclamation.*** Each Lord's Day, as the disciple sits at the table with his Lord, he is preaching a sermon.

1. First of all Paul says that when we eat ***we proclaim the Lord's death*** (1 Cor. 11:26). Jesus said, "This cup is the New Covenant in My blood" (Luke 22:20). The Lord's Supper is a monument to our salvation as well as to Christ Himself. The Lord's Supper proclaims that man is redeemed and receives forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-20).

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2. Secondly, ***we proclaim our love for Him.*** When the Christian assembles at the Table, he is telling the Lord and the world that he believes that the blood of Christ redeems and that he is there to show his love to Christ by being obedient to His command. *References:* Rom. 5:6-8.

3. ***We proclaim the Lord's return.*** When we partake of the Lord's Supper, we "proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Cor. 11:26). The Lord's Table looks back in memory to Calvary where our salvation was made possible. It also looks forward to the day when Christ shall return and our salvation will be fully realized. Only those who truly anticipate His second coming will consistently participate in this Supper.

QUESTIONS – THE LORD'S SUPPER

Read the four accounts of the illustration of the Lord's Supper – Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25. In the blanks write the reference where the following statement is found:

- _____ 1. "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them."
- _____ 2. "Take eat: this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me."
- _____ 3. "For this is my blood of the New Testament, for which is shed for many for the remission of sins."
- _____ 4. "...I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

DISCUSS

1. At the Lord's Supper, what does the bread represent? What does the fruit of the vine represent? (Matt. 26:26) _____

2. List three (3) names applied to the Lord's Supper.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. What is the purpose of partaking of the Lord's Supper? (1 Cor. 11:26) _____
4. What warning is given in 1 Cor. 11:27? _____
5. Before one partakes of communion, what does the Bible command him to do? (1 Cor. 11:28) _____
6. In what sense is the Lord's Supper a proclamation?

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