

The Lord's Supper

Matt. 26:26-29

Introduction:

1. In these verses we read of Jesus, on the night of His betrayal, instituting that memorial feast later referred to as "the Lord's Supper."
2. Regarding the observance of this memorial supper, Jesus, in Luke 22:19-20, said "*this do in remembrance of me.*"
3. Early Christians did just that! Acts 2:42; 20:7.
4. If we obey Christ's instructions, if we follow the approved examples of first century Christians, we will partake of the Lord's Supper on a regular basis. This we do; however, it is possible for us to take too much of a matter of fact attitude about things which are serious and solemn in nature. And it is possible to harbor some unscriptural views about such matters. Hence, it is appropriate to periodically take a new look at an old subject.

Discussion:

I. Background Information.

- A. The Lord's Supper was introduced when Jesus was observing the Jewish Passover with His disciples, Matt. 26:17-19.
 1. It was "*after*" the Passover supper that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, Luke 22:19-20.
 - a. Hence, it is a separate event from the Passover; not an appendage to the O.T. Passover.
 2. However, in view of its overall context with regards to the time of its institution, it seems evident that an understanding of the O.T. Passover could give us a better perception of the significance of the New Testament Lord's Supper.
 - B. The Jewish Passover.
 1. Instituted while Israel was yet in Egypt, just before their departure from Egypt, Ex. 12:1,3,5-7,11-14.
 - a. The Passover lamb typified Jesus Christ, John 1:29; I Cor. 5:7.
 - b. It was to be without blemish, Ex. 12:5, which also typified Christ, I Peter 1:18,19.
 - c. Not a bone was to be broken, Ex. 12:46; which also typified Christ, John 19:32-36; Psa 34:20.
 2. It was to be observed throughout their generations, Ex. 12:14. The Lord's Supper is to be observed until Jesus returns, I Cor. 11:26.
 - C. Further Comparisons can be made between the Passover Supper and the Lord's Supper.
 1. The Passover commemorated Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, Ex. 12:25-27; the Lord's Supper commemorates our deliverance from the bondage of sin, Matt. 26:28.
 2. In Luke 22:14-20 a parallel is drawn between the Passover meal and the Lord's Supper. Each began with eating and was followed by drinking. Jesus stood between these two events, even as He stood between the Law and the gospel.
 - a. The Passover typified our Lord's suffering **before** it occurred.
 - b. The Lord's Supper typifies our Lord's suffering **after** it occurred, I cor. 11:26.

II. The Lord's Supper is therefore a Memorial.

Note: Monuments of stone, marble, metal, etc., are often erected to honor famous people. Cf. Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Kennedy's grave, etc. People gather at such places to honor their memory.

- A. But Christ Instituted His Own Memorial, I Cor. 11:23-25.
- B. The elements He used were economical and universally abundant.
 1. Unleavened bread. During the Passover all leaven was removed, Ex. 12:15,19,20.
 - a. The unleavened bread represents His sinless body, Matt. 26:26.
 2. The fruit of the vine, Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18.
 - a. This represents His blood, Matt. 26:28. **Note:** It was never called "wine."

III. Significant Facts regarding the Lord's Supper.

- A. The Names by which it is called.
 1. "*The Lord's supper*," I Cor. 11:20.
 2. "*The Lord's table*," I Cor. 11:21.
 3. "*The communion*," I Cor. 10:16.
 - a. **Note:** It was not called "the holy Eucharist," "a sacrament," "the mass," etc.
- B. The Frequency, Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7.
 1. Note also I Cor. 11:26.
 2. The saints at Corinth met upon the first day of the week, I Cor. 16:1-2.
 3. The so-called "church fathers" (writers from the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th centuries) stated that Christians regularly observed the Lord's supper on the first day of the week – writers such as Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Eusebius, etc.

C. The Place for observing the Lord's Supper.

1. In the assembly, Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:18,20,33.
 - a. The Catholic Church turned the Lord's supper into a Mass, called it a Sacrament, decided that it therefore has a therapeutic effect on the sick; so the priest takes the Mass to those who are ill.
 - b. Many of our brethren have basically done the same thing with respect to the Lord's Supper; they take it out of the assembly, and take it to those who are ill, while omitting all the other items of worship. Their intentions are good, but they need to remember the actual background of such a practice, and follow **biblical precept** rather than **Catholic tradition**.

D. The Manner of Observance.

1. Examine self, I Cor. 11:28.
2. Partake of it worthily, I Cor. 11:27-29.
 - a. "*Worthily*" is an adverb of manner in which a person observes it. It does not describe the person partaking. No one is worthy of the sacrifice Jesus made.

IV. Things We Admit by Partaking of the Lord's Supper (if we do so with understanding).

- A. Jesus died for our sins, Matt. 26:28.
- B. The Law of Moses is no longer binding on man, Heb. 9:14-15.
- C. We are under the New Covenant, Matt. 26:28.
 1. "*New*" is from *kainos*, which means "*new*," not in respect to time but quality.
- D. The Kingdom has come, Matt. 26:29.
- E. We ought to be united, I Cor. 10:16-17.
- F. Jesus is coming again, I Cor. 11:26.

V. Directions in which the Lord's Supper Looks.

- A. Inward, as we examine ourselves, I Cor. 11:27-28.
- B. Upward, as commune with our Lord, I Cor. 10:16.
- C. Backward, to Jesus death, I Cor. 11:26.
- D. Forward to His return, I Cor. 11:26.
- E. Summarized – The Lord's Supper is a:
 1. Time for self-examination.
 2. A communion.
 3. A memorial.
 4. A proclamation.

Conclusion:

1. There are several paradoxes connected with the proper observance of the Lord's Supper. We should be:
 - a. Sorrowful that an innocent Person had to die in our behalf.
 - b. Ashamed that it was our sins that necessitated the death of Christ.
 - c. Thankful that He loved us so much.
 - d. Joyful at the prospects of His return,.
2. Note these words from the Song: "**I Stand Amazed.**"

"I stand amazed at the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene.
And wonder how He could love me,
A sinner condemned, unclean.

"When with the ransomed in glory
His face I at last shall see,
'Twill be my joy thro' the ages
To sing of His love for me."

"For me it was in the garden
He prayed, 'not My will, but thine,'
He cried with tears in His sorrow,
And sweat drops of blood for mine."

"He took my sins and my sorrows,
He made them His very Own,
He bore the burden to Calv'ry,
And suffered, and died alone

--Bobby Witherington, March 5, 2017