

LESSON 9



THE ORDINANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Scripture Texts: John 6:54-57, 63; 1 Corinthians 11:23-30

Christ died that we may partake of His life. The bread of the Lord's Supper is a symbol of Christ's body, broken on the Cross for our sins. The grape juice is a symbol of His shed blood, the price paid in the sacrifice for our sins. Only people who have had part in the spiritual supper are fit to partake of His supper. Those not saved from sin have nothing to observe, remember, or keep. This supper symbolizes the divine life which Christ has placed within the heart of the one who has accepted Christ's sacrifice. Let us see what the Bible teaches about the third ordinance of God's house.

MEMORY VERSE: *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

1 Corinthians 11:26

The Flesh Profiteth Nothing

John 6:54-57, 63 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. This is NOT physical eating. If so, we would not be able to eat and drink of Him—His literal body is not here. **The flesh**—the material body or bread—**profiteth nothing. It is the spirit that quickeneth**, or gives life. We must believe His Words, follow them, make His teachings and promises ours, if we are to live. See how clearly the Lord's Supper is a symbol? It cannot save. Not even Jesus' physical body and blood can save. It must be His Spirit and life within us. **He that hath the Son hath life** (1 John 5:12). There is no other way. The eating of His flesh has a spiritual significance.

Instituted by Christ

1 Corinthians 11:23 Paul's knowledge of this ordinance was **received of the Lord . . .** and it takes its place along with baptism and feet washing as a Christian ordinance. **Jesus . . . night . . . he was betrayed**—He instituted the supper on the night just before His death which it commemorates (Matthew 26:17-28). Gathered with His disciples for the Passover supper (this Jewish yearly feast commemorated the deliverance from Egypt when spared by the death angel by applying the blood of a lamb to the door), Jesus **took bread**—unleavened bread. No leaven was allowed in the house during the week of Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread. Leaven is a type of sin. Unleavened bread is a type of purity. As the Passover had pointed forward to Christ, the Lord's Supper is a new symbol to point backward to Him (Exodus 12).

1 Corinthians 11:24 He gave **thanks**—thanked the Father for the privilege of paying the only possible price to redeem them. **He brake it**—symbolic of His body **broken for you**—tortured and killed on the Cross. **Take, eat**—symbolic of our accepting Christ, taking Him into our hearts, His life entering into us. **This is my body**—a figure of speech meaning it represented His body. The statement "this is my body" cannot be literally true, for the literal,

physical body of Christ was then visibly present apart from the bread. Christ often spoke in this way: "I am the true vine"; "I am the door." **This do in remembrance of me**—His command to us.

1 Corinthians 11:25 He gave the grape juice as He had the bread. **This cup is the new testament**—new covenant or agreement promised in Jeremiah 31:31-34, to write His law in their hearts—**in my blood**—His blood sealed the testament or agreement (Matthew 26:26-28). Again He commands **this do . . . in remembrance of me**. A remembrance is something that causes our minds to go back to something that happened some time ago, such as a picture of a loved one who died several years before. The picture vividly brings that one to mind.

1 Corinthians 11:26 **As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death**—you teach the fact of it, acknowledge faith in it, testify to having entered into it. **Till he come**—until Christ comes. This gives it a permanent place.

1 Corinthians 11:27-30 Since this memorial means so much, to partake of it **unworthily**—not having the life of Christ in the heart—is to be **guilty of the body and blood of the Lord**—of crucifying the Lord afresh. Therefore each should **examine himself**—look into his own heart. If sin is found there he should get right with God, then come to partake. Partaking unworthily brings **damnation**—it is testifying to a lie. This is the reason there is such an unhealthy or dead spiritual condition in many lives.

The True Ordinance

The Passover supper commemorated a type of the atonement. The Lord's Supper commemorates the actual atonement. As the bread that is made from grain brought in from many areas and baked into one loaf represents the body of Christ, so we find that the church is made up of people from all walks of life that are brought together into one body. As that loaf is changed by the heat of the oven, so lives are changed by the heat of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 10:17). Whether the ordinance is kept sacred or becomes common depends upon the spirit of the people and not in how frequently it is observed.

Its Observance

The very manner in which the Lord instituted both the ordinance of Feet Washing and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper is important not only in that they are to be observed together, but also in the order they are to be observed. We read in Matthew 26:30 and in Mark 14:26: "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." This indicates that feet washing preceded the Lord's Supper, since they departed after singing a hymn at the conclusion of the Lord's Supper.

The Passover supper was a full meal. But the Lord's Supper consisted only of bread and wine. The eating of a full meal is condemned as a perversion of the ordinance (1 Corinthians 11:20-21, 34).

Proper observance requires:

- (1) unleavened bread and grape juice
- (2) giving thanks for what they represent
- (3) breaking of the bread
- (4) giving of the bread
- (5) eating of the bread
- (6) giving of the cup
- (7) drinking of the juice.



We should keep the essentials as Jesus gave them with no additions or changes. Only those who have spiritual reality of what the ordinance represents should take part in it. We are told to examine ourselves for fitness. Small children are innocent, and so clear before God, and should be allowed to partake of this communion supper.

JUST A THOUGHT

Sin is a boomerang.