

# Lord's Supper

**1** I was asked to look at the topic of the Lord's Supper. This is a lesson that we looked at back in 2012. It was part of a series that I did on the 5 acts of worship. There have been many perversions of this ceremony, from the idea of transmutation to the thought that there is no need to even partake of it. The things we will talk about are by no means comprehensive, or complete. We want to look at what and how the New testament Church responded to the Lord's teaching so that we might be identified by those same characteristics today.

There are four passages that describe the institution of the Lord's Supper, three as related by the writers of the Gospels, and the other one as given by Paul who relates that it was part of the instructions given him by the Lord when He appeared to him on the road to Damascus in...

## **1 Cor 11:23-25**

**2**

**23** For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; **24** and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." **25** In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

This should emphasize for us the great importance of this memorial. Paul's statement that Christ Himself instructed him about the memorial should help us to recognize that this is not some afterthought, but is very much intended by God to be a central part of our worship service for Him. And if it is that important, then it is our responsibility to make sure that we are engaging in it the way that the Lord wants it done.

The account from Matthew reads...

## **Matt 26:26-28**

**3**

**26** While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." **27** And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; **28** for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

The accounts from Mark and Luke read almost identical.

So, as we look at these passages and compare them with this passage, there some questions we want to answer...

**4** 1) What is the stated reason for the memorial?

2) What are the elements involved?

**5**

- a} Bread
- b} Fruit of the vine
- c} Man

Here are the accounts from...

## **Mark 14:22-25**

**6**

**22** And while they were eating, He took some bread, and after a blessing He broke it; and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is My body." **23** And when He had taken a cup, and given thanks, He gave it to them; and they all drank from it. **24** And He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. **25** "Truly I say to you, I shall

never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

**Luke 22:14-20**

**7**

**14** And when the hour had come He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. **15** And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; **16** for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. " **17** And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; **18** for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes. " **19** And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

The stated purpose is to...

**8**

### ***“Do This in Remembrance of Me”***

We are to remember what Jesus did for us in His sacrifice when He gave His body and blood to pay for the sins of man, while at the same time bearing the penalty for those sins, both physical and spiritual death.

The elements involved are the bread, which represents His body, and the fruit of the vine, which represents His blood. None of the passages that address the institution of the supper indicate what kind of bread or the strength of the fruit of the vine. It is understood that the bread was unleavened bread because that is the only bread that was authorized to be used during the Feast of the Passover, which is the occasion for Christ and the disciples gathering together in that upper room, as seen in the commandments given to Moses in **Exodus 12:1-13**. So the bread Christ broke was unleavened, which is why that is what is used today. None of the passages describe the fruit of the vine as being anything other than, fruit of the vine, in again, in context of the time and locale, that means juice from the grape. That is why we use grape juice today.

These things are not arguable, and they are doctrine in that they *are* not arguable. The Lord's Supper must have those elements in combination with the attitude of the partaker, man.

**1 Cor 11:27-29**

**9**

**28** But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. **29** For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly.

This indicates that man's attitude when he worships God in the partaking of the supper must be one that seeks to engage in it in a manner that is in accordance with the Word and is done in a respectful and loving manner for what God has done for man. Am I doing what God wants, the way He wants it, not just in the partaking of the supper but in all things in my life. That is what Paul says in...

**Phil 1:27**

**10**

**27** Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ

So, getting back to the elements of the supper, it is not surprising that none of these things typically cause much in the way of difficulty among the world's religions. Almost all religions that practice communion use these two elements in some form.

No, the controversies arise in the performance and understanding of what is being done.

**11**

A) Understanding, in that some believe that the bread and the fruit of the vine miraculously transform into the actual blood and body of Jesus when they are taken in

communion, transmutation, even though there is virtually nothing to indicate that is what occurs.

- 12** B) Performance, in that some partake of it once a year, on Saturdays or Fridays, or special occasions, weddings, funerals, etc..

While it is difficult to address the understanding aspect because the scriptures are silent on the topic, we *can* see in the passages we have looked at that Christ does not indicate or imply that there is anything miraculous taking place, the true effect of the memorial takes place in the mind of man when he remembers and reflects on the sacrifice and examines himself in light of what Christ did for us.

The aspect of performance is much easier to address. The scriptures have much to say concerning how and when we are to take the Lord's Supper.

*Acts 2:42*

**13**

**42** And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Those that the Lord added to the Church, those that were being saved, were being taught by the Apostles that they were to memorialize the sacrifice of Christ in the Lord's Supper, and this they did...

*Acts 20:7*

**14**

**7** And on the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to depart the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight.

There is no other time mentioned either by direct statement or example, or necessary inference that could be used to authorize partaking of the Lord's Supper on any day other than the first day of the week. Where is the authority to partake on Fridays, at weddings or funerals, or at any other time? It is not in the scriptures and therefore would only be adding to or taking away from God's word. Note...

*2 John 9-11*

**15**

**9** Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. **10** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; **11** for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

Now combine that with what God through Paul says in...

*1 Cor 10:14-17*

**16**

**14** Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. **15** I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say. **16** Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? **17** Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.

The designation, the Lord's Supper, occurs only in **1 Cor 11:20**. The institution of this memorial by our Lord happens in connection with the Passover which we saw in **Matt 26:19-30; Mark 14:16-26; Luke 22:13-20**. The one who was presiding over the observance of the Passover began by a blessing "for the day and for the wine," over a cup of which he and the others drank. Passover tradition says that the wine was mixed with water, and that the table was set out with the Passover lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and a sauce of dates, figs, raisins, and vinegar called Charoseth, symbolizing their service in mortar, the making of bricks, in Egypt. The head of the table,

and then the rest of the attendees, dipped a portion of the herbs into the charoseth and ate. The dishes were removed and a cup of wine brought. Children then were allowed to ask the meaning of the service, and the cup was passed round and drank. The head repeated the commemorative words of the Passover and gave thanks, saying, ("this is the Passover which we eat because the Lord passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt"). Then followed the reading of **Ps chapters 113 & 114**. Then the head broke one of the two cakes of unleavened bread and gave thanks over it. All then took portions of the bread and dipped them in the charoseth and ate them. Then they ate of the lamb, and a third cup, "the cup of blessing," was handed round.

A fourth cup followed, called "the cup of the Hallel" and then a song, as seen in **Ps 115-118**, was recited. A fifth cup with "the great Hallel" (Ps 113-118) might follow. These usages explain what we read in...

**Luke 22:17-20**

**17**

**17** And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; **18** for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes. " **19** And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." **20** And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

If we follow the time line in accordance with what is known of the order of the Passover. Then came the dipping of the sop or bread morsel (**John 13:26**), the thanksgiving consecration of the bread (**Luke 22:19**), and the distribution of the cup "after supper" (**Luke 22:20**).

Christ partook of the former cup, the Passover cup, as well as "ate" of the Passover, but declares He will partake of it, the Passover feast, no more, thus indicating that the Passover as fulfilled in Himself, the true Passover Lamb (**Luke 22:17-18**) would no longer be required. He does not partake of the subsequent cup and bread, which He gives to His disciples and institutes as the new Supper to supersede the old Passover.

One of the prominent teachings of today that has caused much damage in the Church is that of the one cup doctrine. Those who advocate one cup say there are three elements in the Supper:

- 18** C) The bread represents the Body.
- 19** D) The fruit of the Vine represents the Blood.
- 20** E) The Cup (container) represents the New Testament
- 21** In 1 Cor. 11:26, Paul said,

***"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup"***

I don't want this to sound demeaning or condescending but obviously there is no physical way one can drink a container, only the contents. Paul says further in vs. 27...

**22** ***"Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord"***

Nowhere does Paul mention being guilty of the "one cup," Paul does not say one would be guilty of the container of the Lord (**3rd thing**). Paul does say that he is giving to the Corinthians,

**23** ***"That which the Lord gave me"***

We have, therefore, ONLY two elements in the Supper, i.e.;

- 24** F) The **BREAD** which represents the **BODY**

**25** G) The **FRUIT OF THE VINE** which represents the **BLOOD**

The other aspect of this discussion is that, in fact, the cup is the third element of the memorial as instituted by Christ. Which cup? Remember, authority is the standard by which we will be judged. If Christ instituted the cup as the third element of the memorial, then the only cup which has been authorized is the cup that He was holding. There are hundreds of groups that claim that the scriptures teach that only one cup can be used, if that is the case, then it can be only the cup that Christ used. If there is authority for each of the many groups to use their own cup, or multiple cups if they are a large group, then why doesn't the authority which allows each individual group to use its own cup also authorize each individual member to use their own cup? This can be the only logical conclusion of what the scriptures teach.

Brethren, we must have authority from the scriptures for what is done in God's Church.

Do you want to know which Church is practicing what God wants? Look to the scriptures for the standard which defines His Church.

God's Church;

- 26**
- ★ Practices benevolence locally, it does not send it's funds to a society to do the work for them.
  - ★ Supports, to the best of its local ability, preachers, directly, and does not send the Lord's money to a society to do the work for them.
  - ★ Understands and values the work that the women of do, but understands that God's plan is that the men are to take the lead role in leadership.
  - ★ Raises their voices in praise to God without the inclusion of musical instruments into the worship service.
  - ★ Takes the Lord's Supper every first day of the week, using the elements prescribed in the scripture, unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, and does not bind as doctrine anything that God does bind.

We here at Oakdale are doing our best to pattern ourselves after the Church we read about in the New Testament, nothing more, nothing less.

Do you want to be a part of the Church that the Lord added to in Acts 2?