

# THE LORD'S SUPPER

by Walton Weaver

## Introduction:

- A. The institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded in Matt. 26:26-29, Mk. 14:22-25, and Lk. 22:19ff.
  1. The *time* was Thursday evening of the final week of our Lord's earthly life, prior to his crucifixion the next day (Mk. 15:42).
  2. The *place* was an upper room in Jerusalem (Mk. 14:15).
  3. The *occasion* was the last Passover which Jesus would observe with the disciples (Jn. 13:1-15).
  4. This was the night of our Lord's betrayal. What he established on this occasion mixes the sublime with the simple.
  5. True to the real spirit of his kingdom, he took some of the most simple things of life, unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, and gave them spiritual and profound significance when he said, "This do in remembrance of me." **Read Matthew 26:26-29.**
  6. Not only did he give it significance by making it a memorial, but he gave it even greater significance when he added, "The bread is my body which is given for you" (Lk. 22:19, NKJV), and "this cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Lk. 22:20, NKJV).
- B. Let's begin by noting---

## II. THE TERMS BY WHICH THE LORD'S SUPPER IS IDENTIFIED.

- A. The "Lord's Supper," 1 Cor. 11:20.
- B. The "Lord's Table," 1 Cor. 10:21.
- C. The "communion," 1 Cor. 10:16.
- D. The "breaking of bread," Acts 2:42: 20:7.
- E. The "love feast"? Jude 12; 2 Pet. 2:13.
- F. It is never called:
  1. The "**eucharist**." This word applies to the giving of thanks (from *eu* = "well, good," and *charizesthai* = to "show favor" [from the noun *charis* = "favor, thanks]).
  2. The "**sacrament**." This word comes into the English through the Latin word *sacramentum* and means "oath, solemn engagement."
  3. The "**mass**." This word signifies a rite or commemorative ceremony, and as applied to the Lord's Supper Roman Catholics view this rite as that in which the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross is offered, only it is "an unbloody sacrifice." In other words, every time the mass is observed Christ is sacrificed again. **But see Hebrews 9:28 and 10:10-14.**

## III. THE ELEMENTS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

- A. "Jesus took BREAD, and blessed it," Matt. 26:26 (cf. Mk. 14:22; Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:23).
  - 1. The unleavened bread of the Passover feast, Ex. 12:15. Salt was not regarded as leaven and was allowed in the altar service, but leaven itself was not allowed, Lev. 2:11-13. From this we may safely conclude that salt may be used in the bread for the Lord's Supper.
  - 2. The Jews would have understood the expression, "this is my body," Matt. 26:26. Compare:
    - a. When Joseph interpreted the butler's dream, "The three branches are three days," Gen. 40:12.
    - b. When he interpreted Pharaoh's dream, "The seven good kine are seven years," Gen. 41:26.
    - c. When Jesus said, "The good seed are the children of the kingdom," Matt. 13:38.
    - d. Jesus was not holding his own literal body in his hand was he?
- B. "And he took the CUP," Matt. 26:27, "this FRUIT OF THE VINE," Matt. 26:29.
  - 1. "Cup" refers to the contents, not the container, Matt. 26:29; 1 Cor. 11:26.
  - 2. It represents the blood of Christ, Matt. 26:28.

#### IV. THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

- A. By "meaning" we refer to its significance, and how the Christian should look at it. What is required of the Christian for its **proper** observance? To know its significance and observe it properly is important. See 1 Cor. 11:27.
- B. The proper observance of the Lord's Supper involves a look in five directions.
  - 1. We must look *inward*. It is a time for *inspection*.
    - a. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup," 1 Cor. 11:28.
    - b. Note the "himself" — it is self-inspection, not inspection of the other person.
    - c. This self-examination involves: (1) The proper frame of mind (1 Cor. 11:27). (2) Am I in the faith? (2 Cor. 13:5). Cf. 1 Cor. 11:31.
  - 2. We must look *outward*. It is a time for *proclamation*.
    - a. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). This is done by our participation.
    - b. Some truth can be proclaimed by words, some by deeds. Here is an eloquent sermon that all Christians can preach. Throughout the world Christians are proclaiming Christ's death. See 1 Cor. 15:1-4.
      - (1) It proclaims the fact of his death.
      - (2) It proclaims the purpose of his death.
    - c. Therefore, we ought not to forsake the assembling, Heb. 10:25.
    - d. "Those who come to it, therefore, should come, not to satisfy hunger, nor for the gratification of social feelings, but for the

definite purpose of bearing their testimony to the great fact of redemption, and to contribute their portion of influence to the preservation and propagation of the knowledge of that fact" (Charles Hodge).

3. We look *backward*. It is a time for *reflection*.
  - a. "This do in remembrance of me," (1 Cor. 11:24); "this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:25). Cf. Lk. 22:19.
  - b. We remember the events of Calvary, so we should eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine in that remembrance. The emblems are appropriate: bread for body and fruit of vine for blood.
    - (2) The emblems are accessible: they can be found anywhere on earth.
4. We look *upward*. It is a time for *realization* and *dedication*.
  - a. *Realization*: "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?" (1 Cor. 10:16).
    - (1) The word "communion" means participation or sharing, and refers to our sharing in the benefits of Christ's blood and body. We are one with him; we share his grace and salvation. We should also be reminded that because we are united with Christ, we are also united with all others who are in communion with him; we are one body; we are mutual sharers of his grace and salvation (v. 17).
    - (2) Thus, the Lord's Supper brings us to a *realization* of our union with Christ and with one another. Eating idolatrous meat in the idol's temple, Paul argues, unites the eater with the idol, and he proves this by the fact that eating the Lord's Supper identifies the Christian with Christ.
  - b. *Dedication*: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Cor. 11:25). See also Lk. 22:20. Cf. Matt. 26:28; Mk. 14:24.
    - (1) The KJV has "testament," but covenant is better since it refers to the sealing or ratifying of agreements.
    - (2) The O. T. background is Ex. 24:5-8.
    - (3) The Lord's Supper represents the blood-ratified covenant between Christ and his people. Cf. Heb. 8:6-8, 12.
    - (4) Christ has made many promises, i. e., forgiveness, peace, prayer, hope, etc.
    - (5) Christians, in eating the Lord's Supper, bind themselves to implicit obedience to Christ. We must eat the Lord's Supper with a consciousness of our promised *dedication* to Christ.

5. We must look *forward*. It is a time for *anticipation*
  - a. "Ye do show the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26).
  - b. In eating the Lord's Supper we should keep alive in our hearts, and before others, our Lord's eventual return.
  - c. The hope of his coming fills our hearts, Jn. 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16.
  - d. In view of the marvelous blessings that shall be ours when he comes again, we should desire, anticipate and rejoice in his coming, and we should have this hope rekindled within us each week as we observe this divine feast.

**Conclusion:**

- A. If properly observed by Christians, the eating of the Lord's Supper will result in greater love, appreciation, unity, faith, zeal, obedience, hope and joy.
- B. May we come to appreciate its meaning more and thus partake of it more worthily, and be blessed both now and eternally.