

Teaching Sound Doctrine

The Worship of the Lord's Church as God Would Have It Part 4

LORD'S SUPPER

Just prior to our Lord's crucifixion, He instituted a Supper for those in His kingdom. The Synoptic accounts of the gospel records the institution of this Communion service (Mat. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20). First, He took the bread (it was unleaven bread because it was at the Passover when the Israelites could not have any leaven in the house), blessed it (which means he gave thanks for it), break it, gave it to the apostles, and told them: "Take, eat; this is my body" (Mat. 26:26). Next, He took the cup (metonymy for the contents of the cup which is the fruit of the vine), blessed it, gave it to them to drink saying, "Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mat. 26:27-28). When Jesus said, "this is my body...my blood" He did not mean that the elements (unleaven bread and fruit of the vine) had changed into His actual body and blood. It was still unleaven bread and grape juice, and those elements only represented His body and blood. To use different elements would be vain worship because it would not have the authority of Christ, only of man.

The Scriptures use different terms to designate this Supper. Paul refers to it as the *Lord's Supper* (1 Cor. 11:20). Earlier in this same book he referred to it as a *communion* (1 Cor. 10:16) and as the *Lord's table* (1 Cor. 10:21), also in these two verses it is referred to as *the cup of blessing* and *the cup of the Lord*. The inspired historian, Luke, records the early church continuing in the *breaking of bread* (Acts 2:42) and coming together to *break bread* (Acts 20:7). However, today some use terms which the Bible never uses regarding the Supper (we are to speak the oracles of God not the doctrines of man, 1 Pet. 4:11). Many call this memorial supper the *Eucharist* which means "thankfulness, gratitude, to show favor to" coming from the presiding bishop of the apostate church *consecrating* the elements. Another non-Bible term some have come up with is *Sacrament* and many times they will add holy to it (*Holy Sacrament*). This comes from a Latin term meaning "oath, solemn obligation." Apostate groups use this term to mean "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." There simply is no such thing—it is purely the imagination of apostate groups who refuse to stay within the bounds of God's Word. These terms should not be used

for the Supper of our Lord.

Concerning the Supper Jesus said, “This do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). Thus, the Lord’s Supper is a memorial done to remember the body and blood of Jesus (the Scriptures never speak of it as a memorial to His burial and resurrection, only His death). During this Supper we have communion (participation, fellowship, or sharing) with the Father and Christ (1 Cor. 10:16) and with one another (1 Cor. 10:17). In partaking of it we proclaim the Lord’s death (that He died for our sins; Mat. 26:28) and our faith in His second coming (1 Cor. 11:26). We are also proclaiming the covenant He made by that shed blood (Mat. 26:28; 1 Cor. 11:25).

Paul makes it clear that we are to partake of the communion in the proper manner. We must take of it in a worthy manner as we examine ourselves. When we do this properly, we discern the Lord’s body (1 Cor. 11:27-29). *Unworthily* in verse 27 is an adverb, not an adjective, describing the manner of partaking not the worth or non-worth of the worshiper. As we partake, we are to center our minds upon the Lord’s death. If we partake with our minds elsewhere, then we become guilty of His death and stand condemned. As we partake of the Supper, we must do so in a state of unity. We not only have fellowship (communion) with the Godhead but with one another. Congregational divisions, malice between Christians will prevent this communion so that “it is not possible to eat the Lord’s supper” (1 Cor. 11:20 ASV).

Finally, there is the question of when we are to partake of the Lord’s table? Immediately after the establishment of the kingdom, church, Luke records, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). Here it simply states that they continued steadfastly in partaking of the Lord’s Supper without giving any specific details as to when. As Paul corrects the errors concerning the communion at Corinth he simply states, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come” (1 Cor. 11:26). Both of these passages show a regular practice, but do not specifically tell us **when**. However, if we take the 1 Corinthians passage, when we view it in its wider context, it does indicate when the “as often as” is. The wider context begins at the first of chapter eleven and continues to the first part of chapter sixteen with the contribution. In connection with the contribution they are told to give upon the first day of the week. Thus, we must conclude that the Lord’s Supper was also to be taken upon the first day of the week.

Confirmation of the above is given within the pages of the New Testament. It was Paul’s intention to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost (Acts 20:16). Yet, when he

arrives in Troas (on Monday), he delays his journey for seven days. The only reason we can conclude is to partake of the communion with these brethren. Paul knew that Sunday was the day the disciples came to eat the Supper and this was the purpose of their coming together. The day after eating the Supper with them he continued his journey.

And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight (Acts 20:6-7).

The brethren did not partake of the Supper on any day but the first day of the week which is Sunday. If they partook of it on some other day, Paul would not have had to wait seven days to eat it with them. This is the only day the Bible authorizes to eat the Lord's Supper. Since we can only do things which God has authorized (Col. 3:17), the **only** day we may partake of the Lord's Supper is Sunday. This is the day of our Lord's resurrection (Luke 24:1) and is truly the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10).