

“TO EAT THE LORD’S SUPPER” #1

INTRODUCTION

Since the first century, churches of Christ have been observing what is called “The Lord’s Supper,” on a regular basis. It is important for us to study what the New Testament says about this supper, so as to keep the Supper of the Lord in its place in proper worship. Our basic text comes from a statement by the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 11:20, which reads, “*When ye come together into one place, this is not **to eat the Lord’s Supper.***” To understand what Paul is saying here about NOT eating the Lord’s Supper, will be determined by its context in another lesson. However, in a positive way we shall look at the words of the passage which say, “***To eat the Lord’s Supper;***” and later we will consider what Paul meant about **not** eating it.

The Lord’s Supper was instituted the night before Jesus’ crucifixion while with the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. The accounts of the institution are found in Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and repeated by Paul in 1 Cor. 11. In the first of three lessons, we shall look at some basic matters about the Supper, then in the second lessons we shall dig deeper into the Supper, and then in the third lesson we shall consider the statement, “Not To Eat the Lord’s Supper.”

DISCUSSION

I. 1st, let’s consider WHY IT IS CALLED “THE LORD’S SUPPER.”

- A. It is the Lord’s supper because HE instituted it in the garden of Gethsemane, right after His last Passover celebration with His disciples.
1. The Lord established it and it is ABOUT the Lord, as we “remember” the Lord’s body and His shed blood. 1 Cor. 11:24-25
 2. It is called the Lord’s “SUPPER”, which makes it the “chief” meal for believers, as the word “supper”, (Gr. *Deipneo*, = “the chief meal”, VINE, p. 610)
 - a. Many Americans used to eat a “supper” each day, in an evening meal, which in our time is called “dinner”.
 - b. Some may suppose that since Jesus instituted the supper in the evening (about “sunset”), we should take the Lord’s Supper in the evening, but being the “chief meal”, we find no significance to it being such in our country today, in the evening.
 - c. Since “supper” referred to the “chief meal” actually did start in the evening (about sunset), so it was convenient to worship and commune at that time.
- B. So, being under the Roman calendar, our days begin at midnight and lasts 24 hours, meaning that anytime in that given time is appropriate for communion, which is a “chief meal” for us, as we commemorate Jesus’ death.

II. 2nd, let’s consider WHERE THE LORD’S SUPPER IS OBSERVED.

- A. Jesus said He would drink the cup with disciples “in the kingdom of God.” (Mark 14:25).
1. Matthew’s account says, “in my Father’s kingdom”. (Matt. 26:29).
 2. Luke says “until the kingdom of God is **come.**” (Luke 22:18)
- B. The kingdom **came** on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came on the apostles.
1. Jesus said the kingdom would come when the “power” of the Holy Spirit would come. Mark 9:1
 2. Jesus also said the “power” would come when the disciples were in Jerusalem. Luke 24:49
 3. So, this would be a few “days” from the time of Jesus’ ascension. Cf Acts 1:5
 4. THEN, Paul gives the account of the Supper’s being instituted, TO the “church” in Corinth, and gives directions for its use in the “church”, meaning that the kingdom and the church are one and the same. Acts 2:47; Rev. 1:4, 9; 1 Cor. 1:2; 11:23-26

III. 3Rd, let's consider the TIME THE SUPPER IS TO BE OBSERVED.

- A. Nothing is said about the **time of day** the Supper was to be observed in worship.
1. However, the morning is the first part of the day in the world's society, so that presents the best time for it's celebration.
 2. However, due to sickness, employment, shift work, and emergencies, many Christians cannot attend the morning assemblies of the church.
 3. So, though not specifically commanded, another opportunity **for** the communion is extended in most congregations today.
- B. Nothing is said in the Bible about observing the Lord's Supper on special occasions, holidays, weddings and funerals, but it appears to be a "once a week" celebration for God's children in the Sunday worship assemblies.
1. Some denominations and "televangelists" celebrate the communion on special occasions, and even make it public and televise it's observance.
 2. Since it is to be observed **only** on Sundays, it became unique as an act of worship, while prayers, teaching and singing can take place anytime of day or week.
 - a. Paul, in his travels, delayed his departure from Troas so as to "break bread" with the disciples on the first day of the week. Acts 20:6-7
 - b. We also note that the church in Corinth met regularly on the first day of the week for other acts of worship. 1 Cor. 16:1-2

IV. 4th, let's consider the PURPOSE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

- A. One purpose is to "commune" with Christ in His body and blood being sacrifices in our behalf. 1 Cor. 10:16
1. To "suffer" with Christ is said to "partake" of His sufferings. 1 Pet. 4:13
 2. So, to commune with Christ is to "partake" of His death each week. 1 Cor. 10:16
- B. Another purpose of the Supper is to "remember" Christ's death, and to show or declare it to the world. ` 1 Cor.11:26
1. We declare that death each time we commune.
 2. We are to declare this death in communion "till He comes again." 1 Cor. 11:26

CONCLUSION

- I. There are other matters we shall discuss in future lessons.
- II. To commune properly, one needs to be a Christian, having already being united with Christ in baptism. Rom. 6:3-5
- A. As Christians, we think about Jesus and His death while we are taking the bread and cup.
- B. When we give thanks that we might "partake" in a worthy manner, we do that while we are "thinking about" the body and blood of the Lord. 1 Cor. 11:28-29
- III. If you are not a Christian, or a Christian who needs special prayer, the invitation is now extended to you to let it be known, while we stand together and sing.