

The Lords Supper (A Time of Remembrance and Fellowship Among Believers)

The Last Supper: The final meal of Jesus with the Twelve Apostles in the Upper Room in Jerusalem the evening before his crucifixion. After the supper Jesus took bread (regular bread, not unleavened bread), gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.” Luke 22:19-20

The cup refers to Christ's coming death with its accompanying physical and spiritual agonies.

The event of the crucifixion was referred to by Christ as His cup. (Luke 12:50)

Christ's human nature, though without sin, did fear death. In Jerusalem in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus prays; “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me.” Luke 22:44

Remember in our earlier studies we learned that when a person is born again that persons human nature is replaced with a spiritual nature, God living in the believer. So then, taking of the Lord's Supper is meant to be a time of remembrance and a fellowship meal among believers. A time when believers come together in spiritual unity remembering that the broken body and shed blood of Christ is a substitute for their sins. Having received Jesus Christ as their Savior believers come in agreement with the New Covenant.

The Institution of the Lord's Supper

The Lords Supper: The earliest written account of the institution of the Lord's Supper is in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34. The Corinthian church was divided, and many of its members were self-indulgent. The members came together as a church for a supper, but not the Lord's. This supper was immediately after Pentecost. It is a disorderly gathering of people going through the motions, it could hardly be called the Lord's Supper. Some were actually getting drunk.

Paul was saying that since there were divisions among the members of the Corinthian church when they came together as a church there must have been disagreement as to who had God's approval. He pointed out that these meetings were doing more harm than good. The church members were not in unity and not focused on the Lord.

The apostle Paul is writing to correct these abuses in the church, he is not saying that he is against eating any food at all in the church. Having stated his sentiments about how not to come to the Lord's Supper, Paul then gives instruction as to how it ought to be done. (Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-29.)

Paul traces the authority to the Lord Himself. Paul's method here is to look back to the Upper Room to trace the events of the Last Supper. Paul's approach says several things; (Remember the NT had not been written yet)

1. It bases what he has to say on history.
2. It forces his readers to think back with him to Calvary, which of course, is what the Lord's Supper is all about.
3. Paul lays out precisely what the Lord said and did so that his readers cannot escape the significance of it.

Historical Events Leading up to the First Lords Supper

Last Supper – Jesus meets with the twelve Apostles in Jerusalem in “ the Upper Room” the evening before his crucifixion. The typical Passover was to be exchanged for a commemorative Supper.

Crucifixion – Jesus substitute death for sins of all mankind.

Resurrection -- Jesus rises to life after being dead for three days.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the beginning of Christianity. If Jesus had not been resurrected and seen by many people (more than 500), Christianity would not exist today. Jesus made twelve appearances after his resurrection.

The Great Commission After the Resurrection, Jesus met with his disciples on a mountain in Galilee and gave them a command to go out and evangelize to all people. This teaching went on for about 40 days.

Jesus Ascends to Heaven After he had told his disciples to go out into the world and preach the Word of God, Jesus ascended into Heaven. Jesus had left but the Spirit had not yet come.

Pentecost ----- Fifty days after the Resurrection (10 days after Jesus Ascension) the apostles, Mary the mother of Jesus and other men and women who were followers of Jesus met together in an upper room in a building in Jerusalem and prayed for the “baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Ushering in the beginning of the church.

Church Supper - Immediately after Pentecost the members of the Corinthian Church meet together at their church for a supper.

Lord's Supper --The Apostle Paul gives instructions to the Corinthian Church on how the church should conduct the Lord's Supper.

The Return of Jesus ----- Jesus will return in the future to judge the living and the dead and to establish eternal peace.

Christ's death was a substitute for the sins of the entire world (John 1:29). Paul stressed the memorial aspect of the Last Supper. “Do this in remembrance of me.” Christians were to remember the sacrifice Jesus made for them, that the body of Christ was broken and His blood shed for them. As the Passover was a symbol of the old covenant, the Lord's Supper is a symbol of the new covenant.

Old Covenant: Exodus 19:5 “Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”
So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the Lord had commanded him to speak. The people all responded together, “We will do everything the Lord has said.” So Moses brought their answer back to the Lord.

OT Prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-33 “The time is coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them, declares the Lord.

“This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.”

New Covenant: John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”