

# THE LORD'S SUPPER

## INTRODUCTION:

The central theme of the Christian religion is the death and suffering of Christ on the cross to redeem us from our sins and give us the hope of eternal life. The central part of our worship on the Lord's day, the Lord's Supper, is a commemoration of that sacrifice. By a proper observance of this memorial feast once every week, our appreciation of that sacrifice is increased, our purpose in life as a Christian is re-emphasized, and our strength to resist temptation is renewed.

## WHAT IS IT?

### A. A Memorial or Monument (I Cor. 11:24, 25; Matt. 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk. 22:14-30)

1. Compare to the Passover Exodus 12
  - (a) A memorial of sparing the first-born Ex. 12:13, 14, 24-29
  - (b) A memorial of Israel's deliverance Ex. 13:9
  - (c) Neglect brought ex-communication Num. 9:13
2. Compare to other monuments or memorials as to:
  - (a) Time in existence
  - (b) Extent of observance
  - (c) Effect on the observer
  - (d) Cost of the materials
  - (e) Practicality

### B. A Communion with Christ (I Cor. 10:14-18)

1. Matt. 26:29
2. Luke 22:18, 29, 30
3. Every Christian, when ushered into God's Kingdom by baptism, makes an appointment to meet Christ around His Table on the first day of every week. No appointment with earthly friends, family, or for our personal pleasure ought to take precedence over this appointment.

### C. A Declaration "*Proclaim the Lord's death until He come*" (I Cor. 11:26)

1. In spite of more than 1900 years of persecution from without and false teaching within, this greatest of all sermons is preached by thousands of faithful Christians all over the world.

### D. Scriptural Designations

1. The Lord's Supper I Cor. 11:20
2. Breaking of Bread Acts 2:42
3. Table of the Lord I Cor. 10:21
4. Communion of the Body and the Blood I Cor. 10:16
5. It is never called "sacrament," "mass," "Holy Eucharist," etc.

## THE ELEMENTS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

A. **Bread** I Cor. 11:23,24 Note: Jesus was using the unleavened bread of the Passover Feast

B. **Fruit of the Vine** Matt. 26:29, 27, 28 Note: The terms "cup" and "fruit of the vine" are used interchangeably. Jesus is talking about the contents, not the container.

C. Are the terms "body" and "blood" used figuratively in these passages?

1. The Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation teaches that the literal body and the literal blood of Christ are present in the observance of the Lord's Supper.
2. Arguments for the use of these terms in a figurative sense:
  - (a) Remember that Jesus was alive at the institution of the Lord's Supper

- (1) When He said "*Take, eat, this is my body,*" He was handing them unleavened bread.
- (2) When He said "*This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins,*" His blood was still in His veins, but He was handing them the fruit of the vine.

(b) Use of similar expressions elsewhere:

- (1) "*I am the vine, ye are the branches*" John 15:5
- (2) "*I am the door*" John 10:7
- (3) "*I am the way*" John 14:6
- (4) "*I am the Bread of Life*" John 6:35, 48
- (5) "*These women are the two covenants*" Gal. 4:24
- (6) "*The three branches are three days*" Gen. 40:12
- (7) "*The three caskets are three days*" Gen. 40:18
- (8) "*The seven good kine are seven years*" Gen. 41:26
- (9) "*This cup is the new covenant*" Luke 22:20

## WHO MAY PARTAKE?

- A. Those in the kingdom Luke 22:29, 30; Matt. 18:3; Jn. 3:3-5
- B. Those in the church I Cor. 11:18,20; also I Cor. 10:16-18, 21
- C. Compare to the Passover Ex. 13:42-49

## WHEN AND HOW OFTEN OBSERVED?

- A. Note: If there is no divine regulation about the matter, no approved apostolic example or command, then whether a man partook every day or once a year or even once a lifetime would be a matter of human choice.
- B. There was a command to assemble Heb. 10:25
- C. There was a day of assembly Acts 20:7 Note: The meeting of the disciples and the breaking of bread are both expressed in the same terms. If they met upon the first day of the week, they broke bread upon the first day of the week.
- D. The example of the Corinthian church
  1. They assembled or "came together" to partake of the Lord's Supper I Cor. 11:18, 20-23, 33, 34
  2. They gave of their means when they assembled I Cor. 16:2
  3. This was on the "first day of every week" I Cor. 16:2 R.S.V.
- E. Compare the "first day of the week" to "remember the sabbath."

## WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE IN OBSERVING THE LORD'S SUPPER?

- A. Reverence Heb. 12:28
- B. Self Examination I Cor. 11:28; Ps. 139:23,24; II Cor. 13:5
- C. In a worthy manner I Cor. 11:27-32 Note: "unworthily" is an adverb denoting manner, not an adjective denoting a state or condition.
  1. Does this mean sinless perfection?
  2. How can we partake "unworthily"?