

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT: THE LORD-S SUPPER

Definition: "A pictorial, memorial ordinance given to the Lord-s "churches" to stir up their remembrance of the great sacrifice our Savior made for them."

Purpose: "To renew the commitment of individual "churches" to the Lord by drawing their attention back to what Jesus did for them."

I. JESUS HIMSELF INSTITUTED THIS ORDINANCE.

A. HE GAVE THIS ORDINANCE TO HIS "CHURCH".

1. The Apostles were in the upper room eating the Passover meal.
2. At the end of this meal, Jesus instituted this ordinance for His "church."
 - a. Matthew 26:26-29.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, 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.

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink of it new with you in my Father-s kingdom.@

- b. Mark gives his account of this event in Mark 14:22-25, which states:

And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.®

- c. The account given by Luke is given in 22:17-20, which states:

And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.®

- d. The Apostle Paul, though not present at this event, instructed the "church" of Jesus Christ at Corinth as to the proper manner in which this "church" ordinance should be observed. These instructions were recorded in I Corinthians 11:23-26:

¶For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.®

B. JESUS KNEW HIS "CHURCHES" WOULD NEED TO REMEMBER WHY THEY WERE SERVING HIM.

1. He gave his "churches" a tremendous responsibility when He gave them the Great Commission.
 - a. Mark 16:15 states:

¶And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.®
 - b. Acts 1:8 states further:

¶But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.®
2. Believers of all ages, who commit themselves to serving the Lord in a New Testament "church," will often experience times of discouragement.

- a. At least initially, most people do not want to know that they are doomed to eternal torment because of their sins.
 - b. Living the Christian lifestyle will incur resentment and criticism from the lost, because the believer will not join in their lifestyle.
 - c. Even "religious" people will condemn the committed "church" member for staunchly adhering to the integrity of the Word of God.
 - d. Then perhaps most harmful, Satan is committed to hindering the message of the Lord's "churches."
- 3. When discouragement or resistance to the Christian life is encountered, it is very easy to forget why the believer is doing this work.
 - 4. Jesus knew this condition would be common for His "churches."
 - 5. As the members of one of His "churches" observe this ordinance, once again the memory of the sacrifice of their Savior will evoke a sense of undying gratitude that Jesus would suffer and die for sinners.

C. HOW OFTEN SHOULD "CHURCHES" OBSERVE THIS ORDINANCE?

- 1. Each "church" of Jesus Christ will encounter their own peculiar obstacles; therefore, each "church" will become discouraged at different times.

II. WHO ARE THE RIGHTFUL PARTICIPANTS OF THIS ORDINANCE?

A. ONLY MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY ("CHURCH").

- 1. Remember the purpose of this ordinance.

2. Each "church" experiences its own particular obstacles and discouragement at different times.
3. This is why the Lord set no specified frequency for a "church" to observe this ordinance.
4. Therefore, Paul said, "as often as ye do it," or in other words, "just as often as you need to do it."
5. Some are offended because a "church" believes only fellowshipping members of the "church" may rightfully participate in this ordinance.
6. The Lord's Supper is to show obedience to the Lord and inspire greater commitment to Him, not to demonstrate love for one another.

B. IT IS TO BE OBSERVED ONLY BY A UNITED "CHURCH."

1. It is to be observed only by a "church" in which the members recognize their need to be reminded of the great sacrifice made by Jesus Christ.
2. It is quite difficult for a divided "church" to properly observe this ordinance.
3. Paul addressed the "church" at Corinth regarding this problem in I Corinthians 11:17-20 which states:

ANow in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.@

For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper.@

C. IT IS TO BE OBSERVED ONLY BY FELLOWSHIPING MEMBERS OF A LOCAL "CHURCH."

1. The Lord's Supper is properly observed only by those, united in spirit and purpose and committed to doing the work the Lord gave His "churches."
2. For those who have never made a serious commitment to serve the Lord in one of His "churches," there is no purpose in observing the Lord's Supper.
3. There can be no fellowship without participation.

D. THERE ARE MORAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR THOSE WHO OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1. Paul wrote to the "church" in Corinth regarding this subject in I Corinthians 5:9-13 which states:

I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:

Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters: for then must ye needs go out of the world.

But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

**But them that are without God judgeth.
Therefore put away from among yourselves
that wicked person.@**

2. The eating about which Paul had reference was not a common meal.
3. Paul was specifically referring to participation in the Lord's Supper.
4. When a "church" gathers to observe the Lord's Supper, there is no place for those involved in immoral conduct.
5. This command demands that a church@ exercise discipline of her members.

**E. THERE ARE SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR THOSE WHO
OBSERVE THE LORD'S SUPPER.**

1. What about members who have hidden sins?
2. Paul stated in I Corinthians 11:27-32:

**Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread,
and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily,
shall be guilty of the body and blood of the
Lord.**

**But let a man examine himself, and so let
him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that*
cup.**

**For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily,
eateth and drinketh damnation to himself,
not discerning the Lord's body.**

**For this cause many are weak and sickly
among you, and many sleep.**

**For if we would judge ourselves, we should
not be judged.**

**But when we are judged, we are chastened of
the Lord, that we should not be condemned
with the world.**

3. Since observing this ordinance in an unworthy manner is of great consequence, the individual member should thoroughly examine himself before participating in this precious ordinance.
 - a. He must be sure he is not harboring unconfessed sins.
 - b. He must be sure he is not harboring a grudge against his brother, the principle of which is stated in Matthew 5:23-24:

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

- c. Paul spoke about anger against another in his letter to the Ephesian Church in 4:26 which states:

Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
4. While sickness, and even death, are possible results of participating in this ordinance unworthily, no one has ever been doomed to the Lake of Fire for this reason.
5. For these reasons, the Lord's Supper must be restricted to fellowshiping members of the local Church.

III. TWO COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A. THE LORD'S SUPPER IS NOT TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

1. The Catholic Church teaches the bread and the fruit of the vine literally become the flesh and blood of Jesus.

2. This heresy is possible because of a lack of understanding of the scriptures.

a. Jesus said in John 6:53-54.

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.@

b. The teaching of the concept of transubstantiation is an erroneous interpretation of the Scriptures and would teach cannibalism!

B. THE LORD-S SUPPER IS NOT CONSUBSTANTIATION.

1. Those who hold this false teaching do not believe the Catholic idea the elements actually become the physical body and blood of Jesus.

Many Protestant denominations teach that even though the elements are not actually the flesh and blood of Jesus, they do contain the essence of the elements, and as such, observance of the Lord's Supper (also know as the "Eucharist") is necessary to obtain or keep saving grace. The insidious nature of this error lies in the fact the "church" decides who may, or may not, participate; therefore, allowing or excluding individuals from salvation. Clearly, this is a teaching that is subject to much abuse where the eternal destiny of the believer rests in the hand of another human! That concept is never taught in the Bible.

2. The erroneous teachings of transubstantiation and consubstantiation are very effectively countered by the clear teaching of Jesus when He said, **This do in remembrance of me.@**