

THE LORD'S SUPPER (physical aspects)

Text: 1 Corinthians 11:20-26

INTRO: The memorial supper instituted by the Lord shortly before His crucifixion is a subject worthy of our study, especially since there has been quite a bit of controversy centered around its observance. While historical research & theological pronouncements may be worthy of some note, our teaching & our practice must be based squarely & firmly on the Scriptures themselves.

In this lesson we will look primarily at the physical aspects of the L.S. Next week, we will look more closely at its spiritual significance.

I. THE MATERIAL ELEMENTS OF THE SUPPER.

A. Unleavened bread. The L.S. was instituted during the Jewish Passover when the only bread available was unleavened, EX 12:15. READ MATT 26:17-21, 26-29

NOTE: Salt is not leaven. READ LEV. 2:11, 13. Though this may not be significant to us today, the oil in the Passover bread was vegetable oil. The Jews did not use animal fats in their foods.

[1 Cor 5:7-8 is not a L.S. passage, but it is likely that the apostle did have the L.S. in his mind when he wrote:] Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice & wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity & truth. (1 Cor 5:7-8).

B. The 2nd material element is the juice of the grape, "fruit of the vine."

This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. Assuredly I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. (MK 14:24-25).
fermented or unfermented? --the juice of the grape.

- C. Some other things are expedient--a table, containers for the bread & juice. These are not a part of the supper itself but are incidental to it. Other foods or drinks besides the bread & the fruit of the vine are entirely unwarranted. There are only 2 material elements, 1 Cor 11:26-17.

II. THE TIME ELEMENT. WHEN SHOULD THE L.S. BE OBSERVED?

- A. Often. 1 Cor 11:25, 26
- B. Continue. Acts 2:42
- C. When?
 1. That day, MT 26:29; MK 14:25
 2. Next mention, Acts 2:42. Pentecost always fell on the first day of the week, Lev 23:16.
 3. Next mention, Acts 20:7.
 4. 1 Cor 11:20; 16:1-2

III. SOME COMMON MISTAKES REGARDING THE L.S.

- A. Transubstantiation--the R.C. theory that the bread & fruit of the vine, when "blessed" by the priest, become the literal body & blood of Jesus. 1 Cor 11:24.
 1. Figurative expression. His body had not yet been broken nor His blood shed. Same principle as in JN 15:5, "I am the vine." JN 10:7, "the door."
 2. Do Christians become cannibals when they eat the L.S.?
- B. Another practice of Catholicism is for only the clergy to partake of the cup. MT 26:27

But let a man examine himself & so let him eat of the bread & drink of the cup. (1 Cor 11:28).
- C. Some of our own brethren insist that the container for the fruit of the vine is an integral element of the supper--& there must be only one such container--one cup. This

theory is based on the fact that the Bible repeatedly refers to "the cup."

1. Note how the phrase "the cup" is used in the Bible.
READ LUKE 22:17-22; I COR 11:25-27
2. These brethren mistakenly assume that communion is a congregational matter to the extent that until each member drinks from the same container, there has been no communion.
1 Cor 11:24-29.
3. Note the size & weight of the cup at Jerusalem & how long it would take to serve it, if the whole congregation drank from the same container.
Acts 2:41; 4:4.
4. Finally, note that Paul was of necessity considering at least 2 drinking containers. He was separated from the Corinthians by about 900 miles, but he spoke of "the cup which we bless."
5. Numerous other "rules" have been made by well-meaning but mistaken brethren:
 - a. bread in one piece, unbroken except by each communicant.
 - b. bread in one piece, but first broken by the "host."
 - c. What about literally gathering around the table? What about bread already made into individual pieces?
 - d. Are we obligated to offer the supper to those who missed it earlier in the day? Are we obligated to keep them from partaking if they missed an earlier opportunity?

IV. SOME TRUTHS THE CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE REMINDED

OF IN PARTAKING OF THE L.S.

- A. That Jesus lived & walked upon the earth, LK 22:19.
- B. That He died for our sins, MT 26:28.
- C. That He is coming again, 1 Cor 11:26
- D. That He has not yet returned, 1 Cor 11:26.
- E. That His kingdom has been established,
LK 22:29-30; 1 Cor 10:21

- F. That He has given a new testament or covenant to replace
the old covenant which was fulfilled in His death,
MT 26:28

Jonestown, TX, August 16, 1970

Springhill, LA, September 19, 1971

KBSF Radio, Springhill, LA, March 23, 1975

La Porte, TX, January 30, 1977

Exton, PA, April 17, 1988

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, September 15, 1996

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, August 31, 1997