

# The Communion of the Lord's Supper

Brandon Steinke - April 10, 2010

We begin our study with the parallel gospel accounts of the Lord's Supper:

Luke 22:13-20

13 And they went and found it [just] as He had said to them; and they made ready the Passover [supper].

14 And when the hour came, [Jesus] reclined at table, and the apostles with Him.

15 And He said to them, I have earnestly and intensely desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer;

16 For I say to you, I shall eat it no more until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And **He took a cup**, and when He had **given thanks**, He said, **Take this and divide and distribute it among yourselves**;

18 For I say to you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine at all until the kingdom of God comes.

19 Then **He took a loaf** [of bread], and when He had **given thanks**, He **broke [it] and gave it to them** saying, **This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.**

20 And in like manner, He **took the cup after supper**, saying, **This cup is the new testament or covenant** [ratified] **in My blood, which is shed (poured out) for you.** AMP

Matt 26:26-30

26 Now as they were eating, Jesus **took bread** and, **praising God, gave thanks** and asked Him to bless it to their use, and when He had broken it, He **gave it to the disciples** and said, **Take, eat; this is My body.**

27 And He **took a cup**, and when He had **given thanks**, He gave it to them, saying, **Drink of it, all of you**;

28 For **this is My blood of the new covenant**, which [ratifies the agreement and] is being **poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**

29 I say to you, I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it with you new and of superior quality in My Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. AMP

Mark 14:22-26

22 And while they were eating, He **took a loaf** [of bread], **praised God** and **gave thanks** and asked Him to bless it to their use. [Then] He **broke [it]** and **gave to them** and said, **Take. Eat. This is My body.**

23 He also **took a cup** [of the juice of grapes], and when He had **given thanks**, He **gave [it] to them**, and **they all drank** of it.

24 And He said to them, **This is My blood** [which ratifies] **the new covenant**, [the blood] which is being **poured out for** (on account of) **many**.

25 Solemnly and surely I tell you, I shall not again drink of the fruit of the vine till that day when I drink it of a new and a higher quality in God's kingdom.

26 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. AMP

From the study of the three gospel accounts, we find three basic commands. The commands of our Lord to His disciples are this:

- 1) **Take, eat**; this is My body which is given for you
- 2) **Drink of it, all of you**; For this is My blood of the new covenant
- 3) **Do this** in remembrance of Me

Now we know that, representationally, His reference to eat and drink were in reference to the bread and the wine, but symbolically what were their meaning?

To begin with, we know that, Jesus, numerous times, uses the symbolism of eating and drinking in reference to spiritual matters. For example:

John 4:31-34

31 Meanwhile, the disciples urged Him saying, Rabbi, eat something.

32 But He assured them, **I have food** (nourishment) **to eat of which you know nothing** and have no idea.

33 So the disciples said one to another, Has someone brought Him something to eat?

34 Jesus said to them, **My food** (nourishment) **is to do the will** (pleasure) **of Him Who sent Me** and **to accomplish** and **completely finish His work.** AMP

His disciples obviously misunderstand, to which He must explain that His 'food' is not physical, but spiritual. This scripture works closely in conjunction with Deuteronomy 8:3, "And He humbled you and allowed you to hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you recognize and personally know that man does not live by bread only, but man lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord." AMP

Continuing and confirming this reference, Jesus states in John 6:32 that the manna they received in the wilderness was not the true 'bread from heaven', but that *He* is the true 'bread from heaven'.

Likewise, in John 6:28-29, the people ask Him what 'work' they shall do, to which He replies that the 'work' they must do is to 'believe' on Him. Belief meaning, as the Amplified version explains, to: cleave to, trust, rely on, and have faith in Him. I would add to this definition: to obey, to follow, and to seek. They asked this because just prior to this, in verses 26-27, Jesus had told them, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." The point being that the people were still caught up in their physical carnality, yet Jesus was striving with them to change this paradigmatic filter through which they viewed everything. They were approaching Him and His teachings from a culture and history steeped in distorted ritualism's of the Law. So it was from this perspective that they challenged Jesus to 'show them *something*', for their fathers had gotten manna to eat. It was about '*getting*' something and/or '*seeing*' something. They were then, I imagine, dumbfounded when Jesus tells them that He is the 'Bread of Life' and implies also that He is the 'Living Water', and that he who 'comes' to Him and 'believes' on Him shall never hunger nor thirst. He told them the truth, but not what they wanted to hear. Read the full scripture below:

John 6:28-35

28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?

31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but **my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.**

33 For the bread of God is **he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.**

34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread .

35 And Jesus said unto them, **I am the bread of life:** he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. KJV

As His conversation with the people continues, and they struggle to both accept and understand, He makes further clarification for them by explaining that this 'bread' of which He is and of which they must eat is a symbolic reference to His flesh, and, likewise, the 'drink' they must drink is a symbolic reference to His blood. Read the full text below:

John 6:47-58

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 **I am that bread of life.**

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 **I am the living bread which came down from heaven:** if any man eat of this bread , he shall live for ever: and **the bread that I will give is my flesh**, which I will give for the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, **How can this man give us his flesh to eat?**

53 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.**

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

55 For **my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.**

56 **He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.**

57 As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so **he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.**

58 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. KJV

The question then becomes: What does it mean to 'eat' His flesh and 'drink' his blood? Imagine being there and hearing this for the first time. Would we not have asked as the Jews did, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" It was a radical concept whose time was quickly approaching.

If we return now to the gospel accounts of the Lord's Supper, Jesus' words take on a bit more meaning as He gave thanks, broke bread, and said to His disciples, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then likewise when He had taken the cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you." Yet when he spoke these words, their meaning was still not complete.

Before the full meaning and purpose of His words could be realized, much had yet to be accomplished. In John 12:23-24 Jesus said to his disciples, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Likewise in Mark 10:33-34 He told them, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again." KJV

Why? Why did these things need to happen? Because as John the Baptist had testified, Jesus was the 'Lamb' of God, which had been sent to take away the sin of the world!

John 1:29

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.** KJV

We read further in Hebrews 10:1-5:

10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4 **For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.**

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: KJV

Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, of which the prophets for generations had spoke, and of which the angel had told the shepherds in Luke 2:11, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Yet in their eager expectation of this Deliverer and King, they failed to understand God's superior plan and purpose. They failed to recognize the inferiority of the Law and the need for its ultimate accomplishment and fulfillment. As 1 Peter 1:18-19 reads:

18 You must know (recognize) that you were redeemed (ransomed) from the useless (fruitless) way of living inherited by tradition from [your] forefathers, not with corruptible things [such as] silver and gold,

19 But [you were purchased] with the precious blood of Christ (the Messiah), like that of a [sacrificial] lamb without blemish or spot. AMP

It is in this sacrifice that we then also gain the necessary insight to understand the meaning of Jesus' words to His disciples as He passed to them the cup, "This cup is the new testament or covenant [ratified] in My blood, which is shed (poured out) for you." Hebrews 7:19-22 adds, "For **the law made nothing perfect**, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God....By so much was **Jesus** made a surety of **a better testament** ." KJV

So it is through this understanding that we begin to comprehend how this man, Jesus, was able to, as the Jews queried, 'give us his flesh to eat' and additionally His blood to drink. We understand now, as well, the significance of this 'flesh' and 'blood'. Yet, we still may not have answered the question: What does it mean to 'eat' His flesh and 'drink' his blood? Obviously neither they nor we ate any part of His physical body or drank His physical blood.

If we read Matthew 20:22-23, we gain some insight:

22 But Jesus replied, You do not realize what you are asking. **Are you able to drink the cup** that I am about to drink and to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized? They answered, We are able.

23 He said to them, **You will drink My cup**, but seats at My right hand and at My left are not Mine to give, but they are for those for whom they have been ordained and prepared by My Father. AMP

We read here of Jesus speaking of a 'cup' that He is about to drink and asking a couple of His disciples if they are able to drink of this 'cup'. Yet Jesus was not speaking of a physical cup, but instead He was referencing the things He must soon face, as recorded in Mark 10:33-34, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him..." KJV

If we observe carefully here, we see that to 'drink' means to 'participate in'. And, as we read previously, in John 4:34, Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him Who sent Me", and in John 6:57, "**As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.**" Jesus was making a very clear statement and comparison here, that just as He lived and received nourishment by doing the will of the Father, we should live and receive nourishment by our obedience and submission to Him. Matthew 4:4 also reinforces, "...Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." So, to 'eat' this 'food' of God, appears to reference doing God's will and living by His Word.

So we begin to see, but this still does not completely explain what our Lord meant when He first instructed His disciples as they celebrated that final Passover meal together. For if we study Paul's recitation from I Corinthians 11:24-26, we read:

24 Take, eat. This is My body, which is broken for you. Do this to call Me [affectionately] **to remembrance.**

25 Similarly when supper was ended, He took the cup also, saying, This cup is the new covenant [ratified and established] in My blood. **Do this, as often as you drink [it], to call Me [affectionately] to remembrance.**

26 For **every time you eat this bread and drink this cup**, you are **representing** and **signifying** and **proclaiming** the fact of **the Lord's death** until He comes [again].

From these verses we catch a purpose of remembrance and proclamation. Remembrance and proclamation of *what*? Of His death. His death meaning: His sacrifice, His obedience, His willingness, His humility, His love. As Philippians 2:5-11 records:

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, **he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death , even the death of the cross.**

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. KJV

So we see here what it is that we are to call to remembrance and are simultaneously reminded of the participation that we are to take by the writer's admonition to 'let this mind be [also] in you'.

This thought is reinforced by Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 10:16-22:

16 The cup of blessing [of wine at the Lord's Supper] upon which we ask [God's] blessing, does it not mean [that **in drinking it**] **we participate in and share a fellowship (a communion) in the blood of Christ** (the Messiah)? The bread which we break, does it not mean [that **in eating it**] **we participate in and share a fellowship (a communion) in the body of Christ**?



17 For we [no matter how] numerous **we are, are one body, because we all partake of the one Bread [the One Whom the communion bread represents]**.

18 Consider those [physically] people of Israel. Are not those who eat the sacrifices partners of the altar [united in their worship of the same God]?

19 What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is [intrinsically changed by the fact and amounts to] anything or that an idol itself is a [living] thing?

20 No, I am suggesting that what the pagans sacrifice they offer [in effect] to demons (to evil spiritual powers) and not to God [at all]. I do not want you to fellowship and be partners with diabolical spirits [by eating at their feasts].

**21 You cannot drink the Lord's cup and the demons' cup. You cannot partake of the Lord's table and the demons' table.**

22 Shall we thus provoke the Lord to jealousy and anger and indignation? Are we stronger than He [that we should defy Him]? AMP

As verse 16 states, thus, "...in drinking it] we participate in and share a fellowship (a communion) in the blood of Christ (the Messiah)" and, "...in eating it] we participate in and share a fellowship (a communion) in the body of Christ"

We must here remember the significance of our salvation experience:

Romans 6:3-8

3 Know ye not, that **so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?**

4 Therefore we are **buried with him by baptism into death**: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been **planted together** in the **likeness of his death**, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now **if we be dead with Christ**, we believe that **we shall also live with him**: KJV

So, in the partaking of the Lord's Supper, not only are we remembering and proclaiming His death, sacrifice, and obedience, but we are 'communing' with it. Some interesting historical insight may help us to better understand this aspect of sharing:

In days gone by, monarchs feared that those around them would poison their drinks, so they employed the services of a cupbearer to sample the drink first. If it was poisoned, he died, sparing the king's life. If it was safe, he shared in its refreshing qualities and remained in the king's presence and confidence.

In the book of Genesis, Pharaoh's "chief butler" was actually the cupbearer (Genesis 40:20), a very influential position. Later, Nehemiah had that role as cupbearer to the king of Persia (Nehemiah 1:11). A cupbearer was frequently in the presence of the king, participating in whatever the king did.

The phrase "**drinking of the cup**" eventually symbolized **sharing the consequences of what was in that cup**. It also came to mean accepting what the king dealt out. The whole world drinks of Babylon's cup, full of the wine of her fornications and abominations (Revelation 17:4; 18:3). Since "drinking of the cup" means accepting whatever is appointed for one to experience—both good and bad, joyful or sorrowful—all who drink of Babylon's cup will share in her future.

In the Bible are numerous references to this cup of God's wrath and how Babylon and other nations will drink from it, symbolizing the divine punishments being inflicted (Revelation 14:10; 16:19; Psalm 11:6; Isaiah 51:17, etc.). Revelation 14:10, for example, speaks of drinking "of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation." **Drinking of a cup means participating in whatever that cup contains.**

**Have we consciously rejected the cup of this world**, of Babylon, in favor of the "cup of the Lord"? God will not mix the contents of these two cups; they are totally incompatible. We must choose one or the other. Paul says, "**We cannot drink of the Lord's cup and of the cup of demons**" (I Corinthians 10:21). **We must totally reject this world**, this Babylon, **and that awful cup of the false church**, full of her abominations and of the blood of the saints (Revelation 18:6).

If we have lived in this world—and we all have to some degree—we have sipped from that awful cup and have been affected by its contents. **We must now unconditionally reject it**, empty it, discard it and replace it totally **in favor of the new cup of blessing from God**.

According to tradition, when a young Hebrew man and woman were to be betrothed, the groom **poured wine into his cup and invited the woman to drink of it**. It was up to her. **If she drank from it, she was considered betrothed to him**. If she did not, no marriage would take place. Paul tells the church in II Corinthians 11:2: "For I am jealous for you with godly

jealousy. For **I have betrothed you to one husband**, that I may present you as a chaste virgin **to Christ.**" **When the bride drank of the cup, she drank of the marriage covenant** or contract, **accepting it.** ([Are You Drinking of the Master's Cup?](#) - by Staff - *Forerunner*, March 1999)

From these excerpts, we gain great depth to our understanding of what it means to share in His cup. We see that drinking of His cup involves sharing in the consequences of, and participating in, whatever that cup contains. We see that drinking of His cup signifies our whole hearted and undivided allegiance to His Kingdom. And we see that drinking of His cup is an acknowledgement of our acceptance of His proposal to take us as His bride.

Similarly, in partaking of the bread, we are recognizing and signifying that 'we are... one body' (I Corinthians 10:17), as 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 and 27 tells us:

12 For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

13 For **by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

27 **Now ye are the body of Christ** , and members in particular. KJV

And so it was, in this vein, that Paul spoke correction unto the Corinthian church:

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 (AMP)

17 But in what I instruct [you] next I do not commend [you], because when you meet together, it is not for the better but for the worse.

18 For in the first place, when you assemble as a congregation, I hear that there are cliques **(divisions and factions) among you**; and I in part believe it,

19 For doubtless there have to be factions or parties among you in order that they who are genuine and of approved fitness may become evident and plainly recognized among you.

20 So when you gather for your meetings, it is not the supper instituted by the Lord that you eat,

21 For in eating each one [hurries] to get his own supper first [not waiting for the poor], and one goes hungry while another gets drunk.

22 What! Do you have no houses in which to eat and drink? Or do you despise the church of God and mean to show contempt for it, while you humiliate those who are poor (have no

homes and have brought no food)? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, [most certainly] I will not!

23 For I received from the Lord Himself that which I passed on to you [it was given to me personally], that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was treacherously delivered up and while His betrayal was in progress took bread,

24 And when He had given thanks, He broke [it] and said, Take, eat. This is My body, which is broken for you. Do this to call Me [affectionately] to remembrance.

25 Similarly when supper was ended, He took the cup also, saying, This cup is the new covenant [ratified and established] in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink [it], to call Me [affectionately] to remembrance.

26 For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are representing and signifying and proclaiming the fact of the Lord's death until He comes [again].

27 So then whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in a way that is unworthy [of Him] will be guilty of [profaning and sinning against] the body and blood of the Lord.

28 Let a man [thoroughly] examine himself, and [only when he has done] so should he eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

**29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discriminating and recognizing with due appreciation that [it is Christ's] body, eats and drinks a sentence (a verdict of judgment) upon himself.**

30 That [careless and unworthy participation] is the reason many of you are weak and sickly, and quite enough of you have fallen into the sleep of death.

31 For if we searchingly examined ourselves [detecting our shortcomings and recognizing our own condition], we should not be judged and penalty decreed [by the divine judgment].

32 But when we [fall short and] are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined and chastened, so that we may not [finally] be condemned [to eternal punishment along] with the world.

33 So then, my brothers, when you gather together to eat [the Lord's Supper], wait for one another.

34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together to bring judgment [on yourselves]. About the other matters, I will give you directions [personally] when I come.

And later in 1 Corinthians 12:14-18 and 25-26, he reaffirms:

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

18 But now hath **God set the members every one of them in the body**, as it hath pleased him.

25 That **there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.**

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. KJV

Jesus, himself, had prayed in John 17:20-23:

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

21 **That they all may be one** ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; **that they may be one, even as we are one:**

23 **I in them, and thou in me**, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me... KJV

Clearly, through the reading of these scriptures, we see that from our baptism to perfection, and most certainly in the partaking of communion, it is God's will that we that we recognize, honor, and respect the unity of our faith in the brotherhood of believers, and that we care for and even prefer one another. To fail to do so, is without acceptance.

## **The New Covenant**

At the initial institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus and His disciples had gathered to eat the Passover meal. Read the account of the original Passover from Exodus 12:1-27:

12:1 THE LORD said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt,

2 This month shall be to you the beginning of months, the first month of the year to you.

3 Tell all the congregation of Israel, On the tenth day of this month they shall take every man a lamb or kid, according to [the size of] the family of which he is the father, a lamb or kid for each house.

4 And if the household is too small to consume the lamb, let him and his next door neighbor take it according to the number of persons, every man according to what each can eat shall make your count for the lamb.

5 **Your lamb or kid shall be without blemish**, a male of the first year; you shall take it from the sheep or the goats.

6 And you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall [each] kill [his] lamb in the evening.

7 They shall take of the blood and put it on the two side posts and on the lintel [above the door space] of the houses in which they shall eat [the Passover lamb].

8 They shall eat the flesh that night roasted; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.

9 Eat not of it raw nor boiled at all with water, but roasted — its head, its legs, and its inner parts.

10 You shall let nothing of the meat remain until the morning; and the bones and unedible bits which remain of it until morning you shall burn with fire.

11 And you shall eat it thus: [as fully prepared for a journey] your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. It is the Lord's Passover.

12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment [proving their helplessness]. I am the Lord.

13 The **blood shall be for a token or sign** to you upon [the doorposts of] the houses where you are, [that] **when I see the blood, I will pass over you**, and **no plague shall be upon you** to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt.

14 And this day shall be to you for a **memorial**. You shall keep it as a feast to the Lord throughout your generations, keep it as an ordinance **forever** (**owlam**).

15[In celebration of the Passover in future years] seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; even the first day you shall put away leaven [symbolic of corruption] out of your houses; for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

16 On the first day you shall hold a solemn and holy assembly, and on the seventh day there shall be a solemn and holy assembly; no kind of work shall be done in them, save [preparation of] that which every person must eat — that only may be done by you.

17 And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day have I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall you observe this day throughout your generations as an ordinance forever.

18 In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread [and continue] until the twenty-first day of the month at evening.

19 Seven days no leaven [symbolic of corruption] shall be found in your houses; whoever eats what is leavened shall be excluded from the congregation of Israel, whether a stranger or native-born.

20 You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread [during that week].

21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said to them, Go forth, select and take a lamb according to your families and kill the Passover [lamb].

22 And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood in the basin, and touch the lintel above the door and the two side posts with the blood; and none of you shall go out of his house until morning.

23 For the Lord will pass through to slay the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood upon the lintel and the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to slay you.

24 You shall observe this rite for an ordinance to you and to your sons **forever** (*ʿowlam*).

25 When you come to the land which the Lord will give you, as He has promised, you shall keep this service.

26 When your children shall say to you, What do you mean by this service?

27 You shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for He passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when He slew the Egyptians but spared our houses. And the people bowed their heads and worshiped. AMP

And so it was, that as they ate together of the Passover meal, Jesus introduced to them the concept of a 'new covenant' and instituted with them a new 'meal of remembrance'. For, as we read previously, though the disciples failed to yet understand or comprehend, Jesus came to fulfill, once and for all, the blood covering and atonement for sin required under the Law. Just as the Passover lamb covered the Israelites so that 'no plague [of judgment] shall be upon you', so the blood Christ covers us and continually stays the hand of judgment from our own lives.

Let us review these related scriptures:

John 1:29

29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, **Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.** KJV

Hebrews 10:1-5:

10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4 **For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.**

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: KJV

1 Peter 1:18-19

18 You must know (recognize) that you were redeemed (ransomed) from the useless (fruitless) way of living inherited by tradition from [your] forefathers, not with corruptible things [such as] silver and gold,

19 But [you were purchased] with **the precious blood of Christ** (the Messiah), **like that of a [sacrificial] lamb without blemish or spot.** AMP

Hebrews 7:19

19 For **the law made nothing perfect**, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God....By so much was **Jesus** made a surety of **a better testament.** KJV

Confusion sometimes lies in the reading of the original Passover account from Exodus chapter 12, verses 14 and 24, which state that this feast and ordinance shall be kept 'forever'. Further



study of the word translated 'forever', helps us understand. The original word in Hebrew was **`owlam**, meaning:

OT:5769 `owlam (o-lawm'); or `olam (o-lawm'); from OT:5956; properly, concealed, i.e. the vanishing point; generally, time out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity; frequentatively, adverbial (especially with prepositional prefix) always:

KJV - alway (-s), ancient (time), any more, continuance, eternal, (for, [n-]) ever (-lasting, -more, of old), lasting, long (time), (of) old (time), perpetual, at any time, (beginning of the) world (+without end). Compare OT:5331, OT:5703. (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary)

From this definition we see many clarifications of the meaning of this word translated 'forever'. As the definition reads, "generally, time out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity; frequentatively". We receive further support from the fact that this word, `owlam, is used numerous other times throughout the Old Testament in similar fashion. Some examples are:

Leviticus 16:34, in reference to the yearly sacrifice:

34 And this shall be an everlasting (**`owlam**) statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year . And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.  
KJV

Exodus 27:20-21, in reference to the lamp of the tabernacle:

20 And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.

21 In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: it shall be a statute for ever (**`owlam**) unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel. KJV

Exodus 29:28 – referencing the heave offering

Exodus 30:21 – referencing the ceremonial washing

Exodus 31:17 – referencing the keeping of the Sabbath

Leviticus 6:18 – referencing Aaron and his son's portion

Leviticus 6:22 – referencing Aaron and his son’s offering

Leviticus23:14 – referencing the Feast of Unleavened Bread

Leviticus23:21 – referencing the Feast of Firstfruits

Leviticus23:31 – referencing the Day of Atonement

Leviticus23:41 – referencing the Feast of Tabernacles

So we can see from the many times in which this word was used in reference to various institutions of the Law, that it’s true translation and meaning are not ‘forever’ as we would understand, but rather ‘**continuously until...**’. Continuously until, that is, these things should be fulfilled. As Jesus said in Matthew 5:17, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but **to fulfill**.”

For even the Prophets had foresaw the day:

Isaiah 42:1-10

42:1 BEHOLD **MY Servant**, Whom I uphold, **My elect** in Whom My soul delights! **I have put My Spirit upon Him**; He will bring forth justice and right and reveal truth to the nations.

2 He will not cry or shout aloud or cause His voice to be heard in the street.

3 A bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not quench; He will bring forth justice in truth.

4 He will not fail or become weak or be crushed and discouraged till He has established justice in the earth; and the islands and coastal regions shall wait hopefully for Him and expect His direction and law.

5 Thus says God the Lord — He Who created the heavens and stretched them forth, He Who spread abroad the earth and that which comes out of it, He Who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it:

6 I the Lord have called You [the Messiah] for a righteous purpose and in righteousness; I will take You by the hand and will keep You; **I will give You for a covenant to the people [Israel], for a light to the nations [Gentiles],**

7 To open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who sit in darkness from the prison.

8 I am the Lord; that is My name! And My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to graven images.

9 **Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare;** before they spring forth I tell you of them.

10 Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise from the end of the earth! You who go down to the sea, and all that is in it, the islands and coastal regions and the inhabitants of them [sing a song such as has never been heard in the heathen world]! AMP

Isaiah 43:18-22

18 **Do not** [earnestly] **remember the former things; neither consider the things of old.**

19 **Behold, I am doing a new thing!** Now it springs forth; do you not perceive and know it and will you not give heed to it? I will even make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

20 The beasts of the field honor Me, the jackals and the ostriches, because I give waters in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to My people, My chosen,

21 The people I formed for Myself, that they may set forth My praise [and they shall do it].

22 Yet you have not called upon Me [much less toiled for Me], O Jacob; but you have been weary of Me, O Israel!

Moving forward, the author of Hebrews tells us:

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of **a better covenant** , which was established upon better promises.

7 For if that **first covenant** had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the **second**.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

9 **Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers** in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant , and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 **For this is the covenant that I will make** with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; **I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts:** and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: KJV

\*\*\*

13 In that he saith, A **new covenant** , **he hath made the first old**. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

9:1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

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13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this cause **he is the mediator of the new testament**, that by means of death, **for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament**, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. KJV

Hebrews 10:9-10

9 He then went on to say, Behold, [here] I am, coming to do Your will. Thus He **does away with** and annuls **the first** (former) order [as a means of expiating sin] so that He might **inaugurate and establish the second** (latter) order.

10 And in accordance with this will [of God], we have been made holy (consecrated and sanctified) through **the offering made once for all** of the body of Jesus Christ (the Anointed One). AMP

We read also in Romans:

8:1 THEREFORE, [there is] now no condemnation (no adjudging guilty of wrong) for those who are in Christ Jesus, who live [and] walk not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life [which is] in Christ Jesus [the law of our new being] has freed me from the law of sin and of death.

3 For **God has done what the Law could not do**, [its power] being weakened by the flesh [the entire nature of man without the Holy Spirit]. Sending His own Son in the guise of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, [God] condemned sin in the flesh [subdued, overcame, deprived it of its power over all who accept that sacrifice],

4 So that **the righteous and just requirement of the Law might be fully** met in us who live and move **not in the ways of the flesh but in the ways of the Spirit** [our lives governed not by the standards and according to the dictates of the flesh, but controlled by the Holy Spirit]. AMP

Rom 10:2-6

2 I bear them witness that they have a [certain] zeal and enthusiasm for God, but it is not enlightened and according to [correct and vital] knowledge.

3 For being ignorant of the righteousness that God ascribes [which makes one acceptable to Him in word, thought, and deed] and seeking to establish a righteousness (a means of salvation) of their own, they did not obey or submit themselves to God's righteousness.

4 For Christ is the end of the Law [the limit at which it ceases to be, **for the Law leads up to Him Who is the fulfillment of its types, and in Him the purpose which it was designed to accomplish is fulfilled.** That is, **the purpose of the Law is fulfilled in Him**] as the means of righteousness (right relationship to God) for everyone who trusts in and adheres to and relies on Him. AMP

And finally in Galatians 3:19:

19 What then was the purpose of the Law? It was added [later on, after the promise, to disclose and expose to men their guilt] because of transgressions and [to make men more conscious of the sinfulness] of sin; and **it was intended to be in effect until the Seed** (the Descendant, the Heir) **should come**, to and concerning Whom the promise had been made. And it [the Law] was arranged and ordained and appointed through the instrumentality of angels [and was given] by the hand (in the person) of a go-between [Moses, an intermediary person between God and man]. AMP

So it becomes clear to us through the reading of these scriptures that 'old things are passed away' and 'all things are become new'. Notice Paul's example in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8:

6[About the condition of your church] your boasting is not good [indeed, it is most unseemly and entirely out of place]. Do you not know that [just] a little leaven will ferment the whole lump [of dough]?

7 **Purge (clean out) the old leaven** that you may be fresh (new) dough, still uncontaminated [as you are], **for Christ, our Passover [Lamb], has been sacrificed.**

8 Therefore, **let us keep the feast, not with old leaven**, nor with leaven of vice and malice and wickedness, **but with the unleavened [bread] of purity** (nobility, honor) and **sincerity** and [unadulterated] **truth.** AMP

Paul speaks here figuratively. Note: the leaven of which he speaks is not physical leaven, as it was in Old Testament times, but spiritual leaven (vice, malice, wickedness). This is in keeping with his words later in chapter 11 admonishing us to 'examine' ourselves that we not partake of the communion meal in an unworthy manner. So originally they were to search their homes for **physical** leaven (Exodus 12:19), but now we are to search our hearts for **spiritual** leaven. This is also in keeping with Jeremiah's prophecy (Jeremiah 31:33) that reads, "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their **inward parts**, and write it **in their hearts**; and will be their God, and they shall be my people", as well as Jesus' teachings on sin in Matthew 5:27-28, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That **whosoever looketh** on a woman to lust after her **hath committed** adultery with her **already in his heart.**"

And so we see, through the study of these scriptures, that the keeping of, and partaking in, of the Lord's Supper is not a continuation of the Passover, but rather a recognition of the completion and fulfillment of it, and a signification of a new and better institution.

## Participation

There are at times dispute and debate as to the question of who should partake in the Lord's Supper.

Once again, let's start at the beginning. At its institution, to whom did the Lord Jesus original administer it? It was to His disciples, of course. So here we catch our first glimpse. Now let's see how this aligns with some other scriptures. In Paul's address to the Corinthian church, in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, it says:

17 But in what I instruct [you] next I do not commend [you], because when you **meet together**, it is not for the better but for the worse.

18 For in the first place, when you **assemble as a congregation**, I hear that there are cliques (**divisions and factions**) **among you**; and I in part believe it,

19 For doubtless there have to be factions or parties among you in order that they who are genuine and of approved fitness may become evident and plainly recognized among you.

20 So when you **gather for your meetings**, it is not **the supper instituted by the Lord** that you eat,

We can observe two things from these passages

- 1) The church had gathered together 'as a congregation' to evidently partake of a communal meal and the Lord's Supper
- 2) There were 'divisions and factions' among them

So what does Paul say? He tells them, basically, that, it doesn't matter what they *want* to call it, what they *are* doing is *not* the 'supper instituted by the Lord'. Why? Because they were not properly recognizing, discerning, or respecting the Lord's 'body'. Remember the portions of scripture that we read previously:

1 Corinthians 12:13 and 27:

13 For **by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

27 **Now ye are the body of Christ** , and members in particular. KJV

1 Corinthians 12:14-18 and 25-26:

14 For the body is not one member, but many.

18 But now hath **God set the members every one of them in the body**, as it hath pleased him.

25 That **there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another**.

26 And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. KJV

Paul goes on to instruct them in:

26 For **every time you eat this bread and drink this cup**, you are **representing** and **signifying** and **proclaiming** the fact of **the Lord's death** until He comes [again].

27 So then **whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup** of the Lord **in a way that is unworthy** [of Him] **will be guilty of** [profaning and sinning against] **the body and blood of the Lord**.

At this point we would need to remember all that we had read and studied previously regarding the significance of the 'body and blood of the Lord'. And in so doing we can begin to understand the purpose of Paul's seriousness in his correction of them. We might go all the way back to the place of Calvary as Jesus hung on the cross. Would they have pushed and shoved there? Would they have been concerned with their cliques and factions there? Or would it have been a hallowed place of brokenness? A time and a mood of unity? For it is in partaking of the Lord's Supper that we are taken back (in our hearts and in our minds) to that place.

So in consideration of this, Paul goes on to instruct them:

28 Let a man [thoroughly] examine himself, and [only when he has done] so should he eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

29 **For anyone who eats and drinks without discriminating and recognizing with due appreciation that [it is Christ's] body, eats and drinks a sentence (a verdict of judgment) upon himself.**

30 That [careless and unworthy participation] is the reason many of you are weak and sickly, and quite enough of you have fallen into the sleep of death.

31 For if we searchingly examined ourselves [detecting our shortcomings and recognizing our own condition], we should not be judged and penalty decreed [by the divine judgment].

32 But when we [fall short and] are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined and chastened, so that we may not [finally] be condemned [to eternal punishment along] with the world.

33 So then, my brothers, when you gather together to eat [the Lord's Supper], wait for one another.



34 If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together to bring judgment [on yourselves]. About the other matters, I will give you directions [personally] when I come.  
AMP

‘Let a man **thoroughly examine** himself’, ‘For anyone who eats and drinks **without discriminating** and **recognizing with due appreciation** that [it is **Christ's**] **body**, eats and drinks a sentence (...of judgment) upon himself’, ‘For if we **searchingly examined** ourselves..., we should not be judged’. His words are pretty clear. But for a true born-again Christian these words should not come with any surprise. Their concepts should not come across as new and shocking. At the outset of our salvation experience, we are called to repentance and admonished to live a continually repentant lifestyle. Likewise we are instructed, in Romans 12:9-10, to: “Let love be **without dissimulation**. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly **affectioned one to another** with brotherly love; in honour **preferring one another**”.

So, is Paul instructing us to have a corporate time of examination each time before we partake in the Lord’s Supper? No. He is rather placing the responsibility upon each of us individually, as Jesus, himself, told us 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.” When *you* come to share in and partake of the Lord’s Supper, it is *your* responsibility to check *your* heart and Spirit. And should you find within yourself corruption of some kind, then find a private place and personally repent of your sin.

In addressing the question of who should participate, it would do good to recall, as well, some of the highlights of the article we read earlier ([Are You Drinking of the Master's Cup?](#) - by Staff - *Forerunner*, March 1999):

- ‘Drinking of the cup’... symbolized sharing the consequences of what was in that cup.
- Drinking of a cup means participating in whatever that cup contains.
- Have we consciously rejected the cup of this world..., in favor of the "cup of the Lord"?
- ‘We cannot drink of the Lord's cup and of the cup of demons’ (I Corinthians 10:21).
- According to tradition, when a young Hebrew man and woman were to be betrothed, the groom poured wine into his cup and invited the woman to drink of it. It was up to her. If she drank from it, she was considered betrothed to him.

Do we readily understand and embrace the consequences of drinking of this cup and all that it contains? Are we willing to participate in and share in the cost and responsibilities of membership in the body of Christ? Have we rejected the ways of this world, steeped in selfish pleasure and sin, for the greater will and purposes of our King and Creator? Are we ready to be married to our Lord? Have we had enough of our childish and immature independence?

When the question arises of who can or should partake of the Lord's Supper, we must answer *this* question with *these* questions. If one cannot answer these questions confidently, they must not only question their participation in the Lord's Supper, but their very *salvation*! This is a hard statement, without a doubt, but it is true to the teachings and ministry of our Lord Jesus.

Now, seeing as Jesus originally administered it to His disciples, and, in reading Paul's word's of correction regarding the 'body', it would seem to imply that the Lord's Supper is an institution intended for the true and sincere born-again believer. He or she who has entered into the 'priesthood' of believers and become a 'child of God', as Galatians 3:26-28 states:

26 For ye are all the **children of God** by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for **ye are all one in Christ Jesus**. KJV

For it is in this recognition, commitment, and unity that we are called to partake.

## Frequency

The next question that arises is often, "How frequently should we celebrate the Lord's Supper?"

From the Gospel accounts we have only the command of Jesus to '**do this** in remembrance of Me.' From Paul's account, which he says he 'received from the Lord Himself', we have Jesus' words, "**Do this** to call Me [affectionately] to remembrance", and, "**Do this, as often as** you drink [it], to call Me [affectionately] to remembrance. For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are representing and signifying and proclaiming the fact of the Lord's death until He comes [again]. "

In the original Greek, ‘as often as you drink of [it]’, does little to aid our understanding. The word ‘it’ is bracketed, because, as Strong’s Concordance notes, it is an *‘inserted word; This word was added by the translators for better readability in the English. There is no actual word in the Greek text.*

The words translated ‘as oft as’, are ‘hosákis eán’. Which Strong’s defines in this way:

**hosakis** (hos-ak'-is); multiple adverb from NT:3739; how (i.e. with NT:302, so) many times as:

KJV - as oft (-en) as.

**ean** (eh-an'); from NT:1487 and NT:302; a conditional particle; in case that, provided, etc.; often used in connection with other particles to **denote indefiniteness or uncertainty**:

KJV - before, but, except, (and) if, (if) so, (what-, whither-) soever, though, when (-soever), whether (or), to whom, [who-] so (-ever). See NT:3361.

The only insight we gain is from the definition of the word ‘ean’, which it says ‘often...denote(s) indefiniteness or uncertainty’, and this ‘indefiniteness’ of frequency would seem to be confirmed by the lack of pointed instruction on the part of either Jesus or Paul. What we should recognize, is that the Word of the Lord never fails to tell us exactly what we *need* to know. In the Old Testament God made it very clear to the Israelites the exact measures and times of His will and expectations. He instructed them explicitly on what to do and when. Yet, as we have discussed previously, what was required in times past in the physical, has now been set at liberty in the spiritual. What was once mechanically required, is now sought willingly. They *had* to; we *get* to.

Let’s look at another scripture. In Acts 2:42 and 46 we read:

42 And **they continued steadfastly** in the apostles' doctrine and **fellowship**, and in **breaking of bread**, and in prayers.

46 And they, continuing **daily** with one accord in the temple, and **breaking bread** from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, KJV

So here we read that they (the believers and followers) ‘continued steadfastly’. Webster’s defines steadfast as:

steadfast – firmly fixed in faith or devotion to duty; constant; unchanging

And what was it that they were doing ‘steadfastly’? It says they were ‘in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers’. Likewise, verse 46 states that they continued ‘daily’ with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house.

A couple of terms that we can recognize from these passages are ‘fellowship’ and ‘one accord’, which speak to us of the ‘body’ life that we studied previously. But the term ‘breaking of bread’, what does it mean?

We read in Acts:

Acts 20:7 and 11

7 And upon the **first day of the week**, when the disciples came together to **break bread**, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had **broken bread**, and **eaten**, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. KJV

Acts 27:34-36

34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he **took bread**, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had **broken** it, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. KJV

And in Luke chapter 24 we read:

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took **bread**, and blessed it, and **broke**, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in **breaking of bread.** KJV

From the reference in Acts 20:11, where it says they ‘had broken bread, and eaten’, it would seem to imply that this was their meal and their sustenance. Unless, that is, we separate when they ‘had broken bread’ from when they had ‘eaten’. It is possible that the ‘had broken bread’ was in reference to a particular part of the meal separate from the ‘and eaten’ portion.

The scripture from Acts 27:34-35, is a definite reference to sustenance, as Paul tells them, ‘this is for your health’, but the passage from Luke could again leave some question. As it says, He ‘sat at meat with them’, it would seem to reference a meal, but the fact that they recognized Him when He ‘took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them’ would seem to imply the possibility that there was a significant manner in which did this.

So we know that the term ‘breaking bread’ is at least sometimes used to reference simply eating a meal for the sake of sustenance, yet our question remains: When the scripture says they continued daily breaking bread and that they gathered on the first day of the week to break bread, what does it mean? Is it a reference to simply eating or a reference to the eating of the Lord’s Supper? Of a certainty, we cannot tell for sure.

So can a consensus be made? It does not appear so. From scripture we are left with the possibilities that they ate of the Lord’s Supper at: indefinite times, weekly, or even *daily*! What we do know, again, is that the Lord has never failed to be able to give man necessary direction or instruction. We must discern from this that it is not necessarily the Lord’s concern as to how *often* we eat of it as it is His concern that we do it *properly* and with *sincerity*. This is not to imply that the frequency of our partaking in it is not a concern to the Lord at all, for most certainly, as it is a time of remembrance of His great love and sacrifice for us, He does desire for us to share in it frequently. Yet, we must always examine and remind ourselves of the great depths of its meaning, lest we lose our perspective and appreciation of this great institution.

## **The Bread, the Wine, and the Meal**

Much discussion is often given to the physical representatives of the body and blood, which are the bread and the wine. Some debate that the wine was really only juice, while others debate whether the bread must be unleavened.

Again we will go to the scriptures. The only reference, from each of the gospel accounts, that is made as to what was in the cup, are Jesus' words following:

I say to you, I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it with you new and of superior quality in My Father's kingdom.

So what did 'fruit of the vine' mean? Well, we know that it was certainly a reference to grapes. But was it fermented or unfermented? From this reference we cannot know for sure. What we do know from other portions of scripture is that it was common for fermented wine to be drunk in the culture of that day. Scripture clearly teaches us that it is not good to drink to excess or drunkenness, but there is nothing that speaks against casual cultural consumption, with the exception being the avoidance of placing a stumbling block before your brother:

Romans 14:20-21

20 For meat destroy not the work of God. **All things indeed are pure**; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.

21 It is good neither to eat flesh, **nor to drink wine**, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, **or is offended, or is made weak.** KJV

Some scriptural references involving fermented wine include:

Matthew 11:19

19 The Son of man came eating and **drinking**, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a **winebibber**, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children. KJV

For clarification we read also the Amplified version:

19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking [with others], and they say, Behold, a glutton and a **wine drinker**, a friend of tax collectors and [especially wicked] sinners! **Yet wisdom is justified** and vindicated **by what she does (her deeds)** and by her children. AMP

The phrase 'wisdom is justified by what she does' would seem to explain the exaggerations of Jesus' accusers, yet, it would seem that although they are exaggerations, they are exaggerations of a truth. Meaning that, while he wasn't gluttonous, he did eat, and though he was friendly with sinners, he was not friends with them in the terms of shared participation in their sinful

lifestyle, and likewise, though he most certainly was not a 'winebibber' or a drunk, he most likely did drink fermented wine as was the cultural norm of the day.

An additional reference would be Paul's admonition to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:23:

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little **wine** for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. KJV

And a final reference would be Jesus' first miracle:

John 2:3-10

3 And when they wanted **wine**, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; **and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.**

KJV

Due to the context of this scripture, a celebratory wedding feast, we can be certain that this was fermented wine. The same original Greek word, *oinos*, is used in each of these passages and translated as wine.

So we know that it was not uncommon to consume fermented wine during that time period, yet this does not ascertain for us that it was fermented wine that was consumed at the original institution of the Lord's Supper. As we discussed earlier, what we can be certain of is that, if it was of vital importance, the Lord most certainly would have made it clear in His Word. One could even argue that the 'cup' itself is referenced more than the contents of what was in the

cup, and as we studied previously, this could be an important observation. It would appear that our Lord was indeed making the point and focus to be the communion and fellowship of the shared cup more than the significance and clarity of what was in it.

As for the bread that we break, what does scripture tell us? We know that Jesus and His disciples had gathered to eat the Passover meal:

Luke 22

13 And they went and found it [just] as He had said to them; and they made ready the **Passover** [supper].

14 And when the hour came, [Jesus] reclined at table, and the apostles with Him.

15 And He said to them, I have earnestly and intensely desired to eat this **Passover** with you before I suffer;

And we know that during the time of the Passover only unleavened bread was to be consumed:

Exodus 12

20 You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread [during that week].

So we can be certain that it was unleavened bread that they ate at the original institution. Yet neither, Jesus nor Paul, give any instruction as to a requirement that the bread must be unleavened. We remember Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 5:6-8:

6[About the condition of your church] your boasting is not good [indeed, it is most unseemly and entirely out of place]. Do you not know that [just] a little leaven will ferment the whole lump [of dough]?

7 **Purge (clean out) the old leaven** that you may be fresh (new) dough, still uncontaminated [as you are], **for Christ, our Passover [Lamb], has been sacrificed.**

8 Therefore, **let us keep the feast, not with old leaven**, nor with leaven of vice and malice and wickedness, **but with the unleavened [bread] of purity** (nobility, honor) and **sincerity** and [unadulterated] **truth.** AMP



In these passages Paul is most certainly referencing matters of the heart, which, as we stated previously, are clearly at the center of our keeping of, and participation in, the Lord's Supper. But with such clear and obvious examples of the spiritual and historical significance and principle represented by the leaven and the unleavened bread, it would only seem wise to keep this concept intact as we plan out and partake in the Lord's Supper. Yet, let us not be overly consumed by the debate and discussion of the status of the bread and lose sight of the significance of all that it represents: Christ's body – broken for us, and our unity as sons and daughters in Him, members together of His body.

As for the meal itself, tradition has shifted the location of 'communion' from the supper table to the church service. Likewise, the broken bread has evolved into, in many instances, nothing more than a wafer or cracker. Scripturally we see no support for either of these distortions. Jesus' institution of communion was clearly at the supper table, more specifically, towards the end of the meal:

Luke 22

20 And in like manner, He took the cup **after supper...**

Matthew 26

26 Now **as they were eating**, Jesus took bread

Again, we find nothing in scripture that would cause us to dispute this fact.

As for the use of wafers or crackers, our previous discussion of the use, significance, and purpose of the bread should suffice to defend its necessity. We certainly see nothing in scripture that would suggest or allow for the use of anything else. Yet once more, in closing, let us be reminded to not allow these symbols of unity become a cause of *dis*-unity!

