

Lord's Supper

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I. Introduction.

A. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and

broke it; and he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins. But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:26-29).

B. The Lord's Supper was instituted during a Passover Feast.

1. Passover was observed with unleavened bread.

(a) "Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel" (Exodus 12:15).

2. The juice of the grape, or fruit of the vine, was also on the Passover table.

(a) "But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29).

3. The bread represents the body of Jesus; the grape juice represents his blood.

(a) It is basic to understanding language to regard every statement as literal unless the context requires a figurative application.

(b) Jesus said many things that are figurative: "I am the door...I am the vine...I am the bread of life...I am the water of life."

(c) When Jesus said of the cup containing the fruit of the vine, "this is my blood of the covenant," and when

he said of the bread, "this is my body," he obviously did not mean literal blood and literal flesh. He was present with them in the flesh. They had to understand he was saying the bread is symbolic of my body, the fruit of the vine is symbolic of my blood.

II. Essentials of the Lord's Supper.

A. The time of observance.

1. First century disciples assembled regularly on the first day of the week to worship.

(a) "Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh" (Heb. 10:25).

(b) "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come" (1 Cor. 16:2).

(c) "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7).

2. Since the first day of the week is the day of worship, and since the Lord's Supper is a part of worship, it follows that the Lord's Supper is to be observed on the first day of the week. Acts 20:7 shows this was the practice of the early church.

B. Who may partake?

1. "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be

guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body" (1 Cor. 11:26-29).

(a) Each person is to examine or prove himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

(b) The fruit of the vine or the cup is Jesus' blood of the covenant. A person who is not in a covenant relationship with Jesus is not a proper candidate to partake of the cup or eat the bread.

2. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we are all partake of the one bread"

(1 Cor. 10:16-17).

(a) No person can discern the body of Jesus who has not obeyed the conditions of pardon given in the New Testament.

3. To discern the body and blood of Jesus and, therefore, to partake in a worthy manner, one must have the right attitude toward the supper. A part of that attitude is to know ourselves to be unworthy; only then can we partake in a worthy manner.

4. Still, each person is to prove himself, and then eat and drink.

C. The communion is not the most important part of the worship (one of God's commands is not more important than another) but it is the centerpiece of our worship.

1. In all worship we must have proper feelings of piety and devotion.