

**Harvest Christian Fellowship**  
**March 11, 2012**  
**Theology @ 9**  
**“The Lord’s Supper”**  
**Facilitator: Buddy Pritchard**  
**“The Lord’s Supper”**

**History:** We cannot know where we are if we do not know where we have come from. The Meta-narrative.

While the ordinance we observe as the “Lord’s Supper” is found in the new covenant between Christ and His church, its foreshadow is found in the Old Testament as God communes with His people Israel.

Exodus 24:9-11, “ Then Moses went up with Aron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel and they saw the God of Israel ... Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they beheld God, and they ate and drank.” In his book on Systematic Theology, Grudem speaks of the relationship between man and God in the garden of Eden as it relates to communion, “Since there was no sin in that situation, and since God had created them for fellowship with himself and to glorify himself, then every meal that Adam and Eve ate would have been a meal of feasting in the presence of the Lord” (989).

More specifically the context of the “Lord’s Supper” is found within the Law of Moses as it relates to the Feast of Passover. The Old Testament feasts are themselves foreshadows or pictures of the Messiah who was to come so the people of Israel would recognize Him. So it is not surprising then that Christ would institute the New Covenant and this ordinance of the church during this specific Old Covenant feast.

**God’s Command and Christ Fulfillment in the Feast of Passover**

(Not all-inclusive)

1. Ex. 12:3,6; The Lamb was to be examined for four days. Christ, the “Lamb of God” entered Jerusalem and was in the temple for four days preaching and teaching.
2. Ex. 12:5; The lamb was to be without blemish. Christ as the Son of God is perfect without sin. Even Pilate found no guilt in Him at His trial.
3. Ex. 12:6; The lamb was to be killed between the evenings. Jesus died at the ninth hour of the day or 3:00 pm.
4. Ex. 12:7,13,22; The blood must be applied to the door. (Sign of the cross) The blood of the lamb in Egypt protected the family from physical death. The blood of Jesus applied to believers protects them from spiritual death. The only way into the house of God is through the shed blood of the Messiah, who is the door. (John 10:7-9)
5. Ex. 12:43-46; Not a bone of the lamb was to be broken. Not one bone of Jesus’ body was broken when He was crucified. (John 19:33)
6. Deuteronomy 16:5; The lamb must be killed outside the gates of the city. Jesus was killed outside the city of Jerusalem at a place called Golgotha. (John 19:16-19, Hebrews 13:10-13)

7. Ex. 12:8-10; The body of the lamb must be eaten. Both the body and the blood of the lamb speak of the body and the blood of Jesus. We spiritually eat of His body when we eat the bread and when we drink of the cup, which represents His blood.

### **Examination of the Elements**

**Jewish saying:** “Let your eye see so that your heart will remember.”

**The bread:** The bread was unleavened, that is without yeast, yeast in the Scriptures is a symbol for sin and what it does to a life. When it was baked it was flattened and pierced to keep it from rising and striped with a hot iron to represent the beatings the children of Israel took as slaves at the hands of the Egyptians. Jesus said this is my body speaking of the bread, which is symbolic and a visual picture of what was to become of His body.

**The cup:** The wine in the Jewish mind represents, Joy, Life and Blood.

### **Biblical terms related to the Lord’s Supper**

- a. Agape or Love feast: 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 11:20-22, A larger meal given by the wealthy members of the body for the benefit of the poorer members of the church, in which Communion was celebrated. These “love feasts” were celebrated on a weekly basis.
- b. The Lord’s Supper, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:20
- c. The breaking of bread, Acts 2:42.
- d. Communion, from the Authorized version translation of *koinonia* in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:16.
- e. Eucharist: Greek, meaning *Thanksgiving*, this arose from the giving of thanks before the taking of the elements, “this was two parts of the one larger meal—the action round the bread ‘while they were eating’, and the action a round the cup ‘after supper’ - but in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century the agape or love feast and the Eucharist were separated” (Ferguson 236).

### **Three differing views of Communion**

1. Transubstantiation: Roman Catholic view,” This means that the substance of the bread and the wine are miraculously transformed into the substance of Christ’s body and blood so that they are no longer bread and wine though they appear to be” (Packer 218).
2. Consubstantiation: Lutheran view, In, With, and Under. “That Christ’s body and blood come to be present in, with, and under the form of the bread and wine, which thus become more than bread and wine though not less” (Packer 218). The idea here is that, “Christ’s body is present in the bread as water is present in a sponge—the water is not the sponge, but is present, ‘in, with, and under’ a sponge, and is present wherever the sponge is present” (Grudem 994).
3. The Memorial view: The Lord’s Supper, “is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming” (BF&M 2000).

Historic Baptist belief understands the words of Christ, “This is my body ... my blood” to mean represents not constitutes. The, “bread and wine symbolized the body and blood of Christ, and they gave a visible sign of the fact that Christ himself was truly present” (Grudem 995).

### **It's Institution**

The historical account of the institution of the Lord's Supper can be found in the three Synoptic gospels, Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:17-20. Paul writes in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:23-29 to explain the Supper's institution to the church and the doctrines that surround it.

### **It's Significance**

1. It is a memorial to Christ. Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of Me” (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 11:24). Not only remembering His death but that He is alive so we commemorate Him as the one who ever lives and is present with His own.
2. It is a pledge of the New Covenant. The sign of the new covenant is the cup. It symbolizes the blood, which was shed by our Lord in the ratification of the new covenant. Jesus said, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Luke 22:20).
3. It is a proclamation of Christ's death. Paul writes, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes” (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 11:26).
4. It is a prophecy of Christ's coming. This ordinance is to be practiced until Christ comes, (1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 11:26). Jesus said, “But I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom” (Matt. 26:29). This reminds the believer of our joyful reunion with Christ which is to come.
5. It is fellowship with Christ and His own. Paul writing in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:16 tells us, “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?” As Jesus has promised to be present whenever believers worship (Matt. 18:20) then we should expect Him to be present when Christians gather to partake of the Lord's Supper. This is a spiritual experience, “an inner communion with His person which uses the outward action as an expression of inward spiritual faith” (Thiessen 329).

### **Who should Participate in the Lord's Supper?**

The conditions of participation in the Lord's Supper are regeneration and a life of obedience to Christ. Participants are asked to examine themselves (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:27-29) as to their fitness to come to the table, the issue here is sin in the life of the believer, which should be repented from and confessed to the Lord prior to the taking of the elements. To do other wise is to bring judgment upon himself (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:27-29).

The subject of Baptism and participation in the Lord's Supper has been debated within the church for centuries.

One view is that baptism should precede the taking of the Lord's Supper and Scripture demonstrates this in the life of the early church as best we can tell.

The opposing view is that there is no proof from Scripture that non-baptized believers were excluded from the Lord's Supper until they were baptized.

This issue is a secondary doctrine and is to be decided within the context of the local church as to which view will be practiced. However, the ideal situation is for new believers first to be baptized and then partake of the Lord's Supper.

At Harvest we practice open communion that is the elements are offered to baptized believers only regardless of denomination. It should be understood, that Harvest's statement of faith proclaims that, "Being a church ordinance, it (Baptism) is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and the Lord's Supper" (BF&M 2000).

### Questions

**1. Who should administer the elements?** Scripture does not speak to this directly as the Holy Spirit gives great latitude to the local church. This latitude allows Christianity to grow and flourish across all cultures and situations. However it would be prudent that responsible church leaders administer the ordinance as they ordinarily officiate at the worship service.

**2. How often should the Lord's Supper be celebrated?** Again Scripture does not give us a proof text. Jesus simply said, "as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup..." (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:26). Church history has shown that communion has taken place every week, prior to the Reformation and then to once a month, or twice a month or even four times a year. The issue is not the number of times communion is taken or on what week of the month it is taken, but upon its spiritual significance. The Lord's Supper is an act of worship as Paul says, "Let all things be done for edification" (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:26).

### Works Cited

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