

The Lord's Supper: Why the Bread???

The Bread & The Passover

What is so important about the brief religious ceremony that we call 'the Lord's Supper' or 'Communion'?

I have heard many discussions, often heated discussions, over the bread and juice used in the Lord's Supper, the precise *form* or *manner* in which the Lord's Supper is offered/served/taken, whether the Lord's Supper can be served at a time other than Sunday morning, and on and on it goes. I agree that we should consider those questions, but WHY???

What if we are simply completing a ritual because of biblical command and we overlook the meaning? Jesus really did give it meaning!

If we overlook the meaning of the Lord's Supper and its importance, I am convinced that we will risk making the Lord's Supper mere religious ritual void of any blessing from God.

When Jesus gave his disciples the unleavened bread at the 'Last Supper' he referred to the bread as "my body." The 'Last Supper' was the last Passover meal that Jesus ate with his disciples. A lamb was sacrificed and eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. The meal was eaten annually by the Jews to celebrate the deliverance of their ancestors from Egyptian slavery.

Read about the *first* Passover in Exodus 12 where Moses ordered the Pharaoh of Egypt to release the Israelite people from slavery. God had Moses tell Pharaoh that there would be one last plague, a plague that would demonstrate His power over life and over death. God would bring death to the firstborn in every household unless the blood of a sacrificed lamb was put on the doorpost.

God instructed Moses to observe the Passover every year explaining to their children the meaning of the sacrifice and the ritual. The Israelites were to teach their children that the Passover was a celebration of deliverance from slavery. It was called the *Passover* because God literally 'passed over' the houses of those who, in faith, put the blood of the sacrifice on their doorpost so that no one died.

The Passover was not to be observed as a mere command. It was full of meaning. It was supposed to convey *deliverance from slavery, celebration of life, and the faithfulness of God*.

At the Last Supper, when Jesus referred to the bread as his body *he identified himself as the Passover lamb*. John the Baptist foreshadowed this connection by calling Jesus the Lamb of God (John 1:29). Later the Apostle Paul would refer to "Christ our Passover" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus was the Passover sacrifice for all people. His sacrifice, like the original Passover was full of meaning, and full of joy. As our Passover Lamb he has delivered us from slavery to sin; he has given us life; and the faithfulness of God has been demonstrated once again.

When a Christian eats the unleavened bread, he is to remember the body of Jesus who was sacrificed as our Passover Lamb. However, our focus is not to be our sin and sorrow. The Israelite Passover was never about sorrow for slavery, but rather a celebration of God's faithfulness and deliverance.

Jesus connected the sacrifice of his body on the cross to the Passover Lamb. What shall we teach our children about the Lord's Supper: Religious ritual? Sorrow for sin? Or joyful celebration of deliverance from sin?

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