

THE EMBLEMS OF BREAD AND WINE

The observance of the Lord's Supper is a very important night to the true Christian. It is the night of the year in which we remember the death of Jesus the Christ, who sacrificed himself for our sins. The observance involves the emblems of bread and wine which represent his sacrificed body and blood, respectively.

The Lord's Supper occurs on the same night of the Jewish Passover, Nisan the 14th according to the Jewish calendar. *"And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go yet into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover."* Mark 14:12 to 16. Let us analyse "the goodman" of the house, but before doing so, read Matthew 26:17 to 19 and Luke 22:7 to 13. Something we should be aware of is that the use of the goodman's house was likely pre-arranged. It was common for Jesus to send disciples ahead to places he intended to visit so that people would be aware of his coming and that way, they could come and hear him speak. *"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him."* Luke 9:51, 52; *"After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face unto every city and place, whither he himself would come."* Luke 10:1. It is because of Jesus sending disciples of places he intended to visit that there were crowds waiting for him. There is no doubt that Jesus' words would attract people as well but given the relatively short time of Jesus' ministry, it would make sense that Jesus would make the most of his time by planning ahead. Given the specialness of the last supper Jesus would have with the twelve disciples, it makes sense that he would plan for this event and not just "wing it". When Jesus sent Peter and John to get a room for the observance of the Passover, his disciples were instructed to utter specific words, as though this was a coded signal for the goodman of the house. *"And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand, I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples."* Matthew 26:18; *"And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?"* Mark 14:14. Read also Luke 22:11. As soon as the disciples spoke the specified words, the goodman of the house took them to a large upper room that was furnished and they proceeded to prepare the Passover meal.

With respect to identifying which man the disciples were to seek out, they were told by Jesus to look for a man bearing a pitcher of water. To many Western minds this would not sound like anything out of the ordinary but for someone to witness a man bearing a pitcher of water during those times would stand out as something very unusual indeed. It was customary during those times for a woman to carry water; a grown man would rarely be doing such a thing. Women were the ones who normally performed the household chores which would include the retrieving and carrying of water for the family. For the disciples to find a man performing such a chore, they could be sure that they had in fact found the "goodman of the house" that Jesus spoke of because of how rare such an act was performed by men.

In Luke 22:14, 15, we read: *"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer."* The Passover was a family affair and often, there would be ten to a dozen people at such a meal. If the family was smaller, then friends would be invited. In Jesus' instance, he changed the

traditional gathering in that he held the Passover with his spiritual family, his disciples, instead of his blood family. This marked the beginning of the change in the meal's purpose.

At the last meal, Jesus instituted another change, that relating to the taking of emblems, that is, of bread and wine. With respect to the eating of the bread: ***"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body."*** Matthew 26:26; ***"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body."*** Mark 14:22; ***"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me."*** Luke 22:19. Jesus was instructing his followers to follow this example and perform this ceremony as a way to remember him. The partaking of the bread was representative of his body which he willingly sacrificed for the sake of mankind. When we observe this custom, we are saying that we remember the sacrifice he made and wish to be part of his church. Just as the Scriptures described, Jesus was that bread of life and all that follow his words, will find eternal life because his words come from God. ***"This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. 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 ... 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."*** John 6:50, 51, 58.

The other emblem instituted by Jesus was that of the fruit of the vine (ie. Wine), which represents the blood of Jesus. ***"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."*** Matthew 26:27, 28; ***"And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said to them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."*** Mark 14:23, 24; ***"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat of this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."*** I Corinthians 11:25, 26. Similar to the bread, the wine is symbolic and represents the blood that was spilled by Jesus on behalf of the world. It should be noted that "for as often as ye eat of this bread and drink this cup" does not mean that we should be observing the Lord's Supper numerous times each year but simply that each time we observe the Lord's Supper, we are remembering our Christ's death. For a more detailed discussion on how often we should observe the Lord's Supper, feel free to download our booklet, *"For As Often"*. Notice that the blood he shed was for "the remission of sins". This means that Jesus was our once-and-only sacrifice – he was the perfect sacrifice, without spot or blemish, and after his crucifixion, there was no more need for the sacrifices performed by the Levitical priesthood. ***"Who needed not daily as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself."*** Hebrews 7:27; ***"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God ... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*** Hebrews 10:12, 14; ***"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."*** Hebrews 10:1.

In contrast to the Mosaic Laws, Jesus was not one for instituting various types of rituals and ceremonies, however, he did institute the Lord's Supper as a way for his followers to remember him and the sacrifice he made for us. If we consider ourselves of the body of Christ, we will observe this tradition just as instructed. We know he intended it as a replacement for the Jewish Passover since he was our unblemished lamb and he allowed himself to be crucified so that we could pass from the bondage of sin into the hope of salvation. ***"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the***

unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." I Corinthians 5:7, 8; ***"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."*** Isaiah 53:7. Instituting the Lord's Supper during Passover was no coincidence. The Passover was instituted by Moses to remember how God saved the Israelites from the bondage and cruelty of the Egyptians. Jesus was our sacrificial lamb and because of him, we are saved by his words because his words give us life and release us from the bonds of this world. Since Jesus is our passover, we believe that we should be observing the Lord's Supper each year during the same time as the Jewish Passover (ie. Nisan the 14th).

Death is the result of Adam sinning against God. The Christ's purpose was to overcome sin by his remaining faithful to God the Father until death. Due to his obedience unto death, Jesus was raised by the Father, and since death is the result of sin, through the resurrection, Jesus had overcome or defeated death. ***"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive ... So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*** I Corinthians 15:21, 22, 54 to 57.

Through Jesus' death, a new covenant was brought into effect that was built upon better promises. ***"And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."*** Mark 14:23, 24; ***"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood ..."*** I Corinthians 11:25; ***"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. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second ... 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."*** Hebrews 8:6, 7, 13; ***"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."*** II Corinthians 3:6. Note that "not of the letter" refers to the law written on scrolls by the hand of Moses which contained laws relating to feasts, blessings and cursings – these Mosaic laws were the letter that killeth but does not include the Ten Words or Commandments of God – for a discussion on the distinction between the Mosaic Laws and the Ten Words of God, please download our booklet *"Two Laws and One Testimony"*. In order for the new covenant or testament to take effect, Jesus had to be obedient unto God unto death. ***"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: 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? 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. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."*** Hebrews 9:13 to 17.

In conclusion, it is important for the true Christian to participate in the Lord's Supper and partake of the emblems of bread and wine which Jesus asked his followers to do in order to remember his death on the cross. The Lord's Supper should be held with fellow Christians on Nisan the 14th, at sunset, the day of the Jewish Passover. Partaking of the emblems shows that we consider ourselves believers in the Christ of God and wish to be part of that new covenant that leads to eternal life.