

# The 'New Passover' - Christ's Last Supper and the Breaking of Bread

Arkansas Christadelphian Bible School

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# **Class Outline - Main Topics**

- **Background - Old Testament references;  
Passover and other Jewish feasts/meals**
- **Relationship of the Passover to Last Supper**
- **Institution of the Breaking of Bread in  
- Last Supper/Gospel and 1 Corinthian accounts**
- **Meaning of the Emblems**
- **Breaking of Bread in 1st Century**
- **Apostate Church Practices & Interpretations**
- **Purpose & practical aspects of Memorial Service  
today**
- **In the Kingdom of God**

# A Duty and A Privilege - Bro. T. Williams

“Now for God’s people there is one special duty, or rather privilege, laid down, and that is to remember the Lord’s death till he come. For this purpose, Jesus gave a most impressive institution to be observed, one that would ‘*stir up pure minds by way of remembrance*’ of the cross as the means by which God’s blessing of salvation has come to the fallen race; and to carry the mind forward to the return of their departed Lord to bestow upon his faithful people the actual blessings of salvation. What could be more beautiful than an institution of this sort? This institution is that of the breaking of bread and drinking wine upon every first day of the week.”

# R. Roberts - Further Seasons of Comfort

## “Man of Sorrows”

“The **‘Lord’s Supper’** is a

- **continual protest against the fancies of men** by which they hope to save themselves apart from the real Christ. For us, it is a
- **continual profession of subjection** on the part of all true disciples **and a continual remembrance** of those things, which are apt to pass out of our mind.
- **confirmation of our allegiance to the One Body and the Supremacy of the Lord**, as head and husband, root and vine, as the most glorious and characteristic features of the system which centers in Christ.”

*“It was a sober meeting in that upper room, when all outside was feasting and gladness. The sorrow of the hour was but part of work of preparation for the Great House of the Father as ‘the tabernacle of God with men’.”*

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# R. Roberts - Further Seasons of Comfort

## “Man of Sorrows”

“To see Christ, unbosom his grief to his disciples and soothe the sorrow caused by his words, is to learn that if we belong to the Christ community, **we are not callous theorists or unsanctified dealers in ‘doctrines’ that touch not our feelings and move not our sentiments. But on the contrary, ‘the love of Christ constraineth us’ -**

*‘because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead, that they that live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again’*” [2 Cor. 5:15].”

# Our Main Objectives - 3 Questions

1. What took place at Christ's last meal with his disciples just prior to his crucifixion [ie, the institution and its OT background]?
2. What was/is its spiritual significance?
3. How was the Breaking of Bread celebrated in 1st century and how/why should we remember his death today in our service?

# Primary References

“Further Seasons of Comfort” - Bro. R. Roberts

“Story of the Bible”, Vol. 7 - Bro. HP Mansfield

“Studies in the Gospels” - Bro. H. Whittaker

“Chronology of the Crucifixion Week” - Bro. A. Briley

“The First Century Ecclesia” - Bro. JB Norris

“The Letters to Corinth” - Bro. WF Barling

“The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah” - Edersheim

“The Last Supper and the Lord’s Supper” - IH Marshall

“The Lord’s Supper” - R. Letham

“Take Eat, Take Drink; The Lord’s Supper through the Centuries” - E. Bartels

# Lord's Supper & Old Testament Context

- No ordinary meal; special and unique
- Connection between a meal & offering of sacrifice - ***Gen. 31:54***
- A meal before offering of a sacrifice
- Was the Passover celebrated according to the Law?

# Chronology of the Passover & Feast of Unleavened Bread

*“Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses” Ex. 12:15*

*“In the 14th day of the first month at even is the Lord’s Passover. And on the 15th day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord; seven days ye must eat unleavened bread” Lev. 23:5-6*

**14th Abib - Passover lamb slain in the afternoon and eaten between ‘the evenings’**

**15th Abib - Passover Sabbath and first day of Feast of Unleavened Bread**

# Passover Meal



# Order of the Passover Meal

1. Head of household says words of thanksgiving for the feast & wine
2. First of 4 cups of wine served
3. Preliminary course of greens, bitter herbs & *haroseth* sauce
4. Passover story recited and first part of *hallel* [Psa. 113-114]
5. Main course (lamb served w/ bitter herbs & fruit)  
- began with drinking of 2nd cup of wine
6. Thanks given over unleavened bread (served for 1st time)
7. After meal, 3rd cup of wine - known as “cup of blessing”  
over which thanks was given
8. Second part of *hallel* sung [Psa. 115-118]
9. Fourth cup of wine served (likely not at time of Christ)

# Jewish Meals

- Giving Thanks
- Breaking of bread
- Cup of blessing
- Elements of bread and wine that characterize the Last Supper were present in a Jewish formal meal.

# Peace Offering (Leviticus 3 & 7:11-21)

- Fellowship with God through partaking of a meal
  - in His presence; provided by Him
- Followed the burnt offering (sacrifice of self-consecration)
- Offerer put his hands on head of sacrifice
  - identifying himself with slaying of it
- Was slain by the offerer in person
  - emphasizing sacrifice was for himself
- Choicest portions were burnt on altar
  - Jesus served His Father and died in prime of life
- Priest received special portions as heave offering
  - expresses idea of willing, perfect sacrifice

# Passover and the Last Supper

## Questions:

1. Was Last Supper a complete Passover meal and did Jesus eat of the Paschal lamb?
2. If not, why did Jesus send his disciples to prepare for the Passover feast?
3. Why is there seeming contradiction between the Gospels as to what day it was and how do we resolve?

# Evidence that it was Passover Meal

## Strongest in Luke's Account:

**22:7-8** Reference to preparation on morning of 14th of Passover meal to be eaten that evening (beginning of 15th)

**v. 13** “and they made ready the Passover”

**v. 15** “with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer”

**v. 17,20** Mention of 2 cups suggests Passover ritual

# Last Supper details like Passover

- Time - after sunset [Matt. 26:20; Mk. 14:17; 1 Cor. 11:23]
- Special arrangement to eat in Jerusalem [Mk. 14:16]
- Number & Position (reclining) at table [Jn. 13:23]
- Breaking bread in middle instead of beginning
- Giving of thanks and blessing bread and wine
- The 'sop' and two cups in Luke [Lk. 22:17,20]
- Singing of Hymn at end (like "*hallel*")  
[Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26]

# Edersheim - Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah

*“Nothing can explain away these facts”.*

- Jews would not postpone Passover from Thursday to Friday to avoid the Sabbath following 1st day of Feast
- Christ would not hold Passover a day earlier of that observed by rest of Jewish people.

*“It is fitting that he would offer this one Pascha, partaken of its commemorative Supper and connected his own new institution with that to which this Supper pointed. This joining of the Old with the New, the one symbolic sacrifice which he offered with the One Real Sacrifice seems to cast light on the words after expressing his desire to eat this Passover with them – “I say unto you, I will not eat any more thereof, until it be fulfilled in Kingdom of God”.*

# “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” [1 Cor 5:7]

- Believers in 1st century appropriated the language of Passover to sacrifice of Jesus
- “*prepare us the Passover, that we may eat*” may have meant one thing to apostles but different connotation in mind of Jesus.
- It was to be a memorial feast of a greater deliverance than that from Egypt - New Passover.
- Was **this** the Passover that he desired to eat with them? Or New Passover that he was about to institute?

***“I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God”***

# Types of Christ as Passover (Ex. 12)

Verse in Ex. 12	Quote from Exodus 12	Anti-types concerning Christ re: Last Supper
4	"Let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it"	Words emphasize fellowship, an aspect of redemption both essential and inevitable; hence Paul's word "communion" [1 Cor. 10:16]. Should we not seek fellowship in our ecclesias?
4	"Every man according to his eating"	i.e., enough and to spare and to each participant according to his individual need. Even so is Christ, at the Breaking of Bread.
6	"the 14 <sup>th</sup> day...in the evening"	Jesus died on the cross at the very time when the slaying of the Passover lambs began in the temple court [Mk. 15:34].
11	"Loins girded" etc.	Interpreted by Peter as an eager expectation of ultimate redemption in Christ [1 Pet. 1:13]. Cp. "Ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come".
14	"This day shall be unto you for a memorial".	This redemption was a vivid experience which must never grow dim in the memory. "Do this in remembrance of me".
19	"No leaven in your houses" "Whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation".	Today, the counterpart in the experience of the disciple is "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat" [1 Cor. 11:28]. 2 <sup>nd</sup> quote is interpreted by Paul: "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation unto himself".
26	"Your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?". "and thou shalt shew thy son in that day [Ex. 13:8]"	It is this showing forth that Paul alludes "As oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew [proclaim] the Lord's death till he come [1 Cor. 11:26]"
46	"Thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh".	Here is explicit condemnation of men who thought to enjoy God's highest blessings to Israel while refusing to share fellowship with others similarly blessed. Sharing the Lamb and yet not sharing one another's fellowship is a hopeless contradiction. Bro. Thomas's famous phrase: "Breaking a factious loaf in solitude".
	"Neither shall ye break a bone thereof".	We know Christ's bones were not broken when he was crucified. The "broken" can only be mentally associated with the symbolic Bread then and not the Body itself.

# Difficulties with Paschal Setting of Last Supper

- No specific reference to Passover lamb and bitter herbs being partaken at Last Supper
- Bread is blessed after it was broken in Passover ritual.
- Single cup of wine and bowl of 'sop' vs. individual in traditional Passover meal
- John's account indicates that supper took place before the feast

# Evidence that Last Supper took place night before Passover:

- ***“Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew his hour was come...”*** [Jn. 13:1]
- **Jesus desired to eat of the Passover, but that he would ‘by no means eat of it’ until the Kingdom came.** *“With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more [or ‘by no means’ per Bullinger] eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”* [Luke 22:15-16]
- **Jesus was not to be arrested on the feast day.** *“After two days was the feast of the Passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, **Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people”.*** [Mark 14:1-2]

# Evidence that Last Supper took place night before Passover:

- Judas would not have been able to buy “*those things*” [Jn. 13:29]
  - nor Joseph of Arimathea, the “*fine linen*” [Mk. 15:46]
  - since no shops open on Feast day
- Jesus was on trial before Pilate even before the Passover started. “*Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.*” [Jn. 18:28]
- “*and it* (day of crucifixion) *was the preparation of the Passover*” [Jn. 19:14]. See also Mk. 15:42; Matt. 27:62
- “*For that Sabbath* (day after crucifixion) *was an high day*” [Jn. 19:31]
  - early hours of Passover (~8pm on 15th) when it was eaten.

# Evidence that Last Supper took place Night before Passover:

- **If Jesus did not partake of the Passover lamb, then his death could have coincided with time of lambs being slain on the Day of Preparation.**
- Jesus died on 14th Abib per Jewish tradition as preserved in Talmud.
- Early Christian writers - Last Supper was not held at the same time as the Jewish Passover.
- If Jesus ate Passover lamb, wouldn't Judaisers have argued that Christians should do the same?
- More appropriate that **Jesus was the Lamb** at Last Supper.

# Possible Chronology

## Hour

## Event

### **14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan**

- 6pm Peter and John go ahead to make arrangements for Passover meal.  
 9 Jesus and others follow to upper room.  
 Last Supper, a 'New Passover', takes place.  
 12 Arrest in Gathsemane.
- 3am Illegal trial take places during the night.  
 6 Formal condemnation by Sanhedrin. Trial and condemnation by Pilate.  
 9 Crucifixion.  
 12noon “  
 3pm Death of Jesus. Slaying of Passover lambs begins. Christ's burial.

### **15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan**

- 6pm Sabbath begins  
 6-9 Passover meal eaten by the people.

# Conflict between the Gospels

- **Matthew, Mark and Luke**
  - Disciples sent to prepare for Passover [Mk. 14:12-16; Lk. 22:7-13]
  - Jesus acted as host at this meal that was “prepared”.
- **John**
  - Last Supper ended before Passover feast [13:1]
  - Jesus already on trial before Pilate when Jews still making ready for celebration [18:28]
  - Crucifixion occurred on Day of Preparation [19:31]

# Harmonization of Gospels

- Apparent differences arise from how days of feast are expressed.
- Other Gospels [see Mk. 15:42] state, as does John, that Jesus was crucified on Day of Preparation for the Sabbath.
- John's usage of 'day of Preparation' [19:14] supports chronology of other Gospels re: Christ's crucifixion.
- But, what of the Last Supper?

# Gospel Accounts - Last Supper Intro.

*“Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the Passover? **Matt. 26:17**”*

*“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 we mayest eat the Passover?” **Mark 14:12**”*

*“Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed” **Luke 22:7**”*

*“Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end” **John 13:1**”*

# Timing of other Gospels is correct

- Matthew, Mark and Luke were actually referring to the day of preparation as the first day of unleavened bread.
- At the time of Christ, the day of preparation (when they were to rid their homes of leaven) was considered to be part of the feast itself. It was also the reason that Mark and Luke mention that it was the day the Passover lamb was to be killed.
- If this is true, then all 4 Gospels agree that the Last Supper took place on the day of preparation or 14th of Abib/Nisan.

# Institution of Breaking of Bread

## Parallel Gospel Accounts:

- Matthew 26:17-30
- Mark 14:12-26
- Luke 22:7-38

## Allusions made - Feeding of 5000:

- John 6:53- 58

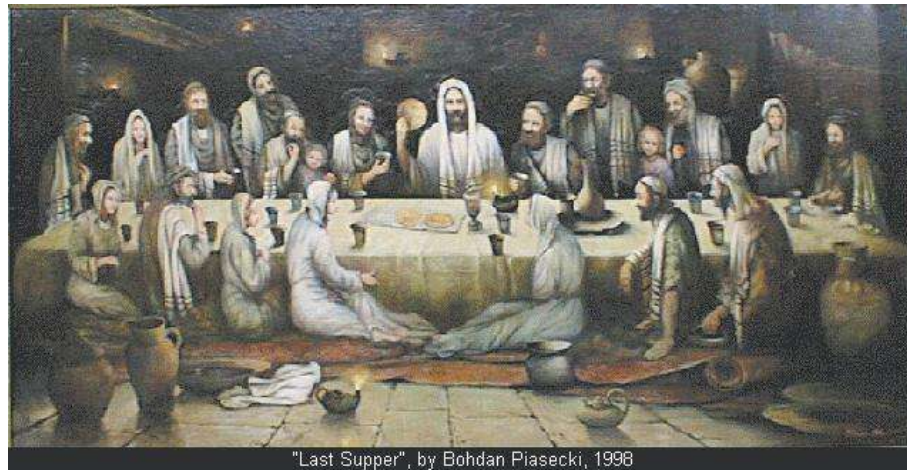
## Paul's Record in 1 Corinthians:

- 1 Cor: 11:23-28

# Institution of Breaking of Bread

Two Aspects to Address:

1. Historical - What happened at Last Supper?
2. Doctrinal - What is the spiritual or theological significance?



"Last Supper", by Bohdan Piasecki, 1998

# Dating and Grouping of Accounts

## Possible Time of Writing

Matthew and Mark: early 50's to 70 AD

Luke: most likely ~60 AD

Paul (I Corinthians): ~55 AD

## Grouping for Comparison

1. Matthew and Mark
2. Luke and Paul

# Gospels vs. Paul's Account

## Gospels

- eye witness accounts as historical reports of Last Supper
- full description including preparations for the meal
- and sayings of Jesus about fact that he will not eat or drink again until kingdom of God comes

## Paul's account

- received by revelation from the Lord
- focuses on part of Last Supper that provides pattern for brethren to follow in remembrance of him
- provides words of institution only; distribution of bread and cup along with Christ's words that explain their significance.

## ***“large upper room furnished: there make ready”***

**‘furnished’ - couches arranged around the table except at one end.**

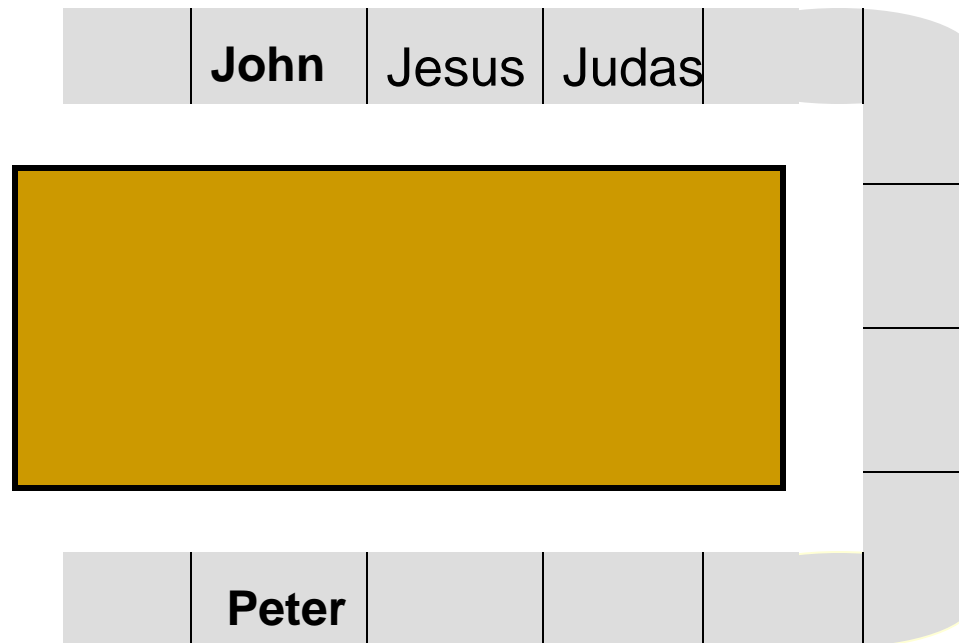
**‘ready’ - with provisions supplied for the Feast:**

- Cups & Wine – mixed with water
- Cakes of unleavened bread
- Dipping dishes with vinegar and *haroseth* sauce (made of nuts, raisins, apples, almonds)

# Traditional Portrayal of Last Supper



# Likely Table/Seating Arrangement



# Details of the Meal

- Little is recorded of the meal itself except Luke's mention of the second cup and traditional dipping in the 'sop' dish
- Can assume followed pattern of the Passover meal for which it was "made ready"
- ***'as they were eating'*** [Matt. 26:21] or ***'as they sat [reclined] and did eat'*** [Mark 14:18].
- Judas departs and the 'new feast' is instituted.

# Distribution of the Bread and Cup

	<u>Bread</u>	<u>Wine</u>
<b>Matthew 26</b>	<b>v. 26</b>	<b>v. 27</b>
<b>Mark 14</b>	<b>v. 22</b>	<b>v. 23</b>
<b>Luke 22</b>	<b>v. 19</b>	<b>vv. 17 &amp; 20</b>
<b>1 Corinthians 11</b>	<b>v. 24</b>	<b>v. 25</b>



# Sayings over Bread & Wine

## Matthew

“Take, eat; this is my body”.

“**Drink ye all of it**; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many **for the remission of sins.**”

## Mark

“Take, eat; this is my body”.

“This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.”

## Luke

“This is my body, which is given for you”.

“This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for **you.**”

## Paul

“Take, eat: this is my body, **which is broken for you**: this do in remembrance of me”.

“This cup is the new testament in my blood. **This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me**”.

# The Two Cups in Luke's Account

- Related to 3 or 4 cups in Passover meal?
- The descriptive words of verse 17 are exactly the same as other Gospel accounts

Is it possible that record is just not in chronological order? Note placement of other aspects in his account:

- contention between disciples over who was the greatest
- prediction of Judas' betrayal and departure
- warning of Peter's denial



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# End Sayings - Message of Hope

*“I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God” Mark 14:25*

**Paul instead records - *“proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”***

**Matthew adds - *“with you”***

# Meal Ended/Hymn Sung

*“And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives”*

**Matt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26**

**Was it part of the Paschal ‘Hallel’? Psalm 118?**



# ***“Take, eat; this is my body”***



- What does bread representing body of the Lord teach?
- Life can only come through death!
  - A life that overcame and destroyed the flesh.
- **Unleavened bread** - represented a sinless body
- ***‘bread from heaven’*** - strengthened from above;  
a life of perfect obedience [Ps. 80:17; Isa. 11:2-4]
- ***“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”*** [Gal. 5:24]

# The Bread - Christ's Body/Flesh?

- “**Soma**” - original Aramaic word is broadly applied;
  - meaning is not precise
- “**Gupa**” - person as a whole; entire **body**
- “**Bisra**” - **flesh** of person or animal
- No question that its meaning is tied to that of Passover Lamb and its sacrifice
- Conclusion - **Body and Flesh**

# The Significance of the Cup

*“This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many”.*

- A comparison of the cup and its contents to the *life-giving blood* that Christ would pour out.
- Represented relationship of his shed blood to that of sacrifices under the Law - required for ratification of the covenant made by Yahweh with his people. **Exodus 24:8**
- **Christ’s shed blood = blood of the covenant.**

# The Cup - Blood or Covenant?

**Matthew and Mark:** *“This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many”*. \*

**Luke and Paul:** *“This cup is the new testament [covenant]\*\* in my blood, which is shed for you”*.

\* *“he hath poured out his soul unto death...he bare the sins of many...”* Isaiah 53:12

\*\* *“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel...”* Jeremiah 31:31

# The Cup of Blessing

***“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion with the blood of Christ?” [1 Cor. 10.16]***

- that for which thanks is given as well as that which brings forgiveness of sins
- Jewish term for cup of wine for which a blessing, ie, thanksgiving, was given to Yahweh
- Cup is not blessed; but is a means of participating in the blessing that comes through the blood of Christ.

# Analogy of Grapes & Wine

1. Grapes start as blossoms, grow and are ripened by sun.
2. Fruit is picked & trodden underfoot to extract “blood of grape”.
3. Juice is fermented - active process of conversion to wine; produces chemical preservative.



# Analogy of Grapes & Wine

## Natural

1. Grapes are ripened by sun.
2. Fruit is picked & trodden underfoot to extract “blood of grape”.
3. Juice is fermented - active process; produces chemical preservative.

## **Spiritual:**

**Wine represents new life created by treading the old fruit underfoot.**

## We need:

1. Warming, ripening influence of Sun of righteousness [Mal. 4:2]
2. Humble ourselves by crushing underfoot ‘old fruit’; pouring out our lives in dedicated service to him.
3. Manifest new life in Christ, that will preserve us for the Kingdom.

# Two Emblems - Personal Application

## Two emblems

- Bread
- Wine

## Personal Application of Emblems:

- Bread
- Wine



## Two aspects - Christ's sacrifice

- Flesh crucified - avoidance of sin
- Blood poured out - fulfilled all righteousness

## Our Lives of Service:

- Self-denial
- Service to Yahweh; our manifesting His righteousness and divine characteristics

# Two Emblems - Another Explanation

Ref: Articles by bro. Sam Alexander, Testimony Magazine, September & October 2005 issues

## Proposal:

- **Bread** - emblem relating to **Old covenant**
  - doing away with former way of life under 'law of sin and death'
- **Wine** - emblem relating to **New covenant**
  - dedicating ourselves to new life in Christ in covenant relationship

**See Handout - summary of case made.**

# Breaking of Bread in the First Century

# Post-resurrection meals with Jesus

**With two disciples in Emmaus Luke 24:30**

*“And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was made known of them in the breaking of bread” [v. 35]*

**With the 11 apostles - ate fish before them Lk 24:42-43**

*“He appeared to them over a period of 40 days and spoke about the kingdom of God. On one occasion, while he was eating with them...”*

**Acts 1:4 [NIV]**

*“And showed himself openly... even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead” Acts 10:40-41*

*“Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise” John 21:13*

# The First Century Ecclesia

- Bro. JB Norris refers to age from time of Christ's resurrection until now as -

- **“Dispensation of the Upper Room”**

*“Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet...  
And when they were come in, they went up into **an upper room**...”*

**Acts 1:12-13**

- **Christ had an idea his absence would be long:**
  - Parable of man traveling into a far country - *“After a long time...”*
  - Institution of Breaking of Bread - enduring and sustaining safeguard for his brethren and as a form of remembrance and fellowship

# First Century Ecclesia - Acts 2

*‘They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the **breaking of bread** and in prayers.’*

**Acts 2:42**

*“day by day, attending the temple together and **breaking bread in their homes**, they partook food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people’.*

**Acts 2:46-47 (NIV)**

# Main Features of 1st Century Ecclesial Life (Acts 2:41- 46)

1. Baptism
2. Apostolic Doctrine
3. True Fellowship
4. **Breaking of Bread**
5. Prayers

*“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts”* Acts 2:46 [NIV]

# Common Meals

- Breaking of bread - part of or after common meal as it was in the Last Supper.
- Meals held among groups of people was a regular practice at time of Christ.
- Brethren in 1st century were carrying on practice of Christ during his ministry.
- “Table Fellowship” pointing forward to future age:
  - *“that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones”* Lk. 22:29-30
  - *“We have eaten and drunk in thy presence”* Lk. 13:26-27

# Characteristics of 1st Century Worship

Acts 2:46-47

1. “*continuing daily with one accord*”
2. “*with gladness and singleness of heart*”
3. “*Praising God and having (enjoying) favor with all the people*”
4. “*breaking bread from house to house*”

# ***“Breaking bread from house to house”***

**Acts 2:46**



# Meeting in Homes

<b>Year</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Passage</b>	<b>Ref.</b>
Early 30's	Jerusalem	<i>"Breaking bread from house to house"</i>	Acts 2:46
Early 40's	Jerusalem - Mary's	<i>"...where many were gathered together praying".</i>	Acts 12:12
Mid 50's	Troas – Upper chamber	<i>"when the disciples came together to break bread"</i>	Acts 20:7-8
Late 50's	Rome – Aquila & Priscilla's	<i>"...greet the ecclesia that is in their house"</i>	Rom. 16:3-5
Late 50's	Corinth – Gaius's	<i>"... mine host and of the whole ecclesia, saluteth you"</i>	Rom. 16:23
Early 60's	Laodicea – Nymphas	<i>"Salute the brethren...and the ecclesia which is in his house"</i>	Col. 4:15
Early 60's	Colosse – Philemon	<i>"...unto Philemon...and to the ecclesia in thy house"</i>	Phil. 1,2

# On the First Day

## Acts 20:7-12

- ~55 AD or >20 years later than Acts 2
- Paul in Troas giving word of exhortation
- *“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread”*

## I Cor. 16:1-2

*“Now concerning the collection for the saints...Upon the first day of the week let every of you lay by him in store...”*

## Rev. 1:10

*“I was in the spirit on the Lord’s day...”*

# Breaking of Bread = Memorial Service

References to 'breaking of bread' do not mention:

- partaking of the cup
- words of institution - meaning of emblems
- Christ's death or sacrifice

**But, they are meant to be reports of service being held; not descriptions of the service or its purpose.**

**Luke's account in Acts is complement to Paul's in 1st Corinthians.**

# The Agape Meal

3 New Testament passages where “Agape Meal” or Love Feasts are mentioned:

1. **1 Corinthians 11:20** *“This is not to eat the Lord’s supper”.*
  2. **2 Peter 2:13** *“Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you.”*
  3. **Jude 12** *“These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm” (NIV)*
- Abuse of common meal found in each case

# The Lord's Supper in Corinth

- Memorial service held at end of common meal
- Social aspects and self-indulgence began to predominate over breaking of bread

*“ye come together not for the better but for the worse”* 1 Cor. 11:17

- Factions had developed along socio-economic lines

*“I hear that there be divisions among you”* v. 18

- Not celebrating Lord's Supper but their own gluttony

*“...not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating everyone taketh before his own supper; and the one is hungry, and another is drunken”* v. 20-21

# Separation of Service from Meal

- Disregard for the tradition that Paul had transmitted to Corinthians as it was revealed to him.

*“For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you.”* v. 23

- They should not have forgotten its purpose if their weekly service was done in the manner prescribed - solely to remember him. *‘For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death until he comes’.* v. 26

- Result of this reproof was separation of breaking of bread from the common meal in ecclesial meetings.

# Unworthy Participation

*“But let a man examine himself...For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body”. 1 Cor. 11:28-29*

- **Body of believers or Body of Christ?**
- **Not remembering Christ’s death in the right spirit**

*“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep”. 1 Cor. 11:30*

- **Better if the Corinthian brethren would ‘judge’ themselves and repent.**

*For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But, when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord...” 1 Cor. 11:31-32*

# Late First Century Practices

- **Meetings**

- more formal; orderly; traditions being formed?
- “Host” - one brother presiding over service
- Service patterned after Paul’s instructions - 1st Corinthians
- Done ‘decently and in order’ - 1 Cor. 14:40

- **Public Addresses or Lectures**

- after the pattern of apostles
- took place in synagogues, schools and lecture halls
- combined with Breaking of Bread?

# Order of Worship Service

## 1. Semi-public meeting for worship and instruction

- based on Jewish synagogue service [see Acts 13:14-16]:

- **Reading of Law and Prophets**
- **Singing of Psalms**
- **Word of exhortation**

## 2. Exclusive Breaking of Bread service

- **including Prayers**

# Closed Communion in Early Ecclesia

- *“It is not lawful for anyone to partake except him who believes our teaching to be true; and one who has been washed with the washing for remission of sins and unto regeneration, and who lives as Christ ordained”* [Justin Matyr; 150 AD; Apology, I, lxvi]
  - *“faith, sealed in baptism, preserved in purity, every communicant must have, or he is debarred from the sacred feast”* [WB Frankland, The Early Eucharist, p. 95]
  - *“But let no one eat or drink of this thanksgiving, but they that have been baptized in the name of the Lord”* [The Didache\*]
- \* “Teachings of the Twelve”; writings of Justin Martyr of 2<sup>nd</sup> century and Hippolytus of 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

# Participation in Breaking of Bread

## Century

## Distribution of Emblems

1st/2nd

all baptized believers

4th/5th

degeneration to clergy only

12th/13th

revival of all partaking again

# Biblical Terms for Memorial Service

**“Breaking of Bread”** - Acts 2:42,46; 20:7,11

**“Communion”** - 1 Cor. 10:16

**“Lord’s Supper”** - 1 Cor. 11:20

**“Lord’s Table”** - 1 Cor. 10:21

**“Thanksgiving” or “*eucharisteo*”**

- original word used in all Gospel accounts of institution for the “giving of thanks” by Jesus;
- commonly used for entire service by end of 1st century

# Titles in Use Today

- Breaking of Bread
- Memorial Service
- Holy Communion
- Lord's Supper
- The Eucharist
  - *eu* - well
  - *charis* - favor, kindness, grace, thanks
- Mass

# Different Interpretations of Emblems

## - Truth vs. Apostasy

- Tran-substantiation - **physical** presence\*;  
**change** of substance
- Con-substantiation - **physical** presence\*;  
**no change** of substance
- Communion - **real spiritual** presence\*
- Memorialism - **absence**; emblems are only symbolic

\* eating and drinking of Christ's flesh and blood in emblems

# Transubstantiation- Lateran Council IV

- Justin Martyr espoused idea in 2nd century
- Became official dogma of Roman Church in 1215
- Pope Innocent II: *“the body and blood of Christ are truly contained under the appearances of bread and wine”*
- Sacrificial meal in which Christ and the priesthood work together. - *“an unbloody repetition of the atoning sacrifice of Christ by the priesthood for the salvation of the living and the dead.”*
- The Council decreed that “all must make confession and receive the Lord’s Supper at least once each year, at the time of Easter”.

# Transubstantiation

Explanation per Aristotle's science of metaphysics:

- *Substance* - what something really is; intrinsic nature
- *Accidents* - what something appears to be;  
- but not same as its inner nature
- Bread/Wine - changed into body/blood of Christ  
(*trans* = change; *substantia* = of substance)  
- but remains bread/wine in appearance  
(*per accidents*)
- Not magic; but a “**sacramental mystery**”
- Physical & Spiritual merged into one

# Eastern Orthodox church

- Held to the doctrine of Transubstantiation

*“[The bread] is truly that Body, united with the Godhead, which has its origin from the Holy Virgin; not as though that Body which ascended came down from heaven, but because the **bread and wine themselves are changed into the Body and Blood of God.** But, if thou seekest after the manner how this is, let it suffice thee to be told that it is by the Holy Ghost; in like manner as by the same Holy Ghost, the Lord formed flesh to himself, and in himself, from the Mother of God; nor know I ought more than this, that the Word of God is true, powerful and almighty, **but its manner is unsearchable (or past finding out).**”*

John of Damascus, ca. 700

# The Reformation

- Transubstantiation opposed in 14th - 16th centuries
- Single most decisive change - abandonment of 'Mass'

## Primary Forerunners

**John Duns Scotus (1270-1308)**

**William of Occam (~1300-1350)**

**John Wycliffe (1320-1384)**

**John Huss (1370-1415)**

## Principal Players/Authors

**Martin Luther (1483-1546)**

**Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)**

**John Calvin (1509-1564)**

# Con-substantiation

- Martin Luther - primary proponent of view that:
- **Bread and Wine - undergo no change in substance during communion**
- **But, Christ still physically present in sacrament**
- **Not as preposterous as transubstantiation, but still very far from true understanding.**

# 'Communion'

- John Calvin - primary proponent
- **Rejected both 'trans-' and 'con-substantiation'**
  - did not believe in physical presence of Christ in the 'sacraments'
- **Claims Christ is present spiritually in the sacrament**
  - teaches that Christ does not come down to us in his body and blood; instead, we are lifted up to him by the Holy Spirit

*“As soon as you receive the bread in your mouth, you receive the body of Christ in your soul, and that by faith”*

- **“Classic Reformed” view still held by many of Protestant churches today**

# Communion - John Calvin

John Calvin viewed the sacraments as primarily an act of grace through the Holy Spirit and faith:

*“The sacraments properly fulfill their office only when the Spirit, that inward teacher, comes to them, by whose power alone hearts are penetrated and affections moved and our souls opened for the sacraments to enter in. If the Spirit be lacking, the sacraments can accomplish nothing more...”*

***“God’s promises are sealed as we are made partakers of Christ’s flesh, a mystery more to be felt than explained.”***

***By true partaking of him, his life passes into us and is made ours – just as bread when taken as food imparts vigor to the body. This is a high and incomprehensible mystery.”***

# Memorialism

- Ascribed to the reformer, Ulrich Zwingli
- Emblems are purely symbolic
- Breaking of Bread service:
  - **only a memorial of Christ's death & sacrifice**
  - **participation without influence of Holy Spirit**
- Conservative, fundamentalist sects hold to it
- Focus is on salvation and sanctification

# The Old vs. 'New Passover'

## Old Passover - Typical

- Sacrifice of Lamb + Feast
- Looked back to Egypt
- Looked forward to anti-type
- Partaking showed their acceptance of plan of deliverance
- Not merely a celebration of deliverance but means of it.
- Old covenant ensured nation's blessedness if obeyed.

## New Passover - Anti-type

- Christ instituted new Passover knowing original was superceded by his offering
- Memorial of his death
- Looks forward to Marriage Supper of the Lamb
- Signifies our acceptance of God's plan of salvation through Christ
- We celebrate sacrifice of anti-typical lamb as mean's of our deliverance
- New covenant in blood of Christ ensures coming blessedness

# Why We Break Bread

**Why do we meet** every first day of the week for the breaking of bread?

**Do we find pleasure** in so doing or **should we?**

Do we find this service **profitable** and if so how does it profit us?

*“Very much is involved in the answer to these questions.”*

Bro. R. Roberts; Further Seasons of Comfort; p. 241-245

# Why Do We Break Bread?

Because Christ has commanded us to do so -  
***“This do ye, in remembrance of me”.***

Bro. HP Mansfield -

*‘In Christ, the principle holds for all who are his brethren. Social claims and responsibilities have their place but none compare in importance with the ‘New Passover’, which the disciple must eat with him. **There can be no priority over this obligation.**’*

# “In Remembrance of Me”



- What is meant by this phrase?
- “***anamnesis***”-Greek for ‘**remembrance**’
  - Signifies an awakening of the mind
- Need to identify with Lord’s sacrificial self-denial as well as deny ourselves.
- In partaking of emblems, look back to his sacrifice
 

*“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till he come”*
- **and look forward to his coming again**

*“I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until I drink it new with you in the Kingdom of God”.*

# Our Needs

Do we find this service profitable and if so, how does it profit us? Do we find pleasure in it or should we?

**Bro. Roberts - we have needs on three levels:**

1. **Intellectual** - knowledge and faith
2. **Motivational / Emotional** - hope, fear, contentment
3. **Physical** - future 'renovation'

# Forgiveness

## Baptism

We are in Christ, clothed with righteousness, stand spotless before Yahweh when baptized. But,...and so...

## Breaking of Bread

We seek forgiveness as a renewal of cleansing that is invariably needed, as...

We remember our Lord, contrasting his **sinlessness** to our **sinfulness**; examining ourselves in the process.

Remembrance as the Son of Man in the flesh is a wonderful aid to our overcoming.

# A Fellowship Meal

- Last Supper was final opportunity to share a meal with the disciples as a fellow mortal.
  - Occasion for fellowship with Jesus at a higher spiritual level than other meals as well as a pledge of future fellowship when he eats and drinks anew in his Father's kingdom

*“Through the use of these **emblems**, he had a **new basis for the fellowship** of his friends. He established **a new bond of connection between himself as the TRUTH and all who should come unto God by him**. It brought Christ forward as the bread of life, in the partaking of whom by the truth, we become constituents of the ONE BODY. It places him in the position of the HEAD – the First, the Alpha and Omega, of the salvation of God.”*

“Man of Sorrows” – Further Seasons of Comfort – R Roberts

# Our Fellowship at the Table

- Sharing of the **bread** was done by Jesus himself, to signify the disciples' ***fellowship with him***
- **Wine** was passed from one to the next emphasizing ***fellowship with one another through him.***

*“Because there is one bread, we, who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread”*. 1 Cor. 10:17

- Paul's main point: Believers are bound together with fellow-believers in the Lord's Supper and express their unity and love for one another when they partake of the emblems.

# Meaning of the Breaking of Bread

## - A Summary from “First Century Ecclesia”

1. Expression of Thanks to God
2. Frequent Remembrance\*
3. Sustenance
4. Fellowship or Communion with Christ
5. Association with Sacrifice

\* “Recollection of all that believers owe to their Lord is dulled not only with the passage of time but by the distractions of our modern environment. Our ‘busy’ daily routine can easily allow Jesus to fade out of our individual life-pictures. Breaking of Bread puts the modern environment in its proper subordinate place. After all, the environment in which we live is only the shell and not the kernel. The shell will pass. Within the shell, is it to be Christ or dust? We make the answer. We must remember the Divine provision for dealing with sin, every week, before the Table.”

# Breaking of Bread Service – Practical Aspects Today

Form of Bread?

Leavened or Unleavened?

One cup or individual cups?

Wine or Grape Juice?



How should emblems be distributed?

Prayers?

How often to celebrate?

# Form of Bread

*“Because there is one bread, we, who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread”*. 1 Cor. 10:17

- Greek word ‘*artos*’ - a round loaf or cake of bread
- Only word used in NT for bread
- Single loaf used by 1<sup>st</sup> century ecclesias
- Fitness of the symbolism points in this direction



# Leavened or Unleavened Bread?

*“Jesus took bread and gave thanks, and brake it and gave unto them”*

- **Original text - no help**

- Same word is used in association with both leavened and unleavened bread. [*artos*, Strong’s #740]
- Root word [*airo*, verb “to lift or raise”] signifies leavened bread
- Another word is used to distinguish the two types [“leavened” or “leaventh” – *zumoo* #2220; “unleavened” – *azumos* #106] but only in context of Feast of Unleavened Bread.
- **Main argument for leavened bread - more fitting emblem of him who partook of our sinful nature**

# Case for Unleavened Bread

- Unleavened used for Passover meal
- Moral and spiritual lesson taught by unleavened bread is clearly brought out in **1 Cor. 5:7-8.**

*“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 the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth.”*

- Also, typical righteousness of sacrifice under the Law  
*“**Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven”.***  
**Ex. 34:25**

# The Cup

- What was in 'the cup' is not specified.  
We know it was wine for two reasons
  - **Wine was the regular, everyday drink at the time.**
  - **It was used in the feasts including the Passover.**
- **Wine used at the Last Supper - mixed with water**
- Fermented wine uniformly used in Breaking of Bread until Temperance movement in 19<sup>th</sup> century influenced practice in some churches.



# Substitutes for Wine

- Grape juice
- Other juice in an ‘emergency’

## Example at Hezekiah’s great Passover

*“...yet did they eat the Passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God...And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah and healed the people.”* [2 Chronicles 30:18-19]

# Partaking of the Cup

- Gospels and Paul all refer to “*the cup*”, singular.
- “*Drink ye all, of it*”      “*and they all drank of it*”
  - Matt. 26:27
  - Mk. 14:23
- “*Sacrament...must be according to institution of Christ. Consider what he said, what he did and what he commanded you to do: all must be said, done and obeyed. It is his intention that must be kept. If you leave undone one jot of what he commanded you to do, you pervert the institution, for there is nothing in the record but what is essential...if we leave any particular point belonging to this institution undone, we pervert the whole action*”.

Robert Bruce, “Mystery of the Lord’s Supper”, 1958, pp. 109-110

# Single versus Individual Cups

Two considerations:

- **Individual cups not used until germs were ‘discovered’ in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. But, would Yahweh give the greatest of all blessings to His children and yet allow the very act of thanksgiving to be a serious health concern? The greater includes the less; faith in the greater will surely include faith in the less.**
- **In such matters, a prayerful consideration of another’s point of view can usually lead to practical concession or compromise agreeable to all. In Scripture, there is a meticulous regard for the unshared scruples of others. But, concessions are to be made to those who are weak, not to those who are strong. [Rom. 14:1 - 15:3]**

# Prayers & Time for Meditation

- Time for mediation and individual prayer?
- Giving thanks versus blessing of bread and cup?

# Frequency of Breaking of Bread

- Scripture is not definitive - no 'thou shalt'
- Record of Acts - was regular (from daily to weekly) feature of ecclesial life in 1<sup>st</sup> century
- Only specific reference to meeting each week on the first day 'to break bread' is **Acts 20:7**.
- Key word is "**often**". "*For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup...*" [1 Cor. 11:26].
- **Each first day is an appropriate frequency, in keeping with the commandment and our needs as 'leaky vessels'.**

# “Eating & Drinking” with Christ in the Kingdom of God

*“...for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God...For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.”*

**Lk. 22:16,18**

- Future celebration of Passover in a new way
- Breaking of Bread - linked to the past and future
- Christ’s earnest desire to partake with his disciples  
- an expression of that which will not be fulfilled until the Kingdom

# The Cup of Blessing

- Can we eat and drink with the Lord in the day of his glory?
- Not without also sharing his immortality
- **This is the Cup of Blessing -**
  - **Future participation in his glory, sharing in his friendship, enjoying his love and fellowship\*, inheritance of his glorious, immortal nature**
- Even now, we can enjoy in some measure at the Breaking of Bread

*“Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty”* Isa. 33:17

*“Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face”* I Cor. 13:12

# Prophecy of Isaiah 25:6

*“And in this mountain [Zion] shall the Lord of hosts make unto all the peoples [the new Israel] –*

- A feast of fat things\*
- A feast of wines of the lees,
- Of fat things full of marrow,
- Of wines on the lees well refined”

\*“Fat things” - allusion to meal offerings (or bread) always associated with oil.

• **Prophecy of a special Memorial feast to be celebrated in the Kingdom with Bread and Wine**

# Future Reference in Paul's Account?

- No reference to 'eating and drinking' in Kingdom?
- Not directly related to Christ's primary instructions
- **Echo of a reference** - *'As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.'* 1 Cor. 11:26
- **Breaking of Bread:**
  - **First - Memorial of Christ's death**
  - **Second - pointing forward to Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

# Marriage Supper of the Lamb

- John was commanded to write:

***‘Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb’***

**Rev. 19:9**

- Blessedness begins now in some measure to those ‘called’ ones
- No hope in participating in Marriage Supper if call not accepted and acted upon in days of probation
- What are we called to be? **Rev. 19:7-8**
- Bride - ***‘arrayed in fine linen, clean and white’***
- Fine Linen - ***‘the righteousness of the saints’***

# Marriage as the Figure

- **Stages** - of Acquaintance, Love and Betrothal precede marriage
  - Each must be represented in our relationship with Christ
- **Espousal** - when one enters into covenant with Christ through baptism and takes on his name; a preliminary covenant to be later ratified if conditions fulfilled
- **Betrothal** - period of each person's probation as chaste virgins
- **New Name** - will receive at the marriage; Rev. 3:12.
- **Glorious Marriage** - consummation when betrothal ends

**“Behold, I stand at the DOOR, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the DOOR, I will come into him, and will SUP with him, and he with me” Rev. 3:20**



**“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come”**



Past



Present



Future