



FAMILY STUDY

The Lord's Supper

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"The Lord's Supper"

By Definition...

The Lord's Supper, often referred to as 'Communion,' is a sacrament of Christ's church, meaning that those who are believers in Christ should follow and obey this practice. By definition, 'communion' means 'mutual participation,' 'an act of sharing,' or 'intimate fellowship.' Indeed, this is what God desires of us—to share in His kingdom and His holiness. The practice of the Lord's Supper is a way to be intimately involved in fellowship with Christ as you remember the death and sacrifice He made on our behalf.

The Body and Blood of Christ

The sacrament of Communion began with the Lord's Supper (also called 'the Last Supper'). It involves partaking in bread, which represents Christ's body, which He gave up for us on the cross; and also wine (or grape juice) which represents Christ's blood which was shed for us. As it happened, no doubt by God's design, the Lord's Supper took place on the anniversary of the Passover.

This is significant because the Passover meal was a reminder of God's deliverance of the Israelites from the plague of the firstborn which God sent upon Egypt as a final persuasion for Pharaoh to let the Hebrew slaves leave Egypt.

Read Exodus chapters 11 and 12

In these chapters, we read about the plague on the firstborn and about God's instructions for the Passover. The Israelites in Egypt had been instructed by God to slay a year-old male lamb and smear its blood on the top and sides of the doorframes of their houses. When the Lord passed through Egypt to strike down all the firstborn children, He would see the blood markings on the doorframes of the Jews and pass over those houses.

Part of God's instructions to the Israelites for Passover included a meal which was to be eaten the night of Passover every year for all time. The meal, which included unleavened bread (made without yeast so as to be free of death) was therefore a way to observe God's salvation from the plague of death.

The Last Supper

Many hundreds of years later, as the time for Jesus' crucifixion drew near, the Lord desired to eat the Passover meal with His disciples before being arrested and sent to the cross. And on this occasion, as the Jews observed God's deliverance from death at the Passover, Jesus gave us something NEW to commemorate. Read these accounts of the Last Supper with your family:

Matthew 26:17-30

Mark 14:12-26

Luke 22:1-38

Breaking the Bread...

After giving thanks to God His Father, Jesus broke the bread—the same kind of unleavened bread, free of death, and passed it around to His disciples.

Then, Jesus drew their attention to the bread, saying "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." The consumption of the bread served as a symbol and a reminder that, for our sake, Christ's body was broken. If the bread represented Christ's flesh, then there was no better way to illustrate His sacrifice for us than to consume Christ's 'flesh.'

Next, Jesus drew their attention to the wine, reddish in color, resembling blood. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you," Christ said, and they were instructed to drink it. His blood would be shed for our sake, and consuming this 'blood' would commemorate Christ's sacrifice.

Parallels Between Passover and Christ's Sacrifice

1. The Sacrificial Lamb

Each Jewish family was commanded to sacrifice a perfect lamb and take its blood and cover their doorframes in order for the Death Angel to pass over them. In the same way, Christ is called the perfect, spotless, Lamb of God. He was sacrificed, and his blood was poured out for us so that we could also have eternal death pass us over.

John 1:29

I Cor. 5:7

I Peter 1:18-19

Rev. 5:8-9,12

2. Protection of the Firstborn; Salvation Through God's Firstborn

The last plague God sent upon the Egyptians was the Plague of the Firstborn. All firstborn who were not in a house that had the blood of a lamb on the door were slain by the Death Angel. Christ was the firstborn of Mary. He was slain for us so that we would not have to die for our sins. Christ is also called the firstborn of Creation, and the firstborn from death. (Note: the term 'firstborn of Creation' does not mean that Christ was the first created being as some cults suggest, but rather that He has the birthright of a firstborn, which means that He has preeminence over creation.)

Luke 2:7

Colossians 1:15-18

Revelation 1:5

3. Covered by the Blood of the Lamb

Just as the blood of a perfect lamb protected the Jews from death, Jesus' blood provides a covering for us too. His blood covers us and protects us from eternal death. Just as the death angel passed over the houses where lamb's blood was on the doorposts, the judgement of death is passed over those who have accepted what Christ did on the cross for us.

Rom. 3:22-25

Heb. 9:14

I John 1:7

Rev. 5:9

4. Not Saved by Default--Saved by Faith

The Jews were not universally saved from the plague of the firstborn just because they were Jewish. They had to act in faith that they would be saved by sacrificing a lamb and placing its blood on the doorpost. If they had refused to do this, they also would have suffered the same plague as the Egyptians. In the same way, we who are in Christ have also had to act in faith. Christ's death and sacrifice does not cover everyone's sin. While it is available for all who believe and ask Jesus for salvation, to those who refuse to accept His sacrifice, His blood does not cover their sins, and they will suffer eternal death for their lack of faith.

John 3:36

Romans 3:22-25

Hebrews 9:27-28

Participation with God

The Lord's Supper, or Communion, is a solemn sacrament and is not to be taken lightly. It is contrary to the definition and intent of Communion for non-believers in Christ to participate in Communion, and we are to examine ourselves carefully before partaking in the Lord's Supper.

I Cor. 10:16

I Cor. 11:17-34

2 Cor. 13:5

Conclusion

We hope that this study sheds some light on the Lord's Supper for you and your family. Communion is a wonderful reminder to us of Christ's sacrifice, and we hope that the Scriptures will help you to better understand and appreciate this important sacrament.