

The Gospel Truth

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT
FOR THE MISSION FIELD WORLDWIDE.

THE PASSION OF CHRIST

(The following account is illustrative of the crucifixion of Christ as detailed in Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23 and John 19 KJV)

Betrayed, arrested, tried and sentenced to be crucified, Jesus was stripped of His garments and scourged by the Roman soldiers. This flogging was a legal preliminary to every Roman execution and was intended to weaken the victim to a state short of death. The Romans used a short whip having several leather thongs to which small iron balls or sharp pieces of sheep bone were tied. As Christ was lashed, the skin was cut and blood flowed down His body. The deep tissues and muscles of His back were lacerated into ribbons as the flogging continued.

Taunting Jesus, the soldiers placed a scarlet robe over His bloodied body and placed a crown of thorns on His head. Thorns often represent sin in the scripture and now the King of Kings was

bearing the sin of the world. They placed a reed in His hand and mocked as they bowed down before Him saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Wracked with pain and suffering, Jesus was struck on the head by the soldiers. They laughed and spit on Him.



According to custom, the crossbar of the cross was placed upon Christ's back. His outstretched arms were tied to the crossbar which weighed 75-125 pounds. Jesus was taken to Golgotha to be executed. In a weakened condition,

Jesus staggered under the weight and could hardly go on. A man named Simon helped bear His cross.

At 9:00 a.m. (the third hour), Jesus was thrown down and the heel of His palms were nailed to the cross with iron spikes. A sign was attached to the cross that

read "Jesus of Nazareth, The King of the Jews." The cross was raised and spikes were driven through His feet to attach them to the post.

Crucifixion was one of the most painful and disgraceful methods of capital punishment. It was reserved for slaves, foreigners, traitors and the worst of criminals. It was designed to produce maximum pain and suffering. Two

criminals were crucified with Jesus and were hung on crosses beside Him.

Hanging on the cross in agony, being physically and mentally abused, Jesus looked on the gathered multitude and prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Though Jesus

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WHAT THE BIBLE Teaches About...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;

Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;

Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;

1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;

1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;

Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

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had the power to have called the angels to deliver Him, He willingly offered Himself as a sacrificial lamb because of His great love for mankind. At noon (the sixth hour), the sun was covered and the whole land was in darkness for three hours.

It was difficult for the crucified to breathe. The body would sag as it was held by nails. The victim could only adequately breathe by lifting the body. The flesh would tear and there would be searing pain in the nerves and the wounds would be reopened.

In the darkness, about 3 p.m. (the ninth hour), Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." As Christ died, the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom; and there was a great earthquake. All people could now have access to God through the blood of His son.

Jesus suffered and endured an agonizing death that the world might be saved because of His sacrifice. A soldier, finding Christ dead, pierced His side from which flowed blood and water. The devil may have thought that he had triumphed because the Messiah was now dead...but Sunday came! Jesus rose from the dead in victory and is alive forevermore.

-mws

THE GOSPEL TRUTH

The Gospel Truth periodical is published in the name of the Lord for all people of all lands in the interest of establishing and encouraging them in the truth of God's Word. This publication teaches and promotes the truths of the Bible that have been established since the time of Christ and the apostles.

The Word of God is the singular, acceptable rule of faith. It teaches salvation and deliverance from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ; a subsequent infilling of the Holy Spirit to lead, direct and empower; practical holiness in every area of life; and the unity and oneness of God's people. Acceptable service to God is through a personal relationship of love founded in truth. Special thanks to Alyssa Clevenger for photography and artwork contributions for this issue.

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Editorial



When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you —Exodus 12:13

Thank God for the blood! When the death angel saw the blood applied to the door posts of the Israelites in Egypt, he passed over. When we stand before the judgment seat of God, and He sees the blood of His son, we are also saved from eternal death.

There is power in the blood of Jesus to save from the deepest pit of sin. When a person is addicted to the power of the flesh and it seems there is no possible way for him to live holy, do not forget that the blood of Jesus can make the vilest sinner clean. Although Jesus died almost 2000 years ago, the blood has lost none of its power.

This quarter, we conclude our study of the ordinances with the subject of the Lord's supper. In the Old Testament, animals were sacrificed for the atonement of sin. "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Hebrews 10:4). Christ offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice and through the shedding of His blood there is power to live free from sin. I remember many a time being moved to tears while sitting in a communion service as I reflected upon the great sacrifice of Jesus. His love is great and He paid the ultimate price for our salvation.

Our world puts much emphasis on Christmas and many celebrate the birth of Christ during that season. It is noteworthy that Christ was not born in December nor did He instruct us to celebrate His birth. Jesus did instruct His people to remember His death through the observance of the Lord's supper. While there is no set time of year that the Bible prescribes, there is something special about local congregations having communion around the week of Resurrection Sunday.

The traditions and symbolisms are important in the observance of the Lord's supper. I know many people do not like to share the cup of communion and would rather have an individual cup from which to drink. I have never known someone to get sick because of drinking from a common cup during communion. I have drunk with groups of people where many diseases were prevalent and I did not suffer because of it.

Juice from grapes was used in the Bible during the Lord's supper. While that is best in symbolism, I have been in places where no grapes were available. Rather than not have the ceremony, we used various liquids. In one place we mixed a dark colored soda with a local juice. I believe God honored that observance.

It is a wonderful blessing to partake and share in the suffering of our Lord. "Lord, we fellowship thy passion...."

Michael W. Smith

April 2015





Recipe for Unleavened Bread

Unleavened bread is very simple to make. The only ingredients are flour and water.

Ingredients:

1-1/2 cups whole-grain flour

1 cup water

Place flour in bowl. Gradually add water to flour while stirring until dough forms. Add water or flour as needed until dough is thick enough to form with oiled hands into a flat, round loaf.

Place in an oiled pan. Bake at 350° F for 15 minutes or over a fire until done.

Yield: 1 loaf



“Take, eat, for this is my body which is broken for you.”

1 Corinthians 11:24

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

SUBJECT: THE ORDINANCE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

Scripture Reading: *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.* —1 Corinthians 11:26

Summary: The Lord’s Supper is a Biblical ordinance instituted as a memorial to the suffering and death of Jesus Christ whose body was broken and blood shed for the redemption of mankind.

Read: Matthew 26:17-30; 1 Corinthians 11:20-34 (Reference: Luke 22:7-22; Mark 14:12-26).

I. Instituted During the Passover

- A. Exodus 12:12-15 Passover in Egypt
- B. Matthew 26:17-20 The feast of unleavened bread.
- C. Luke 22:7-16 The Passover prepared.

II. Instituted by Christ

- A. Matthew 26:26-29 Jesus administers communion to His disciples.
- B. 1 Corinthians 11:23 Received of the Lord.

III. Purpose of Communion

- A. New Testament Memorial
- B. 1 Corinthians 11:24b,25b "In remembrance of me."
- C. 1 Corinthians 11:26 Show the Lord’s death.

IV. Symbolism of the Bread

- A. Matthew 26:26 The body of Christ.
- B. 1 Corinthians 11:24 The broken body of Christ.
- C. 1 Corinthians 10:17 The church—the body of Christ.
- D. 1 Corinthians 5:6-8 Unleavened bread.

V. Symbolism of the Fruit of the Vine

- A. Matthew 26:28-29 The shed blood of Christ.
- B. 1 Corinthians 10:16 Communion of the blood.
- C. 1 Corinthians 12:13 Drink into one Spirit.

VI. Proper Administration of Communion

- A. Mark 14:22 Jesus took bread, blessed it, brake it, and gave them.
- B. Mark 14:23 Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, gave it to them, and they all drank of it.
- C. See also: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

VII. Conclusion to the Lord’s Supper

- A. Matthew 26:30 They sang a hymn.
- B. Mark 14:26 Sang and departed.

VIII. Communion Misused at Corinth

- 1 Corinthians 11:20-22, 34 Congregation focused on temporal eating rather than on the symbolic observance.

IX. Ordinance for Believers

- A. 1 Corinthians 11:27-28 Examine yourself.
- B. 1 Corinthians 11:29-32 Consequences.

X. Ordinance to be Kept by the Church

- A. Matthew 28:20 Observe all things.
- B. 1 Corinthians 11:2 Keep the ordinances.
- C. 1 Corinthians 11:25 This do ye.

Conclusion:

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup.
—1 Corinthians 11:28

THE ORDINANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Companion article for Bible Study

THE OLD TESTAMENT PASSOVER

Nearly 3500 years ago, Moses and the children of Israel were on the eve of an epic exodus out of the bondage of Egypt. God told His people to sacrifice a lamb that was without blemish and to place the blood upon their door posts. That night, the angel of death passed over Egypt to slay the first born son in every home. There was salvation from death where the blood of the lamb had been applied. The Passover was instituted to annually commemorate this wonderful, historic deliverance (Exodus 12:12-15).

JESUS INSTITUTES THE COMMUNION ORDINANCE

Approximately 1500 years later, Jesus sat with His disciples to partake of the Passover supper (Luke 22:7-16). Jesus knew that within a few hours He would be crucified on the cross as a sacrificial lamb for the sins of humanity. Jesus took unleavened bread and a cup of the fruit of the vine and administered the first communion (Matthew 26:26-29). This ordinance was instituted by Christ and was reconfirmed by the apostle Paul. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you..." (1 Corinthians 11:23).

After the manner of the Passover, Christ established a memorial in the New Testament dispensation. Mankind is only saved from everlasting death when the blood of Jesus has been applied. What a wonderful salvation that all have access to through the blood of the lamb Christ Jesus. Jesus told His disciples to have communion "in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24b). The observance of the Lord's supper is a memorial service that God's people might never forget the pain and suffering of the Saviour. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26).

THE BREAD REPRESENTS THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Lord's supper is one of the few practices in the New Testament that is rich with symbolism and meaning through a literal observance. Jesus used the unleavened bread of Passover and said, "Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you..." (1 Corinthians 11:24). Christ was nailed to the cross and He was pierced with a spear. His body was broken that we might be saved. The bread is a symbol of



that crucified body. Unleavened bread is also a symbol in scripture of the body of Christ, the Church of God. "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:17). As the bread is unleavened and compact, many grains come together in one undivided loaf. People with different personalities and

backgrounds are joined together in unity in one body when they are changed by the saving power of Jesus Christ.

THE JUICE REPRESENTS THE BLOOD AND SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

The fruit of the vine that Jesus used was juice from grapes. It represents the blood that Christ shed on the cross (Matthew 26:28). Grapes must first be pressed and squeezed to get juice. Christ was whipped, beaten and crucified that through His blood we could have forgiveness of sin. Every child of God has communion through the blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16).

HOW TO ADMINISTER COMMUNION

There are many ways in which churches administer communion. It is important that the essence of the symbolism not be lost in its administration. Jesus first took unleavened

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bread. He blessed it, brake it and then gave to the disciples (Mark 14:22). This is the Biblical way in which to conduct the Lord's supper. Many churches use little wafers which causes the symbolism of brokenness to be lost. Jesus then "took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it" (Mark 14:23). There was a common cup of which they all partook. This is not appealing in the flesh but it is a symbolic act with great spiritual implications. God's people drank together from the cup of suffering of our Lord. This is truly communion, which means the act of sharing. At the conclusion of the first communion, the disciples sang a hymn and departed (Mark 14:26). There is a special blessing given when this practice is followed and God's people depart from the Lord's supper similar to the disciples of old. The Biblical pattern should not be tampered with or changed.

MISUSES OF THE ORDINANCE

The congregation at Corinth did not observe the Lord's supper properly. Paul reproveth them and gives instruction (1 Corinthians 11:20-22, 34). The congregation had been turning the occasion into a time of feasting and overindulgence. They had mistaken the nature of the ordinance. Paul instructed them to eat at home and that the Lord's supper was not time to fill one's hunger. It was rather a time to remember Christ in a symbolic observance.

COMMUNION IS FOR THE BELIEVER

The Lord's supper is an ordinance that is for saved people (1 Corinthians 11:27-32). Paul stated whosoever ate of the bread and drank of the cup unworthily would be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. Each individual is to examine himself before partaking of communion; it is not the job of the ministry. It is a time of self-examination that goes beyond a profession of salvation. It is a time to consider one's life, conduct, business, attitudes, etc. Many in the congregation were sick, weak and even dying because there was a lack of spiritual seriousness in partaking of the Lord's

supper. This lack was not necessarily to eternal damnation but was provoking God to judgment. The Lord was chastising them that they might not be condemned eternally as the world (1 Corinthians 11:29, 32). The Lord's supper is a solemn act and should be entered into with carefulness and great reverence.



“May the Church of God be faithful
to commemorate the...Lord’s supper
until He returns.”

COMMANDED FOR ALL GENERATIONS TO OBSERVE

The observance of the Lord's supper is an apostolic tradition that was intended for all generations. Jesus taught His church to "observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). Paul's instruction was to "keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you" (1 Corinthians 11:2). Jesus said "this do ye" (1 Corinthians 11:25). May the Church of God be faithful to commemorate the sacrifice of Christ through the observance of the Lord's supper until He returns.

-mws



How often should the ordinance of the Lord's supper be observed?

THE CHURCH IS CLEARLY INSTRUCTED TO OBSERVE THIS ORDINANCE. PEOPLE WHO ARE UNWILLING TO PARTICIPATE HAVE SPIRITUAL NEEDS WHICH THEY NEED TO ADDRESS WITH THE LORD.

Jesus did not tell the church how frequently they were to participate in communion. He said, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup..." (1 Corinthians 11:26). Frequency is an issue that is left to each person and fellowship to decide. It is noteworthy that Christ patterned this ordinance after the Passover which was celebrated once a year.

Some people partake of communion once a week or more. While that may not be singularly wrong, there is danger of it becoming casually ritualistic. The other danger is that some people find security in their frequent communion. Salvation is not derived from participating in this ordinance. Salvation is by grace through faith which brings about holy living.

Should children take communion?

THE SCRIPTURE DOES NOT GIVE AN AGE REQUIREMENT FOR PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNION BUT IT DOES GIVE SOME REQUIREMENTS. It unequivocally says "let a man examine himself" (1 Corinthians 11:28).

Communion is also something that should only be partaken of by those who have been saved. An infant or two-year-old does not have the mind to examine himself. Just as infant baptism is contrary to Biblical teaching, so is infant communion. It is a parent's responsibility to know their child and oversee the timing of the child's participation in the communion. While parents are to raise their children with godly practices, communion is a special memorial that is reserved for the born-again. Children should recognize the seriousness of partaking and have a great reverence for the service. If a child takes communion he should have a personal experience of salvation.

What about transubstantiation?

TRANSUBSTANTIATION IS ONE OF THE FALSE THEOLOGIES CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE BREAD AND FRUIT OF THE VINE. This doctrine, which is espoused by the Roman Catholic church, states that during the ceremony of mass, the "bread and wine" are changed, in substance, into the flesh and blood of Christ, even though the elements appear to remain the same. This is drawn

from the scriptures where Jesus said "this is my body" and "this is my blood" (Matthew 26:26, 28).

Jesus was not speaking literally because He still possessed His literal blood and body. He was speaking metaphorically. Jesus was drawing an analogy. He expressly said in 1 Corinthians 11:26, "as often as ye eat this bread..." He told the disciples to partake of the Lord's supper "in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). This also implies that He was not present physically in the communion bread itself. The bread and fruit of the vine are simply symbols of the body and blood of Christ.

-mws





DID YOU KNOW?

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

—Mark 14:26

The Jews observed the Passover by singing or chanting the *Hallel* or Hallelujah. It consists of a recitation from Psalms 113-118 which is used for praise and thanksgiving. Psalms 113-114 were usually sung before the meal and Psalms 115-118 were sung at the close.

There is little doubt but that this is what Jesus and the disciples sang before departing to the mount of Olives.



A Word
In Season

The Fellowship of His Sufferings

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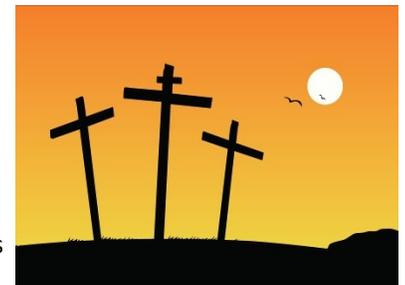
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I count all things but loss....that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

—Philippians 3:8-10

The apostle Paul counted everything in life but loss so that he could experience as much as possible the life and power of Christ. Purportedly, Paul was beheaded for his faith. Based on his writings, I am confident that Paul welcomed this as he welcomed many other hardships in life.

The Lord Jesus left the splendor of Heaven, came to this sinful world to experience life and gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sin. We owe Him a debt that can never be paid for the gift of salvation and eternal life. It is an honor and blessing to drink of the cup of suffering with Christ.



Origen, an early Christian scholar, says that the apostle Peter felt himself to be unworthy to be put to death in the same manner as his Master, and was therefore, at his own request, crucified with his head downward.

Our sufferings can never compare to the sufferings of Christ. He was rejected, betrayed, denied, lied about, misrepresented, spit upon, whipped, and crucified. Oh child of God, be not dismayed nor discouraged in time of sufferings and trial. "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:13).

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HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD