

Communion

Lesson 5

I. Introduction

- a. From our previous lessons regarding the institution of the Lord's Supper, we understand that when Christ is described as blessing or giving thanks, the most natural understanding of the passage is that he was offering a **prayer** of gratitude for God's provision.
- b. We have also seen that Jesus used the unleavened loaf of bread to represent to his disciples that, just as bread is a life sustaining substance, in like manner and yet in a **spiritual** sense, it is through his body broken for us that we receive eternal life.
- c. Although others may disagree, we can conclude that the words of Jesus recorded in the parallel passages, in **no way** suggest even the slightest notion that he performed some miraculous transformation of the bread which he held.
- d. Before we examine the historical detail of the doctrine of transubstantiation, it is necessary to complete our survey of the institution of the Lord's Supper in which the Lord distributed the **wine**.
Matthew 26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

II. The Cup

- a. [And he took the cup] According to Luke, his **first** mention of the cup was probably a reference to the cup of blessing, which the master of a family took, and, after blessing God, gave to each of his guests by way of welcome.
Luke 22:17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: KJV
- b. Although the parallel passages make **no** mention of the first cup, in their narrative the writers deal only the very important rite which Christ was instituting.
 1. **Matt 26:27-28** 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. *KJV*
 2. **Mark 14:23-24** 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. *KJV*
 3. **Luke 22:20** Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. *KJV*
 4. **1 Cor 11:25** 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. *KJV*
- c. The cup in each of these passages is to be understood as being associated with the bread. It is noteworthy that when distributing the bread he had simply said, Take, eat, this is my body, but with regard to the cup, he said Drink **ye all of this**.
- d. This emphasis pointed out one very critical aspect of the institution, namely the blood of **atonement**. With this statement Jesus was emphasizing to each of His disciples the necessity of identifying themselves personally with the blood of atonement.
- e. As each disciple drank of the cup, it was the equivalent of the Jewish Priest placing his hand upon the head of the animal to be sacrificed as a means of **personally** identifying with the sacrifice. *Ex 29:10 And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. KJV*
- f. It is important to our understanding that we see the **significance** of His words and to strive to understand the full import of their meaning to us as believers.

III. The Blood

- a. The words eating and drinking were often used metaphorically and carry a **variety** of meanings in Scripture.
 1. It referred to **meditating** upon and assimilating the Word of God *Jer 15:16 Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: KJV*
 2. It referred to making **use** of the spoils of your enemy for one's own maintenance. *Deut 20:14 thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. KJV*
 3. By the act of eating or drinking, the participant is specifically identifying **himself** with the thing eaten or drunk. And in the case of *John 7:37-38* eating is synonymous with believing. *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. KJV*
- b. As eating was essential to the understanding of the symbol of bread, so drinking is essential to our understanding of the symbol of blood in **two** important aspects.
- c. First, the wine represented the blood of **atonement** for sin, which up till that time had been symbolized by the slaughtering of animals under the Jewish sacrificial system. *Heb 9:22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. NIV*
- d. But Jesus came as the **actual** fulfillment of the promise of real, full, and complete atonement. In effect He was saying THIS is THAT blood of mine which was pointed out by all the sacrifices under the Jewish law; but, this blood offering is different. *Heb 10:4-5 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: KJV*

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- e. What we have in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament was a mere **symbolic** representation of what was promised and what was to come in the person of the suffering servant of God who was our atonement. *Isa 53:3-5 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. KJV*
- f. The wine also symbolizes the blood of the sacrifice which was slain for the **ratification** of the new covenant. *Heb 9:14-15 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. KJV*

IV. The New Covenant

- a. Our New Testament, upon which we base our understanding of the person and work of Jesus Christ simply means, the new **COVENANT**.
- b. The word Covenant, (from con, together, and venio, I come), signifies an agreement, contract, or compact, between two parties, by which **both** are mutually bound to do certain things, on certain conditions and under certain penalties.
- c. In the Hebrew language, the word often signifies not only the covenant or agreement, but also the sacrifice which was slain on the occasion as a means of ratifying, **in blood**, the agreement between the parties.
- d. The idea carried by the blood oath between the contracting parties, affirmed the fact that each of them subjected himself to such a **death** as that of the victim, should either of them violate their agreements.
- e. An oath of this kind, involving the slaying of the covenant sacrifice, was customary in ancient times. I.E. In **Homer**, when a covenant was made between the Greeks and the Trojans, and the throats of lambs were cut, and their blood poured out.
- f. Between Jehovah and the Nation of Israel a blood covenant was established by God Himself and His blood oath ensuring His performance was guaranteed by the performance of **Messiah**. *Zech 9:9-11 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water. KJV*
- g. Scripture also alludes to the promise of God in which He states that Messiah would be given by Him for a covenant (sacrifice) to the **Gentiles**. *Isa 42:1-6 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; KJV*
- h. When Jesus held up the cup of wine and said to his disciples “*Drink ye all of this*” He was alluding to **both** the atonement accomplished by His shed blood and the establishment of the New Covenant by which they were saved. *Heb 9:15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. NIV*
- i. Just as his disciples had literally eaten the bread by which he signified his body, they also literally drank the wine by which Christ **signified** the atonement and the new covenant which was affirmed by his blood.
- j. In this literal eating and drinking each of His disciples were signifying their personal **identification** with Christ and belief in him who was the Lamb sent from God who was about to take away the sins of the world.
- k. Today, each of us as believers, repeat this symbolic and yet very real memorial act as we eat the bread and drink of the cup of the Lord’s Supper. Let us do so with the **full** appreciation for its meaning and significance.

V. Application

- a. We can not discern the quality of an apple by its appearance only. Likewise, Scripture tells us in Ps 34:8 “*to taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*” Have you tasted his body and his blood?
- b. Are you trusting in Christ for your eternal life?