

Memorial Supper Instituted

Key Verse: *“I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”*
—**Matthew 26:29**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 26:17-30

Peter links the “lamb” picture to Christ, whom he calls “a lamb without blemish and without spot,” because his life was completely free from sin.—I Pet. 1:19; Heb. 4:15

The Israelites had been instructed to kill the Passover lamb on the 14th day of the first month—Abib—later called Nisan. (Exod. 12:6) In direct correspondence to this, Jesus died as the “Lamb of God” on the exact same day, according to Jewish reckoning. Thus, we are provided conclusive evidence that the sacrifice of Christ was the greater fulfillment of the Passover picture, and so the Apostle Paul directly states, “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.”—I Cor. 5:7

Jesus and his disciples, being Jews, were obligated to follow the Jewish Passover arrangement. Thus, they

OUR LESSON DIRECTS US

to Jesus’ institution of a “memorial,” or remembrance, of his willing sacrifice and death as “the Lamb of God.” (John 1:29) Centuries earlier, in God’s instructions to Israel concerning their Passover observance, they were told to select a lamb “without blemish” to be sacrificed, the purpose of which would be to secure their release from bondage to Egypt. (Exod. 12:5) The Apostle

gathered together to eat of a literal lamb, with bitter herbs and unleavened bread, and the fruit of the vine. (Matt. 26:1,2,17-20; Exod. 12:8) Apparently, it was just as the Passover supper was ending that Jesus took some of the leftover unleavened bread, blessed it, broke it into pieces, and gave it to his disciples. He said, “Take, eat.” “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.”—Matt. 26:26; Luke 22:19

Jesus’ breaking of the bread provided several lessons which his disciples understood after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. First, it indicated that his earthly body must be “broken” in death before its sacrificial benefits could accrue to the disciples. Second, the fact that Jesus himself broke the bread shows that he willingly gave his life—no one took it from him. (John 10:18) Third, the disciples’ eating of the broken bread pointed toward the privilege of appropriating the benefits of Jesus’ sacrifice once it was completed.

The “fruit of the vine,” or cup, was next introduced by Jesus as part of this memorial of his impending death as man’s Redeemer. After blessing the cup, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink ye all of it.” Jesus explained that the contents of the cup represented his blood, “my blood of the new testament [or covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” What a wonderful picture we see in this “fruit of the vine” of the ransom price value, represented in the shed blood of Jesus, which would be provided on the behalf of the sins of the world.—Matt. 26:27-29; I John 2:2

As Jesus’ disciples at the present time, we are invited, by faith, to partake of and appropriate to ourselves the benefits symbolized by both the “bread” and the “cup” of the Memorial Supper. By so doing, we who thus partake of these benefits are reckoned as being members of his “body,” and are invited to present ourselves a “living sacrifice” and be symbolically baptized into his death, that we may also be in the likeness of his resurrection.—I Cor. 12:12,27; Rom. 12:1; Rom. 6:3-5 ■