

# **The True Meaning Of The Lord's Supper**

*No. 3 in a Series of 3 Studies on the Subject*

By Jack W. Langford, April 2007

## *The Setting For The Supper*

We can very well say that Israel had its national beginning with the first Passover Supper that was observed in the land of Egypt under the direction of Moses. This was some 1500 years before Christ. In these intervening years that Supper remained as the very hallmark of the nation's existence.

For the last five hundred or more years before Christ a suppression had clouded the ancient land of Israel as if with a murky darkness. After being conquered by four world empires, the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and now the Roman, the little national community was hardly recognizable compared to its former glory. Most of its population had been transplanted and scattered. A remnant had returned to the land that had been promised to Abraham as a perpetual inheritance. The generations to follow had continued a long struggle in maintaining its religious identification. Its language had been almost smothered by foreign dialects of Aramaic, Greek and Latin. Yet that Scriptural language of Hebrew still existed especially in the city of Jerusalem where the Temple stood as a reminder of its religion and its hopes toward a final redemption.

Suddenly a burst of noonday light had been seen by all the inhabitants of the land with the fiery ministry of John the Baptist and the miraculous and compassionate ministry of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. All the hills and countryside and even the desert area had been blanketed with the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. The promising expectation caused all the inhabitants to hold their breath as it were—is this indeed the promised Messiah who was prophesied to come?

However, both the forerunner of the Messiah and the Messiah, Himself, had been rejected by the official leadership of the nation of Israel. Though the common people seemed to accept John the Baptist as an authentic messenger from God and though vast crowds of people had come to anticipate Jesus as the true Messiah Who would shortly set up the Kingdom of God, yet John had been beheaded and Jesus' life was also under serious threat by both King Herod and the religious leadership. Indeed, Jesus had privately warned His disciples of His imminent death.

This is the actual setting for the last supper Christ would have with His apostles—this would be another Passover Supper—His final Passover during His ministry.

## *“The Promises Made To The Fathers”*

The apostle Paul characterized the ministry of Jesus Christ in the following manner, “*Jesus Christ has become a servant (minister) to the circumcision (the Jewish people) for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers*” (Rom. 15:8). And this is precisely what Jesus Christ is going to do at this evening Supper.

Christ began that Supper with these very important words, “*With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer*” (Luke 22:15). This is the rendering in the New King James Version and I like it because it properly lays the emphasis upon the *intensity* of Christ’s desire to eat the Passover at this important focal point in time—before He would suffer as the antitypical Passover Lamb.

He is going “*to confirm the promises made to the fathers*” concerning a future Passover deliverance for the nation of Israel. Most Christians don’t realize that the prophets of old spoke of a future Passover for Israel which would take place at the coming of the Messiah to rule and reign in a Kingdom on earth. However, before this glorious event the Messiah would be rejected and suffer death.

The actual death of Christ as a Passover Lamb would serve a dual purpose. Not only would it be the basis for the spiritual redemption of mankind from the guilt and penalty of sins, but it would also be the basis for the prophetic future Passover deliverance of Israel out of all nations on the face of the earth, and into that splendid New Covenant Kingdom age. This is what Christ will be telling the apostles during this Supper. The ingredients of that Supper speak of His death, but His death will also be the basis for the future deliverance of Israel in the Kingdom. We will explore this more carefully as we move through that Supper. First let us listen to the prophets of old who were inspired to speak of the future prophetic Passover peculiar to the nation of Israel and then we will see how Christ “confirms these promises.”

JEREMIAH said—

“Behold the days are coming, says the LORD,  
That I will raise to David a Branch of Righteousness;  
A King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment  
And righteousness in the earth.  
In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely;  
Now this is His name by which He shall be called:  
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

*Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the LORD,  
That they shall no longer say,  
‘As the LORD lives Who brought up the children of Israel  
from the land of Egypt,’ but,  
‘As the LORD lives Who brought up and led the descendents  
of the house of Israel from the north country and  
from all the countries where I have driven them.  
And they shall dwell in their own land.’”*

*(Jeremiah 23:5-8)*

The nature of this prophecy by Jeremiah would cause the people of Israel to expect in the future another final deliverance for the nation. Instead of looking back to their deliverance out of Egypt, they are looking forward to a deliverance out of all the nations on the face of the earth where they have been scattered.

### *The New Covenant Promises*

Again JEREMIAH said—

*“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My Covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.*

But this is the *Covenant* that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD:

I will put My Law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

No more shall every man teach his neighbor, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD.

*For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”*  
(Jeremiah 31:31-34)

The context for this prophecy is the restoration of Israel. In the earlier part of the chapter, verse 23, they are told that God will “bring back the captivity” of the nation. In verse 28 they are promised that God would “watch over them to build and to plant.” Then the truth is portrayed by the prophet Jeremiah that Israel will no longer look back to their deliverance out of Egypt when God instituted the Old Covenant. Instead they will look forward to a New Covenant being established. Everything about this New covenant is spelled out clearly—

1. The Time of the New Covenant being established is *“After Those Days,”* i.e., after the restoration of the nation.
2. The People of the New Covenant are *“The house of Israel and the house of Judah.* (Please note: this is not the church!)
3. The Work of the New Covenant is when God *“forgives their iniquity, and their sin is remembered no more.”*
4. The Result of the New Covenant is that *“all shall Know The LORD, from the least of them to the greatest of them.”*
5. The Effect of the New Covenant is that they will have *“My (God’s) Law...written on their hearts.”*

(For other important references to this Covenant please read—Isa. 59: 20, 21; Jer. 32:37-44; 50:5; Ezek. 11:17-20; 16:60, 62; 20:37; 36:24-28 & Mal. 3:1.)

### *Confirmation of the New Covenant Promises*

Christ will state specifically at this Passover that the wine drunk during the Supper represents His own blood which is shed for them and serves as the basis for the New Covenant (Luke 22:20). This is the New Covenant that Jeremiah (and others) spoke about as we just read in the passage above.

“Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying,  
‘Drink from it, all of you.  
For this is My blood of the *New Covenant*,  
which is shed for many for the remission of sins”  
(Matthew 26:27,28).

“This is My blood of the *New Covenant*,  
which is shed for many” (Mark 14:24).

“Likewise He also took the cup after Supper, saying,  
‘This cup is the *New Covenant* in My blood,  
which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20).

“In the same manner He also took the cup after Supper, saying,  
‘This cup is the *New Covenant* in My blood” (I Cor. 11:25).

In the book of Hebrews it is explained that no Covenant can go into effect without the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:18-22; 10:16,17). Thus the blood, as the basis for the New Covenant, has already been shed by Christ at His crucifixion. The cup that is drunk during the Passover Supper now stands as the blood of that New Covenant in the death of Jesus Christ. This does not change the nature of the New Covenant which is specifically for the people of Israel and Judah, and will be established only after Israel’s restoration.

### *Other Promises*

Another prophecy that draws a parallel between God’s deliverance of Israel out of Egypt and this future deliverance is from Isaiah 11:11-16.

“It shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set His hand again  
the second time to recover the remnant of His people who are left,  
from Assyria and Egypt, from Pathros and Cush, from Elam and Shinar,  
from Hamath and the islands of the sea.  
He will set a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel,  
and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of  
the earth...

*The LORD will utterly destroy the tongue of the sea of Egypt; with His  
mighty wind He will shake His fist over the river, and strike it  
in its seven streams,  
and make men cross over dry-shod.*

*There will be a highway for the remnant of His people who will be left  
from Assyria, as it was for Israel  
in the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.”*

From this phenomenal prophecy we can understand that there will be another Passover deliverance for Israel much greater than that of the days of their deliverance out of Egypt. Another *strong wind* will blow, so as to *dry up the water* barriers between Israel and their promised land. The people of Israel will again *cross over “dry-shod”* as they had done millenniums before in Egypt.

In addition, in Isaiah 31:4 & 5 the prophet spoke of another “*Passing-over*” by God in Israel’s future deliverance.

“For thus the LORD has spoken to me: ‘As the lion roars, and a young lion  
over his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is summoned against him,  
He will not be afraid of their voice, nor be disturbed by their noise,  
So the LORD of hosts will come down to fight for Mount Zion and for its hill.  
Like birds flying about, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem.  
Defending, He will also deliver it; *Passing over*, He will preserve it.’”

After this great future deliverance of the nation of Israel they will again observe the Passover celebration as specified, “*in the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall observe the Passover, a Feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten*”—Ezekiel 45:21-24.

#### **“Confirming the Promises Made to the Fathers” about the Passover!**

What better thing could Christ do before He died than to “confirm the promises made to the fathers by the prophets” concerning these Passover “promises.” Herein is the heart of the whole last Supper! It is the final opportunity Christ has to bring to their attention the Kingdom hope of Israel as anticipated in the New Covenant promises. These promises were couched in words of prophetic inspiration centered around the Passover theme of Israel’s deliverance out of Egypt. Every year the Jewish people ate their Passover Suppers *looking back* and commemorating their deliverance from Egypt. But the prophets spoke of a greater deliverance to come for the nation of Israel in anticipation of their promised Kingdom. As a result of the truths Christ gave, as often as they eat their Passover Suppers, they will no longer do so in remembrance of the past, but *in anticipation of the future!* In other words, their Passover Suppers are now prophetic Feasts looking forward to fulfillment in the Kingdom. This is precisely the language Christ will use at this final Passover meal—“Till it be FULFILLED IN THE KINGDOM” (Luke 22:16).

“*For I say to you, I will no longer eat of it (the Passover Supper) until it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God*” (Luke 22:16).

“*For I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of God shall come*” (Luke 22:18).

“*Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God*” (Mark 14:25).

“*But this I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s Kingdom*” (Matthew 26:29).

*“For as often as you eat this bread or drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death **til He comes**” (I Cor. 11:26).*

*“But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a Kingdom, just as My Father has bestowed upon Me, **that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel**” (Luke 22:28-30).*

What an amazingly clear list of Scriptures! They all make it very plain that the purpose of this Supper points forward in time to the Kingdom to be established for the nation of Israel. This Supper is therefore prophetic in nature. It looks forward to the Kingdom age. “It will be fulfilled in the Kingdom!” The Kingdom in view is obviously not the church age. It is the age when Christ will have returned to earth to reign in His Kingdom and all the apostles will once again sit at the Passover Supper in that glorious Kingdom with their Savior. The purpose of this Supper is wholly within the context of the hope of Israel. The prophetic purpose of this Supper entirely skips over this present church age.

How well do I remember sitting in the midst of “Holy Communion” services in the various churches I had served and visited, trying to concentrate on some spiritual purpose for taking this cracker and grape juice, and only coming up with the thoughts suggested by the preacher of concentrating on the sufferings of Christ. In reality I could often think of His suffering for me in my daily life without any reference to crackers and grape juice. So I often thought, “There’s got to be more to this! I’m missing something!” Then in about 1958, after I returned home from the military, I got my answer. A dear older brother, named Wilbur Johnson, sat me down and read these Scriptures and explained the real purpose for the last Supper Christ had with His apostles.

### ***So, What Is The Purpose of the Lord’s Supper??***

I could hardly believe it! These passages are all so clear. How come none of the preachers and teachers I sat under in my denominational years ever made reference to any of these testimonies? And I had to ask myself, “was I so deluded in denominational ‘Lord’s Supper’ superficiality that I never even thought of these passages?” I knew that I had read them before. Probably in my thinking they had something to do with the present spiritual Kingdom of the church! And yet, when one reads about the present spiritual Kingdom the Scripture says, “*The Kingdom of God is NOT eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*” (Rom. 14:17).

In other words, the bread and wine of the Lord’s Passover Supper actually had nothing whatsoever to do with the church’s memorializing in some ritual manner the suffering of Christ. It really was not for the church! The Lord’s Supper and the elements in that Supper primarily had to do with twelve tribe Israel. The Jewish believers would hold observances once a year at Passover time commemorating the promises of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, coming again to deliver Israel and reign over them. Furthermore, that anticipation specifically meant their celebration with Christ once again in the Kingdom age. What a beautiful celebration of Passover that will be!

So when we ask the question, “What is the purpose of the Lord’s Supper?” the answer is very clear! Its purpose is all encapsulated within the Passover celebration. Its purpose is in the anticipation of the establishment of the New Covenant which will be inaugurated and fulfilled in the Kingdom of God when the prophetic fulfillment of the Passover will take place. The bread and wine of the Passover Supper represents the body and blood of Jesus Christ which is the basis for the establishment of the New Covenant. As often as the Jewish believers took the Passover Supper they were now to do so in remembrance of Christ and in anticipation of the coming Kingdom of God.

The twelve Jewish apostles who had been ministering the Kingdom of God and had believed on Jesus Christ as the true Messiah will not be disappointed because of Israel’s reluctance to accept this Kingdom offer. At a future time they will realize the Kingdom blessings. For now, they were like Caleb and Joshua of old who were ready to go into the promised land but had been discouraged by their brethren. God granted that another generation of Israelites would indeed enter into the promised land. Caleb and Joshua would live through the wilderness journey and be preserved and eventually go into the promised land. So it is with the twelve apostles. They will indeed sit down with Christ in the Kingdom and again partake of that Passover Supper when it is “Fulfilled in the Kingdom.”

### ***But Isn’t the New Covenant For The Church??***

The idea that the New Covenant is for the church of Jesus Christ is one of the biggest misunderstandings in Christendom. Our Bibles have been divided under the titles of “The Old Testament” and “The New Testament” and the church falls in the New Testament. Like chapter and verse divisions these two main divisions can be handy, but at the same time they are often confusing. Chapter and verse divisions are later traditional additions and they sometimes are erroneous. Likewise are the two main divisions. Modern translators of the Bible are often encumbered with the need to regulate verse and sometimes chapter divisions to less obvious places. The Old Testament of course has reference to the Law of Moses. Yet the Law of Moses did not come into existence until some twenty-five hundred years of Biblical history had transpired. That simply means all the book of Genesis is technically not under the Old Testament. The last fifteen hundred years up until Christ’s death was the actual period of the Law or Old Testament. In addition, if we remember that Christ was born and lived under the Mosaic Law system until His ascension (Gal. 4:4,5), then we can see that the four Gospels, themselves, can be placed under the Old Testament as well—if we divide the Bible under the term of the Testaments or Covenants. Actually the church age is a parenthetical period of time that more properly falls under the blessings for the Gentiles because of the Abrahamic Covenant and not the New Covenant. The last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, has to do with the preliminary events leading up to and the establishment of the New Covenant Kingdom age. For clarity’s sake, the best way to describe the Bible is by the designations “the Hebrew Scriptures,” and “the Greek Scriptures.”

In addition, Christendom, beginning with Roman Catholicism, has long held to the doctrine that all God’s promises to Israel are now transferred to the Church. Erroneously they presumed that once Israel was set aside, all the prophetic promises to Israel are given instead to Christendom. “The Church,” they teach, becomes “The True

Israel.” Sometimes they say, “The Church is Spiritual Israel.” All this false teaching comes under the heading of “Replacement Theology.” Christendom has lived under this delusion for nearly seventeen hundred years. It is no wonder that Christians take it for granted that the New Covenant Lord’s Supper belongs to the church.

Christendom likewise fails to recognize the transition period of the book of Acts wherein the early Jewish believers are still practicing the Law of Moses with its Passover Supper. This transition continues right up until the time of the close of the book of Acts—see Acts 21:20-25. At the first counsel in Jerusalem (Acts 15) the Gentiles were declared exempt from the Old Testament Law. The Jewish believers became exempt from the Old Testament Law by the revelation specifically to the Hebrew believers, the book of “Hebrews.”

The consequence of these basic errors has caused Christendom to carry over certain ordinances and traditions that were designed for the nation of Israel and not for the church of Jesus Christ of this age. Rome carries over a corrupt version of the priesthood and many other twisted rituals meshed with paganism. Holy Day observances, Sabbaths, physical ordinances as water baptism and the Supper remain in Protestantism. Tithing, ritual services, plus innumerable customs from paganism have been meshed together—the modern Easter customs are a good example. It is no wonder the ugly confusion about the Supper remains as the “hallmark” of false Christendom.

### *The New Covenant Verses*

Some have argued, “Doesn’t it say in Hebrews 8:6 that the New Covenant ‘was established’ by Christ?” It is true that in Hebrews 8:6-12 the whole of Jeremiah 31: 31-34 is quoted. However, the words “was established” in verse 6 are qualified in context as having reference to the New Covenant being “established UPON BETTER PROMISES” at the time Jeremiah gave the prophecy. In other words, the New Covenant is established upon better promises than the Old Covenant was. It most certainly does not say the New Covenant was put into effect or “established” by Christ for this church age. The writer to the Hebrews quotes the whole of the prophecy. The People of the Covenant, the Time of the Covenant, and the Results of the Covenant all remain the same—they have nothing to do with the church of Jesus Christ today.

Some have argued, “Does not Hebrews 9:15-20 say that Christ is ‘the Mediator of the New Covenant’” and that it goes into “force after men are dead”? Yes, it does say this. However, it does not say that the New Covenant has NOW gone into force! The specifics of the New Covenant tell us when it will go into effect—after Israel’s restoration. The passage is simply saying Christ’s death is the basis for the New Covenant being put into effect. Christ’s shed blood is the blood of that Covenant. However, the specific time when it will become operative is yet in the future, awaiting Israel’s deliverance. (See also Hebrews 10:16-18.)

The apostle Paul tells us specifically and precisely WHEN the Covenant goes into effect as it relates to this age in Romans 11:25-27—

“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has

happened to Israel UNTIL the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written (Isa. 59:20,21):

*“The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away  
ungodliness from Jacob; ‘For this is My **Covenant** with them,  
WHEN I take away their sins.’”*

Therefore, we now have double confirmation as to just exactly when the New Covenant goes into effect. It goes into effect AFTER God has completed the out-calling of Gentiles for this age and WHEN God turns away the sins of national Israel! (Interestingly enough, the spiritual salvation blessings for Gentiles have come under the terms of the Abrahamic Covenant—see Galatians 3:6-18 and Romans 4:16-25.)

### ***What about II Cor. 3:1-18?***

It is generally taught that since Paul says he is an “able minister of the New Covenant” that would mean that the New Covenant is in effect today! Yes, Paul does say this, but of course, this conclusion does not necessarily follow. Paul also understood and could effectively teach the Law (I Tim. 1:7-9) but that did not mean that the Law was now in effect for the Gentiles, because it absolutely was not.

It was important that the apostle Paul received the revelation about the last Passover Supper Christ had with the other apostles and about the New Covenant promises. Paul received this revelation directly from Jesus Christ. This in no way, shape or form changes the nature of the New Covenant. The New Covenant documents, such as Jeremiah 31:31-34, Rom. 11:25-27, etc., remain unchanged. The whole context of II Cor. 3 is Paul’s contrast of the past ministration of the Law with the present ministration of the Spirit. Now the New Covenant also contained promises about an outpouring of the Holy Spirit—Ezek. 36:26,27; Joel 2:28, etc. Therefore, the New Covenant lends itself to the contrast that Paul is using. Paul says in II Cor. 3:6 that they are “ministers of the New Covenant—NOT of the LETTER but of the SPIRIT.” Then Paul goes on to enlarge upon the present “Ministration of the Spirit” in contrast to the letter of the Law. The present “ministration of the Spirit” has similarities, yet is an entirely different outpouring of the Holy Spirit than what will take place under the New Covenant.

What Paul is doing may be likened to what Peter did on Pentecost when he likened Joel’s prophecy to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. The only similarity between Joel’s prophecy and what happened at Pentecost was the personality of the Holy Spirit—“this is that Spirit spoken of by Joel.” However, what happens in Joel’s prophecy is not what happened on Pentecost and vice versa. The same is true with Paul’s statement here in II Corinthians 3. The fact that Paul uses the New Covenant as an illustration of the present ministry of the Spirit does not mean that the New Covenant is now in effect.

Paul would state before the last gathering of Jews he met when he came to Rome, “For the hope of Israel am I bound with this chain.” That hope is the New Covenant Kingdom hope which is peculiar to the nation of Israel and is vouched for in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this regard Paul was an able minister of the New Covenant. However, as we all know, this was not the primary calling of the apostle Paul. He was specifically called to go to the Gentile peoples (Rom. 11:13; 15:15,16; Gal. 1:16;

2:7-9; Eph. 3:1, 8; I Tim. 2:7, etc., etc., etc.). And the New Covenant is not specifically for the Gentile peoples. It has long been stated, “The New Covenant is for the same people who had the Old Covenant.” The Gentiles never had an “Old Covenant” and therefore, they do not have “The New Covenant.”

### *Confusion About The Supper*

It is rather humorous sometimes to witness, or even to read, of the vast array of ideas about how to hold and observe the modern version of “The Lord’s Supper.” I will not include in this the sophisticated routines practiced by the various ornate Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Russian Catholic, Anglican, etc., churches. Those are so encumbered with pure paganism that there is absolutely no recognition of Biblical Christianity about them. However, among Protestants there is some attempt to restore a Biblical framework about the observances. Even there the variations are enormous. Among the more conscientious Protestants there is a more dedicated attempt. Nevertheless, sometimes even the most dedicated recognize there are apparent allowances that must exist in this celebration. For instance an editor of the “Berean Searchlight” openly writes that Christ has allowed a variety of ways to celebrate the Supper. He pointed out that Christ never stated “how often” it was to be done. Nor did He tell us specifically what time of day it was to be done. Or for that matter, Christ did not specifically say it was only to be done on the first day of the week. Furthermore, it was never specifically stated whether to use one cup or many; one loaf of bread, or just crackers; real wine or grape juice, etc., etc., etc. And so it follows from church to church.

I can assure you that all this obvious confusion bears the ugly fruit of not only further division among Christians, but of ugly superficiality and hypocrisy in worship. I remember, myself, as a young person being in the kitchen of a church after Holy Communion services and drinking the rest of the grape juice from the tumblers that were not used. No one was looking, but I wondered if God would condemn me for doing this. I found out later that my wife had done the very same thing in her youth. Obviously, both of us liked grape juice and hated to see it thrown away.

I have personally witnessed some embarrassing scenes in this so-called Holy Supper celebration. One time, during a “One Cup” celebration a young lady ran for the door and before it could be closed she could be heard vomiting. Needless to say, it was difficult for the rest inside to concentrate. Another dear Christian lady I knew was, in her younger years, highly regarded as a spiritual young lady who attended church, arriving early and sitting right in front by the aisle every Sunday morning. Years later she explained that it was not her spirituality that made her do this, but rather the thought of not wanting to get that “cup” after it had been passed to some of the snaggle-toothed mouths in that assembly. They took the Supper every Sunday morning and she made sure she was first. On another occasion I witnessed a young man tear off a piece of bread and then accidentally drop the loaf that was being passed around. He sat there absolutely petrified and was finally told to pick it up and pass it on—so he did—and promptly buried his head in shame. I also remember the testimony of another brother who said he got saved during a Communion service on a military base when he was in the army. He explained that it wasn’t any beauty in the services, but rather the fear of eternal condemnation if he ate that bread with sin in his life—so he promptly called upon the

Lord for salvation in sincerity just before the crackers and grape juice were handed to him. You can rest assured that this is not the normal way the churches preach the gospel.

A very good friend of mine tells the story of being raised in a Catholic orphanage. He and some other boys became mischievous toward a certain priest who was easily susceptible to alcohol. They decided that whichever of them was assigned the job of pouring the wine into the chalice of that particular priest during the early morning Mass would not stop pouring until that chalice was brimful. My friend got the station as an altar boy to pour the wine. When the time came to pour he didn't stop with just a little. The priest kept pushing with the chalice on the bottle to signal for him to stop. Instead he filled it full with an innocent look on his face. The chalice that is used in the Mass is actually huge. Once the wine is consecrated the priest has to drink it all. By the time that priest had gotten through three Masses that morning he was hardly able to stand on his feet and was humiliated. Needless to say, my friend was disciplined for the deed. However, the fun they had was worth it. Of course, you would think that according to Roman Catholic doctrine, once the wine was changed into the blood of Christ and only existed under "the appearance" of wine, it would not have had that effect upon the priest. Perhaps the priest should have explained to the congregation that since he had drunk the consecrated wine he was only under "the appearance" of being inebriated. No doubt, with a "tipsy" doctrine you get a "tipsy" priest.

### *Specific Instructions About The Supper*

Actually, all this is only further proof that the Lord's Supper is not for the church at all. The very fact that there are not specific instructions in the Gospels, nor the book of Acts, nor in the Epistles, as to the specific way it must be observed indicates it is not specifically for us today. In the Bible (the Greek Scriptures) the Supper is eaten in sincere dedication and form—but *that form is never expressly spelled out for the church*. The three Synoptic Gospels simply tell us they prepared the Passover Supper. The Gospel of John, which reveals the unique spirituality of the coming age, says nothing about the Supper, other than the truths Christ gave after the Supper was over. The apostle Paul simply gives the same facts about the Supper that Christ ate the night of His betrayal, and told the carnal Corinthians that they were not to be eating it when the whole church was gathered together to eat a regular fellowship dinner.

In actuality there was nothing lacking in the instructions concerning the observance of the Lord's Supper. When we realize that the Lord's Supper was the Passover Supper, all the question marks are erased. The details are very plainly given in the Hebrew Scriptures. That is why there are no other details needed to be given in the Greek Scriptures. It was a full-scale supper feast and all the particulars were clearly spelled out in the Law. The food ingredients were clearly given—roast lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and wine with all the feasts. The day is clearly specified—at the close of the fourteenth day of Nisan. It is done once a year, and is always an evening meal. It is never a congregational celebration, but always one or more households eat together. No Gentiles were to partake of it unless they had converted and become proselytes to Judaism, etc., etc. There was nothing left to anyone's imagination. There was no hint that the participants could do it just anyway they wanted.

No wonder in Christendom they don't know how to do it!!! No wonder, in Paul's epistles there is no explanation of how the Gentiles were to observe it. In fact, the only mention Paul makes, as I stated earlier, is a warning that it should not be done in a general gathering of all the saints.

### ***“Breaking Bread”***

Many sincere Christians have been taught that wherever you see the expression “breaking bread,” as used in the Greek Scriptures, you have the indicator that the early Christians went on observing the Lord's Supper on various and numerous occasions. This argument is based on the fact that at the last Supper the expression is used that Christ “broke bread” and gave it to the disciples (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22 & Luke 22:19).

Of course, most of these teachers don't tell you that this expression was probably used at many, if not all, the meals they ate (Matt. 14:19; 15:36; Mark 6:41; 8:6, 19, 20; Luke 9:16). In addition, with a careful look at where the expression is used after Christ's resurrection it still meant the common meal and not a special “Lord's Supper” celebration. Christ was made known to two disciples when they sat down for the evening meal—see Luke 24:30 & 35. This had nothing whatsoever to do with observing the “Lord's Supper.” Christ talked further with the apostles early one morning on the shore of Galilee over a breakfast of “bread and fish”—see John 21:13.

The early Jewish believers ate many common meals together—see Acts 2:42 (“breaking bread”) with verse 46 (“breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart”). Traditional Christendom stretches its imagination to the maximum in pretending this has reference to the early church observing the “Lord's Supper.” This is pure religious imagination. It is simply saying that common meals were eaten together from house to house.

The saints at Troas gathered on the first day of the week to “break bread” and then listen to Paul—see Acts 20:7. Again the ritualists love to assume this was an observance of the “Lord's Supper.” However, there is no indication whatsoever that this is anything other than a common meal together in the evening preceding Paul's message. In fact, they “broke bread” a *second time* just after midnight—verse 11. In a similar way, the apostle Paul “broke bread” on behalf of the occupants of a whole ship that was about to be destroyed on an island reef—Acts 27:33-38. This was to encourage and strengthen them for their survival. Obviously he is not observing the Lord's Supper with them.

### ***What About “The Cup of Blessing”—I Cor. 10:15-22 ??***

The context of this passage is the subject of whether or not the Corinthians should be taking the liberty to eat foods sacrificed to idols. That context begins with the first verse of chapter 8 and ends in chapter 10, verse 33. In chapter eight Paul explains the harmful effect this could have on those looking on who countenance idolatry. In chapter nine Paul gives his own example of giving up his own rights by doing what is constructive and helpful for others. Then in chapter 10:1-14 Paul gives the example of Israel's separation to God in their wilderness journey, and God's discipline of those who turned back to idolatry. In verses 15-22 Paul makes the application to the saints as to why

they should not provoke the Lord by eating things sacrificed to idols. Then in verses 23-33 Paul concludes the subject of why they should not be eating meats sacrificed to pagan gods. The passage in question reads (verses 15-22 in three sections)—

1. (vs: 15-17) *“I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.*
2. (vs: 18-20) *“Observe Israel after the flesh; are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What am I saying then? That the idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.*
3. (vs:21-22) *“You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s table and the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?”*

Many times Roman Catholics will glibly quote the words of Christ “Except you eat My flesh and drink My blood you have no life in you” (John 6:53), as if Christ is talking about physically eating their Holy Mass. Most Evangelical Christians realize Christ’s words were to be understood spiritually in the context. Yet, these same Christians will turn around and glibly quote the words of Paul “The cup of blessing...and the bread we break...is it not the communion of the blood and body of Christ,” as if Paul is saying the fellowship of Christ’s body and blood is in the physical eating and drinking of two consecrated elements of food. Should they not look more carefully at the context?

The proper understanding of the passage is the following: In the first section, verses 15-17, Paul obviously is using *spiritual language*. There are several reasons why we know this. 1) Paul prefaces his remarks by the words, “I speak as to *wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.*” In other words this will take *spiritual discretion*. 2) In verse 18 Paul switches back to the physical—“Observe Israel after the flesh...” That means what he stated earlier is spiritual and not physical. 3) The bread is clearly not physical, literal bread, but plainly said to be the “*one body*” of Christ. 4) “All who partake” are not literally eating physical bread. The partakers are the whole church and there is only one (loaf of) bread. *In fellowship* they are all partakers of *one another in Christ’s body*. 5) In chapter 5 of I Corinthians we are told by Paul that the church has a “Passover.” Everyone realizes this is *spiritual* truth. That Passover is not a woolly lamb, rather it is Jesus Christ. The church observes the feast *spiritually* not physically—“with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (5:7, 8). Just as we have a spiritual “Passover” and spiritual “unleavened bread,” so it is here in chapter 10 we have a spiritual “cup” and a spiritual “bread.” 6) the words can also be read in reverse order so as to get their spiritual meaning. “*The communion (fellowship) of the body of Christ—is the bread we break.*” “*The communion (fellowship) of the blood of Christ—is the cup we drink.*”

In conclusion, as to this first section it can be said, whereas “Israel after the flesh” had physical cups that they customarily blessed at all their dinners and feasts, the church of Jesus Christ has a spiritual cup and bread that they are thankful for (John

6:35,41,48,51,53-56). When Christ ate the last “Passover Supper” with His disciples and blessed the physical wine and the physical bread, this also represented “Israel after the flesh.” The apostle Paul says (II Cor. 5:16) that the first generation of Jewish believers had known Christ “after the flesh.” However, Paul adds, “Yet now we know Him thus no longer.” In other words, now we know Christ spiritually. The church today characteristically worships God “in Spirit, rejoices in Christ Jesus, and has no confidence in the flesh!” (Philip. 3:3).

### ***What About “The Lord’s Table”—(verses 18-22) ??***

In the second section (verses 18-20) we learn, that in the sacrificial system, those who offer the animals and eat of that sacrificial meat are actually identifying with the particular god represented by the *sacrificial altar*. In the case of Israel’s sacrifices the *altar* represented Jehovah God, whereas with the pagan deities the *altars* are actually representing demon worship. Obviously, God would not want believers identifying with the demonic worship of the pagans by eating of their sacrificial meats.

As to the last section Paul brings out the total inconsistency and incompatibility of association with the two contradictory systems that are anathema to each other. On the one hand, believers today who partake of the “cup of the Lord” (*spiritual*, verses 15-17) cannot partake of that which is spiritually demonic. In a similar way, “Israel after the flesh” cannot partake of their own physical “altar” (verses 18-20) called here the “*table of the Lord*” and at the same time partake of the “demons,” meaning the altar of demons. Please remember the “altar” of sacrifice is plainly called “the table of the LORD” in Mal. 1:7 & 12—“You offer defiled food on My altar, but say, ‘In what way have we defiled You?’ By saying, ‘The table of the LORD is contemptible.’” “But you profain it, in that you say, ‘The table of the LORD is defiled.’” In Malachi the children of Israel made the “table of the LORD” contemptible by offering the lame and defiled animals on the altar. Thus “*the table of the Lord*” is not some so-called “Holy Communion table,” but rather the *sacrificial altar* in Israel’s sacrificial system.

Please remember that we are told in Hebrews 13:10, “*We have **an altar** (table of the Lord) from which those who served the tabernacle have no right to eat.*” This is the book that liberates the Jewish believers from the physical Law system. So, both saved Jews and Gentiles in the church today have a spiritual Passover, a spiritual Bread, a spiritual cup, and a spiritual altar, or “table of the Lord,” which will be real and enduring. Whereas, the “table” under the Law system had “*become obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away*” (Heb. 8:13).

Let us remember that “The Kingdom of God (today) is NOT meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy IN THE HOLY SPIRIT” (Romans 14:17).

The reason the Gospel of John said nothing about the physical Lord’s Supper—other than “Supper being ended” (John 13:2)—was because John is properly called “The Spiritual Gospel.” Therefore it had no place for the ritual. In addition John also recorded the words of Christ, “True worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth” (John 4:23). In addition we eat Christ’s body and drink His blood spiritually—John 6:63.

In conclusion, the cup of blessing and the bread of verses 15-17 are spiritual and the “table of the Lord” (verses 21 & 22) is the sacrificial altar.

### ***In Summary Conclusion—Three Passovers***

There are basically three Passovers revealed in the Scriptures. The first Passover Supper was when Israel was delivered out of Egyptian bondage. The second Passover is a spiritual one, which is recognized in this present Age of Grace, where Christ dies as the antitypical Passover Lamb for the sins of mankind. We keep that feast with “sincerity and truth,” not with physical elements of bread and wine. The third Passover is yet to come, when God will deliver Israel in the Kingdom and establish the New Covenant.

Years ago brother Maurice M. Johnson wrote a beautiful and excellent study on “The Three Passovers and The Lord’s Supper.” I drew up a chart for that study which I am also including in this paper. It can be folded together in such a way as to see the parenthetical nature of the present Church Age. On the night of Christ’s betrayal when He took the Last Supper, He signified that His death was the basis not only for the remission of sins but also as the basis for the New Covenant being established. That Passover Supper He ate will have its fulfillment in the Kingdom of God—that is the purpose of the Lord’s Supper—it points to the future Millennial Kingdom of God.

### ***The Future Fulfillment***

An interesting story in the book of Genesis about a mysterious man named Melchizedek is enlarged upon by the writer of the book of Hebrews (the apostle Paul—Heb. 5:6-11; 7:1-10). The Messiah would be a priest after the order of Melchizedek according to Psalms 110:4. It has sometimes been stated by the traditionalists who idolize the Supper, that just as Melchizedek came out to meet Abraham with “bread and wine,” (Genesis 14:18) so the Lord Jesus Christ as the antitypical Melchizedek brings forth the “bread and the wine” before the church. Maurice M. Johnson responded to that by pointing out—“Just remember, Melchizedek did not come out to meet Abraham until after ‘the slaughter of the kings’ (Gen. 14:17).” Indeed, that is when our Lord Jesus Christ will be the antitypical Priest King, who will once again bring forth the bread and the wine for the descendants of Abraham, after He has defeated all His enemies at the beginning of the Kingdom.

Indeed, the modern Jewish people have already been taught by their sages that the only event in history that will be more dynamic than the Passover Exodus out of Egypt, when “a loosely related ethnic group of slaves” were transformed into “a new nation,” will be the prophetically promised “Final Redemption.” This prophetic redemption will “overshadow” everything—it will virtually “mark the end of history”—it will be “The coming of the Messiah” (Jerusalem Post, *From Exodus to Final Redemption*, by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, March 30-April 5, 2007). The Jewish teachers recognize that the many prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures about this future greater Passover all point to their expectation of the true Messiah coming at that Passover time. No doubt their amazement will be very sober when they see the one whom they pierced two thousands years ago outside the walls of Jerusalem—Zechariah 12:10-14. They will mourn “as for their firstborn son” (verse 10).

### *Proclaiming Christ In Us*

In the meantime the church of our Lord Jesus Christ is really not concerned with the *ritual showing forth of the death of Christ*—“As often (temporarily, until the Law in practice is set aside, and then renewed again in the Tribulation) as you (Jewish believers) eat this bread and drink this cup, you *proclaim* (Greek, *katangelo*—to proclaim or shewforth) the Lord’s death *till He comes* (in the Kingdom)” (I Cor. 11:26). Rather, the “new creation (i.e., the church wherein is neither Jew nor Gentile)” has the privilege expressed in Colossians 1:27 & 28, “To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is *Christ in you, the hope of glory (the Rapture)*—Whom we *proclaim* (Greek, *katangelo*—to proclaim or shewforth).”

In contrast to the hope of Israel, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ primarily has the privilege of “proclaiming” that Jesus Christ is alive and soon returning for us! Besides, as we have said before, Christ is not eating the Supper now. He will not be doing it until He returns to set up His Kingdom. Obviously, “the body of Christ” should not be doing something “the Head” is not doing!

In addition, the inspired apostle Paul has clearly enunciated the admonition to all saints today, “*So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ*” (Colossians 2:16,17). Amen! And Amen!

THE END

