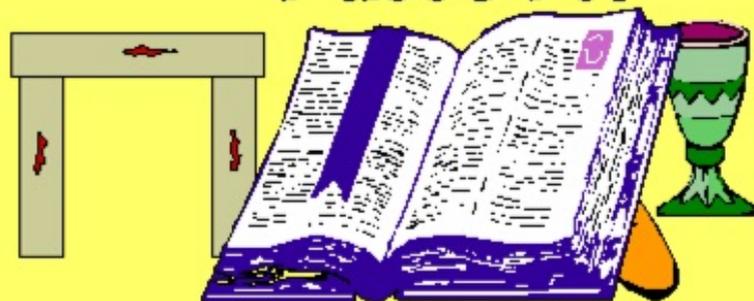


The Christian's "Passover"



by

John T. Polk II

The Christian "Passover"

Every first day of the week, Christians observe the Lord's Supper. Amidst much confusion on the subject, a close study of the Bible removes all doubt about ***its essence, elements, and essentiality***. The New Testament accounts of where Jesus initiated this act of worship are in **Matthew 26:17-30**; **Mark 14:12-26**; and **Luke 22:7-20**.

Its Essence

Its essence begins by noticing that the 1st Passover was given only to Israelites for their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage (**Exodus 12:1-51**). From the 2nd Passover (**Numbers 9:1-14**) till the last, it was an annual memorial of that deliverance (**Exodus 12:14, 24-27**). Jesus observed this Jewish Passover for its last time before His death, but converted the elements into His Supper to be observed after His death. Jesus Christ lived under, and died to remove, the Law of Moses (**Galatians 4:4-5**; **Matthew 5:17-18**; **Luke 24:44-49**; **Colossians 2:3-17**).

Its Elements

The elements of the Passover were designed to remind Israelites of their hurried release from Egypt ([Exodus 12:5-13](#)), so:

(1) the lamb was "roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails" and what was not eaten by morning was burned up ([Exodus 12:8-10](#)). It was a total sacrifice of the lamb;

(2) Their houses were to be purged of **leaven** (i.e. "yeast") a week before, and a week after they ate unleavened bread with the Passover lamb ([Exodus 12:17-20](#)). The "Feast of Unleavened" Bread" was called "Passover" in Jesus' day ([Luke 22:1](#));

(3) The contents of "**the cup**" in all Gospel accounts is "fruit of the vine" ([Matthew 26:29](#); [Mark 14:25](#); [Luke 22:18](#)). The word "wine" (Greek, **oinos**) may refer either to fermented ([Genesis 9:21](#); [Isaiah 28:7-8](#)), or unfermented ([Isaiah 65:8](#)) juice. However, Jesus' expression that is quoted by the Gospel writers leaves no doubt as to the freshness of the liquid. Since no leaven was in a house where Passover was observed, *there could have been no*

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fermented wine on the Passover table. Jesus took the elements from Passover and made the unleavened bread represent His body that was sacrificed on the cross (**Luke 22:19**), and the unleavened "fruit of the vine" represent His blood "of the New Covenant" which was "shed for many for the remission of sins" (**Matthew 26:28**). Twisting Scriptures to justify leavened (fermented) grape juice would of necessity permit the use of leavened (risen) bread. Both the intent and picture of the original Passover elements would thus be ruined.

Its Essentiality

Its essentiality is seen in the fact that Jesus Christ is the Passover sacrificed for Christians (**I Corinthians 5:7**), and His Supper is a weekly memorial to "proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (**I Corinthians 11:25-26; Luke 22:19**). But nowhere does the Bible teach that the elements become His actual body and blood! Under Moses, Pentecost was always "the day after the seventh Sabbath" (**Leviticus 23:15-16**), or the first day of a week (**Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1**).

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The first day of the week was given new significance when Jesus was raised from the dead, never to die again ([Matthew 28:1-6](#); [Mark 16:1-6](#); [Luke 24:1-8](#); [John 20:1-8](#); [Romans 1:4](#); [6:9](#)). From [Acts 2](#) onward, followers of Christ keep the Lord's Supper in their gathering on the first day of the week. The resurrected Jesus met with His disciples on that same "first day of the week" ([John 20:19](#)); those obedient to the first preaching of the completed Gospel on Pentecost kept His Supper on the first day of the week ([Acts 2:42](#) - "the breaking of the bread"); and the Apostle Paul confirmed the day of the week with his presence in Troas ([Acts 20:7](#)), and commanded those present to also "give" in those weekly meetings ([I Corinthians 16:1-2](#)).

This Christian practice is sometimes referred to as the:

(1) "Eucharist" because the Greek word (***eucharisteo***) is translated "blessing, giving thanks," which Jesus did ([Matthew 26:26-27](#); [Mark 14:22-23](#); [Luke 22:17, 19](#)). However, since Christians must "give thanks" in everything" ([Colossians 3:17](#); [I Thessalonians 5:18](#); [Ephesians 5:19-20](#)), one should

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not leave the impression that this act of worship is the only giving of thanks by calling it "**The** Eucharist;"

(2) "**Lord's Supper**" in I Corinthians 11:20 because at the last Passover "supper" (John 21:20), Jesus made the elements entirely focus on His body and blood in death (I Corinthians 11:23-26). It is a symbolic occasion, and should not be turned into a full repast as some of the Corinthians had done (I Corinthians 11:22-22)

(3) "**Communion**" in I Corinthians 10:16 where the term (Greek, *koinonia*) means "fellowship, joint participation." This is designed for those who "come together in one place" (I Corinthians 11:17-20, 33), and *not* for the willful absenters, or those hindered beyond their means to attend. Presence is required, and proxy is not accepted. The Lord's Supper is a shared act of worship that cannot be conducted through means of computer, telephone, or video.

According to I Corinthians 11:17-34, the church in Corinth had voided the meaning of the Lord's Supper by its practice.

What hinders one's observance
of the Lord's Supper?

(1) Divisions. In **I Corinthians 11**, although they came together in one place (**verse 20**), "as a church" (**verse 18**) it was to promote their own "division" (Greek, ***schism***), for they showed no courtesy to others gathering in the same place (**verses 21-22**). Each "faction" (Greek, ***heresy***) had made a common meal out of the Lord's Supper, providing for its own group alone.

This assembling was "not for the better but for the worse" (**verse 17**), because Christians felt justified in their own faction.

Those Sectarians today who observe this Supper by their own rules are "seeking to establish their own righteousness, [and, jtpII] have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (**Romans 10:3**) on this subject. There is *no sect, faction or denomination* that is justifiable by the Lord's Supper! Those supporting a "Soundness" Sect within the churches of Christ are ignorant of the doctrinal problems that plagued the

church of God at Corinth, as revealed in I Corinthians. They had all been "baptized into one body" ([Acts 18:8](#); [I Corinthians 12:13](#)), so their saved state was unquestioned ([I Corinthians 1:2, 9](#)), but their doctrinal condition left much to be desired. *No individual, and no other church, was authorized to withdraw fellowship from them*, instead, Paul corrected their doctrine that they might observe the Lord's Supper properly;

(2) Lack of salvation. Those who think themselves saved before baptism are not in "fellowship" with Christ and cannot remind themselves of a salvation through His death they have never entered! Repentance and baptism, and the blood of Christ, are "for the remission of sins" ([Acts 2:38](#); [Matthew 26:28](#)), and not "because my sins are already forgiven." Baptism is how and when a sinner becomes "united together [with Christ, jtpII] in the likeness of His death" ([Romans 6:4-5](#)). Thus when the "sinner's prayer" proclaims salvation has occurred before and without baptism, then the sinner proclaims his/her own salvation without entering into Jesus' death! The "sinner's prayer" is a man-made dogma which has kept many sinners from the blood of Jesus Christ, and who, thus, are yet in their sins. Saul of Tarsus (later called

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Paul, the Apostle) obeyed the baptism that washed away his sins (Acts 22:16; 9:18) which he then taught was the means of receiving the benefits of the blood of Jesus Christ. Passover only had meaning for Israelites who were "baptized into Moses" (I Corinthians 10:1-2), and Communion is meaningful only for those whose baptism was "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38, 42);

(3) Willful rejection of Bible truth. Those who reject the specified baptism, elements of the Lord's Supper, or the day of its observance, partake "in an unworthy manner" and are "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (I Corinthians 11:27-30);

(4) Millennialism. Since Jesus taught that His Supper would be observed "in the kingdom of God" (Mark 14:25), then those who teach that Jesus failed to establish His kingdom have never communed with Him! Only those who accept the Bible teaching that Jesus' Kingdom was started in the First Century can observe it (Matthew 12:28; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:3; 8:12; 14:21-22).

(5) A "Seder" service is honoring Moses' law above the sacrifice of Jesus Christ! It is performed after

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the manner of, with the explanation of, and according to the day of the Jewish Passover, but NOT according to the New Testament. It thus ignores Jesus Christ and His teaching about the "new covenant" and new "Passover."

(6) Changing the times or elements.

Observance of the Lord's Supper infrequently, inadequately, or only according to human rules, nullifies any spiritual benefit. Adding elements, substituting elements, changing days of observance, making it quarterly/annually or anything other than a weekly observance disregards entirely the purpose and meaning for a Christian.

The Lord's Supper should be a period of self-examination for each one who participates. "If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged" (I Corinthians 11:31-32). Christians must examine themselves before the Lord, re-focusing on His sacrifice every 1st day of every week, in order to not be condemned with the world.

-----**John T. Polk II**

All Scriptures and comments, unless otherwise noted, are based on the New King James Version.

**Additional Bible study materials are available at:
www.johntpolktwo.net.**

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