

Lord's Supper

The Lamb's High Feast

A Bible Study Course for Adults

by
Robert J. Koester

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Lesson One

Old Testament Background, New Testament Fulfillment

(*Lord's Supper*, pages 7-33)

Goals

1. To understand the Old Testament context in which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper.
2. To look carefully at the four accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper.
3. To better appreciate how the Lord's Supper is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.
4. To grow to love our Lord more for giving us this rich blessing.

Introduction

Think about your church's Communion service. What does the congregation do during the distribution of the Lord's Supper? What does the pastor do? (You may want to use your hymnals for this introduction.)

Today we will think about how Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. We will look closely at the Old Testament background of the Lord's Supper and the accounts of its institution.

Old Testament Background

Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as he was celebrating the Passover. The heart of the Passover meal is the Passover lamb, along with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. As the Jewish Passover meal developed over time, wine was used, and the cup was passed around several times for all to drink.

Read the Passover account. Note especially what the Passover lamb and the unleavened bread symbolized. If there is time, read Exodus 12:1-30. Otherwise, read the verses below.

Exodus 12:1-3,5,7,8,11-14,28-30 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, ²"This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. ³Tell the whole community of Israel that on the tenth day of this month each man is to take a lamb for his family, one for each household. ⁵The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. ⁷Then they are to take some of the blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses where they eat the

lamb. ⁸That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. ¹¹This is how you are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's Passover. ¹²On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. ¹³The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. ¹⁴This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance.” ²⁸The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron. ²⁹At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. ³⁰Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.

- What was the Passover lamb used for? Why did the Israelites use unleavened bread? Why did they eat bitter herbs?

The Passover was only one sacrifice among many. Read Leviticus 1:1-9.

Leviticus 1:1-9 The LORD called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting. He said, “Speak to the Israelites and say to them: ‘When any of you brings an offering to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock. If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. He must present it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting so that it will be acceptable to the LORD. He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. He is to slaughter the young bull before the LORD, and then Aaron’s sons the priests shall bring the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He is to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. The sons of Aaron the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. Then Aaron’s sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the burning wood that is on the altar. He is to wash the inner parts and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.’”

There were various steps in making an offering.

1. An offering had to be brought to the tabernacle and _____ at the entrance to the tabernacle. (Consecration)
2. _____ were transferred from the one making the offering to the animal being offered. (Imputation of sins)

3. The sacrifice was put to death so that _____ could live. (Life for death)
4. The _____ was sprinkled against the altar, covering over the sins of the one making the sacrifice.
5. The person who offered the sacrifice was dismissed in _____.

In some sacrifices, the entire animal was burned up. In other sacrifices, like the Passover, only certain parts of the sacrifice were burned. The Israelites ate the rest of the sacrifice, joining with the Lord in a fellowship meal. The Lord's Supper is such a meal. There, in fellowship with the Lord, we eat and drink the sacrifice given for us by Jesus.

New Testament Fulfillment

In this section we will look at the institution of the Lord's Supper as recorded by three of the gospel writers and by Paul in 1 Corinthians 11.

Read each account. (If time is short, read the verses in bold type.) As you read, ask yourself, "In what ways are the accounts, especially the words of institution, the same? In what ways are they different? Do the differences change the meaning of the Lord's Supper in any way?"

Matthew 26:17-30 *On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'* So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?" Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you." **While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."** When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mark 14:12-26 *On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters,*

'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me." They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?" "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God." When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Luke 22:14-20 *When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."*

1 Corinthians 11:20-29 *When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not! For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: **The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.***

- Note the similarities and differences between the accounts.

- Look at the statements together. What do we learn about the bread that Jesus gave to his disciples? What do we learn about the wine? What do we learn about the purpose of the Lord's Supper?

Jesus transformed the Old Testament Passover into a glorious meal for New Testament Christians!

During the Week

1. Review this lesson by reading the People's Bible Teachings book *Lord's Supper*, the introduction and chapter 1.

Lesson Two

Why Come to the Lord's Supper?

(*Lord's Supper*, pages 35-49)

Goals

1. To more closely examine the words of institution.
2. To appreciate what a great blessing God has given us in the Lord's Supper.
3. To find encouragement to come to the Lord's Supper often.
4. To help others better understand the Lord's Supper.

Introduction

What goes through your mind as you come forward to the Lord's Supper? What goes through your mind as you come away from the Lord's Supper? Use these questions to begin thinking about the theme of our study, "Why come to the Lord's Supper?"

Eat—Drink

If our nation's president invited you to his home for a feast, you would consider it a great honor. The greatest ruler of all, God himself, has done just that. He has invited us to an ongoing feast.

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

- In these verses, what does Jesus tell us to do?

- In these verses, what does Jesus say about how often we should do this?

One reason we go to the Lord's Supper is because our Lord has invited us to do so.

My Body—My Blood

Matthew 26:26-28 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

- All four accounts of the Lord's Supper record Jesus calling the bread his body and the wine his blood. What great blessings do we receive when we eat the bread and drink of the cup at the Lord's Supper?

Read Luther's statement on what is present at the Lord's Supper: “It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ for us Christians to eat and to drink” (The Institution of Holy Communion). Luther uses the word *under* to express the relationship between the bread and wine and the body and blood.

It is helpful to note the contrasting teachings about what is present in the Lord's Supper.

Evangelical/Reformed Churches—The churches today that stem from the Reformed branch of the Reformation (including most modern Evangelicals and Pentecostals) do not believe that Jesus' body and blood are present in the Supper. They believe that Jesus' body is in heaven, so it cannot be present on earth. They ignore the passages that tell us that Jesus' body and blood are in the Lord's Supper. They change the meaning of the word *is* and say it means “represent.” They speak about a spiritual eating and drinking and stress the “memorial meal” aspect of the Lord's Supper.

Roman Catholic Church—Traditional Roman Catholics believe that the bread and wine change into the body and blood of Christ, and so the bread and wine are not present. They stress their belief that the Roman Catholic priest performs an “unbloody” sacrifice. They ignore the Bible passages that talk about our eating the bread and drinking the wine in the Lord's Supper.

Lutheran Churches—Following Luther's lead, based on Scripture, Lutheran churches teach that bread and wine, body and blood are present in the Lord's Supper. In this way we stress that this is a meal in which we eat and drink the sacrifice Jesus offered for us, namely, his body and blood.

We come to the Lord's Supper in order to receive Jesus' body and blood.

The New Covenant

Genesis 3:14,15 So the LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

- Adam and Eve sinned and destroyed the bond of love and fellowship they had with the Lord. What promise (covenant) did God establish with Adam and Eve?
- How did God reestablish this bond?

Exodus 19:4-6 *“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”*

- God gave his Old Testament people a covenant distinct from the covenant he had made with Adam and Eve. Without revoking his first covenant, he added another covenant under which they were required to live. What covenant does the Lord refer to in these verses?

Isaiah 42:5-7 *This is what God the LORD says—he who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it, who gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it: “I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.”*

- Who is the covenant God will make with all people?

Isaiah 54:8-10 *“In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,” says the LORD your Redeemer. “To me this is like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth. So now I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.*

Jeremiah 31:31-34 *“The time is coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother,*

saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

- What is the covenant God promised to make with Israel? Why did the old covenant have to be replaced?

Matthew 26:27,28 "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Mark 14:23,24 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many."

Luke 22:20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

1 Corinthians 11:25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

- All four accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper talk about the new covenant. Jesus expressed himself in different ways, but what do they all say we receive in the Lord's Supper?

The new covenant was established by Jesus' _____.

Because Jesus sacrificed himself, God no longer blesses us through the law (which we cannot keep) but through the _____.

In the Lord's Supper, because we are eating and drinking Jesus' body and blood, we know we have _____.

The cup, referring to the wine within it that the disciples drank, was called the _____.

Jesus' blood was poured out for "you," meaning all people, and for "many," used here not in a restrictive sense but to refer to the vast number of people in the world, all of whom Jesus _____.

We come to the Lord's Supper to receive the body and blood given and shed for us. His body and blood are the foundations on which God's new covenant is established with us, and they are the bases on which God can forgive us. Through Jesus' body and blood we receive the forgiveness of our sins and are made heirs of all his promises now and in eternity.

In Remembrance of Me

Matthew 26:29 "I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

- This was Jesus' last earthly meal with his disciples. What does Jesus want them to look forward to?

Luke 22:19 *He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

1 Corinthians 11:24,25 *When he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."*

- What does Jesus want us to do as we partake of the Lord's Supper?

We come to the Lord's Supper to remember his sacrifice and in anticipation of eternal life.

During the Week

1. Review this lesson by reading *Lord's Supper*, chapter 2.

Lesson Three

How Do We Celebrate the Lord's Supper?

(*Lord's Supper*, pages 51-66)

Goals

1. To understand how the Lord wants us to celebrate his Supper.
2. To grow to appreciate the freedom we have under the new covenant.
3. To help us appreciate the various parts of the order of service for the Lord's Supper.
4. To grow in knowing how to thank the Lord who has atoned for our sins.

Introduction

Pick a section (a chapter will do) in Exodus or Leviticus where God is giving the Israelites details for their worship life. After you have read that section, compare it with the accounts of the Lord's Supper. What main difference do you notice?

“Do This”

Jesus said to his disciples, “Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:25). Jesus is telling us that we are to observe what he did and repeat that every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Doing what he did makes the meal *his* Supper.

As we watch Jesus celebrate the first Lord's Supper, we see three basic things happening. The bread and wine are *consecrated*, that is, they are set apart for a special use. The bread/body and wine/blood are *distributed*. The communicants *receive* (eat and drink) what they are given.

Review the following verses. Tell how the three basic activities described above are present in the Lord's Supper.

Matthew 26:17-30 *On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating,*

he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me." They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely not I, Lord?" Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you." **While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."** When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mark 14:12-26 On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus' disciples asked him, "Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?" So he sent two of his disciples, telling them, "Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there." The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. While they were reclining at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me." They were saddened, and one by one they said to him, "Surely not I?" "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one who dips bread into the bowl with me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born." **While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. "I tell you the truth, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God."** When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Luke 22:14-20 When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God." **After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."**

1 Corinthians 11:20-29 *When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this? Certainly not! For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: **The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."** In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, **"This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."** For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

- What are the elements consecrated for sacred use? What role does the Word of God play in the Lord's Supper?

- At what point does the distribution take place?

- How is the reception of the Lord's Supper indicated?

- The Lord's Supper is a single action. No single part of the meal can stand alone from the others. The consecration and the eating and drinking must all take place for the meal to be the Lord's Supper. Perhaps the most obvious denial of this is how the Lord's Supper is conducted in the Catholic Church. What do you know of their practice?

The Cup for Which We Give Thanks

1 Corinthians 10:16 *Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?*

- What does Paul call the cup (the wine) in the Lord's Supper?

- We thank the Lord privately when we partake of the Lord's Supper. But we also do this publicly along with our fellow Christians. Look briefly at the Communion liturgy. How do we thank the Lord there for his body and blood?

During the Week

1. Review this lesson by reading *Lord's Supper*, chapter 3.

Lesson Four

The Lord's Supper Serves the Church

(*Lord's Supper*, pages 67-124)

Goals

1. To learn how the Lord's Supper serves God's church.
2. To study two sections of Scripture that help us better understand the use of the Lord's Supper.
3. To grow in our understanding of the serious nature of the Lord's Supper and how we should prepare to receive it.

Introduction

What sets the Christian church apart from the world?

Today we will examine two sections from Scripture that help us see how the Lord's Supper sets Christians apart from the world and serves to help us maintain our identity as redeemed children of God.

It Distinguishes the Christian Church from the World

1 Corinthians 10:14-22 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf. Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

The question had come up about eating food sacrificed to idols. Paul said that it was all right to eat such food. Idol worship was not involved in that practice (1 Corinthians 8). However, from what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10, some members of the Corinthian congregation were still involved with idol worship.

- What did Paul call the cup that the Corinthians drank in the Lord's Supper?
- What does he remind the Corinthians about how they should—and do!—think about the cup of thanksgiving?
- The Corinthians were not just drinking wine when they came to the Lord's Supper. They were also drinking the blood Jesus sacrificed for them. As Paul put it, they were participating in the blood of Christ. The same was true in regard to the body. What did this fact do to the Corinthians' relation to the world?
- Paul used the picture of Jesus breaking bread and distributing it among the disciples. They all ate from it. What did that do to their relation with one another? What does eating the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper do to us Christians?
- How does this truth guide our decision on who to allow to partake of the Lord's Supper with us?
- There is no sitting on the fence. What does Paul tell us we cannot do at the same time we eat and drink of the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper makes a distinction between the church and the world.

Leaven for a Troubled Congregation

1 Corinthians 11:17-32 In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. When you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, for as you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else. One remains hungry, another gets drunk. Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you for this?

Certainly not! For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

- In the early Christian church, believers would join in a meal of Christian love after the worship service. It was during that meal that they would celebrate the Lord's Supper. Describe what this meal had become in the Corinthian churches. What did this do to their celebration of the Lord's Supper?
- How did Paul deal with the errors in the Corinthian church?
- After the words of institution, Paul added, "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." How would this statement help correct the problems in Corinth?
- Paul continues his warnings in the next verses (the last paragraph of the Scripture passage quoted above). In this context, what does it mean to eat and drink the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner?
- Paul says that when the Corinthians thought of going to the Lord's Supper, they should examine themselves. What questions should they be asking?

- What happens when a person eats and drinks Christ's body and blood without understanding or believing that Christ's body and blood are present?
- In what sense should we "judge" ourselves before we come to the Lord's Supper?
- What does this section tell us about becoming thoroughly instructed in the Christian faith before we partake of the Lord's Supper?

"When the Lord gives us his body and blood to strengthen the bond of faith with him and all believers, his Supper serves its purpose" (*Lord's Supper*, page 117).

During the Week

1. Review this lesson by reading *Lord's Supper*, chapters 4 and 5.