

# DO THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the unique aspects of the Body of Christ, which we call the church are the ordinances or ceremonies the Lord has instructed us to observe. There are two primary observances we have been given. One is baptism, which is a one-time ceremony whereby a person publicly confesses his or her faith in Christ.

The other ordinance is somewhat different. It is the ceremony we call the Lord's Supper or Communion. And this observance is one that we are instructed to repeat over and over on a regular basis. It is to be repeated as a reminder of our Lord and His sacrifice.

Today we want to look at the history of this celebration - where it began, what it means and why we carry it on in our church.

### I. The Historical Background of the Lord's Supper

In order to see the history of the Communion celebration we must go back all the way to the book of Exodus and the Passover.

Background to this incident:

- Israelites in bondage 400 years in Egypt
- The Lord heard their cries - Ex. 3:7-10
- The plan to deliver them – Moses
- The plagues on Pharaoh and all of Egypt.

The final plague - death of the firstborn.

Instructions given in Ex. 12:1-13

3-4 - take a lamb per household

5-6 - kill the lamb

7 - spread the blood of the lamb on the doorposts of the house

8-9 - Cook and eat the lamb

10 - leave nothing over until the next day

11 - Be prepared for a journey

Vv. 12-13 give us the reason for the blood to be applied to the doorposts. It was to be a token of their faith and obedience to the Lord.

That night - angel of the Lord - death to the firstborn of every household. But every home where the blood was applied would be spared. He said, "The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you." - v. 13

And so it was that when the angel of the Lord passed through the land that the firstborn of every household died, from the least even to the household of Pharaoh.

### II. The Ceremonial Background to the Lord's Supper

In the verses immediately following (vv. 14-20) God gives some more instructions. The people were to remember this incident through an annual celebration. Each year the people of Israel were to set aside several days during the first month of the year to remember the Passover and celebrate God's deliverance of their people out of the land of Egypt. The key reminder was how they were saved from harm by the application of the blood to the doorposts.

At the heart of the Passover celebration was the Passover meal when they would re-enact the Passover by killing and eating a lamb.

At the time of Jesus this was being done, and in fact to this day, in orthodox Jewish homes the Passover is remembered in a special meal.

(Go through the elements of that meal and their significance.)

1. Meat - lamb
2. Bitter herbs - bitter years of slavery
3. Charoseth - mixture of figs, dates, raisins, nuts, etc. - reminder of the clay they used in Egypt to make bricks.
4. Unleavened bread - haste with which they left Egypt.
5. Wine - four glasses - reminder of the promises God had given them in Exo 6:6-8
  - I will bring you out of Egypt.
  - I will set you free.
  - I will take you as my people and will be your God.
  - I will bring you into the land I promised to your father Abraham.

All of these things had to be prepared for the Passover celebration - Luke 22:7-13 - Peter and John made the arrangements for this supper with Jesus and his disciples.

And so it was to just such a meal that Jesus and His disciples sat down or reclined that evening many years ago. You can read several accounts of that event in the gospels. One such account is in Luke 22:1-38. As Jesus arranged to spend this time with His disciples, He also used the time to try to prepare them for the fact of His coming death on the cross. He began to tell them of how He must suffer and die. And this leads us to the next point...

### III. The Typical Significance of the Lord's Supper

You see we can never really understand the importance or meaning of the Lord's Supper until we understand the connection between the Passover in Egypt and the death of Jesus on a cross outside of Jerusalem. For it is in the death of Christ that the true significance of the Passover is seen. The OT Passover is a type, or symbol, which continually pointed forward to that once-for-all sacrifice which was to be made to purchase our redemption.

It is clearly seen in the NT that God's plan for salvation is pictured in the Passover. The sentence of death was on every one of us just as it was on the households of Egypt. However Christ, the Lamb of God, was slain as the Passover lamb, to pay the penalty to free us from that sentence of death. He shed His blood in our place and all that remains for us to do is to believe Him and apply the blood, as it were, to the doorposts of our lives.

Just as in Egypt, there is no other way. The Atonement [payment] was made by the blood of Christ and the only way to avoid destruction is to apply the blood through faith in His blood. And then when we face the judgment of God we will hear the same declaration that God made to the Israelites, "When I see the blood I will pass over you."

And there you have the significance - the Passover was a type or symbol pointing to the death of Christ our Passover lamb. His blood is our token of redemption. Now what does all this have to do with the Lord's Supper, or Communion? Just this...

### IV. The Institution of the Lord's Supper.

In Luke 22 we have Jesus sitting down to the ceremonial Passover meal with His disciples. There they would go through the usual ceremo-

nies involving the eating of the traditional foods and remembering the meaning and symbolism of those foods.

1. Meat - lamb
2. Bitter herbs - bitter years of slavery
3. Charoseth - mixture of figs, dates, raisins, nuts, etc. - reminder of the clay they used in Egypt to make bricks.
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Then at the conclusion of the meal Jesus did something unusual. He took two of the elements of the Passover meal - the bread and the wine - and gave them to His disciples as a kind of ceremony with a whole new meaning. It was still to be a ceremony of remembrance, but from now on they would look back not the slaying of a lamb in Egypt and God's subsequent delivery from slavery. Rather, they would be looking back to the slaying of THE Lamb of God and the deliverance that his death brought, not from slavery in Egypt but from bondage to sin.

And with this new ceremony He gave the instruction Do this in remembrance of me. When you look into the book of Acts, you find one of the first things mentioned about the early church is that they shared together in the breaking of bread - a reference to their celebration of the Lord's Supper.

And now almost 2000 years later believers in Christ are still remembering His death through the sharing of his body and blood, represented in the bread and the cup.

### CONCLUSION

The Lord's Supper, the bread and the juice, represents the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our Lamb, whose blood was shed to offer a way of escape from the wrath of God.

There is no other way. He is our lamb. His blood is our token of forgiveness. He is our Passover. As we come to the table of the Lord this morning let us do so with gratitude for what He was willing to do for us.

Conclude with warning - It is possible to misuse and abuse the Lord's Supper - mention Corinthians.