

The Lord's Supper

The unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, are well known today among all denominations as the type of the broken body and spilled blood of the Son of God, and to partake of them Jesus says, we show forth His death until He comes again.

The time, however, of this sacred ordinance is not considered as thoughtfully as it should be, when commemorating as it does the most sacred event in the history of mankind. Everyone agrees that it is impossible to celebrate their own birthday on any other time of the month or year, than that which it occurred, and we cannot commemorate any event at any other time than the time which it happened. We celebrate the Declaration of Independence on the fourth of July; and to try to celebrate it at any other time, would be vain.

THE TIME TO OBSERVE THE PASSOVER

The history of the Passover is too well known to enter into detailed narration here. It dates back to the time of the angel of death passing over the land of Egypt. Exodus 12th chapter. The blood of the lamb sprinkled on the door posts was a token to the death angel, and he "passed over" that home without harm, but where blood was not found the first born of the house was slain. This event happened the 14th day of the first month, "Abib."

Anyone who desires, may quickly refer to any Bible Dictionary, or even to Webster's large dictionary and learn that the month Abib corresponds to March and April, taking in the latter part of March and the first of April. It is reckoned from the first new moon, nearest the spring equinox, the first moon nearest the time when the days and nights are equal length in the spring. It is the first month of the sacred year. The new year with God commenced in the spring when the buds were bursting forth and when new life was everywhere manifested. Notice the second verse of this chapter says, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year unto you."

The most significant truth involved here is recorded in verses thirteen and fourteen, that this month and day is to be observed in the new dispensation and perpetuated forever. The verses read, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood I will PASS OVER you..... And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generation; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever." Notice particularly, that besides it being kept throughout the generations of Israel, it was also to be kept by an ordinance forever.

HOW OFTEN, AND WHEN?

Note carefully the divine prediction above, that this Passover ordinance was to be kept forever, and

that the time is clearly specified. Then in the following chapter (13), this same ordinance is mentioned and the partaking of unleavened bread brought to view. In verse ten we read, "Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year." Many references could be given to show that this command was obeyed, and the ordinance solemnly perpetuated.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

That the same passover ordinance was observed in the New Testament time is a fact so clearly set forth it cannot be refuted. First we will notice the following scripture. Luke 2: 40, which reads referring to Christ, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him." Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover." The above shows clearly that in the New Testament times they were still keeping the feast of the Passover in its season from year to year. Then in Luke 22: 1-2, we read, "Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the passover. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him for they feared the people." Notice particularly that the feast of unleavened bread is called the passover, and all denominations agree that Jesus was killed at the time of the Passover, and the same day of the month that the unblemished lamb had been killed for years back of which Jesus was the antitype. The lamb being the type of Christ.

Before Jesus died, however, recorded in this same chapter (Luke 22). He introduced the Lord's Supper. In verses 15 and 16 we read, "And He said unto them, with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you I will not anymore eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." The verse shows us that Jesus Himself understood the perpetual nature of the Passover ordinance, for He stated it would also be observed in the Kingdom of God. The next verses following in this chapter read, "And He took the cup and gave thanks, and said, take this and divide it among yourselves. For I say unto you I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come. And He took bread and gave thanks and brake it, and gave unto them saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me."

Everyone knows that this supper was introduced by our Saviour the evening before He was crucified, and that it was on a certain day of a certain month, namely the 14th day of "Abib," and came irrespective of any day of the week, and on a different day each year.

In 1 Cor. 5: 7-8 we read, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Paul here plainly speaks of the Passover, and says that Christ our

passover was sacrificed for us therefore, let us keep the feast, and the Passover was once a year. Again in 1 Cor. 11: 23-25 Paul delivered to the church that which he received of the Lord and he delivered it to them the same night. It reads, "For I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread." As Paul says plainly he delivered it to the church the same night, and calls it in verse 20 the Lord's supper, it was introduced at night, and was on a certain day of the month and not on a certain day of the week, and was the 14th day of "Abib."

In the following verses of this 11th chapter we read that Paul introduced the very emblems that Jesus gave to the apostles the night He was betrayed, namely the unleavened bread, and the fruit of the vine, as a type of the broken body and spilled blood of Jesus. In verse 26 Paul says that as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do show forth the Lord's death until He comes." This shows that it is His death, this ordinance commemorates, and not His resurrection. Then he says, "As oft as ye eat this bread," and we are plainly told how often to eat it, which is in its season from year to year, as the prophet said, in the first month. Then in Acts 20: 6 we are told that the apostles were observing the days of unleavened bread. It reads, "We sailed from Phillippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came

unto them at Troas in five days where we abode seven days.

The above reference shows conclusively that the apostles were observing the Passover just as Paul delivered it to the church as he had received it from the Lord, the same night in which Jesus was betrayed. We, therefore, can only celebrate this solemn event at the time it occurred each year, in its season, as we do all other important happenings, and it would not be in commemoration of the death and broken body of Jesus, if it were not celebrated at the proper time any more than it would be a celebration of the Declaration of Independence to have a holiday in August, or to commemorate our birthdays at some other time than the time the event took place. When Paul says "as often as ye do this." he knew full well that the people knew just how often, for he made this matter plain.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

That the apostles came together on the first day of the week to break bread, Acts 20: 7. after the Passover time had passed, and unleavened bread had been eaten at Philippi, verse 6. need not be thought strange, for in Acts 2: 44-45 they had all things common, and broke bread every day from house to house. This being true they would naturally break bread on the first day of the week the same as every other day. We know full well that the common meal was the purpose of the meeting here, for it says "they came together to break bread," and in verse 11 they did not break bread

until after midnight. It was the custom at that time and is yet in some places to speak of the common meal as breaking bread. This is also made clear by Acts 2: 46 where it says they broke bread daily from house to house. It says nothing in Acts 20: 7, whatever, that would indicate its being anything more or less than a common meal it does not say this was the Passover, or that it was the feast of the unleavened bread, and nothing whatever is said about any wine, but it does say that the days of unleavened bread had passed before they left Philippi. V. 6. Then again the ministers named in verse 4 did not stay for the meeting, but sailed on around the cape a distance of over fifty miles, and Paul stayed and preached to the brethren that night and the next morning walked across the cape nineteen miles, and caught up with the other brethren at Assos.

Let each one without prejudice study to know the truth and to be right with God, for to obey Him and be right in every particular means so much to us, and especially in the sacred ordinance of the Lord's supper.

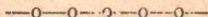
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