

Why we need to take Communion

1- THE FIRST TIME JESUS TALKED ABOUT COMMUNION WAS IN

JOHN 6:48-63:

*“I am the Bread of Life. Your forefathers (Israelites) ate the **manna** in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from Heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the Living Bread that came down from Heaven. If a man eats of this Bread, he will live forever. This Bread is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, ‘How can this man give us His flesh to eat?’

*(53) Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the Last Day. For My Flesh is real food, and My Blood is real drink. Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood remains in Me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent Me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the Bread that came down from Heaven. Our forefathers ate **manna**, and died, but he who feeds on this Bread will live forever.’*

On hearing it, many of His disciples said, ‘This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?’

*Aware that His disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, ‘**Does this offend you?** What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where He was before! The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. **The words I have spoken to you are spirit, and they are life’.**”*

A. **“Manna,”** according to **Exodus 16:31**, was: *“white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey.”*

(1) This is how God fed the Israelites in the time of Moses, when they were released from their Egyptian bondage, and traveled through the desert to the Promised Land (Israel). It appeared, according to **Exodus 16:13,14**, *“in the morning,”* as *“a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor.”*

B. When Jesus told His disciples to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood (**vs.53-56**), **they were offended, because they took Him literally.** Jesus clearly said He was speaking in spiritual or symbolic terms.

C. But, Jesus did say that by eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood, He would **remain in us**, and we would **remain in Him**; and, that by doing so, we would have **eternal life** in Heaven (**vs.53-56**).

2- WHEN JESUS FINALLY REACHES JERUSALEM FOR THE FEAST OF THE UNLEAVENED BREAD, OR PASSOVER, HE EXPLAINED VISUALLY TO HIS 12 APOSTLES HOW TO “EAT HIS FLESH” AND “DRINK HIS BLOOD”
MATTHEW 26:26-28:

*“While they were eating (the Passover), Jesus took **bread** (unleavened), gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; **this is My Body.**’*

*Then He took the **cup** (one of the four cups of **unfermented grape juice**), gave thanks and offered it to them saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. **This is My Blood of the Covenant** (New Testament, which replaces the Old), which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’”*

- A. First, Jesus took a loaf of unleavened bread** (no leaven or yeast was allowed during the week of Passover), had a prayer of thanks, broke it into 12 pieces, and **gave a piece of the unleavened bread to each of His disciples. When they had this piece of bread in their hands, He said in verse 26:** *“Take and eat; this is My Body.”* He didn’t give them a literal piece of His body, but a piece of unleavened bread that was symbolically His body (in spirit).
- B. Then He took the cup** (grape juice, or oinos wine --- unfermented, without yeast or leaven --- not fermented wine as we know it, that is made with yeast); and then while He held the cup of unfermented grape juice in His hand for them to plainly see, He told them in **verse 27:** *“Drink from it, all of you. This is My Blood.”* Again, He did not give them His actual blood, but grape juice, as a spiritual symbol of His blood.
- C. Jesus continued in verses 27,28:** *“**This is My Blood of the Covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins**”*

A covenant is an agreement, will, or testament, between two parties. In the case of this Covenant (that we call Communion), the two parties would be the one partaking of Communion emblems, and the one who died for you --- Christ. A covenant does not become valid until the death of the one who made it. This Covenant, or Will became valid when Christ died on the cross, and became the only blood sacrifice God would accept for our sins.

So, when we partake of this Covenant or Testament; we are agreeing to the terms: (1) to **“remember”** Him by partaking of the unleavened bread (His Flesh), and fruit of the vine, or grape juice (His Blood), and (2) to **“remain in Him”** by obeying His New Testament or Covenant that He left us, through His Holy Spirit and Apostles.

When we keep the following terms of this Covenant, we receive the following inheritance promised by this Will: (1) that God will **“forgive our sins,”** (2) that Christ will **“remain in us,”** and (3) that we shall receive **“eternal life”** in Heaven!

**3- AFTER JESUS DIED FOR OUR SINS ON THE CROSS, WAS BURIED IN THE TOMB FOR THREE DAYS, AND THEN RESURRECTED ON SUNDAY...
LUKE 24:13-35 SAYS:**

*“Now that **same day (Sunday, according to verse 1) two of them** were going to a village called **Emmaus**, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, **Jesus Himself came up and walked along with them;** but they were kept from recognizing Him.*

He asked them, ‘What are you discussing together as you walk along?’

*They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named **Cleopas**, asked Him, ‘Are you the only one living in Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that have happened there in these days?’*

‘What things?’ He asked.

‘About Jesus of Nazareth,’ they replied. ‘He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed Him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified Him; but we had hoped that He was the One who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find His body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said He was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but Him they did not see.’

He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter His glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if He were going farther. But they urged Him strongly, ‘Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.’ So He went in to stay with them.

(30) When He was at the table with them (still during the week of Passover), He took bread (unleavened), gave thanks, broke it, and began to give it to them (like He did just three days earlier). Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, and He disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’

*They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found **the Eleven** (Judas hung himself, according to **Matthew 27:1-10**), and those with them, assembled together and saying, ‘It is true! **The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon (Peter).**’ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and **how Jesus was recognized by them when He broke The Bread.**”*

- A. Verse 30,31** tell us Christ “took **bread (tou arton in the Greek, or The Loaf in English)**, gave thanks, broke it, and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him.”
- B.** This is the same thing He did with His Apostles just three days before (Thursday) on the first day of Passover, when He told them to do it in remembrance of Him. **Passover lasted 7 days, so they still had unleavened**

bread and unfermented oinos (Greek) wine, or grape juice (without leaven or yeast).

4- ACTS 2:42-46 TELLS US THE FIRST 3,000 CHRISTIANS, ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST (50 DAYS AFTER PASSOVER): “...*devoted themselves to the Apostle’s teachings (doctrine), and to fellowship (or communion), to the Breaking of (The) Bread, and to prayer.*”

- A. The original Greek manuscript translates this verse: “*And they were **proskartereo** in the teaching of the Apostles and in **the koinonia** in the **te klasei of tou artou.**”*
- (1) “**proskartereo**” is the Greek word literally translated “*to be strong towards, to endure in, or persevere in, to be continually steadfast with, give constant attention to, or to be devoted to a person or thing.*”
 - (2) “**koinonia**” is the Greek word literally translated “*communion, fellowship, sharing in common, communication, a contribution.*”
 - (3) “**te klasei**” is the Greek word literally translated “*to break, of the breaking of bread in the Lord’s Supper, **Matt.26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; Acts 20:7; I Cor.10:16; 11:24.***”
 - (4) “**tou**” is the Greek article for “*The*” which makes the next word something special.
 - (5) “**artou**” is the Greek word literally translated “*bread, signifies loaf or cake, composed of flour and water and then baked...never cut, but only broken, and were consecrated to the Lord every Sabbath and called the shewbread (loaves of presentation), **Matt.12:4**; the loaf at the Lord’s Supper, e.g. **Matt.26:26**; the breaking of bread became the name for this institution (**Communion**). **Acts 2:42; 20:7; I Cor.10:16;11:23.***”
- B. **Therefore, Acts 2:42 is literally translated:** “*And they were **STRONG TOWARDS, ENDURED, PERSEVERED, CONTINUALLY STEADFAST WITH, GIVING CONSTANT ATTENTION AND DEVOTED TO the teaching of the Apostles (which would be DOCTRINE as in Matt.28:18-20; I Cor.4:6; I Tim.4:16; II Tim.4:1-5), and in the COMMUNION, FELLOWSHIP, SHARING IN COMMON, COMMUNICATING, CONTRIBUTING AND DEVOTED in THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD COMPOSED OF FLOUR AND WATER & BAKED THAT WAS FIRST CONSECRATED TO THE LORD EVERY SABBATH AND THEN BECAME THE LOAF AT THE LORD’S SUPPER.***”
- C. **Verse 46** goes on and tells us that the 3,000 “*broke bread in their homes and ate together.*” This time the word “*bread*” or “*loaf*” does not have the article “*tou*” or “*The*” before it as it did in **verse 42**. **This shows that they also simply ate food together.**

5- ACTS 20:7-12 SHOWS US THE EARLY CHRISTIANS KEPT MEETING ON SUNDAY:

(7) *“On the first day of the week (Sunday) we came together to **break bread**. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. There were many lamps in the upstairs room where they were meeting. Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. ‘Don’t be alarmed,’ he said. ‘He is alive!’ (11) Then he went upstairs again and **broke (Greek inserts the word “ton” or “The” before the word “bread”)** bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. The people took the young man home alive, and were greatly comforted.”*

- A. Verse 7 tells us they met to “break bread.” But in this verse there is no article (“Ton,” or “The”) with the word “bread.” So, they first met to **fellowship and eat together** (as was the original practice, according to *Acts 2:46*).
- B. However, after they ate and fellowshiped together, Paul preached to them; and then, after Eutychus falls out of the window, dies, and then Paul brings him back to life --- **they go back upstairs, and Paul leads them in a Communion service; or, “they broke (The)bread and ate.”** We know it was **Communion**, because, in the original Greek manuscript, it literally says: *“klasas ton arton kai geusamenos,” or, “breaking the bread and tasting (not just eating food as they did earlier, because they were hungry).”* Notice, this second time (when they went back upstairs after Paul raised Eutychus from the dead), the article “ton” or “The” is used with the word “bread” or “Loaf;” and, this second time, they are only “tasting” the bread, as they would when taking Communion --- not eating again because they were hungry.
- D. Remember, in *John 6: 53*, Jesus said: *“whoever eats my flesh and drinks My Blood, has eternal life, and I will raise him up...”* After Paul raised Eutychus from the dead, he had the perfect Communion illustration, don’t you think?

6- PAUL GAVE COMMANDS FOR THE LORD’S SUPPER (COMMUNION) IN I CORINTHIANS 11:17-34:

“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. (20) 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 that? 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.'** (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.'** For whenever you eat this Bread and drink this Cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Therefore, **whoever eats this Bread or drinks this Cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty of sinning against the Body and Blood of the Lord.** (28) **A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the Bread and drinks of the Cup.** (29) **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 (died). (31) **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.

So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for each other. If anyone is hungry, he should eat at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment."

- A. **Verse 20** tells us that when they came together as a Church they ate the **"Lord's Supper."** If you read on in this letter, you will see that **Sunday was the day they came together (I Corinthians 16:2).**
- B. However, **verse 25** tells us, **"This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me."** The **first Communion** Jesus had with His Apostles **was on Thursday** (The Passover). The **next Communion** service was with Jesus and two of His disciples on **Sunday (Luke 24:13-35)**; When the **first 3,000 Christians** took it during the Day of Pentecost (**Acts 2:42**), it would have been on a **Friday** (50 days after Passover). But, Paul taught that it should be the center of a worship service in **Acts 20:7-12 (on Sunday)**, and again, here in **I Corinthians 11:17-34 (on Sunday).**
- C. Whenever you do take Communion though, you should **first "examine" yourself (verse 28), and "judge" yourself (verse 31).** Because, as **verse 29 warns:** **"For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the Body of the Lord, eats and drinks judgment on himself."** In other words, you should **repent and ask for forgiveness of your sins.** Jesus is the sacrifice for our sins, and **Communion is both offering and partaking of that sacrifice, so that our sins will be forgiven** (as Jesus made clear in **Matthew 26:28**).

7- PAUL EXPLAINED TO THE JEWS HOW THE SACRIFICE AND ALTAR HAVE CHANGED SINCE JESUS CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS, AS RECORDED IN HEBREWS 13:8-16:

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them. (10) We have an Altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle (Jewish priests) have no right to eat.

The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. (12) And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through His own blood. Let us, then, go to Him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace He bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise --- the fruit of lips that confess His Name. (16) And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.”

- A. Paul tells us in **verse 10**: ***“We have an Altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle (Old Testament Jews) have no right to eat.”*** **When we place the Body and the Blood of Christ on the Communion Table, it becomes our Altar.** We now have on the Altar, before God, the only sacrifice He will accept for the forgiveness of our sins. We are made holy through the blood of Jesus Christ (**verse 12**).
- B. **Romans 12:1** says: ***“...offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual worship.”*** How can we be a worthy (“holy”) sacrifice?
- C. **When we eat from Christ’s Altar (Communion Table), we are purified by His Blood, according to I John 1:7**: ***“...we have fellowship with one another, and the Blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sins.”***

8- COMMUNION (THE LORD’S SUPPER) MUST BE THE CENTER OF OUR WORSHIP SERVICE. A worship service centers around a sacrifice, and an acceptable sacrifice grants forgiveness of sins. Jesus is the only acceptable sacrifice that God will accept for our sins; and He is the One who instructed us to take Communion ***“for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28).***

- A. So, when we take Communion, we are **forgiven of our sins** (as we read in **Matthew 26:26-28**), and made **“holy”** and **“pleasing”** again to God; becoming a **“living sacrifice,”** (**Romans 12:1**), **“Doing good and sharing with others”** (**Hebrews 13:16**), which is our **“spiritual worship”** (**Romans 12:1**).
- B. And Jesus then promised us in **John 6:53-56**: ***“Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood, has eternal life...whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood, remains in Me, and I in him.”***

9- NOW SEE: “*THE DEATH, BURIAL & RESURRECTION*”