

New Testament Worship – The Lord’s Supper

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Men build great buildings, towers, or statues as memorials to their fallen heroes. We garnish the graves of our loved ones with flowers, and, more permanently, tombstones. Jesus instituted a spiritual Supper to memorialize His atoning death (1 Cor. 11:20). It is called “the Lord’s Supper” in Scripture because it was ordered by Him and in memory of what He did. It is also called “communion” in Scripture, indicating that it is an act in which many share in the remembrance of the death of Christ and that the participants likewise are recipients of the benefits of His death.

When Jesus blessed (i.e., gave thanks for) the bread and passed it among the apostles, He told them it represented His body which was given for them and that they were to eat it in His memory. Doing the same with the fruit of the vine, He told them it symbolized the blood that was poured out for them (Luke 22:19–20). Some object to the expression that the bread and fruit of the vine “represent” the body and blood of Christ. They either represent or symbolize them or they are His literal body and blood. The Roman Catholic church has mistakenly chosen the latter view and their doctrine of transubstantiation is a direct result. However, it is obvious that He did not give them His literal flesh and blood as He was still living physically in their presence. Obviously, these elements were given as figures of His body and blood. None have any problem understanding this symbolism when Jesus said, “I am the door” (John 10:9). Not only does the Lord’s Supper keep the memory of the unequalled sacrifice of Christ fresh in the Christian’s mind by causing him to reflect on the crucifixion, but it also proclaims the Christian’s faith in the promise of Christ to come again (1 Cor. 11:26). This sacred Supper must be eaten with utmost reverence and meditation concerning its purpose, otherwise, one “eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself” (1 Cor. 11:29).

In the first century and for some centuries thereafter, the Lord’s Supper was eaten every Lord’s day. Uninspired church history of the centuries immediately following the age of the apostles shows that it was several centuries after the close of the New Testament before the Lord’s Supper was changed from a weekly to a monthly or quarterly observance. The first day of the week was “when the disciples came together to break bread” (Acts 20:7). This is why Paul instructed the Galatian and Corinthian brethren to give their money on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1–2). He knew they would be meeting to worship and especially to “break bread” then anyway. There is absolutely no Scriptural authorization for observing the Lord’s Supper

on any other day. We fail to understand why those who depart from the Scriptural weekly observance of the Supper argue that it makes it too common.

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