

# “Ready to Give a Defense”

## Answering Our Friends’ Religious Questions

### Lesson Eight - The Lord’s Supper

**Introduction.** On the night of Jesus’ betrayal, He instituted a memorial which He commanded to be observed by His followers. In today’s world confusion exists regarding the manner, the frequency and significance of this observation. In this lesson we will consider what the Bible teaches about this memorial in order to clarify these areas of confusion.

#### I. How Should the Lord’s Supper Be Observed?

- A. Who should observe the Lord’s Supper? (Matthew 26:26, 27; Acts 20:7). Not only did all of the disciples partake of the elements of the Lord’s Supper, but after Jesus’ death, disciples in general observed the memorial. No element was reserved for or excluded from any Christian.
- B. What elements constitute the Lord’s Supper? (Luke 22:8; Exodus 12:19). The Lord’s Supper was instituted while Jesus and His disciples observed the Passover. Neither bread or grape juice that was leavened (or fermented) could be in the house during Passover. This makes it clear that the bread and fruit of the vine which He gave to the disciples would have been unleavened bread and grape juice.
- C. Must the fruit of the vine be taken from one cup? (Luke 22:15-20). Some teach that the fruit of the vine must be shared from one cup. The account in Luke makes it clear that the Jesus divided the contents of the cup among the disciples before they ate the Passover meal. This divided cup is what He refers to as drinking of in the Kingdom and what He identifies as His blood.

#### II. When Should the Lord’s Supper Be Observed?

- A. The example of Paul in Troas (Acts 20:7). Although Jesus did not specify when the memorial was to be observed, the example of Paul in the city of Troas indicates that Christians in the New Testament did so on Sunday, the first day of the week.
- B. The witness of church history. While uninspired history is obviously limited and subject to human frailty, in some cases we can see what was taught in the New Testament reflected in early practice.
  1. Justin Martyr (ca. 150 AD). After describing the observance of the Lord’s supper he claims - “We hold this common gathering on Sunday, since it is the first day, on which God, transforming darkness and matter, made the universe, and Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead on the same day” (*First Apology*, 67, Richardson).
  2. *The Didache* (ca. 150 AD). In a description of worship, claims - “And on the Lord’s own day gather yourselves together and break bread and give thanks, first confessing your transgressions that your sacrifice may be pure” (14, Lightfoot).

#### III. What Is the Significance of the Lord’s Supper?

- A. “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:24,25). In Jesus’ very instructions to the twelve, He identified the significance of the Supper as a memorial. It is to be done remembering the death of Jesus.
- B. Does the bread and fruit of the vine become the literal flesh and blood of Christ? (Ephesians 2:19-22; I Corinthians 14:37). Some in the religious world teach that the elements of the memorial actually transform into the literal body and blood of Jesus.

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1. If so, then Jesus drinks His own blood (Matthew 26:27-29; Mark 14:24,25).  
When a Christian observes the Lord's Supper they are partaking of the elements with the Lord in His kingdom. Jesus did not drink His own blood on the night of His death, nor does He in the observance of the memorial.
2. The eating of blood has always been condemned in Scripture (Leviticus 17:11,12; Acts 15:29). If a Christian eats the literal blood of Jesus in the memorial, they are violating ordinances taught in both Old and New Testaments.

**Conclusion.** The Bible teaches us that disciples of Christ observed the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week partaking of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine in memory of Jesus' death. This was a memorial observed by the church to regularly remind them of Jesus' sacrifice for mankind. Although it does not involve any mysterious or miraculous transformation of the elements, it is nonetheless, a beautiful and important aspect of worship to God under the Law of Christ.