

26 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ASKING!

QUESTION #22: WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?

The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of remembrance for the church, full of imagery of the deliverance God has wrought for his people.

1. THE OLD TESTAMENT BACKGROUND: THE PASSOVER

Matthew (26.2), Mark (14.1-2), and Luke (22.1) are all careful to draw a connection between the last supper of Christ (the institution of the Lord's Supper). So it would be wise of us to ask...

A. WHAT WAS THE PASSOVER?

A meal of consequence...

Exod 12² "This month shall be for you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year for you. ...¹⁴ This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

A meal of covenant, distinguishing Israel as the people of God from the Egyptians.

Exod 12²³ For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.

A meal of celebration as God's people were delivered.

B. WHAT WAS THE RESULT OF THE PASSOVER?

The people who participated were freed from slavery...

Exod 12⁵¹ And on that very day the LORD brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their hosts.

A pattern set...

Exod 24⁹ Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up,¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. ... they beheld God, and ate and drank.

God is re-establishing fellowship...

Gen 3²² Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. ... therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden ..."²⁴ He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.

C. THE FEAST TO COME...

Isa 25⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. ...⁸ He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. (Cf. Zech 14.16)

2. THE REALITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. JESUS IS THE TRUE PASSOVER LAMB

1Cor 5⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?⁷ Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

1Pet 1¹⁸ ...knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

B. A NEW COVENANTAL MEAL

This is the meal of the *new* covenant (Luke 22.20), designed to cause us to remember the salvation of God in this covenant.

1Cor 11²⁵ "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

C. A CELEBRATION OF JUDGEMENT AND MERCY

Just as God's mercy to Israel meant the death of a sacrificial lamb, so God's mercy to us comes by the judgement of Jesus.

D. A CELEBRATION OF ABSENCE AND PRESENCE

By proclaiming the Lord's death 'until he comes' we're acknowledging that he is at once 'present' with his people in the church and yet distinctly 'absent' in that we await the fulfilment of restoration of fellowship.

E. A CELEBRATION OF FULFILMENT TO COME

God's goal aim has been the same from Eden to the New Jerusalem: to bring his people into fellowship with himself.

Rev 19⁹ And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

3. WHAT IT ALL MEANS TO US

1. The reality of Christ's death
2. Our covenantal union with Christ
3. Spiritual nourishment
4. Unity of Christians
5. An affirmation of Christ's love for me
6. An affirmation that the blessings of salvation are mine
7. I affirm my faith in him

4. APPLICATION: CORE VALUES

A. TRUTH

Here is truth: Christ's death applied to me is enough. Jesus loved me and gave himself for me; that is our hope.

B. HUMILITY

Not only do I need the death of a substitute on my behalf, but I need to be constantly reminded of my need.

C. DELIGHT

One of the functions of the Lord's Supper is to cast our eyes forward to the wedding supper of the Lamb. On that day all God's purposes for his people (me!) through history will be fulfilled when I am with him in true fellowship.