COGMA

Church of God Mission Academy

STUDY GUIDE 76

Ordinances Fulfilled in Jesus Christ

STUDY GUIDE 9 OF 12:

The Last Passover and the Living Bread

An overview of the Passover's meaning and its fulfilment in Jesus Christ.



Equipping and empowering for effective service

2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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- Infallibility and authority belong only to God and His Word.

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PREFACE

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The Last Passover Jesus Christ shared with His disciples is among the most familiar events recorded in the New Testament. For generations, Christian congregations have observed bread and wine or juice in remembrance of that occasion, calling the practice the Lord's Supper or communion. Many regard it as a continuing ordinance established by Jesus Christ. Yet every religious practice must be examined according to Scripture and the fulfilment accomplished in Him.

To understand that final meal, we must first consider the Passover God appointed for natural Israel. Its sacrifice, blood, deliverance and memorial had a genuine purpose under the former covenant. They were not the final spiritual reality, but pointed forward to Jesus Christ.

This Study Guide examines the final Passover Jesus shared with His disciples before His suffering and death. We will consider His words concerning the bread and cup, His body and blood, and the New Covenant. The question is whether those instructions established a continuing outward ordinance or declared the fulfilment of what the Passover represented.

Particular attention will be given to His words *"This do in remembrance of me."* These words have long been used to support the continuation of literal communion, and their meaning must be established from Scripture rather than inherited religious practice. We will also examine John chapter 6, where Jesus identified Himself as the bread of life and spoke of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. His teaching directs us towards the spiritual life found in Him, which physical food cannot produce.

The believer's completeness in Jesus Christ governs this examination. We must distinguish the outward representation from the spiritual reality it was appointed to reveal. No ceremony can add to the completed work of Christ or supply something lacking in the believer who is already complete in Him.

Our purpose is not to question the sincerity of believers who have been taught to observe these practices. It is to establish their meaning and continuing authority according to the Word of God, keeping Jesus Christ at the centre. The Person is greater than the ordinance, and the fulfilment is greater than the shadow.

The governing question is whether the Church must continue observing the representation when Jesus Christ, the promised reality, has already come.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must the bread and cup be understood through Christ's completed work?

Personal Reflection

What does being complete in Christ mean for your understanding of a communion ceremony? Which part of your own understanding does it challenge?

Action Step

Is there a belief about receiving spiritual life through bread and wine that you want to examine in the Bible? Explain. Explain what you will rely on for fellowship with Christ and what ceremony-based assumption you need to correct.

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Throughout Christian history, the Lord's Supper has been regarded as one of the most important observances of the Church. Many congregations consider the breaking of bread and drinking of wine or juice to be sacred acts of remembrance and obedience. Yet the importance or long history of a religious practice does not establish its continuing authority under the New Covenant.

The central question is whether Jesus Christ intended His people to continue an outward representation or whether He fulfilled the spiritual reality towards which it pointed. To answer this, we must examine the relationship between the Passover given to natural Israel, the final Passover Jesus shared with His disciples, and the redemption accomplished through His sacrifice.

God established the original Passover when He delivered Israel from Egypt. Its sacrifice, blood, meal and memorial had a genuine purpose within the former covenant, while also pointing towards a greater deliverance. We must therefore understand what became of that outward observance when Jesus Christ fulfilled its appointed purpose.

At His final Passover, Jesus knew that His suffering and death were approaching. He connected the bread and cup with His body and blood and declared the significance of the New Covenant that would be established through His sacrifice. His words must be understood within those circumstances rather than through religious traditions developed afterwards.

We must also examine His instruction concerning remembrance. Does remembering Jesus Christ require the continuing performance of a physical ceremony, or has the New Covenant brought believers into the greater spiritual reality found in Him? The answer must come from Scripture rather than inherited religious practice.

The teaching of Jesus in John chapter 6 is essential to this examination. He identified Himself as the bread of life and spoke of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. His words distinguish natural food from the everlasting life found in Him, providing an important foundation for understanding true communion.

The completeness of salvation must also govern our understanding. The born-again believer already possesses Jesus Christ through His indwelling Spirit and is complete in Him. We must

therefore establish whether an outward religious observance has any continuing authority when it cannot produce the spiritual reality the believer already possesses.

Throughout this Study Guide, we will examine the relevant Scriptures within their historical setting, distinguishing the outward representations from their fulfilment in Jesus Christ. The Word of God must govern every conclusion, and the completed work of Christ must remain our foundation.

The question before us is not whether the Last Passover was important, but whether its appointed purpose has already been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the first Passover help explain the final Passover Jesus shared with His disciples?

Personal Reflection

What has helped you distinguish a familiar religious practice from a New Covenant command? What difference should this make to your own response?

Action Step

How might you examine your own understanding of the Lord's Supper in the light of Christ's fulfilment? Identify a change needed in the way you remember or speak of Christ's sacrifice, keeping the Person central.

CHRIST IS THE REALITY, NOT THE OUTWARD ORDINANCE

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An outward religious ceremony may be performed with sincerity, reverence and great care, yet none of these things makes it the spiritual reality it represents. This distinction is essential when examining the Passover, the bread and cup, and the completed work of Jesus Christ. We must understand what these ordinances represented, why God appointed them and whether their purpose has been fulfilled.

The New Covenant does not leave God's people dependent upon outward representations for spiritual life. Jesus Christ Himself is the fulfilment, and every born-again believer possesses His indwelling life. The ordinance represents, but Jesus Christ is the reality.

An Ordinance Represents but Cannot Produce

A ceremonial ordinance is an outward representation pointing towards a greater spiritual reality. It may illustrate what God intends to accomplish, but it cannot produce that reality. Physical bread cannot impart the life of Jesus Christ, just as the blood of an animal could not redeem humanity from sin.

The distinction between a shadow and its fulfilment is fundamental. A shadow has significance because it directs attention towards something greater. Once the promised reality has come, the shadow has accomplished its appointed purpose.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:16-17**:

> *"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."*

Paul distinguishes the shadow from the substance found in Jesus Christ. The former observances pointed forward towards Him and were not intended to establish permanent religious requirements alongside the Person they represented.

This principle is essential when examining the Lord's Supper. The bread and cup represented the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and their significance must be understood through His accomplished sacrifice. The outward representation cannot retain sacred authority as a Gospel ordinance after the spiritual reality has been fulfilled.

The writer of Hebrews declared in **Hebrews 10:1**:

> *"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."*

The writer identifies the former covenant ordinances as shadows pointing forward to something greater. Their repeated observance could never make the worshipper perfect because the promised reality had not yet been accomplished.

The Scriptures must be understood according to their clear and consistent witness. Historical actions are recorded for our understanding, but their occurrence does not automatically establish continuing New Covenant requirements. We must recognise the spiritual principles revealed through those actions and their fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

The shadow pointed forward. Jesus Christ fulfilled it. The completed work of Christ must govern our understanding of every outward representation.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why could an outward ordinance represent spiritual life but never produce it?

Personal Reflection

Have you thought of a religious ceremony as supplying something that Christ has not supplied? Explain what you now understand.

Action Step

What might trusting Christ's completed work mean for your own approach to religious ceremonies? Examine where you have placed your confidence. What will you change to keep that confidence in Jesus Christ?

"But Christ Being Come"

The writer of Hebrews explains that the former covenant ordinances had an appointed duration.

He wrote in **Hebrews 9:9-11**:

> *"Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;"*

Notice the expressions *"until the time of reformation"* and *"But Christ being come."* The former ordinances were not sinful or mistaken during their appointed time. God established them for a genuine purpose, but their duration was limited because they pointed towards what Jesus Christ would accomplish.

These outward requirements could not make the worshipper perfect concerning the conscience. Their purpose was to represent and prepare for the greater spiritual reality, not to produce complete redemption. That redemption required the coming and sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself.

The words *"But Christ being come"* announce the decisive change. The promised Person had arrived, bringing the fulfilment towards which the former ordinances had pointed. God established the New Covenant through Jesus Christ, not so that His people would remain dependent upon outward shadows.

The Believer Possesses the Person

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:9-10**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

The words *"ye are complete in him"* establish a truth that must govern our understanding of every religious ordinance. The born-again believer is not waiting for another ceremony to supply something spiritually missing from Jesus Christ. The believer already possesses the Person in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells.

A continuing ceremony cannot make someone more complete in Christ. Neither can a minister's prayer over ordinary bread and wine or juice produce His indwelling life. The spiritual reality is found in Jesus Christ Himself, not within physical elements.

When a religious ceremony is presented as necessary to obtain or maintain fellowship with Jesus Christ, an outward requirement is placed beside His completed work. Such teaching suggests that possessing the Person is insufficient, even though Scripture declares the believer complete in Him.

Complete in Christ means complete.

Religious traditions do not acquire New Covenant authority because generations have practised them or sincere believers consider them sacred. Every practice must be examined according to Scripture and the fulfilment accomplished in Jesus Christ.

The Passover given to natural Israel must be understood through this principle. Its sacrifice, blood, deliverance and memorial pointed towards the greater redemption Jesus Christ would

accomplish. Once that redemption was obtained, the former representation had fulfilled its appointed purpose.

The same principle governs the bread and cup associated with the final Passover. Their significance must be understood through the body and blood of Jesus Christ, His accomplished sacrifice and the establishment of the New Covenant. The outward elements cannot provide a spiritual reality that has already been fulfilled in Him.

We do not reject what these representations pointed towards. We reject their continuation as sacred Gospel ordinances because their fulfilment is already found in Jesus Christ Himself.

The shadow pointed forward. The reality has come. The believer possesses the Person, and the Person is greater than the ordinance.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do **Hebrews 9:9-11** *and* **Colossians 2:9-10** *explain the end of the shadows and the believer's completeness?*

Personal Reflection

What does possessing Christ Himself help you understand about spiritual completeness? What does this reveal about an assumption you have held?

Action Step

When you feel spiritually lacking, how could the truth that the believer possesses Christ guide your response? Choose one present decision and explain how you will respond from Christ's life within, not independent effort.

THE FIRST PASSOVER - THE LAMB, THE BLOOD AND DELIVERANCE

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To understand the Last Passover Jesus Christ shared with His disciples, we must first examine the Passover God appointed for natural Israel. The events recorded in Exodus chapter 12 were not religious customs established by men. God Himself gave the instructions as He prepared to deliver Israel from bondage in Egypt.

The first Passover involved a lamb, its blood, the judgment upon Egypt and the deliverance of Israel. These were genuine historical events, and God's instructions had to be obeyed within their appointed setting. Their greater significance, however, would be revealed through the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ.

God Appointed the Passover

Israel had lived under Egyptian bondage, and God was preparing to bring His people out. The plagues had demonstrated His authority, yet Pharaoh continued resisting the command to release the Israelites. God therefore gave Moses specific instructions concerning the final judgment and the deliverance that would follow.

Moses recorded in **Exodus 12:1-4**:

> *"And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb."*

The instructions came directly from God. He appointed the time, identified the sacrifice and established how the households of Israel were to prepare. This was not an ordinary meal that later acquired religious significance, but a God-appointed observance connected with Israel's deliverance from Egypt.

The Passover therefore belonged to the history of natural Israel and God's covenant dealings with that nation. Its immediate purpose concerned deliverance from Egyptian bondage, but it also established an outward representation that would find its greater fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

The Lamb and the Blood

God gave specific instructions concerning the sacrifice and how its blood was to be used.

Moses recorded in **Exodus 12:5-8**:

> *"Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it."*

The lamb had to be without blemish and sacrificed at the appointed time. Its blood was to be applied to the doorposts, and its flesh eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Israel could not disregard these instructions or establish its own manner of observing the Passover.

These were literal actions performed during the events surrounding Israel's departure from Egypt. Yet the animal sacrifice could not remove sin from the heart, produce the new birth or give the eternal life found in Jesus Christ. Its significance extended beyond the immediate historical deliverance towards the greater sacrifice God would provide.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did the sacrifice of the Passover lamb point beyond deliverance from Egypt?

Personal Reflection

What has the difference between leaving Egypt and receiving new life helped you understand about salvation? Which part of your own understanding does it challenge?

Action Step

What does the difference between an outward deliverance and redemption from sin mean for your own trust in Christ? Explain what you will rely on for fellowship with Christ and what ceremony-based assumption you need to correct.

The Blood Was God's Appointed Sign

God explained the purpose of the blood in **Exodus 12:12-13**:

> *"For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt."*

Notice God's declaration: *"The blood shall be to you for a token."* The blood was the appointed sign connected with His promise to spare the households of Israel from the coming judgment. Its significance came from God's command and promise, not from independent spiritual power within the blood of an animal.

God Himself declared what He would do when He saw the blood upon the houses. The Israelites were responsible for obeying His instructions, but the deliverance came from God.

Moses repeated the instructions to the elders of Israel.

He said in **Exodus 12:21-23**:

> *"Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you."*

The households were to apply the blood to the lintel and doorposts and remain inside until morning. These requirements belonged to that particular night and the deliverance God had promised. Obedience to those instructions was necessary within their appointed setting, but the outward action did not produce spiritual redemption or establish the New Covenant.

This distinction is essential. God appointed the blood as a token connected with deliverance from judgment upon Egypt. It represented something greater, but it could not accomplish the eternal redemption from sin that would come through Jesus Christ.

Judgment and Deliverance

The Scriptures record that God's declared judgment came upon Egypt exactly as He had announced.

Moses wrote in **Exodus 12:29-31**:

> *"And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead. And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said."*

The judgment demonstrated the seriousness of God's declared purpose. Pharaoh could no longer prevent Israel's departure, and he called for Moses and Aaron during the night. Egypt experienced the judgment God had announced, while Israel was delivered according to His promise.

These were genuine historical events through which God brought natural Israel out of bondage. The Passover was therefore connected with both judgment and deliverance, but its greater spiritual significance reached beyond the physical circumstances in Egypt.

Moses further recorded in **Exodus 12:40-41**:

> *"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt."*

God accomplished the deliverance He had promised. Israel was brought out from under Pharaoh's authority, and the bondage that had marked their life in Egypt came to an end.

However, deliverance from Egypt was not the same as redemption from sin. A person could leave Egypt physically without receiving the new birth or the indwelling life of Jesus Christ. The historical deliverance was genuine, but it did not produce the greater spiritual reality towards which God's purpose was moving.

The first Passover brought deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Jesus Christ would accomplish the greater deliverance from sin through His own sacrifice.

The First Passover Pointed Towards Jesus Christ

The first Passover establishes several important truths. God appointed the sacrifice, commanded the application of blood, executed judgment and delivered Israel from bondage. Each action belonged to a genuine historical event, but together they pointed towards a greater redemption that God would accomplish through Jesus Christ.

John the Baptist identified Jesus Christ as the fulfilment towards which the former sacrifices pointed.

He declared in **John 1:29**:

> *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

Peter also connected the sacrifice of Jesus Christ with the requirement that the Passover lamb be without blemish.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 1:18–19**:

> *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"*

The original Passover required a lamb without blemish, but the animal sacrifice could not redeem humanity from sin. Jesus Christ fulfilled what that sacrifice represented through His own precious blood. He accomplished the redemption that the former sacrifice could only point towards.

The Passover lamb was the representation. Jesus Christ is the fulfilment.

The Passover lamb could be sacrificed, its blood applied and its flesh eaten, yet none of those actions could cause someone to be born again. The blood of an animal could not remove sin from the heart or place the Spirit of Christ within a person. Those spiritual realities required the greater sacrifice and completed work of Jesus Christ.

The distinction between representation and fulfilment must therefore remain clear. The original Passover served its appointed purpose within the covenant history of natural Israel. Its greater significance is found in the Person towards whom it pointed.

The animal sacrifice was not the final answer to humanity's need for redemption. God was preparing the way for Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice would accomplish what the former representation could never produce.

This prepares us to examine why God established the Passover as a memorial for Israel and how that memorial reached its fulfilment in Jesus Christ. The historical observance must be understood through the greater spiritual reality revealed in Him.

The first Passover was the representation. Jesus Christ is the promised reality.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the blood appointed as a sign in Egypt point towards Christ's greater redemption?

Personal Reflection

What does the difference between an animal sacrifice and Christ's sacrifice clarify for you? What difference should this make to your own response?

Action Step

What response do you want to make to Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God, rather than to an outward sign? Identify a change needed in the way you remember or speak of Christ's sacrifice, keeping the Person central.

THE PASSOVER MEMORIAL - JESUS CHRIST OUR PASSOVER

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God established the first Passover as both the occasion of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and a memorial for succeeding generations. The sacrifice, blood and deliverance were to remain part of Israel's covenant testimony throughout the appointed period of that covenant. Their greater spiritual significance would be fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

We must understand why God appointed this memorial and how its purpose was completed. The Passover was not intended to establish an endless succession of outward religious ceremonies. It pointed towards Jesus Christ, who would accomplish the redemption that the former sacrifice could only represent.

The Passover Was Established as a Memorial

After giving the instructions concerning the Passover, God commanded Israel to remember the deliverance He had accomplished.

Moses recorded in **Exodus 12:14**:

> *"And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever."*

Notice the word *"memorial."* God wanted succeeding generations to remember how He had delivered their fathers from Egypt. The observance recalled His judgment upon Egypt and His faithfulness towards Israel.

The deliverance had already occurred, and repeating the Passover did not reproduce that historical event. The memorial preserved the testimony of what God had accomplished while pointing towards the greater redemption that would come through Jesus Christ.

God also intended the meaning of the Passover to be explained to the children of Israel. Each generation was to understand why the observance had been established rather than participate without knowing its purpose.

Moses recorded in **Exodus 12:24-27**:

> *"And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped."*

The children were expected to ask, *"What mean ye by this service?"* Their parents were then to explain the judgment upon Egypt and the deliverance accomplished by God. The outward observance had meaning because it was connected with something God had already done.

This establishes an important distinction between a religious action and the truth it represents. The Passover could remind Israel of its deliverance, but the ceremony did not

possess the power to reproduce that deliverance. Neither could it accomplish the greater spiritual redemption towards which God's purpose was moving.

The memorial was therefore a genuine covenant observance with an appointed purpose. It preserved the history of natural Israel while directing attention towards the promised Redeemer.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What was the purpose of the Passover memorial within God's covenant with natural Israel?

Personal Reflection

How does knowing the memorial's original purpose help you understand its place in the Bible? Is there a familiar expectation of yours that now needs reconsidering?

Action Step

What does the original purpose of the Passover memorial mean for your own beliefs about observing communion? What will you personally change so that your confidence remains in Christ rather than in outward participation?

Understanding the Words "For Ever"

God instructed Israel to observe the Passover as an ordinance *"for ever."* These words must be understood within the covenant in which the command was given and in harmony with the fulfilment accomplished through Jesus Christ.

The Passover belonged to the former covenant order established for natural Israel. Its observance continued throughout the generations of that covenant, but its greater spiritual purpose was to point towards the coming Redeemer.

The writer of Hebrews declared in **Hebrews 8:13**:

> *"In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."*

The establishment of the New Covenant meant that the former covenant no longer retained its covenant authority. Its outward ordinances had served their appointed purpose and were fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

The writer further declared in **Hebrews 10:9**:

> *"Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."*

Notice that the first was taken away so that the second could be established. God did not establish two continuing covenant orders, each possessing its own requirements for righteousness and worship. The former order had an appointed purpose, and Jesus Christ brought its fulfilment.

The words *"for ever"* therefore do not require the Church to continue the former Passover ordinance after its spiritual fulfilment. God's command was genuine within its appointed covenant setting, but the New Covenant has brought His people into the greater reality found in Jesus Christ.

The authority of the former ordinance belonged to its appointed covenant. Jesus Christ has fulfilled the purpose towards which that ordinance pointed.

Jesus Christ Our Passover and the Spiritual Feast

Paul identifies Jesus Christ directly as the fulfilment of the Passover.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 5:7-8**:

> *"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is 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."*

Notice Paul's declaration: *"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."*

Paul does not direct believers towards another animal sacrifice or another literal Passover observance. He identifies Jesus Christ as the One who fulfilled the appointed sacrifice. The original Passover involved the blood of an animal and the deliverance of natural Israel, but Jesus Christ accomplished the greater redemption through His own sacrifice.

The former sacrifice could represent redemption, but it could not accomplish redemption from sin. Jesus Christ accomplished what the animal sacrifice could never produce.

The Passover lamb belonged to the shadow. Jesus Christ is the substance.

Paul then declares, *"Therefore let us keep the feast."* These words are especially important because they are sometimes understood as a command to continue an outward Passover observance. However, Paul immediately explains the spiritual meaning of the feast.

He contrasts *"the leaven of malice and wickedness"* with *"the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."* His instruction directs believers towards the spiritual conduct that belongs to their life in Jesus Christ. He is not establishing another Passover sacrifice or requiring the continuation of the former ceremonial meal.

The spiritual meaning of the feast is found in the life of Jesus Christ expressed through His people. Those who are born again already possess Him within, and His life is the source of righteousness, sincerity and truth. Their conduct is to express the spiritual reality they have received.

Christianity is not an attempt to manufacture acceptable behaviour through human effort. It is the life of Jesus Christ dwelling within the believer and being expressed through faith, righteousness, sincerity and truth.

The outward Passover meal could not produce that life. Neither can repeating a religious ceremony make the believer more complete in Jesus Christ. The Person is greater than the outward observance because the spiritual reality is found in Him.

To keep the feast spiritually is to live in the reality of Jesus Christ, not to continue the former outward observance.

The Memorial Has Reached Its Fulfilment

The Passover memorial reminded natural Israel of its deliverance from Egypt, but its greater spiritual significance was fulfilled through Jesus Christ. The former sacrifice pointed towards

redemption, while Jesus Christ accomplished the redemption that the animal sacrifice could never obtain.

The writer of Hebrews declared in **Hebrews 10:10**:

> *"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*

Notice the words *"once for all."* Jesus Christ did not accomplish a partial redemption that must be completed through repeated religious ceremonies. His sacrifice was sufficient to establish the New Covenant and provide the spiritual reality towards which the former ordinances pointed.

The believer does not need another Passover sacrifice or a continuing sacred memorial meal to obtain spiritual fellowship with Jesus Christ. That fellowship is found in the living Person who has already accomplished redemption and now dwells within His born-again people.

We must therefore understand the Passover memorial according to its appointed purpose. It belonged to the covenant history of natural Israel, preserved the testimony of deliverance from Egypt and pointed towards the greater redemption Jesus Christ would accomplish. Once that fulfilment came, the former representation had accomplished its purpose.

The importance of the Passover never made it greater than the Person towards whom it pointed. Its sacrifice, blood, deliverance and memorial all find their greater significance in Jesus Christ.

The Church must not return to outward representations as though the promised redemption remains incomplete. Jesus Christ has been sacrificed, the New Covenant has been established, and the born-again believer possesses His indwelling life. The spiritual reality is no longer awaiting fulfilment.

We do not need to continue the Passover memorial because Jesus Christ has fulfilled the reality it represented.

The first Passover testified of deliverance from Egypt. Jesus Christ accomplished the greater deliverance from sin through His own sacrifice and established the New Covenant. The former representation has fulfilled its purpose, and God's people now possess the Person to whom it pointed.

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. The shadow has fulfilled its purpose, the reality has come, and the believer now possesses Jesus Christ Himself.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do Christ our Passover and the spiritual feast explain the memorial's fulfilment?

Personal Reflection

What has become clearer to you about the words 'for ever' in their covenant setting? What does this reveal about an assumption you have held?

Action Step

What does receiving the fulfilment in Christ mean for your own reliance on a repeated memorial ceremony? Name one belief or practice about the bread and cup that you will reconsider in the light of Christ's completed work.

THE LAST PASSOVER - JESUS CHRIST PREPARES TO FULFIL THE SHADOW

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The final Passover Jesus Christ shared with His disciples was an important moment in the fulfilment of God's redemptive purpose. The Passover had been appointed for natural Israel and observed throughout its generations, but the One towards whom its sacrifice and deliverance pointed had now come. Jesus Christ was approaching the time when He would give His life and accomplish the redemption that the former ordinance could never produce.

We must understand what Jesus was observing, why He desired to share this Passover with His disciples, and how His approaching sacrifice would fulfil its appointed purpose. These circumstances provide the foundation for understanding His words concerning the bread, the cup, His body and His blood.

Jesus Prepared to Observe the Passover

Matthew identifies the occasion upon which Jesus gathered with His disciples.

He wrote in **Matthew 26:17-19**:

> *"Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover."*

The disciples asked, *"Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?"* They understood that Jesus intended to observe the Passover and sought His instructions concerning its preparation. Jesus directed them to make the necessary arrangements, declaring that He would keep the Passover with them.

This establishes the historical setting. Jesus was observing the Passover God had appointed for natural Israel, not gathering His disciples for an unrelated religious occasion. Everything that followed must therefore be understood through the purpose and fulfilment of that Passover.

Within His instructions, Jesus declared, *"My time is at hand."* He knew that His suffering and death were approaching, and He was preparing to accomplish the greater redemption towards which the former Passover sacrifices had pointed.

Throughout Israel's generations, Passover lambs had been sacrificed according to the former covenant. Yet none of those sacrifices could obtain eternal redemption, remove sin or produce the new birth. Jesus Christ was now preparing to accomplish what those sacrifices could only represent.

His approaching death was not an unexpected interruption to His ministry. It belonged to the purpose of God that was being fulfilled through Him.

Luke provides further information concerning the preparation.

He wrote in **Luke 22:7-13**:

> *"Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover."*

Luke identifies Peter and John as the disciples sent to prepare the meal. Jesus gave them specific instructions concerning the place where they would gather, and they found everything as He had said. They then prepared the Passover.

The repeated references to preparing and eating the Passover confirm that this was the observance already known among Israel. Jesus had not yet given His body in sacrifice, and the New Covenant had not yet been established through His blood. The disciples were preparing an outward observance whose greater spiritual significance was about to be fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does the preparation recorded in the Gospels identify this meal as the Passover?

Personal Reflection

What difference does its setting before Christ's death make to your understanding of the bread and cup? Which part of your own understanding does it challenge?

Action Step

Which of Jesus' words at that meal would you like to consider more carefully in their original setting? Explain what you will rely on for fellowship with Christ and what ceremony-based assumption you need to correct.

"With Desire I Have Desired to Eat This Passover"

When the appointed hour arrived, Jesus expressed the importance of the occasion.

Luke recorded in **Luke 22:14-16**:

> *"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. 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 any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God."*

Jesus declared, *"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer."* His words connected the occasion directly with His approaching sacrifice. He understood that the time had come for the greater purpose of the Passover to be accomplished.

The expression *"this passover"* identifies the observance, while *"before I suffer"* reveals its relationship to what Jesus was about to accomplish. The former covenant had pointed forward through sacrifice and deliverance. The promised Redeemer was now preparing to give His own life.

Jesus then declared that the Passover would be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. His words *"until it be fulfilled"* established that the former observance pointed towards a greater spiritual reality. That fulfilment was approaching through His own sacrifice.

The first Passover had been established when God delivered natural Israel from Egypt. Its sacrifice, blood and memorial belonged to that covenant setting, but their greater significance pointed towards the redemption Jesus Christ would accomplish. The kingdom of God would not be established through the continued sacrifice of Passover lambs or the repetition of the former outward observance.

The promised spiritual reality would come through the completed work of Jesus Christ and His indwelling life within those who were born again. The fulfilment was approaching through the very Person who sat with the disciples. He was preparing to accomplish the redemption that the Passover had represented throughout Israel's generations.

The Passover had pointed forward to Jesus Christ. The appointed Redeemer was now preparing to fulfil what the former observance represented.

The Last Passover Stood at the Point of Fulfilment

The final Passover must be understood within the movement from the former covenant to the New Covenant. Jesus Christ had come to fulfil God's promises, and His approaching sacrifice would accomplish the spiritual reality that the former ordinances could never produce.

Jesus declared in **Matthew 5:17**:

> *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."*

Jesus did not come to destroy God's former purpose. He came to fulfil it. The Passover was not meaningless because its outward observance would cease to possess covenant authority. Its true significance was revealed in the Person towards whom it had pointed.

The Last Passover therefore stood at a decisive moment in God's redemptive purpose. The former animal sacrifices had represented a greater sacrifice, and Jesus Christ was now preparing to give His own life. Through Him, eternal redemption would be obtained and the New Covenant established.

The Last Passover was not the beginning of another permanent outward ceremony. It stood at the point where the former representation was approaching its fulfilment in Jesus Christ Himself.

This historical setting is essential when examining what Jesus subsequently said concerning the bread and cup. He was observing the Passover appointed for natural Israel, knew that His suffering was approaching, and had declared that the observance would be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

The words Jesus spoke concerning the bread and cup belonged to the final Passover and directed attention towards His approaching sacrifice. Jesus Christ fulfilled the spiritual reality those elements represented. He did not establish another permanent outward ordinance for His New Covenant Church. His body was given, His blood was shed, and the redemption towards which the Passover pointed was accomplished.

The bread and cup represented His body and blood, but they could not accomplish redemption. That required the sacrifice of Jesus Christ Himself. The outward representation was reaching its appointed fulfilment as the promised Redeemer prepared to give His life.

The first Passover pointed forward. The Last Passover stood at the point of fulfilment. Jesus Christ Himself was the promised reality.

His sacrifice would accomplish what the former observance had represented, and the New Covenant would bring believers into the spiritual life that no outward ceremony could produce. The Person was greater than the representation, and His completed work would establish the reality towards which the shadow pointed.

The shadow was approaching its appointed end because the substance had come in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did Jesus' approaching suffering bring the Passover to its point of fulfilment?

Personal Reflection

What has His desire to share this Passover helped you understand about His coming sacrifice? What difference should this make to your own response?

Action Step

How might His willing approach to that sacrifice deepen your own trust in Him? Identify a change needed in the way you remember or speak of Christ's sacrifice, keeping the Person central.

"THIS IS MY BODY" - THE BREAD AND CUP POINTED TO HIS SACRIFICE

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The words Jesus Christ spoke concerning the bread and cup at His final Passover are central to understanding their spiritual significance. For centuries, these words have been used to support the continuing observance of literal communion. Their meaning must therefore be

understood through the sacrifice Jesus was about to accomplish and the fulfilment of the Passover appointed for natural Israel.

Jesus was not presenting ordinary bread and wine as sources of spiritual life. He was directing His disciples towards His own body and blood, through which redemption would be accomplished. The distinction between the outward representation and the Person it represented is essential.

The Bread Pointed to His Genuine Body

Luke recorded the words and actions of Jesus in **Luke 22:17-20**:

> *"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. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."*

Notice the words *"This is my body which is given for you."* Jesus was speaking before His suffering and death. His genuine human body had not yet been given in sacrifice, and His blood had not yet been shed.

The bread He held before the disciples directed attention towards the body He was about to give. Its significance was not found in spiritual power within the bread, but in Jesus Christ Himself and the redemption He would accomplish through His sacrifice.

The former Passover involved the sacrifice of an animal, but the greater redemption required the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The bread represented the body that would be given, while His actual sacrifice would accomplish what the outward representation could never produce.

The bread represented His body. Jesus Christ Himself gave His genuine body in sacrifice and accomplished the redemption that ordinary bread could never produce. The representation pointed forward, but the Person accomplished the fulfilment.

Mark also recorded Jesus' words at the final Passover.

He wrote in **Mark 14:22-25**:

> *"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God."*

The body Jesus spoke of was His genuine human body. His sacrifice was not an imaginary event or a spiritual representation without actual suffering. Jesus Christ truly experienced human life, suffered and gave Himself for the redemption of humanity.

This distinction must be preserved when interpreting the bread. Recognising its representative meaning does not weaken the reality of His humanity or His sacrifice. The bread was not His suffering body, but His own body would be given through the sacrifice He was approaching.

The disciples were therefore being directed towards the redemptive work of the Person standing before them. The bread could illustrate that work, but it could never become the sacrifice through which redemption was accomplished.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why did the bread point to Jesus' genuine body without becoming His sacrifice?

Personal Reflection

What has the distinction between the bread and His body clarified for you? Is there a familiar expectation of yours that now needs reconsidering?

Action Step

How could this distinction guide what you personally believe about receiving Christ through physical bread? What will you personally change so that your confidence remains in Christ rather than in outward participation?

The Cup Pointed to His Blood and the New Covenant

Matthew provides further explanation concerning the cup.

He wrote in **Matthew 26:26-29**:

> *"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*

Jesus connected the cup with His blood, declaring that it would be shed *"for many for the remission of sins."* The remission of sins would not be accomplished through the contents of the cup. It required the blood of Jesus Christ shed through His approaching sacrifice.

The cup represented the blood through which the New Covenant would be established. It could not remove sin, redeem humanity or produce the spiritual life that believers would receive through the new birth.

The cup represented His blood. His blood accomplished redemption.

Notice also that Jesus continued to describe the contents of the cup as *"the fruit of the vine."* He did not declare that the drink had physically become His blood. His genuine human body remained before the disciples, and the suffering through which His blood would be shed was still approaching.

This establishes the distinction between the representation and the sacrifice. The bread and cup were connected with what Jesus Christ was about to accomplish, but they did not become that redemptive work.

Neither do these Scriptures establish that a minister's prayer can transform ordinary bread and wine or juice into the spiritual life of Jesus Christ. Physical food cannot produce the new birth, remove sin or establish fellowship with God. These spiritual realities are found in Jesus Christ Himself.

The spiritual benefit of His sacrifice is received through faith in Him. His genuine body was given and His blood was shed, but the life obtained through that sacrifice cannot be produced through eating and drinking physical elements.

The Passover lamb had also been an outward representation pointing towards something greater. Its sacrifice could not obtain eternal redemption, just as bread and a cup could not accomplish the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In both cases, the representation must be distinguished from the spiritual reality.

A representation cannot become the Redeemer. The physical elements could illustrate His approaching sacrifice, but the sacrifice itself required Jesus Christ to give His own life.

His Sacrifice Was Once for All

The writer of Hebrews declared in **Hebrews 10:10**:

> *"By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."*

Notice the words *"once for all."* Jesus Christ did not accomplish a partial sacrifice requiring completion through repeated religious ceremonies. His offering accomplished what the former covenant sacrifices could never produce.

The bread and cup could direct attention towards His approaching sacrifice, but they could not add anything to its completed effectiveness. Neither could continued ceremonial observance supply a spiritual benefit missing from Jesus Christ.

His body was given, His blood was shed and redemption was accomplished. The New Covenant was established through His completed work, not through the repetition of an outward representation.

The sacrifice was accomplished once for all. The spiritual reality is found in the Person who gave Himself.

The born-again believer possesses Jesus Christ through His indwelling Spirit. Spiritual fellowship with Him does not depend upon the continual consumption of bread and wine or juice. The believer has received the Person whose body and blood accomplished redemption.

This is why the Last Passover must be understood through fulfilment rather than the permanent continuation of its outward representations. Jesus identified the bread with His body and the cup with His blood because He was approaching the sacrifice through which the New Covenant would be established.

We do not continue the bread and cup as a sacred Gospel ordinance because their appointed purpose has been fulfilled. Nor do we require an outward ceremony to make His sacrifice effective or complete the salvation already received through Him.

The believer possesses more than a reminder of Jesus Christ. Through the new birth, the believer possesses the living Redeemer Himself, whose Spirit now dwells within.

We possess the Redeemer, not simply a reminder of the Redeemer.

The bread pointed towards His body. The cup pointed towards His blood. Jesus Christ Himself accomplished the redemption they represented.

The sacrifice is complete. The shadow has fulfilled its purpose. The Person has come, and the believer possesses Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the cup and Christ's once-for-all sacrifice explain the blood of the New Covenant?

Personal Reflection

What does the completeness of His sacrifice mean to your understanding of forgiveness? What does this reveal about an assumption you have held?

Action Step

Is there something in your own thinking about repeated ceremonies that you want to reconsider in the light of His finished sacrifice? Name one belief or practice about the bread and cup that you will reconsider in the light of Christ's completed work.

THE NEW COVENANT ESTABLISHED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST

BACK TO CONTENTS

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ accomplished more than the fulfilment of the Passover. Through His death, He brought the former covenant to its appointed fulfilment and established the New Covenant. This was a decisive change in God's dealings with His people because the outward ordinances of the former covenant gave way to the spiritual reality accomplished through Jesus Christ.

We must understand what established the New Covenant and how believers receive the spiritual life it provides. The answer is found in the completed sacrifice and indwelling life of Jesus Christ, not in the repetition of religious ceremonies.

The New Covenant Was Established Through His Death

The writer of Hebrews identifies Jesus Christ as the Mediator of the New Covenant and explains how its promises were established.

He wrote in **Hebrews 9:15**:

> *"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."*

Notice the words *"by means of death."* The New Covenant was not established through ceremonial eating and drinking. It was established through the death of Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice accomplished redemption.

The bread and cup at the Last Passover represented what Jesus Christ was about to accomplish. The spiritual reality required the giving of His genuine body and the shedding of His blood. No continuing outward ceremony can repeat His sacrifice or add anything necessary to the redemption He obtained.

The establishment of the New Covenant also meant that the former covenant had fulfilled its appointed purpose.

The writer of Hebrews declared in **Hebrews 10:9**:

> *"Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."*

Notice the order: *"He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."* Jesus Christ did not establish the New Covenant alongside the former covenant so that both would continue with equal authority. He fulfilled the first and established the second through His own sacrifice.

The writer also declared in **Hebrews 8:13**:

> *"In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."*

The former covenant had served its appointed purpose, but its sacrifices, ceremonies and outward requirements were not the final spiritual reality. They pointed forward towards the greater redemption accomplished through Jesus Christ.

The Temple and former religious practices remained visible for a period after the New Covenant had been established. Their historical continuation did not restore the covenant authority that had been fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

The former covenant was not replaced by another collection of outward ceremonies. It was fulfilled through the Person who established the New Covenant.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why was Christ's death necessary to establish the New Covenant?

Personal Reflection

What has helped you understand the difference between a new covenant and a new set of ceremonies? Which part of your own understanding does it challenge?

Action Step

How might this truth guide the way you personally approach God through Jesus Christ? Name one choice in your own life that should change because of this truth, and explain why.

One Sacrifice Accomplished Complete Redemption

Under the former covenant, sacrifices were offered repeatedly because they could not accomplish the complete redemption that Jesus Christ would obtain.

The writer of Hebrews declared in **Hebrews 10:12-14**:

> *"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*

Notice the words *"one sacrifice for sins for ever"* and *"by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."* Jesus Christ accomplished through one sacrifice what the repeated offerings of the former covenant could never produce. His redemption was complete and required no further sacrifice or outward ceremony to make it sufficient.

This is essential when considering the bread and cup. If Jesus Christ has already accomplished redemption, no continuing ceremonial meal can contribute another necessary part of that work. Neither can repeating the ceremony make the born-again believer more complete in Him.

The believer possesses the Person whose offering has already accomplished the promised spiritual reality. Salvation is complete at the new birth because Jesus Christ has obtained eternal redemption.

The sacrifice is complete. The believer is complete in Christ. No outward ordinance can add to what He has accomplished.

The New Covenant Establishes One Spiritual People

The New Covenant brings God's people into an inward spiritual relationship through Jesus Christ. The former covenant contained outward ordinances, but the New Covenant establishes the reality of God's life dwelling within His people.

The writer of Hebrews declared in **Hebrews 8:10**:

> *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:"*

Notice God's promise concerning the mind and heart. The New Covenant is not centred upon outward religious performances, but upon the inward work of God and the spiritual relationship established through Jesus Christ.

The believer does not obtain this relationship through ceremonial observance. At the new birth, Jesus Christ comes to dwell within the believer, and His life becomes the source of righteousness, holiness and obedience.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

The identifying reality of belonging to Jesus Christ is His indwelling Spirit. A person does not enter His spiritual body through eating bread, drinking from a cup or performing another outward religious action. Every born-again believer possesses Jesus Christ Himself.

The New Covenant also establishes the spiritual unity of those who belong to Him. Under the former covenant, natural Israel possessed ordinances and ceremonial distinctions that separated the nation from other peoples. Through Jesus Christ, that former separation was removed, and Jewish and Gentile believers were brought together into one spiritual body.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:14-16**:

> *"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:"*

Paul identifies Jesus Christ as the One who made both one. The New Covenant does not establish separate spiritual peoples with different means of belonging to God. Through the new birth, Jewish and Gentile believers receive the same Spirit of Christ and belong to His one spiritual body.

Paul also identifies *"the law of commandments contained in ordinances"* as having been abolished through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The former outward distinctions no longer determine the spiritual identity of God's people. The Church is identified through the indwelling Spirit of Christ, not participation in a ceremonial meal or another outward ordinance.

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ therefore established the New Covenant, fulfilled the former covenant and made the promised spiritual life available through the new birth. The believer does not remain outside that reality, waiting for a religious ceremony to bring them into fellowship with God.

Jesus Christ has come as Spirit to dwell within His people. His life is the reality that the former outward representations could never produce. The Church does not need to preserve a continuing ceremonial Passover to possess the redemption He has already accomplished.

The bread and cup at the Last Passover directed attention towards His approaching sacrifice. Their significance must now be understood through His body and blood, the redemption He accomplished and the New Covenant established through His completed work.

The New Covenant was established through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, not through the continuation of an outward ordinance.

The believer possesses the Person who fulfilled the shadow. His sacrifice is complete, His New Covenant is established, and His Spirit dwells within every born-again believer.

The representation cannot add to the reality because the reality is Jesus Christ Himself.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do complete redemption and one spiritual people follow from Christ's sacrifice?

Personal Reflection

What does belonging to one people in Christ mean to your understanding of fellowship? What difference should this make to your own response?

Action Step

How could you welcome another believer on the basis of Christ rather than a shared religious ceremony? Consider someone whose background differs from yours. What change in your thinking or treatment of that person is needed?

"THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME" - WHAT DID JESUS MEAN?

BACK TO CONTENTS

One of the principal Scriptures used to support the continuing practice of literal communion is the instruction Jesus gave at His final Passover: *"This do in remembrance of me."* For

generations, Christian congregations have understood these words as establishing a continuing ceremony involving bread and wine or juice. Yet His instruction must be understood through the Passover He was fulfilling and the New Covenant He was about to establish.

The question is not whether Jesus Christ should be remembered. His sacrifice, resurrection and accomplished redemption remain central to the Gospel. The question is whether remembering Him requires a continuing outward ceremony after the spiritual reality towards which it pointed has been fulfilled.

Remembrance Was Already Part of the Passover

God established the Passover as a memorial of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Each generation was to remember what He had accomplished and understand the meaning of the sacrifice He had appointed.

Moses recorded in **Exodus 12:14**:

> *"And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever."*

The memorial reminded Israel of an accomplished deliverance. Subsequent observances did not reproduce the original event or provide another deliverance through the ceremony. They preserved the testimony of what God had done.

The Passover also belonged to a covenant whose greater spiritual purpose pointed towards Jesus Christ. Its sacrifice represented the redemption He would accomplish, but the former observance could not produce that redemption.

The Passover memorial pointed forward towards Jesus Christ, whose sacrifice accomplished the promised redemption. Once He fulfilled its appointed purpose, the outward memorial no longer possessed continuing covenant authority. Under the New Covenant, believers remember Jesus Christ through His Word and the indwelling Spirit, not through the continuation of a sacred bread-and-cup ordinance.

The memorial pointed towards the greater redemption. Jesus Christ came to accomplish that redemption.

Jesus' Instruction and Paul's Teaching to the Corinthians

Luke recorded the words of Jesus in **Luke 22:19-20**:

> *"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. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you."*

Jesus spoke these words during His final Passover, before His body was given in sacrifice and His blood was shed. The bread and cup belonged to the outward observance He was fulfilling, while His words directed the disciples towards the redemption He was about to accomplish.

Notice His declaration: *"This is my body which is given for you."* The significance was found in the body Jesus would give, not in spiritual power contained within the bread. Likewise, His words concerning the cup directed attention towards His blood through which the New Covenant would be established.

The instruction to remember Him was genuine and must be honoured. Yet that remembrance centred upon Jesus Christ and His approaching sacrifice. The outward elements could represent His sacrifice, but they could neither accomplish redemption nor produce the spiritual life that would come through Him.

Paul later repeated Jesus' words when addressing the Corinthian congregation.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 11:23-26**:

> *"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."*

Paul recalled the words of Jesus while correcting conduct that contradicted the spiritual fellowship the Corinthians professed. They needed to recognise the significance of the Lord's body and blood and the Person whose sacrifice they were failing to honour.

Paul's words *"as oft as ye drink it"* do not establish the bread and cup as a continuing Gospel ordinance. The final Passover pointed towards the sacrifice Jesus Christ would accomplish, and that sacrifice has been completed. The outward representation has fulfilled its appointed purpose.

The Scriptures establish that Jesus Christ is our Passover, the living bread and the spiritual reality of true communion. The New Covenant does not require believers to continue an outward representation when they already possess the Person whom it represented.

We remember Jesus Christ through His Word and indwelling Spirit. We proclaim His accomplished redemption through the Gospel. We do not continue a ceremonial bread-and-cup observance because the reality has already come in Jesus Christ.

Remembrance Through the Holy Ghost and the Gospel

Jesus also explained how His disciples would be taught and reminded of His words after His departure.

He declared in **John 14:26**:

> *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."*

Jesus connected remembrance with the Holy Ghost. He promised that His disciples would be taught and reminded of His words through the Spirit.

Jesus Christ returned on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 31 as the Holy Spirit. The promised Comforter was not another divine Person replacing Him, but Jesus Christ Himself returning as Spirit to dwell within His people. The Person had come, the New Covenant reality was established, and every person born again receives that same Jesus Christ through His indwelling Spirit.

Under the New Covenant, believers therefore possess something greater than an outward memorial. They possess the living Christ within, whose Spirit teaches them and brings His words to remembrance.

The believer receives Jesus Christ at the new birth. His indwelling life is not produced by a ceremonial meal, and repeated participation in an outward observance cannot supply more of the Person already received.

The Person has come. His Spirit dwells within His people, and His Word continually reveals the redemption He accomplished.

The Gospel Keeps Jesus Christ Before Us

Paul also connected remembrance of Jesus Christ with the proclamation of the Gospel.

He wrote in **2 Timothy 2:8**:

> *"Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:"*

Paul directed Timothy's attention towards Jesus Christ, His genuine humanity and His resurrection. He did not identify a ceremonial meal as the necessary means of maintaining that remembrance.

Paul explained the same Gospel to the Corinthians.

He wrote in **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**:

> *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"*

Notice Paul's words *"keep in memory what I preached unto you."* He connected remembrance with retaining the Gospel concerning the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. These were accomplished events through which redemption had been provided.

The Gospel continues to proclaim what Jesus Christ accomplished. Through His Word, people hear the truth concerning His sacrifice and resurrection, while those who believe receive His life through the new birth.

Remembrance therefore remains central to the life and ministry of the Church. However, the Gospel does not depend upon repeating a ceremonial Passover to make Jesus Christ known.

The Person Is Greater Than the Memorial

Jesus Christ is not absent from His Church, waiting to be supplied through a physical representation. He came as Spirit at Pentecost and personally dwells within every born-again believer.

This does not mean that believers no longer need to hear, study or meditate upon the Scriptures. The Word of God continually reveals Jesus Christ, strengthens understanding and teaches believers to walk according to His indwelling life. Such growth does not supply a missing portion of salvation because the believer is already complete in Christ.

The same principle governs remembrance. We remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ because it has been accomplished. A ceremony is not required to complete that sacrifice, maintain its effectiveness or provide the believer with the life already received through the new birth.

A person may participate regularly in a solemn religious observance without understanding the spiritual reality it represents. The outward action cannot establish genuine faith, produce the new birth or create communion with Jesus Christ.

Remembrance without the living Person cannot provide the spiritual reality. The born-again believer already possesses the Person.

The final Passover stood at the point where the former covenant representation was approaching its fulfilment. Jesus directed His disciples towards the body He would give and the blood He would shed. Through His sacrifice, He accomplished the redemption that the former Passover could only represent.

The New Covenant was established through that completed sacrifice. The believer now receives Jesus Christ Himself, whose indwelling life provides the spiritual reality that no outward memorial could produce.

We reject the continuation of literal bread and wine or juice as a Gospel ordinance because Jesus Christ has fulfilled the reality those outward elements represented. His sacrifice has been accomplished, His New Covenant established, and His Spirit now dwells within every born-again believer.

We do not require the outward memorial because we possess the Person. The shadow has passed, and the reality has come in Jesus Christ.

The Gospel continually proclaims His sacrifice and resurrection. His Word reveals what He has accomplished, and His indwelling Spirit brings His truth to remembrance.

We do not reject the remembrance of Jesus Christ. We reject the teaching that remembering Him requires a continuing outward ordinance after its appointed fulfilment.

The memorial pointed towards the Person. The Person has come, His sacrifice is complete, and His life now dwells within His people.

We possess Jesus Christ Himself. The Person is greater than the memorial, and the fulfilled reality is greater than the outward representation.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the Passover setting, Paul's words to the Corinthians and the Holy Ghost's work help explain remembrance of Christ?

Personal Reflection

What has become clearer to you about remembering the Person rather than depending on a memorial meal? Is there a familiar expectation of yours that now needs reconsidering?

Action Step

How could the Gospel and the Holy Ghost's teaching help you keep Christ before you in your own life? What will you change in your understanding or practice so that the saving work belongs to Jesus Christ alone?

"I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE" - THE TRUE BREAD FROM HEAVEN

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Before Jesus Christ shared His final Passover with the disciples, He had already taught the people concerning the true bread from heaven. His teaching in John chapter 6 establishes the difference between natural food and the spiritual life found in Him. This distinction is essential when examining the bread used at the Last Passover and whether that outward representation was intended to continue as a Gospel ordinance.

Jesus did not direct the people towards a ceremonial meal through which they could receive everlasting life. He directed them towards Himself as the source of that life. The true bread is not something we purchase, prepare or eat physically. The true bread is Jesus Christ Himself.

Natural Bread Cannot Give Everlasting Life

Jesus had fed the multitude, and many who had received the food continued seeking Him. He knew that their interest was connected with satisfying natural hunger, so He directed their attention towards something greater.

John recorded in **John 6:26-27**:

> *"Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."*

Jesus knew that the people had eaten the loaves and were satisfied, but natural food could not provide the everlasting life they needed. He therefore instructed them, *"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."*

Natural bread sustains the physical body for a time, but its benefit is temporary. A person must eat again because physical food cannot give everlasting life. Jesus was directing the people towards the spiritual nourishment found in Him.

This distinction must govern our understanding of the Lord's Supper. If Jesus directed the people beyond natural bread towards the life found in Himself, we must not return to physical bread and assign to it the spiritual work that belongs to Jesus Christ.

The people then asked what they should do to accomplish the works of God.

John recorded in **John 6:28-29**:

> *"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."*

Notice the answer Jesus gave. He did not direct them towards another religious ceremony, a special meal or an outward action through which spiritual life could be obtained. He declared, *"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."*

Jesus directed their attention towards faith in Himself. Everlasting life was not something they could produce through religious performance. They needed to believe on the Person through whom God would provide that life.

The same principle governs the New Covenant. A person does not receive Jesus Christ through eating physical bread or drinking wine or juice. The sinner must believe the Gospel and be born again, receiving the life of Jesus Christ through His Spirit.

The new birth is God's work. No outward ordinance can produce it or place the indwelling life of Jesus Christ within a person.

The people also referred to the manna that natural Israel had eaten during its journey through the wilderness.

John recorded in **John 6:30-31**:

> *"They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat."*

The manna was a genuine provision from God. It sustained the natural lives of the Israelites during their journey and demonstrated His care for them. However, those who ate the manna remained subject to physical death.

The manna could not produce everlasting life or establish the inward spiritual relationship that would come through Jesus Christ. God had provided food for the natural body, but the greater provision was the spiritual life found in His Son.

The people were concentrating upon the former miracle of bread from heaven. Yet the true bread from heaven was standing before them, and they needed to recognise the Person whom God had sent.

Jesus Christ Is the True Bread From Heaven

Jesus corrected the people's understanding by distinguishing the manna from the greater provision of God.

He declared in **John 6:32-34**:

> *"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread."*

Jesus distinguished between the natural bread provided in the wilderness and the true bread that gives life to the world. He declared, *"For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world."*

The true bread is a Person. Jesus was not describing another physical substance or a religious ceremony through which everlasting life would be distributed. He was identifying the One who came from heaven to give life to the world.

This is central to understanding the fulfilment of the former covenant representations. Natural Israel had received outward provisions that pointed towards something greater. Jesus Christ had now come as the Person through whom the promised spiritual reality would be accomplished.

The people asked for this bread, but they still needed to understand that Jesus was not offering another form of natural nourishment. The bread they needed was the living Christ Himself.

Everlasting Life Comes Through Faith in Jesus Christ

Jesus then made the declaration that brings His teaching into focus.

He said in **John 6:35**:

> *"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."*

Notice His words, *"I am the bread of life."* Jesus did not identify the bread of life as an outward ceremony that would be established later. He identified Himself as the source of the spiritual life that satisfies the need of the soul.

He then explained how a person receives that life: *"He that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."*

Coming to Jesus Christ and believing on Him are directly connected with receiving the life He provides. Jesus did not direct the people towards physical eating and drinking as the means of obtaining everlasting life. He directed them towards faith in the living Person.

Natural hunger returns after eating because physical food sustains the body temporarily. Jesus was speaking of the everlasting life received through Him, which natural food could never produce.

A person cannot obtain spiritual life by eating bread, but the person who believes on Jesus Christ receives the life that He alone can give.

Jesus continued by distinguishing between those who had seen Him and those who truly believed.

He declared in **John 6:36-37**:

> *"But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

Some had seen Jesus Christ, witnessed His works and eaten the bread He provided, yet they did not believe on Him. Their experience of a physical miracle had not produced saving faith. Jesus therefore directed attention towards coming to Him and believing on Him.

This establishes an important distinction between outward experience and spiritual life. A person may witness remarkable events, participate in religious activities and become familiar with Christian teaching while remaining spiritually unchanged. The determining relationship is found in Jesus Christ Himself.

Under the New Covenant, the person who believes and is born again receives Jesus Christ through His Spirit. The believer does not receive a portion of Christ through a physical element but possesses the living Person.

Some who heard Jesus also struggled to understand His declaration that He had come down from heaven.

John recorded in **John 6:41-42**:

> *"The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?"*

They considered Jesus according to what they understood of His natural life and family. His declaration concerning heaven did not agree with their limited understanding of the Person before them.

Jesus Christ was genuinely human, yet He was also the revelation of the one true God. His divine origin and the spiritual life He gives cannot be explained by treating Him as an ordinary man whose significance depended upon natural birth.

The people needed to recognise who Jesus Christ truly was. He was not another prophet offering natural bread as God's final provision. He was the true bread from heaven, the One through whom everlasting life would be received.

Their misunderstanding also shows why the spiritual meaning of Jesus' words must be understood according to what He was revealing. Concentrating upon outward circumstances can prevent a person from recognising the greater spiritual reality found in Him.

Believing on Jesus Christ Brings Everlasting Life

Jesus brought the central truth of His teaching together when He spoke again of believing on Him and receiving everlasting life.

He declared in **John 6:47-50**:

> *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die."*

Notice the words *"He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."* Jesus identifies Himself as the bread of life and connects everlasting life directly with believing on Him. He then contrasts that spiritual life with the temporary nourishment supplied by manna.

Those who ate manna in the wilderness eventually died. The natural bread sustained their bodies, but it could not deliver them from death. Jesus Christ provides the spiritual life that natural food can never give.

This distinction is essential when examining the Lord's Supper. A person may eat bread and drink wine or juice while remaining spiritually dead. No ceremony can produce the new birth, remove sin or place Jesus Christ within the heart.

The source of everlasting life is not found in what a person eats or drinks physically. It is found in Jesus Christ, who gives His life to those who believe on Him.

The true bread gives spiritual life because the true bread is Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus then connected the living bread with the sacrifice He would accomplish.

He declared in **John 6:51**:

> *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

Jesus declared that the bread He would give was His flesh, *"which I will give for the life of the world."* These words directed attention towards His approaching suffering and death. The greater spiritual nourishment He provides is inseparable from the redemption accomplished through His sacrifice.

His genuine human body would be given, and His blood would be shed. The spiritual meaning of His words does not diminish the reality of His humanity or the sacrifice He was preparing to accomplish.

Yet everlasting life would not be received through physically consuming His body or eating ordinary bread representing it. The promise concerned the living Person and the redemption He would accomplish through giving Himself.

Jesus Christ is both the promised Redeemer and the living bread. His sacrifice accomplished redemption, and through the new birth, His indwelling life becomes the spiritual reality possessed by those who believe.

John chapter 6 therefore establishes a distinction that must govern our understanding of the Last Passover. Natural bread sustains the body, but Jesus Christ gives everlasting life. The manna belonged to God's provision for natural Israel, while Jesus Christ is the true bread from heaven.

The people sought natural food, but Jesus directed them towards Himself. They asked what works they should perform, but He instructed them to believe on Him. They remembered the manna, but He declared that the true bread had come from heaven.

The same principle governs the bread used at the Last Passover. It could point towards the body Jesus Christ would give in sacrifice, but it could not produce His spiritual life. The New Covenant brings believers into the greater reality through Jesus Christ dwelling within them as Spirit.

The believer does not need a continuing dependence upon physical food to possess spiritual life. Through faith and the new birth, the believer receives Jesus Christ Himself and is complete in Him. His life is the spiritual reality that no outward ordinance can produce.

Jesus Christ is the bread of life. Those who believe on Him receive everlasting life, and every born-again believer possesses the Person Himself.

The true bread has come from heaven. We do not need a continuing outward representation to obtain the spiritual life already found in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Jesus distinguish natural bread from the everlasting life received through faith in Him?

Personal Reflection

What does His promise to the person who believes on Him mean to you personally?

Action Step

What response do you want to make to Jesus as the true bread from heaven? Explain what you believe or still want to understand. Name one belief or practice about the bread and cup that you will reconsider in the light of Christ's completed work.

EATING HIS FLESH AND DRINKING HIS BLOOD - SPIRITUAL PARTAKING

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Jesus Christ declared that He is the living bread from heaven and that those who believe on Him receive everlasting life. He then spoke of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, words that caused confusion among those who heard Him. These expressions must be understood spiritually because they concern receiving the life of Jesus Christ, not physically consuming His body and blood or eating ordinary food.

This teaching is essential to understanding true communion. Jesus Christ Himself is the spiritual food, and the believer partakes of Him through faith and the new birth.

Eating His Flesh and Drinking His Blood

John recorded the words of Jesus in **John 6:51-52**:

> *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"*

Jesus was speaking about everlasting life, but those listening concentrated upon the physical meaning of eating His flesh. They could not understand how He could give them His body to eat.

Their response reveals the difficulty of interpreting spiritual language through natural understanding. Jesus had already identified Himself as the bread of life and connected everlasting life with believing on Him. Yet His hearers continued thinking in terms of physical food.

The same distinction must be preserved when examining the Lord's Supper. Ordinary bread and wine or juice cannot provide spiritual communion with Jesus Christ. Physical elements cannot accomplish what belongs to the living Person.

Jesus continued in **John 6:53-58**:

> *"Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever."*

Jesus connected eating His flesh and drinking His blood with everlasting life and dwelling in Him. These are spiritual realities that physical eating cannot produce.

The manna sustained the natural lives of the Israelites, but those who ate it eventually died. Jesus Christ was speaking of a greater life, received through Him rather than through natural nourishment.

Notice His declaration: *"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."*

This reveals the spiritual relationship Jesus was describing. The believer possesses Christ, and Christ dwells within the believer. True partaking concerns receiving the Person whose life provides everlasting spiritual nourishment.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood reveal about receiving His life?

Personal Reflection

How does Christ dwelling in the believer help you understand true partaking? Which part of your own understanding does it challenge?

Action Step

What does receiving the living Person mean for your own understanding of communion with Him? Explain what you will rely on for fellowship with Christ and what ceremony-based assumption you need to correct.

His Genuine Sacrifice and the Life Received

When Jesus declared that He would give His flesh for the life of the world, He was directing attention towards His approaching sacrifice. His words concerning spiritual eating must never weaken the reality of His genuine humanity, suffering or death.

Jesus Christ genuinely possessed a human body, suffered and gave His life. His blood was shed through the sacrifice that accomplished redemption. The spiritual meaning of partaking of Him does not make His physical suffering or the giving of His body unreal.

We must distinguish between the sacrifice Jesus accomplished and how its spiritual benefits are received. His body was genuinely given, but physically consuming human flesh or blood cannot provide everlasting life. Neither can ordinary bread and wine or juice reproduce His sacrifice or impart His indwelling life.

His body was genuinely given. His blood was genuinely shed. The spiritual life obtained through His sacrifice is received by faith in Jesus Christ.

John also identifies the relationship between possessing Jesus Christ and possessing life.

He wrote in **1 John 5:12**:

> *"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."*

The statement is direct. The person who possesses the Son possesses life, while the person who does not possess Him does not have that life. John directs attention towards the Person Himself rather than an outward ceremony.

At the new birth, Jesus Christ comes to dwell within the believer through His Spirit. The believer does not receive a temporary portion of Christ that must be renewed through a weekly or monthly observance. The living Person is received, and His indwelling life establishes the spiritual relationship.

True communion is therefore greater than an occasional religious experience. It is the living relationship established through Jesus Christ dwelling within the born-again believer.

The believer possesses the Person, and the Person is the source of spiritual life.

"It Is the Spirit That Quickeneth"

Some who heard Jesus found His teaching difficult to accept. He therefore directed them towards the spiritual nature of His words.

John recorded in **John 6:60-63**:

> *"Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."*

Jesus declared, *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."* He then explained that His words are spirit and life. He was directing His hearers beyond a natural understanding of eating and drinking towards the spiritual life found in Him.

This did not diminish the importance of His genuine human body. Jesus had already declared that His flesh would be given for the life of the world. His sacrifice was real, but physical eating could not produce the spiritual benefits accomplished through that sacrifice.

The Spirit gives life. Ordinary food cannot produce the new birth, place someone into the Church or establish spiritual fellowship with Jesus Christ.

The teaching caused some who had followed Jesus to turn away.

John recorded in **John 6:66-69**:

> *"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."*

Peter recognised that everlasting life was found in Jesus Christ. He did not ask where the disciples could obtain physical bread or participate in a religious ceremony. He directed attention towards the Person who possessed *"the words of eternal life."*

Peter's declaration was centred upon Jesus Christ: *"Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."*

The words of Jesus reveal the spiritual life found in Him. Through the proclamation of the Gospel, people hear the truth concerning His sacrifice, resurrection and accomplished redemption. Those who believe and are born again receive His life through the indwelling Spirit.

The ministry of God's Word continues to nourish believers in their understanding of Jesus Christ. This does not mean that they receive additional portions of Christ or become progressively saved. They grow in understanding and learn to walk according to the complete spiritual life already received at the new birth.

We Possess the Living Bread

Paul described the spiritual reality revealed through the Gospel.

He wrote in **Colossians 1:27**:

> *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"*

Notice the words *"Christ in you."* This is the living reality of the New Covenant. Jesus Christ does not remain outside the believer, waiting to be received through another religious ceremony.

Every born-again believer already possesses His indwelling life. True communion is therefore fellowship with the living Christ, not dependence upon the physical elements of a ceremonial observance.

A person may participate in literal communion with great solemnity while remaining spiritually dead because they have never been born again. Equally, a born-again believer does not lack communion with Jesus Christ because they have not participated in a bread-and-cup ceremony.

The determining reality is whether the person possesses Jesus Christ Himself. The outward observance cannot provide the life that belongs to the Person.

John chapter 6 establishes that Jesus Christ is the living bread, that believing on Him brings everlasting life, and that spiritual partaking concerns receiving Him. His genuine body was given through His sacrifice, and His blood was shed to accomplish redemption. Those who believe the Gospel receive the life obtained through His completed work.

The bread and cup at the Last Passover represented His body and blood and pointed towards His approaching sacrifice. They could not accomplish redemption or produce the spiritual life Jesus Christ gives.

The New Covenant brings believers directly into the spiritual reality through the new birth. Jesus Christ comes to dwell within them as Spirit, and His life establishes the communion that outward representations could never produce.

We do not eat physical bread to receive spiritual life. We receive Jesus Christ through faith and the new birth, and His life dwells within us.

The believer does not need a ceremonial meal to maintain fellowship with the Christ who already dwells within. The Person has been received, and His indwelling presence is the reality of true communion.

The distinction is therefore clear. Natural bread sustains the physical body, but Jesus Christ gives everlasting spiritual life. The believer possesses the Person rather than depending upon an outward representation to provide Him.

Jesus Christ is the living bread. His sacrifice has been accomplished, His Spirit dwells within His people, and the believer is complete in Him.

We do not depend upon a ceremonial meal to maintain communion with Jesus Christ. We possess the living Person whose life is the reality of true communion.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does 'It is the spirit that quickeneth' explain the life Jesus offers?

Personal Reflection

What has the difference between physical eating and spiritual life clarified for you? What difference should this make to your own response?

Action Step

How could this truth guide your own response when communion is presented as depending on a ceremonial meal? Identify a change needed in the way you remember or speak of Christ's sacrifice, keeping the Person central.

COMPLETE IN JESUS CHRIST - THE PERSON IS GREATER THAN THE REPRESENTATION

BACK TO CONTENTS

The New Covenant brings believers into something greater than the outward ordinances of the former covenant. Those ordinances pointed towards the spiritual reality God would accomplish through Jesus Christ. Now that He has come and completed redemption, the believer is no longer dependent upon outward representations to receive spiritual life.

This distinction is essential when considering the Lord's Supper. The bread and cup represented the body and blood of Jesus Christ, but His body has already been given and His blood shed. The sacrifice has been accomplished, and the spiritual reality is found in the living Person Himself.

We do not possess a shadow of Jesus Christ. We possess Jesus Christ Himself.

"Ye Are Complete in Him"

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:9-10**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

Notice the declaration *"ye are complete in him."* Paul does not describe believers as partly complete or waiting for another religious action to supply something missing from their salvation. Their completeness is already found in Jesus Christ.

All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him. Jesus Christ is not one divine Person among several, but the visible revelation of the one true God. Through the new birth, the believer receives His indwelling life and possesses the spiritual reality of the New Covenant.

If a person has genuinely been born again, no additional ceremony can make that person more completely saved. Neither can eating bread and drinking wine or juice provide another portion of Jesus Christ or add to the spiritual life already received.

Complete means complete. The believer possesses the Person.

Redemption Has Already Been Obtained

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 1:7**:

> *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;"*

Notice Paul's words *"we have redemption."* Redemption is not awaiting completion through repeated outward religious observances. Jesus Christ obtained it through His own blood, and its effectiveness does not depend upon continuing the Passover or another ceremonial meal.

The writer of Hebrews declared in **Hebrews 10:14**:

> *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."*

The words *"one offering"* establish the sufficiency of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. What the repeated sacrifices of the former covenant could not accomplish, He accomplished through His own offering. His completed work does not require another outward observance to make redemption sufficient.

This truth is essential when examining the bread and cup. A representation cannot improve the sacrifice it represents, and repeating a ceremony cannot make that sacrifice more effective. The believer possesses the Person whose offering has already accomplished redemption.

No continuing physical representation can provide an additional spiritual benefit missing from Jesus Christ. His sacrifice is sufficient, and the salvation received through Him is complete.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why can no physical representation add to the redemption already obtained by Christ?

Personal Reflection

What does the sufficiency of His sacrifice mean when you consider your own need of salvation?

Action Step

How might you examine what you rely on for acceptance with God in the light of Christ's complete redemption? Explain one practical response in your own life that should express Christ's indwelling life.

The New Birth Gives the Believer the Person

The completeness of salvation must also be understood through the new birth. A person does not become part of the Church through religious ceremonies, denominational membership or participation in a sacred meal. The spiritual body of Christ consists of those who have been born again and possess His indwelling Spirit.

Paul wrote in **Romans 8:9**:

> *"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."*

Paul identifies the indwelling Spirit of Christ as the determining reality of belonging to Jesus Christ. A person who does not possess His Spirit does not belong to Him, regardless of the ceremonies that person observes. Conversely, every person who is genuinely born again possesses the Spirit of Christ.

The believer does not receive Jesus Christ first and then wait for another spiritual experience or ceremony to receive the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and Jesus Christ personally dwells within every born-again believer as Spirit. The living Person is received at the new birth.

This establishes the believer's spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ. No outward ordinance can produce that relationship, bring the believer into a second level of spiritual life or complete what God has already accomplished.

Paul also explained that salvation is received through grace rather than religious performance.

He wrote in **Ephesians 2:8-10**:

> *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."*

Salvation is the gift of God, received through faith. It is not obtained through religious works, ceremonies or personal achievement. Paul also explains that believers are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

The order is important. Good works flow from the spiritual life already received; they do not produce the new birth or complete salvation. The life comes first, and the conduct expresses that life.

This principle must govern our understanding of religious ordinances. We cannot declare that salvation is complete in Jesus Christ while insisting that an outward ceremony supplies a necessary spiritual reality that His indwelling life has not provided.

Christian conduct remains important, but it is the expression of Jesus Christ dwelling within the believer. We do not serve, obey or walk in righteousness to obtain the Person or improve our standing in Him. We express His life because He already dwells within us.

Complete in Christ, Yet Growing in Understanding

The same distinction applies to spiritual growth. The believer is complete in Jesus Christ at the new birth, yet continues growing in understanding, wisdom, discernment and maturity.

Peter wrote in **2 Peter 3:18**:

> *"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."*

Peter instructed believers to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. He did not teach that spiritual growth supplies another portion of salvation or makes the believer progressively more complete in Christ.

As believers study the Scriptures, hear the Gospel preached and meditate upon God's Word, their understanding develops. They learn to recognise and express the life of Jesus Christ in their relationships, decisions and conduct.

This growth does not mean that Jesus Christ was previously absent or insufficient. The believer already possesses the Person and is learning to walk according to the life received through the new birth.

We grow in our understanding of Jesus Christ, not into a more complete possession of Him.

The Shadow Cannot Add to the Substance

The Passover given to natural Israel served a genuine purpose within the former covenant. Its sacrifice, blood and memorial pointed towards the greater redemption Jesus Christ would accomplish. Yet those outward representations could never produce the spiritual life that would become available through Him.

The Last Passover stood at the fulfilment of that former representation. Jesus Christ was preparing to give His body and shed His blood, establishing the New Covenant through His own sacrifice. The bread and cup directed attention towards the redemption He was about to accomplish.

Now that His sacrifice has been offered, the promised spiritual reality is no longer future. Jesus Christ has fulfilled what the Passover represented, and the born-again believer possesses His indwelling life.

To continue giving sacred authority to the bread and cup as a Gospel ordinance is to preserve the representation after its appointed purpose has been fulfilled. The ceremony cannot

provide spiritual life, establish communion with Jesus Christ or complete the believer's salvation.

The shadow pointed towards the Person. The Person has come.

Jesus Christ is greater than the Passover lamb, greater than the outward memorial and greater than the bread and cup used to represent His sacrifice. The former representations had meaning because they pointed towards Him, but they could never become the Person or accomplish His redemptive work.

We do not need to preserve an outward ceremony to possess the spiritual reality it represented. Redemption has been obtained, the New Covenant established, and the believer receives Jesus Christ through faith and the new birth.

The Church must therefore direct its attention towards the living Person rather than give continuing sacred authority to the representation. True spiritual life and fellowship are found in Jesus Christ Himself, whose Spirit dwells within His born-again people.

The believer possesses the Person. The Person is greater than the ordinance.

The sacrifice is complete. Redemption has been obtained. The New Covenant has been established.

We do not return to the shadow to obtain something spiritually missing from the Person. Jesus Christ has already accomplished redemption and given His life to those who are born again.

Complete in Christ means complete.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How can a believer be complete in Christ and still grow in understanding?

Personal Reflection

Does this distinction correct or strengthen anything in your own understanding of spiritual growth?

Action Step

How could you seek greater understanding of Christ without treating a ceremony as something that completes His work? Identify one practice or belief you will test against the Bible, and explain what you are prepared to change.

CONCLUSION: CHRIST OUR PASSOVER HAS FULFILLED THE SHADOW

BACK TO CONTENTS

We began this Study Guide by examining the Passover God appointed for natural Israel and the greater spiritual reality towards which it pointed. We followed that testimony from Israel's deliverance out of Egypt to the final Passover Jesus Christ shared with His disciples, and then to His teaching concerning the living bread from heaven. Throughout these Scriptures, one truth has remained central: Jesus Christ is the fulfilment, and the believer possesses the Person rather than the outward representation.

Christ Our Passover Has Been Sacrificed

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 5:7-8**:

> *"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is 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."*

The Passover sacrifice, the blood upon the doorposts and Israel's deliverance from Egypt were genuine historical events belonging to the former covenant. Their greater spiritual significance pointed towards the redemption Jesus Christ would accomplish.

Notice Paul's declaration: *"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."* The promised sacrifice has been offered, redemption has been accomplished, and the New Covenant has been established. Paul then directs believers towards sincerity and truth, the spiritual reality expressed through the indwelling life of Jesus Christ, rather than the continuation of the former outward feast.

At His final Passover, Jesus spoke concerning His body and blood because He was approaching the sacrifice that would fulfil the former representation. The bread and cup pointed towards that sacrifice, but they could not accomplish redemption. Jesus Christ gave His genuine body and shed His blood, accomplishing what the Passover had represented.

The Last Passover therefore stood at the point of fulfilment. Jesus Christ did not accomplish redemption so that His people would remain dependent upon another continuing outward ceremony.

The sacrifice is complete. Redemption has been obtained. Jesus Christ has fulfilled what the shadow represented.

Jesus Christ Is the Living Bread

Jesus declared in **John 6:35**:

> *"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."*

The true bread is Jesus Christ Himself. He directed people towards coming to Him and believing on Him, not towards a ceremonial meal as the means of receiving everlasting life.

His teaching concerning eating His flesh and drinking His blood must be understood through this spiritual reality. His genuine body was given and His blood was shed through His sacrifice, but the everlasting life accomplished through that sacrifice is received through faith and the new birth.

Natural bread can sustain the physical body, but it cannot produce spiritual life. Jesus Christ is the living bread, and those who are born again receive His life through His indwelling Spirit.

We do not eat ordinary bread to receive Jesus Christ. We receive the living Person through faith and the new birth.

The Believer Is Complete in Jesus Christ

Paul wrote in **Colossians 2:9-10**:

> *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"*

These words establish the completeness of the believer in Jesus Christ. Everyone who has been born again possesses His indwelling Spirit and does not require another ceremony to receive an additional portion of spiritual life. All the fulness dwells in Jesus Christ, and the believer is complete in Him.

Spiritual growth remains important, but growth in understanding and maturity must not be confused with incomplete salvation. The believer learns to walk according to the life already received rather than seeking completeness through religious performance.

If a ceremonial observance is presented as necessary to obtain or maintain spiritual fellowship with Jesus Christ, it places an outward requirement beside His completed work. Yet the believer is not complete through Christ and a ceremony. The believer is complete in Christ.

The Passover was genuinely appointed by God, but its purpose was to point towards the greater redemption Jesus Christ would accomplish. The shadow had significance because of the Person it represented, not because it could produce spiritual life.

We do not reject remembrance of Jesus Christ or the spiritual truth represented by the Passover. We reject the continuation of the outward bread-and-cup ordinance as a sacred Gospel requirement because its appointed spiritual purpose has been fulfilled.

The New Covenant has not left God's people with less than the former shadows represented. Jesus Christ has accomplished redemption, established the New Covenant and come as Spirit to dwell within every born-again believer. We now possess the greater reality that the former outward observances could never produce.

The first Passover pointed forward. The Last Passover stood at the point of fulfilment. Jesus Christ accomplished redemption through His own sacrifice, and the believer receives His life through the new birth.

The shadow has fulfilled its purpose. The promised reality has come.

The believer possesses the Person. The Person is greater than the ordinance. Complete in Christ means complete.

Jesus Christ is our Passover, our living bread and our all.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the Passover and the living bread show that believers are complete in Christ?

Personal Reflection

Have you expected a ceremony to supply something Christ has already given? Explain.

Action Step

Name one belief about communion you will correct because Christ is the living bread. What will you rely on now?

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

Why is Jesus Christ the reality to which the Passover pointed? Explain how the lamb, the blood and Israel's deliverance help us understand His greater redemption.

2. Understanding

Why must Jesus' final Passover be understood in the setting before His suffering and death? Use His words about the bread and cup to explain what He was about to fulfil.

3. Personal Reflection

What has the Passover memorial and its fulfilment in Christ helped you reconsider about a religious practice you have regarded as sacred? Explain what has become clearer or what you still need to understand.

4. Response to Truth

Jesus said, 'This do in remembrance of me.' How do His words, Paul's teaching to the Corinthians and the Holy Ghost's work guide your own understanding of remembering Him?

5. Action Step

Consider what it means to trust Jesus Christ Himself for spiritual life rather than depend on physical bread and wine. What does this mean for your own beliefs or choices? Explain any response you want to make.

6. Early Response

Have you already responded to the truth that spiritual life is received through Jesus Christ Himself rather than physical bread and wine? If yes, explain what you did or now understand more clearly. If not, explain what you are still considering or what has made it difficult to respond.

7. Ongoing Practice

How could Jesus' teaching that He is the bread of life continue to guide what you trust for spiritual nourishment? Explain how you would respond when a ceremony is presented as necessary for that life.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

How do Christ's once-for-all sacrifice and the New Covenant help explain eating His flesh and drinking His blood? Use a verse to distinguish spiritual partaking from physically eating a ceremonial meal.

9. Living the Truth

Someone tells you that you cannot have full communion with Christ without receiving bread and wine. How would you explain completeness in Him while speaking with respect for that person's sincerity?

10. Final Response

How do Christ our Passover, the living bread and the believer's completeness in Him fit together? Explain your personal response to His fulfilled sacrifice and indwelling life, including anything you still want to consider.