

A recurring symbol-

(The Lord's Supper or The Communion)



Reading

MATTHEW 26.26-28 - And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it 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.

1 COR 10.16-17 - The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

- **Q.** What are two of the main fundamental things we do as humans to survive?
 - **A-** To eat and drink (3 days without water, 3 weeks without food).
 - To use this as an example of salvation is a powerful symbol
 - And that's what God does.
- People assume that the Lord's supper comes from the Passover Festival but the picture is actually older than that.
- Pictures/symbols help us to 'see' and understand visually something that is spiritual and therefore difficult to see.
- Let's look at its symbol in the Old Testament.
- **Q.** What are the Two symbols? -
 - V- A - Bread and Wine**
 - **Bread-** One of the most fundamental foods to keep us alive. "Give us this day our daily bread"
 - It is made from grinding flour, mixing it with water, and baking it.

- Out of one loaf it is broken, shared and eaten.
- **Wine-** or simply grape juice (the word wine refers to this. What Christ would have drunk at Cana wouldn't have been a highly fermented wine like is drunk today. It would have been 'new wine' or 'the fruit of the vine')
- Red grapes are meant in this symbol- looks like blood
- They are crushed, and made into a drink which is poured out.

● Our first reference to these is the mysterious **Melchizedek** coming to Abram Ge 14.18-20 "*Melchizedek king of Salem (early Jerusalem) brought forth **bread and wine**: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all*"

- From psalms and Hebrews we know this mysterious man represents Christ as a priest before the Levitical priesthood.

Psalm 110.4 "*Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.*"

Heb 7.1-3 "*For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.*"

- He appears in the pages of history from nowhere. We don't know his ancestry. It's as if he has no parents, birth or death!
- In this sense he is a type of Christ as the Son of God.
- Christ wasn't an earthly priest of the Levites.
- He was from the tribe of Judah.
- This is why the symbol He institutes is far more like earlier Melchizedek than the later Passover symbol given to Moses and Aaron.
- He is called the priest of the Most High God. He is also the King of Salem (Jerusalem). (Christ only holds all three offices of a Prophet, Priest and King)
- He represents Righteousness (His name Melchizedek means king of righteousness).
- He represents Peace with God (king of Salem means peace)
- He blesses Abram and brings him and his men BREAD AND WINE (this was not humanitarian aid, but a symbol - Abram has just taken food as spoils of war).

- Abram is the father of the Church. From Him come all the Jewish nation (who typify God's people)
- Melchizedek is a type of Christ in terms of being a priest- as someone who represents us to God and God to us- a mediator between the two parties.
- He gives us a symbol here that will become increasingly significant.
 - How can God bless anyone? We're all sinful before Him?
 - It must have something to do with the free gift Melchizedek gives to Abram.
- Note that we have 2 elements (there are two aspects of salvation)
- Bread and wine are associated with covenant meals. "This is the new testament (covenant) in my blood" - an agreement, a deal.
- SO WE'VE LEARNED FROM THIS-
 - SALVATION IS A FREE GIFT TO THOSE WITH FAITH(Abram is known to be credited by God with righteousness because "he believed God")
 - GOD ENTERS INTO A COVENANT (AGREEMENT) WITH HIS PEOPLE
 - THERE ARE TWO ASPECTS TO SALVATION

Joseph in the prison

Gen 40.1 *"And it came to pass after these things, that the **butler** of the king of Egypt and his **baker** had offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound."*

Gen 40.20 *"And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand: But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him."*

- The butler and baker are imprisoned with Joseph.
- Joseph is another type of Christ.
- He is destined to save his people in time of famine (just like Christ feeding the thousands). And ultimately doing the same by giving Himself for their souls.
- But before then, he is taken captive and put in prison.
- This prison is a picture of His death and resurrection (the reference to 3 days points us to this). 2 people are put in prison with Joseph-
 - one representing BREAD (the baker),
 - the other WINE (the butler - or wine taster).

- Both have dreams which Joseph interprets for them-
 - The baker is condemned to death,
 - the wine taster is restored to his life.
- This points us to what these two things representing salvation mean.
- Punishment and deserving.
 - The bread points to DYING
 - The wine to a LIVING
- Note it says the butler didn't remember Joseph still in the prison (as Joseph had asked him to do)
- But when he finally does remember him

Gen 41.9 "Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day:"

- Joseph is raised up out of the prison.
 - This is like remembering Christ's resurrection at conversion, and surely, in the communion service - "do this in remembrance of me"
- It was Pharaoh's birthday, and it will be the birthday of any who remember Christ in being born again.

- It has been noticed that these two prefigure the two thieves on the cross also

Moses, the passover, the manna, and the meal offerings

- I've already said that the Lord's supper isn't the Passover. And Christ was a different order of priest.
 - But it is similar and the Lord links the two by instituting it while having the passover meal.

- In the Passover we have the 2 elements pictured in a different way.
- In this case, The Lamb is the punishment and the bread is the earning and deserving. (The bread is unleavened - which symbolises being pure free from sin)
- In the Lord's supper, the symbol of bread is almost switched. It is more like the lamb slain. Whereas, with regards to the wine, it is a symbol of a pure sinless life - in Lev 17.11 it refers to Life being in the blood. (Thus the Lord's Supper fittingly pictures a righteous life offered and poured out. And it is the bread broken picturing the death of the punished body in death)

The Manna

- This was the miraculous wafer like 'bread' that fell from the sky to keep the Israelites alive in the wilderness.
- It is called "the Bread of heaven"

- A symbol for survival. (3 weeks without food you're dead.)
- This is like Christ, Who comes down from heaven to save us.
- Once again, In the ceremonial “meal offering”, the bread is made from finely ground flour (the grinding and sifting of the mill shows Christ’s suffering), the purity and without leaven represents a perfect life.

But in the Lord's supper Christ takes the idea of Bread just as a symbol for Himself as broken in death

The wine is used as a symbol of a perfect life.

The holy place in the Tabernacle

- In the Holy Place of the OT tabernacle there was a golden table.
- On it was bread and wine.
- The wine was a drink offering poured out- like a life given.
- The bread was a symbol of the provision given for God's people.
 - Christ said “I Am the bread of life”.
 - He also says “I am the vine”
 -

The twelve memorial stones at Jordan

Josh 4.7 “these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.”

These were separate from the twelve stones left in the river Jordan.

Those were to represent Calvary

The ones taken over were to go where they dwelt. This was for an everlasting memorial to remember Calvary.

These are likely to represent the Lord's Supper where we are explicitly told to remember Calvary - (twelve stones for Calvary/twelve to remember Calvary).

The Lord's supper in the New Testament

- Christ is born in Bethlehem (meaning ‘the house of bread’)
- His first miracle is to turn water into wine
- He multiplies the loaves
- As said, He proclaims Himself to be the “*bread of life*”, and says “*For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.*”
- While celebrating the Passover meal Christ institutes a new ordinance as the Passover was close to being fulfilled.
- He uses the food and drink present to make this new ordinance.
- As said, The Lord's supper is not the Passover, the symbols differ.
- Christ takes the bread and wine and explains the symbol- “this is my body... my blood”.

- The two elements -
 - Bread is body broken- punishment. The bread represents Him as a provision in death (the broken body given for them)
 - Wine is the blood of life shed as a perfect offering of righteousness- The wine represents a perfectly righteous life (poured out for His people).

 - These are the two things we need.
 - We are guilty of committing sin and deserve punishment.
 - We don't have a righteous life in order to earn heaven.

 - Can you ever share in the Lord's supper?
 - The fact that the Lord gave this picture to the Church means that it's possible for guilty sinners (which we all are) to be saved.
 - Just like Abram, not by earning it, or paying the price ourselves, but by it being given freely like Melchizedek of old.
By believing and trusting in Christ's life and death.

 - The act doesn't save you. It's just a visual aid to help us regularly remember- "do this in remembrance of Me".
 - Just like Baptism (the only other ongoing ordinance) it is a picture of something that has already taken place.
 - But it is a good symbol, picturing what we all need
 - 1) Our sins taken away by being put upon our Saviour whose body was broken for all who put their trust in Him
 - 2) A Righteousness received from Christ who poured out a perfect life lived for His people. Blood here represents a perfect life offered in death "Life is in the blood".
- These are the two things we need represented in these two things
- We need both aspects
 - If we only had our wrongdoings taken away we wouldn't be able to get into heaven because heaven is for those who have lived a positively righteous life doing the things we should do.
 - It must be earned. Only Christ had lived such a life.

 - How can we hope to please God without this.
 - We are due punishment because - We have done things which anger God and incur guilt. This comes from an unholy character. So we are not only guilty but polluted. We need forgiveness and cleansing.
 - We need a given righteousness because - We haven't done what we should. For example we haven't worshipped and served God in the way we have lived. What

have we done for God and our fellow Man? Our lives have been self serving not God serving.

- Without the Bread and Wine we haven't got a hope of survival of soul.
- But with it we cannot be lost.
- The Lord emphasises this when He says “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread[a] the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”
- There used to be many ceremonies of the Jews to picture the coming work of Christ. They were rich visual aids which can still teach us. But they are all fulfilled by Christ's sacrificial work on Calvary.
- Now we have only two which picture it all. This is fitting for the 'Gospel age'.
 - Baptism is a one time thing to picture a person's conversion.
 - It pictures the washing from sin, and the dying to the old sinful life and being raised to a new life
- The Lord's supper is a memorial “do this in remembrance of me”.
 - It is to be done over and over NOT AS A SACRIFICE (like the Roman Catholics try to make it. This they do as a ceremonial work. That is an abominable heresy)
 - but it is to get us to regularly remember Christ's one time sacrifice already offered.
 - To picture the one time sacrifice that has already been offered once, for all who would believe.
- It is not an empty, arbitrary sign though.
 - It should affect a response in us.
 - It is a help, enabling us to think upon Christ's work in its two respects.
 - It is a covenant sign, similar to how a handshake can seal a deal (although the deal has already been sealed).
- Take eat -

This is my body broken

This is my blood shed for **many**

-For everyone?

- No, for “Many”, because not everyone trusts
- Will you be one of the many?

- An amazing symbol, given to us from the very first book.
- Teaching us in a picture what we need for salvation.
- Apply the doctrine of Christ crucified to yourselves, and let it be meat and drink to your souls.

Texts

MATTHEW - And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it 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.

MARK - 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.

LUKE - 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.

John 6:53-58 - 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.

1 Corinthians 11:26 - For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Cor - The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.