



Covenants

Our Lord's Covenant

Luke 22:14-23, 23:44-49, John 19:28-37

Teaching Aim

To help understand how the Lord's Supper was a Covenantal act.

Setting the Scene

As they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "*Take eat; this is my body. . .*". These verses describe the institution of the Lord's Supper but what is the Lord's Supper and what is its significance?

A Commemorative Act

The Lord's Supper is often thought of as an aid to our memory and approached as a mental exercise, which reminds us of Christ. We are forgetful and the Lord's Supper does remind us of Christ. But is this what Christ meant when he said "do this in remembrance of me"?

We should notice Christ's words at this point. He did not say, "do this so that you can remember me", but rather "do this in remembrance of me." The Lord's Supper is not primarily a memory-jogger, as it were. It is firstly a memorial, or act of remembrance. We remember Christ and, therefore, we "do" the Lord's Supper. It is an act of respect. It is something we do in memory of Him. We respect Christ and wish to honour Him; therefore we perform the act He designated as His memorial.

A Proclamation

Followers of Christ are called to proclaim the truth of God in word and deed. With our words we are to "preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15), and "give an answer to everyone who asks [us] to give a reason for the hope that [we] have" (I Peter 3: 15).

In addition, we are to "let our light so shine before men, that they may see [our] good deeds and praise [our] Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16; I Peter 2:12). We are "living epistles" whose very lives are to proclaim the glory of the gospel and our commitment to Christ (see II Cor 3:2-3).

The Lord's Supper is a deed, which proclaims a particular aspect of God's truth. It proclaims "the Lord's death". "It is not only, however, the fact of Christ's death which this sacrament thus validates; but also its design. Our Lord declared that He died "as a substitute and sacrifice". Christ died for the sins of His people. He died that they may have life and have it abundantly. Through His death Christ averted the wrath of God and made peace between God and His children.

A Covenantal Act

We have three reasons for viewing the Lord's Supper as a covenantal act:

1. The Words of Jesus. Jesus said, "this is my blood of the new covenant" (Matt. 26:28) and "this cup is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20). He is clearly identifying the Supper as a covenantal act.
2. The Form of the Supper. The broken body (v19) and the shed blood (v20) indicate that this is a covenantal act. In Scripture the covenants are often instituted with a sacrifice. In Genesis 15:7-21 God made a covenant with Abraham and had him cut (break) the bodies of several animals. In Exodus 24:3-8 Moses sprinkled blood on the people as they entered into covenant with the Lord.
3. The use of a Sign. In the Lord's Supper the symbol used is bread and wine; the reality is the body and blood of Christ. Jesus said of the bread "this is my body", and of the wine He said, "this is my blood". It is common for a covenant to be accompanied by a sign (e.g.; In Genesis 9: 12 the rainbow is the sign of the covenant), and sometimes the sign becomes the title or name for the covenant.

Summing up

We must always remember that we need to come to Jesus Christ – the One who died on the cross for Salvation. We cannot be saved, as many people believe by partaking of the Lord's Supper. This is why we are instructed to "examine ourselves" lest we eat and drink unworthily.

Resources

Discussion

1. How is the Lord's Supper connected to the events of the Passover?
2. Why did Jesus institute the Lord's Supper?
3. When Jesus said, "This is My body" what did He mean?
4. Why do we not believe that the bread and wine are literally changed into the body and blood of Christ?
5. Why should we partake of the Lord's Supper?

Prayer Points

Give thanks for:

- The way Jesus left us something by which we would always remember His death.
- The Lord Jesus Christ who went to the Cross for us.

Pray for:

- People who are confused as to what they believe because of false teaching they have received.
- Opportunities where you can share your faith with others.