

The Eucharist

By Ken Davies

[Jesus said to His disciples,] "I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." **Matt. 26:29**

Let's pray: Father, please anoint me to bring forth your Word accurately, and let it touch the hearts and minds of Your people. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

A Sunday school teacher asked her children to take some time that afternoon to write a letter to God and bring it back the following Sunday. One little boy wrote, "Dear God. We had a good time at church today. Wish you could have been there."

One Sunday morning the congregation of a ritzy church (with vaulted ceilings, hand-carved oak pews, stained glass windows and deep plush carpet) had a stir. A man came in just minutes before the service was to begin and he was dressed horribly, was stinking, had on old boots, torn overalls, a dirty flannel shirt, and a dusty cowboy hat.

The congregation was aghast! Many quickly sent notes to the minister expressing their disgust. At the end of the service, the minister greeted the humbly dressed man and asked him if he enjoyed the service. The man said he'd enjoyed it very much.

The minister asked the man to consider possibly dressing differently, and taking a shower, and told him to pray to Jesus about how He would have him dress if he should return again.

The next week the man returned. He was dressed the same and once again the congregation was disturbed. At the end of the service, the minister greeted the man again and asked him what he had been told by Jesus concerning how to dress for church.

The man said. "I spoke with Jesus about this, but Jesus said He didn't know how I should dress for "this church" because He's never been here!"

Today is Communion Sunday, and this is when we re-enact, in a way, the Last Supper that Jesus celebrated with His disciples. This is when, in a very real sense, we have intimate fellowship with the Lord, hence the name, "Communion." Catholics say we call it that because we can't spell "Eucharist." That actually comes from a Greek word meaning, "thanksgiving," and emphasizes the thankful attitude we should have when participating in the Lord's Supper.

The Synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) all record Jesus telling His disciples that He would no longer partake of "this fruit of the vine" until He would drink it "anew" (as the King James Version puts it) with them in the kingdom of God.

We forget sometimes that what we celebrate as "Communion" was at that time, a celebration of *Passover*. During that ceremony, bread was broken and several cups of wine were drunk. The last cup, however, was not consumed, because it was set apart for Elijah. That cup was reserved for the time when the Messiah would come, whom the Jews pictured as coming in the spirit and power of Elijah. This was the cup that Jesus now used to institute what we now call Communion.

In **Matt. 26:26-29**, it says:

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine¹ from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Some have puzzled over why Jesus used the term "fruit of the vine," rather than just saying "wine." It may be that, looking ahead to the thousands of people that would re-enact this supper in the future, and knowing that some of them would be teetotalers, He was giving them permission to use grape juice instead of wine.

Verse 28 says, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for **many** for the forgiveness of sins." Note that He did not say it was for "all." God the Father is truly merciful and loving, providing salvation for His people, but He is also a just God. **Num. 14:18** says, "The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished...." There is no "get out of jail free" card for everyone.

You may have heard false teachers out there representing God as a doting, senile grandfather, patting the errant child on the head, and saying, "It's alright. You go out and play now." That is **not** the God of Scripture! Loving? Yes! Merciful? Yes! Senile? No way!

Some will say that this makes God "mean." But I ask you, what *more* could He have done? He gave sinful humanity the ultimate gift of His only Son to be a sacrificial Lamb, providing forgiveness of sin for those who would claim Him as their own. The Mosaic Law demanded perfect obedience, and the shedding of blood for there to be any forgiveness of sin. God the Father provided for both of these! Not only did Jesus shed His own precious blood for the remission of sins², but He also lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father, in essence becoming a second Adam. A new representative head of a new (that is, **reborn**) humanity.

To paraphrase **1 Cor. 15:22**, "All in Adam die. All in Christ are made alive." This is talking about covenant relationships. How do you get into a covenant relationship with Adam? You're *born*! How do you get into a covenant relationship with Christ? You must be *born again*! You may be as confused as Nicodemus was when Jesus told him he had to be born again in order to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus told him that being "born again" was something that happened as a result of the working of the Holy Spirit. This doesn't involve you raising your hand, coming up to the front, or saying a certain prayer. It is the power of God working through the Holy Spirit, not the human will that brings about regeneration.

If you are one of God's born again children, I have good news for you! You are eligible to participate in Communion! In **1 Cor. 11:28**, Paul says, "Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup." I believe this is a call to examine yourself to see if you're really a Christian. Some of the Corinthians were using the Lord's Supper as a time to indulge in gluttony or drunkenness, and Paul warned them that because of their lack of discernment, they were eating and drinking *judgment* to themselves.

He said, "[W]henever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (**1 Cor. 11:26**). So, the Corinthians *should've* understood that Communion symbolized the death of Jesus. When they treated it as a common, everyday meal, they denigrated the sacrifice of Christ. That's pretty serious!

¹ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου

² **Lev 17:11; Heb 9:22**

Now, some of you know that I believe Jesus has already come back, and eventually the question regarding this verse comes up: "If you believe the Second Coming has already happened, why do you still participate in Communion? It says, 'until He comes.' Doesn't that mean it's over when He returns?"

Let me give you an illustration: Let's say you're going to the grocery store, and you're going to leave your children at home. As you're leaving, you tell them, "You be good until I get back!" Does that mean you expect them to stop being good once you return?

"OK," you say, "but is 'until' used that way in Scripture?"

In **1 Tim. 4:13**, Paul wrote to Timothy and said, "**Until I come**, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching." Was he saying he wanted Timothy to *stop* reading, preaching and teaching after Paul had come? Of course not!

There was, however, a significant *change* in the Lord's Supper that was going to take place at the coming of Christ. Jesus said He would once again participate "when I drink it **new** with you in my Father's kingdom." In Greek, that word "new" means "*new in quality, fresh* – because 'not found exactly like this before.'" ([Strong's #2537](#)). In **Rev. 19**, Babylon/Jerusalem has fallen, and the blood of the prophets and saints has been avenged on her,³ and John wrote:

⁶ Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

"Hallelujah!

For our Lord God Almighty **reigns**.

⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad

and give him glory!

For the **wedding of the Lamb** has come,

and his bride has made herself ready.

⁸ Fine linen, bright and clean,

was given her to wear."

(Fine linen stands for the righteousness of God's holy people.)

⁹ Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."

This is a picture of the "new and fresh way" in which Communion would be celebrated! No longer is the sole focus on the *death* of Christ, but now it is on His *marriage*! His bride is the Church, as you can see from the parenthetical explanation of what the linen symbolizes. This is like comparing a funeral to a wedding. The solemnity of showing forth Christ's death has become the joyful proclamation of His wedding!

Remember, Jesus said He would drink it in a new and fresh way "with you [His disciples] in My Father's kingdom." Whether you believe it or not, neither they, nor you, must wait any longer!

Come now! Let us celebrate the marriage supper of the Lamb!

³ **Rev. 18:20**. Also, v. 24: "[I]n her was found the blood of prophets and of God's holy people, of all who have been slaughtered in the land." In **Luke 13:33-34**, Jesus said, "It's not possible for a prophet to die outside Jerusalem. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you kill the prophets and stone to death those sent to you!" (*God's Word Translation*).