

# The Lord's Supper

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# This observance is also known as

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- (Holy) Communion
  - From the idea of table fellowship
- The Eucharist
  - From the Greek word for giving thanks (over the bread and wine)
- The Mass
  - From the Latin word for dismissal (of the non-baptized before the service)



# It is one of two primary ceremonies

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- Also called:
  - Ordinances
  - Sacraments
- Established in the New Testament for participation by Christians
- The other is baptism.
- A few Christian groups observe a third ceremony, foot-washing.
- The Roman Catholic Church has a total of seven Sacraments.

# Jesus established this ordinance

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- At his last meal with his disciples before his death.
- Narrated for us in:
  - Matthew 26
  - Mark 14
  - Luke 22
- Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians 11
  - Responding to abuses
- John 6 provides insight into its meaning.





# Matthew's Narration

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Matt 26:26-30 (NIV) While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the { [28] Some manuscripts 'the new' } covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom." 30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.



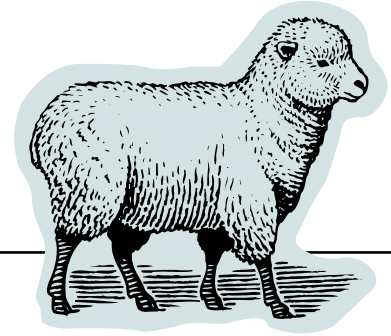
# Biblical Liturgical Ceremonies

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- Apparently intended to be acted parables.
- The action of priest, worshiper, pastor symbolizes a spiritual truth.
- Not always told what they mean, but some are easy to guess.
  - Animal sacrifice
  - Circumcision
  - Temple liturgy
  - Baptism

# Animal Sacrifice

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- Action: an animal of a specified sort, with no physical blemishes, is killed after the worshiper has confessed his/her sins over it.
- Significance: the death of the sacrificial animal (later seen to symbolize Jesus) takes the place of the punishment due the worshiper.



# Circumcision

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- Action: the removal of flesh from the male sexual organ of the worshiper.
- Significance: the removal of sinful flesh, probably also a picture of the cutting off of the promised Seed (Jesus) who was to come.





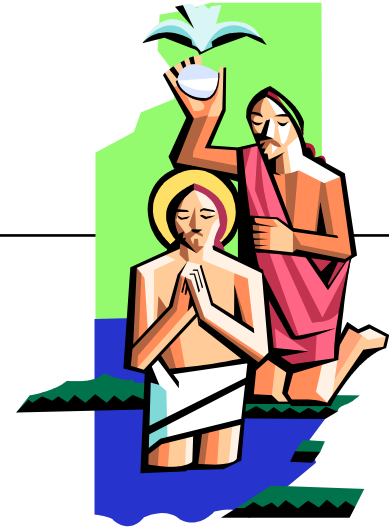
# Temple Liturgy

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- Actions: the worshiper is reminded of the difficulty of approaching God because of our sins, but that God has provided a way of approach.
- Significance: the restriction on the physical approach at the temple pictures the restriction on the spiritual approach to God.

# Baptism

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- Action: baptism is obviously a cleansing of some sort.
- Significance: it pictures the worshiper's cleansing from sin and the worshiper's identification with Jesus in his death, burial and resurrection.

# What is the significance of the Lord's Supper?

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- Each worshiper eats a small piece of (usually unleavened) bread.
- Each worshiper drinks a sip of wine or grape juice.
- The pastor usually reads one of the NT narrations mentioned above.
- Jesus, in instituting this supper, explained that the bread was his body, 'broken' for sinners, and that the wine was 'the new covenant in his blood.'



# Connection with Passover

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- Jesus took the first Lord's Supper from the Jewish Passover Service.
- There the flesh of a sacrificed lamb was eaten.
- This was to remind the worshipers of the death of that lamb whose blood was sprinkled on the doorposts of each house at the time Israel escaped from slavery in Egypt.



## Connection with Passover

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- The blood was to protect each house from the death angel that killed the firstborn of each Egyptian family.
- The Passover event then led to the Exodus, when the Israelites were rescued from their slavery in Egypt.



# Connection with Passover

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- In the Lord's Supper, the bread & wine replace the meat:
  - Jesus himself is the final sacrifice toward which all other sacrifices pointed.
  - This ceremony is designed to be observed when there will be no temple or sacrifices.



# Connection with Passover

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- The Lord's Supper, like Passover, is a meal commemorating God's redemption.
- Now this redemption is seen to be through the death of Jesus.
- The Lord's Supper looks backward to his death for us.
  - Matt 26:26-30 and parallels
  - 1 Cor 11:23-26



## Matthew 26:26-30

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Matt 26:26 (NIV) While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered 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 of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom." 30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.





# 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

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1Cor 11:23 (NIV) For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.



## Connection with Jesus' Return

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- But the Lord's Supper also looks forward:
  - Matt 26:29 and parallels
  - 1 Cor 11:26
- Jesus told his disciples he would not again drink of the wine till he drank it new in the kingdom of God.
- Paul tells us we are by this ceremony to "show the Lord's death until he comes."



## Connection with Jesus' Return

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- Here we eat a mere bite & drink only a sip.
- These remind us of that great banquet we will one day have with Jesus when he returns:
  - Isa 25:6-8
  - Ps 22:22-31
  - Ps 23:5-6



## Isaiah 25:6-8

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Isa 25:6-8 (NIV) On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. 7 On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; 8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.



# Psalm 22:22-31

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Ps 22:22-31 (NIV) I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.... 24 For he has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help. 25 From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you will I fulfill my vows. 26 The poor will eat and be satisfied; they who seek the LORD will praise him—may your hearts live forever! 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, 28 for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations. 29 All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—those who cannot keep themselves alive. 30 Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. 31 They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn—for he has done it.



## Psalm 23:5-6

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Ps 23:5-6 (NIV) You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.



## Connection with Jesus' Return

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- See also Jesus' parables about the banquet:
  - Matt 22:1-14
  - Luke 14:15-24
- ... and his remarks about the Roman centurion in Matt 8:10-12.



## Matthew 22:1-14

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Matt 22:1-14 (NIV) Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.... 8 "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 9 Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.'" 10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests....





## Luke 14:15-24

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Luke 14:15 (NIV) When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God." 16 Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' 18 "But they all alike began to make excuses.... 21 "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' 22 "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' 23 "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"



## Matthew 8:10-12

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Matt 8:10-12 (NIV) When Jesus heard this [centurion's response], he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."



## Connection with Jesus' Return

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- The Lord's Supper is just a bite & a sip so that we will not mistake it for the real banquet still to come.
- The Lord's Supper is another example of the "already, not yet" theme so common in the NT.
- With Jesus' first coming, the end of the age has already begun, but it is not yet what it will be when he comes again.



# Connection with the Present

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- Lastly, the Lord's Supper looks at our present situation as believers in Christ, still living in a sinful world.
- This is seen most clearly in John 6, verses:
  - 30-35,
  - 47-51 and
  - 53-58



## John 6:30-35

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John 6:30-35 (NIV) So they asked him, "What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?" 31 Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" 32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." 35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."



## John 6:47-51

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John 6:47-51 (NIV) I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."



## John 6:53-58

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John 6:53-58 (NIV) Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever."



## Connection with the Present

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- Unless we "eat Jesus' flesh" and "drink his blood," we have no life in ourselves, but if we do, we will live forever.
- Eating & drinking Christ is not what happens where we participate in the Lord's Supper, but the Lord's Supper pictures this.





## Connection with the Present

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- By Jesus' death, we have eternal life, just as by the death of plants and animals we humans have physical life.
- We must accept his death and appropriate it to ourselves, just as we must eat ordinary foods in order to get their nourishment.



## Connection with the Present

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- Each day, as we depend on what Christ has done for us, he provides us with what is necessary to eternal life:
  - Forgiveness of our sins,
  - The gift of his righteousness,
  - The power of the Holy Spirit to help us become more & more like Jesus.



## Summary

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So the Lord's Supper pictures our spiritual life as a result of the work of Jesus:

- Looking back at his death
- Looking now at our sustenance thru him
- Looking forward to our feasting with him in the Kingdom of God.



## The End

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May the Lord help us to appreciate him as we celebrate the Lord's Supper!