

thing but *communion* is NOT God-ordered for believing Christians today.

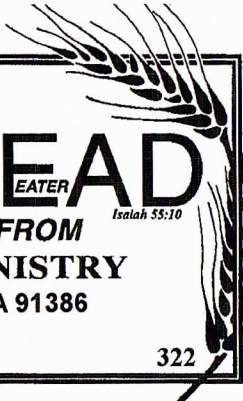
God-pleasing would be to know the God who created the earth, to know the God who came in flesh and died for fallen mankind. God-pleasing would be to accept that He died in our place because we missed the mark, i.e. we have sinned. God-pleasing would be to accept the fact that it is Christ who is the God who died and saves us.

To know God is to know the written word that HE inspired men to write. No ritual, no song, no sermon will be as God-pleasing as knowing Him through His written word. People talk about growing in Christ. We grow by learning every aspect of God that He has revealed in His word, The Bible.

Did I stop taking *communion*? Yes, that is exactly what I did. I have put down in writing what I believe to be true to the Word of God. I hope this is an answer for those who wonder why I stopped partaking in *communion*. May it be of help to anyone who reads this.

Remember, you do not have to have grape juice and crackers to be thankful for, and/or to remember that Christ died for you.

¹ From: Connect, MEMBERSHIP CLASS, page 6. Published by Sunrise Church.



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SEED & BREAD
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COMMUNION: MUSINGS OF A LAYMAN

By Robert English

A friend brought me a handout intended for people who were interested in the doctrinal stand and practices of a newer church in our town. One statement that caught my eye as I read through was the following paragraph:

Communion (also known as the “Lord’s Supper/Table”) is a remembrance of the suffering and death of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ on the cross. Christ instituted communion on the evening before his crucifixion. He commanded that we continue to observe it until his return.¹

Christ instituted *communion*? Where is that found in the Bible? I looked up the word *communion* in the *King James Version (KJV)* which uses the term four times: one each in 2 Corinthians 6:14, 13:14 and twice in 1 Corinthians 10:16 which reads:

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? (1 Cor. 10:16, *KJV*).

So, the first thing I wanted to know was what Greek word was used for *communion* and what is its meaning? *BibleWorks* software program shows *koinonia* (koy-nohn-ee’-ah), Strong’s word No. 2842.

Meaning: 1) fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse; 1a) the share which one has in anything, participation; 1b) intercourse, fellowship, intimacy; 1b1) the right hand as a sign and pledge of fellowship (in fulfilling the apostolic office); 1c) a gift jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution, as exhibiting an embodiment and proof of fellowship.

Communion has the same meaning as the above Greek word, so it is a good translation of *koinonia*. Maybe a better translation is *participation*, which the *New International Version* uses. But we no longer use the word *communion* in the sense of association, but rather use the word *fellowship*.

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Therefore, the above quote might read: **Christ instituted fellowship on the evening before his crucifixion.**

No, Christ did not institute a new ceremony. He and his disciples were participating in the Passover feast the night he was betrayed. We know it was Passover because of the details that the writers of the gospels provided for us. Four times in Matthew 26:1-30, five times in Mark 14:1-26 and six times in Luke 22:1-30 the word *Passover* is used to describe what people call the *Last Supper*. That is a total of 15 times. Is there any doubt about what was being celebrated? Even the Gospel of John says it was the Passover (John 13:1-2).

Exodus tells the story of the first Passover:

And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover. 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. 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 forever (Exod. 12:11-14, *KJV*).

These were Israelites who were spared from death; these were Israelites who were to keep a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever. No Gentile was ever given this memorial to keep.

When Christ and His disciples were in the upper room, it was this Passover memorial that looks back to the Israelites leaving Egypt that they were participating in. These men were Israelites. They were not Gentiles. Christ took two of the memorial elements, the bread and the cup, and *gave each a new meaning*.

Now men who are not Israelites (Jews) take grape juice (maybe wine) and crackers and suppose that they are obeying the Lord. The following verses seem to be the justification of what is called *communion*.

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 (Luke 22:19, *KJV*).

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 (1 Cor. 11:24-25, *KJV*).

These words were spoken to Israelites about an Israelite rite. But church men who have not been given this rite have stripped out just two things and said we must do this because Christ said, **this do in remembrance of Me**. Do what? Clearly, Christ wanted them (Israel) to remember Him each time that

they partook of Passover. Plainly to follow “this do” one must do the Passover rite. No Gentile has this right. Even the Israelites do not observe Passover. They observe Seder as a memorial to Passover. But to church men it is a sign that you are a real Christian if you take *communion*.

In a 59-page booklet titled *This Do in Remembrance*, Otis Q. Sellers covers the Passover from Egypt to the end of the New Testament. An electronic copy can be found at www.seedandbread.org. This website is worth a visit.

When I was at a church service that had communion, I would partake because I knew that it is just a man-made rite that has no significance. Then one day I heard the words that are often spoken at a communion service: **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” (1 Cor. 11:25, *NIV*).** Wait a minute. I have not been under the old covenant (testament; same Greek word) and I am not under the new covenant. I know this because of Hebrews 8:8-11 (*KJV*):

For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 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: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest.

The old covenant (testament) was for the house of Israel (Hebrews 8:9) and the new covenant is for the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Hebrews 8:8). Since all three synoptic gospels report Christ saying at the last supper that His blood is the blood of the new testament (covenant) we have one more reason to abstain from communion as we do not come under the Jewish covenant. (See Matt. 26:28, Mark 14:24, and Luke 22:20, also, 1 Cor. 11:25 [quoted in the aforementioned text] for references to blood of the new covenant.)

Notice that under the new covenant God will write His law in the mind and on the heart of each one of them. No more will they have to say, “Neighbor, you need to know who Jesus is.” Verses 8-11 are future and we look forward to that time. Again, I say we are not under the new covenant.

For me, a ceremony to remember Christ's death on the cross so that I could be saved to have life instead of death is not a problem. I realize that humans like ritual, but when “the church” insists that the man-made ceremony of *communion* is God-ordained for us today, then I have a big problem with that. To say we do this because we hope it is God-pleasing is one