

THE LORD'S SUPPER

It is a natural human tendency to forget. Events fade into the past, life moves forward with new experiences, and we can lose sight of that which brought us to where we are. God understands us and knows our tendencies. When the Israelites were on the verge of entering the promised land which the Lord would give them, He warned, *"beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage"* (Deut. 6:12).

Knowing our tendency to forget, God throughout history has provided memorial observances for His people. The Passover was the annual memorial given for the Israelites to remember what God had done for them in releasing them from bondage to the Egyptians (Exod. 12:11-14). The event remembered in the Passover was the salvation event for the Israelites. It released them from the physical bondage of slavery to the Egyptians. It led to the establishment of the covenant at Sinai and the Israelites as God's covenant people. Thus, the Passover was observed every year as a reminder of God's salvation.

On the night He would be betrayed, the day before He would be crucified, Jesus gathered His disciples for the observance of the Passover. In the midst of the observance, Jesus veered from the script and took the bread, blessed it, and gave it to His disciples to eat, saying, *"Take, eat; this is My body"* (Mark 14:22). He then took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to His disciples, saying, *"This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many"* (Mark 14:24).

With these two common elements, the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, Jesus established a memorial by which we remember our salvation through His death (1Cor. 11:23-26). It is in His death, burial, and resurrection that we have our salvation. In this event, *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself"* (2Cor. 5:19). Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection has fulfilled the ultimate purposes of God and has rendered the Passover observance obsolete, *"For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us"* (1Cor. 5:7).

What is striking about the Lord's Supper is the simplicity of the memorial in comparison to its significance. Every first day of the week, the day of Jesus' resurrection, Christians gather to remember His sacrifice. A sacrifice which is our salvation, which established a new covenant in His blood, and establishes Christians as His covenant people. The Lord's Supper is observed in memory of an event that reconciles us to our Father and gives us hope for eternity.

Thanks be to God for His great love and for the memorial He left for us by which we remember His great sacrifice!

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