

# The Bible versus the “Church of Christ”

## The Lord’s Supper

### Introduction:

1. This series of lessons is investigating the claims of a pamphlet titled: “The Bible versus the ‘Church of Christ’.”
2. The first lessons dealt with fundamental teaching about the church.
  - a. It is the spiritual body of Christ, but not a denomination.
  - b. Its name is important, and “church of Christ” is a scriptural one.
  - c. Its existence has continued since the Day of Pentecost.
3. The next accusations made against the church of Christ have to do with the worship of God.
  - a. Instrumental music in worship to God is not authorized under the New Testament.
  - b. God commands congregational singing – no other type of music is approved for worship.
4. The next criticism concerning worship deals with the partaking of the Lord’s Supper.

### I. Should We Emphasize the Lord’s Supper?

- A. **The Accusation:** *“Like the Roman Catholics, the Church of Christ places far too much emphasis on the Lord’s Supper. ...Friend, you can observe the Lord’s Supper fifty-two weeks a year, but if you haven’t been born again then you’re lost and going to Hell, and if your sins aren’t being confessed to the Lord regularly, then you are OUT of fellowship with Him, in spite of your faithfulness to the Lord’s Supper (Jn. 3:1-7; 1 Jn. 1:1-10).”*
- B. Mr. Melton makes this argument after quoting from a tract written by Fred Gardner called, “What Is Expected of Me as a Member of the Church of Christ?”
  1. In this tract, Bro. Gardner wrote that faithfully attending services and partaking of the Lord’s Supper motivates Christians to maintain their “first love” (Rev. 2:4) and to continue doing the “first works” (Rev. 2:5).
  2. He stated that weekly visualizing the sacrifice made for sin motivates the Christian to faithfulness.
  3. Mr. Melton lashes out at these statements with his customary ALL CAPS!
  4. First, he declares that Revelation 2:4-5 says “nothing – ABSOLUTELY NOTHING – about the Lord’s Supper.”
    - a. Bro. Gardner never said that it did.
    - b. He was using the goal of not leaving one’s first love to show the benefits and importance of faithfulness in worship.
  5. Then, he is astounded that anyone would suggest visualizing the body and blood of Jesus because “we walk by FAITH, not by SIGHT (2 Cor. 5:7).”
    - a. We are commanded to partake of the Lord’s Supper in remembrance of Jesus’ death (Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24-26).
      - i. As we partake of the bread, we remember His sacrificed body.
      - ii. As we partake of the cup, we remember His offered blood.
    - b. How can one remember the Lord’s death without “visualizing” it?
    - c. We did not see it with our fleshy, physical eyes.
    - d. We see it with the eye of faith – which is what 2 Corinthians 5:7 means! (Cf. Heb. 11:3, 7, 8, 13; etc.).
  6. Then, he makes his argument that partaking of the Lord’s Supper is not all that is required to be saved from sin (something Bro. Gardner never said and no faithful member of the Lord’s church believes or teaches).
- C. **First Response:** *We should place emphasis upon the Lord’s Supper.*
  1. Since it was important to the Lord, it should be important to His followers.
  2. It was commanded by the Lord (Matthew 26:26-27).
  3. It is participated in by the Lord (Matthew 26:29).
  4. It is a part of the New Covenant (Matthew 26:28).

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5. It is a memorial to the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:24-26).
  6. How can a Christian not emphasize the Lord’s Supper?
- D. **Second Response:** *Partaking of the Lord’s Supper is not all that is required to be a Christian, but it is required.*
1. The Lord’s Supper is not a mystical sacrament with special powers.
    - a. This is how it is often treated in Catholicism.
    - b. Thus, it is practiced on many unusual occasions – weddings, funerals, times of sickness, etc.
  2. In fact, it has no power to forgive sin.
    - a. Sins are forgiven by the blood of Jesus.
    - b. That blood is contacted by the alien sinner in baptism (Rev. 1:5; Acts 22:16).
    - c. The Christian maintains contact with that blood through faithfulness – including repentance, confession, and prayer (1 John 1:7-9; Acts 8:22).
    - d. In the Lord’s Supper, the blood of Jesus is remembered and memorialized, but not contacted.
  3. The Lord’s Supper is an act of worship.
    - a. Therefore, it is essential to participate in it (cf. John 4:24).
    - b. But, it is no more essential that any other act of worship – singing, giving, preaching, or prayer.
- E. Again, Mr. Melton’s accusation against the church of Christ is without valid foundation.

## II. When and How Often Should We Partake of the Lord’s Supper?

- A. **The Accusation:** *“[They] believe that Christians are to observe the Lord’s Supper EVERY WEEK. Does the Bible teach this? No, it does not. If you’ll read Matthew 26:26-28 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, you will be reading what the Bible has to say about the Lord’s Supper, and you will see nothing at all about observing in on a ‘week by week’ basis.”*
1. First, these are not the only two passages that mention the Lord’s Supper (cf. Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 10:16-21; Acts 2:42; 20:7).
  2. These two passages do not command a “week by week” observance, but other verses do.
  3. The church is commanded to assemble (Hebrews 10:22-25; 1 Corinthians 5:4; 14:23).
  4. If no other instruction or example were given, then the time of this assembly would be left to the desire of the congregation.
  5. However, the Bible teaches that the church is to assemble upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; cf. Revelation 1:10).
  6. One reason for this assembly was to partake of the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:17-20; Acts 20:7).
  7. So, the early church assembled upon the first day of every week for the purpose of worshipping God.
    - a. It is worth noting that those who deny that these verses authorize a weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper still meet for worship every Sunday!
    - b. And, when they assemble, they take up a collection – just a Paul instructed – every Sunday.
- B. **The Accusation:** *“(Acts 20:7) ...Now tell me, WHERE exactly did the Lord say that [the Lord’s Supper was observed on the first day of the week]. ...I thought He said that they came together to BREAK BREAD, not to observe the Lord’s Supper. [T]hey are NOT the same.”*
1. The phrase “break bread” can refer to partaking of the Lord’s Supper or it can refer to the eating of a common meal.

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2. The context must determine what is meant.
    - a. Luke 22:19 – *Lord’s Supper*
    - b. Luke 24:30, 35 – *Common meal*
    - c. 1 Corinthians 10:16 – *Lord’s Supper*
    - d. Acts 2:46 – *Common meal*
    - e. Acts 2:42 - ??? *Likely refers to the Lord’s Supper*
  3. What does the context of Acts 20:7 indicate?
    - a. Upon arriving in Troas, Paul tarried for seven days.
    - b. The inference is that he waited until the day when the disciples came together – when the church assembled.
    - c. This was upon the first day of the week, the assembly of worship.
    - d. The stated purpose of this assembly was to break bread.
      - i. If this were a common meal, it could have been eaten anytime.
      - ii. Yet, this act was joined with Paul’s preaching, another act of worship.
    - e. Because this was the weekly worship assembly, the breaking of bread refers to the Lord’s Supper.
  4. The church at Troas assembled upon the first day of the week to partake of the Lord’s Supper.
- C. **The Accusation:** “[T]he original Lord’s Supper was observed at NIGHTTIME (Mt. 26:31), and ...it was NOT observed on the first day of the week (Sunday) [T]he practice of BREAKING BREAD was done on a DAILY basis from house to house, not on a weekly basis in the Church of Christ. You find this information in Acts 2:46, and you’ll also find that MEAT was involved, not just bread and wine. Why? Because it wasn’t the Lord’s Supper.”
1. The Lord’s Supper was instituted as Jesus and His apostles partook of the Passover Feast.
    - a. This was during the evening, probably on a Thursday.
    - b. If no other example were given, this day would be acceptable.
    - c. However, at the time, Jesus and His disciples still lived under the OT.
    - d. He was preparing them for worship under His New Testament.
    - e. The NT indicates that the Lord’s Supper was observed on the first day of the week.
  2. The breaking of bread from house to house was the eating of a common meal.
  3. The Bible never uses the word “wine” in connection with the Lord’s Supper – always “fruit of the vine.”
- D. **The Accusation:** “There is no specific day in which Christians are told to observe the Lord’s Supper, and nowhere in the Bible are we told to observe it on a weekly basis. The Lord loves His church and He gives us liberty (2 Cor. 3:17) to make certain decisions for ourselves. This is evident in the fact that Paul wrote “as often as” in 1 Corinthians 11:26.”
1. The Lord does love His church and He does give us liberty in certain decisions.
  2. However, when God specifies, man does not have the liberty to alter His will.
  3. We would not dare add another food or drink to the Lord’s Supper, claiming liberty.
  4. Why would we change God’s instructions for the day and frequency of observance of the Lord’s Supper?
- E. The church must strive to partake in a worthy manner – the way that pleases God.