

The Mind of Christ

The Memorial of Love

Part Three

INTRODUCTION:

- I. In our series entitled “The Mind of Christ,” we’re now focusing our attention on the Passover Jesus celebrated with His disciples on the night of His betrayal.
 - A. As we’ve mentioned before, the Passover is the greatest and most significant of all Jewish religious observances.
 1. But what makes THIS Passover meal so important, what CAME from this meal.
 2. During the Passover meal, Jesus took two elements commonly used in observing the Passover – unleavened bread, and the fruit of the vine – and gave them an entirely new meaning.
 - B. Last week we took a close look at the significance of the unleavened bread.
 1. During the observance of the Passover meal, Jews in the days of Jesus, and even today, see the unleavened bread as the bread prepared in haste for their departure from Egyptian slavery – *“the bread of affliction”* as God called it. **(Deuteronomy 16:3)**

2. Jesus RE-defined the symbolic meaning of the unleavened bread by saying:
 - a. **Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22** – “. . . *this is My body.*”
 - b. **Luke 22:19** – “*This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.*”
 3. Jesus wanted His disciples to NOW see the unleavened bread as a symbol of His great sacrifice on Calvary.
 - a. To US the unleavened bread forever represents THE BODY of Christ – our PASSOVER LAMB – Who bore in His own body our sins on the cross.
- C. But now we want to turn our attention to the second element Jesus used in the institution of the Lord’s Supper – the fruit of the vine.
1. First, we want to understand what the fruit of the vine represented to the Jews who celebrated the Passover in the days of Jesus.
 2. Then we want to see the new meaning Jesus gave to the fruit of the vine, and what it should symbolize to us.

BODY:

- I. If you remember from a previous lesson, we looked at the Passover itself, and the various traditions that are included in the Jewish observance of that great feast.

- A. When the Lord commanded the children of Israel to prepare to leave the land of Egypt, He instructed the people to do two things.
1. First, they were to slay a lamb without blemish, and collect the blood of that lamb and smear it on the door posts and lintel of every Hebrew home in Egypt.
 - a. When God saw this blood, He promised to PASS OVER that house and spare the inhabitants from the plague of the death of all firstborn throughout the land.
 2. Second, the Hebrews were to prepare a meal – a meal that would be their final meal in the land of Egypt. That meal contained only THREE elements specified by God:
 - a. The lamb that was to be roasted whole. . .
 - b. Bitter herbs to remind them of the bitterness of their Egyptian bondage, and
 - c. Unleavened bread.
- B. However, over the course of several centuries, ceremonies were developed around various traditions that were added to the observance of the Passover meal – all of which carried very symbolic meanings.
1. Among these traditions was the drinking of FOUR cups of diluted wine – or fruit of the vine.
 2. This tradition was already well in place by the time of Jesus, and had become a vital part of every Passover celebration.

C. Wine used during the Passover meal carried two basic meanings to the people of Israel:

1. Wine was a symbol of freedom, since only FREE MEN drank wine. Slaves, on the other hand, rarely enjoyed the luxury of drinking wine.
2. Wine was also a symbol of blood.
 - a. In the Passover meal wine symbolized the blood of the Hebrews during their slavery in Egypt, as well as the blood of Hebrew children – recalling the time when Pharaoh ordered new-born Hebrew male infants thrown into the Nile River at the time when Moses was born.
 - b. But the wine also represented the blood of the sacrificial lamb, recalling the lamb without spot or blemish that was slain, and whose blood was smeared on the doors of Hebrew homes to protect the Hebrews from the tenth and final plague.

D. Each of the four cups of wine used in the Passover had a very special meaning – all of which are associated with the promises of God to the children of Israel found in **Exodus chapter 6**:

1. **Exodus 6:6-8** – God commanded Moses: *Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage,*

and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

2. These cups of wine represented FOUR SPECIFIC PROMISES

God made to the children of Israel in **Exodus 6:6-8**:

- a. The FIRST cup of wine represented the promise, *"I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians,"* and was the cup that was blessed at the very BEGINNING of the Passover meal.
- b. The SECOND cup of wine represented the promise, *"I will rescue you from their bondage,"* and this was the cup used DURING the meal.
- c. The THIRD cup represented the promise, *"I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments,"* and was the cup that was drunk immediately AFTER the meal.
- d. And finally, the FOURTH cup represented the promise, *"I will take you as My people, and I will be your God,"* and was drunk by the celebrants of the Passover meal during the singing of the *"Great Hallel"* (the words of Psalms 113-118) near the conclusion of the Passover celebration.

E. From the gospel accounts of the Passover Jesus celebrated with His disciples, we find specific mention of TWO of the four cups of wine that were traditionally used in this meal.

1. **Luke 22:14-18** – *When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."*
 - a. When Jesus celebrated the last Passover with His disciples, He began this Passover meal with the FIRST cup, called the Cup of Sanctification (or "*Kiddush*"), in which the traditional blessing is given at the beginning of the meal.
2. The SECOND cup, which is called the Cup of Plagues, recounts the ten plagues God brought against the Egyptians. But, there's no mention of THIS cup in the gospels accounts.
3. Nor is there any mention of the FOURTH cup, which is the Cup of Praise – or the Cup of Hallel.

4. However, ALL THREE gospel accounts mention the THIRD cup – and Luke’s account (**Luke 22:20**) tells us that this is the cup that Jesus took immediately AFTER the Passover meal.
 - a. It is THIS cup that we want to take a close look at.
 - b. First, we want to understand what it traditionally meant to all Jews who partook of the Passover meal – including the Lord’s disciples – then we want to see the NEW meaning Jesus gave to it.
- II. This THIRD cup wine – or fruit of the vine – had GREAT symbolism among Jews celebrating Passover, and an even GREATER meaning to the disciples of Jesus Christ.
- A. To the Jews, this THIRD cup of the Passover was called **The Cup of Redemption**, and it reminded them of the promise God made to REDEEM His people, and was associated with the promises of God found in **Exodus 6:6**.
 1. **Exodus 6:6** – *"I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with **great judgments**," (NKJV) or, *"I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with **mighty acts of judgment**." (NIV)*
 - a. The *"**great judgments**"* or *"**mighty acts of judgment**"* by which God redeemed the children of Israel were the TEN PLAGUES God brought against the Egyptians.*

2. The GREATEST of those mighty acts of judgment was the TENTH plague – the one in which the Lord took the life of every firstborn throughout the land of Egypt who were not in homes protected by the blood of the sacrificial lamb.
 - a. Therefore to every Jew celebrating Passover – including the disciples of the Lord – this THIRD cup of wine symbolized the REDEMPTION of God’s people THROUGH the blood of the sacrificial lamb.
- B. But when Jesus celebrated the last Passover with His disciples, He gave this THIRD cup a completely NEW meaning.
 1. All three synoptic gospels record new symbolism Jesus gave to this particular cup.
 - a. **Matthew 26:27-29** – *Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."*
 - b. **Mark 14:23-25** – *Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. Assuredly, I say to you, I will no*

longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

- c. **Luke 22:20** – *Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."*

- 2. From this moment forward, Jesus said the fruit of the vine would NO LONGER represent the blood of the sacrificial lamb slain during Passover, but would represent HIS BLOOD which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

III. There are a few critically important things Jesus said about the fruit of the vine in these verses that we need to understand.

- A. First, there is a slight variance in the reading. Matthew and Mark record Jesus as saying, *"this is My blood of the new covenant,"* while Luke's account records Jesus saying, *"this cup is the new covenant in my blood."* (**Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20**)

- 1. The variation in the reading between Luke's account with that of Matthew and Mark, raises a question about what is actually being symbolized here.
 - a. Some brethren today contend that Jesus actually introduced THREE symbols here – (1) the bread, which represents His body; (2) the fruit of the vine, which represents His blood

which was shed for the remission of sins; and (3) the cup, which, THEY say, represents the new covenant.

2. However, when Jesus said, "*this cup IS the new covenant in my blood*" (**Luke 22:20**), He was NOT saying the cup or the container represents, or in some way symbolizes, the new covenant or anything else.
 - a. How do we know this? Simply because Jesus was using another figure of speech – just as He did when He said of the unleavened bread, "*this is My body which is given for you.*" (**Luke 22:19**)
 - b. The figure of speech Jesus used here is known as METYONOMY – defined as the rhetorical or metaphorical substitution of a one thing for another based on their association or proximity.
 - (1). In other words, Jesus used the word CUP to rhetorically or metaphorically substitute for the FRUIT OF THE VINE.
 - (2). That's what the disciples drank – not the cup, but the contents of the cup.
 - c. I'll have a lot more to say about this in our next lesson. But for now, we simply need to understand that Jesus

did NOT introduce three elements to the Lord's Supper, only TWO – the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine.

- B. But what did Jesus mean when He said of the fruit of the vine, *"this is My blood of the new covenant,"* (Matthew and Mark) or, *"the new covenant in my blood"* (Luke)?
1. Blood has always played an important role in the worship of God in Old Testament times.
 - a. We already know the importance of blood on the night God passed over Egypt. **(Exodus 12)**
 - b. Later, according to the Law of Moses, the blood of a sacrifice became an offering for the atonement of sins, especially on the annual Day of Atonement. **(Leviticus 16)**
 2. But perhaps of GREATEST significance is that the MOST BINDING of ALL covenants were "Covenants of Blood" – where the covenant was ratified or brought into effect by the shedding of the blood of a LIVING sacrifice.
 3. For example, God ratified (brought into effect, or ushered in) the covenant He made with Israel by the blood of a sacrifice.
 - a. **Exodus 24:3-8** – *So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people*

answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do." And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient." [Now verse 8] And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."

- b. This is why Moses called the blood of the sacrifice, "*the BLOOD of the Covenant.*" It was the blood of that sacrificial animal that ratified or brought into being in the covenant of God with Israel.
4. The New Testament book of Hebrews ALSO makes references to the blood of the covenant.
 - a. **Hebrews 9:16-22** – *For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a*

testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. Therefore not even the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." Then likewise he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

- b. The Hebrew writer tells us that the first Covenant – the Covenant of God with the children of Israel – could not have been dedicated without blood. In other words, the Covenant was brought into being, put into effect, or ratified by the blood of an animal sacrifice.
5. In like manner, the New Covenant – the Covenant God has made with you and me as Christians – also needed to be ratified, brought into being, or put into effect by the blood of a sacrifice. But the difference NOW is that the blood that ratifies, brings into being and puts into effect the NEW Covenant is the blood of Jesus Christ.

- a. **Hebrews 13:20-21** – *Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*
6. This is why in Matthew and Mark's account of the Passover, Jesus called the blood He was about to shed on the cross of Calvary, "*My blood of the new covenant,*" or as Luke records it, "*the new covenant in My blood.*"
 - a. The shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ – our Passover – was necessary to ratify, or bring into effect the NEW Covenant God has made with those who have also been redeemed by the blood of Christ.
 - b. This is why the Hebrew writer says, "*Jesus has become a surety [the guarantee] of a better covenant.*" (**Hebrews 7:22**)
 - c. And why he also writes of Jesus, "*He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.*" (**Hebrews 8:6**)
7. And perhaps MOST important, this is why the writer of Hebrews speaks of the New Covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 31**), and quotes from that prophecy by saying, "*This is the*

covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin. (Hebrews 10:16-18)

- a. The New Covenant that God has made with us through Jesus Christ, is far better than the Old Covenant He made with the children of Israel. The Old Covenant was ratified by the blood of an animal sacrifice, whereas the New Covenant is ratified by the blood of Christ.
 - b. Furthermore, the New Covenant is better than the Old because the New Covenant is founded on the better promises that God will remember our sins and lawless deeds no more – permanent and complete forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ once and for all.
- C. But not only did Jesus say the fruit of the vine (the CONTENTS of the cup) *"is My blood of the new covenant,"* or *"is the new covenant in My blood,"* He also said *"which is shed for many for the remission of sins."* **(Matthew 26:28)** Why is this? Because the scriptures tell us there is one principle requirement for remission of sins: *"without shedding of blood there is no remission."* **(Hebrews 9:22)**

1. During Old Testament times the High Priest was required to take the blood of a sacrifice and enter the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle (and later the Temple) once every year and make atonement for the sins of the people of Israel.
 - a. **Exodus 30:10** – God said, *"And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."*
 - b. **Leviticus 16:15-16** – God provides more detail regarding the procedure for the sin offering: *"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness."*
 - c. **Leviticus 17:11-12** – Finally, God explains why the blood of a sacrifice is required to atone for sins. God said, *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon*

the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."

- d. **Hebrews 10:1-4** – The writer of the book of Hebrews tells that there was one basic problem with the blood of sacrificial animals: *"For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins."*

2. Therefore, it was essential for the blood of Jesus to be shed on the cross so that remission of sins could be achieved once and for all time.

- a. **Hebrews 9:11-12** – This is why the writer of Hebrews depicts Christ as OUR High Priest, who offered His OWN blood for our sins: *"But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered*

the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption."

- b. **Hebrews 9:24-28** – *"For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another – He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many."*
- c. **1 Peter 1:17-21** – *". . . conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who*

raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

D. Therefore, when we put together all we've learned here, we see Jesus clearly wanted His disciples to understand this fruit of the vine was, from that moment to the end of time, to represent His blood.

1. It is His blood that ratifies the NEW covenant – a covenant founded on better promises because it's an eternal covenant, and one in which God will remember our sins no more.

2. And, it is His blood that brings remission of sins once and for all time.

a. Jesus wants you and me to remember, *"it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul."* **(Leviticus 17:21)**

b. And, *"without shedding of blood there is no remission."*
(Hebrews 9:22)

CONCLUSION:

I. When the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, he reminded those saints of the importance of observing the Lord's Supper in a proper manner, and reminded them what the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine should mean to them.

A. There are three vitally important truths in Paul's comments to the Corinthians that we need to understand.

1. First, Paul reminded them that the Lord's Supper is a MEMORIAL, when he recalled of the words of the Lord, who commanded His disciples to do these things *"remembrance of Me."* **(1 Corinthians 11:24-25)**
 - a. When we observe the Lord's Supper it should become a MEMORIAL during which we remember the terrible sacrifice Jesus paid for you and me.
2. Second, Paul reminded them that the Lord's Supper was a PROCLAMATION, when he said, *"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes."* **(1 Corinthians 11:26)**
 - a. When we observe the Lord's Supper it becomes a PROCLAMATION – a means by which we proclaim to the world how much the sacrifice of Jesus means to us.
3. And finally, Paul reminded them that the Lord's Supper is a time of SELF-EXAMINATION by DISCERNING the Lord's Body. He said, *"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."* **(1 Corinthians 11:27-29)**

- a. When we partake of the Lord's Supper it becomes a SELF-EXAMINATION – a time for us to eat of the bread and drink of the fruit of the vine DISCERNING the Lord's body.
- b. Discerning means that while we partake of the Lord's Supper we are to separate and make a distinction between the TRUE meaning and purpose of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine from their common use.
- c. We need to be thinking of the body of Christ: the pure and sinless Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world; and we need to be thinking of the blood of Christ: the blood that ratifies the new covenant between us and God, and the blood by which we have eternal redemption once and for all.

II. What does the blood of Christ mean to you?

- A. If you're a faithful Christian, it means everything.
 1. Because you know that without the blood of Christ, you would still be alienated from God and still in your sins.
- B. But if you've turned away from the Lord, or have refused to take advantage of the saving power in the blood of Christ by obeying the gospel of Christ, the blood of Christ means very little, if anything at all.

1. How are you going to stand before this SAME JESUS on judgment day and explain why His blood that was shed for you meant so little to you?
2. **Hebrews 10:28-31** – The Hebrew writer puts it this way: *Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*
3. Don't let that be your fate!