

“THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME...” (1)

By Keith Greer

"Now we come to the most sacred part of our worship service." One might say, "Now we come to the most important part of our worship service."

Have you heard someone use these phrases in preparing to partake of the Lord's Supper? Could these statements be factual or a personal opinion? Does God tell us to put one part of our service to Him above another?

God does not direct us as to the "most" important element in worship, but why did Jesus institute the Lord's Supper? Why do we partake of it? How often? On what day? Can it be done with any type of attitude?

When God told the Israelites to observe the Passover, as He was about to bring the death of the firstborn upon Egypt, they were to keep the feast on a yearly basis. "So you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this same day I will have brought your armies out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance." (Exodus 12:17) Why? "And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.'" So the people bowed their heads and worshiped." (Exodus 12:26-27) These things were to be done to "bring to their remembrance" what God had done for them.

When the children of Israel crossed the Jordan River in Joshua 4:1-8, God told them to make a memorial of 12 stones. The memorial would be a reminder of God bringing them across the Jordan.

After the rebellion of Korah and the 250 princes, what did God have the children of Israel do with the censers? "... and they were hammered out as a covering on the altar, to be a memorial to the children of Israel that no outsider, who is not a descendant of Aaron, should come near to offer incense before the LORD; ..." (Numbers 16:39-40)

In all of these "memorials", God wanted the children of Israel to remember what He had done, and why. Why were they needed? God knows that man is a forgetful being. So, He established memorials so that they, and their children, would always keep in memory their dependence upon God.

Men still need reminders today. Unfortunately, we too are forgetful. We tend to forget from time to time what God has done for us. Just before His betrayal and death upon the cross, Jesus established a memorial for us.

Jesus and His twelve disciples gathered in an upper room to remember the Passover feast. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and

said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 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." (Matthew 26:26-28)

In this account, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. This was to be a "memorial" for them, and for us, to remind us of the sacrifice Jesus made for us by dying on the cross.

By observing this supper, we would have the facts before us: the love and the price paid for our hope of eternal life. "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

The bread represents our Lord's body; the fruit of the vine represents His blood that was shed on the cross of Calvary. "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death until He comes." (1 Corinthians 11:26) (Continue in Part 2) ***