

UNDERSTANDING THE MEMORIAL

“Keep doing this in remembrance of me.” –Luke 22:19b



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On the evening before his death, Jesus met with twelve of his disciples in a large upper room to observe the Passover (Mark 14:14-16). Our Bible then goes on to relate what happens next through four accounts, two which were eyewitness recollections. As such, we are given a series of events, a command to continue observing the event, and what it represents. But the questions we need to ask ourselves are: who was commanded to observe or have a share in this Memorial occasion, how often should it be done, and whether there are those who are supposed to simply “observe” the occasion and sit idly by while it takes place.

As we examine the scriptural facts, we should hopefully get a sense of the importance of why we need to properly understand the Memorial and what it fulfills and symbolizes for us today. We have a personal obligation to discern the evidence for ourselves and act in accordance with our findings.

Origin of the Passover

The occasion which Jesus was observing with twelve of his disciples that evening was the Passover. The Passover had been instituted on the evening before the departure of Israel from Egypt (the Exodus). The *first* Passover was observed about the time of full moon, on the 14th day of *Abib* (later called *Nisan*) in the year 1513 B.C.E. This was thereafter to be celebrated annually. (Exodus 12:17-20, 24-27) *Abib* (*Nisan*) falls within the months March-April of the Gregorian calendar. Passover was followed by seven days of the Festival of Unfermented Cakes, *Nisan* 15-21. Passover *commemorates* the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt and the ‘passing over’ of their firstborn when Jehovah destroyed the firstborn of Egypt. Seasonally, it fell at the beginning of the barley harvest.—Exodus 12:14, 24-47; Le 23:10.

Passover was a memorial celebration; therefore the Scriptural command was: “And it must occur that when your sons say to you, ‘What does this service mean to you?’ then you must say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the passover to Jehovah, who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when he plagued the Egyptians, but he delivered our houses.’”—Ex 12:26, 27.

Since the Jews reckoned the day as starting after sundown and ending the next day at sundown, *Nisan* 14 would begin after sundown. It would be in the evening after *Nisan* 13 concluded that the Passover would be observed. Since the Bible definitely states that Christ is the Passover sacrifice (1Co 5:7) and that he observed the Passover meal the evening before he was put to death, the date of his death would be *Nisan* 14, not *Nisan* 15, in order to fulfill accurately the time feature of the type, or shadow, provided in the Law.—Heb 10:1.

Each household was to choose a male sheep or goat that was sound and a year old. It was taken into the house on the 10th day of the month *Abib* and kept until the 14th, and

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then it was slaughtered and its blood was splashed with a bunch of hyssop on the doorposts and the upper part of the doorway of the dwelling in which they were to eat it (not on the threshold where the blood would be trampled on).

The lamb (or goat) was slaughtered, skinned, its interior parts cleansed and replaced, and it was roasted whole, well-done, with no bones broken. (2Chron. 35:11; Nu. 9:12) If the household was too small to consume the whole animal, then it was to be shared with a neighbor household and eaten that same night. Anything left over was to be burned before morning. (Exodus 12:10; 34:25) It was eaten with unfermented cakes, “the bread of affliction,” and with bitter greens, for their life had been bitter under slavery.—Exodus 1:14; 12:1-11, 29, 34; Deut. 16:3.

At the Passover in Egypt, the head of the family was responsible for the slaying of the lamb (or goat) at each home, and all were to stay inside the house to avoid being slain by the angel. The partakers ate in a standing position, their hips girded, staff in hand, sandals on so as to be ready for a long journey over rough ground (whereas they often did their daily work barefoot). At midnight all the firstborn of the Egyptians were slain, but the angel passed over the houses on which the blood had been spattered. (Ex 12:11, 23) Every Egyptian household in which there was a firstborn male was affected, from the house of Pharaoh himself to the firstborn of the prisoner. It was not the head of the house, even though he may have been a firstborn, but was any male firstborn in the household under the head, as well as the male firstborn of animals, that was slain.—Ex 12:29, 30

Prophetic Significance of the Passover

Jehovah God has always taught through example and illustration when dealing with humans. Jesus, while upon the earth, followed his heavenly father’s example of teaching. Everything that the Law contained was symbolic and prophetic, pointing to a future fulfillment or to a representative type within Jehovah’s Purpose. The institution and observance of the Passover was no different.

The apostle Paul, in urging Christians to live clean lives, attributes pictorial significance to the Passover. He says: “For, indeed, Christ our passover has been sacrificed.” (1Co 5:7) Here he likens Christ Jesus to the Passover lamb. John the Baptizer pointed to Jesus, saying: “See, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world!” (Joh 1:29) John may have had in mind the Passover lamb, or he could have been thinking of the male sheep that Abraham offered up instead of his own son Isaac or of the male lamb that was offered up upon God’s altar at Jerusalem each morning and evening.—Ge 22:13; Ex 29:38-42.

Certain features of the Passover observance were fulfilled by Jesus. One fulfillment lies in the fact that the blood on the houses in Egypt delivered the firstborn from destruction at the hands of the destroying angel. Paul speaks of anointed Christians as the congregation of the firstborn (Heb 12:23), and of Christ as their deliverer through his blood. (1Th 1:10; Eph 1:7) No bones were to be broken in the Passover lamb. It had been prophesied that none of Jesus’ bones would be broken, and this was fulfilled at his death. (Ps 34:20; Joh 19:36) Thus the Passover kept by the Jews for centuries was one of those things in which the Law provided a shadow of the things to come and pointed to Jesus Christ, “the Lamb of God.”—Heb 10:1; Joh 1:29.

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Jesus confirmed his role in fulfilling what the Law had been teaching and representing humans, because during his brief ministry on earth he said:

“Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I came, not to destroy, but to fulfill; (Matthew 5:17)

However, in spite of the numerous generations which had been observing the Law, mankind still had difficulty understanding the underlying significance of why things were just so. The time had not yet arrived for Jehovah to make things clear, although new insights were quickly coming to the fore as Jesus pressed ahead in his short tenure among humans here on earth. His methods of teaching were like breaths of fresh air to the people who heard him, and many listened to Jesus’ message from his heavenly father with renewed interest.

Still, some of what Jesus said proved difficult to understand, and on one particular occasion was offensive to the extreme because the hearers were still thinking in a physical sense and not in a spiritual sense. It was because the Law inherently focused on the physical. Everything was represented through physical icons and resolved through tangible means. But they had forgotten that the Law was leading them to the Purpose that Jehovah God had put into place for mankind’s salvation. No measure of animal sacrifices would ever be able to accomplish that for fallen mankind.

On the seemingly offensive occasion when Jesus tried to help his hearers to appreciate what needed to take place as fulfillment of the Law and to open the way for mankind back to Jehovah God, Jesus discussed how those who wished to have life would need to “eat his flesh.”

35 Jesus said to them: “I am the bread of life. He that comes to me will not get hungry at all, and he that exercises faith in me will never get thirsty at all. **36** But I have said to you, You have even seen me and yet do not believe. **37** Everything the Father gives me will come to me, and the one that comes to me I will by no means drive away; **38** because I have come down from heaven to do, not my will, but the will of him that sent me. **39** This is the will of him that sent me, that I should lose nothing out of all that he has given me but that I should resurrect it at the last day. **40** For this is the will of my Father, that everyone that beholds the Son and exercises faith in him should have everlasting life, and I will resurrect him at the last day.” (John 6:35-40)

After he said that to the listeners, they began “murmuring” about his words, and he afterwards went on to explain further:

48 “I am the bread of life. **49** YOUR forefathers ate the manna in the wilderness and yet died. **50** This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that anyone may eat of it and not die. **51** I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread he will live forever; and, for a fact, the bread that I shall give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world.” **52** Therefore the Jews began contending with one another, saying: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” **53** Accordingly Jesus said to them: “Most truly I say to you, Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves. **54** He that feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I shall resurrect him at the last day; **55** for my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. **56** He that feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in union with me, and I in union with him. **57** Just as the living Father sent me forth and I live because of the Father, he also that feeds on me, even that one will live because of me. **58** This is the bread that came down from heaven. It is not as when YOUR forefathers ate and yet died. He that feeds on this bread will live forever.” **59** These things he said as he was teaching in public assembly at Ca-per’na-um.

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60 Therefore many of his disciples, when they heard this, said: "This speech is shocking; who can listen to it?" **61** But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were murmuring about this, said to them: "Does this stumble YOU? **62** What, therefore, if YOU should behold the Son of man ascending to where he was before? **63** It is the spirit that is life-giving; the flesh is of no use at all. The sayings that I have spoken to YOU are spirit and are life. **64** But there are some of YOU that do not believe." For from [the] beginning Jesus knew who were the ones not believing and who was the one that would betray him. **65** So he went on to say: "This is why I have said to YOU, No one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."
66 Owing to this many of his disciples went off to the things behind and would no longer walk with him. (John 6:48-66)

The very thought of Jesus suggesting that they would have to "eat the flesh" of this man standing before them was enough to drive away not only the hearers of Jesus' words, but also many of those disciples which had accompanied Jesus thus far. Cannibalism, indeed!

It was an unfortunate loss for those who decided they couldn't listen to such an illustration, but one that not all of Jesus' followers abandoned. The Bible relates that twelve remained, and it was to these that Jesus now turned his attention:

67 Therefore Jesus said to the twelve: "You do not want to go also, do YOU?" **68** Simon Peter answered him: "Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life; **69** and we have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God." (John 6:67-69)

It was likely that because of what they had personally observed during their time with Jesus that the twelve remained, even though they weren't entirely sure of what they had just heard. Still, there were other occasions when their Teacher would tell them something new and unheard of, and this one proved to be no different. They knew in their heart that Jesus would explain what was meant, when it was time.

Not too much earlier, they had heard another statement made by Jesus that, while not as horrific, was just as confusing because the time had not yet arrived for them to better understand the illustrations. On that occasion, Jesus was making reference to a "temple:"

18 Therefore, in answer, the Jews said to him: "What sign have you to show us, since you are doing these things?" **19** In answer Jesus said to them: "Break down this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." **20** Therefore the Jews said: "This temple was built in forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?" **21** But he was talking about the temple of his body. **22** When, though, he was raised up from the dead, his disciples called to mind that he used to say this; and they believed the Scripture and the saying that Jesus said. (John 2:18-22)

As the scriptures point out in verse 22, it wasn't until much later that the underlying meaning of the statement became understood. But it *did* become understood, and abundantly so.

Not understanding everything Jesus taught did not discourage the faithful disciples. They could see with their own eyes that Jehovah was with Jesus. The miracles that he performed, the manner in which he taught, and the very example that he personally set for them day to day were more than enough to convince them. Still, Jesus was not one to keep his faithful followers in the dark regarding Jehovah's purposes, nor in preparing them for the eventual culmination of his ministry: his own death and subsequent resurrection. His father would never do that, neither would he. (Amos 3:7)

Instituting the Memorial

Jesus knew that his time on earth was nearly at an end. He had done everything he could to help prepare his faithful followers for the inevitable, and now, on this particular Passover celebration he offered them an understanding that they would afterwards explain to all who came to the Christ. He offered them the understanding of the fulfillment of the Passover.

Matthew 26:26-30	Mark 14:22-26	Luke 22:14-20
<p>26 As they continued eating, Jesus took a loaf and, after saying a blessing, he broke it and, giving it to the disciples, he said: "TAKE, eat. This means my body." 27 Also, he took a cup and, having given thanks, he gave it to them, saying: "Drink out of it, all of you; 28 for this means my 'blood of the covenant,' which is to be poured out in behalf of many for forgiveness of sins. 29 But I tell you, I will by no means drink henceforth any of this product of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father." 30 Finally, after singing praises, they went out to the Mount of Olives.</p>	<p>22 And as they continued eating, he took a loaf, said a blessing, broke it and gave it to them, and said: "Take it, this means my body." 23 And taking a cup, he offered thanks and gave it to them, and they all drank out of it. 24 And he said to them: "This means my 'blood of the covenant,' which is to be poured out in behalf of many. 25 Truly I say to you, I shall by no means drink anymore of the product of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." 26 Finally, after singing praises, they went out to the Mount of Olives.</p>	<p>14 At length when the hour came, he reclined at the table, and the apostles with him. 15 And he said to them: "I have greatly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I tell you, I will not eat it again until it becomes fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 And, accepting a cup, he gave thanks and said: "Take this and pass it from one to the other among yourselves; 18 for I tell you, From now on I will not drink again from the product of the vine until the kingdom of God arrives." 19 Also, he took a loaf, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: "This means my body which is to be given in YOUR behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me." 20 Also, the cup in the same way after they had the evening meal, he saying: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in YOUR behalf.</p>

It was during the meal that these events took place, according to the three accounts we have recorded for us in the Bible. Too, we have a consistent order of events and Jesus' explanation of what is the meaning (and fulfillment) of the observance.

Jesus, after picking up the unleavened bread, the "bread of affliction" (Exodus 12:8b; Deut. 16:3), gave thanks to Jehovah God and then broke it and gave a piece to each of the disciples that were with him. After researching the possibility, it appears that the *breaking* of the bread wasn't symbolic insofar as having scriptural or prophetic significance; the bread was unleavened, and thus would *have* to be broken into pieces, since it would resemble a cracker in consistency. But Jesus did make clear what the bread

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itself meant: his body. This would likely have recalled to the minds of the disciples that earlier incident when so many had abandoned the Teacher over a seemingly horrific, obscene suggestion. (John 6:35, 48-58, 60, 66)

Here again, as before, Jesus was saying that his flesh was going to be given in behalf of mankind, and now he was giving the representation of that flesh, the unleavened bread, the “bread of affliction,” to his disciples to eat. There was no cannibalism involved after all, as some had thought! And while perhaps they may not have yet fully understood all that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ’s flesh and life entailed, they were helped to appreciate the symbolism, simple and true, of the emblem which they had been sharing in all those years, and the generations before them had shared in eating... what that unleavened bread, that “bread of affliction” actually *represented*.

“Take, eat,” Jesus told them. “This means my body.” Luke’s account adds a pointed additional statement, “which is given in your behalf.” This helped confirm to them Jesus’ earlier statement, too: “and, for a fact, the bread that I shall give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world.” (John 6:51)

So the lesson continued when Jesus then took a cup of wine, again offered up thanks to Jehovah God, and gave it to them, saying: “Drink out of it, all of you; for this means my ‘blood of the covenant,’ which is to be poured out in behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:27-28; Mark 14:23-24) Luke’s account differs from Matthew and Mark’s account, where it is recorded in this way: “This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf.” (Luke 22:20)

Much earlier in Jesus’ ministry, there was a reference made to wine, and it was during Jesus’ first miracle, at a wedding feast. How very fitting, then, that his ministry was to be at its end on a similar occasion, symbolically speaking.

Here is the Bible’s account:

2 Now on the third day a marriage feast took place in Ca’na of Gal’i-lee, and the mother of Jesus was there. **2** Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the marriage feast.

3 When the wine ran short the mother of Jesus said to him: “They have no wine.” **4** But Jesus said to her: “What have I to do with you, woman? My hour has not yet come.” **5** His mother said to those ministering: “Whatever he tells you, do.” (John 2:1-5)

The disciples who had seen their Teacher change water into wine on that occasion had put their faith in him that day (John 2:11), not because they understood what he had made reference to regarding wine and that his “hour” had not yet come, but because they saw a miracle with their own eyes, the changing of water into wine.

Now, however, Jesus’ hour *had* come. The words “They have no wine” was about to be made painfully clear as Jesus’ shed blood was about to be poured out in behalf of not only them, but the whole world. It was not through the sacrifice of beasts and the pouring out of their blood that mankind would or could be washed clean, but only through the pouring out of the blood of the Christ.

Here, too, Jesus was further clarifying the illustration he had used earlier in his ministry when he was telling his hearers how they would need to “drink his blood” and eat his flesh. (John 6:53-57).

Jesus also commanded his faithful disciples to “Keep doing this in remembrance of me.” (John 22:19b). Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, recorded Jesus’ words thus:

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23 For I received from the Lord that which I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was going to be handed over took a loaf **24** and, after giving thanks, he broke it and said: "This means my body which is in YOUR behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me." **25** He did likewise respecting the cup also, after he had the evening meal, saying: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood. Keep doing this, as often as YOU drink it, in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

This observance would serve as the fulfillment and replacement of the Passover arrangement, serving as a memorial to Christ's sacrifice in our behalf, acting in lieu of beasts which had been sacrificed for our sins down through the generations. No more would the killing and sacrificing of a lamb or goat be expected at Passover for those serving Jehovah God: Jehovah Himself had provided the lamb. (John 1:29, 35-36)

Having finished instituting the Memorial, Jesus, along with his faithful disciples, sang psalms to Jehovah and went out to the Mount of Olives, where Jesus would soon be taken into custody and handed over for the fulfillment of the Passover and the Law's requirements in order to purchase back mankind from the sentence of death due to sin.

The Memorial in the Early Congregation of the First Century

Jesus had told his faithful disciples to "keep doing this" commemoration, and it is evident from a letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthians that the command was being followed, but that some issues had arisen that were casting a bad light on the event. Indeed, Jesus, before ascending back into the heavens, had instructed the disciples:

16 However, the eleven disciples went into Gal'i-lee to the mountain where Jesus had arranged for them, **17** and when they saw him they did obeisance, but some doubted. **18** And Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded YOU. And, look! I am with YOU all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 28:16-20)

So what issues had arisen that had Paul writing concerning the proper observation of the Memorial? We can see for ourselves by reading the account from the scriptures:

14 Therefore, my beloved ones, flee from idolatry. **15** I speak as to men with discernment; judge for yourselves what I say. **16** The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of the Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not a sharing in the body of the Christ? **17** Because there is one loaf, we, although many, are one body, for we are all partaking of that one loaf. **18** Look at that which is Israel in a fleshly way: Are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers with the altar? **19** What, then, am I to say? That what is sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? **20** No; but I say that the things which the nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want YOU to become sharers with the demons. **21** You cannot be drinking the cup of Jehovah and the cup of demons; YOU cannot be partaking of "the table of Jehovah" and the table of demons. **22** Or "are we inciting Jehovah to jealousy"? We are not stronger than he is, are we? (1 Corinthians 10:14-22)

Here, Paul is helping his readers to appreciate a number of points related to the sharing in the Memorial, including the oneness of all partakers. But he is also pointing out that Jehovah God will not tolerate a sharing with demons and Satanic influences. By

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pointing to the fleshly mode which was served by sacrifice and then applying it to the spiritual way that a disciple of Christ should look upon his own life and service as a living sacrifice, Paul's words were meant to reflect that the Christian cannot be serving two masters, an expression that Jesus made use of during his own ministry. (Matthew 6:24; compare with 1 Corinthians 10:21)

It was to be clear that by partaking in the Memorial and eating of the bread and drinking of the wine, that there was an exclusivity that binds a Christian to God. Christians were to do so out of sincerity, an earnest desire to do their utmost to live and express their appreciation for what the bread and the wine mean. To share in the Memorial and then seek after the longings of the world was unacceptable, in effect, inciting Jehovah to jealousy.

While the table of the world, set by Satan and his demons, is beset with every unclean thing imaginable, colorful and pleasing to the eyes, it is such foods which Christians should turn from, for Jehovah hates the things set upon it. (1 John 2:15-17).

On the other hand, Jehovah's table is simple, unfettered. Yet it contains everything Christians will ever need for life everlasting. (Matthew 11:29-30; John 3:16; John 6:27; John 17:3; James 1:27)

Indulging or "snacking" from the table of demons will cost the Christian not only their relationship with Jehovah God, but their very lives.

Paul had still more to say about properly appreciating the Memorial:

20 Therefore, when you come together to one place, it is not possible to eat the Lord's evening meal. **21** For, when you eat [it], each one takes his own evening meal beforehand, so that one is hungry but another is intoxicated. **22** Certainly you do have houses for eating and drinking, do you not? Or do you despise the congregation of God and make those who have nothing ashamed? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you? In this I do not commend you.

23 For I received from the Lord that which I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was going to be handed over took a loaf **24** and, after giving thanks, he broke it and said: "This means my body which is in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me."

25 He did likewise respecting the cup also, after he had the evening meal, saying: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood. Keep doing this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." **26** For as often as you eat this loaf and drink this cup, you keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, until he arrives.

27 Consequently whoever eats the loaf or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be guilty respecting the body and the blood of the Lord. **28** First let a man approve himself after scrutiny, and thus let him eat of the loaf and drink of the cup. **29** For he that eats and drinks eats and drinks judgment against himself if he does not discern the body. **30** That is why many among you are weak and sickly, and quite a few are sleeping [in death]. **31** But if we would discern what we ourselves are, we would not be judged. **32** However, when we are judged, we are disciplined by Jehovah, that we may not become condemned with the world. **33** Consequently, my brothers, when you come together to eat [it], wait for one another. **34** If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, that you may not come together for judgment. But the remaining matters I will set in order when I get there. (1 Corinthians 11:20-34)

There was a growing failure to appreciate the Memorial and what it represented, and Paul was endeavoring to bring the Corinthians back to their senses. Apparently, some were fallen to being intoxicated before the observance while others came to the observance in search of a meal to eat. In neither case was the proper attitude being exercised. Paul refused to commend them in their keeping the Memorial due to this problem. He pointed out that he had shown them what he himself had been taught

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regarding the observance of the Memorial, reminding them what the bread and the wine represented. And he admonished the Corinthians to first examine themselves before sharing in the Memorial, because they could be eating or drinking judgment to themselves if they were not of the right mind-set and living in accord with what they were proclaiming. Only after taking a hard look at themselves and making sure that they were in harmony with their sharing in the Memorial could they partake of the emblems of bread and wine and not stand judged by Jehovah God. And there was no need to rush the occasion, but rather the suggestion that all wait until everyone is present to share *together* the Memorial and the hopes therein. And to those who were coming to find a meal, they should eat in their own homes before attending and partaking.

Far better to do these things first than to partake unworthily of the symbolic emblems, Paul admonished them. (1 Corinthians 11:27) (See also Page 22 of this treatise.)

The Memorial and Christians Today

Today, in a world besieged with dozens upon dozens of variations of Christianity *all* claiming to be *based* on the Bible, it is difficult to decide among them which is the “right” religion without learning something about each one. And the observance of the Memorial is practiced among many of the religions today, in many different ways, ranging from a weekly “mass” to an annual “Memorial.” Each claims to be correct in *their* observance and understanding.

But for those who have no particular allegiance or involvement with a given religious group or church, yet want to learn of the Memorial and whether it is something that Christians today should (or do) observe, the Bible holds the answers—not always agreeing with the teachings of a religious group or church. But whether there is agreement or not, we *must* obey the Bible as we understand it, and do our utmost to live in harmony with God’s Word.

The scriptures that have been presented are only the start to better understanding the Memorial and its significance to our lives. There are many facets of God’s Word that have not been discussed here, but are appropriate to the occasion, and it falls upon us as dedicated disciples of Christ and servants of Jehovah God to become familiar with them.

When Should the Memorial Be Observed?

While the Bible doesn’t say pointedly that the Memorial should be held *annually*, or weekly, it *does* tell us that “For as often as you eat this loaf and drink this cup, you keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, until he arrives.” (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Even so, it has been reasoned by some that since the Memorial that Jesus instituted is the fulfillment and replacement for the Passover memorial, it seems reasonable that it be observed every year as the Christian Passover or Memorial at the time that the former Memorial was observed: Nisan 14. But whether this is the conclusion arrived at by consensus or not, Paul’s words certainly do not provide us with a foundation for that conclusion, and so we must rely upon our own conscience and grasp of the Scriptures. To that end, Paul also wrote that we are not to be judging one another when it comes to observances and festivals. (Colossians 2:16,17)

There are enough factors and forces to divide us, not only from each other, but from our Creator, Jehovah God, without allowing such issues as forcing our beliefs upon others as a *standard* and saying that Jehovah will not accept someone else unless they approach Him as we do, for the Bible tells us in no uncertain terms that “God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10:34, 35)

Who Should Partake at the Memorial?

In this section, I will be addressing "Jehovah's Witness" theology regarding the Memorial. Unless you are familiar with Witness teachings on this subject, some (or all) of what follows may be confusing. At the same time, if you are one of "Jehovah's Witnesses," you will likely find the information in this section to be completely foreign, but you are invited to carefully scrutinize the statements and scriptural evidences provided, just as the Bereans did in Paul's day when he presented them with previously unknown views and teachings. After reading the section, if you still disagree, you are welcome to contact me to address the points you feel I failed to prove. Similarly, if you still have questions about certain points I discussed and want to get clarification, please contact me.

According to current Witness theology, when Jesus instituted the Memorial, it sealed a new covenant that applied only to those who would reign with Christ in the New Order, Christ's Kingdom. This would involve a limited number of 144,000 which has been filled, with less than 9,000 of the "anointed class" remaining alive today. While those not of the "anointed class" would *benefit* from the new covenant arrangement, they are not considered to be in "union with Christ," and thus may not partake of the bread and the wine. They may, however, attend the Memorial as bystanders. They are

considered of the "earthly class" and are often referred to as members of the "great crowd."

In addition, the Society teaches that Jesus' statements in John 6 in reference to his being the "bread" and "wine" that mankind must "eat" and "drink" in order to have life was in no way a reference to the instituting of the Memorial since "it was spoken a year before the Memorial was set forth."

John 6:53, 54: "Jesus said to them: 'Most truly I say to you, Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves. He that feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I shall resurrect him at the last day.'"

This eating and drinking would obviously have to be done figuratively; otherwise the one doing it would be violating God's law. (Gen. 9:4; Acts 15:28, 29) However, it should be noted that Jesus' statement at John 6:53, 54 was not made in connection with the inauguration of the Lord's Evening Meal. None who heard him had any idea of a celebration with bread and wine used to represent Christ's flesh and blood. That arrangement was not introduced until about a year later, and the apostle John's report about the Lord's Evening Meal does not begin until more than seven chapters later on (in John 14) in the Gospel bearing his name.

How, then, can a person "eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood" in a figurative way if not by partaking of the bread and the wine at the Memorial? Notice that Jesus said that those thus eating and drinking would have "everlasting life." Earlier, in verse 40, when explaining what people must do to have everlasting life, what did he say was the will of his Father? That "everyone that beholds the Son and *exercises faith* in him should have everlasting life." Reasonably, then, 'eating his flesh and drinking his blood' in a figurative sense is done by *exercising faith* in the redeeming power of Jesus' flesh and blood laid down in sacrifice. This exercising of faith is required of all who will gain the fullness of life, whether in the heavens with Christ or in the earthly Paradise.—*Reasoning from the Scriptures*, page 268

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There are several problems with the conclusion arrived at by the Society and subsequently imposed upon “Jehovah’s Witnesses” as a whole.

First, the Society states that the *reason* why they insist that “Jesus’ statement at John 6:53, 54 was *not* made in connection with the inauguration of the Lord’s Evening Meal” is because “None who heard him had any idea of a celebration with bread and wine used to represent Christ’s flesh and blood.”

However, the tie between the two events (this account and the instituting of the Memorial) *are* evidently tied together, because the disciples who did not abandon Jesus over this proclamation awaited the time when Jesus would clarify or explain what he *meant* by it. That explanation came on the night of Nisan 14.

There are numerous occasions when Jesus taught something *publicly* and then privately *explained* it to his disciples. (Confer Mark 4:10-12; Mark 4:34) The speech at John 6 is just *one* of those occasions, and it cannot be stressed enough that Jesus later made good on explaining what he meant, when he helped them to appreciate the Memorial.

Some might argue that when Jesus said something publicly that his disciples did not understand, it was *shortly* after that occasion when he would make it clear to them—thus him teaching something and it becoming clear a year or more later wasn’t at all the case, which means that we can’t tie John 6:53-54 to the Memorial. But this is not true. *Several* things didn’t become clear to them until much later (in some cases, years!). (Luke 24:6-11; John 2:22; John 12:16) And even the Society teaches as much, when they say things like the apostles not fully understanding a great many thing which have now, in our day, been undergoing fulfillment, etc., yet Jehovah’s people have had these things prophesied to them down through the ages.

Second, the argument is presented that since there are “more than seven chapters” separating the occasions, the two cannot possibly be tied. Such a convoluted line of reasoning, if applied to the rest of the Bible, would undermine everything we have come to know and believe. After all, there are more than seven *books* (not just “chapters”!) of the Bible separating the Messianic Promise given in Eden until the actual implementation of that Promise through the birth of Jesus, yet we accept that the two are linked.

The Society then proceeds to explain that a person who does not partake at the Memorial still does so *figuratively* by “exercising faith in the redeeming power of Jesus’ flesh and blood laid down in sacrifice.” This reasoning, however, is beset with numerous problems.

Most Witnesses *recognize* that one is not exercising their faith unless they are *doing* something—especially “works” related to faith. Every Witness knows that they are not viewed by others as “exercising” their faith if they themselves are not personally participating and carrying out the field ministry, but rather are content to merely “observe” and associate with those so doing. Yet the Society says that a person doesn’t need to be *partaking* at the Memorial in order to be exhibiting a work of faith in that sacrifice the Memorial represents.

To examine the problem with this line of reasoning still further, we must remind ourselves of the first Memorial observance: the Passover.

When Jehovah commanded the Passover, *all* were expected to eat of the sheep or lamb. This is made clear by the following instruction:

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But if the household proves to be too small for the sheep, then he and his neighbor close by must take it into his house according to the number of souls; YOU should compute each one proportionate to his eating as regards the sheep.—Exodus 12:4

On the night of the Passover, *all* ate of the flesh of the lamb, and they *also* ate the unleavened bread. Nobody was left out. Nobody stood by as a mere observer, as someone who “exercised faith” in the Passover but didn’t *do* anything.

In addition, *all* individuals were to remain inside the household during the Passover, so that *all* came under the protection of the arrangement. The blood was also splashed “upon the two doorposts and the upper part of the doorway” of that house. Again, *all* were expected to do this. Nobody stood by as a mere observer, as someone who “exercised faith” in the Passover but didn’t do anything.

If we were to apply the Society’s reasoning to the original Passover (the same Passover which Jesus was observing with his disciples that night), what would have happened to those Israelites who did not actually eat the flesh or place the blood upon their doorposts and doorway? Would Jehovah’s angel have passed *over* that household? (Confer Exodus 12:29-30) Really, it was *unthinkable* for them *not* to do so!

One more point of important interest involves the Society’s view of a “spiritual Israel,” and how those not “of the anointed” can be comparable to the “foreigners” who accompanied Israel out of Egypt. This relationship, according to the Society, precludes the majority of “Jehovah’s Witnesses” from sharing in Christ’s Memorial. However, notice what the Bible shows us:

And Jehovah went on to say to Moses and Aaron: “This is the statute of the passover: No foreigner may eat of it. ⁴⁴ But where there is any slave man purchased with money, you must circumcise him. Then first he may share in eating it. ⁴⁵ A settler and a hired laborer may not eat of it. ⁴⁶ In one house it is to be eaten. You must not take any of the flesh out of the house to some place outside. And YOU must not break a bone in it. ⁴⁷ All the assembly of Israel are to celebrate it. ⁴⁸ And in case an alien resident resides as an alien with you and he will actually celebrate the passover to Jehovah, let there be a circumcising of every male of his. First then he may come near to celebrate it; and he must become like a native of the land. But no uncircumcised man may eat of it. ⁴⁹ One law is to exist for the native and for the alien resident who is residing as an alien in YOUR midst.”

⁵⁰ So all the sons of Israel did just as Jehovah had commanded Moses and Aaron. They did just so.—Exodus 12:43-50 (NWT)

It should be noted that the *only* prohibition imposed by Jehovah concerning “foreigners” or “alien residents” who desired to have a share in the Passover Memorial was against those who were *uncircumcised*. However, all they needed to do was become circumcised and they would be able to have a share. And it must also be noted that *one law* was in effect concerning the Passover Memorial’s observance and participants.

By Jesus’ day, the Jews continued to observe the Passover Memorial in the same way they were directed to back in Moses’ day, as commanded upon entering the Promised Land. That year, Jerusalem was bursting with Jews who traveled from all parts of the world to observe the Passover Memorial. *Everyone* was partaking of that Passover Memorial, including Jesus and his disciples. The Bible accounts nowhere indicate that any of those present sat idly by as Jesus explained the fulfillment of the Passover Memorial and the institution of Christ’s Memorial. Neither do the accounts relate that

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anyone refused what Jesus offered them as the majority of Witnesses do today while claiming to observe Christ's Memorial in the same manner as was done in the first century.

The same applies to the remainder of the Christian Greek Scriptures: there are absolutely no references to those who did *not* partake at Christ's Memorial, nor any indication that such a notion would be a later revelation or development. That leaves us with a single conclusion: *every Christian partakes as though they themselves were sitting in that room with Jesus on that night, Nisan 14. Anything done differently would be a failure in the well-known commission recorded at Matthew 28:19-20:*

Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded YOU.—Matthew 28:19-20 (NWT)

If the apostles went forth “teaching [others] to observe all the things I have commanded,” would that *not* have included Christ's Memorial? And what would they have taught, except that which Jesus taught *them*, and in the same way. Again, the apostles reasonably would have taught that everyone would partake at Christ's Memorial *just as Jesus taught them*.

By teaching that there are Christians who should *not* partake at Christ's Memorial, the Society is endangering the everlasting lives of those who adhere to those teachings.

However, some have reasoned that it doesn't *matter* whether we actually, *physically* partake of the emblems, since they hold no life-giving properties in and of themselves. To some extent, this is true. For example, some religions teach “transubstantiation” of the emblems during the religious service, as though the unleavened bread and the wine miraculously change properties. No time needs to be spent here explaining the silliness of such a teaching, since “Jehovah's Witnesses” themselves do not teach this.

But is it true that we do not *have* to actually partake of the emblems in order to benefit from what they represent?

Is It Really Necessary to Actually Partake?

Having already established what foreshadowed Christ's Memorial and *who* should partake, the question remains “Why?”

Why, if Christ fulfilled the Mosaic Law and his shed life fulfilled the Passover Memorial, should we feel it necessary to actually partake of the emblems if we have already come to recognize and appreciate the significance of Christ's Memorial?

The *problem* with this line of thinking is that it is a direct result of the Society's influence on our reasoning skills when it comes to the Bible, rather than allowing the Bible to instruct us on how to view Christ's Memorial. It becomes engrained in our way of thinking that we merely need to “exercise faith” in order to secure the benefits, but fail to realize *what that requires: Action!*

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To say that we are *exercising* our faith, we are required to *do* something. Our faith makes us come alive, makes us bubble with anticipation that derives from our hope, and motivates us to closely walk in the steps that Jesus set down in the wilderness before us.

So, when it comes to Christ's Memorial, do we place ourselves there in that room on that night as Jesus is trying to build up his disciples, knowing that very soon they will abandon him out of fear? Do we place ourselves there in that room as Jesus breaks the bread and passes it around, and then does likewise with the wine? Would we even dream of telling Jesus "No" when he extended the broken bread to us, saying to us, "Take. Eat. This means my body which is to be given in YOUR behalf"? Would we tell him "No" when he passed the wine, saying, "Drink out of it, all of YOU; for this means my 'blood of the covenant,' which is to be poured out in behalf of many for forgiveness of sins."

Some might argue that he said this specifically to his disciples, not to all of humankind. Others might also add that this was the institution of the covenant for a kingdom, but that is an equally incorrect reading of the passage, and the kingdom covenant that the Society has misconstrued will be discussed later in this treatise.

For the time being, even *if* we were to allow for the Society's understanding, we're still left with problems in the passage. Saying that Jesus used his Memorial as the institution of the kingdom covenant, and that only those who will rule with Jesus in the Messianic Kingdom (and thus are anointed Christians) are to partake of the emblems does not fit what the parallel accounts are telling us.

For one thing, the disciples were not "anointed Christians" at this point, but were fully practicing Jews. While the inclination of some is to say, "Well, Jesus *knew* that they would remain faithful and get anointed by holy spirit, and so it was okay for him to institute the Memorial arrangement," they are really imposing their own misconceptions upon God's Word. The Bible itself doesn't say any such thing, nor would Jesus *presumptuously* jump ahead of Jehovah's timetable. Having said that, it is obvious from the passage that being "anointed to rule with Christ" is *not* a prerequisite for partaking of Christ's Memorial.

Second, *if* Jesus presumed upon the situation and instituted the Memorial with his disciples with the Society's own understanding in mind, then why did he later commission them to go forth and teach others *to do what he had taught them*, obviously including the observance of Christ's Memorial? What would they have *taught* disciples to do regarding the Memorial? According to Paul's account, it was never to just sit or stand idly by while the emblems were passed around, but rather to actually *have a share in the symbolic event*. That's why Paul was so adamant about *properly* partaking—because everyone was expected to observe Christ's Memorial. And I'll address that part of the subject later on.

The point being that there is *no* account of any Jew rejecting an active, participating role in the Passover Memorial, nor any account of a Christian rejecting or declining an active, participating role in Christ's Memorial, which *is* the fulfillment of the Passover Memorial and now becomes the Christian's Passover Memorial. For such an important subject, it seems incredible that there isn't such an account that we can refer to so we can justify how the Society interferes with the obvious required participation and has replaced the proper view with their own, limited perception of the Memorial.

For the Jew in Moses' day, it would have cost them their life if they had refused to actively participate in the Passover Memorial. The blood on the two doorposts and the

upper doorway were a sign of protection against Jehovah's judgment, and bore a striking foreshadowing for Christians today. The flesh of the sacrificial lamb was consumed by *everyone*, and likewise had a significance which would not become clear until Jesus' death.

For the Christian *today*, what significance do we appreciate from the emblems? The life of the lamb has been shed for humankind. Have we come to grasp what is meant by consuming the flesh of that lamb, and why we must have a share in that emblem? Jesus himself said that "This is my body. Take, eat." Why? Because it was given in our behalf.

Why, though, is it necessary for us to eat? Do we *need* to actually eat the unleavened bread of Christ's Memorial?

The answer can be found in the same account that the Society itself dismisses as having next to nothing to do with the Memorial.

John 6:53 Concerning this verse, the Society holds that this is speaking of endowment of inherent immortality, but the context of the passage doesn't support this conclusion at all. Jesus says that we will not have life within us *apart* from that provided by the manna from heaven, the bread known as Christ. This does not mean we testify to the fact that we are "anointed to rule with Jesus" and thus will obtain immortality by our eating of the bread from heaven, as the Society teaches. Rather, eating of the unleavened bread denotes our hope of life everlasting, or, as Jesus put it, we "will live forever." (John 6:51) He even clarified the point by adding, "the bread that I shall give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world," including his disciples. (Confer Luke 22:19)

"I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ YOUR forefathers ate the manna in the wilderness and yet died. ⁵⁰ This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that anyone may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread he will live forever; and, for a fact, the bread that I shall give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world."—John 6:48-51 (NWT)

Christians should be familiar with the account of the manna in early Israelite history. This miraculous food sustained the Israelites through a very difficult time. In fact, it was the main food available to them for their 40 years in the wilderness. Jehovah provided manna to His people for a reason:

...in order to make you know that not by bread alone does man live but by every expression of Jehovah's mouth does man live.—Deuteronomy 8:3b (NWT)

Those are words similar to what Jesus used to rebuff Satan's tempting of him while in the wilderness, recorded at Matthew 4:4. Interestingly, Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days, even as Israel was in the wilderness for 40 years. In any case, the purpose of the manna was to teach Jehovah's people that more than actual food, their lives ultimately depended on Jehovah's Word. (John 4:34)

But manna did not lend life everlasting to the Israelites, in spite of its miraculous nature. That could only come from the *living bread that came down from heaven*, that being Jesus—the *only* provision Jehovah now provides in order to lend that much-desired life everlasting. Even so, only by eating of that bread can one enjoy that life everlasting. How long would an Israelite wandering around in the wilderness for 40 years, with no other food provided by Jehovah, have lived, *had they not literally eaten of the manna*? How much *more so*, then, should we not refuse to eat the symbolic representation of the manna by which we will have life everlasting!

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Christians today, who have been brought out of “Egypt,” the enslavement to this system of things, now find themselves wandering in the wilderness of the world, eagerly awaiting the Promised Land. (John 15:19; Hebrews 11:10) But in the meantime, our only sustenance is the manna from heaven: Christ’s body and the hope it provides. But if we decline to eat it, if we *refuse* it, then there remains no hope, and no other provision from Jehovah God. Truly, just as Jesus explained, we will have no life in ourselves. (John 6:53)

So, when a Christian takes that piece of unleavened bread, and then eats, they are *memorializing* Jesus’ shed life as the Lamb of God, as the bread from heaven, which was given that we might have life. It is an action that is loaded with symbolism for us as we

The bread that is offered during the Memorial represents Christ’s body, “which is given in your behalf.” (Luke 22:19) If Jesus’ statement of “in your behalf” applies only to an “anointed” class, who are entitled to eat of it, then those of the “earthly” class will not live forever as he suggested in John 6:51, since an “earthly” class will not eat the bread from heaven that has been provided by Jehovah. (John 3:16) But that would be contradictory. The “your” in Luke 22:19 must, then, be as Jesus explained in John 6:51, to not only those who were present with Jesus in that upper room on the Passover, but to *all* who would later learn how to participate in Christ’s Memorial. (Matthew 28:20)

Paul offers further elaboration on the subject in his letter to the Corinthians. There, we read that: “Because there is one loaf, we, although many, are one body, for we are all partaking of that one loaf.” (1 Cor. 10:17) There is not one loaf (or application) for an “anointed” class, and another interpretation or application for an “earthly” class as Witness theology suggests.

declare it as the only bread we have available to sustain us through the remainder of this system of things. So, while it’s true that the actual, literal eating does not do this for us, we’re not doing it for the faint nourishment it might provide us—but rather, for the symbolism *behind* it. And we are commanded by Jesus to *keep doing this* in remembrance.

By individually consuming that unleavened bread, we are professing our faith just as the Israelites did on the night of the Passover, because we, too, hope to be *passed* over when the Day of Jehovah is upon us soon. We are professing our faith just as the Israelites did while in the wilderness with nothing to sustain them except the manna Jehovah provided them, because we, too, are in the wilderness and know that our lives depend on the *true*

manna from heaven, which is found in the Christ. If we fail to appreciate that sole source of life, then—like the Israelites in Moses day who were killed for their view of contempt towards Jehovah’s sustaining source (Numbers 21:5-6)—we, too, shall lose our lives on the day of Jehovah’s Judgment.

Regarding the wine, we read in the Memorial account that the wine represents the “blood of the covenant” which is to be poured out in behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.’ (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24) Luke’s account uses the expression “in your behalf.” (Luke 22:20) It seems reasonable, then, to understand it to mean that it is not exclusive to an “anointed” class as is taught by Witness theology, not only because of the wording of the scriptures found here, but also the parallel reference in John 6 which has been discussed herein at length. Notice that Luke uses the expression “in your behalf” *in the same way* that Matthew and Mark’s accounts use “in behalf of many.” Because they are parallel accounts, the expressions are interchangeable.

This can be further evidenced from the scriptures by referring to Revelation 7:13-17 (compare verse 16 with John 6:35). In Revelation, those seen wearing white robes are doing so because of having “made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” The only

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known way that they could have done so is by making the requisite changes in their lives and symbolizing their hope through Christ's Memorial—specifically, the emblem of wine.

Under the Passover Memorial arrangement, the blood from the sacrificial lamb was placed on the two doorposts and the upper part of the door, serving as a sign for Jehovah's angel of destruction to pass over that home.

But for the Christian, who has been commanded to keep Christ's Memorial, there is much to consider here.

The first aspect of Christ's Memorial and the wine emblem which needs to be considered is the doorway itself. Under the Passover Memorial, the doorway was important in a couple of ways. First of all, it allowed Israelites to enter into their home, where they would be safe during the Passover. Christians, of course, have come to appreciate the spiritual significance of that because we recognize that *Jesus* is that doorway.

⁹ I am the door; whoever enters through me will be saved, and he will go in and out and find pasturage.—John 10:9 (NWT)

...I have come that they might have life and might have it in abundance.—John 10:10b (NWT)

I am the fine shepherd, and I know my sheep and my sheep know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I surrender my soul in behalf of the sheep.—John 10:14-15 (NWT)

For Christians, we recognize that there is no other means by which we will obtain life everlasting life under the watch of our Shepherd. Just as Israelites entered into their home to seek and have refuge from the judgment of Jehovah, so Christians today enter into the house (congregation) of Christ and become one of his sheep in his "pen."

Another scripture we need to include in our discussion is found in Revelation:

²⁰ Look! I am standing at the door and knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into his [house] and take the evening meal with him and he with me.—Revelation 3:20 (NWT)

Notice how at John 10:2, Jesus says that the Shepherd enters through the door, which appears to be a direct correlation to Revelation 3:20. The door is shut until the person *opens* it for Jesus to come in. Action is required on the part of the person within the dwelling place, however. Once they allow Jesus to enter into their dwelling place, Jesus *immediately* is willing to take the evening meal with them. There is no suggestion here of the person first needing to be qualified as one of the "anointed ones," nor is there *any* sense of limitation in place as to who can or cannot take the "evening meal," or Christ's Memorial.

Why is this scripture significant? Notice that Jesus says that if *anyone* hears his voice and opens the door, that Jesus will come in and take the evening meal *with* that person, and that person will take the evening meal *with* Jesus. This "evening meal" that Jesus is speaking of is Christ's Passover, leaving us with the inarguable conclusion that this invitation is open to *whomever* hears Jesus' voice. And who is it that hears Jesus' voice, if not his sheep? (John 10:2-5)

Returning now to the Passover Memorial, blood from the sacrificial lamb was placed on the two doorposts and the upper part of the doorway, *but not upon the threshold itself*. This, too, bears significance because placing any of the blood upon the

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threshold would have resulted in some of the blood being stepped in or trampled upon. For Christians, this becomes especially symbolic, now that we know that the blood represented the shed blood of the Christ. The apostle Paul sternly addressed this, when he wrote:

For if we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left, ²⁷ but [there is] a certain fearful expectation of judgment and [there is] a fiery jealousy that is going to consume those in opposition. ²⁸ Any man that has disregarded the law of Moses dies without compassion, upon the testimony of two or three. ²⁹ Of how much more severe a punishment, do YOU think, will the man be counted worthy who has trampled upon the Son of God and who has esteemed as of ordinary value the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and who has outraged the spirit of undeserved kindness with contempt? ³⁰ For we know him that said: "Vengeance is mine; I will recompense"; and again: "Jehovah will judge his people." ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of [the] living God.—Hebrews 10:26-31 (NWT)

Indeed, we would never want to trample upon such an undeserved provision as Christ's shed blood, and so we can appreciate why Jehovah's instructions regarding the placement of the blood at the Passover did not include placing blood upon the threshold of the door.

Going one step further, understanding that by placing the blood upon the two doorposts and the upper part of the doorway, the blood served as a *covering* for the household, we today can more deeply appreciate how Christ's shed blood serves as a covering for *us* as individuals.

For if the blood of goats and of bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who have been defiled sanctifies to the extent of cleanness of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more will the blood of the Christ, who through an everlasting spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works that we may render sacred service to [the] living God?—Hebrews 9:13-14 (NWT)

Yes, nearly all things are cleansed with blood according to the Law, and unless blood is poured out no forgiveness takes place.—Hebrews 9:22 (NWT)

And so, the blood of the lamb has been applied, and our sins are forgiven by Jehovah. When we drink of the wine, we are *memorializing* that great sacrifice that has been paid in our stead, and we are reminded of the great price Jehovah paid so that we might become reconciled to him. And it is the *only* provision Jehovah has provided to humankind (Acts 4:12), so to refuse to take the emblem as Jesus commanded his followers is to refuse Jehovah's provision.

If we fully recognize, understand and appreciate the significance of the symbolism behind both the bread and the wine, we will never take Christ's Memorial for granted and decline to partake in that which Jesus has offered us in Memorial of him. Even so, the apostle Paul wrote that some were partaking unworthily. But is the Society's explanation concerning this as accurate as they claim?

What Does It Mean to Partake “Unworthily”?

Consequently whoever eats the loaf or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be guilty respecting the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸ First let a man approve himself after scrutiny, and thus let him eat of the loaf and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he that eats and drinks eats and drinks judgment against himself if he does not discern the body. ³⁰ That is why many among YOU are weak and sickly, and quite a few are sleeping [in death]. ³¹ But if we would discern what we ourselves are, we would not be judged. ³² However, when we are judged, we are disciplined by Jehovah, that we may not become condemned with the world. ³³ Consequently, my brothers, when YOU come together to eat [it], wait for one another. ³⁴ If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, that YOU may not come together for judgment.—1 Corinthians 11:27-34 (NWT)

According to current teaching by the Society, one is said to be partaking unworthily if they are not one of the “anointed Christians who will rule with Christ,” a member of the 144,000.

Those who rightfully partake of the Memorial emblems have been chosen by God and have the testimony of God’s spirit to that effect.—*Watchtower*, April 1, 1996, page 7

However, as brought out already in this treatise (See pages 9-11), Paul was not referring to this being anointed to rule with Christ as a requirement at all when he wrote the above counsel to the Corinthian Christians. The passage speaks for *itself*, and thus needs no interpretation whatsoever, nor any exegesis imposed upon it.

If we are to have a share in observing the Memorial, we need first to examine our lives and our conscience and ensure that we are in harmony with the proclamation we make when we partake of the bread, the representation of Jesus’ body given in our stead, and of the wine, the representation of Jesus’ blood, poured out in behalf of the world, so that we might live. (1 John 4:10)

While it rests upon us to actually do this every day, every hour, every *minute* of our lives, it is absolutely essential that we examine ourselves before coming to “sit with Jesus” on the evening of Christ’s Memorial as he extends the emblems to us. We do not want to be as Judas was, in that within his heart betrayal and enmity were at work. That’s why Paul says we need to do so *before* Christ’s Memorial, lest our actions outwardly profess union, when our *heart* is not in union with the Christ.

An even sterner warning is offered in Hebrews, chapter 10, starting with verse 26 and going through to verse 31. There, we see the importance of being true to our discipleship under Christ. Especially take notice of verses 30 and 31 and compare the words there with 1 Corinthians 10:22!

Really, then, careful consideration should be given on the part of all of us concerning the Memorial and its observance. May we all accept Christ’s invitation, a privilege which has been afforded us at a high price at the hand of our Creator, Jehovah God, and His only begotten son, Jesus Christ.

But, what about the Society’s explanation that Jesus instituted the Memorial as a covenant for the Kingdom? What do Christ’s Memorial and the “covenant for a kingdom” have to do with each other?

The Covenant for a Kingdom

The covenant to which the Society refers as being exclusive to Jesus' disciples as a promise of future co-rulership with Christ also does not appear to be tied to the Memorial itself.

But what about the covenant that was sealed by means of the Memorial, at least as taught by Witness theology? Is there scriptural evidence that the Memorial instituted a new covenant, a covenant that applies *only* to an "anointed" class, although those of an "earthly" class will "benefit" from the arrangement?

None of the scriptures that have been examined so far disprove that a "new" covenant was put into place by Jehovah.

Having said that, however, there is absolutely no indication that this was an "exclusive" covenant, especially since both emblems, the bread and the wine, apply to *all* among mankind, as has been demonstrated by numerous scriptures that this treatise has explored.

The "new" covenant did away with (fulfilled) the "old" covenant of which the Passover Memorial was a part of. Under the "old" covenant, man was required to offer up perpetual animal sacrifices to cover sins, but it could never satisfy Jehovah's just Law. Only Christ's blood would accomplish that. And the Law of the "old" covenant arrangement led up to the Christ. No longer would there be sacrifices of animals and incense. Instead, we would become a living sacrifice, each of us, as disciples of Christ. Having been washed clean from the sins accounted against us (1 Corinthians 6:9-11), we may now approach our Creator, Jehovah God, with freeness of speech and a clean conscience, provided we act in accordance with our faith and not eat at the table of demons, as Paul warned against.

The "new" covenant no longer required that we go through a priest or high priest. Our only mediator is now Christ, who has become our high priest and mediator. (Galatians 3:19-22; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6). We are so much closer now to having restored the privilege of approaching Jehovah God directly than we had been able to under the "old" covenant. And this "new" covenant will eventually be fulfilled and done away with, too, the Bible promises, once mankind has been restored to his former condition. Only then will we be able to approach Jehovah God with no mediator any longer, and He himself will teach and instruct us into eternity, as it had been before Adam's fall. (Jeremiah 31:33, 34; Hebrews 8:1 through 10:25)

Witness theology seems to dismiss this new arrangement, however, in favor of its "anointed" class being privy to this new covenant arrangement, although they agree that those outside of the covenant will still realize the blessings because the exercising of the covenant will come to them through the "anointed" class. Yet as can be seen, there is no scriptural evidence that Witness theology is correct in its understanding.

At the same time, it must be noted that Christ *did* form a special covenant with his faithful disciples. But this was *after* the instituting of the Memorial, and separate from it. This covenant *was* exclusive.

Only Luke's account relates the events, however, and at Luke 22:28 we read:

28 "However, you are the ones that have stuck with me in my trials; **29** and I make a covenant

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with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom, **30** that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22:28-30)

Since this is and was a separate covenant from the new covenant which was instituted at Christ's Memorial, it is outside the scope of this article. However, the reader is still encouraged to research the above passage for better understanding. A close examination will need to be done as the *order of events*, especially. Note also that in all of the Gospel accounts, except John's—which doesn't include the Memorial at all—Judas was *present*.

In conclusion, let it be said that it is unfortunate that the two covenants are applied into a single arrangement under Witness theology that applies only to the “anointed” class, because innumerable disciples of Christ have, in effect, been denied the expression that Christ proclaimed would bring them everlasting life.

Sadly, in accordance with the same Witness theology, those considering themselves of the “earthly” class have refused to do as Christ commanded them when he said “Take, eat” and “Take, drink,” having been instructed that they are not “entitled.”