

What Do You Call This Activity?
*A study of the terms used in the Bible to
describe this weekly observance*

Introduction

1. There are many people who will ask questions about the weekly memorial that we observe in remembering Jesus and His death on the cross for our sins.
2. Some want to know why we partake of this meal at all. Other may inquire about the frequency of practicing this spiritual feast. One man asked me, “What do you call this activity?” Sometimes it is good to go to the Bible and review some of these simple questions that come up from time to time.
3. Have you ever wondered why we address this activity by the names “the Lord’s Supper...the table of the Lord...the breaking of bread...participation in the body...blood of Christ etc.?”
4. Let us examine the terms used in the Bible to describe this weekly observance to find out what the Christians called it in the early church. Once we have identified those terms, we will seek to discover the meaning of each name and how we can apply it to our lives.

I. “...the Lord’s Supper”

A. See I Corinthians 11:20

1. When Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, he spoke of this memorial as, “the Lord’s Supper”
2. Unfortunately, Paul was not commending the Christians for their practice in partaking, because they were misusing the supper and making a selfish common meal out of a shared, spiritual one.
3. Paul told them that they were coming together not for the better, but for the worse. He also said that their purpose for gathering was not to eat, “the Lord’s Supper”. These saints needed to reflect on the true meaning of their coming together in an assembly.

B. How do we apply this term to our understanding of this activity?

1. Since this supper was instituted by the Lord, it is to be governed by His commands and it belongs to Him. (See Matthew 26:26-29)
2. If we are partaking of these emblems, we are to do this in remembrance of Jesus with other Christians. (See I Cor. 11:24-25)

II. “...the table of the Lord...”

A. See I Corinthians 10:21

1. Paul addressed the Corinthians in another passage and warned them not to be guilty of trying to eat at, “the table of the Lord” and the table of demons.
2. These Christians needed to make sure that they weren’t sharing in this memorial with their brothers and sisters on Sunday and then turning around and consuming worldly passions starting on Monday until the following Sunday.
3. These brethren needed to learn that you cannot partake of the Lord and the world at the same time. They would have to choose between the two.

- B. How do we apply this term to our understanding of this activity?
1. We need to remember that the Lord calls us to His table every week with other disciples in the church. (See Acts 20:7)
 2. When we assemble around the, “table of the Lord”, He is present with us as we share this meal in memory of His death on the cross for our sins. He promised that He would eat and drink with us in His kingdom, the church (See Luke 22:16, 18).
 3. Will you be guilty of accepting the invitation to surround this table and eat and drink with the Lord and other saints, only to leave this place and find yourself indulging in the sinful passions on the table of this world.
 3. Let us be thankful for the Lord’s presence among us today and for this opportunity to gather around, “the table of the Lord” and feast together.

III. “...the breaking of bread...”

- A. See Acts 2:42; 20:7
1. When the church had just been established, the Bible tells us that they were continuing steadfastly in, “...the breaking of bread...”
 2. On the first day of the week, the disciples made it a priority to assemble and “break bread” in memory of the Lord.
- B. How do we apply this term to our understanding of this activity?
1. While “breaking bread” was something that described the practice of sharing a common meal, the feast that we are about to partake of is far above anything common.
 2. While it is true that because we are sharing a meal it is accurate to describe what we are doing as, “the breaking of bread”, it must be understood that the scriptures show a clear distinction between the Lord’s Supper and that of a common meal. (See Acts 2:46; 20:11)
 3. The meals that we take daily serve a physical purpose, while the meal that we take together as Christians on the first day of the week serves a spiritual purpose.
 4. We partake of the Lord’s Supper to remember Jesus and proclaim His death until He comes. While physical emblems of food exist on the table, they represent the spiritual symbol of the body and blood of Jesus that was sacrificed for our sins.

IV. “...participation in the body...blood...of Christ”

- A. See I Corinthians 10:16
1. We now look at another statement that was directed to the church in Corinth to help them understand what the Lord’s Supper should truly mean to their lives.
 2. Paul said, “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?” (ESV)
- B. How do we apply this term to our understanding of this activity?

1. It is vital that we see the emblems on the table not as a pinch of an unleavened wafer and a glass of juice, but as symbols to help us remember the Lord and His great sacrifice on the cross for our sins.
2. This bread is to cause us to reflect on the body of Jesus that was beaten, spat upon, pierced etc. while the juice is to remind of the blood that was shed from the head, hands, feet, back and side of Jesus our Lord to provide us with redemption and the forgiveness of our sins.
3. If at any point we forget these truths, this activity has lost its real significance and we are simply going through the motions of a vain ritual.

Conclusion

1. I hope and pray that through this simple study we have been able to offer some helpful insight into the activity that we call:

- “...the Lord’s Supper...”
- “...the table of the Lord...”
- “...the breaking of bread...”
- “...participation in the body...blood...of Christ”

2. Before we partake of the Lord’s Supper today, allow me to summarize this lesson in one short paragraph so that we can take one last moment to get our minds focused on what we are about to do.

“We are sharing in the body and blood of Christ as we gather around the Lord’s table to break bread in partaking of the Lord’s Supper. This we do in remembrance of Him and His death on the cross for our sins.”

Let us pray together at this time.