

# Celebrating The Lord's Supper

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[ 0 : 01 ] Hebrews chapter 9 will provide us with a historical excursion regarding the serving of communion and the significance behind it.

Many people think that this is something that originated in the New Testament, but in fact it didn't. It goes all the way back to the Old Testament and the Mosaic Law.

And what we are going to consider for a few minutes before we serve the elements is the very earliest origins of it. So in Hebrews chapter 9, and I shall be reading from the King James Version, but I'm also going to refer from time to time to other translations from the 26th translation New Testament, where sometimes things are spoken with more clarity than is available in the King James.

But beginning with chapter 9 of Hebrews, the writer says, Then verily, the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary.

For there was a tabernacle made, the first, wherein was the candlestick and the table and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary.

[ 1 : 18 ] Now this is a brief description that the writer of Hebrews is giving of the first tabernacle that God instructed Moses to build back in the book of Exodus.

This is shortly after they came out of the land of Egypt and were out in the wilderness. Moses had gone into the mount and there God had given Moses the law, the Ten Commandments written on stone.

You are aware of some of the things that transpired in connection with that. This is the very earliest giving of the law. And it was in connection with the giving of this Mosaic law that blood and sacrifice were connected.

And when the writer talks about the ordinances of divine service and a worldly sanctuary, it's probably not the best kind of term to use because when we think of worldly, we think of something immoral or inappropriate or something that God would not approve of.

But the use of the word worldly here in the King James simply means earthly, of this present world. It was a physical, material tabernacle made of gates and posts and material and linen.

[ 2 : 40 ] And it was overlaid parts of it with silver and the sockets and all the rest and the fence that was built around it. That's the description that was given here. That was the tabernacle. It was designed from the beginning to be temporary.

It was designed to be able to be disassembled and carried through the wilderness, which they did for 40 years.

Different ones were assigned the responsibility of carrying these objects of furniture, tabernacle, fences, the posts, the silver, all the rest of it.

And they bore this for all of those years and their journeyings through the wilderness. And the writer goes on to describe in verse 3 of chapter 9, And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the holiest of all, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, and over it the cherubims of glory, shadowing the mercy seat.

Now, these are all descriptions of the items of furniture that were placed in the tabernacle. He talks about the ark of the covenant, the lid that was on it, which was the mercy seat, the overshadowing, overarching cherubim that covered the mercy seat.

[ 4 : 12 ] This was the physical manifestation of the dwelling place of God with his people on the earth. That was the purpose of the tabernacle.

Think of it in terms of this. When the children of Israel traveled in the wilderness, God traveled with them. In the place, or in the person of the tabernacle.

This holy of holies contained the item of furniture that was the ark of the covenant. In the ark of the covenant, which was just a box not too dissimilar from the size of the communion table here. And inside this box was Aaron's rod that budded, and the commandments on stone, and the golden pot of manna.

And the mercy seat was the lid. And the angels were on either side of that, overshadowing it. So, when they traveled, that covenant, that box, that ark, represented the physical presence of God with his people.

[ 5 : 29 ] And into that, well, let's read on the scripture and let him describe it. He does it better than I. Verse 6. Now, when these things were thus ordained, the priest went always into the first tabernacle.

Now, it doesn't mean that there are multiple tabernacles, but it means the one tabernacle had two compartments. The larger area and the smaller area.

The larger area was called the holy place. The smaller area was called the most holy place.

It was half the size of the other. The only thing that was in the most holy place was the ark of the covenant. That was it. It sat there all by itself, all alone.

There was a huge veil that covered the whole expanse between these. And it was not a large proposition. It was not large at all. It was only like 15 by 45 feet long and 15 feet wide.

[ 6 : 36 ] It was three times as long as it was wide. And it was broken up into two-thirds and then one-third. And the one-third was the small area. That was where the ark of the covenant was kept.

And no one was allowed in there but the high priest. And he will go on to tell us about that. Verse 6, when these things were thus ordained, the priest went always into the first tabernacle.

That's the larger one. Accomplishing the service of God. And what were those services? Had to do with the table of showbread. That was in the other one. And the golden candelabra that contained the illumination for the place.

That was there. In addition to the table of showbread, the brazen altar and the laver were outside that yet. Because cleansing had to take place before they could even come in there.

But unto the second, verse 7, went the high priest alone once every year. That was on the day of atonement. And that was the smaller section where the ark of the covenant was.

[ 7 : 43 ] And not without blood. And I want to address this subject of blood. It is very much misunderstood.

Sometimes even in Christendom. What is so significant about the blood? Believe it or not, the real value is not actually in the liquid blood itself.

And I don't want to be misunderstood here because this is a very important distinction. That which the blood refers to. And don't lose sight of this because this is everything.

When it comes to this subject. That to which the blood referred. Death. That's the point that is made.

And many people miss that point. And they become fascinated by the actual literal blood. The real value in the blood.

[ 8 : 49 ] The real value in the blood is the fact that it was the absencing of that blood that resulted in death.

In other words, let me put it this way. It isn't the fact that Christ bled that provides our redemption. Not at all. It is the fact that Christ died. That's the thing. Well then, what's the big deal about the blood?

The importance of the blood is that the shedding of blood signifies, points to, actually means death has occurred.

It was not enough that Jesus bleed for us. What was required is that Jesus died for us. And when the scriptures use the term, the shedding of blood, that is a dramatic way of expressing the reality of death.

[ 9 : 59 ] When Genesis 9.6 says, Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.

What is that really saying? What it's really saying is, whoever kills a man, takes a man's life.

By man shall his life be taken. And the aspect of the blood being used is simply a dramatic, poignant way of indicating life has been forfeited.

Because to simply shed someone's blood, or to make someone bleed, that could be an accident, or it could be intentional, but death not result.

I mean, there have been many people who, through accidents, or through criminal activity, or something of that kind, have bled, and maybe even lose a lot of blood. But they didn't die.

[ 11 : 09 ] And there's a world of difference. So, it is important to understand that blood and the shedding of blood is the most visible, telling kind of thing that we can use in expressing the idea that death has occurred.

And that's important. When Jesus Christ died on that cross, it became absolutely essential that his death, his actual, literal, real, physical death, was verified.

So that there could be no doubt. And how was it verified? When they came to Jesus, the soldiers came to Jesus, and they were prepared to break his legs, which would have hastened death.

And they simply took a large wooden mallet and struck a heavy blow on the kneecap, breaking the leg.

And then they couldn't push themselves up anymore to inhale. And they suffocated. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was dead already.

[ 12 : 31 ] And was that sufficient for experienced Roman soldiers to say, well, no need to do anything here. He's already dead. No, no. No. No. If they were anything, they were very thorough.

And to make certain, the Roman soldier went over and took his spear, his lance, and positioned the tip of it right under the ribcage of the body of our Lord, hanging there on the cross.

And with one final lunge, he drove that spear into Christ's chest cavity. And we are told that forthwith there came out water and blood.

And this was so dramatic, the blood just literally spurting forth. You could actually make a distinction between the red of the blood and the clear-like liquid of the serum that had already separated from the blood.

And what did that prove? That proved that he was, in fact, dead, even before the spear was put in and he lunged forward.

[ 13 : 53 ] Death had occurred. And how was it verified? Through all of the blood loss. That's the important thing to understand about the blood of Christ.

I know some people have a very sentimental attachment to the blood. And we sing songs like, what can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. And yet, you need to understand that it was what the shedding of blood resulted in that provides our redemption.

And that is the death of Christ. In other words, let me put it this way. Jesus could not have donated a couple of pints of blood and procured the redemption of anybody. It was his death.

His death. And it was verified through the shedding of blood. So, the type is being established here.

When the high priest went alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people, the Holy Ghost, this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.

In other words, what this is saying is that this typology, this prefiguring that was set up with the Mosaic tabernacle and its compartments and the Ark of the Covenant and everything, did not in itself reveal all of that which was to come.

[ 15 : 34 ] It simply set the stage for it so that when it did occur, that is, the death of Christ, they would be able to look back on this, as we do now, and make a connection.

That's the importance of it. And he goes on to say that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, and of course Christ is that.

He becomes the new and living way, the veil which is to say his flesh, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect or complete, as pertaining to the conscience.

In other words, this tabernacle, its worship, its service, the sacrifice that was offered there by the priest, it was all designed to be temporary.

This is not the final picture. This is only the establishing of that which is to come. It is a prefiguring of that which is to come. It is not an end in itself.

[ 16 : 53 ] This is not all that's required. This is the beginning. The rest of the story is yet to follow.

And this, of course, was something that many of the Jews did not understand, because they began to look upon the tabernacle as permanent.

The law of Moses as permanent. They lost sight of the fact, or they never knew, that these were divinely provided stopgap measures, designed just to put, if you will, to put the sins of humanity on

hold.

Until the time came when they would be finally and completely dealt with. All of that is symbolized in this tabernacle.

Just a temporary service. And it is a beautiful thing that God made it to be temporary, even adding to the aspect that it was not intended to be forever.

So it was made so it could all be broken down and reassembled. And broken down, moved, reassembled. Broken down, moved, reassembled. Put back together again. And when, of course, the temple is built, it will be a permanent structure, as opposed to the temporary nature of the tabernacle.

[ 18 : 19 ] But all of this is to say, and this is a difficult concept for us, but we've got to plug into it, this all is a copy.

It's a duplicate of that which is in heaven. And when God gave Moses the dimensions, the items of furniture, directions as to how everything was to be constructed, and who was to work on it, who the artificers were, he said, make sure that you make this according to the plans that I give you, according to that which is in heaven.

And this is a direct blueprint of that. So let us read on, if we may. Okay. Verse 9, which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, or complete, or finished, as pertaining to the conscience, which stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers, or multiple washings, or cleansing, these were ceremonial purifications, and carnal ordinances.

And again, the use of that word carnal isn't a particularly appealing word, but again, it just simply means the flesh. It doesn't mean worldly or inappropriate. It just means of the flesh.

Ordinance of the flesh. Imposed on them until the time of reformation. And this is the point that I want to make. Imposed on them until the time of reformation.

[ 20 : 02 ] What does that mean? Let me give you some other translations. The Rames-Douet version, from which the Roman Catholic translation is taken, says, Which until a season of rectifying are in force.

What does rectify mean? Let me give you another translation. Williams says, Which are in force only until the time of setting things.

Right. That's what it means to be rectified. It means for things to be made right.

Another rendition says, Which have their place till the time comes when things will be put right. 20th century New Testament renders it. Imposed until the coming of the new order. Goodspeed says, In force only until the time for the new order.

[ 21 : 21 ] What's the new order all about? What is the rectifying? What is it that is going to set things right? That's the death of Christ.

There is going to be a gap of approximately 1500 years between the time of the construction of the tabernacle and the time of the death of Christ.

Now that could vary as much as 100, 150 years. Either way. I'm just giving you ballpark figures. But that is what is involved. And then verse 11.

But Christ. Being come. And high priest. After the order of Melchizedek. Remember that from chapter 5 and 7.

By a greater and more perfect tabernacle. Not made with hands.

[ 22 : 26 ] That is to say, not of this building, this physical material building. Neither by the blood of goats and calves.

That's the kind of blood that the high priest offered when he went into the Holy of Holies. It was animal blood. That's why it could never make man complete.

It could never make man finished. It could never make man perfect in the sense of his standing or his relationship to his creator.

And do you realize that is exactly what Jesus Christ did for you? Christ, for all who believe in him, has given them an absolutely perfect status, position, standing before God.

because Christ imputes his standing, his status to us.

[ 23 : 43 ] We stand in his perfection. None of us has any illusion to being anywhere close to perfect in our behavior, our decorum, our attitude, our speech.

We all fall far short of that. But in Christ, we have an official, legal, judicial standing before God that is just as righteous as Christ says.

So you can see, can you not, why it has nothing to do with your behavior. It has everything to do with who you know. It has everything to do with whose righteousness do you stand in, yours or Christ's.

Nothing can be added to the righteousness of Christ. This is what Paul meant when he said, we are accepted in the beloved.

We enjoy the same degree, the same full acceptance before God and his righteousness that Jesus Christ enjoys. And there isn't a one of us who deserves it.

[ 25 : 05 ] Not a one of us. That is amazing. It is just priceless. That's our standing.

God looks at us as if we had never sinned. We are robed in the righteousness of Christ. Amazing. He goes on to say, Neither by the blood of bulls and goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in.

And that means by his own death. By his own sacrifice he entered in. Having obtained eternal redemption for us.

For, if the blood, and here he presents a hypothetical argument, if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh, and did they not provide what was needed?

Stopgap? Temporary? Yes. They atoned. They allowed God to pass over. They allowed God to give these people a pass.

[ 26 : 18 ] This is what Paul meant in Romans when he talks about God winked at. God overlooked their transgressions because they were temporarily atoned for.

And they had to do this year in and year out. And there was the morning sacrifice all year long. This was the day of atonement. It was the annual thing. But there was a morning sacrifice and the evening sacrifice. And this went on for hundreds and hundreds of years.

And every time the sacrifice was made they were reminded, you know what? I'm going to have to do this again. I'm going to have to do this again. Why? Because I'm human.

Because I'm going to offend God or man in one way or another. And all of these animal sacrifices, all they do is tend to keep a temporary lid on things.

But they cannot do what really needs to be done. What needs to be done? Sin needs to be more than simply covered.

[ 27 : 22 ] And that's what the atonement means. A covering. Sin needs to be removed. taken away. As far as the east is from the west.

Sought for and not found. Cast behind his back. Buried in the depths of the deepest sea. That's what needs to be done with sin. Animal sacrifices never do that.

All they could do was temporary. All they could do was just stop gap. All they could do was point to the real thing.

that will do the real job. And if they could provide that on a temporal basis, the writer of Hebrews is saying, verse 14, how much more shall the blood of Christ, which literally means the death of Christ, who through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God.

Purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. And for this cause, Christ, he, is the mediator, the go-between of the new covenant or new testament that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, the law of Moses, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

[ 29 : 06 ] For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead.

Otherwise, it is of no strength at all while the testator lives. And this means if someone writes a last will and testament and they put you in their will and they say, I want John Smith, my cousin, to receive this and to receive that and to receive this and five thousand dollars, and cash and so on upon my death.

Well, what does John Smith get while you're still living? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. The will doesn't come into effect until the testator dies and then it comes into effect.

That again points out the significance and the need for the death of the testator. The death of Christ.

Whereupon neither the first testament 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 of goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, this is

the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

[ 30 : 39 ] Moreover, verse 21 says, he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And what this signifies is the solemnity and the sacredness blood represents life.

Life of all flesh is in the blood. We talk about how valuable blood is. We are all dependent upon it.

And do you know, blood is often looked upon in an unfortunately negative way.

Nobody should look upon blood that way. We tend to think of blood as being distasteful and gory.

Some people do. No, no, no. That is a completely wrong perception of blood.

Blood is precious. Blood is valuable. Blood has not only the properties in it through a miraculous system of physical body that God has created to provide nourishment to all of the organs of the body, but blood is a cleansing agent.

Blood cleanses and purifies the body. It is so critical, and it is a beautiful, beautiful thing the way God has fashioned our bodies and put us together, and the value, the properties, and the use to which he has put blood, it is a beautiful thing, and it has so many spiritual connections with it.

[ 32 : 21 ] It is just absolutely wonderful, and it is just another indication of the creative genius of our heavenly father. And he goes on to say, almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission.

It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

animals, how often do they have to offer those animal sacrifices over and over and over again?

There's no end to it, because all the animal sacrifices could do was demonstrate, first, their necessity, and secondly, their inadequacy.

They never were able to get the job done, and that's because the value of the animal lives that were forfeited could not begin to equal the value of human beings.

[ 33 : 55 ] So, you did not have an adequate sacrifice to atone for man's sin. You had to have a sacrifice that had more intrinsic value than the one who committed the sin.

Animals didn't. Animals didn't have as much value as human beings. But Jesus Christ, because he was the God-man, had the intrinsic value and the purity coupled with it to cancel out the sins of humanity.

Therein lies all the difference. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entered into the holy place every year with blood of others.

For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world. Christ would have to be offered again and again and again if he were just like these animals.

But now, once, in the end of the world, and I like the Reims-Douet version here better, it isn't the end of the world, it is upon the conjunction of the ages.

[ 35 : 30 ] It's where the ages meet. The former age and the latter age culminated at Calvary. And Christ is that central figure of all human history.

It is a glorious thing to consider. He's the focal point of it all. He's the culmination of it. And he is placed right in the middle of these ages.

the conjunction of the ages. To put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.

and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. And that's what we're looking for.

[ 36 : 38 ] And that's what this table is all about. We are to do this until he comes. We do it in remembrance of him, looking back upon that incredible sacrifice he made that was all sufficient.

And we do it in anticipation of his coming again. We are to do it until he comes. Would you open your hymnal, please?

Number 224. We already sang the first stanza. And let's stand and sing the second stanza.

And well, let's sing stanzas 2, 3, and 4. 224. And as we are singing, we'll ask the elders if they'll come forward and we'll prepare for the table. Would you stand, please?

Number 224, beginning with the second stanza. Forbidden Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God.

[ 37 : 58 ] All loving things that charm me most, I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet. Sorrow and love flow may go down.

Did such love and sorrow meet? For fortune composed so rich a crown, were the whole realm of nature mine, but and hinder and Be seated please.

It was an evening of great confusion at last night when our Lord met with His apostles right before His arrest and trials and crucifixion.

There was a lot of sorrow in the room, a lot of sadness, a lot of mixed emotions. A lot of them are wondering, what is He talking about? He's going away.

[ 40 : 01 ] Where are you going? Why can't we go with you, Thomas said. They were just not to understand any of that until after the fact of His death, His burial, and His resurrection.

Then it would all come back to them. Then it would all make sense. But until then, there was a quandary about what all of this meant. And you may be sure that in the midst of their perplexity, there was a lot of depression because of His talking about going away.

And He made a deliberate effort to provide for them some kind of physical reminder whereby they could recall to mind as to what He was about, why He was here, why He was leaving, and why He was returning, and what His actual body was going to accomplish for them.

So He instituted two of the very most familiar, common things that everybody knew, bread and wine.

In the Hebrew community of the first century, you could not find two elements that had greater familiarity among the people than these.

[ 41 : 21 ] The bread was the staple of life. The wine was the most common drink as it was mingled with the water which always needed some purification and the wine did that.

So they were very familiar with that and He took the most common things that existed and made them point to Himself. So He is going to be called the bread of life and indeed He is spiritually as well as physically.

So our Lord took a common piece of bread much like what we would probably call a pancake, something of that configuration and He broke off a piece of it and then He gave it to them and they passed it around and each one broke off a piece of that bread.

That was to represent the body that is the butter. Thank you.

Lord Jesus said, this is my body which is given for you. Ladies Trio will provide a selection of you.

[ 43 : 14 ] Thank you. I've experienced such a conflict of emotion as I do at the Lord's Table between the two great extremes of a profound sadness and a profound joy.

Strange, isn't it? The sadness has to accompany the realization of the incredible price that was paid to affect our redemption.

The shame, the ignominy, the physical pain, to say nothing of the emotional and spiritual pain through which our Lord went.

To procure our redemption and His separation from His Father in that time when He was made sin for us.

There isn't anything that can evoke a more profound sense of sadness in my heart and mind than that. And at the same time, it is followed with a feeling of inexpressible joy because of what was accomplished because of that.

[ 44 : 26 ] And it's just an amazing emotional, spiritual phenomenon all in one brain, all at one time. It's a remarkable thing. And I'm sure that many of you, maybe all of you, experience the same kind of thing.

It is the greatest range of emotion, I guess, that we can have. The profound sadness and the profound elation and joy. And the anticipation of His coming again.

It's just wonderful, wonderful beyond words. Our Lord then took the cup. That same night, our Lord took the cup and said, This cup is the New Testament or the New Covenant in my blood.

And as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup, you do declare or show forth the Lord's death. They come. In just a moment, the elders are going to be passing the offering plate.

This we do in conjunction with our communion service because it provides the elders with discretionary funds that they may apply to those within the congregation.

[ 46 : 08 ] And sometimes outside the congregation, whom they deem wise to help. So we want to encourage you to give in accordance with your desire and your ability.

I cannot say that there are any particular needs within the assembly now financially. There may be some that I'm not aware of, but I'm not aware of any.

However, you are as familiar as I am with what is going on in the local and the national economy. And it's very possible that we could be facing some financially turbulent times.

Things could get very difficult in a very short period of time. We don't know that that's going to be the case, but we do know that a number of negative things are in place with people's employment picture, etc.

if things could get difficult. So I'm sure you'll keep that in mind with your ability and your need to give as well. So, gentlemen, do love. Thank you.

[ 47 : 13 ] Thank you.

Thank you.