

**THE MISSION  
OF JESUS THE  
MESSIAH**

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## The Mission of Jesus the Messiah

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proaching events<sup>78</sup> when he asked the Lord where He would go. The Lord responded that Peter could not go with him immediately, but that he would follow later. Again Peter protested that he would lay down his life for the Lord, whereupon the Lord cautioned him, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you.”

The Lord then strengthened Peter by declaring that he had prayed that Peter’s faith would not fail. He then concluded by stating that when Peter was finally converted, he should strengthen his brethren. But Peter would not relent. He again protested, stating that he was ready to go with the Lord both to prison and to death. Finally the Lord prophesied to Peter that the “cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.”<sup>79</sup>

The paschal meal continued, and undoubtedly during its normal course Jesus instituted the second ordinance of the new covenant—the sacrament.

*The Last Supper, Part Three:  
The Sacrament*

Matthew 26:26–29

26. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28. For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.

Cross-references

Mark 14:22–25	Luke 22:17–20
JST, Matthew 26:22–25	3 Nephi 9:17, 19–20; 18:5–11; 20:8
Moroni 4, 5	D&C 20:75–79; 27:2–4

Only the Synoptics record the institution of the sacrament. Although there are some discrepancies between the Synoptic writings, they are insignificant. More important, they each attest to the significance of the sacrament and its institution as the emblem of the new covenant.

The Passover celebration commemorated the blessings Jehovah gave to the children of Israel as they escaped from Egyptian bondage. Included in the celebration was the slaying of the paschal lamb, an act which looked forward to the anticipated Messiah. This represented part of the ancient sacrifice practiced by Adam in anticipation of the future Atonement and sacrifice of the Son of God (Moses 5:5-8).<sup>80</sup>

From the Exodus forward, the children of Israel had celebrated the Passover in the similitude of Christ's sacrifice. "All of the sacrificial similitudes of all ages combined to bear testimony of the infinite and eternal atoning sacrifice—the sacrifice of the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world."<sup>81</sup>

Now Christ's eternal sacrifice was about to take place, and the paschal lambs that had been slain in the temple symbolically testified for the last time of that great and eternal sacrifice that would shortly come to pass. When Christ gave his life for mankind, animal sacrifice authorized by the Lord, as it was practiced from Adam to the time of Christ, ceased. At the Last Supper, the Lord instituted a new ordinance to replace it. The new ordinance was called the sacrament.

The Passover meal offered the perfect situation for instituting the sacrament. The similitude of the Passover celebration and that of the sacrament was the same. Whereas the ceremonial sacrifice of animals looked forward to the great eternal sacrifice, the shedding of blood and the atonement of Christ for all mankind, the sacrament looked to the past in remembrance of that glorious event. Both ordinances focus on that moment in time when the Son of God fulfilled his earthly mission and provided through the Atonement, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection (1) salvation for all mankind and (2) exaltation for those who would obey his words. The blood of the Passover lamb redeemed God's chosen people from the angel of death as it passed over Egypt; so, too, the blood of the Son of God will ransom all mankind from the angel of death (sin) and thus open the way for entering God's kingdom.

After Christ washed the Apostle's feet, the supper continued. The company no doubt ate bitter herbs in remembrance of the children of Israel's sojourn in Egypt. Whether the Lord participated in every portion of the ceremonial observance is unknown, but it is unlikely that he did so, for the Jewish leaders had changed and expanded much of the ceremony over the passing centuries.<sup>82</sup> However, they certainly ate all the unleavened bread and the lamb, for the feast required it. At this point, the ceremony called for the blessing and drinking of the third cup of wine, and in all probability it was now that the Lord instituted the ordinance of the sacrament.<sup>83</sup>

Just as with the washing of feet, the ceremony of the Passover feast provided the Lord with the opportunity of instituting a new ordinance without unduly disrupting the supper itself. He took bread, "blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples," with the instructions that they should eat, for, he said, "This is my body." Similarly, he took the cup, "gave thanks, and gave it to them," instructing them to drink, for, he said, "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The scriptures note that the Lord blessed both the bread and the wine, but the specific words of the blessings are not recorded. Although the Passover celebration contained certain ritual blessings for the bread and the wine,<sup>84</sup> the Lord probably would not have used them.<sup>85</sup> Although the New Testament does not record specific instructions regarding the sacrament, the Book of Mormon does. It explains that after Christ's resurrection, he visited the Nephites and instituted the sacrament (3 Nephi 18:3–11). In this connection, no doubt the Lord gave the same instructions to the Apostles of the ancient Church as he did to the Nephites and to the latter-day prophet of the Restoration.<sup>86</sup> These include the sacrament prayers, the similitudes of the bread to Christ's body, the wine to his blood; and the teaching that by worthily partaking of the sacrament we come into fellowship with him and spiritually feed on the remembrance of his mission. (See 3 Nephi 18:3–11; Moroni 4, 5; D&C 20:75–79.)

The Lord used wine for the sacrament both at the Last Supper and on the Western Hemisphere. However, in the Restoration the Lord revealed that water could be substituted for wine (D&C 27:2–4), as we do today.

We take the sacrament for the following purposes:

(1) To remember the body and blood of Christ. The ordinance looks back on the Atonement, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection. Like sacrifice, the Passover celebration had looked forward to those same events. Through our remembrance we acknowledge that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, and no one can be saved but by him (John 14:6).

(2) To take upon us the name of Christ. We covenant with and witness before our Father in Heaven that we will take upon us the name of Christ. By doing this we accept Christ's teachings and place them in our lives as guiding principles. Earlier in his ministry, Jesus alluded to this when he delivered a discourse at Capernaum on "the bread of life."<sup>87</sup> In that discourse he used the common metaphors of food and drink<sup>88</sup> to teach the Jews that they must "eat of his flesh" and "drink of his blood" to become part of him. The literal-minded Jews questioned how anyone could eat of his flesh and drink of his blood, but the Lord was using the example metaphorically, not literally. He meant that they must make his teachings and their belief in him part of them and that they should exemplify that belief in everything they did, just as bread and wine were assimilated into their body tissues and literally became an abiding part of the body. When we partake the sacrament worthily we accept Christ as our Lord and King, and we evidence this by living his commandments and acknowledging him as the literal Son of God, our personal Savior.

(3) To always remember him. We should direct our constant attention to the Savior's atonement. In celebrating the final feast of the Passover, the Lord fulfilled the old law and initiated the new. "Sacrifice stopped and sacrament started."<sup>89</sup> Sacrifice and the Passover pointed the ancients *toward* the coming atonement, the sacrament replaced these venerable ordinances and pointed the attention of his Saints (after his death) *back* to the great atoning sacrifice which he had wrought.<sup>90</sup>

(4) To keep the Lord's commandments. We specifically covenant to keep the Lord's commandments when we partake of the sacrament. The Lord put it simply: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). To keep his commandments is to "live by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God" (D&C 84:44).

(5) To receive God's blessings. Providing we have partaken of the sacrament worthily and continue to live righteously, God has promised us that he will grant us his Spirit to be with us so that "in due course [all] shall inherit eternal life."<sup>91</sup>

The Church grew rapidly after Christ's resurrection, and the Apostles undoubtedly instructed the new converts in proper sacrament observance. The Savior had instituted a simple rite; however, various incorrect doctrines developed concerning the sacrament until its restoration in modern times. Perhaps these changes were due to theological zeal or heated fancy, but in any event they would have startled and shocked the original Saints.

Evidence of this problem was apparent early in the Church. The Saints at Corinth had made a mockery of the sacrament by reducing it to a gluttonous feast replete with drunkenness. Paul, in correcting this wrongdoing, declared harshly, "For there must be also heresies among you. . . . When ye came together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." (1 Corinthians 11:19–22.)

Paul warned the Saints not to make a mockery of this ordinance nor participate in it unworthily, concluding that if a man did so, he would eat and drink "damnation to himself. . . . For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep [die]." (1 Corinthians 11:27–30.)

The sacrament is a simple ordinance but is of singular importance in the lives of worthy Saints. If we partake of it unworthily we jeopardize our salvation, but if we partake worthily we open the door to eternal life by accepting Christ and his teachings into our lives.

When the Savior had finished administering the sacrament to the Apostles, he continued his teachings to strengthen their faith. The fateful advent of his arrest and trial would soon scatter them abroad, so he reminded them of the success of their first mission. They had gone without purse or scrip and yet lacked nothing, and

the Apostles acknowledged this. But now the Lord told them to be prepared, to *take* purse and scrip, for now they would be subject to the harsh circumstances of the world. The sword, he said as an example, would better describe their future proselytizing problems: if they did not have a sword they should sell their garments and buy one. It was another metaphor used to describe the difficult times they would face as they taught all nations. He knew that he and his followers would be “reckoned among the transgressors” in the world’s eyes. The Apostles again failed to grasp the Lord’s meaning and declared they had but two swords in their possession. Without continuing his explanation Jesus closed the conversation by simply stating, “It is enough” (Luke 22:38).

The Passover supper was finished—the old Covenant had passed away.