

Should We Remember the Death of Our Messiah with Leavened or Unleavened Bread?

The Command:

Matt. 26:26-28 *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. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.*

Luke 22:19-20 *And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. ²⁰ Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

1 Cor. 11:23-29 *the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

The Passover Precedent

The memorial bread represents the body of our Messiah where the power of diabolos was broken. Should that memorial bread, by which we remember Christ's death and its significance to us, be unleavened or leavened? Originally it was obviously unleavened, as this was the Passover meal in which Jesus was participating. By his Father's command only unleavened bread could be eaten for the Passover celebration.

Ex. 12: 8;17-20 *And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.... And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even (Passover), ye shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land. Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread.*

Therefore there can be absolutely no question that Jesus initiated the memorial service with unleavened bread. The combining of unleavened bread with the memorial wine (representing the sacrificial blood of the Messiah) actually satisfies another divine law:

Ex. 23:18 *Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread; neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning*

Ex. 34:25 *Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning.*

Since Yahweh's laws for the Kingdom of God demanded that no leavened bread ever be offered in combination with sacrificial blood it seems contradictory to suggest we should do exactly the opposite in relation to Christ's sacrificial blood, especially in the absence of any direct command from our Creator to substitute leavened bread in the memorial ritual.

The Strictly Unleavened Grain Offering

Another Kingdom of God law that offers a parallel precedent would be that the grain offerings brought to Yahweh and consumed by the priests could only be unleavened.

Lev. 2:3,10-11 *And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire... And that which is left of the meat (grain/minchah) offering shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire. No meat (grain/minchah) offering, which ye shall bring unto the LORD, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire.*

The grain offering from the altar was the food of the priests, on the basis of being the sons of the High Priest. That grain offering had to be unleavened 100% of the time. Under the terms of the new priesthood initiated at Jerusalem we also see the sons of the High Priest constituting the priesthood. The children of Jesus are identified as priests (1 Pet 2:5,9; Is. 9:6; Is. 53:10). Just as the Aaronic Priesthood of the Mosaic Age ate from the altar so does the Christ Priesthood of the Ecclesial Age.

Heb. 13:10-11 *We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.*

We (the Brothers and Sisters in Christ during the Ecclesial Age), eat from our Christ altar when we partake of the broken bread and wine for memorial service. The difference with our priesthood being highlighted in this Hebrews verse is that we get to eat of the very offering forbidden to the Aaronic priests. The law demanded that when the blood of the sin offering entered the Tabernacle that the accompanying body of that animal had to be completely incinerated outside the camp and not eaten by the priests (Lev. 6:30). However the blood (life) of Jesus Christ (our antitypical sin offering) was brought into the antitypical Tabernacle (God's presence). Unlike the previous Priesthood, we do partake of that sin offering from our Christ altar. Therefore we have repeated parallels between the Aaronic priesthood and the Christ priesthood for which we qualify.

Now with this divinely identified relationship and precedent we have to ask that if the previous priesthood were divinely required to exclusively eat unleavened bread from their altar then why should the subsequent priesthood practice be exactly the opposite pattern since there is no divine direction to change this procedure? In fact the Apostle Paul makes a direct connection between our eating the memorial bread and the previous Priesthood eating the bread of the altar.

1 Cor 10:15-18 *I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?*

Just as Israel 'after the flesh' partook of the altar, so Israel 'after the spirit' (our current enlightened community) partakes of our altar (Christ). Israel after the flesh was forbidden to eat leavened bread from their altar. Therefore why does the current community of believers presume they are free to break that precedent without any divine direction to change that relationship?

Leaven is consistently presented throughout scripture as highly negative and a polluting influence:

Matt 16:6;12 *Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.... Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*

Mk 8:15 *And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.*

Lk 12:1 *...he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

Shouldn't it seem strange that Jesus would consider the leaven that he identifies as a symbol of hypocrisy and doctrinal distortions to be a perfectly acceptable component of the memorial bread representing his sacrificial body?

1 Cor 5-8 *To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

Scripture identifies leaven with malice and wickedness, while unleavened bread is identified with sincerity and truth. Additionally we are told that we, as the body of believers, are supposed to be an unleavened lump. How could we maintain our unleavened lump status (as is highly recommended in this context) if we partake of leavened bread in our "feast"? The parallel is being made that just as we partake of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth in our Passover memorial that we are supposed to extend that understanding to our brotherhood body in the sense of maintaining the absence of a polluting leaven, such as this unrepentant young brother living with his father's wife. Why would Jesus want to remember his sacrificial death with the leaven of malice and wickedness and not the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth?

Gal 5:7-10 *Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.*

Again we see the same precedent that the Ecclesia should consider itself to be unleavened and should address the polluting, leavenous factors that develop within the Ecclesia.

Unleavened bread is consistently presented throughout scripture as highly positive, divinely acceptable and representative of our Messiah.

Deut 16: 3 *Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it; seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, even the bread of affliction; for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste: that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.*

This restatement of the unleavened requirement for remembering the escape from Egypt identifies unleavened bread as the bread of affliction. However, this is not a negative association but highly positive.

1 Cor. 10:1-4 *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.*

The wilderness precedents for baptism and the memorial service are identified by Paul. The spiritual meat that Israel consumed was the manna in the wilderness. We also see Jesus identifying himself with this manna to those who baited him at Capernaum to repeat his food miracle of feeding the 5,000 from the day before.

John 6:32-35 *Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

Jesus identifies himself as the antitypical manna. He expands on this reasoning throughout this exchange.

Vs.48-51 *I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

Jesus expands his identification with the wilderness manna to the memorial service bread and wine, representing his body and blood that must be eaten.

The key component in this identification of Christ being the antitypical manna that is a precedent for the memorial service bread... **is that manna was not leavened.**

Therefore, on what basis can we presume that accommodating our convenience of remembering our Messiah's death with leavened bread, void of any specific divine instruction, can be appropriate?

Illuminating Challenges

Whenever we think we understand the divine mind on a matter, we should always look for exceptions. If we are correct then whatever suggested inconsistencies will only confirm and

reveal an even greater and more glorious understanding. If we are wrong then we must abandon our original premise, as being wrong about divine truths is not an inconsequential failure. *All unrighteousness is sin* (1 Jn 5:17). Since all un-right-ness is sin, then contradicting God's right-ness is sin. We have to be right, just like God.

Therefore, It is interesting to note the divinely required inclusion of leaven in certain ritual applications. These are not reversals of divine policy, but further validations in the consistency of our understanding. The inclusion of leavened bread in the Feast of First Fruits and the Peace Offering subtly indicate the promise of grace within the highly judgment-focused rituals and laws of the first Kingdom of God.

Feast of Unleavened Bread Vs Leavened Feast of First Fruits

The first of the three divinely imposed feast weeks each year was the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 23:14-17; 34:18-24; Lev. 23). It was defined by the complete absence of leaven. However the second feast week began 50 days after the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It was known as the Feast of Weeks, as well as the Feast of First Fruits and also as Pentacost in Acts. The Feast of First Fruits had to be initiated by waving two leavened loaves of wheat bread (Lev. 23:17; Ex. 34:22). This seems to be an extreme difference. The first feast demands an absolute and total absence of leaven but the second feast cannot start without the waving of two leavened loaves. We have to ask why our Creator would demand the faithful to observe these seemingly contradictory requirements.... and does this policy reversal somehow license reversing the use of unleavened bread at Christ's last Passover to leavened bread at Christadelphian memorial services?

First we have to understand the context of what these harvest feast weeks are intended to project. Our Creator communicates with an exclusive and intentional complex pattern, as did His son. God speaks through parables, visions, dark sayings and complex imagery. The purpose for this intentional complexity is two-fold. As Jesus answers his disciples, that intentional complexity is designed to give to those who have while simultaneously taking away from those who have not (Matt. 13:12). Complex images have to be interpreted. When the basis for our interpretation is our instincts and heart generated impressions or the popular impressions of those who make us feel good about ourselves.... what little insight we have into the mind of the Almighty will be taken away. When the basis for our interpretation is an intense, concentrated determination to find truth at any cost, with a willingness to accept personally diminishing understandings, then we will be given more. The three harvest feast weeks when God demanded the enlightened stand before Him project the three great divine harvests in the divine plan. These are the three immortalization events in the Creator's plan. These include 1) Jesus Christ; 2) the family of Christ at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and 3) the rest of the world at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. Yahweh is the great Husbandman who has sown His image and likeness (mankind) in the field of creation.

There was a specific harvest associated with each of the three feast weeks. The Feast of Unleavened Bread was identified with the first fruits of the barley harvest. The Feast of Firstfruits (also the Feast of Weeks and Pentacost) was defined by the wheat harvest. The

Feast of Tabernacles, identified as the feast of ingathering, was specifically referred to as the feast of the final ingathering, which included the vineyard and olive harvest. In perfect consistency the faithful are consistently paralleled to these categories of fruit bearing plant life. Appropriately contrasting this observation is that the unenlightened are repeatedly identified throughout scripture as non-fruitbearing plant life (briers, thorns, grass, weeds).

The identification of these three harvest feast weeks with the progressive three immortalization events (harvests) in the divine plan is a common but rather subtly presented theme throughout divine communications. We see these three progressive immortalizations projected by the three outpourings of divine power on the faithful at the beginning of the Ecclesial Age. The Holy Spirit is first poured out on Jesus at his baptism. The second outpouring is on the 120 faithful Jews in Jerusalem, when they are “baptized with fire,” projecting the immortalization of the family of Jesus at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. The third and last outpouring was when the Gentiles were officially welcomed into the Ecclesia at the home of Cornelius, thereby projecting the immortalization of the rest of the world (conditioned by divine acceptability) at the end of the Millennial Kingdom. The relationship between the three Holy Spirit outpourings and the three immortalization events is cemented by Paul who defines the miraculous Holy Spirit power as the “earnest” of the promise of immortalization (2 Cor. 5:1-5; Eph. 1:13-14).

We can further solidify this relationship between the 3 harvest feast weeks with the 3 immortalization harvesting events and the 3 Holy Spirit outpourings. The immortalization of Jesus Christ, the first divine harvest of creation, actually took place during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The ‘earnest’ of the promise of immortalization for the faithful at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom was appropriately poured out on those 120 at Pentacost, which is the Feast of Firstfruits. This is why Jesus told them they had to wait at Jerusalem after his ascension for the gift of the comforter. That comforter, the power of the Holy Spirit, could not be given to them until the Feast of First Fruits (Pentacost), in order to maintain the divinely intended symmetry of the three immortalization harvests in the Creator’s plan.

Yet another confirmation of this relationship is that Jesus identifies the resurrection, judgement and reward of the faithful at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom to the wheat harvest (Matt. 13:37-43). The wheat harvest was the specific harvest identifying that second feast week, with the two leavened loaves of the first of the wheat harvest being waved to initiate that second harvest celebration. This brings us to our answer we sought from the beginning.

Why would Yahweh demand no leaven whatsoever for the entire eight days of Passover through the Feast of Unleavened Bread and yet require the next feast week to begin only after the waving of two leavened loaves of the wheat first fruits? The answer is bound to the corresponding immortalization harvest event projected by each harvest week. The basis for Christ’s immortalization was a complete absence of antitypical polluting leaven throughout his entire life. Jesus exclusively and constantly demonstrated the righteousness of his Father. He was leaven-free. However the 2nd feast week projects the 2nd immortalization event, for the family of Christ at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom. Our

immortalization will need a component that was unnecessary for the basis of Christ's immortalization. Our salvation will be awarded **despite** the presence of the offending leaven in our lives. **Grace** is the additional component that affords the salvation of the faithful at the 2nd immortalization event, that 2nd divine harvesting of creation. Therefore the polluting feature of leaven absolutely should be associated with the 2nd feast week but definitely not the 1st. We need grace and forgiveness. Jesus was not dependent upon grace, due to his perfect, leaven-free life.

When we look closely at the possible defensive objections to the consistent scriptural theme of leaven, which might somehow permit the appropriate replacement of leavened bread for Christ's original unleavened bread for his memorial, we find these potential objections actually further validate our expressions and understanding.

The Peace Offering Leaven

This is also the case for the required presence of leaven for the peace offering ritual. Both leavened and unleavened bread were required for the Peace Offering (Lev. 7:11-14). A unique distinction of the Peace Offering was that it was the only offering category where all three participants shared in the same meal. Yahweh received his portion on the altar. The officiating priest received a portion of the offering and the offerer was invited to eat the flesh of his own Peace Offering. This was never allowed with the Burnt, Sin, Trespass, Meal or Drink Offerings. The divine understanding of peace is the presence of harmony. The sharing of this offering between Creator, priest and faithful is a projection of the divine plan when Yahweh, Christ and the faithful will exist in perfect harmony, in both image and likeness. Therefore it is highly appropriate that the offering demonstrating the principle of ultimate peace include both the unleavened bread (Christ's unpolluted basis of salvation) and the leavened bread (the faithful's necessary dependence on grace for salvation due to our polluted leavened state). The divine plan of perfect harmony (peace) when the Creator will "be all and in all" after that last enemy of death is destroyed demands the element of grace... or only Christ could be saved. This is why the leaven is required for the 2nd feast week and also for the peace offering.

Unleavened Bread in the Millennial Kingdom

Our original question was whether or not it is appropriate that many Christadelphians have chosen to conveniently replace the original unleavened memorial bread instituted by our King with leavened bread, as if the difference is inconsequential. It should be understood that not only was the Passover institution of the memorial service instituted with unleavened bread, but also the Passover in the Millennial Kingdom will be observed with unleavened bread (Ezek. 45:21). Since the procedure was initiated with unleavened bread in Egypt ... and the next phase was necessarily initiated with unleavened bread at the last supper... and the next phase in the Millennial Kingdom will require unleavened bread... we should ask on what basis Christadelphians have been so presumptuous as to change this pattern as if it were inconsequential?

The Ecclesia is recommended to maintain an unleavened state (1 Cor 5). Therefore why would we want to partake of leaven in remembering Christ if we are supposed to maintain

an unleavened state, as Christ did. The omer of unleavened manna deposited in the ark of the covenant would never corrupt. That ‘bread’ from heaven (as Jesus refers to it) was unleavened. Unleavened bread represents immortality. Why would we seek to replace that with leavened bread, the polluted bread representing malice and wickedness?

Objections

It has been suggested that when Jesus instituted the memorial service that he did not use the Greek word for “unleavened” bread or “leavened” bread, but simply bread. It is therefore presumed that since Jesus did not make the **clear** distinction that somehow this issue becomes insignificant, despite the avalanche of divine precedents. This reasoning is nothing but a desperate attempt by the imaginative human heart defending itself against the two edged sword of the spirit of truth. This reasoning is illegitimate on at least two different avenues of consideration.

1. The identification of the bread as specifically unleavened that Jesus was breaking and requiring his disciples to partake... would be unnecessarily redundant. It was Passover. No leaven would be allowed in any household of the family of God for an additional seven days. It would be like saying.... Jesus was killed dead, which is a redundant expression that would be rather insulting to the average intelligence. Of course that bread was unleavened. Jesus had no need to identify that to his Jewish disciples. They weren’t little children.
2. To accept this line of reasoning as even marginally legitimate would be to presume that the divine communication pattern has to be extreme clarity, without ambiguity, without the opportunity for error, with no metaphors or parables or imagery or symbols or intentional complexity. That would be a presumption contradicting the obvious pattern, as intentional complexity is certainly the divine communication pattern. Aaron and Miriam were severely reprimanded by Yahweh because they were oblivious to the extreme significance of their brother Moses being the only man to whom God could communicate without that intentional complexity, like a friend (Num. 12:3-10). The presumption that God would certainly make the leavened or unleavened bread status perfectly clear and unmistakable if it was significant, is completely without substance.

Two questions remain. Once we understand the significance of using unleavened bread for memorial service, then what do we do when offered leavened bread at a Bible School or Fraternal Gathering or an Ecclesia we may be visiting? The next question would be that if we do not consider the prospect of occasionally partaking of leavened bread in the memorial service to be personally defiling while in the company of the enlightened who are unfamiliar with the divine policy on the issue of unleavened bread, then why would we make any distinction in the first place? These issues can also be definitively addressed, however not quickly or simply with but a single verse. These questions will have to be extensively addressed in another commentary. However, the simple answers would be that:

1. We cannot be personally defiled by an imperfection at memorial service. Jesus was not personally defiled when he shared the memorial service with a brother in the truth he declared would have been better off never having been born, as well as eleven other brothers who had no understanding of the atonement, the necessary sacrificial death and

resurrection of Jesus or even the true basis for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus was not in any way defiled by sharing the memorial service with these Brethren. Neither are we. That is the short answer, on which to meditate.

2. We should never look for precedents denying divine principles simply to accommodate our own convenience or validate relaxing community standards. The motivations for our actions will be highly significant when we face our judge who will decide whether we will live forever or die forever. He has already warned us that there are many to be called to judgment but few will be chosen (Matt. 20:16; 22:14). Searching for conscience deadening exceptions to projecting divine principles is quite unwise. This is only the short answer. The legitimacy of these short answers can be confirmed by repeated scriptural precedents.

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