

The "Lord's Supper"

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all scriptures are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Bible unless otherwise noted.¹

Intro

The "Lord's Supper" in the Protestant church is merely a rebranding of the Catholic Mass, which in turn is rooted in a misunderstanding of John chapter 6. Those without faith consider what is 'real' to be that which can be seen and touched and tasted. The Lord however speaks of that which is of the spiritual realm when He taught that His body was 'real food' and his blood was 'real drink' (John 6:55 NIV).

Additionally, at the 'Last Supper' Jesus was not creating a new ritual. Rather the Lord was simply showing how His sacrifice was symbolized through the Passover feast.

Later, the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthian church extended the idea of the 'Lord's Supper' beyond the Passover feast to all meals that believers eat together. Paul demonstrated that while the pagans sacrifice their food to idols and give thanks and worship to demons, believers give thanks and worship to the one true God for all things, and in this case for the food we receive from His hand. Thus the commentary by Paul in 1st Corinthians has nothing to do with the mass, or a sacrament or an ordinance, but is simply a command to believers to give thanks to God through Jesus for all that we consume. Additionally Paul addresses the issue of good manners at the weekly, or perhaps daily, church wide meal. In other words Paul intends to make sure everyone is provided for, rather than having some believers stuffed with food while others went hungry.

We will see that in the Hebrew Bible (the Old Testament), that the tradition of eating unleavened bread and drinking wine permeates the text. Unleavened

¹ I have no particular favoritism for the NKJV. Rather it just happens to be the English version that appears in my Hebrew/English Bible, and therefore the one I use. The primary connection between the NKJV and the original King James Version are the texts they are translated from. In accordance with the practice of the NKJV to capitalize pronouns that refer to the Deity, I likewise do so in this paper. While it is true that in the Hebrew Bible pronouns are not capitalized, neither are any other words - Hebrew doesn't have capital letters. The relatively new tradition of capitalizing Deity pronouns is completely appropriate in English and is occasionally helpful in clarifying to whom a pronoun refers. Unlike the NKJV the KJV does not capitalize deity pronouns.

bread is both symbolic of Passover and of hospitality. When a guest suddenly dropped in on a host, the host would not have time to bake bread with yeast and instead would take flour and water and make unleavened flat bread, much like pita or Naan.

Back to Genesis

Whenever we study the Bible, we should go back to the older texts in order to properly comprehend the newer texts. This way we will avoid misunderstanding and misapplying scripture. The tradition of sharing bread and wine did not start at the 'Last Supper' in the Gospel accounts, nor did it start at the first Passover. Rather it started back in Genesis. Therefore, let us look at the chronological/historical development and background of the Lord's Supper, starting with the earliest accounts and moving forward.

Melchizedek

The first instance of the "Lord's Supper" or "Communion" was when Melchizedek King of Salem brought out Bread and Wine to fellowship with Abram (Abraham).

Genesis 14:18-20 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all.

Regarding this passage, the author of the letter to the Hebrews points out that Jesus is a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek². So the very first instance of sharing Bread and Wine is by this unique individual to whom Jesus' own eternal priesthood is connected. Melchizedek brought out the bread and wine to fellowship with Abraham. Notice the aspects of Hospitality and Communion in this passage. Melchizedek showed Abram hospitality by providing for both nourishment of Abram's war tired body and by providing wine to celebrate the victory in the battle. Melchizedek also had communion with Abram both by sharing in the meal and celebration of victory as well as sharing in their common faith in the one true God. There was also an exchange of gifts. Melchizedek gave a blessing and Abram gave Melchizedek ten percent of everything.

² Hebrews 5:6-10, 6:20, and 7:1-21. The author refers back to Psalm 110:4 to point out the prophecy about Jesus being a priest even though he wasn't descended from the tribe of Levi.

When the author states in Hebrews 7:7 that the lesser is blessed by the greater, he is referring to the phrase in Gen. 14:19 "And he blessed him..." and is not referring to the phrase: "...Blessed be Abram..." for then the logic of the argument would fail because Melchizedek also says: "And blessed be God Most High...". The difference is in the active versus passive use of the root word meaning "to bless" בָּרַךְ/בָּרַךְהוּ. We know from Genesis 24:27 that the word "blessed" בָּרוּךְ (Qal passive participle - basically an adverb) is used by a lesser to refer to a greater. In that instance, Abraham's servant declares that God is "blessed".

Abraham and the Three Guests

Later Abraham brought out unleavened bread for YHVH³ and two angels.

Genesis 18:1-9, 16-19 Then the LORD appeared to him by the terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men⁴ were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 "Please let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 "And I will bring a morsel of bread, that you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, inasmuch as you have come to your servant." They said, "Do as you have said." 6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead it and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave it to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8 So he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate. 9 Then they said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" So he said, "Here, in the tent."...

16 Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them to send them on the way. 17 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, 18 "since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? 19 "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

In this passage, note the similarities to the Last Supper/Passover:

1. The hospitality (18:2-4, 16)
2. The washing of the feet (18:4)
3. The bread (18:5-6)
4. The larger context of a feast (18:7-8) including the sacrifice of a young animal.
5. The fellowship (18:17)

³ Whenever the term "LORD" appears in all capitals in an English translation of the Bible, it indicates that in the native text of the Bible, the name "Yahweh" יהוה appears. The language of the Old Testament is Hebrew. Ancient Hebrew had no vowels, so in English I write Yahweh as YHWH or YHVH. (The W or V represents the Hebrew letter VAV, which is believed to have been pronounced as a W in ancient times but in modern times is pronounced as a V). This name YHWH does NOT mean "I am" as many mistakenly believe. The name is derived from a 3rd person masculine form. A closer translation would be "He is" or "He will be", although this too is debatable. The only time it is written in a first person form is in the account of Moses and the burning bush when God is referring to Himself: אהיה אשר אהיה (Exodus 3:14).

⁴ In this passage, the three men should not be construed to be the "Trinity". It is very clear that YHVH is one of them, but the other two are simply angels.

6. The Tradition (18:19)

Abraham is also blessed again. This time God blesses him with the promise of Sarah bearing a son.

Lot and the angels

Shortly later, Lot serves unleavened bread and wine to the same two angels, and in showing this hospitality saves his life and that of his family:

Genesis 19:1-3 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. 2 And he said, "Here now, my lords, please turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way." And they said, "No, but we will spend the night in the open square." 3 But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. Then he made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.

Note that the word 'feast' in this passage implies wine because it is the word for drinking wine.⁵

In this passage we see:

1. Hospitality
2. Washing of the feet
3. Unleavened bread
4. Wine (by implication of the word 'feast')
5. The larger context of a full meal

Lot also compelled them after they first resist his hospitality. Why did the angels say that they would just spend the night in the open square? Why were they spending the night at all? What might have happened if Lot accepted their initial answer? Lot may have simply been destroyed with the rest of the city if he didn't persist in his hospitality.

Judges 19:11 ff - Gibeah

Judges 19:11-21 They were near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said to his master, "Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it." 12 But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who are not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah." 13 So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah." 14 And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which

⁵ Hebrew = מִשְׁתֶּה 'Mishteh'. From the word 'to drink', especially alcohol. The same word is used in several other passages to indicate drinking alcohol. A famous passage is Gen. 29:22 where Laban gets Jacob drunk and switches the bride.

belongs to Benjamin. 15 They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, for no one would take them into his house to spend the night. 16 Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who also was from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place were Benjamites. 17 And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?" 18 So he said to him, "We are passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I am from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; now I am going to the house of the LORD. But there is no one who will take me into his house, 19 "although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant, and for the young man who is with your servant; there is no lack of anything." 20 And the old man said, "Peace be with you! However, let all your needs be my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square." 21 So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

In this passage the old man shows hospitality to the stranger. He takes him into his house, provides food for his animals, washes his feet and provides bread and wine⁶.

This story is similar to the story of Lot. Both Lot and the old man were not originally from the place of their residence and both showed hospitality to strangers and were 'preachers of righteousness'. The hospitality shown in both cases wasn't merely friendliness but also protection.

In this passage we see again:

1. Hospitality
2. Washing of the feet
3. Bread
4. Wine
5. The larger context of a full meal

The Passover

Exodus 12-14 records the account of Passover. The history of Passover includes:

1. Hospitality (smaller families were to invite neighbors to share their meal).
2. Instead of washing of the feet, there was the complete baptism in the Red Sea.
3. Unleavened bread
4. Wine (by tradition, though not listed in the Exodus account).
5. The larger context of a full meal.
6. Tradition - this was to be celebrated annually for thousands of years to come.

⁶ The Hebrew in verse 22 indicates they were drinking an intoxicating drink - probably wine.

The Passover precedes the Law

The Passover feast actually precedes and supersedes the Law. Jesus came to fulfill the Law and thus to prevent the Law from being able to condemn us. He did not come to eliminate Passover, rather He actually enhanced the Passover by showing that he was the prophetic fulfillment of Passover and that we should declare His death every time we celebrate the Passover. The implication is, of course, that we would continue to celebrate the Passover.

One might argue, that like circumcision, the Passover was something only the Jewish believers were to continue practicing. If this were the case then it would be consistent to argue that since the Bread and the Wine come from the Passover, gentile believers should not celebrate the Lord's Supper (Passover). However this line of reasoning seems contradictory to Paul's statements in 1st Corinthians.

An Examination of N.T. Passages:

Matthew's account (similar to Mark and Luke's account):

Matthew's account of Jesus' last celebration of Passover is often called the "Last Supper". This is the last time Jesus ate the Passover meal, and was indeed his last meal before his crucifixion.

Matthew 26:17-30 Now on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?" 18 And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples." ' " 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. 20 When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. 21 Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." 22 And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?" 23 He answered and said, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. 24 "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." 25 Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it." 26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." 30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

In this passage we see again:

1. Hospitality
2. Washing of the feet
3. Bread
4. Wine

5. The larger context of a full meal

Also the singing of a hymn(s) at the Passover and the weekly Sabbath gathering of God's people was traditional. The importance of frequent singing is stressed by the Apostle Paul:

Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.⁷

Only the Synoptic Gospels mention the Bread and the Wine

The gospel of John is conspicuously missing any account of the bread and wine at the Passover meal. John wrote his gospel last, much later than the other gospels. Perhaps as late as the 90s A.D.⁸. If the "Lord's Supper" was one of two 'ordinances'⁹ given to the church, then why wouldn't the last gospel writer include this in his gospel account? John does record Jesus calling His body real bread and his blood real wine at John 6:53ff. However the account of the ordinance of "communion" is completely ignored by John when writing about the Passover meal. He also doesn't include the command by Jesus to make disciples of all nations and baptize them. Thus John leaves out the two Protestant ordinances altogether.

Yet John makes a point of mentioning that after Judas received the bread given to him by Jesus, the devil entered him!

John 13:26-27 Jesus answered, 'It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.' And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, 'What you do, do quickly.'

The other Gospels do not make this correlation. It is as though John was specifically trying to combat false spirituality that had been attached to the meal or to the breaking of the bread. Here Jesus Himself, breaks bread and gives it to

⁷ See also Ephesians 5:19 for the same instruction to another group of believers and see also Acts 16:25 where Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns in prison.

⁸ The Gospels appear in the order in which they were written. John had no reason to create a fourth synoptic version, but rather addressed new heresies that were already beginning to appear by the end of the 1st Century. Among them Gnosticism, mysticism and possibly a cult around John the Baptist. Within the very first chapter of his gospel account, John attacks Gnosticism, the cult of John the Baptist and the "sacrament" of baptism. This evidence along with the rumor that John would not die, which indicates he was already very old, are proof of a late 1st century date. However, if it can be shown that John had not yet seen the destruction of the temple in 70AD, then his gospel must have been written earlier.

⁹ Baptists and other Christian churches use the term 'ordinance' to indicate that the Lord's Supper and Baptism are commands Jesus gave us to symbolize the grace God gives. Roman Catholicism calls them 'sacraments' and expand the number to seven. The term sacrament implies that these are not merely symbolic of grace but actually are a means of imparting grace.

Judas, yet what follows is not salvation, but devil possession. It is not the bread or the wine that saves or imparts salvation. Rather it is faith in Jesus. I deal with John 6:51ff further below.

Here is what the other gospels say about the betrayer at the Passover meal:

Matthew 26:20-26 When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. 21 Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me." 22 And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?" 23 He answered and said, "He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. 24 "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." 25 Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?" He said to him, "You have said it." 26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

Mark 14:18-21 Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you who eats with Me will betray Me." 19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, "Is it I?" And another said, "Is it I?" 20 He answered and said to them, "It is one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish. 21 "The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

Luke 22:21-23 "But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table. 22 "And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" 23 Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.

Notice that none of the first three gospel accounts mention Jesus giving Judas bread.

Real Bread, Real Blood - Transubstantiation/Consubstantiation.

Does John's gospel teach transubstantiation? Or as the Lutherans teach, Consubstantiation?¹⁰

John 6:26-71 Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 27 "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." 28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent." 30 Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe

¹⁰ Transubstantiation is the Vatican teaching that the bread actually turns into Jesus' body and the wine actually turns into Jesus' blood, even though humans can't see the change. Consubstantiation is similar, but rather than a physical transformation of the elements, Jesus' body is said to be in and around the bread. Generally Lutherans do not use this term, but it does describe accurately their belief.

You? What work will You do? 31 "Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' " 32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 "For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always." 35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. 36 "But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. 37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 "This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." 41 The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 42 And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?" 43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. 44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. 46 "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. 47 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. 48 "I am the bread of life. 49 "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." 52 The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" 53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54 "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 **"For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. 56 "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.** 57 "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 "This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever." 59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. 60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" 61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 "What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? 63 **"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.** The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. 64 "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. 65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." 66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 "Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve,

and one of you is a devil?" 71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

This passage is often used by Roman Catholics and Lutherans concerning a supposed mystical or supernatural element to the bread and wine.

However, "food indeed" or "real food" (NIV) is not bread made from flour. Rather 'real food' is spiritual food and is nourishing to the soul. Just like Jesus promised living water. Living water is not H₂O, however it is real and has a real effect.

The context of this passage is preceded by Jesus having miraculously fed 5000 men and then another 4000 men, besides women and children. The multitude was following Jesus because he gave them free food made of molecules and atoms. He is now turning their attention to spiritual matters by showing that 'real' food and 'real drink' is not physical. Physical things are quickly passing away, but what really satisfies and what really provides nourishment and what really gives life is Jesus.

In other words, Jesus is not saying that His molecular flesh is actually the same as molecular bread, but rather His flesh and His blood is the real deal. By His death and shed blood, we are really given life. Whereas physical food only nourishes these dying bodies in a very temporal manner.

The Jews argued amongst themselves about eating Jesus' flesh and drinking His blood. The unbelieving Jews of that day and the unbelieving church members of our day cannot overcome the false idea that "real" means physical, molecular. "Real" to the unbeliever consists only in that which can be seen and touched. "Real food" to the unbeliever is the stuff that goes into his belly. But Jesus had just told them not to labor for food that perishes (v. 27). Jesus is teaching that His body and blood are what actually give life. Physical food nourishes our dying bodies for a short time by ingesting it. However Jesus' flesh is a different kind of food. It is not the type that enters the belly and is digested and pooped out. Rather it is spiritual food that gives real life, eternal life. It doesn't serve to nourish our dying human bodies but rather it nourishes our souls and gives us eternal life. The type of food is different, the method of consuming it is different and the effect is different.

Any celebration of the "Lord's Supper" should cause us to remember, as we eat bread and drink wine, that those perishing food stuffs are at best symbolic. If Transubstantiation were true, then what happens when we flush the toilet after church? This is the very argument Jesus used about food not making a man unclean. Food just gets pooped out. But out of the heart comes a man's actions and words. (Mark 7:14-23)

Elsewhere, Jesus told the disciples that He had bread they didn't know about. The carnally minded disciples thought he was talking about physical loaves of bread. But Jesus said:

..."My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. (John 4:34)

And:

..."It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'" (Luke 4:4)

Two Cups of Wine - The "Last Supper" according to Luke:

Luke 22:14-20 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 "for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 "for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.

Notice that here in Luke's gospel, there are actually two different cups of wine! During the Passover meal there are traditionally 4 cups of wine, which are to be drunk.

The first cup is called the "Cup of Sanctification". The second cup is called the "Cup of Deliverance" or "Cup of Salvation". The third cup is called the "Cup of Redemption" and the fourth cup is called the "Cup of Expectation" or the "Cup of Hope". There is a fifth cup for Elijah the prophet but it is not drunk.¹¹

Chabad (an orthodox Jewish organization) states the cups mean¹²:

1. SANCTIFICATION: Salvation from harsh labor—this began as soon as the plagues were introduced.
2. DELIVERANCE: Salvation from servitude; or the day the Jews left Egypt geographically and arrived at Ramses.
3. REDEMPTION: The splitting of the sea, after which the Jews felt completely redeemed, without fear of the Egyptians recapturing them.
4. HOPE: Becoming a nation at Sinai.

The tradition of the four cups is taken from the four "I will" statements God made to the Israeli people in Exodus:

¹¹ Likewise the door is opened for Elijah. The idea is to invite Elijah to come, for he must precede the Messiah's coming - Just as Jesus said.

¹² "What is the significance of the four cups of wine?"
https://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/658520/jewish/What-is-the-significance-of-the-four-cups.htm

Exodus 6:6-7 "Therefore say to the children of Israel: 'I am the LORD; **I will** bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, **I will** rescue you from their bondage, and **I will** redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 **I will** take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

The symbolism of the fourth cup is not yet completely fulfilled according to Jewish tradition, for they have not completely become a nation, for they are not yet a theocratic nation, the Messiah is not yet ruling them as a nation, nor are they all living in the land of Israel. (For more about the 4 cups see "The Four Cups" by Tim Hegg¹³)

Returning to the Luke account, at verse 16 the Lord Jesus says He will not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. He is referring to the Passover meal, and therefore it is still not fulfilled. But we read in Luke that Jesus does break bread with his disciples right after his resurrection:

Luke 24:30-31 "Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight."

However this was not a Passover meal, but just a regular meal where Jesus broke bread with his disciples. This is the breaking of bread that was traditional and of which Paul speaks of in 1st Corinthians 10:16. This bread was not necessarily unleavened.

Thus Jesus was speaking of the annual Passover feast when He spoke saying "do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19)¹⁴

The Emmaus Road Experience

Luke 24:30-35 - Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. 32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" 33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" 35 And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

¹³ <https://www.torahresource.com/pdf-articles/the-four-cups.pdf>

¹⁴ Also at 1st Corinthians 11:24-25. Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians before Luke wrote his version of the Gospel. Luke was a companion of Paul and probably learned that Jesus said this phrase from Paul. The other gospel accounts do not contain this phrase. The Corinthian Church was very "jewish" and Paul wrote to them only about Jesus being the Passover Lamb. Paul specifically expects the Jews and Jewish believers to continue celebrating Passover, as he himself continued to do.

What was it about the breaking of the bread that caused the disciples to recognize Jesus? How does this relate to 1st Corinthians 11:29?

Paul's account of a traditional meal together:

1 Corinthians 10:1-33 - Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. 6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. 7 And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 8 Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. **16 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?** 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. 18 Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? 19 What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons. 22 Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? 23 All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being. 25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; 26 for "the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness." 27 If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. 28 But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it¹⁵ for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for "the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness." 29 "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience? 30 But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks? 31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

¹⁵ Exodus 34:15-16 forbids eating sacrifices to false gods as well as intermarrying with pagans.

In Verse 16 Paul speaks of the "cup of blessing which we bless" and the "bread which we break". Paul is referring to the traditional way of giving thanks before a meal. Today before a meal, the Jews still say: "Blessed are you LORD our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine" and the one offering praise holds up his own cup. This cup is either passed around to share or everyone has their own cup. Then the one giving the blessing also says "Blessed are you LORD our God, king of the universe, who brings forth bread from the Earth". The bread is held during the blessing and then the one offering praise breaks himself off a piece and passes the loaf around for everyone else to tear off a piece. This begins the meal. The Jews do this especially on Sabbath meals, but also at other meals.

We see the Lord Jesus breaking bread in this manner in several places:

Feeding of the 5000: Matthew 15:36 (Mark 6:41, John 6:5-14): "And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude."¹⁶

Feeding of the 4000: Mark 8:6-7: "So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and they set them before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small fish; and having blessed them, He said to set them also before them."

The Last Supper: Matthew 26:26 (Mark 14:22) - "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.'"

Emmaus Road: Luke 24:30-35 - Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

We also see the disciples breaking bread in this manner after Jesus rose from the dead:

Acts 2:42, 46 - "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ... 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,"

¹⁶ The parallel passage is Mark 6:41 - "And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among them all." Notice that difference in the number of loaves. The Gospel of John agrees with Mark: "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" (John 6:9)

Paul's long Sermon: Acts 20:7, 11 "Now on the first day of the week¹⁷, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. ... 11 Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed."

Paul's shipwreck: Acts 27:34-36 "Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you." And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat. Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves.

It is very important to realize that the Biblical definition of 'Breaking Bread' is to share a meal. In the Biblical sense, one could 'break bread' even if he didn't have bread for the meal. If someone in the Bible said 'let us break bread', what they are simply saying is 'let us have dinner together'. There is nothing in the phrase that implies an ordinance or sacrament.¹⁸

Paul instructs the Corinthians about breaking bread:

1 Corinthians 11:17-34 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19 For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. 20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the **Lord's Supper**. 21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you. 23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 25 In the same manner He also took the **cup after supper**, saying, "This

¹⁷ The first day of the week is likely Saturday night. In the Bible, the day starts at evening, not in the morning. Saturday night was a traditional time then and now for Jews to gather. In the Greco-Roman world of the time, there was no such thing as a weekend for workers. The seven day work week was normal. When Constantine become Emperor in the early 4th century and 'converted' to Christianity, he declared a rest on the day of the Sun for certain workers. Here it is plain from the text that the disciples were meeting in the evening. It is possible that it was Sunday evening, but more likely it was Saturday. At any rate, this was not Sunday morning, for many of the believers were compelled by their masters to work during the day, thus the disciples met in the evening after the work day was over.

¹⁸ Keep in mind this slang came into being before one of the world's greatest inventions - sliced bread! Had it come later, the disciples might have been saying 'let us slice a loaf!'. Seriously though, bread was broken in part because of the way it was cooked. A bit like modern Naan or Pita. Leavened loafs would also be treated with ripping instead of cutting. Torn bread is better for dipping than sliced bread and much easier to distribute when no cutting board is available.

cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. 33 Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

Notice here at verse 25 Paul specifically mentions the cup being after supper. This directly refers to what we learned about the four cups of the Passover meal. At the end of the meal the fourth and final cup - the Cup of Hope - would be blessed and drunk. The bread and wine that Paul spoke of here were not consumed at the same time. Nor were they a mini-meal, but rather were two different parts of a larger meal. Here in 1st Corinthians 11, Paul is specifically addressing the believers' communal meal which was intended both for fellowship and for nourishment. All believers are to be equal. The poor and the rich alike would get to eat the exact same food and drink the exact same wine. Paul was critical of those who would eat all the food and drink all the wine without sharing with the poorer members of the congregation. When Paul says "let a man examine himself", he was not referring to a general examination for sin, but specifically that of being inhospitable and neglecting the poor.¹⁹

The Messiah has come! and the Betrayal of Jesus

Notice Paul's precise language at verse 26 above. His wording hits hard at the Jews for rejecting Jesus. The fourth cup was the hope of Messiah's coming. Paul shows that the cup does indeed represent the hope of Messiah's coming, but that it also shows that Messiah has already come and was killed! In verse 23 Paul points out that Jesus gave thanks for the bread on the night He was betrayed. Pointing out the betrayal is seemingly inconsequential to Paul's teaching here, however, in light of what we have learned about the "Cup of Hope" we realize that Paul is drilling home the point that Jesus is the Messiah who came and was meant to fulfill the "Cup of Hope" but He was betrayed by the Jews. Jesus was not merely betrayed by Judas, but by the Jewish leaders and

¹⁹ The phrase "For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep" may not be a statement of God's judgment but rather a statement of the condition of the poor due to neglect. The poor were relying on this communal meal for nourishment but were deprived by others eating all the food and drinking all the drink. This lack of nourishment led to weakness, sickness and even death. Paul's concern and the Apostles concern for the care of the believing poor is clearly shown here in v. 22 and Rom. 15:26, Gal. 2:10, Jas. 2:2ff. The Lord Jesus spoke of care for the poor (Matt. 19:21, Luke 14:13) and the Hebrew Bible is full of commands to care for the poor and weaker members of society, including both working welfare (Lev. 19:9-10) and free welfare (Deut. 14:28-29).

the Jewish Nation. The betrayal by Judas was just the start. Keep in mind that Jesus, as the Messiah, is the King of Israel. Yet the leaders and people of Israel betrayed their king, handing Him over to the Romans to have Him killed. This is the meaning of the "night He was betrayed" that Paul speaks of here. Paul is pointing out that we as believers reject this betrayal of the Messiah every time we drink the Cup of Hope, for we do so declaring that the Messiah has already come, that He was betrayed by His own people and killed, but that He will come again. We believe He is the rightful ruler of Israel.

Jesus recognized that He would be rejected and betrayed by his own nation, therefore He said he would not drink the Cup of Hope again or celebrate any of the Passover until it was fulfilled in the Kingdom (Luke 22:16-18). In other words, Jesus chose not to drink the Cup of Hope or celebrate Passover again until the nation of Israel accepts Him as their king, ushering in the Messianic Kingdom.

Are we to continue to celebrate Passover?

When King Jesus gave instructions about the Bread and the wine, He was specifically referring to the Passover meal.

Later Paul the Apostle writes in a way that assumes the Corinthians would be celebrating Passover:

1 Corinthians 5:7-8 "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

Paul says "let us keep the feast". In one sense he is referring to our entire lives being a feast, but he also assumes that the Passover would continue to be celebrated by believers.

Summary

There are two different traditions of Bread and Wine or the 'Lord's Supper' in the Bible. The first is the Passover tradition which is a full meal with unleavened bread. The other tradition is the daily breaking of bread which can be with either unleavened or leavened bread and is also part of a full meal. This later one is especially when the church gathers for a meal.

Both traditions should be celebrated. Passover is a once a year special feast.

The daily breaking of bread represents our daily meals, especially those on Erev-Shabbat²⁰.

For our daily meals, we should be actively seeking to show hospitality to strangers and to join with other believers for fellowship.

The important parts of both traditions include:

1. Giving thanks for physical nourishment.
2. Giving thanks for spiritual life.
3. Hospitality
4. A full meal, not just the 'elements'.
5. Fellowship with other believers and the Lord.
6. Building up unity with other believers.
7. Declaring that all believers constitute one body - that of Messiah.
8. Declaring that Jesus is rightful King of Israel but was killed by his own people instead.
9. Declaring that Jesus is alive and someday will be acknowledged by Israel as their King.
10. Forgiving each other (washing of the feet).
11. Singing
12. Giving of thanks for the freedom we have through the Passover Lamb's sacrifice.

Conclusion

In light of the scriptures, we should cease to pass out the 'elements'. Nor should we view them as a sacrament or ordinance or mystical. Believers should cease from this tradition that is rooted in Roman Catholicism. Instead believers should return to the annual celebration of Passover and to the weekly and daily meeting

²⁰ The term 'Erev-Shabbat' means the 'evening of the sabbath' i.e. Friday nite. According to the Bible, the Sabbath starts on Friday night and ends on Saturday night (the day starts at nightfall). Israelis traditionally get together with family and friends for this special sabbath meal. They also invite over strangers for hospitality. I enjoyed this hospitality several times during my travels in Israel. Once from an old Jew I met on my first flight to Israel. He invited me, a complete stranger and non-jew to his home to share the Sabbath meal. That is what hospitality is all about - care for the stranger.

Many Christian Churches celebrate Sunday as the Sabbath day. However this comes not from the Bible but from Emperor Constantine: On March 7, 321 Roman Emperor Constantine issued a civil decree making Sunday a day of rest from labor, stating:

'All judges and city people and the craftsmen shall rest upon the venerable day of the sun. Country people, however, may freely attend to the cultivation of the fields, because it frequently happens that no other days are better adapted for planting the grain in the furrows or the vines in trenches. So that the advantage given by heavenly providence may not for the occasion of a short time perish.' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabbath_in_Christianity#Roman_Catholicism

Before this there was no Sabbath day in the Roman Empire, therefore some believers met on Sunday because that was the day of Jesus' Resurrection and of the giving of the Holy Spirit and others met on Saturday. It was however, not a day of rest, so all meetings were likely after a long day of work. We do know that God fearing Gentiles and Jews were meeting on the Sabbath (seventh day of the week) with Paul in the book of Acts.

for meals with other believers. Believers who have this world's wealth should show care for the poor, treating them as equals and we should invite complete strangers into our homes for meals.

Believers should remember that we are all part of one body, every time we get together for a meal.

The next time believers gather, instead of taking the 'elements', invite another believer out for dinner or over to your home for food. Show them hospitality. Experience fellowship according to the Spirit. Give thanks to God for physical nourishment, and speak of the death and resurrection of Jesus and of our own future resurrection. And if you have done anyone wrong, ask for forgiveness. If you have been wronged, forgive. Wash each others feet. Show hospitality to strangers. Take them into your home, feed them, give them rest, refreshment and protection.

This is what the Scriptures teach us to do, starting all the way back in Genesis.

And remember, as you put food in your belly, it is only nourishing a body corrupted by sin that will soon die and rot. True life comes from abiding in Jesus. As we abide in Jesus, we are literally eating of His flesh and blood. He is nourishing our souls by his Spirit.

Finally, do not judge those who take so called 'communion'. For if a little bit of cracker and a shot of juice makes one remember the high cost of redemption, then good for them. Though it is a bit like standing too close to a great work of art - it is impossible to appreciate the full picture, but one may still appreciate a few brush strokes of the master.

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