

Truth and Reason

Speaking the Words of Truth and Reason ♦ Acts 26:25

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The Lord's Supper

THE PHYSICAL LIFE OF JESUS WAS nearing its end. In just a few short hours, He would be betrayed, unjustly tried, and then condemned. Finally, He would be delivered up to die—executed without cause on a Roman cross by an unruly mob who thirsted for His death. It was in the shadow of these events that He assembled His disciples in a humble upper room so that He could partake of the Passover feast with them. While celebrating that feast, He instituted the greatest memorial the world has known or ever will know. He solemnly commanded them to observe it in His kingdom. That memorial is the Lord's Supper.

A more fitting memorial could not be found. All other memorials pale in comparison to it because it is the only one established by the Lord Himself so that His disciples can remember His sacrificial death. Had it been left to man, no doubt he would have devised some ostentatious ceremony, built a grand edifice or sculpted a fine work of art. But the Savior simply took the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine from the Passover meal and linked them forever with Him and His wondrous sacrifice by saying, "This do...in remembrance of me." (1 Cor. 11:23,25)

The Passover, the feast which commemorated God's deliverance of the Israelites from the death angel while in Egypt, in one sense, was already linked to Jesus. It served as a shadow of Him whom the apostle Paul calls our "Passover." (1 Cor. 5:7) and the freedom from sin and death He gives to sinners who obey His will. (Heb. 5:8-9)

The Purposes of the Supper

The Supper is mainly intended to cause the disciples of Jesus to **remember Him and His sacrificial death.** (1 Cor. 11:23, 25). But just as with so many things given by God, though its primary purpose is to memorialize Jesus, several other purposes are served by its observance.

In partaking of the Lord's Supper, participants **proclaim His death until He returns.** (1 Cor. 11:26). It is an expression of their faith not only in Him but also in His word in which He promises to return and gather His followers to Him (1 Cor. 15:24).

By observing the Supper, Christians **share in the body and blood of Christ,** communing with Him and sharing with all other Christians in being part of His body, the church (Eph. 1:22-23). In 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 the apostle Paul

wrote, "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 all partake of that one bread."

Participation in the memorial observance of the Supper shows **recognition of the "new covenant"** God made with man through the blood of Christ (Matt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 11:25). The old covenant was fulfilled by Jesus (Matt. 5:17) and taken out of the way so that His new one could be established (Heb. 8:13). In order for it to have validity and the power to remit sins (Heb. 9:15-22), it had to be established, dedicated, and sanctified by the blood of Christ. It is, therefore, superior to all covenants God had made with man which preceded it for they were dedicated by the blood of animals (Heb. 9:19-20) not by the precious blood of the Son of God (Heb. 9:12).

Time and Frequency of Its Observance

In response to the Lord's command to partake of the Supper in His kingdom, the early Christians, under the guidance of the apostles who were being led into all truth by the

Holy Spirit (John 16:13), assembled on the first day of the week to observe the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). Such passages as Acts 20:7 and 1 Corinthians 11:17-26, along with 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, show that they assembled to partake of it on a regular basis.

Since the account in Acts 20 which details the practice of the church in Troas is the only reference in Scripture to both time and frequency of observance of the Supper, we must conclude that it was observed then, and is to be observed now, on every first day of the week. Though some churches take it only monthly, quarterly, or annually, those who desire to observe the Supper in an authorized manner must take it every first day of the week.

J.W. McGarvey, commenting on the frequency of observance, wrote in his *Original Commentary on Acts*, "It is very generally admitted, even among parties who do not observe the practice themselves, that the apostolic Churches broke the loaf weekly; but it is still made a question whether, in the absence of an express commandment, this example is binding upon us. This question is likely to be determined differently by two different classes of men. Those who are disposed to follow chiefly the guide of their own judgment, or of their denominational customs, will feel little influenced by such a precedent. But to those who are determined that the very slightest indication of the divine will shall govern them, the question must present itself this way: 'We are commanded to do this in memory of Jesus. We are not told, in definite terms, how often it shall be done; but we find that the apostles established the custom of meeting every Lord's day for this purpose. This is an inspired

precedent, and with it we must comply. We can come to no other conclusion without assuming an ability to judge of this matter with more wisdom than did the apostle.'" (p. 247)

The Manner of Observance

As with all other aspects of worship, the Lord's Supper must be observed "in spirit and truth." (John 4:24)

To partake "in truth" involves having:

- The proper elements— unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. (Matt. 26:26-28)
- The proper place—the assembly of the church. (1 Cor. 11:18)
- The proper time of observance—the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7)

To partake "in spirit," each Christian must:

- "Prove himself." (1 Cor. 11:28) He is to examine his life and his motives for partaking.
- Be cognizant of his fellow Christians. (1. Cor. 11:33; 10:16-17) He must regard the "like precious faith" of each one. (2 Pet. 1:1)
- Rightly "discern" the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:29-31). He must acknowledge the purpose of the Supper, the Lord who died, and the church He purchased with His blood. (Acts 20:28)

The church at Corinth had abused the Supper in many ways. In making it a drunken feast and a common meal while manifesting no regard for one another, they had totally lost sight of the Supper's purpose and the manner in which it was to be observed. Because of their abuses, when the apostle Paul wrote his first letter to them, they stood condemned. (1 Cor. 11:31) Their

worship could not be acceptable before God while such abuses continued. (1 Cor. 11:20) Since God is impartial and no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34-35), our worship will likewise be rejected if we abuse or alter the Supper, its purposes, and/or manner of observance in any way.

Conclusion

Participation in the Lord's Supper allows the Christian to express his love for and worship to God. Derrel Shaw once wrote,

"Surely then, to use some well-known and well-used words, we need to let our minds go back to the scenes of Calvary. And as we contemplate the events upon which the sun refused to shine, we do have thoughts of sadness as we discern His body (See 1 Cor. 11:29) and as we try to imagine the burden He bore and the suffering He experienced for us.

"But let us consider ALL factors involved and rejoice that He NOW LIVES and is alive forevermore (Rev. 1:18). He reigns as King Supreme; He inter-cedes for us; He is our advocate and our friend; He knows our works, and HE IS COMING! How rich is His mercy and how wonderful are His promises. As we commune with Him in the Supper we long to be freed from the shackles of life on this terrestrial sphere, to be with Him and to serve Him without the hindrances we now know...In awe we consider the sinless life which qualified Him to be the perfect sacrifice; in reverence and love we accept the benefits He can now bestow; and in joy we eat and drink with Him in the kingdom of God."

What a blessing it is to be able to feast at the Supper of the Lord. 🍷

- Gene Taylor



Book of the Month

A Study of the Books of the Bible from Truth and Reason

Joshua

I. General Data

- A. Name: Joshua.
 1. The book gets its title from the principle character in the book who led Israel into the Promised Land to conquer it.
 2. Joshua is also the probable author of the book.
 - B. Author: Joshua (5:1,6; 24:26; 6:26; cf. 1 Kings 16:34) along with a later compiler (some have speculated Phineas, cf. 24:33 and 6:25). Much of the book was undoubtedly written at a later time (cf. 4:9; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28-29; 9:27; 10:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63).
 - C. Joshua the man.
 1. He served as a minister to Moses. As such, he once led the armies of Israel into battle against the Amalekites. (Ex. 17:8-14)
 2. He was chosen as one of the twelve spies sent from Kadesh-Barnea to investigate the land of Canaan.
 - a. He and Caleb were the only two to give a favorable report and to urge going in and conquering it. (Num. 13:26 - 14:10)
 - b. Because of the attitude of the people, Israel was forced to wander in the wilderness for 40 years until that faithless generation died off.
 - c. Of all the people who left Egypt, only he and Caleb were permitted to enter Canaan.
 3. His original name is *Hoshea*, "Salvation" (Num. 13:8) but Moses evidently changed it to *Yehoshua*, "Yahweh is Salvation" (Num. 13:16).
 - a. He is also called *Yeshua*, a shortened form of *Yehoshua*. This is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek name *Iesous* (Jesus).
 - b. "The name 'Hoshea' means deliverance; the new name 'Joshua' means Yahweh is deliverance; a living reminder of the sworn covenant between Yahweh and the nation of which Joshua was official representative." (Elmer W.K. Mould, *Essentials of Bible History*)
 4. He was chosen to succeed Moses as leader of the children of Israel. (Num. 27:18-23)
 - a. He had spent several years as Moses' assistant and when Moses died the mantle of leadership fell upon him. (Deut. 3:28)
 - b. Though no leader was greater than Moses (Deut. 34:10), Joshua was an exemplary leader in many ways.
 5. He was commanded to lead Israel into Canaan, to conquer its cities and drive out the Canaanites, and to divide the land as an inheritance among the tribes. (Num. 34:16-29)
 6. He died at age 110. (Josh. 24:29)
 - a. He was buried within the border of his inheritance at Timnath Serah.
 - b. His legacy: "Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua." (Josh. 24:31)
 - D. Time span: From the Israelites' entrance into Canaan to Joshua's death. Approximately 25-30 years.
 - E. Theme: "The Victory of Faith."
 1. The book stands in sharp contrast to the book of Numbers where in the episode of the ten spies who gave an unfavorable report and the people who listened to them is seen the failure of unbelief.
 2. "The book of Joshua demonstrates God's faithfulness to His promise by leading Israel into the land of Canaan (Josh. 1:2-6)." (*Unger's Bible Dictionary*)
 3. "This book teaches that He is fully able to perform all of His good promises to His people that He is ever guiding them and overruling in the dangers that beset them." (*Zondervan Pictorial Bible Encyclopedia*, Vol. III, p. 705)
 4. A good statement of the theme of the book of Joshua might be 1 John 5:4.
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F. Summaries of the book.

1. The book of Joshua “forges a link between the Pentateuch and the remainder of Israel’s history. Through three major military campaigns involving more than thirty enemy armies, the people of Israel learn a crucial lesson under Joshua’s capable leadership: victory comes through faith in God and obedience to His word, rather than through military might or numerical superiority.” (Notes in *The New King James Version of the Bible*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1988, p. 190)
 - a. The books of the Pentateuch lead Israel to Canaan, Joshua leads them into it, the next eleven books record their history once in it.
 - b. It links the land promise with its realization and serves as an introduction to the settling of Israel into Canaan.
2. “The book of Joshua consequently is an essential sequel to the Pentateuch as declaring the thorough fulfillment of God by the covenant made by Him through Moses with Israel, and thus as illustrating His inviolable faithfulness...He (Joshua) proposes to narrate the conquest of Canaan, and to present that conquest as a proof of God’s fidelity to His Covenant.” (*Barnes Notes on the Old and New Testaments*, Exodus-Ruth, pp. 346, 349)
3. The book of Deuteronomy records Moses’ death and immediately introduces Joshua. (Deut. 34:5,9; Josh. 1:1) Joshua had been groomed to succeed Moses as leader of Israel and to guide them into the Promised Land. (1:1-9)

The book describes the fulfillment of the land promise made to Abraham. (Gen. 12:1-3, 7; 15:18; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4) It begins with preparations to enter Canaan. Two spies are sent into the land where they are hidden by Rahab. They discover the fear the Canaanites have of them (2:8-14). Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry land and began their conquest by taking Jericho and Ai. Then they moved southward and finally conquered the northern territory.

Approximately seven years were needed to conquer and subdue the land. (compare Num. 10:11 and 13:17 with Josh. 14:7,10) The Israelites divided the land among themselves and began to settle into their inheritance. God gave them **all** the land He had promised them. (21:43-45) They enjoyed peace.

II. An Outline of Joshua

- A. The Conquest of the Land. (1:1 - 12:24)
 1. The commission of Joshua. (1:1-9)
 2. Preparations to enter Canaan. (1:10 - 2:24)
 3. The crossing of the Jordan River on dry land. (3:1 - 4:24)
 4. Israelite men circumcised. (ch. 5)
 5. Capture of Jericho and Ai. (6:1 - 8:29)
 6. Covenant renewed on Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. (8:30-35)
 7. Deception of Gibeonites. (ch. 9)
 8. Conquest of southern Canaan. (ch. 10)
 9. Conquest of northern Canaan. (11:1-15)
 10. Summary of the conquest. (11:16 - 12:24)
- B. The Division of the Land. (13:1 - 22:34)
 1. Joshua instructed to divide the land. (13:1-7)
 2. Eastern tribes assigned their inheritance. (13:8-33)
 3. Western tribes assigned their inheritance. (14:1 - 19:51)
 4. Cities of refuge provided. (ch. 20)
 5. Levitical cities chosen. (ch. 21)
 6. Eastern tribes sent home. (ch.22) A conflict over the altar they built. (vv. 10-34)
- C. Joshua’s Farewell Address. (23:1 - 24:28)
- D. The Death of Joshua. (24:29-33)

III. The Lessons of Joshua

- A. The types of Joshua.
 1. Canaan is a type of heaven. (Heb. 4:8-11)
 2. Canaan is a type of the church.
 - a. Canaan was a place of conquest through conflict. Israel had to draw its sword and put the enemy to flight. If they did not obey God, if they were faithless, they could be removed from the land.
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- b. All of these have their parallel in spiritual Israel today.
 3. The blessings in Canaan typify the blessings the Christian has in Christ.
 - a. Canaan was Israel's promised rest (Deut. 6:10-11) where they could dwell in safety (Lev. 26:6). The Christian has rest and comfort in Christ. (2 Cor. 1:3-5)
 - b. Canaan was a place of bounty, the land of "milk and honey." (Ex. 3:8; Deut. 33:28; Lev. 26:5; Deut. 11:10-12) The blessings of the one in Christ are bountiful. (Eph. 1:3)
 - c. Canaan was a place of triumph. God called Israel not merely to a conflict but to an assured victory. (Deut. 7:1) Triumph and victory belong to the one in Christ. (1 John 5:4; 1 Cor. 15:57)
 - B. A comparison between the book of Joshua and the book of Ephesians: A five point parallel between the earthly inheritance given through Joshua and the spiritual inheritance given through Christ.
 1. Each was the predestined inheritance of a chosen people. (Gen. 13:14-15; Eph. 1:3-4)
 2. Each was delivered by a divinely appointed leader. (Josh. 1:6; Eph. 1:18-22)
 3. Each was a gift of grace to be received by an obedient faith. (Eph. 2:5-8)
 4. Each shows a great revelation of God. (Josh. 4:23-24; Eph. 3:8-10)
 5. Each is described as a scene of conflict.
 - a. In order to receive and remain in the land, there were enemies that had to be conquered who were militarily superior to Israel (Deut. 7:1) but with the help of God His people would enjoy victory.
 - b. So it is with spiritual Israel. (Eph. 6:12)
 - C. An acceptable faith is an obedient faith.
 1. There is no greater example that the promises of God are conditioned upon man's obedience than the fall of Jericho. (Josh. 6; Heb. 11:30)
 2. If the children of Israel were to capture Jericho, they had to believe and obey God's instructions.
 - D. God's people should be characterized by courage and confidence.
 1. Knowing that God is faithful, His people should possess courage and confidence.
 2. Such courage comes, not from one's own abilities, but rather from the trust one has in God. (1:2,6-9)
 3. Every child of God in every age should possess this courage and confidence. (Rom. 8:31; Phil. 4:13)
 - E. The God of heaven is greater than the gods of this world.
 1. The events of the conquest of Canaan reveal to the world the greatness and supremacy of Jehovah God.
 2. Note especially the confession of Rahab in 2:8-11.
 - F. "Sin in the camp" affects the whole camp. (ch. 7)
 1. The city of Jericho was devoted to the Lord because it was the "first fruits" of the conquest. (6:19) Achan, by taking the "devoted thing," affected the whole of Israel and brought them defeat. (7:1)
 2. This principle is applied to spiritual Israel, the church, by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:6.
 - a. A failure to deal decisively with sin in the local congregation, condoning or overlooking it, leads to all members being adversely affected.
 - b. As God did not condone sin in physical Israel, He surely will not abide it in spiritual Israel.
 - G. A refutation of the doctrine of premillennialism.
 1. Premillennialists believe that the land promise to Abraham was never fulfilled and that Israel will be restored to their land some day.
 2. Joshua 21:43-45 says "the LORD gave to Israel all the land of which He had sworn to give their fathers...Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass."
 - H. The responsibility to choose to serve God.
 1. In his farewell address Joshua challenged Israel to obey the Lord. (24:14-15)
 2. Their response is seen in 24:24, "And the people said to Joshua, 'The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!'"
 3. Can our response be any different from theirs and still please God?

Joshua Study Questions

1. Who was Moses' successor as leader of Israel? What was his great task? What encouragement was he given? Why should he be "of good courage" and not "afraid?" (ch. 1)
2. What order did Joshua give to the children of Israel? (ch. 1:10-11)
3. Why were the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh treated as a special group? What order was given to them? What was their response? (ch. 1)
4. What was the mission of the spies who were sent out by Joshua? What kept them from being discovered by the people of Jericho? (ch. 2)
5. What was the effect of the spies' mission? (ch. 2)
6. Describe the manner in which the Jordan River was crossed. What made this an especially great miracle? What similar occurrence had taken place 40 years before? What was the purpose of this miraculous crossing? (ch. 3)
7. In what two places were stones set up? What was their purpose? (ch. 4)
8. What was the effect of the miraculous crossing of the Jordan River on the heathen kings? (ch. 5)
9. What had to be done after the crossing of the Jordan? Why was it necessary? (ch. 5)
10. What feast was kept in Gilgal? What was its purpose? (ch. 5)
11. When did the manna cease? Why did it stop? (ch. 5)
12. Describe how Israel captured the city of Jericho. Was there any natural connection between the things commanded to be done and the fall of the walls? Explain. (ch. 6)
13. What warning was given in connection with the taking of Jericho? What is meant by "the devoted thing?" (ch. 6)
14. Who was spared when the city of Jericho fell? Why? (ch. 6)
15. What city was Israel to conquer after their victory at Jericho? Describe their first effort to take this city. (ch. 7)
16. What had caused Israel to lose its power at Ai? What did God demand be done about it? (ch. 7)
17. How was the guilty party at Ai exposed? What was his punishment? Who shared his punishment? Why? (ch. 7)
18. Who were the Gibeonites? How did they deceive Israel? Why did they deceive them? (ch. 9)
19. What difference did it make to the Israelites whether the Gibeonites lived in the land or were from a far country? (ch. 9; see also Ex. 23:31-32; 34:12; Num. 33:55; Deut. 7:1-5; 20:10-18)
20. What was done when Gibeonites' deception was discovered? What position was assigned to them? (ch. 9)
21. What was the occasion for the battle described in chapter 10? What was the result of this battle? What was unusual about the day of the battle? What did God do to help Israel?
22. Where was the tabernacle erected in the land of Canaan? (ch. 18)
23. What was a city of refuge? Name the six cities of refuge and give their location. (ch. 20)
24. How thoroughly had God fulfilled the land promise He had given to Abraham? (ch. 21)
25. How did the inheritance of the Levites differ from that of the other tribes? (ch. 21; cf. 14:3-4 and 18:7)

The Cure for the Troubled Heart

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.” (John 14:1-4)

A TROUBLED HEART CAN BE found in anyone, even the Christian. There are many reasons for one’s heart to be troubled – separation from or death of a loved one, the unfaithfulness of a friend, a feeling of insecurity, a lack of understanding, personal problems, sin, etc. What is the Christian to do when his heart becomes troubled? He must look to Jesus and the comfort He can give.

It has been said that only those who have known sorrow are able to give comfort. Isaiah 53:3 refers to Jesus as “a Man of sorrows.” Thus, acquainted with sorrow Himself, He can soothe the hearts of His disciples when they become sorrowful and troubled.

The fourteenth chapter of the gospel of John provides dramatic evidence of that fact. Jesus recognized how troubled His apostles would be by His death so in that passage He spoke words of comfort to them. In those same words we, His

disciples today, are able to find the cure for our troubled hearts.

The Comfort of Faith (v. 1)

Faith is the foundation of true comfort. Faith frees one from sin, makes him pleasing to God, allows him to overcome sin and the world, and causes him to always remember that God will never forsake him. (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6; 1 Sam. 12:22) If faith is great enough, one can accomplish or overcome all things. (Phil. 4:13; Matt. 21:18-22) What a comforting thought that is for all the faithful.

The Comfort of Hope (vv. 2-3)

Hope in Christ is the comfort and anchor of the soul. (Col. 1:27; 1 Tim. 1:1; Heb. 6:19-20) Apart from Christ, in the world, there is no hope. (Eph. 2:12) And in hell, all hope will be left behind. The hope of better things should comfort the Christian in adverse times. (1 Thes. 4:13-18)

The Comfort of Understanding (vv. 4-6)

Jesus has given a plain way to the Father and made complete provision for the Christian to understand it. He sent the Holy Spirit to guide men into all truth and to reveal the mystery of the Christ. He is our advocate with the Father. (1 John 2:1)

The Comfort of Prayer (vv. 13-14)

The Christian who is lonely or

whose heart is heavy should follow the example of Jesus, Peter, Paul, and Stephen and pray. (Luke 18:1; 1 Thes. 5:17; Jas. 5:16). It is an aid in time of trouble. In prayer, one can cast all his cares upon the Lord. (1 Pet. 5:6-7)

The Comfort of Love (vv. 20-25)

How comforting it should be to the Christian to know that he is the object of divine love. That love is great (1 John 3:1) and will never fail (Rom. 8:35-39).

The Comfort of the Holy Spirit (v. 26)

The comforting words of the Holy Spirit teach the Christian all that is necessary for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3) and thoroughly equip him for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

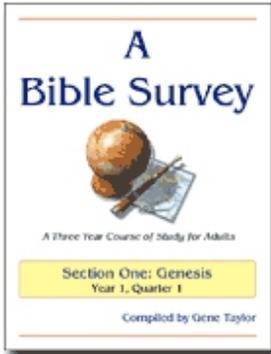
The Comfort of Peace (v. 27)

Those who are justified have peace with God. (Rom. 5:1) They are in a kingdom of joy and peace. (Rom. 14:17) They produce the fruit of the Spirit which includes love, joy, and peace. (Gal. 5:22) The peace they have passes all understanding. (Phil. 4:7)

Conclusion

The next time your heart is troubled, look to Jesus. He provides comfort in all the above ways to those who allow Him to guide their lives. 🙏

- Gene Taylor



A Bible Survey is a complete three year Bible curriculum for adults consisting of twelve study guides each containing 13 lessons. The lessons cover both Old and New Testaments.

These lessons were originally compiled to follow the *Amplified Bible Curriculum* developed by Crump and Valdes and published by Florida College. We have tried to parallel the *ABC* as closely as possible but each of the twelve study guides may be used independently.

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