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Sermon: Communion and the Passover—Their Eternal Significance

by Ron Banuk

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[4490 Words]

Scripture

The Biblical text for this sermon is Luke 22:7-20.

Introduction

Just before Jesus suffered and died on the cross for our sins to fulfill Scripture, He formulated a remembrance ceremony for this momentous occasion called the Communion Service.

Immediately, four questions should spring into the minds of believers: {}

1. Was there a precedent in Scripture for a Communion Service or did Jesus create this on the spot out of thin air? If so, then what are the precedents for bread and wine?
2. Why was the Communion Service created at the Passover meal. Why not on the Feast of Hanukkah when He was conceived, or on the Feast of Tabernacles when He was born and would return later triumphantly as King, or when he proposed the Parabolic Decalogue with ten parables for the church immediately after He was rejected for the first time by the Scribes and Pharisees?
3. Jesus mentions the New Covenant which is introduced in the OT. Is this covenant for Israel, or for the church, or both?
4. Is the Passover Feast dead? Why does Luke mention a second cup of wine while Matthew, Mark, and Paul mention only one?

These four questions you should know the answers to, and you should be able to teach them to your children and your grandchildren. So, listen carefully.

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I Precedent for the Communion Service with Bread and Wine

A walk through the OT will reveal precedents for bread alone, bread and wine, and blood alone:

1. Bread Alone Memorials
 - a. **Manna.** While wandering for 40 years in the wilderness, the Israelites were, given Manna or bread from Heaven (Ex 16:4, Neh 9:15) or the Bread of Angels (Ps 78:25) for physical sustenance. As is often the case in the OT, physical salvation by the Almighty is related to His desire for spiritual salvation. Manna,

in this case, was similar to unleavened bread. John, the greatest theologian of the NT, seizes the opportunity here to remind us of Jesus saying that while Manna sustained physical life, He, the Messiah, was the true bread of life that gives eternal life (John 6:32-35). In this very verse, Jesus links physical and spiritual salvation by the symbology of bread and the typology of an OT type.

- b. **Bread of the Presence** (Ex 25:30). In the Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting and also in the Temple, twelve loaves of unleavened bread were presented weekly on a table. This “continuous presence” was only for the priests but now is for all. The Bread of the Presence was called by Paul the “Table of the Lord” (1 Cor 10:21) and is one of the seven terms for Communion. They are:

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- i. **The Lord’s Supper** (*kuriakon deipnon* in 1 Cor 11:20) following the Agape meal.
- ii. **Table of the Lord** (*trapezes kuriou* in 1 Cor 10:21) referencing the Bread of Presence found in the Tent.
- iii. **Breaking Bread** (*klasei tou artou* in Acts 2:42, 20:7) what members did.
- iv. **Eucharist** (*eucharistia* in Mt 26:27, §217, and *todah*) meaning to give thanks.
- v. **Eulogia** (*eulogias* in 1 Cor 10:16) meaning “blessing”.
- vi. **Communion** (*koinonia* in 1 Cor 10:16) references both the body and blood.
- vii. **Passover** (Pessah or *pascha* in Mt 26:18) which is used only by Hebrew Christians.

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2. Bread and Wine Memorials

- a. **Melchizedek meeting Abram.** When the mysterious Melchizedek, without father, without mother, without genealogy, without a record of birth, without a record of death, but like the Son of God is a perpetual host (Heb 7:3), met Abram (Ge 14:18-20), the priest Melchizedek brought out bread and wine. The earthly offering of bread and wine by Melchizedek points forward to the eternal offering by Jesus Christ. This was a foreshadowing of the Eucharist or thanksgiving or Communion. Also, in Psalm 110:4, Messiah is declared “a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek—not according to the order of Aaron” as were the Levites.
- b. **Todah (Thanksgiving) Sacrifice.** In the OT, when a person was saved from a life-threatening situation, he offered a sacrifice of bread, meat, and wine followed by songs of praise. The Apostles knew this. When Jesus mentioned the word “thanks” (*eucharisteo*) twice in the Communion service (Lk 22:17, 19), it was in reference to the practice of Todah (thanksgiving) as shown in Ps 50, 95, 100, 116 which were included in a Second-Temple hymnbook while Jesus taught. And Jesus used this word first in relation to the Passover (Lk 22:17) and second in relation to Communion (Lk 22:19).

3. Blood Alone Memorial

- a. **Moses ratifying the Covenant of the Law of Moses.** This pericope is very important, because Moses, a prophet, predicted the coming of “a prophet like me”

(Dt 8:15, Acts 3:22, 7:37). But Moses used animal blood to ratify the Law of Moses, whereas Messiah used His own deific blood to ratify the covenant of the Law of Christ. In Exodus 24:1-10, Moses distributed the animal blood of sacrifice by sprinkling it on the people. Then Moses, his inner circle (Aaron, Nadab, Abihu) and the elders “saw the God of Israel” (Ex 24:10a). And in a similar manner, Jesus, His inner circle (Peter, James the Greater, and John), and the remaining Apostles also saw the God of Israel at the Communion ceremony where He was about to shed His blood for the ratification of the New Covenant.

In summary, we have just seen in Slide 3 that there was precedent for the Communion Service in the OT by:

1. Bread Alone
 - 1) Manna: Temporary sustenance for Jews alone
 - Communion: Eternal sustenance for all believers
 - 2) Bread of Presence: For Priests alone (Ex 25:30)
 - Communion: For all believers as the Table of the Lord (1 Cor 10:21)
2. Bread and Wine
 - 1) Melchizedek’s sacrifice
 - 1) Melchizedek, the priest of God most high (El Elyon), offered a meal in thanksgiving for Abram defeating Chedalora-omer, thereby verifying Abram as the face of the Abrahamic Covenant.
 - Jesus, the eternal Great High Priest, offered a meal of thanksgiving for defeating Satan, thereby verifying the eleven Apostles as the face of the New Covenant.
 - 2) *Todah*—thanksgiving sacrifice for a lifesaving event
 - 1) Scripture: Lev 7 & 22. Ps 50, 95, 100, 116 & Rabbinic Tradition (Talmud)
 - Thanks (*Todah*) via Communion (*eucharistia*). Praise offerings with lips (Heb 13:15).
3. Blood Alone
 - 1) Moses, Law of Moses, animal blood, inner circle, elders, saw God and ... (Ex 24)
 - Jesus, Law of Christ, Messiah’s blood, inner circle, Apostles, saw Jesus as God and they ate and drank.

II Why the Passover Meal?

In Leviticus 17, Moses spelled out the seven holy seasons or feasts of Israel. These seven feasts are actually a chronological outline of God’s redemptive plan for mankind from the Crucifixion to the establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. This is God’s **protocol** for salvation meaning that only this in this way can save mankind. These feasts and their Christian parallels are:

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|---------------------|--|
| 1. Passover | Crucifixion (Friday) |
| 2. Unleavened Bread | Jesus being spotless and unblemished (Saturday) |
| 3. First Fruits | Jesus’s Resurrection (Sunday) |
| 4. Weeks | Sending the Holy Spirit to birth the church (Sunday) |
| ----- | |
| 5. Trumpets | <i>Harpazo</i> or Rapture of the church by the HS |
| 6. Day of Atonement | Jews confess their national sin |
| 7. Tabernacles | Jesus inaugurates the Millennium by being enthroned and completes the wedding ceremony. {Enthronement} |

In the world today, Christianity is divided as to the greatest feast in the church. In the east it is said to be the Resurrection while in the West it is said to be the Crucifixion {St Paul's}. In Israel at the time of Christ, there was no such dilemma—far and away it was Pesach. It is mentioned 50 times in the OT and 27 times in the NT. Jesus as a boy 12-years old, attended a Passover with his parents. The High Priest at the time was Jesus (Joshua) son of Sie. The following year at Jesus's Bar mitzvah, Annas was the High Priest. Jesus's campaign was framed by four Passovers. Jesus's greatest miracle (Feeding 5000) was done on the eve of the Hidden Passover. The Seder meal is actually a talk-fest which memorializes the telling (*Haggadah*) of the Exodus story where among four cups of wine, four questions come from the youngest son with four expressions of redemption, and four basic foods for the seder (shank bone, matzah, bitter herbs, and charoset) and then there are the four Passovers that framed Jesus's ministry as Messiah and the four psalms used in the Todah sacrifice.

Pesach or Passover commemorated the day when the sprinkled blood of a lamb falling on the two doorposts and lintel of a home commanded the angel of death to pass over this house and not kill the firstborn son. Today, 3500 years later, Jews according to Leo Trepp (1913-2010), the Gamaliel (10 BC-AD 52) of the 20th century, relate the Passover to the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage (*Judaism*, p 307). Rabbi Leo Trepp continues saying that since sacrifices are no longer offered in Judaism, only the Seder meal outlined in the Mishnah has remained (p 308). Also, is it not interesting to note that since sacrifices are no longer offered and eating lamb is representative of a burnt offering sacrifice as was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Jews today generally eat chicken or anything but lamb.

As for being “freed from bondage”, are you a “slave” of Christ? Immediately after inaugurating the Communion Service, Jesus in the Upper Room made this statement: **15** *"No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you **friends**, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16 "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. 17 "This I command you, that you love one another (John 15:15-17 NASU).*

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In summary, the Passover is the only feast on which the memorial of the Communion Service could have been commemorated because:

1. It is far and away the greatest feast among the Jews
2. It is revered both in the Bible and the Jewish culture.
3. It epitomizes deliverance from bondage.
4. It's end result proclaims: We are no longer slaves! (But remain slaves to sin.)

III The New Covenant

As a prelude, did you know that there are eight covenants in the OT, that six are unconditional and still in force, and that five were made with Israel? Here is the list:

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1. Edenic	Adam	Conditional	Man Died Spiritually
2. Adamic	Adam	Unconditional	Dispensation of Conscience
3. Noahic	Noah	Unconditional	Dispensation of Government
4. Abrahamic	Israel	Unconditional*	Spiritual Blessings to Jews Then to Israel and the church
5. Mosaic	Israel	Conditional	Dispensation of Law
6. Palestinian	Israel	Unconditional*	Spiritual Blessings to Jews Then to Israel and the church
7. Davidic	Israel	Unconditional*	Spiritual Blessings to Jews Then to Israel and the church
8. New Covenant	Israel	Unconditional*	Dispensation of Grace Spiritual to Israel and church Land and Seed to Israel

* Mosaic: Wall of Partition for the Gentiles

The New Covenant was made between God and Israel as documented in Jeremiah 31:31-34, 32:40; Isaiah 55:3, 59:21, 61:8-9; Ezekiel 16:60, 34:35-41, 37:26-28; Romans 11:26-27. This covenant was made in the OT between God and the House of Israel (10 tribes) and the House of Judah (2 tribes), that is the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Those from the 12 tribes of Jacob that are saved are called “Israel”. Hence the word “Israel” has two meanings: 1) the ten tribes of upper Israel and 2) those Jews from the 12 tribes of Jacob that ultimately are saved. This covenant promises the national regeneration of Israel. That obviously did not happen in the OT and will not happen until the Jews as a group confess their national sin on the Feast of Yom Kippur. Israel will then be regenerated (Jer 31:34a; Is 61:9). At this time, the New Covenant will not just atone for sin but will forgive sin (Jer 31:34b). This New Covenant will provide for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Jer 31:33; Ez 36:7). The forgiveness of sin and indwelling of the Spirit can only be fulfilled by the blood of Messiah. Consequently, this covenant could not have come into effect until the death of Messiah after which He sent another Paraclete (Jn 14:16) on the Feast of Pentecost to indwell those saved.

Remember that the New Covenant could not be completely enacted in the OT because:

- Only Messiah could forgive sins (Jer 31:34b)
- Only Messiah could send the HS (Jer 31:33; Ez 36:27)
- Only Messiah could end the Law of Moses (Eph 2:11-16, 3:5-6; **Jn 1:17**)
- Only Messiah could regenerate Israel (Jer 31:31-34b; Is 61:9).

In support of the term “Only Messiah” we saw in the OT manna as the Bread of Angels; we saw a covenant ratified by Moses with animal blood and Messiah with divine blood; and we saw

verification of a covenant not by a Levitical priest but by a Melchizedekian priest. As verification, the Book of Hebrews in the NT tells us that Jesus Christ is greater than the angels (Heb 1), greater than Moses (Heb 3), and greater than the Levitical priesthood (Heb 5) because He belonged to the order of Melchizedek. This means that there is no more worthy person to create a memorial of bread and wine than Jesus Christ.

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In summary, the New Covenant:

1. Releases all the promised spiritual blessings to Israel and the church.
2. Releases the Land and Seed blessings to the repentant Jews called “Israel”
3. Jesus is the guardian of this and all covenants (Jn 1:17) because
 - a. He is greater than the angels (Hebrews 1)
 - b. He is greater than Moses (Hebrews 3)
 - c. He is greater than the Levitical Priesthood (Hebrews 5).

IV Is the Passover Dead?

At the time of Christ, the Seder Meal had been in practice for about 1500 years. The Seder Meal had become a talk-fest for the narration (*haggadah*) of the Passover, and the number “4” representing God’s creation was the leitmotif for the narration:

- Four Scriptural commands were given to tell the story (Ex 12:26, 13:8, 13:14; Dt 6:20)
- Four questions were asked by the youngest son.
- Four sons are involved in the story.
- Four expressions of redemption come from Exodus 6:6-7)
- Four foods are on the plate: shank bone, matzah, bitter herbs, and charoset (fruit, nuts, and wine symbolizing mortar)

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- Four cups of wine for the Seder Meal:
 1. **The Cup of Blessing or Thanksgiving** (Passover + Cup)
 2. The Cup or Plagues or Deliverance
 -
 3. **The Cup of Redemption** (Bread + Cup)
 4. The Cup of Hallel or Praise.

Jesus introduced the Communion Service just before the third cup of wine (Lk 22:20) when He broke the unleavened bread and gave thanks (Lk 22:19). Matthew, Mark, and Paul begin the Communion Service with Verse 19 and mention only the third cup. Only Luke, our faithful chronicler, mentions the first cup of wine. Why? Luke points out the difference between the Passover meal in Verses 15-17 by highlighting two words “Passover” and “cup” and the Communion Service in Verses 19-20 by highlighting the words “bread” and “cup”. That right there marks the transition between the two ceremonies. Jesus does not mention the fourth cup of praise, but Paul writes at the very end of Hebrews: *Through Him then, let us continually offer up*

a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name (Heb 13:15). In other words, the Christians praises formed by words are like an unbloody sacrifice. {rabbis}

The seven Jewish feasts and their sacrifices were temporarily halted at death of Jesus as Messiah on the cross. Visual manifestations were the rending of the veil of the Temple (Mt 27:51) in AD 33 and the complete destruction of the Temple in AD 70. It is interesting that the gold from the Herodian Temple which was supposed to offer sacrifices to the one true God was used to create the Colosseum where blood sacrifices including human were made to all the Roman gods.

The Feast of Passover was created as a permanent ordinance when the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt: *...It is the Lord's Passover* (Ex 12:11b)...*Now this day will be a memorial (zikkaron) to you, and you shall celebrate it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you are to celebrate it as a permanent ordinance* (Ex 12:14 NASB).

But what happens after the Messianic Kingdom is introduced at the Feast of Tabernacles? The major prophet Ezekeil in Chapter 44 mentions that the Passover, Feast of Tabernacles, and Sabbath will be observed (Ez 44:21-25). At this time, the majority of the priests will be Jews, while a few will be Gentiles in the Millennial Temple—a place of worship for Jew and Gentile. Absent will be the Ark of the Covenant (Jeremiah 3:16), because the Messiah will dwell among us. This sacrificial system was introduced into the OT as a promise of what God would do for them. So, the sacrificial system will be reintroduced in modified form in the Messianic Kingdom to remind the people of what God promised and did do for them. So, the question is: Will the Bride of Christ celebrate Passover or the Communion Service?

During the one thousand years of Messiah's reign on Earth, the Jews will remember how they should have greeted Messiah while the Christians will remember how they did! Do you see the rub here? This is why the Bride of Christ is special. Among all the saints (OT, church, and Great Tribulation), it was the Bride of Christ or church that stood up for Him when His own people rejected Him. {Remarks on standing in.} Israel will celebrate the Passover in a new light while the Bride of Christ will continue celebrating the Communion Service and participate in the Passover with a clear conscience.

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In summary, the death of the Passover (leitmotif is four) can be described as follows:

1. The Passover was suspended at the Last Supper and has been replaced by the Communion Service.
2. This suspension will be lifted in the Messianic Kingdom during the Millenium.
3. During the Millennium, the Communion Service will continue side by side with the Passover.
4. Jews will remember what they should have done and Christians will remember what they did do.

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Now you can tell your children the four reasons behind the Communion Service:

1. Why bread and wine is needed for the Communion Service (Lev 17:11) and its precedents were Manna, Bread of Presence, Melchizedek, Todah, Moses.
2. Why the Passover was the only feast in which the Communion Service could have been instituted.
3. Why the New Covenant of the OT could not be fulfilled until Jesus the Messiah died.
4. Why the Passover will reappear in modified form during the Millennium and the Communion Service will continue as is.

Seven Verses Presenting the Passover as the Umbrella for the Communion Service

Disburse Ushers for Communion

Read Luke 22:7-13 NASU

7 *Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread on which the **Passover** lamb had to be sacrificed.*

8 *And Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the **Passover** for us, so that we may eat it."*

9 *They said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare it?"*

10 *And He said to them, "When you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house that he enters.*

11 *"And you shall say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the **Passover** with My disciples?"'"*

12 *"And he will show you a large, furnished upper room; prepare it there."*

13 *And they left and found everything just as He had told them; and they prepared the **Passover**.*
NASU

Notice that the word "Passover" is mentioned four times.

What is "The Cup"?

Before we read the seven Communion Service verses, we must remember that to drink one's cup is to accept one's task. A cup is a task. Notice also, that immediately after the Communion Service and the Upper Room Discourse, the Lord and the eleven Apostles walked to the Garden of Gethsemane, whereupon Jesus was presented with a "cup" for which He was totally unprepared. (Now keep in mind that three days earlier after cleansing the Temple on Monday, Jesus said "*Can I say: Father, save Me from this hour? No, because My very purpose is for this hour: Father, glorify Your name!...Now, if I be lifted up over the ground, then I can draw all men to Myself.*" This shows that Messiah was both aware of and prepared for his death.) Jesus then left eight of his Apostles by the gate to the garden and while walking away with the three from His inner circle suddenly became "astonished". How could Messiah become astonished?

At this very point, Jesus was given additional information by His Father as to the manner of His death. Up to this point, Jesus as the Son of Man had agreed to shed His blood per Leviticus 17:11 (*for the life of the flesh is in the blood*) as reiterated in Hebrews 9:22 for the redemption of mankind. Only now was Jesus told that He, unlike those He would save, would have to be forsaken for three hours while on the cross. Jesus was forsaken by being incommunicado from the Father and the Holy Spirit between noon and 3 PM. We know this because it was getting close to 3 PM while still under an eclipse of the Sun that Jesus cried out in Aramaic: *My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me* (Ps 22:1)!? This distressed Jesus to the point of death. No Christian was ever forsaken (Heb 13:5), but Jesus Christ as the Son of God was. This was “the cup” that He now had to bear. Had He not borne that cup, then you would still be in your sins.

You do not have to bear Messiah’s personal cup, but you do have to share in His and bear the one He has given you: believe, be baptized, keep His commands, forgive those who have wronged you, be grateful (Ps 50:14), and do good (Ps 37:3). This is how I summarize being born again. Can you do that willingly? If not, then you will be forced to drink the remaining cup just as it says in Psalms: *The Lord (Yahweh) is holding a cup of red wine, boiling with fermentation. As He pours it out, all the wicked will drink it to the very dregs* (Ps 75:8). Your choice. Every Christian has his own personal cup. {John, James the Greater, and Salome (possibly Mary’s sister) story. §181}

Now before we begin the Communion Service, examine yourselves. This is between you and God Almighty. Are you drinking your cup without complaint? This is Todah.

Seven Lucan Verses for the Communion Service

Read Luke 22:14-20 NASU

The liturgy for this special Communion Service is not the traditional bread plus cup, but cup plus bread plus cup. In other words, we will first sip half of the cup to symbolize the suspension of the Passover followed by the traditional bread plus cup to symbolize the Communion Service.

14 *When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him.* { }

15 *And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this **Passover** with you before I suffer;*

16 *for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."* { }

17 *And when He had taken a **cup** and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves;*

18 *for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes."*

19 And when He had taken some **bread** and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

20 And in the same way He took the **cup** after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood."

Praise the Lord! who drank His cup temporarily forsaking Himself while eternally saving us. Are you drinking your cup? Let us now sing a song, and then under the leadership of our pastor join hands and go in peace.

Appendix (not part of sermon)

What is Communion in the Church Liturgy?

In the Protestant church, Communion is an ordinance whereby "ordinance" we mean 1) mandated by Christ, 2) practiced in the Book of Acts, and 3) discussed theologically in the epistles. Another ordinance would be Baptism. Both are commanded by the Lord: *Do this in remembrance of Me* (Lk 25:19b) for the Communion Service and *Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit* (Acts 2:38). And just how does Jesus define "love": *If you love Me, you will keep My commandments* (John 14:15). And John, our theologian, adds: *For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.* (1 John 5:3). So, the two ordinances are commands, and obeying these commands shows love by word and deed.

Regarding the essence of the bread and wine in themselves, there are four theories listed below.

1. Transubstantiation: "a singular and wondrous conversion of the total substance of bread into the body and of the total substance of wine into the blood of Christ, the external appearances only remaining unchanged". Roman Catholic
2. Consubstantiation: This transformation concept is the same as that for transubstantiation except that elements of bread and wine do not change. Lutheran
3. Spiritual Presence: "the body and blood are spiritually but not physically present in the elements". Calvin
4. Memorial: The bread and wine just represent a memorial according to Luke 22:19 and 1 Corinthians 11:24-25. Zwingli

This church identifies with the fourth definition—the simplest and most straightforward—which according to Luke and Paul noted above describe the Communion Service as a "remembrance" (*anamnesis*).

