

## THE FIRST HOLY SUPPER

*Lesson: Luke 22:7-20*

Just before the Lord was captured, tried and crucified, He invited His disciples to eat the Passover feast with Him. He did this so that He could begin a new feast in His name—the sacrament (or sacred feast) of the Holy Supper, and in this way prepare His disciples for Easter.

It was the time of the year for the Jews to celebrate the Passover. This feast was held every year in memory of the time, when the angel of death *passed over* the homes of the Children of Israel, held captive in Egypt, and slew the first-born of the Egyptians. This forced the Egyptians to let the Israelites go free, to begin their journey to the promised land. It was this freedom from slavery which was celebrated every year by a feast. This was the feast to which the Lord invited His disciples and He sent Peter and John ahead to find a large upper room where, when everything was ready, all would gather.

When evening came, the disciples joined their Master to celebrate the Passover. During the feast the Lord began a new supper, the Holy Supper—for Christians. The Passover feast was to remind the Jews of their freedom from slavery. The new supper was to remind His disciples and all who would follow Him of the new spiritual freedom and life that is Christianity. This Holy Supper was to become a time when all who loved the Lord would eat special bread and drink special wine in His name, so that He might come present with them, as He said “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

The bread the Lord broke and served His disciples was special unleavened bread, that is, bread made with flour, olive oil and salt without any yeast or leaven to make it rise. The Lord took these flat cakes or wafers, gave thanks, saying “This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me,” (Luke 22:19) broke the bread in pieces and passed it to His disciples. He then took a cup of wine (which was probably red since it corresponds to blood) and passed this to His disciples saying “This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you,” (Luke 22:20) and they all drank from the same cup.

You must remember the disciples did not yet know about Easter. They did not yet know the Lord would very shortly allow Himself to be captured and killed. And they certainly never dreamed He would rise from the tomb and come present with them in His glorified body, His Divine Human. It was only after these events, after the Lord rose from death, after the resurrection, after Easter, that the disciples—and all Christians—could come to see what the Lord really meant when He gave His Holy Supper.

By giving bread and wine to be eaten and drunk in remembrance of Him, the Lord showed that He wills to lay down His life so that all His followers might live. By giving this supper, He showed that He alone is the source of all spiritual food and nourishment. He alone provides the bread of ambition to do what is good and the wine of spiritual truth, from His Word. That by the wine the Lord meant truth from His Word is clear for He said, "This cup is the New Testament in My blood," and New Testament is the name of that part of our Word which tells about Him. As blood carries life to all parts of the body and as it carries off impurities, so truth from the Word supplies life to our minds and spirits and enables us to get rid of false ideas and evil.

The disciples and all sincere Christians could know that the Lord was specially present in His Holy Supper. But it was not until the Lord came again in the Heavenly Doctrines that people could understand why the Holy Supper is the most holy act of worship. It is because the bread corresponds to Divine love which inspires our minds with love to the Lord, love to the neighbor and the love of uses. And the wine corresponds to Divine truth which brings spiritual light into our minds. It is because of these internal things that are in the supper that it is the most holy act of worship.

Children can look forward to the time when they can take Holy Supper. They can learn the stories of the Lord's Word and start to understand the spiritual meaning of the Word as they learn about correspondences. This will prepare them to hear the invitation of the Lord in His Word and be called—as were the disciples and all who love the Lord—to the "supper of the great God."