

The Lord's Supper.

In the New Testament we find a number of different phrases used to describe this commemorative feast. It is the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20), the Lord's Table (1 Cor. 10:21), the Breaking of bread (Acts 2:42; 20:7) Some Christians refer to it as a Eucharist (Thanksgiving), while the term Holy Communion derived, no doubt, from 1 Cor. 10:16 is probably the most commonly used expression of all.

The Last Supper – Luke 22:1-23

The chapter opens with the account of the treason of Judas. The Day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed, the fourteenth Nisan, saw Peter and John going to prepare the meal. The householder, no doubt a friend of the Lord's, had a large upper room suitable furnished with cushions spread on the benches. At the appropriate hour just after sunset, Jesus and the disciples reclined on the benches to eat the Passover meal. In the account of this the cup is mentioned first, before the bread. At the Passover four or even five cups were passed round, and all would partake. It is noteworthy that before our Lord passed it to His disciples He paused to give thanks, and in any service of Holy Communion thanksgiving should always play a prominent part. As for our Lord Himself, He makes it clear that He will join in no more festivals till He rejoices in the completed Kingdom. The bread which He took would have been a flat cake of unleavened bread. Verse 20 does not appear in all of the ancient manuscripts, but in the inauguration of the Lord's Supper the bread and the cup are always associated together.

Our Lord introduced the notion of a new covenant or agreement between God and man, of which His blood is the sign and seal. This word covenant calls attention to the federal aspect of the Lord's Supper. Covenants in the Old Testament were associated with covenant signs or seals, and so it is here. They witness to God's promise and pledge, and also to our attitude of acceptance.

When Christ said "This is my body", He conveyed the idea that in the bread was an emblem of His body, and, similarly, the cup represents the new covenant which is to be sealed and ratified with His blood.