

During the reign of Mary Tudor, "Bloody Mary" (Queen of England, 1553-1558) many believers were killed because of the rejection of the Catholic teaching of transubstantiation, which stated, that during Mass the bread and wine turned into the body and blood of Christ even though no change was apparent. 1) It was heretical because it changed the death of Christ's sacrifice from once to being repeated. 2) It changed the Gospel, it exalted man as the one who decided salvation for others and not the work of God by the Holy Spirit. 3) It forces Christ to die over and over. It was rejected by Protestants who were willing to die for the cause of Christ.

1. **What is the Lord's Table (Communion):** 1) It is the true Passover first observed in Ex. 12. It is rescue from the slavery of sin. It is a portrait of Christ, our Passover Lamb, 1 Pet. 1:19. 2) Sign of the New Covenant. God gives signs with His covenants. The rainbow, circumcision, and Sabbath are examples. The Mosaic Covenant ended at the New Covenant. The New Covenant was "New," Jer. 31:31. Everlasting, Jer. 32:40. Guarantees a nation of Israel forever, Jer. 31:35-37. Brings Peace in the Land of Israel, Ez. 37:26. Is a spiritual transformation, Ez. 37:19. Forgiveness, Jer. 31:34. Relationship with God, Jer. 24:7. This New Covenant is for Israel, but the Church is grafted into Christ, Eph. 2:13 and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, Rom. 8:9, as a pledge or down payment of our inheritance in Christ, Eph. 1:13-14.
2. **Why do we partake of Communion?** 1) It is a means of grace. It is an avenue of blessing from God, not a work that saves or brings salvation, but demonstrates a relationship with Christ and identification with His body. 2) It is a memorial or special remembrance of Christ's death, 1 Cor. 11:26. Christ is ever-present in our worship of Him.
3. **Who partakes in Communion?** Those who visibly and publicly identify with Christ. It is for those who believe in Christ and are joined to the church as members. Believing guests that travel to see family and join us are welcome. It is for those who profess faith and are awaiting baptism and membership opportunities. Baptism identifies us with Christ.
4. **How is it organized? 5 Components of Communion:** From 1 Cor. 11:23-26.
 - a. **Setting of Passover with Christ**, V23, the meal explained: There were steps: **Step 1:** Taking of the Cup of Sanctification. **Step 2:** Bitter herbs to remember the bitterness of slavery in Egypt. **Step 3:** A reading of the Passover story. **Step 4:** Singing of the Hallel (Psalms 113-118). **Step 5:** The Cup of Deliverance. **Step 6:** Eating of the meal: the lamb, unleavened bread, & bitter herbs. **Step 7:** Taking of the Cup of Blessing. **Step 8:** Singing of Psalm 117 and 118. **Step 9:** Drinking of the Cup of Consummation/Acceptance.
 - b. **Bread**, V23-24, there is giving of thanks and breaking of bread. It is a bread of affliction for Jesus body was broken for me. Jesus is the Bread of Life, Jn. 6:35.
 - c. **Cup**, Matt. 26:27, there is a blessing and thanksgiving for salvation. Christ applies sacrificial language to Himself from Ex. 24:8, "blood of the covenant," Jer. 31:31, "new covenant," and Is. 53:12, "poured out Himself to death."
 - d. **Proclamation**, it is a memorial until He comes. We can rejoice in the Gospel that saved our souls. It is the body, blood, and death of Christ that is proclaimed.
 - e. **Hope**, V26, "until He comes." Exodus 6:6-7 outlines the 4 Cups that were taken on Passover: Cup 1: Sanctification: "I will bring you out." Cup 2: Deliverance: "I will deliver you." Cup 3: Blessing: I will redeem you. Cup 4: Consummation: "I will take you for My people." Christ in Matt. 26:29, **delayed the drinking of this cup until we see Him again and partake with Him, Revelation 19:7.**

How we participate: 1) Confession of sin, 1 Cor. 11:27-29. We examine ourselves. 2) With the church, "when you come together," V20, 33, 34. Not forbidden to be taken alone, but generally the example in Scripture is with other believers. 3) With reasonable symbols, was it wine or juice? We are to consider others and any cause of stumbling, Rom. 14:21. We use juice but likely the wine of ancient times was of low alcohol content. Not legalism but love is the motivation in the symbols we use.

Further Discussion and Application

Jesus was our sacrificial lamb. His blood was shed and His life given for us. What passages of Scripture tells us the story of Christ and His work on the cross? (Gen 3, Is. 53, John 1, Rev. 5, 1 Cor. 11). The Kingdom of God is revealed throughout Scripture. What are the roles that Christ played throughout Scripture and the revealing of this kingdom?

What aspects of the suffering and passion of Christ should we remember as we prepare for communion? What motivates us each day as we seek to obey the Lord? Why is the blessing of remembrance/memorial so valuable to our Christian walk and a blessing to us? What was paid for our salvation? What cost was there to bring us to Christ?

How does preparing for communion help prepare us for His return? How does communion prepare us for heaven?

God has given us signs that commemorate and remind us of His word. What is proclaimed when the body gathers together to partake of communion? What is the purpose of the reading of God's word? What is the purpose of giving, singing, preaching, and fellowship? What are all these actions demonstrating in the lives of believers? What if some don't want to participate or don't seem interested? How do we encourage them to join in spirit and with fervor?

What is identifying with the body of Christ? What are the implications for service, unity, peace, and worship? Who are those who are gathering together? What is the implication for discipleship? When we confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord what are we saying?