

1. THE BIBLICAL BACKGROUND OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

- a. The four accounts of the Lord's Supper in the New Testament do not agree in their details.
 - i. Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, and St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 record the institution of the Lord's Supper.
 - ii. There is a divergence in the details recorded. Read and work through the accounts and their similarities/differences.
- b. The accounts do not contradict each other.
- c. The accounts are exactly the same in the Words of Institution: "This is My Body," and "This is My Blood of the covenant."
- d. The Lord's Supper and its efficacy, like baptism, rests on the Word and promise of Christ.
- e. The divergence in the accounts stem from differences in perception, accent, and audience by the authors.
- f. In the case of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), they agree that the Lord's Supper is instituted by Jesus at a Passover meal. Luke even cites a cup before the bread and then a second cup. Luke 22:15 is the clue. (Cf. Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*.)
 - i. Four cups were passed during the Passover meal.
 - ii. Passover was the celebration—once a year by God's command—of the salvation God wrought in delivering Israel from Egypt. See Exodus 12.
 - iii. It took at least 10 men to make a minion or valid Passover meal.
 - iv. The youngest at the table, in response to the question by the "father" of the group, related the events of God's rescue of Israel from Egypt.
 - v. The Passover meal followed with:
 1. Eating of bitter herbs to remind them of the bitterness of the bondage in Egypt.
 2. A cup was passed and shared by all.
 3. Eating of matzos or unleavened bread.
 4. A second cup was shared.
 5. The eating of the lamb followed.
 6. A third cup—the cup of "blessing"—was passed and shared.
 7. Hymns were sung from the Psalms (Psalms 113-118) know as the Greater and Lesser Hallel.
 8. A fourth cup was drunk.
 9. Luke apparently refers to two cups, but the second cup he refers to is the third cup of the Passover ritual.
- g. The Gospel of John does not report the Sacrament at this last meal of Jesus and the disciples, a meal that John describes as taking place one day earlier so that

Jesus is crucified on the Day of Preparation (see John 19:14), the day when the paschal lambs were slaughtered. Also, a key emphasis for John's account of the Jesus last meal with his disciples is the new command to love. John 13:34-35 – ³⁴ “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- h. The failure to love is a key element in St. Paul's treatment of the Lord's Supper in Corinth. Beginning with 1 Corinthians 11:17, we discover they are not seeing the body of Christ in each other, proceeding in a meal without concern or honor for their sisters and brothers, particularly “those who have nothing.”