

The Communion Issue

Whenever I have gone to church and it was on the day they took communion I have never felt right about it. Mainly because most use normal bread or Mother's Pride, which is leavened, but I have had Ryvita, cream crackers, pitta bread and basically anything but what the bible tells us about. When it comes to the wine I have been served Ribena, apple & blackcurrant and a host of other things that just taste like water.

Now if we wish to be biblical we must get the observance right. I know people have said its only symbolic, but even symbols have to be the correct symbols.

So lets examine the text and see what is taught there, in Matthew 26:26 it states: **“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread.”** The Greek word for bread here is *artos*, which generally indicates a loaf of common leavened bread. The word for unleavened bread is, in contrast, *azumos*, found in other New Testament passages, like Matthew 26:17. It makes sense that as in the Matthew account He is talking to Jews he has no reason to explain what kind of bread He was using, for they would have known, so that is the reason for not specifically stating which bread in the passage.

The Last Supper, or Last Passover, took place just before the Jewish Feast of Unleavened Bread so Jesus and the disciples would have eaten that bread because that was all that would have been available that night, according to Exodus 12. Now this is because He became the Passover for us all after His death (1 Cor 5:7). Furthermore, in the Jewish Feast Passover is only one night, and immediately after that comes the Feast of Unleavened bread, so it makes sense that they would use unleavened bread because for a week before, Jewish women clean the house to make sure there is no Chametz or leaven in the house.

Again in Luke 22. the arrival of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is mentioned in verse 7, but when Jesus breaks bread in verse 19, the text simply uses the word, **'artos'**. Again, in John 13:18, the reference to 'bread' in that verse comes from **'artos.'** Then in verses 26 and 30 the bread which is given to Judas by Jesus is simply called **'artos'** - bread. Of course, the use of **'artos'** does not necessarily mean that this bread was leavened (since leavened bread would have been difficult to obtain at Passover time).

But the question has to be asked: If Jesus really wanted us to only use unleavened bread during communion, would He not have inspired these particular texts to describe 'Unleavened bread,' rather than simply 'bread'? My response to that is yes and He did!.

If we turn to 1 Cor 11 Paul in his epistle states in verse 24: **“And when He had given thanks He broke it and said, Take eat, this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me”**. In the same manner He also took the cup after supper saying, **“This is the New Covenant in my blood, this do as often as you drink it in remembrance of Me”** For as often as you eat **this** bread [what bread? The Unleavened bread of the Feast. He could have just said as long as you eat bread, but he emphasized *which* bread] and drink **this** cup [again he specifies the wine, which could also be grape juice] you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.” Furthermore we see in John 6:35 that Jesus informs us that He is the bread of life and we must therefore understand that He is the sinless saviour, and since leaven is the biblical symbol of sin we can never celebrate His selfless act on our behalf with something that is sinful.

In the Old Testament we read from Exodus 13:3:

“And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place:

there shall no leavened bread be eaten. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt.”

It is also noteworthy that the Jews on the evening of Unleavened Bread, to commemorate the unleavened bread that the Israelites ate when they left Egypt. We don't eat or even retain in our possession any "*chametz*" from midday of the day before Passover until the conclusion of the holiday. *Chametz* means leavened grain -- any food or drink that contains even a trace of wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt or their derivatives and wasn't guarded from leavening or fermentation. This includes bread, cake, cookies, cereal, pasta, and most alcoholic beverages. Moreover, almost any processed food or drink can be assumed to be *Chametz* unless certified otherwise. Also, the Jews in the Feast of Unleavened bread have something called Kiddush which means **sanctification** because it separates the holy from the profane and that is what we are doing when we remember the Lord's body.

We can also see back in 1 Cor 11 :29-30 Paul calls us to discern the Lord's body and that is what Passover is all about in Exodus 12:19-27, especially verse 24 which states: **“And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever”** So a symbol of the Passover holiday is **matzo**, an unleavened flat bread made solely from flour and water which is continually worked from mixing through baking, so that it is not allowed to rise. Matzo may be made by machine or by hand; the latter type of matzo, called *shmura matzo* ("watched" or "guarded" matzo), is the bread of preference for the Passover Seder in Orthodox Jewish communities, and is also the bread that should be used by the church.

According to the Hebrew lexicon, the term "unleavened bread" is derived from the word *matzoh*, which means **"bread or cake without leaven."** The lexicon also states that *matzoh* is in turn derived from a word which means "to drain out or suck." In the Bible, leaven is almost always symbolic of sin. Like leaven which permeates the whole lump of dough, sin will spread in a person, a church or a nation, eventually overwhelming and bringing its participants into its bondage and eventually to death. Rom 6:23 tell us that “the wages of sin is death,” which is God's judgment for sin, and this is the reason that Christ died—to provide a way out of this judgment for sin if man will repent of his sins, accept Christ as his Passover sacrifice, and have his heart changed so that he can conform his life to what God commands.