

or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying, he will be convinced by all that he is a sinner and will be judged by all, and the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, 'God is really among you!'" -1 Corinthians 14:22-25 *New International Version*.

A number of translations have cross references in connection with the last clause in the above quotation. Four different translations key the phrase; "God is really among you!" with Isaiah 45:16 and Zechariah 8:23. These several translations are : *New International Version, Jerusalem Bible, King James Version, and New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* [1950 edition]. It seems obvious, therefore, that a number of translators felt there was a direct relationship between what had been prophesied by Zechariah at 8:23 and what was happening with the Christian church in the first century. The great influx of Gentiles was in keeping with the fact that Christ Jesus was to "stand as a banner for the peoples," and that "the nations will rally to him." (Isaiah 11: 10) They were rallying to those called "the Israel of God" -Jesus' collective body of disciples.

The point of all this is simply to demonstrate that prophecies can be made to fit different situations. These applications can stimulate thinking and reflection as we await the final outcome of events relating to God's prophetic word. (2 Peter 1: 19) Oftentimes prophecies are not understood clearly until after the fact. Many of the things Jesus said and did were not fully appreciated from the prophetic standpoint by his disciples until after his resurrection. (Matthew 16:21-

23) Sometimes events in history are thought to fulfill certain prophecies. This was true of the French Revolution that changed the course of European history and broke the power of the Roman Catholic Church. Many 19th century expositors linked these events with prophetic utterances found in the books of Daniel and Revelation. Even though the events could be made to *fit* the prophecy the expectations created thereby led to false prognostication and disappointment. The lesson to be learned from this is that because something fits a certain Bible prophecy that does not necessarily mean it represents the true fulfillment.

We may see something in world events that seems to fulfill a certain prophecy. We may even speak of it and offer our opinion as to what we think it means. But we should be extremely careful to avoid dogmatism. Nor should we conclude that those brothers who do not see matters as we do are somehow lacking in spiritual discernment. Modesty would dictate that we merely express our thoughts and then patiently await the outcome. Speaking dogmatically and insisting that all others see matters in the same unquestioning way only serves to further divide and fragment Christ's disciples. It often glorifies error preached in God's name and stumbles those careless enough to be caught in its trap. If we content ourselves to focus on those issues of life and worship clearly defined in the Bible we will not stray far in our walk of faith .• While continuing to give attention to the prophetic word and praying for the early return of our Lord we will wait patiently (for God to act. according to his time-table not ours or someone else's. (Acts 1:6-8) □

The Annual Memorial Underscores a Different Good News

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On the Evening of April 1, 1988, millions of Jehovah's Witnesses will file into their Kingdom Halls to observe what they call "The Lord's Evening Meal." This annual observance is viewed as the most solemn and sacred event of the year. It purports to be a faithful reenactment of what took place that fateful night more than 19 centuries ago when the Lord had a last, intimate meal with his chosen apostles. He used that occasion to spiritually prepare that little group of devoted disciples for the trials and tribulations that lay ahead. He would be taken from them in the most violent of ways. Momentarily, they would be like sheep without a shepherd. During his ministry he had tried to prepare them for this moment and now in his final hours with them he intensified his efforts. John

chapters 13 through 17 preserve for us the loving concern that his actions and words displayed. As we approach the anniversary of that momentous evening it would seem appropriate for every disciple of the Lord to refresh his heart and mind by reading those chapters again. It was on this night and in this context that Jesus instituted what has come to be called "The Last Supper" or "The Lord's Evening Meal." The Fourth Gospel, while recording the discourse and prayer of the Lord, does not provide us with the formula traditionally used to commemorate that event. For this we must turn to the Synoptics.

At Luke 22: 19 20 we read: "Also, he took a loaf, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them, saying: 'This

means my body which is to be given in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me.' Also, the cup in the same way after they had the evening meal, he saying: 'This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf.'" -- *New World Translation*.

That this was understood to be repeated by the fellowship as a whole and not just the apostles with whom the Lord initiated the meal is demonstrated by what the apostle Paul later had to say: "For I received from the Lord that which I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was going to be handed over took a loaf and, after giving thanks, he broke it and said: 'This means my body which is in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me.' He did likewise respecting the cup also, after he had the evening meal, saying: 'This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood. Keep doing this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this loaf and drink this cup, you keep proclaiming the death of the lord, until he arrives.'" -1 Corinthians 11 :23-26 *NWF*.

When we consider the context in which Paul affirms the perpetual nature of the Lord's Evening Meal we are helped to deepen our appreciation for its observance. It is not a mere ritual to be repeated by rote. It represents holy communion with the Lord and the community of believers. It constitutes a "pro-claiming of the death of the Lord, until he arrives." A commentary on the use of the Greek word *katangelo* (rendered *proclaiming* in the *New World Translation*) offers the following as to its significance here:

"In the New Testament it is used mostly of preaching the Gospel. Always it denotes an activity exercised towards men, and never one exercise towards God. Thus here it means that the solemn observance of the service of Holy Communion is a valid proclamation of the Lord's death. In word and symbol Christ's death for men is set before them. 'The Eucharist is an acted sermon, an acted proclamation of the death which it commemorates.' (Robertson and Plummer). Til he comes reminds us of the eschatological aspect of Holy Communion. It looks forward to the day when the Lord will come again." -*Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*.

The Corinthian brothers were guilty of violating the spirit of holiness when they assembled together to reenact this sacred symbol. Because of this they made a mockery of table fellowship and communion with the

Lord. It was this situation in Corinth that prompted the apostle to write as he did. (1 Corinthians 11:17-34). This letter was probably written in the mid-fifties and would predate the writing of the Gospels. It appears to suggest a frequent observance of the Lord's Evening Meal. While it would seem appropriate to observe it on the anniversary of the initial event there is nothing to suggest that it was restricted to this occasion.

The expression: "as *often* as you eat this loaf and drink this cup," (1 Cor. 11 :26) seems to have the sense of *whenever you do this* you are commemorating the death of our Lord. One thing is certain, and that is that it was an observance in relation to those brought into the new covenant as represented by the cup.

Those who partook of those sacred emblems recognized that the new covenant was validated (put in force) by the flesh and blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Their union with him and their sharing with others as a part of the body of Christ was being emblematically demonstrated-acted out.

Jehovah's Witnesses insist that the observance must be limited to but once a year on the anniversary of the original. This replaces, they say, the annual observance of the Passover. Yet, at the same time, they argue that the Passover was not a type of the Lord's Evening Meal! (see *The Christian Respondent*, NO. 10) According to the figures supplied by the Watchtower Society nearly 9 million people attended this annual ceremony last year. This figure is roughly 3 times the number of active Witnesses presently associated. For reasons best understood only by themselves the Watchtower Society . stresses the importance of getting as many non- Witnesses to this observance as possible. The monthly organizational bulletin *Our Kingdom Ministry* instructs them to invite everyone to this meeting: "By all means invite as many people as possible to be present for the Memorial. Have you thought of inviting your neighbors? How about your relatives, school mates, and work associates?" - *Our Kingdom Ministry*, March, 1988. arrangement.

As has already been pointed out the original meal was a most intimate one. While there were many occasions during Christ's ministry when he spoke to crowds containing the curious as well as his disciples this event was not like that at all. It would, after all, only have significance to those appreciating spiritual blessings and understanding the . new covenant arrangement. Paul wrote that "the message about Christ's death on the cross is nonsense to those who

are being lost; but for us who are being saved it is God's power. "-1 Corinthians 1: 18 *Good News Bible*. It would seem that the Watchtower Society sees some merit in attracting large numbers. During the many years that I attended those annual events I observed that there were people there that YOU never saw at any other time. I used to call them "Memorial saints." Oftentimes those who were once active would show up once each year along with others that were strangers to the Kingdom Hall. They usually appeared ill at ease. It accomplished the Society's goal of getting many to the Kingdom Hall but did little to produce spiritual appreciation in people. And little wonder, for the manner in which the meal was conducted kept The next paragraph goes on to say that heaven will be the reward for only a "little flock" mentioned at Luke 12:32 and is limited to the 144,000 mentioned at Revelation 14:3,4. But is it appropriate to link Luke 12:32 and Revelation 14:3,4 together this way? Keep in mind that nowhere does Jesus or the apostles teach that the final number of those brought into the new covenant is limited to 144,000. At the time Jesus spoke of his disciples as a "little flock" they were a little flock, that is, few in number. The full text reads:

"Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom." -Luke 12:32 *NWT*.

This hardly proves that those to receive the kingdom are limited to those to whom he was speaking! The text from Revelation 14:3,4 says nothing about these ruling as kings and priests with Christ. Care must be taken that we do not read into the Scriptures more than they say or link unrelated texts together to prove something of our own imagination. Interestingly, the next paragraph in *The Watchtower* acknowledges that everyone must feed on the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ in order to "gain God's forgiveness and everlasting life, whether life in heaven or life on a paradise earth." They then quote John 6:51-54 which reads: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread he will live forever; ... the bread that I shall give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world ... He that feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life." If this is true, and we cannot dispute the words of the Lord, then *we must accept the fact that we must feed upon the body and blood of the Lamb of God if we are to have everlasting life and experience a resurrection at the last day.* (John 6:54)

Jesus compared himself to the life-sustaining

manna that fell in the wilderness and sustained those delivered from Egypt: "I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the wilderness and yet died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that *anyone* may eat of it and not die." John 6:48-50 *NWT*. Who ate the manna in the wilderness? Was it limited to only a select group of natural Israelites or did the "mixed company" of non-Israelites also sustain themselves on this food from heaven? The answer is obvious. Everyone who came out of Egypt was kept alive throughout their 40 years of wilderness wanderings by gathering and eating the manna.

It has occurred to many Jehovah's Witnesses that not only did non-Israelites eat the manna but they also ate the Passover-providing, of course, that they had been circumcised. (Exodus 12:44) This has led many to argue that everyone, regardless of his hope, (as a Jehovah's Witness) ought to partake of the Lord's Evening Meal. All things considered, this appears to be a Scripturally sound conclusion. However, the Watchtower Society adamantly holds to the teaching that only those who claimed to be in the new covenant prior to 1935 rightly partake. This is based on the doctrine that from and after 1935 Jehovah God stopped inviting people into the new covenant and began to offer people a new and different hope; that of everlasting life on earth.

This is the general overall view although there have been exceptions. There have been times since then when the number partaking have actually increased rather than declined as one would expect with the older members dying off. For example, in 1969, 10,368 partook of the emblems but in 1970, 10,526 partook-an increase of 158.(7) In 1973 there were 173 more partaking than did the year previous. And the following year, 1974, the number increased by 200 to bring the total to 10,723.

If one of those claiming to have an earthly hope partook of the emblems he or she would be disfellowshipped. I personally know a brother who was disfellowshipped because he believed he should partake even though he did not claim a heavenly hope. He made this known *some weeks before* the Memorial. The elders promptly disfellowshipped him before the Memorial!

In the magazine article under consideration the publishers attempt to prove that there was a marked difference between natural born Israelite and those others who made up the "mixed company." Concern-

ing this they ask: "Did the 'mixed company,' though, have the same prospects as the Israelites? No, they did not; Even though they could worship among the Israelites and could hope to enter the promised land, they could never be kings or priests under the Law covenant. So eating the literal manna in the wilderness did not give everyone the same prospects." -page 31.

This is a remarkable argument. Every Bible student knows that the dynasty of kings of Israel had to come from a single family in the tribe of Judah and no other. And as for the possibility of becoming a priest this opportunity was limited to a single family in the tribe of Levi, The first King of Israel was Saul of the tribe of Benjamin. The second king was David of the tribe of Judah. Jehovah God made a covenant with David respecting the kingship being taken from his family descendants. In this way the opportunity to become a king was limited to one tribe and one family within that tribe. So it is rather foolish to say that the non-Israelites did not have the same prospects as did the natural born Israelite in the matter of being kings. (2 Samuel 7: 16) The same is true regarding the priesthood. Levi had three sons: Gershon, Kohath and Merari. It was from the family of the Kohathites that the priests came. Aaron and Moses were grandsons of Levi's son Kohath. God appointed Aaron and his sons to the priesthood. Other Levites could perform services in connection with the Tabernacle sacrifices but they were barred from the priesthood which became the sole right of Aaron's family. (Numbers 3:6-10) So, as kings were limited to one family, the priesthood was also. So, virtually all Israelites were barred from both the kingship as well as the priest-hood. Their prospects were no greater than the non-Israelites in this regard. Any thinking . Jehovah's Witness must recognize the weakness in the Society's argument on this matter.

God had promised to write his law on the hearts of those brought into the new covenant. (Jeremiah 31 :33; Hebrews 8:10) Like the law covenant which .it re-placed the new covenant features both a priesthood and a kingship. In the former covenant these offices were kept separate but in the new covenant they are com-bined in one person, Jesus Christ. Not only does he serve as king-priest but he also serves as the mediator of the new covenant. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews (chapters 5-10) helps us to appreciate the superiority of the new covenant over the Law covenant in these respects.

The new covenant promised complete forgiveness of sin: "'For this is the covenant that I shall conclude

with the house of Israel after those days,' is the utterance of Jehovah. "'I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their . God, and they themselves will become my people. And they will I10 more teach each one his companion and each one his brother saying, 'Know Jehovah!' for they will all know me from the leas~ one of them even to the greatest one of them. is the utterance of Jehovah. 'For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more.' "-Jeremiah 31:33,34 NWT..

The one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ is perpetual in its efficacy. It is because of the merit of his sacrifice that those under the new covenant have their sins forgiven and forgotten. The Watchtower Society attempts to bind both the "little flock" and the "other sheep" to the *obligations* of the new covenant while denying that the "other sheep" are in the new covenant and have Jesus as their mediator!

They say: "Being inscribed upon the heart, those laws would be less likely to cease being loved by those who obeyed them. If those laws were put 'into their mind/they would be less likely to forget them. Hence, the keepers of those laws say, in the words of Psalm 119:97: 'How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern.' From their most inward being, they set their affections upon Jehovah's laws as given through his Mediator, Jesus Christ. Thus with the right motivation, they determine to keep those precious laws. This applies both to the 'little flock' in the new covenant and to the 'great crowd' of 'other sheep' who are, not *in* the new covenant, but *under it*.-Compare 1 John 5:3; John 14: 15"-Worldwide Security Under the Prince of Peace, page 114 (italics in original).

The same book, on page 10 paragraph 16, says that Jesus Christ only mediates for the 144,000. If this be the case then those whom they call the "other sheep" would not have him as priest-king either because this is a feature of the new covenant. The ones destined to have God's law written on their hearts are the same ones whose sins were not to be remembered. (Jer.31 :33,34) By saying that some are *in* the new covenant while others are only *under* the covenant they attempt to get around this obvious contradiction. In the Bible, however, we do not find such distinctions. It is really nothing more than a human invention to justify what amounts to a most serious heresy. If such a distinction were valid why do we not find it used in relation to the law covenant? The parallel would be that native-born Israelites would be

in the law covenant but . non-Israelites would merely be *under* it. But matters are not put that way. When the apostle Paul speaks of those in the law covenant arrangement he always says they were *under the law*-never that they were *in the law*:

"Now we know that all the things the Law says it addresses to those *under the Law*, so that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become liable to God for punishment. "-,-Romans3: 19NWr."And so to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to those *under law* I became as *under law*, though **1** myself am not *under law*, that I might gain those *under law*."...1 Corinthians 9:20 NWT." But when the full limit of the time arrived, God sent forth his Son, who came to be out of a woman and who came to be *under law*, that he might release by purchase those *under law*, that we, in turn, might receive the adoption as sons." - Galatians 4:4,5 NWT.

If we apply Watchtower logic to the fact that Jesus was a descendant of the tribe of Judah through David then we would have to conclude that Jesus was born *in* the law covenant-not *under* it. But Paul says he was born "*under law*." In all of the scriptural applications

just considered being under the law meant being an active member of those separated to God by means of the law. Being under the new covenant would have to mean the same thing-being separated to God by means of it. The Watchtower Society, by inventing these distinctions and reading them into the Bible succeeds in advancing (at least in the minds of Jehovah's Witnesses) its two-classes of Christians doctrine. It is illogical as well as unscriptural to teach that there are millions of people who do not enjoy the blessings and benefits of the new covenant but are obliged to live up to its terms. This is crazy!

So, when the millions of Jehovah's Witnesses file into their Kingdom Halls to observe the Lord's Evening Meal this year they will be denied the right to partake of the emblematic bread and wine just as they are denied the complete forgiveness of sins offered to those putting faith in Jesus Christ. They have no mediator and they have no priest-king because the new covenant priesthood only function towards within the new covenant family. What annually takes place in the Kingdom Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses is a mockery of what Jesus intended. □

