

The Atonement of Jesus Christ
Week Six – October 18, 2023
The Upper Room
Notes and Quotes

Matthew 26:26-30 – The meaning of Sacrament

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments*, BYU Devotional, January 1988.

A sacrament is any act in which we formally take the hand of God to unite with him to feel his divine power, and be one, whole, and complete.

Oxford English Dictionary – a means of consecrating, dedicating, or securing by a religious sanction.

Webster’s Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary – A visible sign of an inward grace; something regarded as possessing a sacred character or mysterious significance; a sign, token, or symbol of something sacred or divine.

Matthew 26:22

Melvin J. Ballard, *Improvement Era*, Oct. 1919, 1025-28.

We want every Latter-day Saint to come to the sacrament table because it is the place for self-investigation, for self-inspection, where we may rectify our course and to make right our own lives, bringing them into harmony with the teachings of the Church and with our brethren and sisters. It is the place where we become our own judges ... We would not get very far away in one week—not so far away that, by the process of self-investigation, we could not rectify the wrongs we may have done. If we should refrain from partaking of the sacrament, condemned by ourselves as unworthy to receive these emblems, we could not endure that long, and we would soon, I am sur, have the spirit of repentance. The road to the sacrament table is the path of safety for the Latter-day Saints.

(Cf. Mark 14:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29; 2 Corinthians 13:5)

1 Corinthians 11:23-29

David B. Haight, “The Sacrament—and the Sacrifice,” *General Conference*, October 1989

Our most valuable worship experience in the sacrament meeting is the sacred ordinance of the sacrament, for it provides the opportunity to focus our minds and hearts upon the Savior and His sacrifice. The Apostle Paul warned the early Saints against eating this bread and drinking this cup of the Lord unworthily. (See 1 Cor. 11:27–30.) Our Savior Himself instructed the Nephites, “Whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily [brings] damnation to his soul.” (3 Ne. 18:29.) Worthy partakers of the sacrament are in harmony with the Lord and put themselves under covenant with Him to always remember His sacrifice for the sins of the world, to take upon them the name of Christ and to always remember Him, and to keep His commandments. The Savior covenants that we who do so shall have His spirit to be with us and that, if faithful to the end, we may inherit eternal life.

(Cf. Matthew 22:17-30; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-28)

The Sacrament

Astonished, troubled, sorrowed
Kneeling alone to pray,
Praying, pleading, bleeding ---
A heavy price to pay

Quiet, reverent, listening
To words of humble prayer
Thinking, learning, yearning
To understand what happened there.

Loving, willing, yielding
The Father's will be done
Swallowed, united, holy ---
God's only begotten son.

Quiet, reverent, listening;
A priest now bows his head
Praying, pleading, blessing
A broken piece of bread.

Slowly, partaking, pondering
The price he paid for me;
Weeping, joyful, thankful ---
Forever I will be.

Sacramental Pleadings

I come before the altar and with broken heart I plead
I feel so lost and empty; please fill my hungering need.

Please tear from me this stony heart and turn it into flesh,
That I may know thy healing power and feel my soul refresh.

I sing the song of redeeming love that strikes a chord within,
I seek to know thy sweet embrace and lose desire for sin.

Then comes thy flesh in form of bread now blessed by God above,
And as I eat and think of Thee, I'm filled with thy sweet love.

I take the water as thy blood which thou didst shed for me
And quench my thirst which thou didst feel when they hung Thee on
the tree.

And as I ponder on the price, thou paid to make me whole,
I weep inside with gratitude and rejoicing fills my soul.

For joy that was set before Thee, this offering didst though make,
So, I must seek to feel that joy as I come to partake.

And so instead of suffering, I think of Thy great love,
And pledge my heart to live like Thee and become like God above.

Messages from the Upper Room

John 13-17

- *Self-examination and Reflection
Matt. 26:2; Mark 14:19; Luke 22:23; 1 Cor. 11:24-29
- *Serve others without concern about who is greatest
Luke 22:24-27; John 13:4-17
- *Love others as Christ loves us
John 13:34-35; John 15:12-14, 17
- *Receive and Follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost
John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:7-14
- *Connect to, rely upon, and abide in Christ – Fullness of Joy
John 14:27; 15:1-11; 16:33
- *Glorify God
John 13:31-32; 14:13; 16:20-22; 17:4-5
- *Keep the commandments
John 14:15, 21-23; 15:10; 17:6-8
- *Be One with God, Christ, and fellowman
John 17:11-26

The Sacrament

1. What is the full name of the sacrament?
2. What is a sacrament?
3. At what event was the sacrament instituted?
4. Why was the sacrament instituted during this particular event?
5. Who blesses the sacrament?
6. Why bread and water?
7. Why are these emblems blessed to the souls of those who partake?
8. What is the figurative meaning of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ?
9. Why do we cover the sacrament with a cloth and why is the sacrament to be prepared and ready before the meeting begins?
10. Why are we invited and encouraged to partake of the sacrament with our right hand?
11. How do we know if we are partaking worthily?
12. Why do we invite and encourage young men to wear white shirts while officiating in the sacrament?

John 6:51-58

Jeffrey R. Holland, “This Do in Remembrance of Me,” *General Conference, October 1995*

That is why every ordinance of the gospel focuses in one way or another on the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and surely that is why this particular ordinance with all its symbolism and imagery comes to us more readily and more repeatedly than any other in our life. It comes in what has been called “the most sacred, the most holy, of all the meetings of the Church” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:340). Perhaps we do not always attach that kind of meaning to our weekly sacramental service. How “sacred” and how “holy” is it? Do we see it as our Passover, remembrance of our safety and deliverance and redemption? With so very much at stake, this ordinance commemorating our escape from the angel of darkness should be taken more seriously than it sometimes is. It should be a powerful, reverent, reflective moment. It should encourage spiritual feelings and impressions. As such it should not be rushed. It is not something to “get over” so that the real purpose of a sacrament meeting can be pursued. This is the real purpose of the meeting. And everything that is said or sung or prayed in those services should be consistent with the grandeur of this sacred ordinance.

John 6:53-60

D. Todd Christofferson, “The Living Bread Which Came Down from Heaven,” *General Conference, October 2017*

To eat His flesh and drink His blood is a striking way of expressing how completely we must bring the Savior into our life—into our very being—that we may be one. How does this happen? First, we understand that in sacrificing His flesh and blood, Jesus atoned for our sins and overcame death, both physical and spiritual. Clearly, then, we partake of His flesh and drink His blood when we receive from Him the power and blessings of His Atonement. The doctrine of Christ expresses what we must do to receive atoning grace. It is to believe and have faith in Christ, to repent and be baptized, and to receive the Holy Ghost, “and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.” This is the gate, our access to the Savior’s atoning grace and to the strait and narrow path leading to His kingdom.... The symbolism of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is beautiful to contemplate. The bread and water represent the flesh and blood of Him who is the Bread of Life and the Living Water, poignantly reminding us of the price He paid to redeem us. As the bread is broken, we remember the Savior’s torn flesh. Elder Dallin H. Oaks once observed that “because it is broken and torn, each piece of bread is unique, just as the individuals who partake of it are unique. We all have different sins to repent of. We all have different needs to be strengthened through the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we remember in this ordinance.” As we drink the water, we think of the blood He shed in Gethsemane and on the cross and its sanctifying power. Knowing that “no unclean thing can enter into his kingdom,” we resolve to be among “those who have washed their garments in [the Savior’s] blood, because of their faith, and the repentance of all their sins, and their faithfulness unto the end.”.... I have spoken of receiving the Savior’s atoning grace to take away our sins and the stain of those sins in us. But figuratively eating His flesh and drinking His blood has a further meaning, and that is to internalize the qualities and character of Christ, putting off the natural man and becoming Saints “through the atonement of Christ the Lord.” As we partake of the sacramental bread and water each week, we would do well to consider how fully and completely we must incorporate His character and the pattern of His sinless life into our life and being. Jesus could not have atoned for the sins of others unless He Himself was sinless. Since justice had no claim on Him, He could offer Himself in our place to satisfy justice and then extend mercy. As we remember and honor His atoning sacrifice, we should also contemplate His sinless life. This suggests the need for a mighty striving on our part. We cannot be content to remain as we are but must be moving constantly toward “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” Like King Lamoni’s father in the Book of Mormon, we must be willing to give away all our sins and focus on what the Lord expects of us, individually and together.

(Cf. Eph. 4:12-13; Alma 22:15; 3 Nephi 18:7; D&C 20:77-79)

The Sacrament and the Upper Room

1. What is the full name of the sacrament?

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

Elder D. Todd Christofferson, "The Living Bread Which Came down from Heaven, *General Conference, October 2017, 13*

2. What is a sacrament?

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments, BYU Devotional, January 1988*

A sacrament is any act in which we formally take the hand of God to unite with him to feel his divine power, and be one, whole, and complete.

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3. At what event was the sacrament instituted?

Passover – Matthew 26:17-30

4. Why was the sacrament instituted during this particular event?

Passover pointed forward to the atoning sacrifice which Jesus Christ would make, while the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a reminder of the sacrifice which he has made. The sacrament replaces the Passover as a symbol of Christ's atoning sacrifice.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "This Do in Remembrance of Me," *General Conference, October 1995, 2.*

5. Who blesses the sacrament?

God. See sacrament prayers in D&C 20:77, 79. "Oh God, the Eternal Father, we ask THEE TO BLESS AND SANCTIFY this bread ... or water.

6. Why bread and water?

Christ is the Manna from Heaven; taught as Passover approached – John 6:32-57

Christ gives us Living Water – John 4:9-15

Elder D. Todd Christofferson, *General Conference, October 2017, 13*

7. Why are these emblems blessed to the *souls* of those who partake?

D&C 88:15 – The spirit and body are the soul of man. Through the covenant of the sacrament, Christ brings peace to the war between body and spirit. Romans 7:23-25; Ephesians 2:13-17

8. What is the figurative meaning of eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ?

Eating his flesh and drinking his blood is a way of telling us that we must internalize the qualities and attributes of Christ into lives and make them a part of who we are becoming.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson, *October 2017, 14*

9. Why do we cover the sacrament with a cloth and why is the sacrament to be prepared and ready before the meeting begins?

As the bread and water represent the blood and body of Christ, the covered emblems have the appearance of the body of Christ in the tomb. The sacrament is prepared prior to the meeting as a symbol that this meeting is a memorial service for our brother who gave his life for us.

10. Why do we invite and encourage young men to wear white shirts while officiating in the sacrament?

A symbol of purity. Also a reminder of their baptism and the white shirt they will wear in the temple and as representatives of Jesus Christ on their mission.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, "This Do in Remembrance of Me," *General Conference, October 1995.*

11. Why are we invited and encouraged to partake of the sacrament with our right hand?

The right hand is the hand of covenant – Genesis 48:13-14, 17-19.

This is a reminder that Christ stands on the right hand of God and that we are to always seek to choose the right.

Russell M. Nelson, *Ensign*, March 1983 taught the following regarding the use of the right hand:

“As Rachel lay dying in the pain of childbirth, she named her new son Ben-oni, which in Hebrew means “son of my sorrow” or “distress.” But her bereaved husband, Jacob (Israel), changed the name of their newborn son, perhaps to avoid a repeated reference to her travail and death each time his son’s name might be spoken. The name he chose instead was Benjamin, which in Hebrew means “son at the right (hand).” (See Gen. 35:16–19.) Israel’s great love for his beloved Rachel was signified by this special designation given to Benjamin, his twelfth son.

That the right hand suggests symbolic favor is suggested again in the parable of the sheep and the goats. Jesus said: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

“And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. 25:31–34.)

Numerous other scriptural references to the right hand are listed on page 433 of the Topical Guide appended to the new LDS edition of the Bible. These accounts give some background and insight into the symbolic significance of the right hand—a symbolism that appears in the language and other cultural features of the Jewish and Christian world. In Latin, for example, dexter (right) and sinister (left) not only indicated right and left but became the roots for adjectives carrying favorable and unfavorable connotations. The use of the right hand as a symbolic gesture was in time extended to the administration of governmental oaths, and to the courtroom, as witnesses were called to testify under oath.

With this background, we may now focus on the question of which hand to use when partaking of the sacrament. The word sacrament comes from two Latin stems: sacr meaning “sacred,” and ment meaning “mind.” It implies sacred thoughts of the mind. Even more compelling is the Latin word sacramentum, which literally means “oath or solemn obligation.” Partaking of the sacrament might therefore be thought of as a renewal by oath of the covenant previously made in the waters of baptism. It is a sacred mental moment, including (1) a silent oath manifested by the use of one’s hand, symbolic of the individual’s covenant, and (2) the use of bread and water, symbolic of the great atoning sacrifice of the Savior of the world.

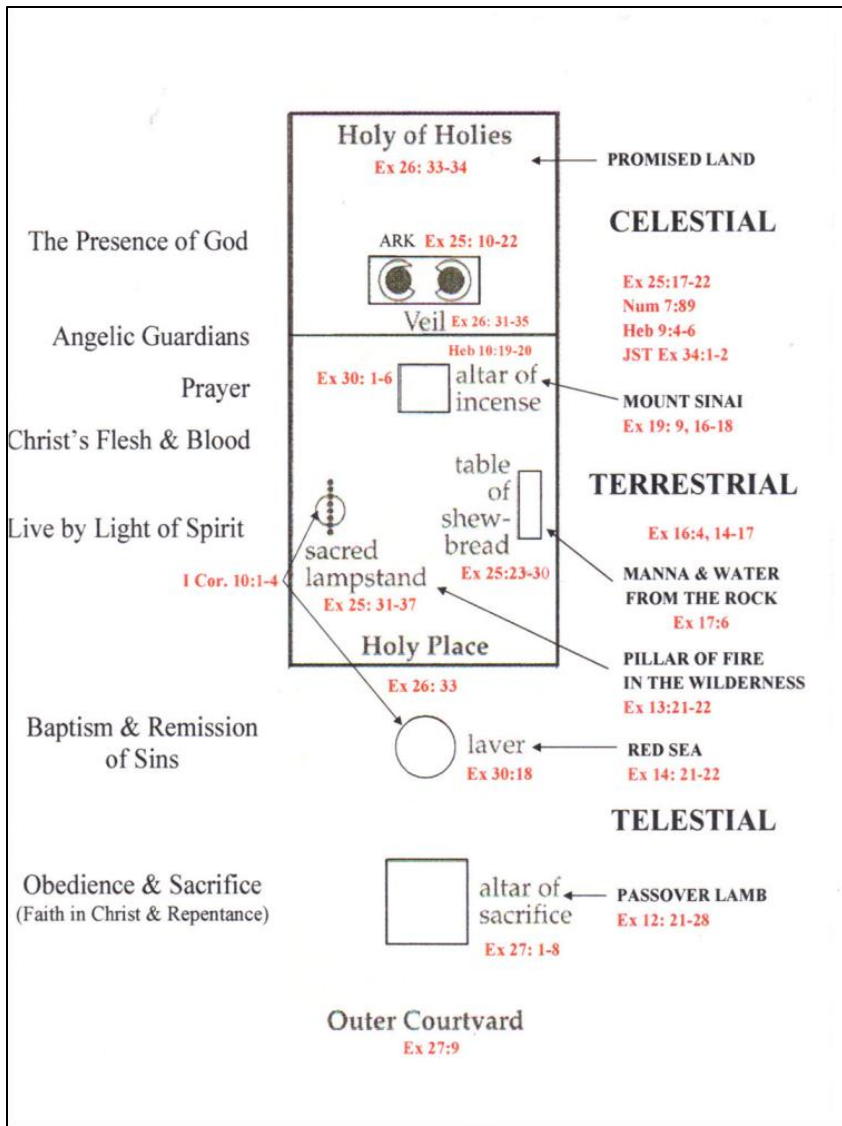
The hand used in partaking of the sacrament would logically be the same hand used in making any other sacred oath. For most of us, that would be the right hand. However, sacramental covenants—and other eternal covenants as well—can be and are made by those who have lost the use of the right hand, or who have no hands at all. Much more important than concern over which hand is used in partaking of the sacrament is that the sacrament be partaken with a deep realization of the atoning sacrifice that the sacrament represents.”

12. How do we know if we are partaking worthily?

John H. Groberg, *General Conference*, April 1989.

Unless you are under priesthood restriction, you are worthy. Only the Bishop has the keys as a judge in Israel to ascertain our worthiness to restrict us from partaking of the sacrament. If we feel that we are not worthy, we should visit with the bishop to receive his judgement.

The following charts show the similarity between the events which took place in the upper room, the journey of the people of Israel to enter the promised land, and the way into the holy of holies performed by the great high priest in Israel. It appears that John was showing to the saints that the sacrament instituted in the upper room was a part of the journey to become at one with God.



This chart is taken from the Institute Student manual. I have added the scriptures and the comparison to the Journey of the House of Israel.

The Chart below is something that I have put together for my own understanding and it is NOT material that has gone through correlation and may not be reproduced.

| STEPS IN ISRAEL'S JOURNEY TO THE PROMISED LAND | REPRESENTATION IN THE TABERNACLE | CHRIST IN THE UPPER ROOM & FINAL HOURS | CHRIST AMONG THE NEPHITES | REPRESENTATION IN OUR JOURNEY HOME |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| PASSOVER EXODUS 12:21-23 | ALTAR OF SACRIFICE EXODUS 40:29 | PASSOVER JOHN 13:1-2 | BROKEN HEART & CONTRITE SPIRIT 3 NEPHI 9:19-20 | FAITH IN CHRIST REPENTANCE |
| CROSSING RED SEA EXODUS 14:21-22 | LAVER OF WATER EXODUS 40:30 | WASHING THE FEET JOHN 13:4-10 | COMMAND TO BAPTIZE 3 NEPHI 11:21-28; 19:11 | BAPTISM |
| PILLAR OF FIRE EXODUS 13:21-22 | LAMPSTAND EXODUS 40:24-25 | TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLY GHOST JOHN 14:16, 26; 16:7-13 | RECEIVE HOLY GHOST 3 NEPHI 19:9, 13-22 | HOLY GHOST |
| MANNA & WATER FROM ROCK EX. 16:4, 14-17; 17:6 | TABLE OF SHEWBREAD EXODUS 40:22-23 | SACRAMENT (CHRIST) MATT. 26:26-29; JOHN 15 | SACRAMENT 3 NEPHI 18:1-11 | SACRAMENT |
| SMOKE COVERS & ASCENDS TO MT. SINAI EXODUS 19:9, 16-18 | ALTAR OF INCENSE EXODUS 40:26-27 | INTERCESSARY PRAYER JOHN 17 | PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE 3 NEPHI 17:14-17 | PRAYER |
| MOUNT SINAI JST EXODUS 34:1-2 | VEIL EXODUS 26:33; 40:21 | SEEKING AT ONE MENT LUKE 22:39-46 Heb. 10:19-20 | PRAYS THREE TIMES 3 NEPHI 19:19-32 | TEMPLE |
| ENTERING THE PROMISED LAND JOSHUA 3:14-17; 4-5 D&C 84:19-24 | HOLY OF HOLIES EXODUS 26:33-34; Leviticus 16:11-34 | VEIL IS RENT MATTHEW 27:51-53 | HEARTS ARE OPENED TO UNDERSTAND ETERNAL THINGS 3 NEPHI 19:33-36 | RETURNING HOME TO GOD'S PRESENCE |