

1 Corinthians 11:23; Revelation 21:1–6 Bible Study

Theme

Communion is not only a remembrance of Christ's death and resurrection but also a foretaste of the eternal feast in God's kingdom. The saints we remember are already gathered at that table, and every time we share in the Lord's Supper, we join them in praise and anticipation.

Scripture Overview

1 Corinthians 11:23

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that the Lord's Supper is not just a church tradition—it is something received from Christ Himself. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and said, "This is my body." The act of communion connects us to that sacred night, grounding our faith in His sacrifice and grace.

Revelation 21:1–6

John's vision opens with a new heaven and new earth where God dwells with His people. The old order of pain and death has passed away. The New Jerusalem, radiant as a bride, descends from heaven. God proclaims, "I am making everything new!" This is the fulfillment of communion—the eternal table where thirst is quenched forever by the water of life.

Background and Context

1 Corinthians 11:23

Paul writes to a divided church in Corinth, reminding them that the Lord's Supper is sacred. It's not a social meal but a proclamation of Christ's death until He comes again. Early Christians gathered around a shared table, emphasizing equality and grace. To misuse this meal was to misunderstand the gospel itself.

Revelation 21:1–6

John's audience faced persecution and uncertainty. His vision of a renewed creation assured them that suffering and death would not have the final word. The "new heaven and new earth" echo Isaiah 65:17, fulfilling God's promise to make all things new. Communion points toward this reality—the meal we share now anticipates the wedding banquet of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9).

Theological Connection

The table of the Lord is where **memory meets hope**.

At communion, we **look back** to Christ's sacrifice, **look within** to examine our hearts, and **look forward** to the day when we will feast with Him in glory. Every time the bread is broken and the cup is shared, heaven touches earth.

The saints we name and remember are not gone; they are gathered at that eternal table. As we take communion, we're not just recalling what Jesus did—we're participating in the promise of what He's still doing: reconciling all things to Himself and preparing a place for us in the new creation.

Wesleyan / Methodist Perspective

John Wesley viewed Holy Communion as both a **means of grace** and a **foretaste of heaven**. He urged believers to receive it frequently because it is a tangible expression of God's grace. For Wesley, communion was not merely symbolic—it was transformative. The bread and cup nourish the soul and strengthen believers for holy living.

When we gather at the table, we join the "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1). The separation between earth and heaven thins, and the communion of saints becomes real and near.

Apologetic Note

Skeptics sometimes view communion as a mere ritual or symbolic gesture. Yet Scripture presents it as something deeper—a **divine encounter**. Paul's words "received from the Lord" affirm its sacred origin, not human invention. Revelation's imagery shows the culmination of that same promise: communion is not an ending, but a beginning. The cross points toward the kingdom.

To partake of communion is to say: "I believe Christ is risen, and He will come again." It is both remembrance and proclamation.

Discussion Questions

1. How does communion connect you personally to both the cross and the coming kingdom?
2. What do you think it means that the saints are already "around the throne" (Revelation 7:9–10)?

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3. How does this understanding shape how we approach the Lord's table?
4. Why might Wesley have called communion a "converting ordinance"?
5. How can remembering the eternal feast change how we view grief, loss, or separation from loved ones?

Reflection

Communion reminds us that **death does not have the last word**. When we come to the table, we remember the One who conquered the grave and trust that He is preparing a place where mourning and pain will cease. The bread we break now will one day give way to the full banquet of joy, where every tear is wiped away.

Think of it this way: each time we share the bread and cup, it's like a rehearsal dinner for the wedding feast of the Lamb. We are not only remembering—we are participating in something eternal.

Action Step

As you receive communion this week, pause and name aloud someone who shaped your faith but is now with the Lord. Picture them at the table with Jesus. Then, in gratitude, say, "We are one in Christ, and this table has no end."

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
You broke bread with sinners and saints,
and You broke Yourself open for our salvation.
As we come to Your table, help us remember Your sacrifice
and long for the day when faith becomes sight.
Let the bread and cup remind us that death is defeated,
and that all who love You are gathered in Your presence.
Make us one with You, one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world—
until we feast at Your heavenly banquet.
In Your holy name we pray,
Amen.

Key Verses for Meditation

- 1 Corinthians 11:26 — "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."
- Revelation 21:5 — "He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!'"

Thought to Carry Home

When we take communion, heaven isn't far away—it's breaking in. We're not just remembering Jesus; we're joining the saints at His table where love never ends.