

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

A Night To Be Much Observed

By Norman E. Fultz

From a burning bush on Mount Horeb at the backside of the desert where he was tending the sheep of his father-in-law, Moses was commissioned of God to return to Egypt and, in company with his brother Aaron, seek Pharaoh's release of Israel. Pharaoh would harden his heart, affording the opportunity for great and convincing wonders to be performed. These wonders (better known to most as the ten plagues) would culminate in the death of Egypt's first born ones; for the Lord considered Israel His first born, and He said, ***“Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first born”*** (Ex. 4:23). The account of these wonders is found in Exodus seven through twelve. Finally, in anticipation of the last plague on Egypt, the Lord instructed Moses and Aaron regarding the ***“Lord's Passover”*** and Israel's release (read Exodus 12). In verse 42, the record says, ***“It is a night to be much observed*** (solemn observance NKJV) ***unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.”*** In the future observances of this event, when the children would ask, ***“What mean ye by this service?”***, they were to be taught its significance fully and clearly (cf. Ex. 12:26-27; 13:8, 14).

Israel's Night To Be Much Observed

It is said to be ***“that night of the Lord...”*** What a marvelous display of God's power against Egypt and of His grace toward Israel! He would triumph over Pharaoh's callousness, and His wonders would be multiplied in the land of Egypt (Ex. 11:9). It was to be observed by eating the Passover lamb.

To Be Observed By Whom?

Some were excluded – the stranger, foreigner, and hired servant; in fact, ***“no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof”*** (Ex. 12:43-45, 48b). These would have lacked the knowledge of the event necessary to its meaningful observance. There would have been a lack of faith in its significance, and faith is the foundation of all acceptable service to God. And there would be a lack of personal interest. To Israel, it was a personal deliverance from many long years of bondage, but to the stranger it would mean nothing.

It was provided for Israel – ***“this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations”*** (vs. 42b). Nor was it only a privilege; it was also a duty. ***“All the congregation of Israel shall keep (do, margin) it”*** (vs. 47).

Time and Manner of Observance

The feast growing out of the events of this night which meant so much to Israel was to be kept with regularity; every year on the fourteenth day of the first month, Abib (Ex. 12:6; 13:4-5). Deep meaning was to characterize the observance. ***“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”*** (Ex. 13:8). And in the next verse the writer shows it to be a memorial which should call forth respect for the Lord's law.

A Night To Be Much Observed By Christians

We hasten to explain that we do not mean to infer that the feast of which we are now about to speak is a continuation of the Jewish Passover. It was, however, instituted at Jesus' last observance of that feast (Lk. 22:15-

18), and there are some points of comparison that can be made without straining. We speak of the Lord's Supper which was instituted by Jesus at night; that night of His betrayal (1 Cor. 11:23).

By Whom To Be Observed?

The Lord's statement of inclusion also excludes some. Since His table is in His kingdom, those not in the kingdom are excluded from a truly beneficial observance of His Supper. In many instances, as outsiders, they are lacking in knowledge of its meaning and, thus, lack the faith which characterizes citizens of the kingdom. For to these latter ones, it is a communion of the body and of the blood of the Lord (1 Cor. 10:16). Those not in the kingdom lack the personal interest which should characterize observers, having never been washed in the blood of the Lamb, nor translated into the kingdom (Col. 1:13-14).

Who are included? Jesus said, ***"And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel"*** (Lk. 22:29-30). While the primary statement was to the apostles, Paul showed that the command to observe the Lord's Supper extended to all those in the church (1 Cor. 11:17-34). And should it not be considered as more than a privilege? Though a privilege, it is to so remember the Lord. Is observance not a duty? The command is, ***"Take, eat"*** and ***"this do ye."*** It is a matter of grave concern that many members of the body seemingly consider the Lord's Supper so lightly. Company dropping in, the opportunity to make overtime dollars, a fishing trip, or a golf game often takes precedence over this great memorial of the Lord's sacrifice. Every child of God should consider it an event to be ***"much observed."***

Time and Manner Observance

Of the disciples in Troas, it is said, ***"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow..."*** (Acts 20:7). They came together on the first day of the week. They broke bread. Every week has a first day. Christians, therefore, are to observe the Lord's Supper every first day of the week.

We should endeavor to attach the deepest meaning to it, examining ourselves, discerning the Lord's body, showing the Lord's death till he comes (1 Cor. 11:26-29). It is a memorial of that great sacrifice of the Lord (vss. 24-25). Let each one learn what it means, and when one's children ask, ***"What mean ye by this?"*** tell them plainly and clearly. And should not the observance of this memorial, as Israel's observance of the Passover, produce a great respect for the Lord's law and a resultant desire to learn more of Him and a deeper commitment to serve Him faithfully?

And should not each Christian, therefore, seek to be faithful in assembling every time possible to praise Him and to grow in His grace and knowledge? Truly, dear fellow Christian, the institution of the Lord's Supper is a night to be much remembered in the kingdom. – ***Truth Magazine***, October 6, 1977 ■

"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Lk. 22:14-20).

"The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. 10:16, 17).

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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