

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Discerning The Body

(Jerry Fite)

Every Sunday, fifty-two times a year, Christians gather to partake of the Lord's Supper. When together, each Christian has a personal responsibility to think properly as he or she eats the unleavened bread and drinks the fruit of the vine. Paul reveals a sobering reminder: *“for he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself if he discern not the body”* (I Corinthians 11:29).

In “discerning”, the human mind must distinguish between things, and seeing things which differ, make a proper judgment. Some believe Paul is exhorting the brethren to properly judge “the body”, or the church. One should know that the body or church should not be divided, which was occurring when the saints gathered to break bread. When “the body” comes together as the church, the eating and drinking should not be considered a common meal, but only a memorial of the death of Christ.

While “the body” in Scripture is often describing “the church”, the immediate context of verse 29 is the similar warning of verse 27: *“Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy*

manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord”. Verse 27 emphasizes the physical body and blood of Jesus which is summed up as “the body” of verse 29. Partaking in an “unworthy manner” would be failing to discern the body” which was delivered upon the cross for our behalf.

What should you think about when “discerning the body of the Lord”. Here are some suggestions to help each of us partake in a worthy manner:

As you partake of the bread, you could begin your thoughts with the incarnation of Jesus. The eternal Word became flesh in time so He could die for us, and through death, defeat Satan. *“Since the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook; that through death he might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is the Devil* (Hebrews 2:14).

Secondly, as you meditate on the body, you could think of Jesus having a body through which He accomplished the will of God regarding your salvation. Animal sacrifices could not accomplish our salvation, *“...but a body didst thou prepare for me... Then said I, ‘Lo, I am come* (in

the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God” (Hebrews 10:5,7). Doing God's will perfectly in the body, Jesus offered His body as the acceptable sacrifice once and for all to sanctify us (Hebrews 10:10).

As the cup of the Lord is passed, we can partake thinking about Jesus' blood ratifying the new covenant which is God's promise to forgive us of our Sins. We blend the new covenant and the remission of sins together in our mind remembering Jesus' words, *“for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins”* Matthew 26:28).

We can also meditate with thankfulness in our heart for God's love, for we know God “so loved” us to give His Son to die for us on the cross (John 3:16). We also thankfully give Jesus the deserved glory for He *“...loveth us and loosed us from our sins by His blood”* (Revelation 1:5).

The body of Christ could not live without the blood, and we could not be saved if Jesus had not lived perfectly in the body, and gave his life-blood for our sins. With gratitude and thanksgiving in our hearts, we partake discerning the body.