

Glad Tidings

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

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How do you discern the body of Jesus?

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When you partake of the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, what are your thoughts? Paul warns Christians of the seriousness of the occasion when he writes, “for he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body” (*I Corinthians 11:29*).

The Corinthians had made their coming together an occasion to satisfy hunger, instead of discerning the body of Christ sacrificed upon the cross (*I Corinthians 11:34*). Selfishness was manifested by some eating their own supper, while those who had no food went hungry (*I Corinthians 11:21-22*). Their divisive spirit, and undiscerning mind made it impossible to partake of the Lord’s supper (*I Corinthians 11:20*).

The solution was to satisfy their hunger at home, and not make the Lord’s supper a common meal. The Lord’s supper was a memorial. Jesus says, “Do this in remembrance of Me” (*I Corinthians 11:24-25*). We, like all faithful disciples of the Lord in the New Testament, gather together to break bread on the first day of the week (*Acts 20:7*). As often as we partake, which comes weekly, we “proclaim the Lord’s

death till He comes” (*I Corinthians 11:26*).

While the Corinthians were not giving thought to the sacrificial body of Jesus when eating and drinking, we must do so. With these sobering thoughts before us, how do we properly discern, or judge rightly the body of Jesus when partaking of the Lord’s supper?

As we eat the bread and drink the fruit of the vine, we can think of Jesus as the Lamb of God (*John 1:29*). He was the sinless lamb without blemish whose body was slain, and whose blood was shed to cleanse the world of sin. Jesus’ body was offered “for you” (*I Corinthians 11:24*). Jesus’ blood “was poured out for many for the remission of sins” (*Matthew 26:28*). As we partake, remembering Jesus, we can contemplate how horrible sin is before God that necessitated the death of the sinless Son of God to cleanse us.

Discerning the body of Jesus may find us thinking about the pain and suffering Jesus endured on the cross. Right before being delivered up to be crucified, Jesus’ back was lacerated by the scourging whip (*Matthew 26:26*). He was spat upon,

mocked and smitten on his head (*Matthew 27:29-30*). While nails pierced his hands and feet with excruciating pain, He endured the challenge to come down from the cross to prove He was the Son of God (*Matthew 26:40*). Thirsty, in His six-hour ordeal on the cross, He was given vinegar to drink (*John 19:28-29*). Jesus did not offer up His body painlessly. I need to reflect and appreciate His ordeal on my behalf.

Eating and drinking with discernment may find you concentrating on the blessings of salvation accomplished by the redeeming price of Jesus’ shed blood. No money could buy us from Sin. Jesus’ precious blood redeemed us from Sin (*I Peter 1:18-19*). We can think of this, also discerning this redemptive plan “... was known before the foundation of the world (*I Peter 1:20*). With a heart of thankfulness, we eat the bread and drink the cup knowing we share in the benefits of Jesus’ death on the cross (*I Corinthians 10:16*).

These are some suggestions for discerning Jesus’ body when you partake of the Lord’s supper. Discerning the body is specific, but it lends itself to a variety of thoughts as we partake each week proclaiming His death.