

COURSE 6

THE TRUE JEWISH COMMUNION AND THE MESSIANIC FEAST

As we've seen, the true communion that Paul spoke of was based on 1,500 years of Israelite communal meals in the Tabernacle and the Temple, not on a Roman Communion ritual that did not yet exist. This Course will cover much ground, from the communal meals often seen in the Tabernacle and Temple to the ultimate communal meal in heaven, for which the parables at the Last Supper prepare us. We will see how, throughout history, the Israelites under the Old Covenant viewed their communal meals as "preenactments" of a heavenly feast with the Messiah. The Messianic Jews in the New Covenant then lived this out through their *agape* feasts, thus fulfilling this natural-to-spiritual idiom.

Course 5 showed that these truths were necessary for the spiritual bride to be made ready. Now we will see how the Israelite bread-and-wine communal meals align with the Last Supper in pointing forward to the Messianic Feast. From the Showbread to various sacrifices, these communal meals all foreshadow the true spiritual communion that God desires with every person.

The First Bread-and-Wine "Communal" Meal

In the scriptures, the first bread-and-wine communal meal (at least symbolically communal) is that in which Melchizedek, the king of Salem and priest of God, brought out *bread and wine to Abraham*, who returned victorious from battle:

^{NAS} Genesis 14:18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out **bread and wine**; now he was a **priest of God** Most High.

Paul later speaks of how great Melchizedek was because Abraham, the inheritor of God's promises, gave him a tithe. He states that Melchizedek had no father or mother, meaning only that his genealogy was not traced from the Levitical priestly lineage (Hebrews 7:6). Paul furthermore states that Melchizedek's name means "king of righteousness," and since this man was king over Salem, it also shows him as "king of peace." (Note that "Salem" means "peace," and the city of Salem was later named "Jeru-salem," meaning "foundation of peace.")

Melchizedek was a type of Christ in various ways, such as through his priestly ministry. Although Jesus was from the tribe of Judah and thus could not hold the rank of high priest according to the law of Moses, he was spiritually called a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. In this priesthood what mattered was the calling of God, not the genealogy from the tribe of Levi (Hebrews 6:20; 7:11, 12).

Several hundred years later King David acknowledged this when, under God's anointing, he spoke concerning the future Messiah: "Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

^{NAS} Psalm 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind,
"Thou art a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek."

Although David was also from the tribe of Judah, he had a revelation on one occasion that he himself could go right into the Temple and ask the high priest for a portion of the twelve breads (Showbread). According to God's law, only priests from Levi's lineage (through Aaron) were to partake of these breads, which were made from the Israelites' grain offerings. These breads were to continually abide in God's presence in the Temple, and the higher order of priests would partake of them every Sabbath.

David was likely also applying the concept of the Melchizedek priesthood to himself and thus had the confidence to ask for the Showbread on this one occasion. Samuel's account of this event with David refers to the priestly need to be ritually pure before partaking of the Showbread (1 Samuel 21:1–6). This purity requirement pointed to the Showbread (breads of the presence) as a *communal* meal at which God Himself was considered to be present. David (from the tribe of Judah) giving out the Showbread to those with him is a type of Christ giving out the true bread to those with him. This typology could also explain why David's sons were called priests (*kohen* in Hebrew, 2 Samuel 8:18). These Jewish communal meals involved *communion* with God and one another as members of the Jewish nation who were following the covenant and law of Moses.

Many Israelites were excluded from this Showbread meal, as this represented a future high calling for only those who desired to be closest to God and dwell in His intimate, most direct presence.

So what was God showing back in Melchizedek's day? Why did God lead that great king and priest to bring *bread and wine* out to Abraham, just a stone's throw from the location where David would later be directed to build the Temple?

Many years after Melchizedek brought out bread and wine to Abraham, and after the Israelites returned to Israel from the captivity in Egypt, God instructed Moses to build the Tabernacle. One of the first things God commanded for this Tabernacle was the gold-overlaid table on which the *breads* of the presence were set

(and the cups/bowls for the *wine* libations, Exodus 25:23–30). Since the Israelites had re-entered this same Promised Land where Melchizedek had lived, this history of Melchizedek bringing out bread and wine to Abraham would have been part of their understanding. David showed this many years later in his statement in Psalm 110:4 (above) about Melchizedek. Thus, some of God’s commandments to Moses (including the Showbread and its wine) would point forward to both the literal and spiritual Promised Land while also reflecting back on the event with Melchizedek.

What we’ll see throughout Jewish history is a common thread linking the communal meals—beginning with the bread and wine of Melchizedek, then the twelve breads and wine in the Tabernacle (and later in the Temple), and then through the solemn bread-and-wine services of the Dead Sea Sect and other Jewish groups. The bread and wine the Messiah served at the Last Supper also pointed forward, for all of these communal meals point to the same Messianic feast or banquet with the king and priest.

The Three Annual Festivals as Communal Meals

The three annual festivals that God commanded through Moses were also communal. The first of these festivals was Passover, the second was Pentecost or Weeks (Shavout), and the final festival was often called Ingathering, Tabernacles, or Booths (Sukkot). They were not open to strangers outside of the covenant given to Moses; among Israelites, those who were ritually clean could attend and partake. However, the festivals were also open to Gentile proselytes who would be circumcised and thus enter the covenant; these proselytes were to be treated as those born in the land (Exodus 12:45).

These festival communal meals at the Tabernacle and Temple involved *bread and wine* with rejoicing as the bread was broken and the wine—either new wine or wine diluted with water—was shared. These meals were not regarded as worldly parties but rather as reverent but joyful celebrations in God’s presence, and they pointed forward to the spiritual feasting in the New Covenant and to the Messianic banquet envisioned by many Jews throughout history.

God commanded the Israelites to attend these three annual festivals in the place where the ark—symbolic of His presence—would dwell.

^{NAS} Deuteronomy 16:16–17 “Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

These three festivals were communal in nature—intended for the whole nation of Israel to commune as a united people in God’s presence in the place He had chosen. God commanded these festivals because they pointed forward to future spiritual truths that would be revealed by the Messiah. It is the spiritual fulfillment of these three festivals that will produce the image and likeness that we are called to (covered in Course 8). This is what will mature the spiritual fruit that God seeks in His people, thus preparing the believers to be caught up into God’s presence as the spiritual bride.

Two of these annual festivals were spiritually fulfilled among the New Covenant Jewish believers. The first—the true Passover—was accomplished when Christ was crucified at the exact time and day of Passover. The second—the Festival of Weeks or Pentecost—was spiritually fulfilled on the exact day of Pentecost (Acts 2) after the 50-day counting of the Omer (the sheaf), when God filled the Messiah’s disciples with His spirit. This individual infilling of God’s spirit had never happened before, and it fulfilled Joel’s prophecy that God would pour out His spirit on all people (Joel 2:28).

The third annual festival was the Festival of Ingathering (Booths), in which the Israelites would rejoice and give thanks for all the produce of the land, including the “ingathering” of the grape harvest with its new wine:

^{NAS} Deuteronomy 16:13–14 “You shall celebrate the Feast of Booths seven days after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and your **wine** vat; and **you shall rejoice in your feast**, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your towns.

The scriptures show that this festival included great celebration and joy.

^{NAS} Deuteronomy 16:15 “Seven days you shall celebrate a feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, **so that you shall be altogether joyful**.

Unlike the first two festivals, however, nothing in the scriptures indicates that this third annual festival was spiritually fulfilled within that same year. However, they do indicate that the disciples were entering this third festival’s spiritual fulfillment because they were sharing the feasts of God’s love (called *Agapais* in Greek), as we saw in Course 5. It is in the spiritual fulfillment of this third festival that the believers who enter in will be perfected as a spiritual bride, completing the picture of the ripened fruit and the harvest.

The joy experienced in these Old Covenant festivals was even greater in their New Covenant spiritual fulfillment. This is evident after God's spirit began to fill the Messiah's disciples on the day of Pentecost and beyond:

^{NAS} 1 Peter 1:8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with **joy inexpressible** and full of glory,

Keil & Delitzsch Commentary further speaks of the joy concerning the third festival:

The leading character of the feast of Tabernacles . . . was to consist in "joy before the Lord." As a "feast," i.e., a feast of joy . . . (אָהַב, from אָהַב = אָהַב, **denoting the circular motion of the dance**, 1 Sam xxx.16), it was to be kept for seven days; so that Israel "**should be only rejoicing,**" and **give itself up entirely to joy** (Deut xvi.15).¹³⁸

We saw in Course 3 that the breaking of bread (with "gladness") experienced by the Messiah's followers after Pentecost (Acts 2:42, 46) was not mere gladness as the English translation indicates, but rather an incredibly ecstatic joy as God moved powerfully among them. The *Louw-Nida Lexicon* defines the Greek word translated as "gladness" in Acts 2:46 as "a state of intensive joy and gladness, often implying verbal expression and body movement (for example, jumping, leaping, dancing)...."¹³⁹ According to this definition, these joyous emotions were so powerful that they needed to be expressed with exuberant physical movement, just as when David danced as the ark was coming into Jerusalem.

Communal Meals and Communal Sacrifices

For many hundreds of years in the Mosaic covenant, the Israelites partook of certain communal meals and communal sacrifices, which formed a deep part of Jewish idiom. Under Moses, sacrifices and offerings brought Israel into *communion* with God. Some of these were communal in the sense of being offered up for the whole nation, while others were offered as individual sacrifices. The Babylonian Talmud often speaks of the communal sacrificial offerings:

138 Keil and Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament* (see his commentary concerning Leviticus 23:33–43 on p. 449).

139 Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 1, p. 303, s.v. "ἀγαλλίασις."

MISHNA. (a) What was done with this money drawn? The daily sacrifices, the additional sacrifices, and the drink-offerings belonging to them were bought therewith; also the Omers (sheaves), the two loaves, **the showbreads**, and **communal** sacrifices in general. The watchmen who had to guard the after-growth on the Sabbatical year were paid out of this money. R. Jose says: “One who so desired could undertake the guarding (of the after-growth on Sabbatical years) without pay.” The sages answered him: “Thou wilt admit thyself, that the sacrifices (from the after-growth on Sabbatical years) must be brought only from **communal** property.”¹⁴⁰

One example of a communal sacrifice brought on behalf of the whole nation was the Tamid—the daily morning and evening burnt offerings in the Temple. These offerings provided communion with God for the nation as a whole, with both the animal’s flesh and blood extremely important for the Israelites’ atonement, as Moses had made clear.

Properly understanding the communal meals and sacrifices helps illustrate the true spiritual communion that Paul wrote about in 1 Corinthians (Course 5), and how the spiritual partaking among the believers fulfilled what these communal meals pointed to. We saw in Courses 3 and 4 (with more coming in Course 9) that the breaking of the twelve Temple breads was a communal meal that points forward to the spiritual meal that God has for us. We also saw that after Pentecost, Messianic Jews went forth “breaking bread”—meaning the spiritual bread, the bread of life.

As was mentioned in the previous Course, *The Jewish Encyclopedia* described the nature of these **communal** gatherings under “Peace-Offerings”:

It is difficult to determine whether Yhwh was regarded as the guest at these sacrificial meals, or the sacrificers were considered guests of God, to whom the sacrifice was being devoted.

Inasmuch as community was expressed at these sacrifices by reciprocal giving and accepting, God must have been considered as more than a mere guest.¹⁴¹

What a powerful picture—that God Himself was considered as partaking with the Israelites in these meals and offerings in the “reciprocal giving and accepting.”

The Jewish Encyclopedia continues:

140 Babylonian Talmud, Book 2, Tract Shekalim, ch. 4, p. 15, <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/t02/shk08.htm>.

141 *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, p. 566, s.v. “Peace-Offering.”

Through the common-meal sacrifice the members of the family or gens (I Sam. xx. 6), as likewise an army at the beginning of a campaign, were brought into **communion** with God.¹⁴²

From the Jewish idiom shown here, the communion with God clearly came about “through the common-meal sacrifice,” and it was the shed animal blood that provided this communion. This is important to keep in mind when Paul says what “our communion” is for those in the New Covenant (1 Corinthians 10:16). “Our communion” is not a Roman ritual, because no Catholic Church or Roman ritual existed yet. Instead, Paul speaks of these meals that involved communing with God through sacrifices from a 1,500-year-old Israelite experience. Now in the promised New Covenant, however, Paul shows that our communion is based on a different type of shed blood and a spiritual communal meal.

When Jewish writers mention “communion” as in the encyclopedic reference above or in Talmudic quotes we’ve seen, it is obviously not in the context of a Roman Communion ritual or the Blessed Eucharist. We must approach the Jewish Paul, the former Pharisee taught under Gamaliel, in a similar way. Paul speaks from the Jewish idiom of his day, with its clear understanding of communal meals, communal Temple sacrifices, and how communion with God was achieved under those sacrifices in the Mosaic covenant. Paul also knew that all this pointed forward to the spiritual experience in the promised New Covenant.

Common Bond for the Communal Meals

The root of the word “communion” (*koinonia* in Greek) is “common,” and this aspect of the word relates to having things in common. The common bond of the people of the Israelite nation was that they were all sons of Israel walking in the covenant of Moses as a separated nation unto God. Their common bond was being part of the nation in good standing with God, having offered the appropriate sacrifices; this was their “commun-ion.”

When Paul and John speak of our “communion” (also translated as “fellowship,” 1 Corinthians 10:16; 1 John 1:3), they point out that the New Covenant communion is based on the common bond of having accepted the Messiah and his sacrifice. Accepting God’s plan through the Messiah—who willingly offered his soul (Isaiah 53:10, YLT)—and accepting his shed blood as payment of our trespasses and partaking of the spiritual bread of life creates our common bond of fellowship, and thus our communion.

142 *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 9, p. 567, s.v. “Peace-Offering.”

In Leviticus 10 and elsewhere, the two things that most concerned Moses were the shedding of the blood of the sacrifice and the consuming of its flesh for our atonement. Moses became angry when he discovered that Aaron and his sons had not eaten the flesh of the atoning sacrifice. Taken in context with the Jewish natural-to-spiritual idiom, the Messiah's shed blood is what provides the fellowship and communion in God's presence, and his body (who he was, as God's word expressed) is the bread that *we* break and feed upon (Christ the "bread of life"). In the New Covenant as spiritual members in Christ's spiritual body, the common bond of fellowship between God and man is based on and fulfills these same two aspects.

^{KJV} 1 Corinthians 10:16 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?

^{YLT} 1 Corinthians 10:16 The cup of the blessing that we bless—is it not the **fellowship** of the blood of the Christ? the bread that we break—is it not the **fellowship** of the body of the Christ?

^{GNT} 1 Corinthians 10:16 τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ **κοινωνία** ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλῶμεν, οὐχὶ **κοινωνία**¹⁴³ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστίν;

^{NAS} John 6:51 "I am the **living bread** that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and **the bread also which I shall give** for the life of the world **is My flesh.**"

Natural Communion to Spiritual Communion

In the communal sacrifices, the Jews shared, communed, and fellowshiped in the shed blood in the sense that they shared in the atonement, the forgiveness, and the other benefits it represented. This sacrificial blood provided communion with God and one another, as well as the blessings and protections of being in covenant with God and having one's sins forgiven. God explained that it paid the price for the atonement of the people:

143 The Greek word *koinonia* is translated into English in various ways, usually as "fellowship," "communion," or "sharing." Additionally, the Greek word for "blessing" could also be translated as "praise"; indeed, *Strong's* lists "praise" as the first meaning for the word and *BDAG* defines εὐλογίας "to say someth. commendatory, speak well of, praise, extol."

^{NAS} Leviticus 17:11 ‘For the **life** of the flesh **is in the blood**, and I have given it to you on the altar **to make atonement** for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.’

The Israelites also shared in the food and nourishment from some of the animal sacrifices and bread offerings. Part of these offerings went to the officiating priests for food and another part often went to the one making the offering. Paul points to this when he says “the bread that *we* break” (spiritual bread) and “*we* have an altar” (Hebrews 13:10), which he means spiritually. Paul is showing that the New Covenant communion with God is no longer based on common genealogical bonds or animal sacrifices, but on believing in God’s plan for atonement through the Messiah.

The same Greek word for communion (*koinonia*) was used by the Jews in the Septuagint, which was written more than 150 years before Jesus and Paul ministered, and four or five centuries before the Roman Catholic Church took over. When Jewish scholars used this Greek word in the Septuagint, it obviously did not refer to a Roman Communion ritual or a “Blessed Eucharist.” These Jewish writers did not intend any such ritual when they translated Leviticus using the Greek word *koinonia* for “fellowship”:

^{LXE} Leviticus 6:2 The soul which shall have sinned, and willfully overlooked the commandments of the Lord, and shall have dealt falsely in the affairs of his neighbour in the matter of a deposit, or concerning **fellowship**, or concerning plunder, or has in anything wronged his neighbour,

^{LXT} Leviticus 5:21 ψυχὴ ἐὰν ἀμάρτη καὶ παριδῶν παρίδη τὰς ἐντολὰς κυρίου καὶ ψεύσῃται τὰ πρὸς τὸν πλησίον ἐν παραθήκῃ ἢ περὶ **κοινωνίας** ἢ περὶ ἀρπαγῆς ἢ ἡδίκησέν τι τὸν πλησίον

In Christ’s day, Jews like Paul were familiar with these Greek words. In fact, the majority of the Old Testament verses quoted in the New Testament come from the Septuagint. Therefore, we should not mentally leap to a Roman ritual when we see those same Greek words used by the Jews in the New Testament.

In Corinthians 10:16, Paul contrasts the New Covenant communion with that under the law given through Moses. By saying in Greek that “the cup of the praise which we praise” is a “communion/sharing/fellowship” of the blood of Christ, Paul points back to what Jesus taught at the Last Supper—that the cup of which they were partaking symbolically represented the New Covenant:

^{NAS} Luke 22:20 And in the same way *He took* the cup after they had eaten, saying, “**This cup** which is poured out for you **is the new covenant** in My blood.

While the first covenant was based on the blood of the sacrifices (Exodus 24:6–8), the Messiah shows here that the New Covenant is based on his own shed blood.

Below, Paul speaks of the “bread that **we** break” and shows it as spiritual fellowship (communion) in Christ’s spiritual body, in and through its members:

^{YLT} 1 Corinthians 10:16b the bread that **we** break—is it not the fellowship of the body of the Christ?

Here, Paul refers back to what the Lord had revealed to him and to what he had previously taught the Corinthians about the Last Supper teachings and the Messiah’s parables (1 Corinthians 11:23). Paul understood by revelation from the Lord that when Jesus “broke” one bread and gave his disciples the pieces and said this was his body (see Course 2), he was showing them how the believers—the spiritual body of Christ—would function in the promised New Covenant.

Paul also taught that as the symbolic pieces of the one bread, we also partake of it, and receive sustenance from it, for we are the members of the one spiritual body:

^{NAS} 1 Corinthians 10:17 Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread.

This is how God will give us spiritual provision, as we fellowship and commune with one another in His spirit.

Notice how verse 17 connects to what we just saw in verse 16, so that immediately after speaking of our communion, fellowship, and the bread that we break, Paul mentions the spiritual bread that the believers were sharing in Corinth. This spiritual partaking in God’s presence fulfills what the Israelite communal meals had pointed to.

Then, in the following verse, Paul compares the Old Covenant communion with the New Covenant communion:

^{DBY} 1 Corinthians 10:18 See Israel according to flesh: are not they who eat the sacrifices in **communion** with the altar?

Paul was not teaching a Roman ritual here, but simply comparing the two covenants and how they both share and commune from the altar. In the New Covenant, we have an altar and we partake of the bread and wine offering of the people, just as the

Israelites did under the first covenant. But this time our partaking is from a *spiritual* altar, from which only those in proper New Covenant communion can partake:

^{NAS} Hebrews 13:10 **We have an altar**, from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

In the previous chapter of Corinthians, Paul had also contrasted the Old Covenant priests sharing and eating in the Temple with our *spiritual* sharing and eating in the New Covenant:

^{NAS} 1 Corinthians 9:13 Do you not know that those who perform sacred services **eat** the *food* of the temple, *and* those who attend regularly to the altar have their share with the altar?

^{YLT} 1 Corinthians 9:14 **so also** did the Lord direct to those proclaiming the good news: of the good news to live.

In other words, those who partake in the New Covenant receive their sustenance from the spiritual provisions that God provides (i.e., in the spiritual sharing and fellowshiping of the pieces of the one bread). This is what the bread and wine offerings throughout Jewish history pointed to, and also what the Messiah showed by the bread and the wine at the Last Supper. (This also refers to the *natural* offerings of the people, such as providing financing and support for the natural needs of the New Covenant teachers and ministers.)

Jewish Groups Emulate the Showbread

Through the Dead Sea Scrolls and other writings, historians have understood that various Jewish groups held services that emulated the Showbread service in the Temple. In Course 3, we saw the following quote that was part of the evidence proving that the Jewish idiom of breaking bread came from the Showbread; this was also presumably how the table in the home came to be considered as a symbolic altar:

The table for the Jewish people, with its unique ceremonials, is an essential part of the Jewish religion. It is around the table that the ideals of Israel's home life find concrete expression. For the Jewish people the table is more than a piece of furniture upon which the daily meals are served. **It is a symbolic altar of God.**

The religious uses of tables in the Temple lend significance to **the table in the Jewish home. The Table of Shew-bread** (Leviticus

24:6), the table for the lights (2 Chronicles 4:8), and the table for the sacrifices (Ezekiel 40:39), have a **symbolic counterpart in the home**.¹⁴⁴

The Jewish biblical philosopher Philo, who lived in the Egyptian city of Alexandria at the time of Christ, wrote of the Therapeutae, a Jewish group in Egypt that held a holy meal with bread that emulated the Showbread table in the Temple:

Philo reported that the Therapeutae's central meal was intended to emulate the holy table set forth in the sacred hall of the temple, but though the Qumran community are portrayed in the Dead Sea Scrolls as viewing the Jerusalem service as having failed to achieve priestly holiness, Philo describes the Therapeutae as deliberately **introducing slight differences** in their practices from those at the Temple, **as a mark of respect for the Temple's shewbread**.¹⁴⁵

Philo put it thus:

(81) And when each individual has finished his psalm, then the young men bring in the table which was mentioned a little while ago, on which was placed that most holy food, **the leavened bread**, with a seasoning of salt, with which hyssop is mingled, **out of reverence for the sacred table**, which lies thus in the holy outer temple; for on this table are placed loaves and salt without seasoning, and the bread is unleavened, and the salt unmixed with anything else, (82) for it was becoming that the simplest and purest things should be allotted to the most excellent portion of the priests, as a reward for their ministrations, and that the others should admire similar things, but should abstain from the loaves, in order that those who are the more excellent person may have the precedence.¹⁴⁶

Although these two quotes make it appear that the twelve Temple breads (Showbread) were to be unleavened, in the following Course (7) it will be shown that this change to unleavened happened after the Pharisees gained control.

144 Shulman, *Gateway to Judaism*, vol. 1, p. 441.

145 *Wikipedia*, s.v. "Therapeutae."

146 Yonge, *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, "On the Contemplative Life or Suppliants," 10:81–82, <http://earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book34.html>.

Philo also mentioned that the Therapeutae drank the *pure wine of God's love*:

Then, when each chorus of the men and each chorus of the women has feasted separately by itself, like persons in the bacchanalian revels, **drinking the pure wine¹⁴⁷ of the love of God**, they join together, and the two become one chorus, an imitation of that one which, in old time, was established by the Red Sea, on account of the wondrous works which were displayed there;¹⁴⁸

Thus here is more proof of the continuing thread through Jewish history of a hallowed bread service derived initially from Melchizedek, and then from the Showbread that always pointed to the Messianic banquet, which the Last Supper also pointed to (as we'll see further below).



Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian, wrote of the Essenes—another Jewish group that lived in Israel in his day that also held a solemn service with breads:

They work until about 11 A.M. when they put on ritual loincloths and **bathe for purification**. Then they enter a **communal** hall, where no one else is allowed, and eat only one bowlful of food for each man, **together with their loaves of bread**. They eat in silence. Afterwards they lay aside their sacred garment and go back to work until the evening. At evening they partake dinner in the same manner. During meals they are sober and quiet and their silence seems a great mystery to people outside.¹⁴⁹

Their timing also seems to emulate the workings of the Temple, as they *bathe for ritual purification* at 11 AM to be ready by the after-noon period. Josephus noted elsewhere that at noon the priests (having already bathed) would be ready at the Temple to begin the process toward the evening offering.¹⁵⁰

147 Philo's mention of the pure wine here may initially refer to new wine, the fresh fruit of the vine, which he then shows points to God's love.

148 Yonge, *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, "On the Contemplative Life or Suppliants," 11:85, <http://earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book34.html>.

149 Josephus, "Wars," 2.8.5, <http://essene.com/History/AncientHistoriansAndEssenes.html>.

150 Whiston, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, "Against Apion," 2.8.105, p. 966.

The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls brought to light that this Jewish sect there also had a reverent service with bread and wine that most likely emulated the Showbread and certainly pointed to a Messianic banquet. Most scholars agree that Josephus's account of the Essenes shows a close and similar belief system to the sect at Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. In Josephus's brief mention of the Essenes, he did not say that they drank wine (or water) with their breads. But they would have needed to drink something with the breads, which they ate in the heat of the day. When we consider their similarity to the Qumran sect who did partake of wine with their hallowed meals, one could easily draw a speculative parallel.

The following quote from the Dead Sea Scrolls can be a little difficult to follow, because of the age of the scroll and its missing letters, but its main points remain clear. The quote is about the coming Messianic banquet when the believers will share bread and wine, which this sect at Qumran also did at their own communal meals:

The procedure for the [mee]ting of the men of reputation [when they are called] to the **banquet** held by the society of the *Yahad*, when [God] has fa[th]ered(?) **the Messiah** (or, when the Messiah has been revealed) among them: [the priest,] as head of the entire congregation of Israel, shall enter first, trailed by all [his] brot[hers, the Sons of] Aaron, those priests [appointed] **to the banquet** of the men of reputation. They are to sit be[fore him] by rank. Then **the [Mess]iah of Israel** may en[ter] and the heads of the th[ousands of Israel] are to sit before him by rank, as determined by [each man's comm]ission in their camps and campaigns. Last, all the heads of [the con]gregation's cl[ans], together with [their] wis[e and knowl- edgeable men], shall sit before them by rank.

[When] they gather [at the] **communal** [tab]le, [having set out bread and w]ine so the **communal table is set** [for eating] and [the] **wine** (poured) for drinking, none [may re]ach for the first portion of **the bread** or [the wine] before the priest. For [he] shall [bl]ess the first portion of the **bread and the wine**, [reac]hing for the bread first. Afterw[ard] **the Messiah of Israel** [shall re]ach for the bread. [Finally,] ea[ch] member of the whole congregation of the *Yahad*¹⁵¹ [shall give a bl]essing, [in descending order of] rank.

This procedure shall govern every me[al], provided at least ten me[n are ga]thered together.¹⁵²

151 *Yahad* means "unity," in this context referring to the community together, in unity.

152 Wise, Abegg, and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, p. 147.

Talmudic and Dead Sea Scrolls scholar Lawrence Schiffman writes about this Messianic meal at Qumran and the difference between it and other rabbinic depictions of the Messianic banquet:

The Sectarial Communal Meal

Although the messianic banquet of rabbinic sources was envisioned as a onetime affair inaugurating the messianic era, the Dead Sea community looked forward to a regular series of such banquets, as is evident from the words “whenever {the meal} is a{rranged} when as many as ten {meet} together.” The sectarian practice of **acting out the future messianic banquet** in their everyday lives indicates the **messianic overtones that were ever present** during their frequent communal meals.¹⁵³

Schiffman also states:

Whereas the sects communal meal described in Rule of the Community {6:2–5} required either **bread or wine**, the **messianic banquet** would require **both**.¹⁵⁴

He then gives a powerful statement regarding the Dead Sea Scrolls that we can apply *spiritually* in the New Covenant:

The sect’s **communal meals**, conducted regularly as part of its everyday life, **were preenactments of the final messianic banquet** at the End of Days. Thus we again see that the contemporary life of the sect reflected its dreams for the age to come.¹⁵⁵

Having received instruction at the Last Supper through the bread and wine parables, the New Covenant followers of the Messiah essentially went forth “acting out the future messianic banquet.” However, these Messianic Jews never regarded this as a natural or literal meal but understood it as a spiritual partaking from a spiritual altar. Their meals of *agape*, where they shared God’s love, His word, and His spiritual sustenance, were not the same “preenactments of the final Messianic banquet,” as Schiffman says of the Dead Sea Sect. For the Messianic believers, the *agape* feasts

153 Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 334–335.

154 Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 334.

155 Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 338.

were *spiritual* meals that would prepare the believers to be made ready as a spiritual bride, which Israel had always been called to.

They knew Paul was not intending a new ritual when he quoted Christ, saying, “For *whenever* you eat this bread and drink this cup . . .” (1 Corinthians 11:26 NIV). Instead, Paul’s teachings in that regard concerned the feasts of *agape* or God’s love into which the early believers were entering, and which he and others were trying to keep pure (as Course 5 highlighted).

The Messiah, of course, also knew this was to be a spiritual banquet among the believers, and it would lead to a spiritual wedding feast (Revelation 19:7, 9). The Messiah’s Last Supper parables, along with his new commandment given right after this supper to love (*agape*) one another, showed the plan for such a spiritual partaking. This is what would make the bride ready for a wedding feast and thus for the eternal Messianic banquet, which begins on earth with the preenactments (the *agape* feasts) and continues forever.



Some Christians have wrongly claimed an analogy between the bread and wine meal at Qumran and the Roman ritual called the “Blessed Eucharist” by quoting text such as the following from Qumran:

Whenever they arrange the table to eat or the wine to drink, the priest shall extend his hand first to bless the first (portion) of the bread or the wine. (*Rule of the Community* 6:4–5)¹⁵⁶

Schiffman addresses this supposed analogy with the Eucharist:

Claiming an analogy between this description and the Christian Eucharist, dominant scholarly opinion has tended to characterize the sect’s communal meals as sacral. In fact, some even consider the sacral meal of bread and wine central to Qumran fellowship, tracing its origins back to the priestly traditions of the Temple. By that analogy, the communal meal would effectively have replaced the sacrificial rituals in the Temple from which the sectarian Zadokite priests had withdrawn.¹⁵⁷

156 Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 335.

157 Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*, p. 335.

Schiffman then states that these meals at Qumran were not connected to the Eucharist because the Dead Sea meals were not “sacral” (pages 335–336). I would agree that anyone claiming an analogy between the Roman Eucharist and the Dead Sea Sect would be wrong, because the Roman ritual was completely different. Since the emperor Constantine wanted nothing in common with the Messianic Jews, Rome changed the Jewish spiritual communion that Paul spoke of into its own version, which was their literal Communion ritual.

A huge line of separation needs to be drawn between the spiritual truth that the Messiah brought out at the Last Supper and that of the Roman Blessed Eucharist established a few hundred years later. Later in this book (in the chapter “The Ritual—Why Didn’t the Jewish Disciples Teach It?”) we document that this Roman ritual was later changed to using unleavened bread, and then the Protestants morphed it in other ways when they pulled away from Rome. The picture subsequently painted of a long-haired Jesus at the Last Supper presiding over a Roman sacramental ritual is inaccurate and has greatly confused the true connections that the Messiah’s teachings had to all of Jewish history.

Although no link exists between the bread and wine of the Dead Sea Sect and that of the Roman Communion ritual, this does not change the true connection between all of Jewish history and the Last Supper. There is no question that the bread and wine given by the Messiah at the Last Supper is connected to the longstanding Jewish tradition of similar Messianic meals—from Melchizedek bringing out the bread and wine to Abraham to the Showbread service in the Temple to the Messianic meals observed by the Jewish groups such as the Essenes and the Dead Sea Sect.

Christian commentators who see these meals at Qumran as somehow connected to the Blessed Eucharist have been overly influenced by the Roman ritual. The Last Supper was not sacramental, nor was it meant to be a continuing *ritual*. Rather, it pointed to the spiritual banquet in God’s spiritual kingdom—the true Messianic banquet. Such a portrayal of the Last Supper as a Roman ritual has alienated many who may otherwise have seen the connection of this Messianic meal to all of Jewish history.

The Last Supper and the Messianic Feast/Banquet

The Messiah’s Last Supper was a *communal* meal, for it was held among ritually pure Israelites the evening before the Passover would be sacrificed. It was also a Messianic meal since it was a meal with the Messiah. Although the Last Supper was not intended as a feast or banquet, the parables spoken at it did point forward to the spiritual feast that the Lord would provide (Luke 22:29–30). This Messianic banquet is for all the victorious believers who enter the promised New Covenant and partake from the Lord’s table.

This is not to say that the disciples understood the Last Supper as a Messianic preenactment of this ultimate heavenly banquet at the time they were eating, but soon enough they would understand what the bread and wine at the Last Supper were pointing to. We will now see that when the nuances of the Greek language are considered, along with the Jewish idioms of the day, it becomes clear that Paul understood that the Last Supper parables (with the bread and fruit of the vine) pointed to this Messianic banquet.

The term “Last Supper” is found nowhere in the scripture; however, the “Lord’s Supper” does appear, right where Paul speaks about the *spiritual banquet* of which the Corinthians should have been partaking:

NIV 1 Corinthians 11:20 When you come together,¹⁵⁸ it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat,

GNT 1 Corinthians 11:20 Συνερχομένων οὖν ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ οὐκ ἔστιν κυριακὸν δεῖπνον φαγεῖν·

We already saw in Course 5 that the Greek word translated as “Lord’s” meant *pertaining to the Lord*, or *belonging to the Lord*.¹⁵⁹ And now the *UBS Greek-English Dictionary* shows some possible meanings for the Greek word translated as “Supper”—the correct English word to use would depend on the context:

δεῖπνον οὐ ν **feast, banquet**; supper, main meal

Together then, these two Greek words could easily be translated as “Banquet pertaining to the Lord” or “Feast pertaining to the Lord.” And since the “Lord” spoken of here was the Messiah, then the English translation of “Lord’s Supper” would more accurately refer to this long Jewish history of a coming “Messianic feast” or “Messianic banquet.” The term “Messianic” means *pertaining to the Messiah*, so this would be a perfectly good meaning of Paul’s words.

Many English translations translate this same Greek word δεῖπνον as “feast” or “banquet” in various scriptures, such as in the verses below speaking of the coming wedding “feast” and then another great “feast”:

NAB Revelation 19:9 Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who have been called to the **wedding feast** of the Lamb.”

158 We saw in Course 5 that the Greek here rather reads along the lines of “when you come together *thus, or thusly*” ... referring to their improper conduct.

159 Louw and Nida’s *Greek-English Lexicon* for κυριακός ἡ ὄν (vol. 1, p. 139).

And he said to me, “These words are true; they come from God.”

^{NLT} Luke 14:16 Jesus replied with this illustration: “A man prepared a **great feast** and sent out many invitations.

Translators often have different opinions on which word to use in a given scripture, as we see in the verse below:

^{DBY} Matthew 23:6 and love the chief place in **feasts** and the first seats in the synagogues,

^{NAS} Matthew 23:6 “And they love the place of honor at **banquets**, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

In the verses below, this same Greek word is again translated as “banquet.” This is the parable in which Jesus pictured many who were invited to a great banquet but then made excuses as to why they could not come, essentially rejecting the man who invited them. Jesus showed that by disregarding this invitation, they would miss out on the coming Messianic banquet:

^{NIV} Luke 14:16 Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a **great banquet** and invited many guests.

^{NIV} Luke 14:24 I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of **my banquet.**’”

Another example of this same Greek word translated as “banquet” involves Herod holding a great banquet for his lords and military commanders:

^{NAS} Mark 6:21 And a strategic day came when Herod on his birthday gave a **banquet** for his lords and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee;

These translations show that it’s no stretch to say that when Paul spoke to the Corinthians of the “Lord’s supper”—and that their “coming together thusly” was *not* the supper pertaining to the Lord—the word could just as easily have been translated as the Lord’s “feast” or the Lord’s “banquet.” Either of these two words would better fit the context in which Paul spoke, whereby he connected the longstanding Jewish idea of a Messianic banquet or feast to what the Corinthians should have been partaking of *spiritually*. Paul was not speaking of a ritual with a morsel of unleav-

ened bread, but rather of the Messiah's banquet with the spiritual feasting in God's presence.

This recognition of what the Last Supper pointed to fits perfectly with a coming Messianic communal banquet or feast with bread and wine—a concept long understood by various Jewish groups throughout history. Although the Last Supper before the Messiah's atoning death was not actually this Messianic banquet, it pointed forward to it.

Using parables and figurative language at the Last Supper, the Messiah communicated to his disciples the future spiritual banquet of which they would partake in the promised New Covenant. This is the Lord's banquet that Paul refers to in Corinthians 11. The fruit of the vine (new wine) in the Messiah's instruction pointed to the spiritual drink of the Holy Spirit (and of God's love) that would be poured out for the believers in the New Covenant at Pentecost. And the breaking bread pointed to the spiritual bread that the believers would be sharing as they gather, share the word of God, and fellowship with one another in His love with His spirit in their midst.

On the night of his last meal, the Messiah spoke of this future heavenly banquet in the kingdom of God:

^{NAS} Luke 22:29 and just as **My Father has granted Me a kingdom,**
I grant you

^{NAS} Luke 22:30a that you may **eat and drink at My table** in My
kingdom,

Jesus had already taught his disciples that they should not look for an outward sign concerning the kingdom of God. When the Pharisees asked Jesus when God's kingdom would come, he seems to say that it was more along the lines of an inward spiritual kingdom that would emerge as the believer yielded to God's will:

^{DBY} Luke 17:20–21 And having been asked by the Pharisees, When is the kingdom of God coming? he answered them and said, **The kingdom of God does not come with observation;** nor shall they say, Lo here, or, Lo there; for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

Paul, of course, understood this. After all, he had also taught the Jewish idea of a coming Messianic banquet and showed what Jesus *meant* when he spoke about eating and drinking at his table in the kingdom of God. Paul shows in his teachings that this is a *spiritual* banquet that the believer can enter into now. He also knew that the

Lord's Supper/Banquet/Feast alluded to a spiritual banquet for all those in the New Covenant who would enter in and take the land:

^{NAS} Romans 14:17 for the kingdom of God is **not eating and drinking**, but righteousness and peace and **joy in the Holy Spirit**.

This Messianic kingdom would begin at Passover when the Messiah paid the ultimate price, and after the Resurrection, which showed God's acceptance:

^{NAB} Luke 22:16 for, I tell you, I shall not eat it (again)¹⁶⁰ until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

This Messianic kingdom and its spiritual banquet would enter a new phase when the Holy Spirit was poured out at Pentecost 50 days later as the *new wine* of God's spirit and His love, which Jesus said he would share with his disciples in the coming kingdom:

^{NAS} Matthew 26:29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it **new with you in My Father's kingdom**."

^{NAB} Mark 14:25 Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the **fruit of the vine** until the day when I **drink it new** in the kingdom of God."

The Bread and Wine of the High Priest Melchizedek

Here is a man about whom we know very little. We know only that Melchizedek, the High Priest of God, brought bread and wine to Abraham when the latter returned victorious over his enemies. Before we tie that bread and wine to the bread and wine the Messiah shares with parables at the Lord's Supper, let's first build out this typology.

Here are the verses where Moses writes of Melchizedek:

^{NIV} Genesis 14:18–20 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out **bread and wine**. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who

160 The word "again" is given in parentheses, the translators thus showing it is not in the Greek text.

delivered your enemies into your hand.” Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

Paul says to observe how great this man Melchizedek was:

^{NAS} Hebrews 7:4 Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.

Moses, the law giver, wrote of Melchizedek. King David, the greatest Jewish king, also wrote of him. Saul (later called Paul), the greatest scholar to follow the Messiah, wrote of him in three different chapters in his letter to the Hebrews (Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1–21). Both Josephus and Philo wrote of him, as did those Jews at the Dead Sea and the writers of the Talmud. So who was Melchizedek really and what did his early bread and wine point to? And why is this short portion of scripture so vital in Jewish history, such that all these major people and historians write of him?

We saw at the beginning of this Course that his name meant “king of righteousness” and that he was king and priest over Salem, later called Jerusalem. In the following scriptures, King David at first is speaking of the Messiah, whom he calls “my Lord”:

^{NAS} Psalm 110:1 *A Psalm of David.* The LORD¹⁶¹ says **to my Lord:** “Sit at My right hand, Until I make Thine enemies a footstool for Thy feet.”

Knowing that it applied to himself as Messiah, Jesus tested the Pharisees on the above scripture (seen in Matthew 22:41–46) by asking them this: If David called the coming Messiah “Lord” (Adonai), how could he be David’s son? Within the Jewish idiom, the father did not call the son Lord. In one sense the Messiah *was* David’s son, since he was from his line, and in another sense he was David’s Lord, as the promised Messiah.

While still in the context of this coming Messiah, David speaks prophetically of the future Messiah as the coming priest after the order of Melchizedek, as we saw earlier:

^{NIV} Psalm 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: “You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.”

161 When “LORD” is in capital letters, it refers to the Hebrew word *YAHWEH*, whereas “Lord” refers to the Hebrew word *Adonai*.

Paul also applies this to the Messiah in the following verse. He asks that if perfection was to come from the first covenant given to Moses and its Levitical priesthood, then why would David later speak (by the spirit) about another priesthood that was not according to genealogy from Aaron?

^{NAS} Hebrews 7:11 Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?

Interestingly, the Dead Sea Scrolls writers also wrote of Melchizedek, portraying him as bringing a “jubilee” as a forgiveness of sins:

And concerning what Scripture says, “In [this] year of jubilee [you shall return, every one of you, to your property” (Lev. 25:13) and what is also written, “And this] is the [ma]nner of [the remission]: every creditor shall remit the claim that is held [against a neighbor, not exacting it of a neighbor who is a member of the community, because God’s] remission [has been proclaimed” (Deut. 15:2): [the interpretation] is that it applies [to the L]ast Days and concerns the captives, just as [Isaiah said: “to proclaim the jubilee to the captives, (Isaiah 61:1) Just] as [....] and from inheritance of **Melchizedek**, f[or ... Melchize]dek, who will return them to what is rightfully theirs. **He will proclaim to them the jubilee, thereby releasing th[em from the debt of a]ll their sins.**¹⁶²

Whether they meant this spiritually, picturing a future Messiah as a king and high priest whose arrival would bring a release from the penalty of sins, or if they meant a resurrected Melchizedek literally doing this, either way the Messiah would achieve this remission of sins when he fulfilled God’s plan in providing the promised New Covenant:

^{NIV} Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had **provided purification for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

162 Wise, Abegg, and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, p. 456.

So we see the various Jewish groups—from Moses and David to the Dead Sea Sect and others—speaking about Melchizedek and the completed picture of him sharing bread and wine at a Messianic feast among the righteous. When understood correctly, this is also what the Messiah pointed to at the Last Supper concerning himself.



At this point, we've seen how Jewish groups throughout history emulated the service of the Showbread, how the twelve Temple breads pointed to the spiritual breaking of bread in the New Covenant, and how the bread and the wine at the Last Supper pointed to the spiritual fulfillment of the Showbread. Now, to complete the circle, we'll connect the bread and wine of Melchizedek to the Showbread under Moses, and then to the spiritual bread and wine of the Messiah as seen in the Last Supper parables.

1. Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God, is directed by Him to bring out bread and wine to Abraham. Melchizedek ministered in a location where God would later direct David to build the Temple, in the Promised Land. This mention of the bread and wine does not refer to Melchizedek coming out for a mere church picnic with Abraham, because the same sentence connects it to his being “priest (Kohen) of God Most High” (Genesis 14:18). As with Jacob speaking prophetically of the Messiah and the blood of the grape, so does Melchizedek’s bread and wine prophetically prefigure the Messianic banquet.
2. Hundreds of years later, before entering the Promised Land, Moses the law giver was directed by God in the service of the twelve Temple breads and the accompanying wine libations. The high priest divided out the breads to the high order of priests (sons of Aaron). This service with bread and wine reflected back on the hallowed event where the High Priest Melchizedek had brought out bread and wine to Abraham, which happened shortly after God promised Abraham the land (Genesis 12:7). It also pointed forward to the future Messianic banquet that so many Jewish groups understood and looked for. If we believe that God directed Melchizedek as high priest to bring out bread and wine to Abraham in Salem, then we can see the connection to the bread and wine that God directed Moses to bring. This service with twelve breads would later be continued in the Temple under David and Solomon. The Temple was built in the location where God directed, just a stone’s

throw from where this event with Melchizedek and Abraham occurred. This connection may have been part of the reason God instructed it be built there.

3. On his last night before the Crucifixion, the Messiah gave out bread and new wine in Jerusalem to his closest followers, who were sons of Abraham. This bread and wine pointed to the Messianic banquet, the true Promised Land, and a spiritual inheritance. He showed that these things pointed further to spiritual truths: the wine as the cup of spiritual blessings in the New Covenant and the bread as the spiritual fellowship among the believers with God's presence in their midst. Jesus (Yeshua) thus showed that the bread and the wine—beginning with Melchizedek, then the Showbread, and then to and through the Last Supper—pointed to the Messiah and to the spiritual partaking he would provide.

When we put all these facts together, we see that the new wine is the New Covenant and its provisions, the infilling of God's spirit, the joy and rejoicing, the *agape* love of God. The bread is the living word of God, the bread of life, the Messiah's spiritual provision provided among the believers as we partake together, with God as "more than a mere guest." By fulfilling what the bread and wine pointed to, the assembly will complete the plan of the ages by coming into God's image and likeness, prepared to have the bridal relationship with God that Israel and all people are called to.

Feasts of God's Love

In Course 5 we saw that it would take a proper partaking in the feasts of God's love to bring about what Jesus was teaching for the Messianic banquet. Jude speaks of these love-feasts, as well as of certain people whose intentions were not pure and were thus pictured as "spots" in the feasts:

^{DBY} Jude 1:12 These are spots **in your love-feasts**, feasting together *with you* without fear, pasturing themselves; clouds without water, carried along by *the* winds; autumnal trees, without fruit, twice dead, rooted up;

Jude did not suggest that the love-feasts be stopped or that God's love be prevented from flowing because of these spots, but as Timothy pointed out, the believers should "turn away from such as these" (2 Timothy 3:5, 6) and as Jude said to abide in the love of God:

^{NIV} Jude 1:19–21 These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. **Keep yourselves in God’s love** as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Peter gave similar instruction to keep the love flowing:

^{NAS} 1 Peter 4:8 **Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another**, because love covers a multitude of sins.

The Lord wants his bride to be perfected in love. This spiritual bride will be a people capable of receiving *agape* love from God, loving Him and one another in the same powerful way, and keeping that love as pure as it should be in the family of God:

^{DBY} 1 John 4:12 No one has seen God at any time: if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us.

^{NAS} Ephesians 4:16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body **for the building up of itself in love**.

^{NAS} 1 Peter 1:22 Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart,

The love between Christ and the bride is mirrored in the love between Solomon, the king of Israel, and his Shulamite bride:

^{NAS} Song of Solomon 2:4 “He has brought me to *his banquet hall*,
And his banner over me is love.

The true (spiritual) communal meal—partaking of God’s love with His spirit in the midst—is to be reciprocal, in and through one another, with God and the Messiah as much more than mere guests!

When the Messianic-based assembly was steamrolled by the Roman Church, which was backed by the power of Rome’s military to convince all on “acceptable” doctrine, many of these first-century Jewish idioms, scriptural understandings, and

nuances were lost. However, God has promised a latter-day rain, a teaching rain whereby many of these original truths (as well as new ones) will pour down from Him. The truths will be based on the word of God, but not as it has been understood through the Roman filter that we have inherited.

Was the Fruit of the Vine Partaken of with the Showbread?

The twelve breads were a communal meal that pointed forward to the true spiritual communal meal and the Messianic banquet. We've seen the Jewish history of hallowed meals with bread and wine (including the Lord's Supper/Banquet/Feast), as well as their allusion toward a Messianic banquet or feast. If all this connects back to the Showbread and Melchizedek as has been considered, then it would make sense that the priests partook of wine with these twelve breads. If the Tabernacle and Temple priests did indeed partake of the fruit of the vine with the Showbread, what would this have pointed to?

^{YLT} Exodus 25:29–30 and thou hast made its dishes, and its bowls, and its covers, **and its cups, with which they pour out**; of pure gold thou dost make them; and thou hast put on the table bread of the presence before Me continually.

The Jewish Encyclopedia shows some uncertainty from Jewish sources about the usage of these cups, bowls, and dishes that are listed above as part of the Showbread offering:

Among the vessels enumerated as belonging to the table of the showbread are “ke'arot” (dishes, or, probably, the “forms” in which the cakes were baked) and “kappot” (hand-like bowls). These were the “bezikin” for the incense, “kesawot” (σπίονδεια) **for the wine-libations**, and “menakkiyyot” (probably dippers). **But according to** the Jerusalem and Samaritan Targumim, the kesawot were intended to cover the loaves.¹⁶³

I have come to the conclusion that, at least in the times of Moses, King David, and Solomon, the priests would have partaken of wine with the Showbread. This wine would be either “mixed” (wine diluted with water) or fresh “fruit of the vine” (grape juice or “new wine”). Here are the reasons for this:

163 *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, p. 313, s.v. “Showbread.”

1. We have seen that these Temple meals were pictured by the Israelites as occasions where God was more than a mere guest, and that He was actually partaking in the bread with them. Course 7 will show that God had His bread in the Temple (the bread of God) and the priests had their bread as well. We also know that some of the new wine from the people's tithes was to be poured out at the altar as a libation to God, so wouldn't it make sense that the priests, as His guests, would also share in some of this new wine with Him, just as they shared in the bread? On those hot summer days, they would have needed to drink something with the Showbread, and God did not command them to drink water in any scripture. If He had wanted them to drink only water or nothing at all, He could have commanded it, but He did not. The twelve breads were a blessing to the priests, and God did not intend their consumption as something they could not enjoy. Fresh fruit of the grapevine (or mixed wine) would also have been a blessing for the priests, making the partaking of the twelve breads more enjoyable while also fulfilling the type.
2. We saw that most of the later Jewish groups who held hallowed services that emulated this eating of the Showbread often partook of wine with their breads. The Dead Sea Scrolls confirm this, as does Philo, who wrote about the Therapeutae in Egypt, among others. These Jewish groups considered their service as symbolic of the Messianic banquet that they believed was to come.
3. If Lawrence Schiffman and other scholars are correct in believing that the Dead Sea Sect descended from the Sadducees, then their use of wine in their Showbread-like service would align with my belief that they consumed wine with the Showbread when the Sadducees (whose name descended from Zadokites) had full control over all aspects of the Temple (before the Pharisees gained much authority).
4. Before Moses gave out the law of the Showbread, the first "king priest"—Melchizedek—brought forth bread and wine to Abraham near the site where God would later direct David to build the Temple. It was also near to where the Messiah would pay the final penalty for remission of sins.
5. The Messiah, who was pictured as a spiritual high priest after the order of Melchizedek, also gave out bread and new wine to Abraham's sons, prefiguring the spiritual Messianic banquet that was to come.



It is true that Nadab and Abihu—the sons of Aaron—became drunk, offered strange incense on the fire to God, and were then slain (Leviticus 10). After this event, it was forbidden to drink “wine, the strong drink” (Leviticus 10:9). However, this was not among God’s commands given to Moses as part of the law but was commanded later, after this incident. The command itself does not prohibit drinking new or mixed wine, but in the Hebrew it appears to forbid only the consumption of intoxicating wine or strong drink when entering the Tabernacle. After all, God did not want the priests to become inebriated and thus lose the carefulness and sobriety of the ministry they were carrying out.

It is probably because of this prohibition that mixed or new wine was often used at the festivals and elsewhere. This way, if the fruit of the vine had fermented to a state of being highly alcoholic, the mixing of the wine was sufficient to keep one from losing his senses and reverence while still retaining the good flavor of the fruit of the vine.

Below we see Wisdom personified as a woman who sets her table with *bread* and *wine*:

^{JPS} Proverbs 9:1–2 Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars; She hath prepared her meat, she hath **mingled**¹⁶⁴ **her wine**; she hath also furnished her table.

^{JPS} Proverbs 9:5 ‘Come, eat of my bread, and **drink of the wine which I have mingled**.

In another example, the navel of Solomon’s bride (the Shulamite) is pictured figuratively (and positively) as never lacking mixed wine:

^{NAS} Song of Solomon 7:2 “Your navel is *like* a round goblet Which never lacks mixed wine; Your belly is like a heap of wheat Fenced about with lilies.

Remember also that at Qumran the wine was mixed. The Dead Sea Scroll text reads as follows:

and when they gather to the table of the community and to the drinking of the wine and when the table of the community is made

164 Notice that Wisdom has “mingled” (meaning “mixed”) her wine.

ready and the wine has been mixed for drinking, then no one is to touch the first portion of the bread and the wine before the priest.¹⁶⁵

The book of Jubilees shows that the priests were to *drink the wine* with joy before the Lord, which came from the tithes of the people:

Jubilees 13:25–27 for Abram, and for his seed, a tenth of the first fruits to the Lord, and the Lord ordained it as an ordinance for ever that they should give it to the priests who served before Him, that they should possess it for ever. And to this law there is no limit of days; for He hath ordained it for the generations for ever **that they should give to the Lord the tenth of everything, of the seed and of the wine** and of the oil and of the cattle and of the sheep. And He gave (it) unto His priests to eat **and to drink with joy before Him.**

Speaking to the priests in Deuteronomy, God says they are to partake of the new wine *in His presence*:

^{NAS} Deuteronomy 14:23 “And **you shall eat in the presence of the LORD** your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the **tithe** of your grain, **your new wine**, your oil, and the first-born of your herd and your flock, in order that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.

Clearly, it was not wrong for these priests to drink new wine or fruit of the vine in the presence of the Lord in the Temple, or God would not have directed them to do it. After all, would God encourage the priests to drink the new wine before Him and then forbid it from the higher order of priests as they partook of the breads of His presence?

Philo also wrote about the instruction of Moses concerning the drinking of wine and how in certain instances (such as the Nazirite vow), God commanded abstinence, while at other times He commanded the priests to drink:

...for in many places of his history of the giving of the law **he mentions wine**, and the plant which produces wine, namely the vine; and he commands some persons to drink it, but some he does not permit to do so; and at time he gives contrary directions to the same people, ordering them sometimes to drink and some times to abstain. These therefore are the persons who have taken the great

165 Stendahl, *The Scrolls and the New Testament*, p. 71.

vow, to whom it is expressly **forbidden to drink unmixed wine**, being the priests who are engaged in offering sacrifices. **But those who drink wine are numerous beyond all calculation, and among them are all those who are especially praised by the lawgiver for their virtue.**¹⁶⁶

Notice that Philo wrote that the priests who were engaged in offering sacrifices were forbidden from drinking *unmixed* wine while ministering, but this rule did not extend to *mixed* wine or fresh “fruit of the vine” (grape juice) with the Showbread.



Some scriptures concerning Solomon’s Temple speak of *the* table (singular) on which the Showbread was set (1 Kings 7:48; 2 Chronicles 29:18), while other scriptures mention tables in the plural (ten tables) with the Showbread on them, with ten bowls on each table (1 Chronicles 28:16; 2 Chronicles 4:8; 2 Chronicles 4:19). Were these other tables for when the priests would gather together and partake of the Showbread? If so, it would make sense to have ten bowls for the new wine on each table, assuming ten men were at each table. But if these bowls were intended for the drink offering poured out at the altar, you would not think that ten would be placed on each table.

The sect at the Dead Sea also mentioned bread and new wine being set out at a table for *ten* men, which would align with these ten bowls on each table in Solomon’s Temple:

By these rules they are to govern themselves wherever they dwell, in accordance with each legal finding that bears upon communal life. Inferiors must obey their ranking superiors as regards work and wealth. They shall eat, pray, and deliberate communally. Wherever **ten men** belonging to the society of the *Yahad* are gathered, a priest must always be present. The men shall sit before the priest by rank, and in that manner their opinions will be sought on any matter. When **the table** has been set for eating or the **new wine** readied for drinking, it is the priest who shall stretch out his hand first, blessing the first portion of the **bread** or the **new wine**. In any place where is gathered **the ten-man quorum**, someone must always be engaged in study of the Law, day and night, continually, each one taking his turn. The general membership will be diligent together for the

166 Yonge, *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, “On Drunkenness,” 1:2, <http://earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book13.html>.

first third of every night of the year, **reading aloud from the Book, interpreting Scripture, and praying together.**¹⁶⁷

Notice that they also connected this partaking of bread and wine to their scripture reading and prayer. As we saw in Courses 3 and 4, these were the various elements of the Temple service as seen in Acts 2: the spiritual breaking of bread (sharing the word of God) and the prayers.

When the nation backslid from God and wealthy priests were still living the high life while people were being afflicted, the Lord raised up the prophet Amos to speak against those priests who were drinking wine *in bowls*:

^{KJV} Amos 6:6 That **drink wine in bowls**, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

The Hebrew word *mizraq* that Amos uses for “bowls” is the same word used for the hundred golden “bowls” mentioned earlier that Solomon made for the tables of Showbread (2 Chronicles 4:8). Amos was not against the priests drinking wine in bowls or anointing each other per se, as God commanded; he spoke against their doing these things while not caring for the affliction of their brothers.

Some of these libations were poured out at the altar, and since these meals and offerings were seen as a partaking with God, it would make sense that the priests also partook of the wine from these bowls, as Amos showed above. Zechariah also had an interesting prophecy in which the Messiah comes and the Israelites are figuratively pictured with him as these same bowls of wine (Hebrew *mizraq*, i.e., as the priestly bowls filled with the new wine of rejoicing and God’s love). Zechariah thus pictures the Israelites as drinking and filled with wine and rejoicing, and this leads into Zechariah’s teaching on the latter rain (Zechariah 9:9–10:1).

^{JPS} Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee, he is triumphant, and victorious, lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass.

^{JPS} Zechariah 9:15 The LORD of hosts will defend them; and they shall devour, and shall tread down the sling-stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like the basins,¹⁶⁸ like the corners of the altar.

167 Wise, Abegg, and Cook, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation*, pp. 133–134.

168 The word “basins” above is this same Hebrew word *mizraq*, for bowls.

^{JPS} Zechariah 10:1 Ask ye of the LORD rain in the time of the **latter rain**, even of the LORD that maketh lightnings; and He will give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.

Wine and God's Love

If it is true that the priests originally shared with God in the wine offerings that accompanied the Showbread, what would this point to? While much of this will be answered in Course 11 regarding the fruit of the vine, let's see here how it foretells the Messianic banquet of God's love.

In Israel, wine was often compared to love. Below is a picture of Solomon and his bride that prefigures the Messiah and his own last-days bride:

^{JPS} Song of Solomon 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for **thy love is better than wine**.

^{JPS} Song of Solomon 1:4 Draw me, we will run after thee; the king hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will find **thy love more fragrant than wine!** sincerely do they love thee.

^{JPS} Song of Solomon 4:10 How fair is thy love, my sister, my bride! **how much better is thy love than wine!** and the smell of thine ointments than all manner of spices!

Paul spoke of not overdoing it with natural wine, but rather being filled with what the new wine spiritually pointed to—God's spirit:

^{NIV} Ephesians 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

Philo also saw the symbolic link between *pure* wine and God's love mirrored in the description of the Therapeutae, that reverent Jewish group in Egypt, with their service that emulated the Showbread. He wrote that they were "**drinking the pure wine of the love of God.**"¹⁶⁹

Not only did the Song of Solomon compare wine with love, and Philo speak of pure wine as God's love, but the Messiah also shared and then poured out the fruit of

¹⁶⁹ Yonge, *The Works of Philo Judaeus*, "On the Contemplative Life or Suppliants," 11:85, <http://earlyjewishwritings.com/text/philo/book34.html>.

the vine as a symbol of his own love. After the Last Supper, Jesus said man can show no greater love than when he lays down his life for his friends (John 15:13). He also showed that the fruit of the vine he poured out (symbolizing his shed blood) would provide the New Covenant. This great love was intended not only for his friends but for all people throughout history. God's love is also shown in this sacrifice, for God so loved the world that He allowed His own son to suffer as the true Passover, which God called His sacrifice:

^{JPS} Exodus 34:25 Thou shalt not offer the blood of **My sacrifice** with leavened bread; neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning.

^{NAS} John 3:16 "For God **so loved** the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

^{NAS} John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

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