

## UK BIBLE STUDENTS NEWSLETTER

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### MEMORIAL OF THE LORD'S SUPPER FOR 2012

Tuesday, April 3, after 6:00 p.m. (18:00)

‘There is long-standing disagreement among churches on the precise method which should be used not only to keep the feast, but how to calculate the date for its observance. In common with other Bible Students, those associated with *UK Bible Students* choose to commemorate it once a year, as one would an anniversary. However, we believe the date of its observance is less important than the fact of its institution. Should other Christians choose to keep it more frequently, there is no sin, and we wish them the Lord's blessing.’

[Read Article](#)

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#### Q&A

**Question:** Did Jesus break the bread into eleven pieces (Judas was absent), or into two, each disciple then breaking off a piece for himself? How should we carry out the service?

**Answer:** The accounts of the institution of the Memorial supper state that Jesus ‘broke’ the unleavened bread before passing it to His disciples. (Citations throughout this Appendix are to the *King James [Authorised] Version*, except where indicated otherwise):

**Matthew 26: 26:** ‘And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.’

**Mark 14: 22:** ‘And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.’

**Luke 22: 19:** ‘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.’

**1 Corinthians 11: 23, 24:** ‘For I [*Paul*] have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.’

#### *Institution of the Memorial Service*

At the time Jesus inaugurated the Memorial service He was the only one who *could* break the bread as symbolic of His own body being broken. Of those assembled in the upper room He alone was righteous (actually ‘justified’, or ‘just’), His sacrifice being then future and the holy spirit of begettal not having come upon the disciples. Looked at this way, one might conclude that since only He would or could offer His body as a ransom-sacrifice, we should read this inference back into the original service.

The difficulty with this assumption, however, is that the Memorial service was intended as a perpetual anniversary – or until Christ would come *again* – in His Second Advent (1 Corinthians 11: 26): ‘For as often as

ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.' This meaning, therefore, rises above the temporal. In other words, the ages-long *significance* of the symbol is what is in view. Jesus was setting forth a model remembrance for subsequent generations of Christians to follow. The singular event in the upper room therefore transcends the time in which it occurred, the signification of the emblems – the bread and the wine – enduring through the centuries, particularly in relation to the Gospel-Age Church. (For information on the sin-offering of the Church, see the articles on our Website, '[Dying for the Dead](#)' and '[Consecration of the Priests](#)'.)

### ***'Breaking' Bread***

The Jewish Passover which Jesus and His disciples kept prior to Jesus' inauguration of the 'last supper' proceeded along customary lines. We have no evidence that Jesus varied this routine. As a Jew brought up under the Law He observed the statutory Jewish feasts. He also honoured the extra-Biblical winter festival known variously as the 'feast of the dedication', the 'feast of lights' or, today, as Hanukkah, a tradition dating back to the 2nd-century revolt of the Maccabees ([John 10: 22, 23](#)).

'Breaking bread together' was a custom of the day. Indeed, the practice of blessing the bread before breaking it is mentioned several times in the Scriptures, the same formulation (bless-brake-gave) appearing often. At the feeding of the (more than) 5,000 with the five loaves and two fishes, we read that Jesus 'blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves' to his disciples ([Matthew 14: 19](#)). On the later occasion when He fed the (more than) 4,000, this time from a supply of seven loaves and a 'few' fish, the narrative also records that He 'gave thanks, and brake them, and gave' to His disciples ([Matthew 15: 34-36](#)). The 'fragments' left over from these community meals – twelve and seven baskets respectively – testify that the people did most of the 'breaking'. See [Matthew 14: 20, 21](#); [15: 37, 38](#); [Mark 6: 35-44](#); [8: 1-9](#); [Luke 9: 12-17](#); [John 6: 1-13](#). Any doubt about there being two separate mass feedings may be settled by reading [Matthew 16: 9, 10](#), in which our Lord refers to those events. [The Greek word, *klao*, translated 'brake' ('broke') is used also in [John 19: 32, 33](#), with reference to the soldiers breaking the legs of the criminals crucified with Jesus.]

The sociable practice of breaking bread together was maintained by the early Church, going 'house to house' ([Acts 2: 42-46](#)). On one of Paul's missionary journeys he reached Troas and met on Sunday to 'break bread' with the brethren ([Acts 20: 7-11](#)). And shortly before the shipwreck which stranded Paul and his fellow passengers on the island of Malta, the Apostle 'took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat' (Acts 27: 35).

### ***What Sort of Bread?***

Bread was usually made of wheat or barley; the sort used in the Passover and, therefore, the Memorial supper which superseded it, would have been baked without leaven – that is, without yeast, without which the bread would not rise. It probably resembled a thick, flat disc, not unlike pitta bread in general appearance. In connection with the miraculous feeding of the 5,000 the Scriptures state that the lad of [John 6: 9](#) had barley loaves with him, the staple of the poorer classes. The Greek is *artos*. The same word is used in a *generic* sense by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10: 16, 17 (*NIV-UK*): 'Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread [*artos*] that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf [*artos*], we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.' [Note that the order of the bread and cup is here reversed. Compare with [Matthew 26: 26, 27](#), and Paul's own rehearsal of it in [1 Corinthians 11: 23-26](#), in which the distribution of the bread *precedes* that of the cup.]

The Apostle's use here of 'bread' does not mean that the Memorial bread itself was of the leavened variety. Rather, his point is that the suffering of the Gospel-Age Church demonstrates their participation in the 'one loaf'. The *primary* implication is that the elect Body of Christ is 'broken' or sacrificed with Jesus; not as a part of His *ransom*-sacrifice – which *only* Jesus could provide – but as a part of the 'sin offering'. This is a complex and profound doctrine, well beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that, for several reasons, the privilege of taking part in the Memorial service is not confined to the saints of yesteryear.

### ***How to Proceed?***

In light of the evidence, the following approach seems reasonable:

1. The one in charge of the service breaks the bread/matzo in two, representative of the actions of Jesus, but does not eat it just yet.
2. As each member of the congregation receives the plate, he or she breaks off a piece and eats it.
3. After all have eaten, the plate is returned to the one in charge who now, as a recipient, breaks off a piece and eats it.
4. The same procedure may be adopted for the cup.

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### **YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS?**

‘1948: Darwin’s influence . . . has been on the wane during the past eighteen or twenty years. Today in France, thanks largely to the influence of that great zoologist, the late Louis Vialleton, probably most men of science reject the doctrine of evolution. In the rest of Europe and in North America the majority of scientists seem still to be evolutionists, but the size of this majority is rapidly dwindling, and the indications are that before the close of the present decade [1950, *Ed.*] evolutionism will have ceased to be fashionable. A generation is rising which is already critical.’

From the pamphlet, *Evolution Today* (London: Evolution Protest Movement, 1948), p. 1.

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### **IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR: *The Roman Empire***

‘The influence of Christianity upon social conditions was powerful and far-reaching. One of the changes brought about by Christianity was the adoption of a new attitude toward women. Pagan peoples, even the highly civilized Greeks and Romans, seem to have had little respect for women or for moral purity. To an Athenian, a wife was not a companion, to be loved and idealized. Of the Romans, the same was true. But Christianity placed woman on a higher plane, made marriage sacred, and insisted upon purity of life.

‘Another great change concerned the working people. Hitherto, those who toiled with their hands had been looked down upon as inferiors. A large proportion of the working class consisted of slaves. The Christians, however, believed that rich and poor were equal in the sight of God; all had immortal souls; and the poor man might be a better Christian than the rich man. Jesus had worked as a carpenter. The Christian doctrine of human equality was one of the great factors in destroying the institution of slavery, which had been the basis of Greek and Roman economic life, and in promoting a more democratic spirit. Furthermore, by teaching that work was not a disgrace, but a wholesome and honorable way of earning a livelihood, Christianity did much to establish the dignity of labor. Many of the Christian monks set an example by engaging in manual toil. It was a lesson that was much needed, for the poorer people of Rome had been learning to demand free bread from the government and to live in idleness.’

Hayes and Moon, *Modern History* (New York: The Macmillan Company; 1944), p. 25. *Extract reproduced with original spellings.*

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### **DRAG-NET**

*News from the World Wide Web*

‘**Backbench rebellion over plans to introduce homosexual marriage**’

<<http://www.christianconcern.com/our-concerns/social/backbench-rebellion-over-plans-to-introduce->

[homosexual-marriage](#)> (retrieved 30 Jan. 22, 2012)

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