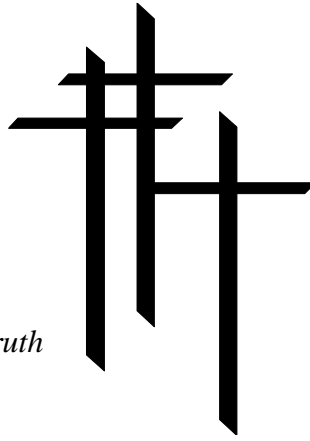


Timely Messenger

*Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth
Speaking the Truth in Love*



Volume 64 No. 10

October 2004

A SATISFYING SUPPER

By Charles Wages

There is much in scripture about eating. Since eating and drinking was God's mechanism for sustaining natural life, you would expect a lot of instruction concerning this "natural" function of existence. This experience would be expected to become a spiritual part of God's plan for His creation. The creation of the earth involved God's plan for His highest creation—man. How was natural life to be sustained? God provided food and water! So, eating and drinking became very important. In fact, life

depended on it! However, God gave instructions and warnings such as, eat to live, and even, "eat and die."

The dietary laws that God placed upon His people Israel, after the call of Abraham in Genesis 12, became a major part of God's instructions to His "chosen" people. They were instructed what, when, where, and how to eat! This should let us see eating and drinking had a major role in God's plan for humankind.

This leads to a very pertinent question. What

does all of this have to do with us today? Well, naturally, we still have to eat and drink to live.

The apostle Paul's instructions in 2 Timothy 4:4-5 are appropriate in this age of God's grace.

"For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

In God's dealings with the Church, the Body of Christ, today, (not Israel, naturally or spiritually), there are no "religious" requirements concerning food in our worship and relationship to and of the Lord. Various religious groups have imposed traditional sacraments and rites to and in their practices of worship concerning "eating and drinking."

These are declared and defended on the basis of "customs and traditions" of men, not on the Word of God, rightly divided.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a

workman that needeth not to ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth.” (2 Tim. 2:15)

When the Lord Jesus was preparing to leave this earth, He told his disciples to prepare for the last supper, or the Passover. The instructions as to this supper were explicit as to where, when, and what they were to eat. These passages are found in Matthew 26:17-29; Mark 14:12-16; and Luke 22:7-13. The significance of this time and purpose of eating was of extreme importance to His people, Israel, and the apostles. The “Passover” involved eating and was the “last supper” the Lord would observe “until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God” (Mark 14:25).

The great and important question for all believers today could be: “Are we to not eat and drink of and with the Lord today? If so, when, what, and how are we to commune and eat with our Lord? The use of the word “sup” and “supper” used in the Word refers to the chief meal of

the day and is given special emphasis in John 13:1-4 that tells us of the “feast of the Passover.”

In verse 2 of this chapter, we read, “And supper being ended,” and in verse 4 we read, “He riseth from supper.” The feast of the Passover was also called “supper,” and satisfied God’s great plan for Jesus’ earthly ministry. Later, Jesus washed the disciple’s feet! The “cleaned” disciples could then go forth and do their earthly ministry for their Lord. This was truly a “satisfying supper.” It is interesting and informative to think of another “supper” that will introduce God’s literal kingdom on earth. It is called “the marriage supper of the Lamb.” We need to understand when this will be, who is invited, what will be served, and for what purpose? It will certainly fulfill God’s great plan for the ages in His dealings with His people, Israel, and the nations.

No doubt, the most informative, yet difficult meal to understand is found in John, chapter six, the beautiful account of our

Lord feeding five thousand souls. How familiar! However, this chapter contains some of the most mystifying truths concerning eating found in scripture. The feeding of the people brought a ready response from the Jewish people who observed. They said, “Our fathers did eat manna from heaven.” Jesus said unto them, “Moses gave you that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven” (John 6:32). Then, later in John 6:50, our Lord said,

“This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.”

The Lord Jesus is that bread! We partake of Him, when we partake of the Word of God! God’s Word is often spoken of as food, such as meat, milk, and bread. In Hebrews 5:11-14 we are admonished and instructed that we shouldn’t be as “babes” but we should be of “full age” and “exercise our senses” to discern both good and evil.”

The lesson is obvious. We need the proper food in order to grow, be healthy, and serve our Lord. Symbols of food do not satisfy. They only confuse us and leave us hungry. A real “happy meal” is one that consists of reading and studying the “bread from heaven,” the Word of God. This is the only meal we need to live and serve. How beautiful and significant are the words in Revelation 3:20.

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

The real, “satisfying supper” is not a symbol, but the reality of partaking of God’s Word. Let us remember the admonition of the Apostle Paul in Colossians 2:16-17:

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days; which are

a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.”

And, let us remember those most beautiful and inspirational words of Jeremiah 15:16,

“Thy words were found and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts.”

**It is written,
Man shall not
live by bread
alone, but by
every word that
proceedeth out
of the mouth
of God.**

Matthew 4:4

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*Thanks for your help
in this matter!*

RIGHT DIVISION AND PRACTICAL LIVING

By R.B. Shiflet

It is a common thing in our time to hear a believer say, "I'm not concerned with dispensational Bible study; I'm just going to preach the gospel and emphasize the walk of the believer."

This feeling has no doubt come as a reaction to the hair-splitting policy of many of our Bible teachers and the confusion that has come from an effort on the part of some to force their dispensational views upon others, or to make these views a test for fellowship. In an effort to get away from a dispensationalism that has degenerated into little more than "profane and vain babbling," many have tried to forget 2 Timothy 2:15, and have reached a position that is untenable.

In the first place, we cannot preach the right gospel without dividing the Word of truth to some degree. The term "gospel" merely means "good news," and God's Word contains many messages of good news. Not all of them are directed to us, however. God had the good news of the kingdom proclaimed to Israel, but Israel

rejected this good news. Today, He is offering the gospel of the grace of God, the glorious gospel of Christ, and unless we study the Word with a view to the right division of it, we will be preaching the wrong gospel, or a perverted gospel. Such is the case when men bring carnal ordinances, works, the law, miracles, signs, a healing program, Sabbath keeping, etc., into the gospel message today. Any man, then, who preaches a clear message of grace, has practiced the right division of the Word to some degree.

Secondly, one cannot live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world without dividing the Word of Truth correctly. Note 2 Timothy 2:15 in its context:

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; who concerning the

truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use, and prepared for every good work." (2 Tim. 2:15-21)

Note verse 16. "Shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness." Shun means to turn one's self about in order to avoid. Profane means unholy. Vain babblings are empty discussions of useless matters. To increase is to advance, and ungodliness is absence of fear or reverence for God. This, you will notice, is placed in contrast with rightly dividing the Word of truth.

Next follows an example of two who, failing to divide the Word, have come into grave error. Through this error in doctrine, brought about as a result of failure to study the Word dispensationally,

the faith of some has been overthrown. The teachers given as an example have been holding that the resurrection was already past. Perhaps they had taken Paul's words in Ephesians 2:5-6, "even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" and failing to divide the Word right, had taken these words to teach that the only resurrection was a spiritual one, and that it was past, that is, it took place when we believed.

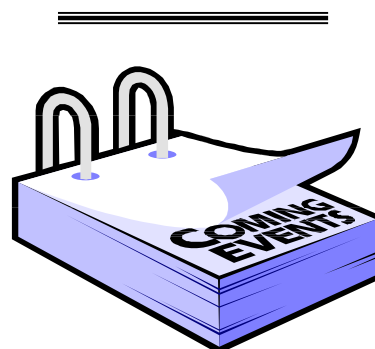
After showing the dreadful results of failing to heed the exhortation to right division, comes the assuring statement that God knows His own, but His own should depart from iniquity and strive to be vessels of honor. How can this be done? "If a man therefore purge himself from these (who fail to divide the Word and overthrow the faith of some) he shall be a vessel unto honor." The interesting word in this verse is "purge." *Harper's Analytical Greek Lexicon* defines the original word as follows: "to cleanse thoroughly; purify; purge out; eliminate." *Thayer* shows that it means: "to avoid defilement from one, and so to keep

one's self pure." The word is a combination of two words, one meaning "utterly," the other meaning "to cleanse or purify; to free from every admixture of what is false; to prune." Isn't this in itself a process of right division? If we study the Word of truth and rightly divide it, we shall know which things to purge from our lives. We will know what must be pruned out in the way of ungodly moral practices that were not brought into our dispensation.

What will be the result of this purging? We shall be vessels unto honor, consecrated, profitable for our Master's use, and fit for accomplishing unto every good work (2 Timothy 2:21). For further proof that the "rightly divided life"—utterly free from admixture—is dependent upon a rightly divided Word, see 2 Timothy 3:16-17. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort

your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work" (2 Thess. 2:16-17). Doctrine and deed are inseparable!



Winter Youth Retreat

Dec. 30 — Jan. 1

WHO? This retreat is for young people, ages 13 through college age.

WHERE? The retreat will be held at Three Mountain Retreat near Clifton, Texas. They have wonderful facilities, good home cooking, and horseback riding.

WHY? The focus of this retreat is Bible study and Christian fun and fellowship. The theme this year will be "*Matters of the Heart—A Biblical View of Love, Dating, Marriage, and Sex.*"

HOW? A registration form will be included in next month's issue.

WHAT ONE MUST DO TO BE SAVED

by Ike T. Sidebottom

Men, women, young people, boys and girls are never saved in mass movement. Too often people throng to the altar in evangelistic meetings and make empty confessions. One follows another, and they are as “the blind leading the blind.” They all fall into the ditch together.

Only the moving power of the Holy Spirit can impress upon the minds and hearts of the unsaved sinners the eternal and unalterable truth of the following scriptures.

“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” (Eccl. 7:20)

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9)

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” (Rom.

3:23)

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23)

Any unsaved person, with a normal mind, having read and thought upon these verses, cannot escape being touched by the truth of them. The honest heart will immediately realize that these verses apply to every one in the human family.

As you read these lines, will you be honest with yourself? Will you be honest with God? Will you read these verses again, and again? Will you think soberly, weighing the contents of each verse, and taking each verse as written directly unto you?

If you have ever thought of yourself as being a just person; and one that doeth good, and sinneth not: then remember

that your opinion of yourself clashes with the unalterable Word of God. He says you are not just, you cannot do good and live apart from sin. I urge you to bow before the Word of truth, accept it without a reservation, and take your place as an unjust sinner, standing in need of God’s mercy and grace.

Have you ever considered the fact, that as a member of the human family, as one of that great number described in the Bible as mankind, you have a deceitful heart that is desperately wicked. Yes, our hearts, both yours and mine, are not only deceitful, but “deceitful above all things.” Our hearts are not only wicked, but “desperately wicked.”

The thing that is most important for us to learn, is that we can do nothing about this terrible condition. We are wholly dependent upon God’s mercy and grace. Apart from His mercy, we would have been in hell long ago. Apart from His grace, we would, at this present time, be entirely without hope.

Perhaps you feel that

your clean, moral life; your good works; your membership in some church or lodge; or the fact that you give liberally to the church, to charity, etc., should be sufficient to give you a standing before God. Be not deceived by such thoughts. God has spoken, and His Word is that “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Without Christ, the very best of people are far short of His glory.

The last verse in the above quotations carries the one hope for you, or for any other member of the human family. Even though, the wages of our sin brings eternal death to our souls, God has provided for the quickening, or making alive of those who are dead in trespasses and sins. This quickening power is in His love gift to the world, even the gift of His own dear Son. God’s gift of eternal life to sinners is included in the gift of His Son.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in

Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name Of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:16-18)

The truth in these verses cannot be measured in heights nor depths, in length nor breadth. The only begotten Son of the Father came down from the heights of glory to live among men. He humbled Himself and became “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” which took Him to the depths of hell, as our substitute. The love manifested at Calvary reaches to the east, to the west, to the north, to the south, even as far as the habitation of any lost soul. The “whosoever” of the above quotation includes you, it included me, it included all

who have lived from the day of Adam to the last man that shall live on the earth.

I would like to emphasize to any unsaved person reading these lines that you are not numbered among the unsaved because of any or all of the sins you have committed. The Word says, “he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” He does not say that people are condemned because they are guilty of this sin or that sin, but because they have not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

We need to remember that the only difference between the saved and the unsaved is that the saved have the Saviour, and the unsaved have no Saviour. “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Therefore all are condemned. Every son of Adam, who has reached the age of accountability, stands condemned before God until he or she believes in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

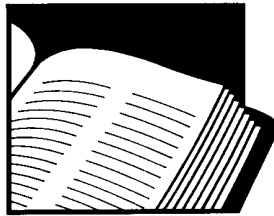
I trust that our unsaved readers will not hesitate to believe. Regardless of what your sins may be, even if you have gone into the very mire of sin, do not hesitate to trust Him who died for your sins. His blood cleanses from all sins.

I also hope that you will not feel that it is necessary for you to be in some revival meeting or some church gathering in order to be saved. You do not even need to be in the presence of a preacher. You only need to realize your lost and undone condition, as set forth in the first list of quotations mentioned above, and then believe that which is set forth in

the last list of verses quoted above.

In closing I say to you, in all sincerity, that which Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4:

“I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”



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