

OBSERVING "THE LORD'S EVENING MEAL"

Song No. 87 and Opening Prayer

PATTERN FOR "LORD'S EVENING MEAL" WAS SET BY JESUS (3 min.)

The first Lord's Evening Meal was celebrated Nisan 14, 33 C.E.

Jesus and his 11 faithful apostles were present on that occasion

Jesus knew that he would soon give his life as a perfect sacrifice

He arranged for his sacrifice to be remembered in a simple ceremony **[Read Luke 22:19, 20]**

Jesus' death is commemorated once each year; this serves as a reminder of loving provision of ransom

Jehovah showed love by making this provision, and Jesus did so by fulfilling his role

WHY A RANSOM WAS NEEDED (7 min.)

When Adam disobeyed God, he lost the **prospect of living forever**

All descendants of Adam have inherited sinful tendencies from him Wages sin pays is death **[Read Romans 6:23a]**

Imperfect humans cannot redeem themselves

By means of the ransom, God provides gift of everlasting life to mankind through Jesus Christ **[Read Romans 6:23b]**

Jesus willingly died so that obedient men could have life

Must exercise faith in Christ in order to have everlasting life **[Read John 3:16, 36]**

"Exercising faith" calls for action on our part **[Read James 2:24, 26]**

Those approved by God come in line for everlasting life, either in heaven or on earth

"LITTLE FLOCK" AND "OTHER SHEEP" BENEFIT FROM THE RANSOM (13 min.)

Jehovah chooses place each dedicated and baptized one will serve "Little flock" receive everlasting life in heaven (Lu 12:32)

Number limited to 144,000 **[Read Revelation 14:1]**

Majority of these were gathered prior to our time; only a remnant remain

Memorial attendance last year worldwide was _____, but only _____ partook of the emblems, indicating heavenly hope

Those of the "little flock" bear the name of Jehovah God and of Jesus Christ (*re* 200; Lu 12:32; Re 14:1)

Will "rule as kings over the earth" (Re 5:10)

As part of Kingdom arrangement, will channel untold blessings to obedient humans

God's spirit gives "little flock" personal assurance that they have heavenly hope

[Read Romans 8:16, 17]

Have been brought into new covenant, on basis of which spiritual Israelites are gathered

Since Jesus referred to "new covenant" when instituting the Lord's Evening Meal, only those in new covenant partake of emblems (Lu 22:20)

Called "*first fruits* to God" **[Read Revelation 14:4]**

This expression implies that others are also in line for God's favor

"Other sheep" will enjoy everlasting life on earth **[Read John 10:16]**

Are highly favored by God; Jehovah called them "blessed" and "my people" **[Read Isaiah 65:21-23]** Members of both the heavenly and the earthly classes have reason to be grateful for kind provision of ransom

While anointed partake of emblems, other sheep attend as respectful observers, reflecting appreciatively on ransom

WHAT THE EMBLEMS REPRESENT (2 min.)

Bread and wine represent body and blood of Christ, the perfect sacrifice

Unleavened bread represents Jesus' sinless body (1Co 5:7, 8)

Red wine pictures his blood poured out in sacrifice, which provides the basis for the new covenant and makes possible forgiveness of sins (Mt 26:27, 28)

CELEBRATING THE MEMORIAL OF CHRIST'S DEATH TODAY (12 min.)

Tonight we will follow the pattern Jesus set for observing the Lord's Evening Meal

[Read and comment briefly on 1 Corinthians 11:23, 24]

Jesus offered prayer and passed bread to 11 apostles

Qualified brother (preferably anointed) offers prayer, and then the bread is passed

[Read and comment briefly on 1 Corinthians 11:25]

Jesus prayed and then offered wine to followers

Another qualified brother (preferably anointed) prays, and then the wine is passed

[Optional whether speaker comments while emblems are being served]

BENEFITS FROM BEING PRESENT AT THIS MEMORIAL CELEBRATION' (8 min.)

How can we show appreciation for the Memorial?

If you are not yet baptized, continue working toward that goal

Build faith by taking in knowledge (Joh 17:3)

As your faith grows, you will have strength to fulfill other requirements--repentance, conversion, dedication, and baptism

Once baptized, must remain faithful

All must attend meetings regularly, not merely on special occasions (Heb 10:23-25)

Engage in preaching work (Ac 1:8)

Both anointed and other sheep must meet same standards of conduct We invite all qualified ones to share in field ministry this week Continue to take in knowledge of Jehovah's purposes

Song No. 105 and Closing Prayer

[Only scriptures in bold type need be read. References: w90 2/15 10-20; *it-2* 268-71; *gt* 114, 115]

APPRECIATE WHAT GOD AND CHRIST HAVE DONE FOR YOU!

Song No. 25 and Opening Prayer

THIS IS A SPECIAL OCCASION (6 min.)

We are here to show our appreciation for the love shown by Jehovah God and Jesus Christ

On this date almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus gave his life to open the opportunity for us to gain everlasting life
Jesus commanded his disciples to remember his loving act in a simple ceremony, which is held once a year as a memorial (Lu 22:19, 20)

In obedience to Jesus' command, millions around the world will observe the Lord's Evening Meal tonight

They will meet in Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls, in private homes, in rented facilities—even in prisons and open fields

In countries where our work is banned, appreciative ones will risk their freedom in order to obey Jesus' command

[Mention adjustments some in audience may have made in order to attend, and warmly commend them for making the effort]

Last year _____ observed the Lord's Evening Meal worldwide

Tonight we will briefly answer the following questions:

- (1) How does Jesus' death open the way to everlasting life?
- (2) Who benefit from Jesus' loving sacrifice?
- (3) Who should partake of the bread and the wine?
- (4) Besides attending this meeting, what else can we do to show our appreciation?

HOW DOES JESUS' DEATH OPEN THE WAY TO EVERLASTING LIFE? (7 min.)

The first man, Adam, had the prospect of living forever

His enjoyment of everlasting life was dependent on his obedience to God

Adam disobeyed God, thus losing the prospect of everlasting life

Later, when children were born to Adam, they came under the death sentence along with him [**Read Romans 5:12**]

Could righteous descendants of Adam ever be rescued from the sad condition they inherited?

Yes, they could, by means of the two greatest acts of love:

- (1) Jehovah willingly sent his firstborn Son, Jesus, to earth as a perfect man (Joh 3:16)
- (2) Jesus willingly gave his life in our place (Mt 20:28; Joh 15:13)

What Jesus gave was equal to what Adam had lost—a perfect human life (1Co 15:22)

Adam set his descendants on the path to destruction

Jesus provided for our deliverance through his obedience as far as death [**Read Romans 5:19**]

But why did Jesus have to die?

Jesus did not die for any wrong he committed; he was without sin (1Pe 2:22)

He took our place, suffering death for us so that we could live forever (Joh 10:11; Heb 2:9)

It warms our heart to think that Jesus, in effect, changed places with us so that we could have life!

But life where? In heaven or on earth?

WHO BENEFIT FROM JESUS' LOVING SACRIFICE? (7 min.)

The Bible describes two destinies, or hopes, for faithful humans

A limited number will receive everlasting life in heaven; the vast majority will enjoy life on a paradise earth, according to God's original purpose for mankind

144,000 will join Christ as rulers in God's heavenly Kingdom government [**Read Revelation 14:1**] (Re 5:10)

God's Kingdom, like most governments, has a fixed number of persons who share in ruling

The vast majority of those attending the Lord's Evening Meal do not have the heavenly hope

They look forward to the blessings that God has in store for them on a paradise earth (Isa 35:5, 6; 65:21, 22)

While on earth, Jesus healed the sick and even raised the dead

He longs to reverse the effects of Adam's sin on the human race

The Bible places no limit on the number who will gain everlasting life on earth (Re 7:9, 10)

They are in no way less important or less valuable to God; they are precious to him (Isa 65:23)

If this is your hope, can you see yourself living as part of the "new earth"? (Isa 65:17)

God wants you to be there!

We can all decide whether to become a member of God's family of worshippers, but we cannot choose where we will serve him, in heaven or on earth

A person cannot decide to be "born again" (Joh 3:5-8; w09 4/1 5-6)

Jehovah determines where we will best serve

WHO SHOULD PARTAKE OF THE BREAD AND THE WINE? (7 min.)

Both those with the heavenly hope and those with the earthly hope benefit from Jesus' sacrifice

However, those with the earthly hope do not partake of the emblems. Why not?

Jesus instituted the Memorial of his death with those with whom he has made a covenant for his heavenly Kingdom, the members of which are limited to 144,000 (Lu 22:28-30)

Those who partake of the bread and the wine tonight should be only the few remaining ones of that number who will rule with Christ in heaven

This is similar to what happens at a wedding: Only the bride and groom are parties to the marriage vows, but many others may joyfully attend the marriage ceremony

How does someone know whether he or she has been chosen by God for heavenly life?

God uses his holy spirit to inform and assure each one whom he chooses (Ro 8:15-17; *w04* 3/15 6)

Those anointed by holy spirit do not need anyone else to confirm their hope (Eph 1:18; 1Jo 2:20, 27; *w20.01* 22 ¶8-9)

How would God feel if someone he had not chosen were to partake of the emblems? (Ro 9:16; *w91* 3/15 21 ¶2)

When Jesus “comes” during the great tribulation, he will gather his remaining “chosen ones” to heaven, and the observance of the Memorial will cease (1Co 11:26; Mt 24:29-31; *w18.01* 16 ¶15)

Faithful ones on earth will no longer observe the Memorial

To benefit from Jesus’ sacrifice, they do not need to partake of the emblems—now or in the future

OBSERVING THE MEMORIAL OF CHRIST’S DEATH TONIGHT (10 min.)

Tonight we will follow the pattern Jesus set for observing the Memorial [For the benefit of new ones in attendance, give a brief overview of what will happen]

[Read and comment briefly on 1 Corinthians 11:23, 24]

Jesus offered a prayer and passed the bread to 11 faithful apostles

Unleavened bread represents Jesus’ sinless body

[A qualified brother offers a brief prayer, and then the bread is passed; the speaker may choose whether to comment while the emblems are being served]

[Read and comment briefly on 1 Corinthians 11:25]

Jesus prayed and then offered the wine to his followers

Red wine represents Jesus’ precious blood, which was “poured out in behalf of many for forgiveness of sins” (Mt 26:28)

[Another qualified brother prays briefly, and then the wine is passed]

WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO TO SHOW OUR APPRECIATION? (8 min.)

We can show our appreciation by choosing to give Jehovah our worship

Jesus’ sacrifice opened the way for you to have a precious relationship with your loving heavenly Father

Jehovah will bless your efforts to strengthen your relationship with him (Jas 4:8)

God will help you to live by his standards—he wants you to succeed!

Whenever you are discouraged, you can pour out your heart to him in earnest prayer

Build faith in God by taking in knowledge (Joh 17:3)

The more you get to know about God and Christ, the more your love for them will grow

Attend Christian meetings regularly, not only on special occasions, such as this one

It has been heartwarming for us to consider what Jesus did for us **[Read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15]**

In the coming days and weeks, continue to reflect appreciatively on Jesus’ sacrifice

May you be moved to show your appreciation for what God and Christ have done for you

Song No. 18 and Closing Prayer