

# CHRISTIAN STUDIES

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Consistent with Protestant churches, Churches of Christ have rejected the five so-called false sacraments and accepted baptism and the Lord's Supper as the proper sacraments of the church. Last year's issue of *Christian Studies* was focused on the theme of baptism. As a follow-up to those reflections, this issue is devoted to the "Eucharist," the early church's favorite word for holy communion. To distinguish it from the self-centered meal that the Corinthian Christians were celebrating, Paul called this meal the Lord's Supper, reminding the church who should be at the center of this practice.

Again, like other Protestant churches, churches of the American Restoration Movement rejected important aspects of the Roman Catholic Church's sacramental theology. As good Protestants, they have taken for granted that communion is to be given in both kinds (bread and cup). Furthermore, with other Protestants, Churches of Christ have rejected transubstantiation.

Where Restorationist churches have generally differed with other Protestants, especially those of Reformed and evangelical backgrounds, is in the frequency of the meal. Traditionally, Restorationist churches have insisted on participating in communion every Lord's Day and only on the Lord's Day. Because this practice has been distinctive among most of their American Protestant neighbors, Restorationist churches have concentrated much of their Eucharistic theology on the question of frequency—specifically, on defending weekly communion against its many detractors. It should be noted that the opponents of weekly communion are now fewer and farther between, since more frequent communion has become the ecumenical consensus. At any rate, as a result of the focus on frequency, other significant questions about the Lord's Supper have often been neglected or pushed aside in Churches of Christ.

Although the question of frequency is certainly important in its own right, this issue of *Christian Studies* intends to address other important issues related to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What is it? How should we think about it? How should we practice it? How can our theology and practice of the Lord's Supper be improved? The result is a collection of articles that are biblical, historical, theological, and practical. Collectively, they examine a variety of

matters connected to the Eucharist, including related biblical themes, the presence of Christ, historical insights, and the proper communicants.

It is my hope that these articles will be beneficial to you in your own study and reflection on this central rite of the church's life. May the considerations in the following pages help us all be more faithful and thoughtful as we seek to practice and pass on the most holy faith.

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# Royal Meals, Covenant Meals, the Messianic Banquet, and the Lord's Supper

R. Mark Shipp

The background of the imagery and elements of the Lord's Supper has long been fertile ground for research. In particular, scholars have tried to show connections between the Last Supper and banquets for Dionysus,<sup>1</sup> first-century AD common Greco-Roman banquet traditions,<sup>2</sup> and funerary banquets for dead ancestors.<sup>3</sup> Others have noted the close connection between Jesus' Last Supper and the Passover celebration, which was the occasion for the Supper, and two of the elements of that Passover meal which Jesus appropriated and reinterpreted.<sup>4</sup>

Dennis E. Smith, in *From Symposium to Eucharist*, has suggested that there is a line of continuity between banquet practices in the classical and Jewish worlds and the Eucharist.<sup>5</sup> Most pertinently, he connects the banquet furnishings, stages of the meal, posture at meals, and elements of the meal itself with Greco-Roman banquet practices (and to a lesser extent, Jewish practices, in terms of Jewish dietary laws). While his observations are illuminating, one

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<sup>1</sup> Dennis E. Smith, "Messianic Banquet," in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, ed. David N. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 788–89.

<sup>2</sup> Dennis E. Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist: The Banquet in the Early Christian World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Smith, "Messianic Banquet," 790.

<sup>4</sup> See, in particular, Joaquim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: Scribner's, 1966). I have previously written in this journal about the Lord's Supper as the "Christian Passover." See R. Mark Shipp, "'This Is the Covenant in My Blood: The Lord's Supper, Passover, and Christian Community,'" *Christian Studies* 18 (2000-01): 5–13.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 171.

might expect a meal in first-century Palestine to reflect Greco-Roman and Jewish traditions and procedures. For example, Jesus and the disciples' reclining at table for the Passover meal reflects common practice at meals. Also, that appetizers and wine were served at specific times during the course of a banquet may inform us as to the typical elements and sequence of such banquets but does not necessarily shed light on the Eucharist as a covenant meal.

Smith himself suggests that two elements of banquet traditions were specific to the Jews: Jewish dietary practice (i.e., kosher laws) and the motif of the "messianic banquet,"<sup>6</sup> although the latter does not represent a real, but rather an idealized, meal tradition. In this article, I suggest that there are at least three ritual meal traditions specific to Jewish ideology and history which provide a deep background and influence upon the Lord's Supper: meals at royal coronation and dedication rituals, covenant meals, and the messianic banquet.

### **Royal Coronations, Dedication Rituals, and Other Royal-Sponsored Meals**

*Meals at Coronations:* Meals were served at coronation celebrations for new kings, sanctuary dedications, and important festivals or political events where the king is the host or figures prominently. In 1 Chronicles 12:38–40, "all Israel" comes to David to "make him king." Food is provided from all Israel, enough for three days of joyful feasting. While it is unclear in this passage that David is the host (all Israel came to David and themselves made provision for the feast), the connection of feasting in the presence of God's anointed king is clear.

Indeed, even the holding of a such a feast by one of the royal household was enough to provoke the rumor that "Adonijah has become king":

Adonijah sacrificed sheep, oxen, and fattened cattle by the Serpent's Stone, which is beside En-rogel, and he invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the royal officials of Judah, but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the mighty men or Solomon his brother. Then Nathan said to Bathsheba the mother

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<sup>6</sup> Smith, *From Symposium to Eucharist*, 171. Smith suggests that even the messianic banquet has similarities with Greco-Roman traditions, although it is specifically tied to Jewish history and traditions. I suggest that the most logical locus for Eucharistic theology and practice is not common banquet practices, but royal banquets, covenant meals, and the eschatological/messianic banquet.

of Solomon, “Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king and David our lord does not know it?” (1 Kings 1:9–11).<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, when Solomon is “made king a second time” in 2 Chronicles 29, there is an anointing ceremony and the people “ate and drank before the Lord”:

And they ate and drank before the LORD on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and they anointed him as prince for the LORD, and Zadok as priest (2 Chron 29:22).

*Meals at Sanctuary Dedications:* Two important sanctuary dedications with meals sponsored by the king are 2 Samuel 6:17–19 and 1 Kings 8:65–66. In 2 Samuel 6, David brings the ark into a tent he had prepared for it in Jerusalem, presides over the sacrifices, and distributes food to all Israel:

And they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house (2 Sam 6:17–19).

Similar to this passage is another dedication narrative, found in 1 Kings 8:65–66/2 Chronicles 7:8–10. In this narrative, Solomon installed the ark into the new temple, prayed a dedicatory prayer, and offered up thousands of sacrifices. The narrative ends with a feast:

At that time Solomon held the feast for seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly, from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of Egypt. And on the eighth day they held a solemn assembly, for they had kept the dedication of the altar seven days and the feast seven days. On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their homes, joyful and glad of heart for the

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<sup>7</sup> Regardless of the obvious political implications the feast provided for those who supported Solomon over Adonijah, such a feast could be, and was, understood as a coronation feast.

prosperity that the LORD had granted to David and to Solomon and to Israel his people (1 Kings 8:65–66).

*Royal-Sponsored Meals at Festivals or other Important Political Occasions:* Among the most striking royal-sponsored meals are those conducted by Hezekiah and Josiah, who each restored the Passover celebration in a manner not seen since the time of David and Solomon (see 2 Kings 23:21–23; 2 Chron 30, and 2 Chron 35:1–19). The Passover was a celebration conducted by extended families at home, but in these narratives the kings initiated a massive, national celebration, with the slaughter of thousands of animals.

Royal-sponsored meals also involved coalitions with other kingdoms and preparations for war. In 1 Kings 22/2 Chronicles 18, Ahab sacrificed numerous sheep and cattle for Jehoshaphat and his retinue in order to coax him into joining with him in battle against the Arameans.

*Passion week as coronation and royal-sponsored meal:* Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem in Matthew 21:1–16 is the public proclamation of his kingship in the line of David (i.e., riding on the royal donkey, as in Zech 9; the crowds crying out “Hosanna to the son of David”). Jesus' first act following his triumphal entry—his entrance into the temple—resonates with David's installation of the ark of the covenant in the tent in Jerusalem, likewise his first act after securing the city from the Jebusites, which is followed by a royal-sponsored meal. Similarly, the temple dedication narrative of Solomon in 1 Kings 8 is followed by a meal. In Matthew, the events which begin with the triumphal entry into Jerusalem end with the royal-sponsored meal with the disciples in the upper room. In that meal, Jesus refers to himself in Matthew 26:24 as the “Son of Man,” language evoking the royal figure given a kingdom in Daniel 7:13–14.

### **Covenant Meals in the Old and New Testaments**

*Covenant meals in the Old Testament.* Covenant ceremonies in the Old Testament often, perhaps typically, included a covenant meal. Whether the covenant was that between equal parties (a “parity covenant”) or between unequal parties (a “suzerainty covenant”), it is not surprising that meals were a feature of such ceremonies.

One of the first such covenant meals is found in the parity covenant between Jacob and Laban regarding their mutual respect for each other's

boundaries. The covenant involves conditions on both parties, a physical sign of and witness to the covenant (the “heap” and the “pillar”), sacrifices offered, and a covenant meal. Laban says to Jacob,

“Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I. And let it be a witness between you and me.” So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. And Jacob said to his kinsmen, “Gather stones.” And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there by the heap. Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me today.” Therefore he named it Galeed, and Mizpah, for he said, “The LORD watch between you and me, when we are out of one another’s sight. If you oppress my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no one is with us, see, God is witness between you and me.” Then Laban said to Jacob, “See this heap and the pillar, which I have set between you and me. This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, to do harm. The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us.” So Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac, and Jacob offered a sacrifice in the hill country and called his kinsmen to eat bread. They ate bread and spent the night in the hill country (Gen 31:44–54).

This narrative has two meals at the occasion of the covenant ceremony: one after raising the pillar and the heap of stones, and the other after the covenant sacrifice, both involving Jacob’s family and the Arameans.

Perhaps the most significant covenant meal in the Old Testament is that depicted in Exodus 24, the covenant at Sinai. Moses and the 70, representing the whole congregation of Israel, go up on the mountain to sacrifice. After the covenant sacrifices,

[Moses] and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank (Exod 24:9–11).

*The Last Supper as a covenant meal.* Not only is the meal in the context of the covenant ceremony, but the explicit connection of the “blood of the covenant” in Exodus 24:8 (“Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made

with you...”) with the Sinai covenant ceremony, the shedding of Jesus’ own blood, and the Last Supper:

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (Matt 26:26–29).

### **The “Messianic Banquet” in Old Testament Texts**

*The Messianic Banquet.* Perhaps the least understood possible influence on the Lord’s Supper is that of the so-called messianic banquet, where a feast is spread in the end times for all peoples and death and chaos are abolished.<sup>8</sup> This theme is most clearly seen in Isaiah 25:6–9:

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples, a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

This passage has several eschatological elements to it—that is, that the events described are set in some future, undisclosed time from the standpoint of the writer and depict a decisive end, or turning point, in history.<sup>9</sup> First, the

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<sup>8</sup> Some have suggested that the messianic banquet has its deep background in the feasts of Canaanite deities, victory banquets for gods or kings, or the fertility cult. E.g., Beth Steiner, “Food of the Gods: Canaanite Myths of Divine Banquets and Gardens in Connection with Isaiah 25:6,” in *Formation and Intertextuality in Isaiah 24–27*, ed., J. Todd Hibbard and Hyun Chul Paul Kim, *Ancient Israel and Its Literature* 17 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), especially 107–15.

<sup>9</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered: Christianity in the Making*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003). Dunn suggests that the messianic banquet language is part of an entire complex of conceptions which “plugs into the Jewish expectation of the time” and raises questions in his mind as to whether Jesus and his followers “operated with

feast to be celebrated is on Mt. Zion, the “mountain of the Lord’s house” and the city of the Davidic king. Second, this victory meal is universal in scope, a meal for all nations and not Israel alone. Third, at this future time, the reproach of Israel will be removed and death itself will be done away with.<sup>10</sup> Fourth, this banquet is connected with the forgiveness of sins.<sup>11</sup> Note that the “Messiah” is not mentioned as presiding over this feast, nor is he mentioned in the text.<sup>12</sup> The setting, however, is Zion, central to God’s promises and covenant with David.

A similar passage is found in Jeremiah 31:10–14, where the Lord provides for his priests and his people in a superlative future:

Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.” For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, declares the LORD.

Note again that a messianic figure is not mentioned in this text, but Zion, the city of the temple and the Davidic covenant, is prominent.

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a single, comprehensive story,” instead of “glimpses of the beyond and flashes of insight” (Dunn, 398). Dunn connects the messianic banquet with conceptions and expectations of the coming kingdom of God (394 and 411).

<sup>10</sup> Dan G. Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration: An Integrative Reading of Isaiah 24–27* JSOTS 61 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1986), 62–67; see also Paul Kan-Kul Cho and Janling Fu, “Death and Feasting in the Isaiah Apocalypse (Isaiah 25:6–8),” in *Formation and Intertextuality in Isaiah 24–27*, especially 133–42.

<sup>11</sup> Brant Pitre, “Jesus, the Messianic Banquet, and the Kingdom of God,” *Letter & Spirit* 5 (2009): 136.

<sup>12</sup> Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 394, thinks that a “messianic figure” and a “messianic banquet” are sometimes, but not always, linked and were independent motifs.

Isaiah 55:1 also may give us a glimpse at an eschatological/messianic meal. In this chapter, the Lord extends an invitation to eat and drink truly satisfying food, sustenance linked with seeking the Lord (v. 6) and listening to his words (v. 2). Of special note is the connection of such a feast with the covenant given to David (vv. 3–4).

*Eschatological Wedding Feasts.* Similar to such eschatological, messianic banquet depictions are wedding banquets, a few of them also having eschatological or messianic dimensions.<sup>13</sup> Hosea 2 uses wedding motifs in metaphorical and eschatological senses. Israel is accused of thinking her “grain, wine, and oil” came from the Canaanite ba`als; God was about to take away these gifts he had given, drive Israel back into captivity, then betroth her again in a new wilderness wandering. There, God was going to take her to himself as a bride and provide her with grain, wine, and oil. This eschatological wedding was to occur in the context of a new, or renewed, covenant:

And I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD. And in that day I will answer, declares the LORD, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth, and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil, and they shall answer Jezreel... (Hos 2:18–22).

This prophecy of a superlative future is in the context of Israel taking God’s lavish blessings and using them in feasts to Ba`al.

*The Messianic Banquet in Intertestamental Writings:* In intertestamental writings the messianic feast takes on even greater significance, with the nations gorging on the carcass of the slain Leviathan and Behemoth (2 Bar 29:1–4) and, at Qumran, two messiahs—the “Priest” and the royal messiah—preside over the

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<sup>13</sup> One thinks immediately of the royal wedding ceremony in Psalm 45, although no feast is explicitly mentioned (see vv. 10–17). Another wedding, this one replete with a wedding banquet, is Song 2:1–5. Eugene Boring connects the messianic banquet with a wedding celebration in several New Testament texts (Matt 22:1–14; Matt 25:1–13; Luke 12:35–38, etc.). See Eugene Boring, “Messianic Banquet,” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* vol. 4, ed. K. Sakenfeld (Nashville: Abingdon, 2009), 67.

meal (1Qsa/1Q28a, the “Messianic Rule”). In 1 Enoch, the Messiah/Son of Man is clearly the one who presides over the feast. He sacrifices and provides food for the righteous ones, “who eat and rest and rise with that Son of Man for ever and ever” (1 Enoch 62:12–14).

*The Messianic Banquet in New Testament Texts:* There are several examples of eschatological banquets in the New Testament, utilizing motifs of divine victory over the enemy and wedding motifs.

The most commonly cited references to eating a banquet in the eschatological kingdom are Matthew 8:11–12 and Luke 13:28–29:

I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt 8:11–12).

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God (Luke 13:28–29).

The context of the first passage is Jesus' dialogue with the centurion, whose servant was ill. Jesus marveled at his great faith and may have been explicitly referencing Isaiah 25 when he says that many who would enjoy the eschatological banquet would come from “east and west,” including Gentiles.<sup>14</sup> The context of the second passage is a kingdom parable, where the master of the household shuts the door on many who were “outside,” but thought of themselves as household familiars, while others would be included at table who came from “east and west.”

Two eschatological feasts are also mentioned in Revelation 19. The first is the invitation to the wedding feast of the Lamb and his bride:

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<sup>14</sup> Pitre, “Jesus, the Messianic Banquet, and the Kingdom of God,” 142, says that two views regarding the identity of those who came from east and west must be abandoned: 1) that only the restoration of a Jewish diaspora is in view, and 2) that this passage refers to the conversion of the Gentiles and condemnation of Israel. He suggests that these passages refer to the ingathering of both Jews and Gentiles into the kingdom.

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"—for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God" (Rev 19:6–9).

The second is a departure from the usual messianic banquet motif of the gathering of Jews/Gentiles to Zion in the eschatological kingdom. In vv. 17–18, an invitation to gather for "God's supper" is sent to "all the birds," to feast upon the flesh of his enemies:

Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great" (Rev 19:17–18).

Any list of messianic or eschatological feasts in the New Testament should also include Jesus' Passover meal with his disciples in Matthew 26:26–29:

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Two aspects of the Last Supper in Matthew stand out in connection with the motif of the messianic banquet, discussed above relative to Isaiah 25: first, it is a banquet held for God's people on Mt. Zion; second, the banquet is connected to the forgiveness of sins; and third, it is an eschatological, end-time feast, celebrating a new kingdom.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See Pitre, "Jesus, the Messianic Banquet, and the Kingdom of God," 145. Pitre suggests that the Babylonian Talmud *Pesahim* 199b is directly parallel to Jesus' action and words in the Last Supper:

From this brief survey of eschatological feasts in the New Testament, it may be seen that the same eschatological banquet motifs are found as in the Old Testament and intertestamental literature: a messianic banquet for all nations, Jew and Gentile; a covenant meal, with eschatological dimensions; and an end-time royal wedding feast.

### **The Last Supper as a Royal-Sponsored Meal, a Covenant Meal, and a Messianic Banquet**

Something has already been said about each of these occasions for meals. I will now summarize these points in the context of Jesus' final week in Jerusalem as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew.

First, Jesus' Davidic kingship is clearly announced upon the occasion of his entry into Jerusalem. He is publicly announced as the "son of David," explicitly messianic language. Also, he rides into Jerusalem on the "royal donkey" (compare with 2 Sam 18:9; 1 Kings 1:33; Zech 9:9; Esther 8:8).<sup>16</sup> The spreading of branches before him is obscure, but tree branches are a common royal metaphor in the Old Testament.<sup>17</sup> He spends time in the temple, cleansing it and teaching in it, and the week ends with the meal he arranges in the upper room with his disciples.

Second, Jesus himself makes the connection explicit between his Last Supper with his disciples, a Passover meal, and the covenant at Sinai when he

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The Holy One, blessed be he, will make a great banquet for the righteous on the day he manifests his love to the seed of Isaac. After they have eaten and drunk, the cup of blessing will be offered to our father Abraham, that he should bless, but he will answer them, "I cannot bless..." Then David will be asked, "Take it and bless." "I will bless, and it is fitting for me to bless," he will reply...

<sup>16</sup> The animal conveyance denoting royal favor and prerogative is variable. In 1 Kings 1:33 it is a *pidāh*, a female mule; in Zech. 9:9 it is a *hāmôr*, a donkey; in Esther 8:8 it is a *sûs*, a horse. In order for Matthew to make his point inescapably clear, he fulfills the messianic prophecy of Zech 9:9 by having Jesus ride two animals, a donkey and the foal of a donkey, disregarding Hebrew poetic parallelism.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Ezek 17; 19:10–14; 31:15–18; Dan 11:7, and many others. As a metaphor for Davidic rule, see Isa 11:1.

reinterprets the cup after the meal using the language of the Sinai covenant and the meal which followed it in Exodus 24.<sup>18</sup>

Third, Matthew makes the eschatological dimension of the Last Supper explicit when he says, “I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom” (Matt 26:29). The connection between the Last Supper and feasting in the kingdom in an eschatological messianic banquet is therefore also made explicit.

There are several points for Christians which should be underscored. The Lord's Supper is indeed a re-appropriation and reinterpretation of two of the elements of the Passover meal, but it is more than this. It is also a royal-sponsored meal, with Christ, the king, as host. It is a covenant meal, with roots in the covenant at Sinai and the covenant with David, but which also symbolizes and signifies a new covenant in the body and blood of Jesus the Christ. Finally, it is a messianic banquet, looking back upon such eschatological banquet passages as Isaiah 25:6–9, but pointing forward to the time when all the people of God will recline with him at table in the kingdom. “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes” (1 Cor 11:26).

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<sup>18</sup> Possibly the “cup of redemption.” see Shipp, “The Covenant in My Blood,” 11–12.

## **Technology as Messiah**

...[T]he question, “What will a new technology do?” is no more important than the question, “What will a new technology undo?” Indeed, the latter question is more important, precisely because it is asked so infrequently. One might say, then, that a sophisticated perspective on technological change includes one's being skeptical of Utopian and Messianic visions drawn by those who have no sense of history or of the precarious balances on which culture depends. In fact, if it were up to me, I would forbid anyone from talking about the new information technologies unless the person can demonstrate that he or she knows something about the social and psychic effects of the alphabet, the mechanical clock, the printing press, and telegraphy—in other words, knows something about the costs of great technologies....

Our unspoken slogan has been “technology über alles,” and we have been willing to shape our lives to fit the requirements of technology, not the requirements of culture. This is a form of stupidity, especially in an age of vast technological change. We need to proceed with our eyes wide open so that we many use technology rather than be used by it.

Neil Postman, “Five Things We Need to Know about Technological Change”

## **Didache on the Eucharist**

Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks as follows. First, concerning the cup: “We give you thanks, our Father, for the holy vine of David your servant, which you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever.” And concerning the broken bread: “We give you thanks, our Father, for the life and knowledge that you have made known to us through Jesus, your servant; to you be the glory forever. Just as this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains and then was gathered together and

became one, so may your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.” But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord, for the Lord has also spoken concerning this: “Do not give what is holy to dogs.”

*Didache* (ca. 70)

### **Justin on the Eucharist**

...[B]read and a chalice containing wine mixed with water are presented to the one presiding over the brethren. He takes them and offers praise and glory to the Father of all, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and he recites lengthy prayers of thanksgiving to God in the name of those to whom He granted such favors.

We call this food the Eucharist, of which only he can partake who has acknowledged the truth of our teachings, who has been cleansed by baptism for the remission of his sins and for his regeneration, and who regulates his life upon the principles laid down by Christ. Not as ordinary bread or as ordinary drink do we partake of them, but just as, through the word of God, our Savior Jesus Christ became Incarnate and took upon Himself flesh and blood for our salvation, so, we have been taught, the food which has been made the Eucharist by the prayer of His word, and which nourishes our flesh and blood by assimilation, is both the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.

Justin Martyr, *First Apology* (ca. 150)

### **Peter Lombard on the Eucharist**

We are cleansed by baptism; we are perfected in the good by the Eucharist. Baptism extinguishes the ardour of the vices; the Eucharist restores us spiritually. And so it is excellently called ‘Eucharist,’ that is, good grace, because in this sacrament not only is there an increase of virtue and grace, but he who is the fount and origin of all grace is wholly received.

Peter Lombard, *Sentences* (ca. 1150)

## **Robert Milligan on the Eucharist**

We must, therefore, simultaneously eat of the commemoration loaf and of the bread of life; and while we literally drink of the symbolic cup, we must also, at the same time, drink spiritually of that blood, which alone can supply the wants of the thirsty soul. *Unless we do this, the bread that we eat, can in no sense be to us the body of the Son of God; nor can the wine that we drink be in any sense the blood of the New Covenant, which was shed for the remission of the sins of many.*

Robert Milligan, *Millennial Harbinger* (1859)

## **Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry**

The Eucharist, which always includes both word and sacrament, is a proclamation and a celebration of the work of God. It is the great thanksgiving to the Father for everything accomplished in creation, redemption and sanctification, for everything accomplished by God now in the Church and in the world in spite of the sins of human beings, for everything that God will accomplish in bringing the Kingdom to fulfilment....

Christ himself with all that he has accomplished for us and for all creation (in his incarnation, servant-hood, ministry, teaching, suffering, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension and sending of the Spirit) is present in this *anamnesis*, granting us communion with himself. The Eucharist is also the foretaste of his *parousia* and of the final kingdom....

As the Eucharist celebrates the resurrection of Christ, it is appropriate that it should take place at least every Sunday. As it is the new sacramental meal of the people of God, every Christian should be encouraged to receive communion frequently.

*Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982)

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