

outreach

The Newsletter of the Churches of God, UK

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Matthew 28:19-20

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REMEMBER!

Veterans Day, Armistice Day. Days of sadness. Days to remember every year in loving memory of sacrifice, of the passing of loved ones.

In modern Christianity there's 'Good Friday' when the death of Jesus is recalled—though no longer nationally. In the Bible, though, the recollection of this awesome event is 'the Lord's Supper'.

It is, Biblically, the annual remembrance of 'Christ our Passover, sacrificed for us' (I Corinthians 5). Jesus instituted it 'on the night in which he was betrayed' (ch 11:23), on the very day* on which he was nailed to the stake. He appointed that evening as a time of remembrance. "Do this", he said, "in remembrance of me" (v.24).

In the secular world, days of remembrance are treated with varying degrees of solemnity. For Christians, this is the most solemn time of year, and the memorial service is observed with due reverence. [The following evening is *Passover* which begins the seven days of *Unleavened Bread*. It is, in contrast to the Lord's Supper, a time of celebration.]

Prepare

Jesus, his words recorded in John 13-17, described how the memorial is observed. The apostle Paul gives some background (I Corinthians 11:17-26) - and also informs us how we ought to prepare for it. He says that the 'Supper' is not a party, not a social occasion. Nowhere does he call it 'the Passover', which is social and celebratory. He sets the tone as a *memorial*.

The apostle makes clear that this momentous historical event is not to be taken lightly, casually. He writes:

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes. Whoever, therefore, eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself and so eat the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we should not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord we are chastened so that we not be condemned along with the world. (I Corinthians 11:27-32)

So, he says, behave reverently at the service. And be sure to prepare ourselves before partaking of the bread and the cup, by challenging our own lifestyle. How do we measure against the yardstick of the life of the Saviour? What aspects of our behaviour and our thinking need reform? How can we change?

It's good practice, in the weeks leading to the Lord's Supper, to look inwards, for once to be introspective.

Many believers will, without being maudlin, focus their regular Bible study on the words descriptive of Jesus' suffering and death—in both the Old Testament and in the New. Guidance on the behaviour Jesus looks for in us is found in the words he directed to the disciples at that final supper.

If you have any queries regarding the observance, please get in touch with any of our offices.

* In that era of history, the 'day' began at sunset

This year, the Lord's Supper will be observed on the evening of **April 22**, Friday, and after sunset.

A leaflet with suggestions for its observation is available from Lincoln, and is also on the CGOM website (www.cgom.org), titled: **Passover and Unleavened Bread**