



LITURGICAL CATECHESIS

Week 9 (April 19, 2017) - The Table Fellowship of Jesus and Structures of Word and Sacrament
(Session 4 of DVD)

Introduction:

Liturgy is a means by which God's people receive God's gifts (Divine Service), worship Him and communicate the Gospel message to each other. The historic Lutheran liturgy seeks to do just that. In addition to communicating the Gospel, the Lutheran liturgy serves as a channel for the worshipper's response in song, prayer, praise and giving thanks (2nd Commandment). Only when the worshiper understands and appreciates the liturgy of his church will he be able to participate in it meaningfully and derive full benefit from it. -Arthur A. Just, *Heaven on Earth: The Gifts of Christ in the Divine Service*

Details of the once-a-year Passover Seder Meal:

- Blessing over the Day (Feast of Unleavened Bread) - A blessing to God for the Day
- Blessings over the Cup I - IN a sense the host was toasting God for this wonderful drink.
 - Food:
 - Bitter Herbs = symbolized the bitterness of their slavery
 - Unleavened Bread = symbolized their leaving in haste
 - Passover Lamb = the means of their rescue (salvation) through the blood of the Lamb
- Midrash - explanation/interpretation of the food
- Haggadah - narration of the Exodus, usually spoken from memory by the father.
 - The "3 questions" from the children:
 - Since the retelling of the Salvation of God in the Exodus to one's child is the object and focus of the Seder experience, much effort is made to teach the truly important things. To that end, questions and answers are a central device in the Seder ritual. By encouraging children to ask questions, they hear the responses and are taught what it is they are to believe. After the asking of the questions, this main portion of the Seder discusses the answers in the form of a historical review. By regular repetition this sets-up the pattern for them to memorize the "main points" in a simple way so that they will know the story and the key points of their faith. (An Early Catechism!)
 - The most famous question which the youngest child asks at the Seder is the first: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" - ie. "What do we mean by this service?" (Exodus 12:26)
- Blessing over the Cup II (Cup of Redemption) A blessing to God for His wonderful deliverance, which was being remembered and celebrated at this meal
- Blessing over the Bread - Even as we ask God to bless our food today before we eat.
 - The Breaking of the Bread - This was the start of the meal.
 - Meal - The food would now be served
- Blessing over the Cup III (Cup of Blessing) - A blessing to God for this meal of remembrance of His salvation by which He powerfully showed the Israelites His activity among them as Savior.
- Grace after the Meal - Seems to be included with the Cup of Blessing

How would you describe what is commonly understood today as “fellowship”?

How has the Church, from the Jews, understood the nature of “fellowship”?

*What was the most significant yearly table fellowship for Israel in our Lord’s day?
What role did this meal serve in the worship life of Israel?*

What other significant table fellowship did the Jews celebrate?

What were the two fundamental parts of table fellowship?

Did the early Christians continue this practice? (Read Acts 2:42-47)

What became the two fundamental parts of the liturgy of the Christian Church?

What is the liturgy?

Sacrifice runs throughout the Old Testament: It began when God sacrificed an animal to make clothes for Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21); it continued right after Noah came out of the Ark (Gen 8:20); it took place with Abraham when God commanded him to sacrifice his only son, who was replaced at the last moment with a ram (Gen 22:13); it also took place in the days of Moses in the connection with God’s promise to Passover each household who in faith slaughtered a year-old lamb without defect and put its blood on the doorframes of their houses (Ex. 12); it was finally established as a regular practice in the book of Leviticus - always with the intention of pointing people to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, who paid the full penalty for all sins.

What role did sacrifice play in “cutting a covenant”? (Read Genesis 15:7-18)

How does sacrifice & cutting a covenant connect to the Seder Meal & thus the Lord’s Supper?

How was Jesus’ Seder meal in Jerusalem made different?

When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, in what two ways was He present?

Frequency and desire:

How often was the Passover meal celebrated?

From the Jewish origins and the fact that table fellowship is so central to the Church’s worship, what are your thoughts about the frequency to which the Lord’s Supper should be offered?