

## ~LOVE FEASTS (160)

### .. Not The Lord's Evening Meal

### .. Misused By Some

- The Bible does not describe these love feasts nor does it indicate how often they were held.
- These are the rocks hidden below water in your **love feasts** while they feast with you, shepherds that feed themselves without fear, waterless clouds carried this way and that by winds, trees in late autumn, but fruitless, having died twice, having been uprooted. (**Jude 1:12**)
- They were not commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ or his apostles, and it is apparent that they are not to be considered mandatory or permanent.
- Some say they were occasions when materially prosperous Christians held banquets to which their poor fellow believers were invited. Together, the fatherless, the widows, the rich, and the less fortunate shared a bountiful table in a spirit of brotherhood.
- Tertullian, a writer of the second and third centuries, gives a description of the **love feasts**, recounting that the participants, before reclining to eat, offered prayer to God.
- They would eat and drink with moderation, only enough to satisfy hunger and thirst, remembering that even during the night they must worship God.
- Their conversation was as those who knew that the Lord was listening. Each sang a song, and the feast closed with prayer. [**Apology, XXXIX,16-18**]
- That these **feasts** were originally held with good intent is indicated by the word used to describe them *a-ga'pe*. *A-ga'pe* is the Greek word used for the highest form of **love**, love based on principle. It is the kind of **love** that the Bible says, **God is**.
- He that does not **love** has not come to know God, because God is love. (**1 John 4:8**)

- **It is listed as a fruit of the spirit at;**
- **On the other hand, the fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith. (Galatians 5:22)**
- **And is described at length in;**
- **Love is long-suffering and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, does not get puffed up. (1 Corinthians 13:4)**
- **Does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury. (1 Corinthians 13:5)**
- **It does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. (1 Corinthians 13:6)**
- **It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. (1 Corinthians 13:7)**

#### •• **Not The Lord's Evening Meal**

- **There does not appear to be any basis for connecting such love feasts with the Lord's Evening Meal, Memorial, as some have done, saying that the love feasts took place either before or after the observance of the Memorial.**
- **The Lord's Evening Meal is an anniversary taking place yearly on the same day, the 14th day of the lunar month Nisan, whereas the love feasts seem to have taken place often and not necessarily on a regular schedule.**
- **After condemning abuses that arose in connection with bringing their suppers to the place where the Lord's Evening Meal was to be celebrated, Paul wrote:**
- **Certainly you do have houses for eating and drinking, do you not? Or do you despise the congregation of God and make those who have nothing ashamed? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you? In this I do not commend you. (1 Corinthians 11:22)**
- **If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, that you may not come together for judgment. But the remaining matters I will set in**

order when I get there. (1 Corinthians 11:34)

- This was an evening to be observed with seriousness and meditation on its significance and not an occasion for eating and drinking at the meeting place.
- Neither are these **love feasts** the same as the taking of meals breaking of bread, **KJ**, mentioned at;
- And they continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to sharing with one another, **to taking of meals** and to prayers. (**Acts of Apostles 2:42**)
- And day after day they were in constant attendance at the temple with one accord, and they took their meals in private homes and partook of food with great rejoicing and sincerity of heart. (**Acts of Apostles 2:46**)
- Bread, **KJ**, mentioned at;
- On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to have a **meal**, Paul began discoursing to them, as he was going to depart the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. (**Acts of Apostles 20:7**)
- Bread in those times was usually made in thin cakes. Unleavened bread would be crisp as well. Bread was not cut, but broken, which gave rise to the phrase, breaking bread, with reference oftentimes to the partaking of an ordinary meal. **KJ**, compare **NW**.
- And day after day they were in constant attendance at the temple with one accord, and they took their meals in private homes and partook of food with great rejoicing and sincerity of heart. (**Acts of Apostles 2:46**)

#### •• Misused By Some

- As a literal meal, **love feasts** became subject to various abuses by those who did not have the proper spiritual outlook. Since they were not commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ or by his apostles but were only a custom, they were later discontinued.
- Jude's words indicate that some associated on these occasions with bad motives;

- **These are the rocks hidden below water in your **love feasts** while they feast with you, shepherds that feed themselves without fear, waterless clouds carried this way and that by winds, trees in late autumn, but fruitless, having died twice, having been uprooted. (Jude 1:12)**
- **Peter indicates the infiltration of evildoers and those teaching false doctrine among true Christians, saying;**
- **Wronging themselves as a reward for wrongdoing. They consider luxurious living in the daytime a pleasure. They are spots and blemishes, indulging with unrestrained delight in their deceptive teachings while **feasting** together with you. (2 Peter 2:13)**
- **While Christians up to and including the present time have continued to have pleasurable fellowship and have helped one another materially as far as it is within their power, there is no basis for the revival of **love feasts** as a custom in the Christian congregation.**
- **The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this. To look after orphans and widows in their tribulation, and to keep oneself without spot from the world. (James 1:27)**
- **If a brother or a sister is in a naked state and lacking the food sufficient for the day. (James 2:15)**