

Didache



*The Teaching of the Master Through the
12 Disciples to the Gentiles*

Rooted in
Torah

A stylized menorah with seven lit candles, rendered in a dark, ornate design.

References

- ❖ Jones, Tony. *The Teaching of the 12: Believing and Practicing Primitive Christianity of the Ancient Didache Community*
- ❖ O'Loughlin, Thomas. *The Didache: A Window on the Earliest Christians*
- ❖ Didache Translation based on Thomas O'Loughlin's with changes by Ryan White based on *The Apostolic Fathers Greek-English Interlinear* in Logos Software.
- ❖ Porter & Stovell, ed. *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*
- ❖ Draper, Jonathan. *Ritual Process and Ritual Symbol in Didache 7-10*
- ❖ Milavec, Aaron. *The Didache*

I am **NOT** saying the Didache
is Scripture. It is up to you to
decide what to do with the
following information.

On Interpretation

- ❖ Can we really let the Scriptures speak for itself?
- ❖ Textual criticism, source criticism, historical-cultural criticism, literary criticism...
- ❖ Whose canon?
- ❖ Oral Gospel to written word. (Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views, pg 32-33)
- ❖ Anachronism: *“a thing belonging or appropriated to a period other than that in which it exists, especially a thing that is conspicuously old fashion”*

History of the Didache

- ❖ We know that the Didache dates to 50 - 110 CE (NT writings date the same period). It is the earliest known “Christian” text.
 - ❖ Church fathers recognized as either canonical or apocryphal (due to localization of content)
- ❖ Appears to be unfamiliar with Pauline theology and is free from doctrines and creeds.
- ❖ Discovered in 1873 by Archbishop Brynnios
- ❖ Meal was repulsive to Catholics, fasting ritual repulsive to Protestants
- ❖ According to Milavec, it was created independent of any known gospel



I am **NOT** saying the Didache
is Scripture. It is up to you to
decide what to do with the
following information.

Context of the First Century

- ❖ Disunity of Judaism and “Christianity”
- ❖ Greco-Roman World
- ❖ Imperial Cult
- ❖ Understanding Community and Boundaries
- ❖ Honor and Shame
- ❖ Social interactions

Greco-Roman World

- ❖ Plato - “Spiritual” > “Physical” = Gnosticism = secret knowledge
- ❖ Stratified society
- ❖ Pax Deorum (Peace of the gods)
 - ❖ Conversion unknown - just inclusion of new gods
- ❖ Highly sexual society - Pornography, nudity, bisexuality, temple prostitution
- ❖ Magic

Imperial Cult

- ❖ Everyone EXCEPT Jews, was required to declare the divinity of Caesar.
- ❖ Priests offered a daily special offering on Caesar's behalf.
- ❖ After 70 CE, Christians exempted from Jewish tax but no longer exempt from declaring divinity of Caesar.

Understanding Community and Boundaries

- ❖ No individualism in the ancient world.
- ❖ Boundaries serve as a clear distinction to define the community, thus a badge of identity for those in, and a threshold for those wishing to join.
- ❖ For Jews, this boundary was circumcision, Shabbat, and kosher.
- ❖ Shared honor and shame for the community

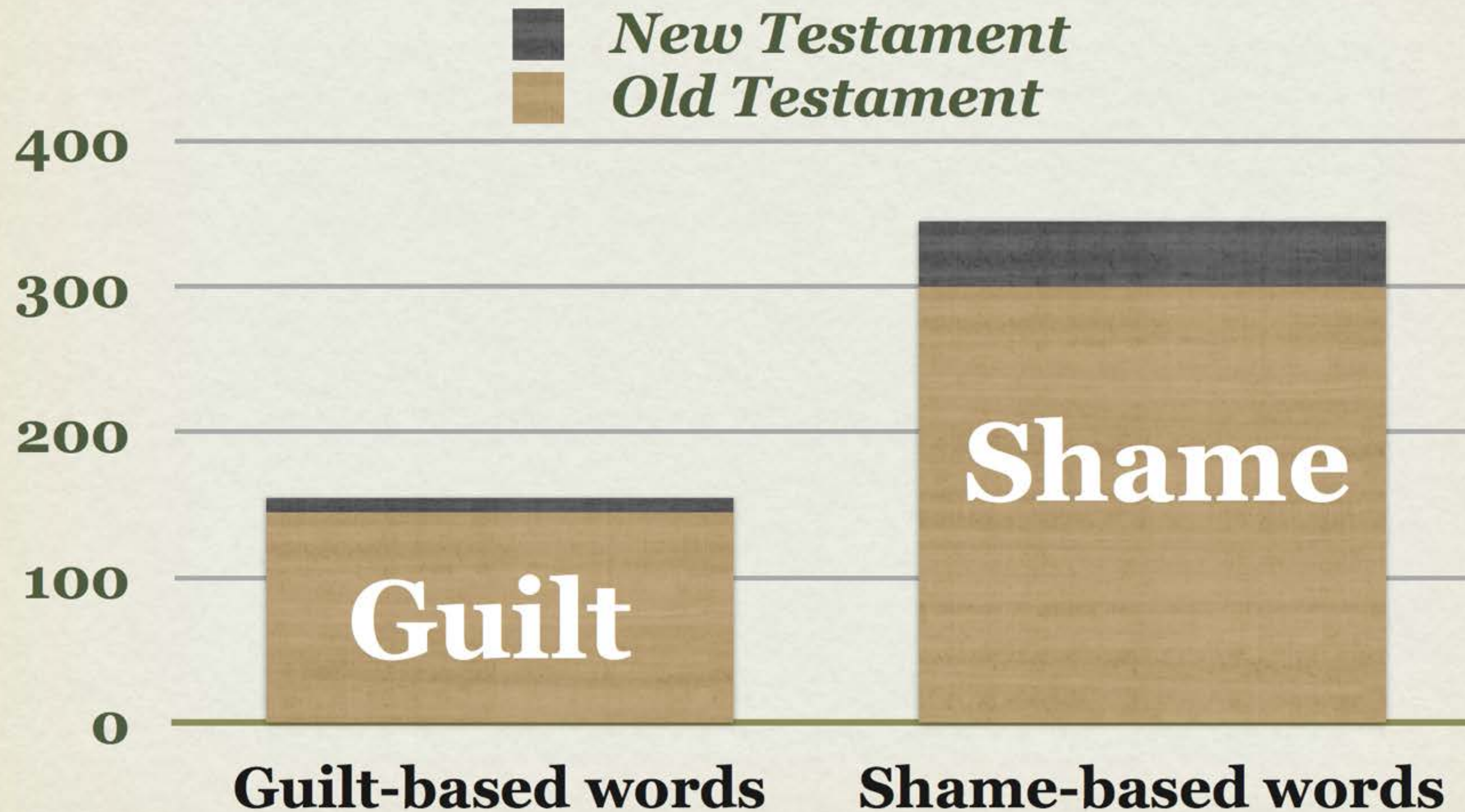
Honor and Shame

- ❖ Honor/shame shared by the group as well as subgroups
- ❖ Comes by affirmation and defamation of worth **by society and peers.**
- ❖ Dominant factor in controlling societal actions in Greco-Roman world; to enforce values.

Apostle Ambassador Dominion Immortal Righteous Sanctified Remembered
Royal **King** Crown Priesthood Anointed Heirs
Conquer Majesty Robe **Reign** Holy Clean Better Chosen Pleased
Might Beauty Exalted Throne Renown Pure Elect Adopted
Warrior **Greater** Great Glorious Inheritance Offspring Pleasing
Worthy Praise High White Glorify **Name** Children Loved
Awesome Worship Authority Bright Above **Glory** Honorable Life Son
Overcome **Power** Rise Highest Honored Blood Respect
Approved Freedom Raised Lifted up Over Family Head
Free Confidence Blessed Bless Face Right hand
Pride Boast Boasting Boastful Friend Right arm Strong
Elder Inside

Reviled **Cursing** Younger Outside
Accursed Cursed **shame** Least **Feet**
Mocking Humiliation Weak Under Below Lesser
Naked Spit upon Dishonor Stranger Alien Fallen
Rejected Cut off **Ashamed** Gentile Enemy
Crucified Defeated Dark Hidden Imprisoned Oppressed
Crushed Suffered Fear **Death** Darkness Captivity Reproach
Despised Rejected Diseased **Persecuted** Byword
Smitten Afflicted Unclean Sick Forgotten
Desolate Impure

References to Guilt vs. Shame in the Bible



SOURCE: Timothy C. Tennent: *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*, p.93

Canopy of Biblical Truth



Spectrums of Biblical-Cultural values, Set 1

| | | |
|-------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| narrative / oral | ←→ | propositional / written |
| honor / shame | ←→ | guilt / innocence |
| kingdom / regal | ←→ | democratic / legal |
| familial / ancestral | ←→ | individual / present-future |
| obedience / concrete | ←→ | knowledge / abstract |
| mystery / both-and | ←→ | logical / either-or |
| poverty / vulnerability | ←→ | wealth / stability |

Canopy of Biblical Truth



Spectrums of Biblical-Cultural values, Set 1



Patronage

- ❖ Patron provides client with goods or services needed (*grace*)
 - ❖ The patron could also be the “mediator” to a more powerful patron.
- ❖ Client shows *gratitude* by reciprocating with public praise (honor), loyalty, and service to his/her patron when the opportunity arose.

Understanding Ritual

- ❖ The handshake
- ❖ Method of communication
- ❖ Meaning may not be understood or may have different meanings
- ❖ Spontaneous **NOT** better than ritual

Social Interaction

- ❖ Circumcision would have made it hard to function socially in the Greco-Roman world
- ❖ Gentiles worked 7 days a week, only taking off holidays
- ❖ Gathering together would have been difficult for slaves. Jews in Diaspora were required a permit to gather together on Shabbat.
- ❖ Patronage system - artisans contracted to wealthy patrons who would expect them to participate in pagan dinner parties and intercourse with slaves.

Didache

A Manual for Discipleship

Application, not Theology

Apprenticeship Program?

Hebrews 5

¹¹ About this we have much to say that is hard to explain, since you have become dull in understanding. ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the **basic elements of the oracles of God**. You need milk, not solid food; ¹³ for everyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is unskilled in the word of righteousness. ¹⁴ But **solid food is for the mature**, for those whose faculties have been **trained by practice to distinguish good from evil**.

Entrance into the Community

- ❖ Apprenticeship/discipleship until baptism just before Passover. (The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, 215 CE)
- ❖ Pagan Gentile apprenticed under a “Jewish Christian”
- ❖ Not based on knowledge acquisition, but upon learning a new Way of life! Practical expectations to join the Israelite community
 - ❖ Faith *of* Yeshua vs. faith *in* Yeshua
- ❖ After baptism, part of the community, can participate in covenant meal.
- ❖ Any community that does not pass on its values, rites and way of life would flounder and eventually perish.

Entrance into the Community

- ❖ Now begins to study Scripture to learn how to keep God's Law towards perfection/maturity.
 - ❖ Remember there is not a lot of access to books
- ❖ Circumcision later
- ❖ Assumption of knowledge of "Jewish" ways => highlighting the differences.
- ❖ *Didache* 1-6 rites of separation and liminality.
 - ❖ Morality creates a social death from pagan ways.
- ❖ *Didache* 7-10 rites of incorporation

Gentile
Pagan

Legal
Conversion

COMMUNITY
MEMBERSHIP

Rites of
Separation

Rites of
Transition

Rites of
Incorporation

- Acts 15 – Separation from idolatry

- Apprenticeship in the Way of Life

- Baptism

Why would a Gentile want to join?

- ❖ Was it based on theological arguments?
- ❖ Was it based on charismatic preachers?
- ❖ Was it because they saw how the believers lived their lives?

Training in the Way of Life

- ❖ Extremely “Jewish”. Similar to Dead Sea Scrolls.
- ❖ Greater 2 commandments
 - ❖ Luke 10:25-28, *b. Shabbat* 31a
- ❖ Beneficent reciprocity instead of Greco-Roman “kill or be killed”/“live and let live” mentality.
- ❖ Anti-fate, pro-choice

Training in the Way of Life

- ❖ “Turn the other cheek” (cf. m. Baba Qamma 8.6)
- ❖ “works of your hands...offer something as reparation of your sins” (cf. *b. Baba Batra 10a*)
 - ❖ Prov 14:34 - “Righteousness exalts a nation, and *chesed* to the people is a *sin-offering*” (translation by Rabbi Y. Zakkai *b. Baba Batra 10b*)
 - ❖ Tobit 12.8, Sirach 3.30
- ❖ Failure to adhere endangers the whole community
- ❖ Not “ethical standards” but prerequisites for relationship with God

The Way of Death

- ❖ Young boy companions
- ❖ Exposure of infants
 - ❖ Father had to pick up infant to accept; otherwise abandoned or smothered (Philo Special Laws 3.114)
 - ❖ Infants rescued by brothels and slave traders
 - ❖ Spread of Christianity
- ❖ Oppressors of the poor
- ❖ Yes! There is still sin...no greasy grace.

Final Exhortation

- ❖ Bearing the whole of the Master's yoke = perfect/mature
 - ❖ Polemic against teaching NOT to keep the whole yoke if you can.
 - ❖ Also sets the desirable goal.
 - ❖ Hebrews 5:11-14
- ❖ Realistic vs. Idealistic
- ❖ Keep away from meats offered to idols. What are the implications?

Baptism/Mikvah

- ❖ Living water (Lev 14:5-6, 50-51, Num 19:17, Zech 14:8, John 4:10)
 - ❖ Ritual purity, new life
- ❖ Cold water better than warm (warm = wealth)
- ❖ Pour water over the head 3x implications
 - ❖ 3x, not magical, do the best you can
 - ❖ m. Tohorot 4.11

Baptism/Mikvah

- ❖ Baptize in the name of... compare to Didache 9.5
- ❖ Baptism at Passover according to Tertullian
 - ❖ Milk and honey
 - ❖ Jer 38:8 LXX (MT 31:8) as a basis. cf. Didache 10:5
- ❖ Served as a boundary into community entry
- ❖ Boundary was open to all willing to accept the values of the community, regardless of race, gender, or social status

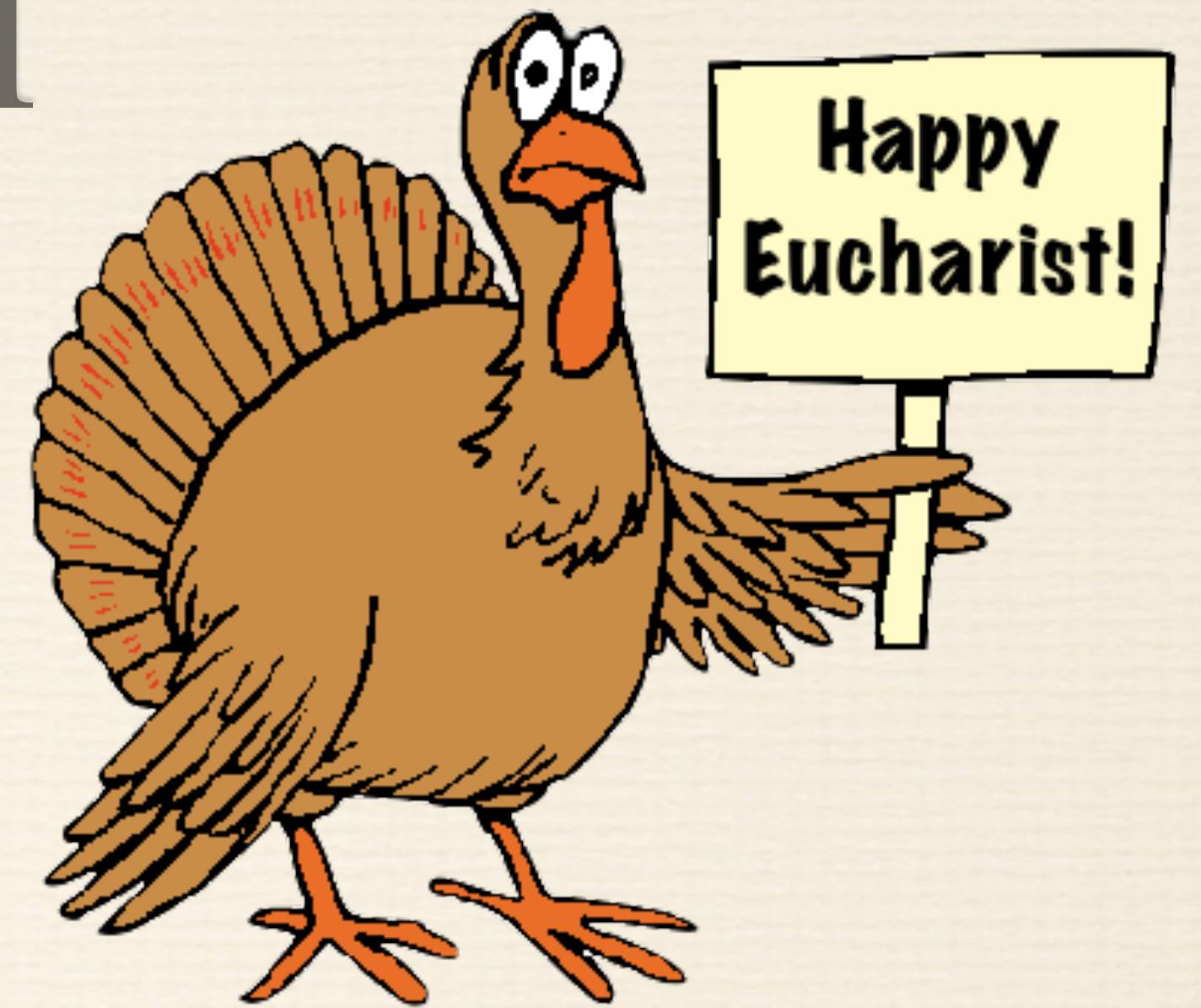
Fasting and Prayer

- ❖ Isaiah 58:4-6 Fasting connection to justice/injustice
 - ❖ Emulates suffering, a condition to which God is required to respond.
 - ❖ Ritual time created by unfamiliar feeling of hunger and bodily restraint
- ❖ Prayer 3x a day, fasting 2x per week. Thus communal events of shared time.
 - ❖ Essenes changed calendars so as not to share sacred feast time with the (heretical) Sadducees.
 - ❖ Yeshua's death in time with the Passover lamb was significant
 - ❖ Shared prayer = pure sacrifice (Mal 1:11)
 - ❖ Romans 14:5-6

Fasting and Prayer

- ❖ Usage of the Shabbat significance
- ❖ Who are the hypocrites?
 - ❖ The *Yehidim* (distinguished ones) fast on Monday and Thursday (*b. Taanit* 10a-12a)
- ❖ Fasting was a public gesture, initiated and concluded with a shofar blast
- ❖ “Lord’s Prayer”
 - ❖ Unique for the community (vs. *Shema* or *Sh’moneh Esreh*)
 - ❖ Recited in the water after baptism facing east (Apostolic Constitutions VII.4.44)
- ❖ Social Justice: release of debts and slavery associated with ritual immersion for the initiation of Gentiles in *b. Gerim* I.10, II.4. Cf. Didache 8.2

~~Eucharist~~ Thanksgiving Meal



- ❖ εὐχαριστία *eucharistia* - 1 Cor 14:16, Php 4:6, Col 4:2, Rev 7:12
- ❖ εὐχαριστέω *eucharisteo* - Mt 15:36, Mt 26:27, Lk 17:16, Jn 6:23, 1 Co 11:24, Eph 5:20, 1 Th 5:18
- ❖ Focus on thanking the Father
- ❖ Is today's "Eucharist" about community and equality?

Covenant Meal

- ❖ Covenant meal, covenant cup
- ❖ Nobody gets the more expensive wine or bread. No matter who you are, you get the same meal!
 - ❖ One loaf of bread, 1 Cor 10:17
- ❖ Remember, they didn't understand germ theory...
- ❖ Yeshua's ministry focused more on table than Temple (priorities)
 - ❖ Basar and Besorah

Covenant Meal

- ❖ Exclusivity

- ❖ 1QS Col 6 & 7 *Manual of Discipline* -> Qumran community excluded those who refused to repent from their ritual bath and meal
- ❖ In Qumran, those who wished to join had to live one year in the Covenant life before being permitted to eat their ritual meal.
- ❖ 1 Cor 5:9-13
- ❖ In Greco-Roman world, meals were public affairs

The Prayer Format

- ❖ Jewish *berakot* formulas were not supposed to be fixed immutable texts => *Did* 10.7
- ❖ Head of house was expected to do the prayer.
- ❖ “holy to the dogs”
 - ❖ Maintain social boundary
 - ❖ “dogs” = heathens in their uncleanness and ferocity
- ❖ 3 prayers, each with 3-fold structure

The Prayer Format

- ❖ “We give thanks to you, our/holy Father
 - ❖ 1 Chr 16:35, 29:13, Psa 44:8, 106:47
 - ❖ Not Messiah in place of God => God appoints Messiah to bring honor to him
- ❖ “Vine of David”
 - ❖ Renewed/regathered kingdom
 - ❖ “vine” = eschatological king who establishes righteousness and justice.
 - ❖ 15th benediction of *Sh’moneh Esreh*
 - ❖ Isaiah 11:1, 11-12
- ❖ *Maran atha amen* -> curse oath formula

Visiting Teachers and Prophets

- ❖ Antioch is ~18 day journey by land from Jerusalem
- ❖ Should not ASK for money.
- ❖ Context of Paul's letters!
- ❖ Earthly mystery???
- ❖ Speaking out against the "Spirit" => ANE Seals
 - ❖ It was considered a grave offense to counterfeit seals

Visitors and Permanent Teachers

- ❖ No Moochers Allowed!!!
- ❖ First fruits tithe either to support the prophet or “true teacher” or to support the poor.

~~Sunday~~ Shabbat Worship

- ❖ Ambiguity of the statement
- ❖ St. Ignatius of Antioch (110AD) “no longer observing the Sabbath, but living according to the Lord’s life...”
- ❖ **Which** day is the “Lord’s Day”? (Mt 12:8)
 - ❖ Never defined as Sunday until 3rd century.
 - ❖ 2nd century, “7th day Sabbath rest still observed, followed by Sabbath night (8th day) celebration” (Socrates Scholasticus. "Church History, Book V")
 - ❖ Mid-2nd century, Justin Martyr (anti-Semite philosopher) claims for cessation of Sabbath
- ❖ Shabbat Night PARTY (havdalah) - Acts 20:7-9

Community Leadership

- ❖ Not a Bishop and deacons, but bishop-deacons or better rendered ‘overseer-servants’ denoting both responsibility and servitude.
- ❖ How to handle conflict

The Apocalypse

- ❖ Not “rapture-ready” waiting...actively trying to live righteous lives.
- ❖ The Cursed One - Gal 3:13
- ❖ Remember the connection to gathering the kingdom together in the thanksgiving prayer.

Rooted in

Torah



Shabbat Shalom!