



The Lord's Table

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Introduction – Towards “Getting It Right”

It is the most expensive meal you will ever eat. Neither you, nor I, nor anyone, either individually or collectively, can afford its cost; yet it's already been paid in full. The institution of the Lord's Table is recorded for us in the synoptic Gospels (Mathew, Mark and Luke) and by Paul in 1 Corinthians respectively:

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matthew 26:26-28, KJV)

And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. (Mark 14:22-24)

And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. (Luke 22:19-20)

For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

With these words Jesus instituted the Lord's Table as a sacrament of unity; yet it has become source of divisions within the Christian community, specifically over the words “is” and “remembrance.” While it is to our shame that we have rent asunder what God has united in Christ, it is also to our credit, if the reason for our divisions is because we “want to get it right.” Therefore, it is our expectation that this guide will be a source of prayerful reflection and discussion regarding this sacrament. Now, let's take a closer look at the Lord's Table.

The Lord's Table throughout Church History

Alternate terms used for the Eucharist have been: Divine Liturgy, Holy Communion, Mass, Lord's Supper and Lord's Table. The reader will note that we have avoided using the term Lord's Supper in preference to the term Lord's Table. This is because it is our supper at which we, and not He, eat and drink at His table.

The Eucharist Doctrine was developed by the early church, by the Church Fathers namely: Saints Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Theodoret, Ambrose, Augustine and John of Damascus. The Eucharist is the inauguration of the new covenant, closely associated with the Crucifixion - with Jesus' life and death - with His humiliation and glory.

It also resonates with **Christological** doctrines such as the Incarnation, Atonement and Resurrection. And, as mentioned above, it proclaims (or should proclaim) our unity in Christ as grains of wheat are in bread. Sadly, this proclamation of unity is not the case.

The generally accepted view in the early church was that the elements of the Eucharist were the body and blood of Christ - and NOT symbols. Yet that view was not clearly defined until Berengar of Tours and some French heretical dualists and docetists raised doubts about the real presence.

Then in 1157 the Council of Constantinople upheld the Eucharist as an eternal sacrifice. This led to the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass as a propitiatory act for the living and the dead. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) was the first to use the term “transubstantiation” in its current sense, and in 1264 Pope Urban IV instituted the feast of Corpus Christi to reinforce eucharistic devotion.

During the Reformation this Roman Catholic definition was challenged by the Reformers; Luther replaced it with what has been called consubstantiation, while Zwingli considered it only a memorial denying any metaphysical change in the elements or in their effect whatsoever. John Calvin took a more intermediate position (sometimes known as “virtualism”) and held that while there was no change in, with or under the elements, believers partook of the virtue and power of Christ by eating in faith.

Church history shows that theologians have continually struggled to establish the real significance of the act of Holy Communion. On one level its elements are considered a mere memorial of the Paschal Lamb, while on another level the elements transubstantiate to the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Thus, the elements become either a sacramental or a symbolic food (or both) enabling partakers to assimilate the essence of the Creator.

In the doctrine of **transubstantiation** the Roman Catholic Church holds that the substance of the bread and wine are actually changed into the body and blood of Christ. The Reformers on the other hand, distinguished between the sign and thing signified and adopted three different views. They held that the change took place not in the elements but in and through the faith of the communicants with Luther adopting a position closer to that of Rome’s. Calvin’s view was similar but not congruent with that of Luther’s while Zwingli held to a more radical view.

As we discuss these various four views concerning our Lord's Table, to avoid our obvious biases and predilections (and in recognition that, when it comes to the Lord's Table, we all want to get it right), the authors will point out the apparent Christological criticisms within each view. BUT we will leave it to the reader to seek from their church leaders how each “apparent heresy” is logically addressed within those various denominations holding to one of the four views.

A Past Remembrance, a Present Communion, and a Prophecy of the Future

The Lord's Table is indeed a drama that has its roots not only in the Upper Room New Testament experience, but also in the Old Testament **Passover**. Paul wrote “For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.” (1 Cor. 5:7)

The Passover story begins with Israel’s enslavement in Egypt and their cry to God who called Moses to deliver them out of bondage. When Moses went before Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, a power struggle ensued between God and Pharaoh, and God sent ten plagues upon Egypt. The last and worst involved the death of Egypt’s firstborn sons and in this context God institutes the Passover.

Each Israelite family was to sacrifice an unblemished lamb, place its blood on the door posts of their house and eat its roasted flesh with bitter herbs. Then God would pass over the houses marked with the lamb’s blood, sparing them from death - the wrath of God. So in a like manner we are “saved” BY GOD – from GOD.

In the New Testament, Jesus changes the Passover and indicates that His blood now marks those saved from the wrath of God. In Luke 22:7-20, Jesus makes explicit reference to two dimensions of time and instituted a third dimension, the present dimension of time:

Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare? And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. (Luke 22:7-20)

1. **THE PAST** by its link to the Passover by Jesus asking His disciples to remember what is now past to us. God often declares sacred space and time – where Israel is giving sacred significance to particular times and places in this world. Moses had to remove shoes because he was on holy ground. After the flood, Noah built an altar to consecrate and memorialize the place where God had delivered them from the flood. Old Testament festivals and feasts involve the sacralization of time and the Passover memorialized Israel's redemption from slavery. We too have sacred days: Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, etc. Indeed every Sunday is (or should be) a sacred day for us. But while too many today have reduced the Lord's Table to only a past remembrance, it also has a future and present aspect as well.
2. **THE FUTURE** orientation of the Lord's Table is found in Luke 22:17-18 and 28-30. Jesus promises His disciples there will be a future time in which they will sit with Him at His table: And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. (Luke 22:17-18) Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Like 22:28-30) In Revelation 19:1-9, reference is made to the marriage feast of the Lamb: And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (Revelation 19:1-9) So every time we celebrate the Lord's Table we do not only look back to what has already been accomplished, our redemption by Christ, but we also look forward to the final consummation of His Kingdom. The Lord's Table is a sign and seal of what will happen in the future – it is a fore-

taste of heaven. But the Lord's Table is not only oriented toward the past and future, it has:

3. **A PRESENT** significance. Most of the controversies over the Lord's Table have been over the present significance of the elements. Is Christ really present in the sacrament; and if so what is the mode of that presence?

Before we can answer that, we need to briefly look at several Christological heresies concerning the person of Christ. From its origin, the church has had to defend its belief that Christ was fully human and fully divine as heresies evolved in the early church.

Interestingly, among the earliest heresy was that of the **Docetists** who held that Christ had only a divine nature. It amazes me that many today will acknowledge the historical human existence of Jesus, but deny His divinity; while many of those closest to the time in which He walked upon this earth, had no trouble believing in His divinity. It was the humanity of Jesus which they denied. They viewed His human appearance in this world as only an illusion.

John clearly refutes this heresy in his first letter. The obvious error of Docetism is, if Jesus did not have a real human body, He could not have suffered real pain and died a real death.

Another error in the early church was that of Nestorianism. In his enthusiasm to maintain the full humanity of Christ, Nestorius affirmed not only the duality of natures, but the duality of persons. For him, God "assumed" a human nature and so God did not really become man.

The error of Nestorius was that he carried the dual nature of Christ too far and gave Christ a double personality; two natures and two persons instead of one person with two natures. The chief error of the Nestorian system was that in separating the divine and human natures of Christ it deprived His human sufferings of the value of their efficacy for the redemption of mankind.

Perhaps the most peculiar of all the Christological heresies was that of **Eutychianism**. Eutychus sought to avoid the dualism of Nestorianism and so he emphasized the unity of the person of Christ as to obliterate the human nature. For Eutychus, after Christ was born, His human nature was deified and was assumed by the divine.

The Eutychian (also known as the Monophysite) heresy denied the distinction between the divine and human natures and held that the two were fused to form a third that was neither divine nor human. This heresy blended or mixed the two natures of Christ. It said after His birth, Christ's human nature was deified and assumed the divine as to deny the distinction of the two natures of Christ.

In 451 AD these heresies were settled by the **Council of Chalcedon**. The Council declared that Christ is truly God and truly man and has two natures — a divine and a human nature. The council also gave us what is called the four negatives, stating that we cannot mix, confuse separate and/or divide the two natures. Chalcedon also said that each nature retains its own attributes.

Symbolism or Presence?

As we consider the four views on the Lord's Table, the prevailing view among most Protestants (and even among many Roman Catholics) today is that the Lord's Table is merely a symbolic "memorialism." However, those holding this view fail to realize that symbolic memorials are really a historical novelty within the Christian church. When one holds to a view that in the partaking of the elements of communion one is only expressing a symbolic memorial, one is expressing a real absence of Christ. And instead of communion being something God gives to us, it's something symbolic communicants give to God.

In all three synoptic Gospels Jesus says this IS. So what does "is" mean? Does it mean that the elements are metaphorical, or equal to?

We Protestants often boast that we take Scripture more literally than our Roman Catholics friends. However, when it comes to Jesus' words in instituting the Lord's Table, it is the Roman Catholics who hold the most literal interpretation of what Scripture says. Rome holds to the doctrine of "transubstantiation" in which substance of the elements, the bread and the wine are supernaturally transformed into the actual body and blood of Jesus.

Rome borrowed metaphysical categories from Aristotle to articulate their doctrine. Aristotle distinguished between the substance and accident of a "thing;" since every "thing" has correspondence of substance and accident. Thus, in the Mass a double miracle takes place. The substance of the elements change while the accidents of the elements remain the same. The Bread becomes substance (the body of Christ) but not the accidents (the outward appearance of the bread.)

As a side note, in 1965 some Catholic theologians offered the concept or Transignification and Transfinalization which suggest that although Christ's body and blood are not physically present in the Eucharist, they are really and objectively so, as the elements take on, at the consecration, the real significance of Christ's body and blood which thus become sacramentally present. This was totally rejected by Pius VI in 1965 by his *Mysterium Fidei*.

The Reformers rejected Rome's Transubstantiation of the elements as a Monophysite heresy and there emerged a range of beliefs from transubstantiation to the body and blood of Christ being supernaturally added to the elements (as in Lutheranism consubstantiation in which Christ's bodily presence is "in, with and under" the elements). But does this Lutheran attempt avoid the Monophysite heresy? Calvinism holds to a **real presence**, but does that avoid the Nestorian heresy? Zwingli argued that it is merely a symbolic memorial observance of the past with a real absence in the present and with no reference of the future.

The issue over the debate on the nature of Christ's presence being actual, virtual, or in, with and under the elements is Christological. Is it possible for a physical body to be omnipresent? Our Christian doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ presents a problem for those of us who maintain a bodily presence in some way.

Rome (in an early attempt to avoid the Monophysite heresy) developed the doctrine of the communication of the attributes in which ubiquity was communicated to the human nature. But their problem was that the communication did not go both ways; that is the attributes of Christ's human nature were not (nor could not) be attributed to the divine nature. Calvin also refuted communication of the attributes on the grounds that the finite cannot contain the infinite.

Calvin believed that as we partake of the Lord's Table we are really strengthened and nurtured by the human nature of Christ which is made present to us by the divine nature. The divine nature remains united to the human-

nature but the divine nature is not contained within finite boundaries. So the divine nature remains omnipresent and unlimited so as it is connected to the human nature that nature can be everywhere. When a person is in communion with the divine nature he is in communion with the human nature that is in perfect union with the divine nature and so with Christ in ALL that He is.

This is consistent with the New Testament in which Jesus talks about going away and about staying. He departs at His ascension and yet says He will be with us always. His human nature ascended but His divine nature remains with the church. But again, one may contend the Calvinistic view comes dangerously close to flirting with the Nestorian heresy.

A Roman Catholic theologian and professor of religious studies at Siena College, (a Franciscan college in NY) has a name somewhat similar to mine. Fr. Dennis D. Tamburello, in an article on Reformed-Catholic dialogue, concurs with Calvin's emphasis on piety, in which the goal is not to know God theoretically or intellectually but to give glory and praise to God, who is the "fountainhead and source of every good." He applauds Calvin's teaching on the centrality of Christ where Calvin wrote in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, "Christ, when He illumines us into faith by the power of His spirit, at the same time so engrafs us into His body that we become partakers of every good."

Tamburello also refers to Calvin's teaching on the Sacraments, especially on the Eucharist (or Lord's Table), as a major contribution. He highlights the fact that Reformed Protestants hold to the "real presence" and not just an empty symbolic remembrance (as many do) of Christ in communion. Tamburello notes that in the ReformedRoman Catholic joint statement on "The Presence of Christ," both traditions hold to "belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist."

Of course, there are some significant differences here because Calvin and Reformed Protestants reject the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Calvin and Reformed Protestants believe that in receiving the elements of communion as believers we are drawn up into the life of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit and thus our communion with Christ is both spiritual and real.

As another side note, a news article on April 22, 2022 reported, "Dr. Ronald J. Feenstra of Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids and Fr. Dennis Tamburello of Siena College in Loudonville, New York, are preparing a study guide based on documents that focus on its ongoing ecumenical discussion. It is tentatively entitled *Learning from One Another: A Study Guide for Reformed-Roman Catholic Dialogue* and will be intended for use in local ecumenical discussions.

The Meaning of "This is my body"

As has been emphasized throughout this document, the sacrament of the Lord's Table has been of major importance to Christian worship. What did Jesus mean when He said, "This is my body" in Matthew 26:26?

Cyril of Jerusalem regarded the bread and the wine as somehow really changing to the body and blood of Christ. Paschasius Radbertus, in support of John of Demascus who simply affirmed the mystery of the transformation of the elements, was also convinced of the physical reality and spiritual importance of the fact that the bread and the wine become the body and blood of Christ. Yet Radbertus provided no real explanation of how this transformation took place.

Ratranmus of Corbie argued that the elements were merely symbols of the body and blood. The difference was in the way in which the believer perceived the elements and not in the elements themselves. The elements remained unchanged, but the believer could perceive a deeper spiritual meaning as a result of the consecration of the elements. Candidus of Fulda stated the purpose of the Lord's Table is to nourish and bring to perfection the church. He argued that the phrase in Matthew 26:26 refers to the church as the body of Christ.

As shown, this issue of the real presence was especially controversial during the Reformation and continues today. Huldrych Zwingli maintained that the Lord's Table is a "naked sign," a "nude symbol" and a memorial of Christ's suffering, but is not a sacrifice. For Zwingli, the words, "This is my body," cannot be taken literally and thus there is no presence (real, physical or spiritual) at the Lord's Table. It is a token to remember Christ by until His return. Zwingli argued there are numerous passages in Scripture where "is" cannot be taken literally and must be taken figuratively or metaphorically.

Both Luther and Calvin rejected the Roman Catholic view of transubstantiation, which Rome explains with metaphysical categories (substance and accidents) borrowed from Aristotle. Substance is the essence of an item while accident refers to the outward or surface appearance of the item. Yet both Luther and Calvin argued for a real presence and therefore also differed with Zwingli.

Martin Luther insisted that the body and blood of Christ are truly present but that they are supernaturally in, under and through the elements; much like the heat in a poker that is taken from the fire. The elements remain both in substance and accidents. Yet, this still left Luther with the problem that the accidents remain hidden to the senses.

John Calvin insisted on the **real presence** of Christ. To those who reduced the sacrament to a naked sign, Calvin insisted on a substantial presence of Christ. But he differed with Luther in that what Calvin meant by the term substantial was real and not physical. For Calvin the person of Christ is omnipresent. Although Christ is absent from us in body (for His body is in heaven) He is never absent from us in Spirit.

Calvin saw in Luther's view of the Lord's Table a form of **monophysitism** (a doctrine that Christ had only a divine nature and that His human nature was so sublimated to His divine nature that it ceased to exist). Calvin understood the divine nature of Christ and the human nature of Christ to stay divine and human in every respect.

Lutherans and Catholics countered that Calvin's rejection of the communication of attributes involved him in Nestorianism (a doctrine that separated the divine and human natures of Christ). Yet Calvinists maintain Calvin did not separate the two natures of Christ but distinguished them. When Christ wept, sweat, or hungered, He was in perfect unity with His divine nature, but the tears, sweat, and hunger were not divine. Jesus' human nature died on the cross, but His divine nature did not die.

John Calvin insisted that the God-man is indeed ubiquitous and truly and substantially present at the Lord's Table, but in His divine nature. Although His human nature is now in heaven it is still perfectly united to the divine nature.

This did not suggest that in the Lord's Table we only commune with Christ's divine nature. Where His divine nature is present, His human nature is present. When we commune with His divine nature, we commune with the whole Christ because His divine nature is still united with His human nature. Although Christ's body and blood remain in heaven, they are spiritually made present to us by Jesus' omnipresent divine nature. Wherever the divine nature of Christ is present, He is truly present.

This is consistent with Jesus' own teaching that He was going away, yet He would abide with us. When we meet Him at the Lord's Table we commune with Him. By meeting us in His divine presence, we are brought into His human presence mystically, because His divine nature is never separated from His human nature. The divine nature leads us to the ascended Christ, and in the Lord's Table we have a taste of heaven.

The Significance of the Lord's Table

We are informed by the apostle Paul in First Corinthians 11:23 that the same night in which the Lord Jesus was betrayed, He took bread. We are also reminded later in this same chapter that we should be careful lest we eat and drink of this cup in an unworthy manner, for if we do, we eat and drink unto our own damnation.

How many of us really grasp the full significance of that? How many of us really consider the full impact or what Paul is saying?

The apostle Paul, under divine inspiration, is saying that improper reception of the elements of communion could bring upon one sickness and even death. Paul calls on us to examine ourselves:

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. (1 Corinthians 11:28)

Lest he be found to be like the one who betrayed the Lord. Judas was not the last to have sat with Christ and dipped his hands in the dish with Him, and then turned his back, denied, betrayed and deserted Him.

Jesus Christ took bread, a simple universal symbol of human food (nothing esoteric about it but a simple substance of our daily food). We are told that He took the bread and broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." (1 Cor. 11:24) Even if Christ is speaking metaphorically here, this is NOT meant to deny the "real" presence of Christ.

The Lord's Table is also called by many different names that tell us something more about its meaning. We call it the Lord's Table so that we may realize that we are being fed and nourished by it. As the elements are taken into our stomachs by faith, we receive the elements of the Atonement of Christ and the benefits of that Atonement. We remember that because of His suffering and death, our sins have been forgiven.

In some churches it is also called the **Eucharist**. Basically that term comes from the Greek word *charis*, meaning, "grace," and *eu* meaning "good." So literally it is the "good grace" of God. We are reminded that our salvation is not based upon anything that we do, it is not based upon any merit of our own, but upon the pure grace of God, who gave His only Son to live and die for us. We are reminded of the pure unmerited, undeserved grace of God. In the Eucharist we are reminded of the good grace of God.

It is also called the **communion** in that we should spend time communicating with Christ, telling Him of our love for Him, confessing our sins to Him, telling Him of our desire to be more like Him, to walk in His footsteps, to be obedient to His commands and to live our lives for Him.

And yes it is a memorial service. Notice that Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me." He did not say, "Do this in remembrance of my teaching." He did not say, "Do this in remembrance of my doctrine." He did not say, "Do this in remembrance of my activities." He said, "Do this in remembrance of *me!*"

As there is a past remembrance, there is also a present communion as our communion is not with the dead, but with the living. Christ's human body is now in heaven and physically separated from us, but by the power of the Holy Spirit we become united to Christ. We participate in ongoing union with Christ particularly in the sacrament of the Lord's Table, and unless we partake of the sacrament in faith, we receive nothing but the visible sign and judgment from God. Our faith, or lack thereof, does not change or affect the objective nature of the sacrament.

In the Lord's Table we not only have a past remembrance and a present communion, but there is also a prophecy of the future. There is a forecast of things to come. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death TILL HE COME." (1 Cor. 11:26)

Jesus said that He would not eat of this bread and drink of this cup again until He does so with us in the Kingdom of God. It is a foretaste of that glorious feast when we shall no longer be touched with physical ailments and sin but we shall see as we have been seen; know as we have been known. We shall be together in the love and fellowship of God in the oneness of the body of Christ forever. So whenever you partake of these elements, reflect again on His words, "Do this in remembrance of me."

Conclusion – An Immortal Memorial

Consider three of the great memorials of the world and how they have failed in that regard. The Great Pyramid took over 200,000 people over twenty years to build, but how many people today know for whom it was built?

For whom was the Great Wall of China built? The Taj Mahal was built to remember a beautiful lady who should never be forgotten – Miss what's her name? But in our celebration of the Lord's Table, He has not been forgotten, nor shall He ever be forgotten. We are called to remember Him, to remember His body, which was given for us. "Do this in remembrance of me." The Apostle Paul continues in 1 Corinthians:

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. (1 Corinthians 11:25)

Christ gave His blood for us. He poured out His blood until He died. The contents of the cup, which we drink, make up the testament, the covenant, and the new covenant that Christ has made with us in His blood.

There are passages (other than those referenced previously) in the New Testament that may allude to the Lord's Table (Hebrews 13:10-16, 1 Peter 2:3, 1 John 5:8, Jude 12 and Revelation 3:20) that could be considered as we attempt to get our various views on the Lord's Table "right."

In doing so we realize that our participation in the Lord's Table cannot be separated from other believers in the body of Christ, who, in their various views on communion, are "trying to get it right."

The main emphasis at the communion table is the proclamation that, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again;" a proclamation that is the very heart of the gospel. In our affirmation of such, in an affirmation of the purpose and nature of this sacrament as an essential element of every Christian worship service, may God grant us wisdom as we continue in our efforts to "get it right."

The Lord's Table – Questions for Further Study

What are some of the names for communion and what do each of them mean? Which name do you prefer and why?

To which view regarding elements of the Eucharist, and their impact, do you hold?

How do you biblically, theologically and rationally defend your view?

Why do you think the early church (for 1,500 years) almost without question, believed the elements actually were the body and blood of Christ?

How is the Old Testament story of the Passover a foreshadowing of our sacrament of communion?

Explain the following Christological heresies: *Docetism*, *Eutychianism* and *Nestorianism*

What is dualism? Why is dualism a heresy?

What is the relationship between Christology and the Lord's Table?

Explain, in your own words, the four negatives of Chalcedon, 451.

The Council at Chalcedon also said that each nature retains its own attributes. Rome, to argue their doctrine of transubstantiation, developed the doctrine of the communication of the attributes in which ubiquity was communicated to Christ's human nature. How and why does their doctrine of the communication of the attributes fail to justify the doctrine of transubstantiation? Why then does Rome still hold to transubstantiation?

How do Lutherans avoid the Monophysite heresy with regard to their doctrine of the Eucharist?

How do Calvinists avoid the Nestorian heresy with regard to their doctrine of the Real Presence (of Christ) in the Eucharist?

How does one justify holding to the Zwinglian view of the Lord's Table — especially regarding the significance of the sacrament?

Do you think the various denominations will ever reconcile with each other regarding their respective views on the Eucharist? What would be the resulting benefits OR dangers if they did?

BONUS QUESTION: Luther said the doctrine of justification is the article on which the church stands or falls. Calvin said the doctrine of justification is the hinge of salvation. The author(s) of this study guide have said all the doctrinal differences between Roman Catholic and Protestant theology are 100% dependent on their respective views of justification. If that is true, discuss how one's doctrine of justification then determines one's ultimate view of the Eucharist.



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