

The Lord's Supper is a covenantal transaction between God and His people in which we renew our vows to be completely His. It affirms the covenantal formula "I will be your God; you shall be My people."

Here are some characteristics we need to remember regarding this sacrament.

First, let us see clearly the two actions of "giving" and "taking." The "giving" is God's part. The "taking" is our part.

What is given? Not merely bread and wine. No, these are symbolic of a sacramental union. What is received is Christ Himself by faith.

God says, "Here is a Savior for you, the Lord Jesus Christ. I have given Him to be your Prophet, your Priest, and your King." **Will I take Him as He is offered?** As my Prophet, His Word is my last word. As my Priest, all my trust resides in His sacrificial offering. As my King, all my allegiance and obedience is pledged to Him.

Secondly, note that we engage in the action of eating and drinking. Such action shows an important element of covenant-making. Isaac and Abimelech ate together in Gen. 26:30. Jacob and Laban did the same in Gen. 31:44-46. The same is mysteriously observed in Ex. 24.

These parties had previously been at odds, even enemies. Parties do not sit to eat together unless they first be reconciled.

Now think! Is Christ Himself present at this observance? Certainly invisibly, but present through representation. Certainly really by His Spirit. He is present spiritually in the elements.

The one who administers communion represents Christ in the words of Institution, admonition, and invitation. He does so by repeating Christ's Words. No words, no sacrament.

Thirdly, we acknowledge the elements of bread and wine as memorials of His infinitely worthy sacrifice.

The covenantal meal was a component of sacrificial worship, as with Noah in Gen. 8 -9; and Abraham in Gen. 15 and with Moses and the elders in Ex. 24:5, 8.

These ordinances reminded God of His promises and the worshippers of their duty. (Psa. 50:5)

Note: we are NOT sacrificing afresh, but are remembering THE sacrifice which never needs to be repeated. (Heb. 10:14).

The Old Testament sacrifices were seals of the Covenant of Grace. There were **four kinds of offerings**. In the **Burnt Offering**, all the animal was wholly consumed. So the sacrifice is offered to God and He consumes it. In the **Sin Offering** and the **Trespass Offering**, one part (God's part) was consumed on the altar. The priests consumed another part, acting as proxy for the worshippers. In the **Peace Offering**, all the people ate, rejoicing in their reconciliation. We could say that the Burnt Offering enabled the Peace Offering (Eph. 5:2).

God chose to live in the midst of His people. He would do so because atonement for sin had been made, and the result was peace between God and men. (Psa. 50:13)

Fourthly, as we contemplate His great mercy and covenant loyalty, He solemnly charges each of us to love Him, to be faithful to Him, to prefer Him before all others, to hate iniquity and to flee from sin, and to call heaven and earth to witness that we would rather die than to renounce His service. In a wedding ceremony, the bride must give her vows of commitment after hearing those of her bridegroom.

Fifthly, our spiritual fathers called this ordinance a "federal" rite of worship and a "sacrament". "Federal" - pertaining to a league or contract; derived from an agreement or covenant between parties. We are "federalists" with regard to our agreement with the terms of the covenant God has initiated with us. In the Roman world the oaths that soldiers made to the Emperor was commonly known as a "sacrament."

We come to the Lord's Table frequently because we repetitively fall into sin and act like covenant breakers. Yet we return to the Shepherd and Guardian of our souls (1 Peter 2:25) in order to renew our part in this Covenant and to pledge ourselves to renewed and deeper commitment to His service. This action is not only a privilege, it is our sacred duty. (Rom. 12:1, 2). **"Do this** in remembrance of Me."