

## Lord's Supper: Historical Views

consubstantiation

- Protestant Reformation Views.
- Luther's Consubstantiation:
  - His view begins with a denouncement of transubstantiation for a number of reasons.
  - First, there is a philosophical underpinning from Aquinas' use of Aristotelian philosophy, and Luther says since it is not from Scripture, no one is required to believe it.
  - Second, Luther pointed out it was a fairly late development in the church's history. The church got along for 1200 years without it.
  - Third, no layperson can understand what it even means since it is so convoluted of an idea. Thus, Luther is strongly against transubstantiation.
  - So what was his view?

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- Luther's Consubstantiation (Cont):
- His view was sacramental union. In the incarnation of Christ, He takes on the fullness of human nature.
  - In the hypostatic union, there is a communication of properties, or a sharing of the divine attribute of divine omnipresence with the human nature such that when the church celebrates the Lord's Supper, Jesus is indeed sacramentally present with the entirety of His being in the Lord's Supper.
  - So it is not transubstantiation, but consubstantiation. He is in, with, and under the elements. So Christ is fully present.
- This is possible because of the omnipresence of Christ mixed with the human nature.
  - Think of the sponge dipped in water. Everywhere the spongy material is, there is the water inside, but the water does not become the sponge or vice versa. So the blood and body are there.
- Luther emphasized the Lord's Supper was a promise. Jesus Christ, the testator, offers to His heirs the promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal life.
  - So the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated in faith for the salvation promised.



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- Zwingli's Memorial View:
  - In reality, Zwingli held to more than this, and instead had a view more like Calvin's spiritual presence.
  - But he is more noted for his emphasis on remembering Jesus' broken body and shed blood. Jesus did tell us to do this in memory of Him.
  - Zwingli was strongly against transubstantiation because the human body of Christ after His death was resurrected and ascended to heaven, and is there now, and therefore cannot be present in the Lord's Supper. Christ in His humanity is seated at the right hand of the Father and will not physically be present until He returns in the future.
  - Consubstantiation is wrong too, according to Zwingli, since by definition the divine omnipresence of Christ could not be part of the human nature since it is located in space and time. So he pushed for the memorial view.



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- Calvin's Spiritual Presence View:
- Like Luther, he denounced transubstantiation, and like Zwingli, he denounced consubstantiation.
- He appreciated Zwingli's memorial view, but he said there is more biblical teaching than just it being a memorial.
  - The bread and wine are symbols, but they are not empty symbols. They communicate what they portray, and they present and give what they portray.
  - It's not the physical presence of Christ in His humanity, but He can be spiritually present.
  - How this is possible Calvin said is a deep mystery that he does not understand. He said it has to do with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit either takes the church to heaven so we celebrate with Christ, or He causes Christ to descend to the church so we can celebrate with Him, but it is spiritual, not physical.



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- Anabaptist and Baptist Views:
  - Most of us assume both held Zwingli's view. That is true to an extent, but our earliest forefathers in the faith (Particular Baptists) held to Calvin's spiritual presence view.
  - Today, most are known for the Zwingli view.
  - What was most important to Anabaptists and Baptists is that the Lord's Supper is only served to genuine believers.
    - They must have heard the gospel, professed faith, repented, and been baptized.

## Biblical & Theological Framework

- Christ Himself instituted the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26-29; par. Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-23).
  - He took a loaf, broke it, gave it to His disciples, and told them to eat, for it is His body. He then took the cup and blessed it and distributed it to the disciples and said it is the blood of the New Covenant. These are the two elements instituted by Christ.
  - We must remember that He did this during a Passover feast. This was His last supper before being betrayed and crucified. He was enjoying a normal Passover celebration with His disciples. Most scholars believe the cup was the third of four cups commonly used in the Passover feast.
  - He gives thanks for these, and this is where the word Eucharist comes from (I give thanks). Jesus added to the Passover activities. No longer would this be a remembrance of Israel's hasty departure from Egypt, but it would be remembrance of Christ's sacrificial death.

## Biblical & Theological Framework

- Christ's Teaching (Cont)
  - The third cup in the Passover feast was the cup of redemption.
  - Jesus made it clear of the cup that it was a sign of the end of Old Covenant and the start of the New. This was a turning point in the history of redemption. God would no longer relate to His people through an Old Covenant, but a New Covenant established by the blood of Christ.
  - Jesus said He would not drink it again until He drinks it with us in the kingdom. This emphasizes two things. First, He was departing. He will be gone for a long time. Second, there is an eschatological reality. He will celebrate this again after the coming of His kingdom. What we celebrate is not the Last Supper, or the Passover feast, but we celebrate the Lord's Supper.



## Biblical & Theological Framework

- Paul's Teaching (1 Cor 10:14-22)
- Paul presents the Lord's Supper to the Corinthians.
  - Many were going down to pagan temples and engaging in pagan banquets. Paul shows how bad that is in light of the fact that they celebrate the Lord's Supper.
- He says the cup is a participation or fellowship or communion in the blood of Jesus Christ. In the bread, there is a participation in the body of Jesus Christ.
  - This goes beyond just remembering the body and blood shed for us. There is a participation in Christ.
  - To drink in the idol temples was to participate to demons. To eat the food was to fellowship with demons.
  - It is a koinania. They are not just remembering demons, but they are participating in the presence of demons.
- Similarly, when we celebrate in the Lord's Supper, it's not just remembering, but participating in the Lord who is spiritually present and His salvific benefits.



## Biblical & Theological Framework

- Paul's Teaching (1 Cor 11:17-34)
- This is the most common passage celebrating the Lord's Supper.
- Contextually, Paul is correcting them here.
  - There would be a meal or love feast in which they celebrate the Lord's Supper. They may have been similar to Baptist potlucks. People would be expected to bring the food and wine.
  - The rich people would bring all the best food. Well, the poor were probably at work, and the rich got impatient and started eating the food, and they were getting drunk and Paul shames them.
  - They were dishonoring the poor members in their midst. After they worked their long hours and they come, there would be no food to celebrate in the agape meal.
- This is not the way it should be. Paul then recounts the tradition that Paul received.
  - For as often as you eat and drink the Supper, you proclaim Jesus' death until He comes.



## Biblical & Theological Framework

- Paul's Teaching (1 Cor 11:17-34—Cont)
- We are making an announcement of the gospel not with words, but with tangible signs.
  - When we take off a piece of the bread and take a drink from the cup, we are vividly portraying our participation in Christ and what He wrought for us on the cross.
- So it is an enacted proclamation of the gospel.
- Paul then turns to the unworthy manner in how the Corinthians were participating in this.
  - The selfish attitude on the part of the rich, running ahead of the poor and consuming all the food before the poor could get there. This was a shame.
- Paul says you should be examining yourself and how you are behaving yourself, and the divisions you create.
  - Some are sick, and some have died premature because of this. We want to make sure we are not condemned with the world.

