

I. Read Luke 22:14-23

Note: In the Luke 22:14-23 passage, Christ institutes The Lord's Supper. The following questions relate to this sacrament.

- A. It was the custom to participate in a meal like the Passover while reclining. According to the commentators of the *New Geneva Study Bible*, "diners leaned on their left elbows, facing the table with their feet away from it, and ate with the right hand." Is there anything in that description that would help us to understand how to observe The Lord's Supper?
No. Rather it points to the fact that we have some liberty regarding the particular posture from which we receive Communion, i.e., standing, sitting or kneeling.
- B. In verses 15 and 16, there is an allusion to the bittersweet experience of The Lord's Supper. What are the two points being alluded to that give rise to two different emotional responses in us?
Christ makes reference to his suffering ("before I suffer"— NKJV) in verse 15, of course referring to the humiliation, torture, and execution He would soon suffer. In verse 16, He refers to the end of time or final redemption of God's creation, when He will host a wonderful banquet/celebration for all of God's children. Remembering the first (Christ's suffering) causes sorrow. Looking forward to the second (Christ's return) causes joy. (See 1 Corinthians 11:26.)
- C. In verse 17, Jesus instructed the disciples to "Take this and divide it among yourselves" (NKJV). What was He instructing the disciples to do and what analogy does it present to us?
According to the *New Geneva Study Bible*, "at the Passover meal, each person would drink four cups of red wine. The wine was diluted, usually three parts water to one of wine." So Jesus was giving them a practical instruction in preparation for their celebration of Passover. On another level, He might be said to have been illustrating a critical element necessary for proper participation in The Lord's Supper. The wine could have represented the Holy Spirit, or the grace of salvation, or God's love (*agape*) for us. In all three instances, *the Holy Spirit and its effects* (the fruit of the Holy Spirit), *God's grace* and/or *God's love* must be shared and administered to others if we are to enjoy the fullness of the Christian life and fellowship. While it is true that God can certainly dispense His gifts directly without using believers as a channel, it is also true that He almost always allows believers to serve as a channel for His special blessings, grace, and love. This is the secondary *reason for being* for the Church. The first *reason for being* is to give Him glory. This happens when the Church is serving as a channel of His grace, love, and blessings.

Consider the meaning of *fellowship* and relate this to the believer's participation in The Lord's Supper.

The Greek word typically used for fellowship is *koinonia*. It means *communion, fellowship, or sharing in common*. A similar Greek term *koinonos* means a *partaker or partner*. So each time we participate in The Lord's Supper, we are making a statement or declaration that, even as we have received redemption and grace from Christ, we recognize that we share that redemption and grace with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Properly understood, The Lord's Supper is both a *declaration* of our position before God *and* a *promise* that we will live out that grace with our co-recipients in very practical and tangible ways. We should not participate in The Lord's Supper until and unless we can make such a *declaration* and *promise*.

- D. There are four views of The Lord's Supper within orthodox Christianity. What are they?
1. **Tran-substantiation:** The bread and wine *literally* change their substance into the real Body and Blood of Christ. This is the Roman Catholic view.
 2. **Con-substantiation:** The Body and Blood of Christ are truly present *in, under and along with* the elements. This is the Lutheran view and is very similar to the Roman Catholic view.
 3. **Zwinglian view:** This view sees The Lord's Supper as *a memorial only*. It is typical to Baptist churches.
 4. **Reformed view:** This is often seen as an intermediate position, in which the true spiritual presence of Christ is emphasized. Calvin stated that communion is clearly of deeper significance than the Zwinglian view allows, emphasizing that it was a *seal and pledge* of what *God does* for believers. He believed that the effects of "the sacrifice of Christ on the cross are present and actually conveyed to believers by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Berkhof). This is a powerful concept that avoids the fanciful extreme of the Roman Catholics.

In all four views, to one degree or manner or another, the bread represents:
The Body of Christ, sacrificed for sinners.

In all four views, to one degree or manner or another, the wine represents:
The Blood of Christ, shed for the remission of sins.

Note to Leaders: The Roman Catholic view is non-sensical. It represents Jesus as speaking in a hyper-literal fashion, which would mean He was declaring that He held an actual piece of His flesh when saying, "This is my body." The Lutheran view is too close to the Roman Catholic view for comfort and lends itself to confusion. The Zwinglian view is simply inadequate. It understates the importance of The Lord's Supper. (Because of this most baptistic churches celebrate The Lord's Supper only quarterly.) The Reformed view is biblical, yet retains the wonderful mystery that makes the sacrament of The Lord's Supper so important. Remember that our word sacrament comes from a Latin word meaning mystery! The Reformed view compels us to celebrate The Lord's Supper often (Calvin did it weekly), to take it very seriously, and to expect positive consequences in the lives of participants.

- E. In verse 20, Jesus declared the "cup" to be "the new covenant in My blood." To which covenant does He refer?
The Covenant of Grace initiated in Eden (Genesis 3:15), which was fulfilled in the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.
- F. What does it mean to say that The Lord's Supper is a *sign* and a *seal* of the Covenant of Grace?
A sign points to something, in this case, to our salvation by grace. A seal confirms something, in this instance, the sure promise of salvation given in the Covenant of Grace.
- G. What part of the *ordo salutis* (the order of salvation) is exemplified in The Lord's Supper? (universal call, effectual call, regeneration, faith and repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, glorification)
Our sanctification. Baptism exemplifies our justification.
- H. What is an obvious difference between the participant's role in baptism on the one hand, and in the Lord's Supper on the other?
In baptism, the one baptized is completely passive, simply receiving what God is doing. In The Lord's Supper, the participant is actually involved, cooperating with what God is doing.

In what regard does the participant's role in the Lord's Supper explain the believer's role in *sanctification*?

In *sanctification*, the believer cooperates and actively commits himself to obey God and walk forward in faith, yet still being urged and empowered to do so by God the Holy Spirit. The believer's role in sanctification is *synergistic*. (Definition of synergism: the combined effect of different elements that exceeds the sum of their individual effects.)

I. What should a believer do in order to prepare for the Lord's Supper?

Seek God's face, confess his sin sincerely and humbly, repent of all sin, rededicate himself to new obedience, and reflect upon the amazing grace evident in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. The believer is never going to be perfect as he approaches the Lord's table, but he must be serious and sincere (1 Corinthians 11:27-32), and he should have a clear understanding of what is taking place.