

***On the Nature & Practice
of Communion***

Exodus 24:1-11 & Matthew 26:26-29

September 7, 2008

What is Communion?

“Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.’”

(Matthew 26:26-29)

Four Views...

1. The Catholic View—Transubstantiation;
2. The Lutheran View (Martin Luther)—
Consubstantiation or Sacramental Union;
3. The Reformed View (John Calvin)—Real
Presence;
4. The “Protestant” View (Ulrich Zwingli)—
Mere Symbol.

Exodus 24:1-11

“Then he [the Lord] said to Moses, ‘Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. Moses alone shall come near to the LORD, but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him.’ Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, ‘All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.’ And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

Exodus 24:1-11

...And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.' And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.'

Exodus 24:1-11

...Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.”

Leviticus 17:11

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.”

And the Point is...

Until the body of Jesus was actually broken and the blood of Jesus was actually spilled, the new covenant was not inaugurated.

Thus, to teach that in any way the bread and cup of communion become the actual body and blood of Christ is to teach that his sacrifice at Calvary is insufficient and needs to be reenacted over and over again.

The Main Difference between the Old and New Covenants is...

*The infinite sufficiency of the blood of
Jesus Christ to forgive sins.*

Hebrews 9:11-28

“But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Hebrews 9:11-28

...Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood.

Hebrews 9:11-28

...For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, 'This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.' And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 9:11-28

... Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 9:11-28

...And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”

Matthew 5:17

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

What Did Christ Accomplish?

1. The blood of Christ bridged the gap between Jews and gentiles so that we could have peace with one another (Eph 2:13-15);
2. The blood of Christ reconciled us both to God (vv. 16-18);
3. The blood of Christ formed us into a people of God (vv. 18-22).

Romans 12:4-5

“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.”

1 Peter 2:9-10

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

1 Corinthians 10:14-17

“Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.”

How did the early church celebrate communion?

1. They partook in the Lord's Supper to symbolize & celebrate their union with Christ.
2. They partook in an "agape meal" to symbolize & celebrate their union with one another in Christ.
3. They confessed their sins and got right with one another.
4. They took up an offering for the poor.