

Discipleship: An Introduction to Systematic Theology and Apologetics

The Doctrines of Redemption: Key Protestant
Reformation Doctrines - Sacraments

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The Lord's Supper - Protestant Unity:

- There is no explicit instruction as to who can administer the Lord's Supper or who can distribute the elements.
- There is no explicit instruction as to how often the Lord's Supper should be celebrated. Since the Reformation, Protestants have usually celebrated the Lord's Supper either twice a month, once a month, or four times a year.
- Protestants have universally rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine of **Transubstantiation**. When the priest says "This is my body" the bread and wine actually take on the whole substance of the body and blood of Christ. The priest raises the bread as he says this so that the bread may be adored. This action can only be performed by a priest. This action imparts grace to those present but the amount of grace imparted is dependent upon the subjective disposition of the recipient. In addition every time the mass is celebrated the sacrifice of Christ is repeated in some sense. Rome is careful to affirm that this is a real sacrifice but not the same sacrifice Christ paid on the Cross. Because the bread and wine literally become the body and blood of Christ Rome did not allow the laity to drink the cup for fear the blood of Christ would be spilled thus profaning the sacrament.

The Lord's Supper - Protestant Unity:

- Rome fails to recognize that Jesus often spoke symbolically: “I am the vine, I am the door versus “This is my body,” “This is my blood.”
- Rome fails to recognize that Christ's sacrifice was the final sacrifice for all time. The idea that Christ's sacrifice is in any way repeated is a blasphemous repetition of the old covenant and undermines the effectiveness of Christ's death. 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. 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. (Hebrews 9:25 – 28)
- Rome does not recognize a priest is not needed since all believers are priests. 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. (1Peter 2:9)

The Lord's Supper - Protestant Division:

- Division over the Lord's Supper among Protestants has mainly centered on the presence of Jesus in the Lord's Supper.
1. The **Memorialist/Zwinglian/Baptist** view. Jesus is not present in the elements, but believers reap a spiritual benefit from partaking because they remember his death.
and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. **Do this in remembrance of me.**" In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. **Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.**" For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11:24 – 26)

The Lord's Supper - Protestant Division:

2. The **Calvinist/reformed/"spiritual presence"** view. Christ's body and blood are spiritually consumed by the communicants as they physically partake of the bread and wine.

Calvin taught that the physical body and blood of Jesus is in heaven but they are spiritually made present to us by Jesus' omnipresent divine nature. (Institutes 4.2.17) So when we partake in the Lord's Supper we commune with His human nature because the omnipresent Divine nature is never separated from His human nature.

R.C. Sproul said; One of the most intimate things we do with other people is to eat with them. In the Lord's Supper think of sitting down and enjoying a meal with Jesus.

Wayne Grudem says in his *Systematic Theology* Book, "Today most Protestants would say, in addition to the fact that the bread and the wine symbolize the body and blood of Christ, that Christ is also *spiritually present* in a special way as we partake of the bread and the wine." (p. 995)... "there is a genuine spiritual blessing in this ceremony." (p. 996)

The Lord's Supper - Protestant Division: Lutherans

3. The **Lutheran/"consubstantiation"/"in, with, and under"/sacramental union"** view. Christ is united to the elements.
- Luther rejected Transubstantiation but taught that the physical body of Christ is present in, with and under the bread (Consubstantiation)
 - The problem with Luther's interpretation of **"This is my body"** is how can Christ's body/human nature be physically present in two or more places at the same time?
 - To answer this question Luther created the **"Doctrine of Communication of Attributes"** (After Jesus' ascension the divine attribute of omnipresence was communicated to Jesus' human nature). The consensus of non-Lutheran theologians has been that such a view is without Biblical support.
 - Therefore, Consubstantiation fails to recognize that Jesus sometime speaks of a spiritual reality in physical terms. So we should no more take **"this is my body"** literally than we take **This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood** literally. (Luke 22:20) The cup symbolizes the new covenant and the bread symbolizes Christ's body **BUT** the cup is not actually the new covenant and the bread is not actually Jesus' body.

Divisions over Baptism

- We will consider four basic questions regarding baptism.
 1. Does Baptism save? Is it necessary for salvation?
 2. Should we baptize babies or believers?
 3. How should baptism be performed?
 4. What does baptism symbolize?

Baptism- Does baptism save? Is baptism necessary for salvation?

- Protestants have usually distanced themselves from Rome on the subject of Baptism though the Lutheran understanding of baptism may seem confusing to other Protestant denominations.
- The Roman Catholic perspective is that **baptism is necessary for salvation** and that the act of **baptizing causes regeneration** (“born again”). Stated differently, baptism is a means whereby the church bestows saving grace on people.
- Baptism is that Sacrament in which man being washed with water in the name of the Three Divine Persons is spiritually reborn. (p. 350) (*Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* by Ludwig Ott) Ott supports this by:
 - John 3:5** Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.
 - Titus 3:5** he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,
 - Ephesians 5:26** that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

Baptism- Does baptism save? Is baptism necessary for salvation?

- However, John 3:5 is best understood as a spiritual washing in the New Covenant when God puts his Spirit within his people.

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

- Titus 3:5 and Ephesians 5:26 do not mention baptism but refer to a spiritual washing not a literal washing with water.
- Finally what about 1 Peter 3:21?

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, **not as a removal of dirt** from the body but as **an appeal to God for a good conscience**, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

- So 1 Peter 3:21 does not refer to a literal physical washing but to an inward spiritual transaction between God and the individual” (namely by anyone old enough to make an “appeal to God) which is symbolized by baptism.

Baptism- Does baptism save? Is baptism necessary for salvation?

- **Ott also says of baptism that:** Faith, as it is not the effective cause of justification...need not be present. The faith which infants lack is replaced...by the faith of the Church (p. 359) **and that** The Catholic Church teaches that the Sacraments have an objective efficacy, that is an efficacy independent of the subjective disposition of the recipient or of the minister...The Sacraments confer grace immediately, that is, without the mediation of Fiducial faith. (p. 328-329)
- **The argument that baptism is necessary for salvation is similar to the argument in Galatians that circumcision is necessary for salvation. Paul's response was:**

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different **gospel** (Galatians 1:6)

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." Now it is evident that **no one is justified before God by the law**, for "The righteous shall live by faith." (Galatians 3:10-11)

You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace. (Galatians 5:4)