

Celebrating Sacraments

Week 3 - The Lord's Supper

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WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. Read Isaiah 25. What reasons does Isaiah give for exalting and praising the LORD?
2. In verses 2-3, Isaiah talks about a city (or many cities). What city or cities is Isaiah talking about?
3. Our text describes the Messianic Feast in verse 6. Who's invited? What's on the menu?
4. According to our text, what will be the reaction of God's people to God's actions?

WHAT IS THE LORD'S SUPPER?

The Messianic feast (or banquet) draws from Old Testament prophecy, particularly Isaiah 25:6-9, envisioning a lavish eschatological banquet hosted by God for all peoples. It features rich food and well-aged wine, celebrates God's salvation, destroys death, wipes away tears, and removes shame culminating in the full consummation of God's kingdom. Jesus echoes this in parables (e.g., Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24) and promises not to drink wine again until he drinks it anew in the Father's kingdom (Matthew 26:29; Luke 22:18). The Lord's Supper bridges these realities. Jesus' words at the institution link the meal to future fulfillment in the kingdom, making it a foretaste or proleptic participation in the Messianic banquet. Every celebration anticipates the great eschatological feast at Christ's return (Revelation 19:9, the marriage supper of the Lamb), where redeemed people from east and west recline at God's table (Luke 13:29). Thus, the Supper looks backward to the cross and forward to glory, blending memory, presence, and hope in joyful expectation.

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CATECHISM CORNER

Heidelberg Catechism

Lord's Day 29

Q&A 78

Q. Do the bread and wine become the real body and blood of Christ?

A. No. Just as the water of baptism is not changed into Christ's blood and does not itself wash away sins but is simply a divine sign and assurance (1) of these things, so too the holy bread of the Lord's Supper does not become the actual body of Christ, (2) even though it is called the body of Christ (3) in keeping with the nature and language of sacraments. (4)

- 1) Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5
- 2) Matt. 26:26-29
- 3) 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:26-28
- 4) Gen. 17:10-11; Ex. 12:11, 13; 1 Cor. 10:1-4

Q&A 79

Q. Why then does Christ call the bread his body and the cup his blood, or the new covenant in his blood, and Paul use the words, a sharing in Christ's body and blood?

A. Christ has good reason for these words. He wants to teach us that just as bread and wine nourish the temporal life, so too his crucified body and poured-out blood are the true food and drink of our souls for eternal life. (1)

But more important, he wants to assure us, by this visible sign and pledge, that we, through the Holy Spirit's work, share in his true body and blood as surely as our mouths receive these holy signs in his remembrance, (2) and that all of his suffering and obedience are as definitely ours

as if we personally had suffered and made satisfaction for our sins. (3)

- 1) John 6:51, 55
- 2) 1 Cor. 10:16-17; 11:26
- 3) Rom. 6:5-11

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GOD SPEAKS TO US

1. Consider your answers from Question #1 in "What We Believe". Which, if any, of the promises made in this text has the Lord done? Explain your answer.

2. Our celebration of the Lord's Supper does not include rich food and well-aged wine. So, how is the Lord's Supper the Messianic Feast?

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GOD SPEAKS TO OUR FAMILY

1. In verses 1 and 9, Isaiah praises God for His perfect faithfulness and for being trustworthy to save those who wait on Him. How can parents model this kind of trust in God during family challenges (like financial stress, health issues, or conflicts), and what difference might it make in helping children learn to rely on God rather than just on their own efforts?

2. Reread Isaiah 25:6-8. How does God's promise of ultimate joy and the end of sorrow give your family hope when dealing with grief, loss, family separation, or ongoing pain? How can this future reality shape the way you comfort and support each other today?

BAVINCK ON THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper, like baptism, is and has to be of divine origin to be a sacrament, for God

alone is the distributor of grace, and he alone can bind its distribution to the means ordained by him. Jesus specifically instituted this Supper in his capacity as mediator. In it he acts as prophet, who proclaims and interprets his death; in it he acts as priest, who gave himself up to the cross on behalf of his own; in it he also acts as king, who freely makes available the grace secured and gives it to his disciples to enjoy under the signs of bread and wine. Besides being the inaugurator of the Supper, he is also its host and administrator. He himself takes the bread and wine, blesses them, and distributes them to his disciples. Nor was he only host and administrator when he physically sat at table with his disciples, but he also is and remains the host and administrator of it always and wherever his meal is celebrated. It is a meal in remembrance of him (1 Cor. 11:24), to proclaim his death (11:26), as a participation in his body and blood (10:16, 21; 11:27). In the Lord's Supper Christ comes together with his church, and the church comes together with Christ, thereby testifying to their spiritual communion (cf. Rev. 3:20)."

Bavinck, H., Bolt, J., & Vriend, J. (2008).

Reformed Dogmatics: Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation (Vol. 4, p. 562). Baker Academic.

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GOD SPEAKS IN WORSHIP

1. Verses 4-5 portray God as a refuge for the poor and needy, a shelter from the storm and shade from the heat, humbling the ruthless. How does recognizing God as our ultimate Protector and Comforter shape our worship songs, prayers, or liturgies? Share how a worship experience (or lack thereof) helped you encounter God as this kind of refuge amid personal or global "storms."

2. Read verse 9. In what ways can Christian worship foster this shared testimony of trust and deliverance?

STOTT ON THE LORD'S SUPPER

"Jesus' gift of forgiveness showed that the exile (the penalty of sin) was over. His healing miracles, ridding people of the disabilities (blindness, deafness, etc.) which would have excluded them from the Qumran community, showed that the kingdom community would be characterized by a basic inclusiveness. His welcoming of social outcasts and eating with them showed that the messianic banquet had begun. Further, his kingdom people must give up their preoccupation with their own identity and accept instead their vocation to be the light of the world. Through Jesus Israel would be renewed; through renewed Israel the world would be blessed."

Stott, J. (2001). The Incomparable Christ (p. 113). Inter-Varsity Press.

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CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 (Southern Baptist Convention's confessional statement) describes the Lord's Supper as "a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the

church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming."

Any spiritual benefit-such as renewed assurance, thanksgiving, or fellowship arises solely from the participant's personal faith and reflection, not from the rite itself. Grace is not inherent in the elements or the act; the Supper points to Christ but does not objectively dispense grace apart from believing reception. This aligns with a more Zwinglian memorialism prevalent in many Baptist circles.

Reformed theology insists grace is received only by faith through the Holy Spirit's work. However, it affirms the Supper as a true sacrament and means of grace: believers spiritually feed on Christ (real spiritual presence), receiving nourishment and confirmation of covenant promises. The elements are signs/seals united sacramentally to what they signify, making the Supper more than mere symbol-efficacious when received worthily by faith.

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THE GOSPEL CALL

1. Read verses 6-8. Discuss how sharing the hope of no more death, tears, or shame can address people's deepest fears (like mortality or regret), and brainstorm ways to present the "great banquet" invitation in everyday conversations or outreach efforts.

2. Isaiah contrasts God's humbling of the proud and ruthless (verses 2-5, 10-12) with His exaltation of the humble who trust Him. In evangelism, how can we gently confront human pride or self-reliance (e.g., "I'm good enough on my own") while offering the free grace of the gospel feast?

BERKHOF ON THE LORD'S SUPPER

"Not only among the Gentiles, but also among Israel, the sacrifices that were brought were often accompanied with sacrificial meals. This was particularly a characteristic feature of the peace-offerings. Of these sacrifices only the fat adhering to the inwards was consumed on the altar; the wave-breast was given to the priesthood, and the heave shoulder to the officiating priest, Lev. 7:28-34, while the rest constituted a sacrificial meal for the offerer and his friends, provided they were levitically clean, Lev. 7:19-21; Deut. 12:7, 12. These meals taught in a symbolic way that "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." They were expressive of the fact that, on the basis of the offered and accepted sacrifice, God receives His people as guests in His house and unites with them in joyful communion, the communal life of the covenant."

Berkhof, L. (1938). Systematic theology (p. 644). Wm. B. Eerdmans publishing co.