

Holy Communion

The ordinance of Holy Communion is very much a part of the doctrine of Consecration. The very act of Holy Communion sets the Christian apart from the non-believer and those who practice false religions. It is vital that we as Christians have a thorough understanding of this subject. It is so much more than just crackers and juice once a month.

What is Holy Communion?

It is an ordinance of the Christian faith, re-enacted in accordance with Jesus' instructions at the Last Supper, that His followers do in remembrance of Him.

It introduces the New Covenant.

There are three basic views on Holy Communion held by the different sects of the Christian Faith:

Transubstantiation is the view that the elements of bread and wine *change* into the body and blood of Christ, although the elements *appear* as bread and wine.

- This view is held by the Catholic Church, Orthodox Church and some Anglican Churches.
- The belief is that Jesus is going through the pain and suffering of His sacrifice all over again.
- **Consubstantiation** is the view that the elements of bread and wine *remain the same* while the *real presence* of Christ is *with* the bread and wine.
- This view is often held by Lutherans and other sacramental churches.
- Since this view teaches that the body and blood is present at communion yet the elements do not change, they see no need to keep the elements after the ceremony is ended, while those who hold to transubstantiation keep the elements at the altar for another mass or for personal devotion.

Transignification is the view that the bread and wine do not confer any special presence of Christ and that the elements are simply representations of the body and blood of Christ and are served to remind of us Christ past work.

- Most Protestants and Evangelicals hold to this view.
- They look at the elements as purely symbolic.
- The elements serve to remind us of what Christ did.
- There is no power in it.

Let's throw out our traditional thinking and believe what we find in the Bible--regardless of tradition.

John 6:51-67 HRB

I AM the Living Bread that came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this Bread, he will live forever. And indeed the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. Then the Jews argued with one another, saying, How can this One give us His flesh to eat? Then Yahshua said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you do not have life in yourselves. The one partaking of My flesh and drinking My blood has everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My body is truly food, and My blood is truly drink. He who eats my body and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. Even as the living Father sent Me, and I live through the Father; also the one partaking Me, even that one will live through Me. This is the Bread which came down out of Heaven, not as your fathers ate the manna and died; the one partaking of this Bread will live forever. He said these things teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum. Then many of His disciples having heard, they said, 'This Word is hard; who is able to bear it?' But knowing in Himself that His disciples were murmuring about this, Yahshua said to them, Does this offend you? What if you see the Son of Man ascending to the place where He was before? It is the Spirit that gives life. The flesh does not profit, nothing! The Words which I speak to you are spirit and are life. But there are some of you who are not believing. For Yahshua knew from the

beginning who they were, the ones not believing, and who was the one betraying Him. And He said, Because of this, I have told you that no one is able to come to Me except it is given to him from My Father. Because of this saying, many of His disciples turned their backs and did not walk with Him. Therefore, Yahshua said to the Twelve, Do you wish to go?

- Notice the word 'truly'.
- By using this word, Jesus makes it clear that He did not intend to give us 'symbolic' food.
- Evangelicals always claim to 'literally' believe in the Bible, yet, when Jesus plainly uses the word, 'truly', many Evangelicals sputter at the thought that we could 'eat' and 'drink' real flesh and blood.
- Consider the result of this teaching.
- On hearing it, many of His disciples said, 'This is a hard teaching.'
- Who can accept it?
- Notice Jesus' response to this question: Does this offend you?
- Some disciples were so offended that they quit following Him.
- They took Him literally.
- There is no way to interpret the words 'my flesh is truly food and my blood is truly drink' except literally.
- There is no wiggle room when the word 'truly' is used.
- Prior to the disciples leaving, He wanted them to make sure they
- understood totally what He was actually saying.
- The Spirit gives life; the flesh does not profit, nothing!
- The Words which I speak to you are spirit and are life.
- Jesus is showing how the flesh can be present, but it means nothing if the Spirit is not there, and the Spirit is carried by the Words of Christ.
- In other words, it's Christ's Words at communion that make the food His body and blood.
- Without the Word, there is no life in the flesh.
- Jesus exalts His Words above the flesh, for the flesh is dependent on the Words of Christ in order for it to become real food.
- This is the great problem with the majority taking communion.
- They take it without really accepting Christ's Word into their heart.
- How many Christians really know the Word of God?

- They know their church's doctrines, but concerning the Word of God, they know so little, and without the Words of Christ, communion will 'count for nothing'.

***Example: Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Baptists, etc. who partake of communion but know nothing about the Word of God--they have no real relationship with Jesus. All they know is their church's doctrine. It's flesh and not spirit and it profits nothing!

- Communion can only be valuable when the people know, accept, and receive the Word of God.
- A lack of understanding the Word of God is why church people are often still dead in their sins, thinking they are saved by eating the bread.

Why did Jesus tell us to do this often until He returns?

Let's look now to the actual Last Supper.

Matthew 26:26-30 HRT

And as they ate, taking the bread and blessing it, Yahshua broke and gave to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body'. And taking the cup, and giving thanks, He gave to them, saying, 'Drink all of it'. For this is my blood of the New Covenant which concerning many is being poured out for remission of sins.

- Notice again Jesus did not say this is 'like' my body.
- NO! He said, 'This IS My body.' This IS My blood.

Couple this with John 6 and you see there is more to Holy Communion than simply bread and wine.

- The Presence of Christ is there in the bread and the wine.
- Why? How? Because Jesus said it was!
- This IS My body. This IS My blood. He's there!
- This is the real reason we take communion: to receive forgiveness for any sins we have committed and to receive healing for our soul and body.
- It's already done.
- We must RECEIVE it!

We all continue to sin or to fall short of how we are to live, even after we have committed our lives to Christ.

- So we still need forgiveness.
- 1 John 1:7 tells us that the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin.
- So, does the blood really cleanse you or just 'symbolically' cleanse you?
- If we are only 'symbolically' cleansed, we are not really cleansed.
- We should not have problems believing in the actual presence of the blood of Christ.
- Holy Communion is a main way to experience the actual presence of the Blood of Christ, and by experiencing it, we get cleansed by it.

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you; The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, 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'.

- These words agree with the Gospels, but Paul brings out one additional truth that deals with WHY we take communion.
- Jesus said, Do this in remembrance of Me.
- This is a very important point.
- When you remember something, the thing you remember is always in the past.
- It is not the present, so from these words, it is clear that the sacrifice of Jesus took place in the past, not 'is' taking place now.

- Catholics believe that the Mass is the 'reoffering' of Christ.
- However, Hebrews 7:27 tells us that He sacrificed for their sins once for all when He offered Himself.
- Jesus finished His work and sat down at the right hand of God.
- When someone sits down it signifies their work is finished.
- Jesus' work of atonement is finished.
- Therefore it does not need to be duplicated.

What are the benefits of Holy Communion?

1 Corinthians 11:26

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

- Every time we partake of communion we are remembering our New Covenant relationship.
- Every time we partake of communion we are confessing the provision of Christ's death, and through confession we have possession!
- We possess forgiveness and health as we properly share in communion.
- Those who do not understand what they do become weak and sick, according to vs. 30.

What are our responsibilities to keep the ordinance of Holy Communion?

- In the end, the issue that matters most is our own hearts.
- Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.
- A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.
- We should gather together on the Lord's Day.
- We should examine ourselves and confess any transgressions to the Lord.
- We should resolve any and all strife.
- Unconfessed sin and strife will defile the sacrifice.

- We should partake of Holy Communion with the giving of thanks through our words.
- There's more that needs to be done than we are doing.

Conclusion:

The view that most aligns itself with the Word of God is the Consubstantiation view.

- 1 Corinthians 11 reveals that the bread remains bread.
- It doesn't change.
- This discredits the transubstantiation view.
- Yet, because Jesus spoke the Words that the bread IS My body and the wine IS My blood, His presence is there in those elements when we partake of them.
- There is power to cleanse and heal when we partake of the bread and the wine.
- Jesus' presence is there as the body and blood of Christ.
- So Jesus' own Words discredit the third view of Transignification.
- It's so much more than symbolic and/or remembering what He DID.