
The Unity of the Spirit

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"In the Bond of Peace"

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Dear Fellow-believers,

In the Bible there is **one** God, **one** people of God and **one** hope of salvation for all of God's people. Throughout the Bible this theme of the oneness of God, his people and the hope of salvation for God's people always begins with simple doctrinal truths and proceeds to simple practical truths. In the Old Testament this unity begins with the fundamental truth about the oneness of God and the calling out of the one people of God, Israel, to be a witness to the nations of the world of the goodness and love of that God. This belief was emphasized repeatedly in the pages of the Old Testament and was the single most important truth in bringing unity to the Old Testament people of God, Israel. This belief is set forth both in the first commandment (Exodus 20) and in what later became known as the Jewish Shema as set forth in Deut 6:4-5:

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is **one**.*

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

This belief in the one true God is the foundation upon which all other biblical beliefs and practices are built. Thus, the Old Testament commands of the Mosaic Law were specifically based on the nature and character of that one true God as exhibited in his covenant relationship with his chosen people, Israel. Man's responsibilities in relation to God and to

one's fellowman were both stated in terms of God's own character and nature which man was to imitate:

Be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy.

... love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord (Lev. 19:2, 12).

In the New Testament the same principles are carried over from the Old Testament. God is still the only true God (John 17:2) and is to be worshipped and loved accordingly as Christ himself stated when he quoted the first and second great commandments directly from the Old Testament.

*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is **one**.*

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself ... (Mark 12:29-31).

In the New Testament, however, the nature and character of the one true God is revealed as never before. God's Word – which was with God in the beginning and which was the agent through which God created the world – became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (John 1:1-2, 14). Thus, to hear the words of Jesus and to witness his acts of love,

mercy and power were to witness the nature and character of God himself. As Christ stated,

“Any one who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

However, not only could people witness God’s heart in the words and deeds of Christ, but it was through God’s redemptive work in Christ – made effective through faith in Christ and the gift of God’s Spirit - that people could come into fellowship and oneness with God, Christ and God’s family. As Christ himself prayed,

*My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be **one**, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be **one** as we are **one**. I in them and you in me. May they be brought to **complete unity** to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me (John 17:20-23).*

This “oneness” or “unity” based on God’s redemptive work in Christ and brought to fruition through the work of God’s Spirit, should be the fundamental basis for practical unity amongst the people of God. However, it must be emphasized that this is a unity that must be *sought* and *built* through diligence and effort. Not by focusing on minute details of doctrine or practice, but by focusing on those central truths that unite us spiritually “in Christ” and enable us to live practically “after the example of Christ.” Paul set forth this goal of unity based on our oneness as God’s people in his Letter to the Ephesians,

As a prisoner of the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in

*love. Make every effort to keep the **unity of the Spirit** through the bond of peace. There is,*

***one** body, and*

***one** spirit, just as you were called to*

***one** hope when you were called –*

***one** Lord,*

***one** faith,*

***one** baptism;*

***one** God and Father of all,*

who is over all and through all and in all (Eph. 4:1-6).

Throughout the Bible – beginning in the Old Testament and continuing through the New – this theme of oneness, or unity, amongst the people of God was always built on simple and clear truths that were understandable to the common man. This unity was based first and foremost on the Old Testament belief in the one and only true God and his covenant people Israel. It then culminated in God’s redemptive work in Christ whereby people from amongst all nations throughout the world could be united in Christ above and beyond the geographical, ethnic, racial, economic and political divisions of mankind. May we as the people of God reflect this same unity of the spirit in the bond of peace as we seek to live for our God day by day. As Paul stated,

*May the God who gives you endurance and encouragement give you the **spirit of unity** among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus,*

*so that with **one** heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 15:5-6).*

Richie Temple

The Hopes and Fears of All the Years

by Chuck LaMattina

Chicago, Illinois

There is a Christmas carol called, "O Little Town Of Bethlehem." The first verse is as follows:

O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless
sleep
The silent stars go by
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

The birth of Jesus Christ has brought to light the hopes and fears of all the years. When Jesus Christ was presented in the temple as a baby, an aged and godly man named Simeon prophesied that Jesus Christ was destined for the fall and rising of many, and that the thoughts of many hearts would be revealed through him (Luke 2:34-35).

Through Jesus Christ, God is redeeming and saving and exalting mankind. And through Jesus Christ, God is also judging the world. The prophet Isaiah knew this.

Isaiah 9:6-7 (All scripture in NKJV):

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

In a prophecy concerning the Messiah, Isaiah declares that he will govern and judge and that he will be known among other things as the "Prince of Peace." What a wonderful message we bring when we preach Christ, we speak of peace. The shepherds near Bethlehem heard of this peace too on the night that Jesus was born.

Luke 2:8-14

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.

"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

"And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

Peace! Goodwill towards men! What a wonderful proclamation. Our hopes for joy, and life, and love and for peace, can now all be fulfilled through Jesus Christ. The word for "peace" here in Luke means a blessed wholeness. It is a peace that gives one a sense of total well being. This peace comes only to those who accept God's goodwill in Christ.

But not only are the world's hopes met in Jesus Christ, so are its greatest fears. The

entrance of Jesus Christ into the world not only made peace available, it also brought a sword.

Matthew 10:32-34

"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

"But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

The religious and sentimental view of Jesus Christ is that he came to fling peace around indiscriminately. Like fairy dust, a little sprinkle from the Savior and some happy and positive thoughts, and all will be well. But this is not true. This is a lie. We think of Jesus Christ as meek and mild, and he is to those who submit to his Lordship. But the Bible is clear that every knee shall bow before the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:8-11

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

*that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow**, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,*

and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father [my emphasis].

Every knee shall bow before Christ, some in loving submission, some from force. The Scriptures not only show us a Christ who is gentle and who loves for children to sit on his

lap, it also shows us a Christ who can be hot with anger, and who with whip in hand can drive the money changers from the temple!

The coming of Jesus Christ was not only to bring peace, but also judgment. People talk about the wonderful grace of God, but grace does not come cheap. The salvation we can receive comes through the cross of Christ. Our salvation cost God the death of His Son. We are saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, by the grace of God. But conversely, rejection of the Savior renders a devastating verdict of condemnation.

Coming face to face with Jesus Christ can be a disturbing experience. Seeing him, you are confronted with the truth that without him you are doomed. Seeing him, we realize that none of our works can save us. Our only hope is in him. But many are too proud and arrogant to accept this verdict.

Matthew 11:20-24

Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent:

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

"but I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

"And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

"But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

The final judgment of condemnation is not for sin, but for the rejection of the Savior from sin, the Lord Jesus Christ. The people in these cities had seen Jesus Christ work, they had heard him preach God's Word, but they rejected him. They rejected God's goodwill that would have brought them peace.

I want you to notice in verse 23 the word "Hades." This word is also translated as hell. The world has many ideas about hell from a place of fire and brimstone, to a place where we relive all our sins throughout all eternity. But biblically hell - Hades, is used for the state of death.¹ It is the realm of the grave, **it is life extinguished**, non-existence. Do you know that the word "hell" or "Hades" is mentioned on more pages of the Bible than the word heaven itself? I came across this quote concerning what someone has said about hell.

The idea of hell was born of revenge and brutality on the one side, and cowardice on the other ... I have no respect for any human being who believes in it ... I dislike the doctrine, I hate it, I despise it, I defy this doctrine ...²

The person who said this was Robert Ingersoll, one of the last century's great American philosophers and a foremost opponent of Christ and Christianity. Robert Ingersoll is dead and Robert Ingersoll has inherited hell [Hades]. He may have railed against it, rebelled against it, marched against it, protested against it, but he is in it. His life is extinguished and his future is simply total annihilation.

People today dislike the doctrine of hell, of eternal death, of judgment. But unless one accepts the Lord Jesus Christ, hell stands like a monolithic stone over the head of every living

¹Editor's note: as the author states the Greek word "Hades" refers to the realm of non-existence in the grave. Another Greek word "gehenna," also translated "hell," refers to the "second death" or the place of final "destruction" of the ungodly after the final judgment.

²As quoted in *Hell You Say*, (Timothy Books, Newton, Pa., 1974), p. 7.

person. God does not delight in the death of wicked (Ezekial 18). He delights in showing mercy. In a sense God does not condemn people to extinction. People sentence themselves by their rejection of the Savior. As certain as is the love and mercy of God, so is the day of judgment.

Acts 10:34-43

Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.

"But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

"The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ - He is Lord of all,

"that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached:

"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

"And we are witnesses of all things which He did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree.

"Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly,

"not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

*"And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that **it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.***

"To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins" [my emphasis].

Peter proclaimed as a part of the message about Christ, a day of judgment, a time when Christ will judge the living and the dead. No one will escape!

The apostle Paul proclaimed this same message of judgment, when he preached in Athens before the intellectual elite of that city.

Acts 17:22-31

Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious;

for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:

"God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.

"Nor is He worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.

"And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

"so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us

"for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own

poets have said, 'For we are his offspring.'

"Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising.

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,

"because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" [my emphasis].

Life is not haphazard. It has a beginning and it will have an end. There are two destinies that await the choice of every man and woman. There comes a time when every man and woman needs to held face to face with the ultimate reality of the future. Like Scrooge, with the "Spirit of Christmas Future," people need to see what might be. But unlike Scrooge and his ghost, this is no work of fiction.

Romans 2:16 states that there is a day coming when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. So many people today do not like to hear this kind of preaching and teaching. They think it to be old fashioned, unloving and unkind. They say, "Life is tough. Give me something that will help us now." The Scriptures do provide help for the here and now. But what many people really want is a kind of spiritual morphine. If a doctor says you have a cancerous growth and it has to be cut out, is he unkind? If what the Scriptures say are true, and I believe they are, then to speak the truth about judgment is the most loving thing in the world. Wouldn't you want to be informed if you were in danger? Sure!

Our world does not like preaching on judgment because our world is sinful and

selfish. We are too often like children who have been warned time and time again not to do a certain thing. Then when we are caught and we receive the consequences of our actions we think our parents are cruel. Children seldom if ever think of the great love the parent has in warning the child in the first place.

God is a God of love and justice. He does not just pronounce a judgment of condemnation. He says, "Look, here is where you are, you are doomed, but here is a way of escape." He says, "I have set before you life and death - choose life!" And we can choose life when we accept Christ. This will bring us peace.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

We can have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. We can have the peace of reconciliation, of being one with God. We can have the peace of a cleared conscience, the peace of inner tranquility that comes from knowing that you are God's child. We can have peace from the mental anguish that comes with the harsh realities of life.

Philippians 4:6-7

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

John 16:33

"These things I [Jesus Christ] have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

The world will always be a whirlwind of confusion and turmoil as it rushes headlong to its final judgment. But for those who accept Christ there can be true peace. Jesus Christ has made peace a reality.

Colossians 1:19-20

For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,

and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of the cross.

Peace in life comes through the cross of Jesus Christ. In him we are reconciled to God. The word "reconcile" in this verse means to cause a thorough change. Where there was no trust, there now is. Where there was no peace, there is now peace!

What the world offers as peace is only a temporary cessation of active war. But in the heart, war and fear still rage. The peace the world offers is no more satisfying than a cup of sand offered to a man dying of thirst. We all know in the depths of our hearts that politics, education, science, the arts, even religion leave us unfulfilled. Without Christ all these things are hollow and unsatisfying.

The heart hungers for something grand and noble and pure. The heart hungers for that which is good and satisfying. The heart hungers for peace and rest. But it is only found in Christ.

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy and My burden is light."

This is not the peace and rest of inactivity. It is the rest of knowing that you are bound for an eternity of glory with God. It is the rest of a heart, that is in harmony with God's will. It is the rest of knowing and experiencing the full blessing of God. It is total satisfaction. It is eternal life.

John 6:35-40

And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.

"But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

"This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.

"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

When Jesus Christ was born in the town of Bethlehem almost 2000 years ago the hopes and fears of all the years came together in that manger where he lay.

There is another Christmas carol entitled "O Holy Night." The first verse reads:

O holy night the stars are
brightly shining, it is the night of
the dear Savior's birth;

Long lay the world in sin and
error pinning, 'til he appeared
and the soul felt its worth.

A thrill of hope the weary world
rejoices, for yonder breaks a new
and glorious morn;

For those who accept the salvation offered in Jesus Christ, the soul does for the first time feel its worth! We realize that we are saved from sin and its consequences, and that we are also saved to bear the image of God. And our hearts thrill with hope, knowing that each new day we can manifest the life and power of God, and each new day brings us closer to history's final moments.

2 Peter 4:11-13

Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat.

Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

To those who accept the Lord Jesus Christ the future is as bright as the promise of God. For those who accept Christ as Lord and Savior there is peace and rest even in the here and now. And we look forward with great expectation to a new earth, a new world, where there will be no more sorrow and tears.

People speak of making their peace with God. But there is no peace with God except that which comes through the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed are those who have Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior.

[This article is adapted by permission from Chuck LaMattina's book *Discovering Christ*. This book and other books and tapes may be obtained by writing to Chuck at the following address: Grace Ministry USA, 2102 Burr Oak Lane, Lindenhurst, IL. 60046].

One in Christ Jesus

by Richie Temple

Cary, N.C.

When a person believes in Jesus Christ, accepting him as his risen Lord, he is born of God and spiritually created in Christ Jesus. As a result, this new believer identifies with Christ in all of Christ's accomplishments: past, present and future. "In Christ" the believer has already been judged as to his spiritual standing before God and the verdict is "not guilty" (Rom. 8:1; I Cor. 1:30). This is not because of the believer's own righteousness but because of Christ's sacrificial death and the resulting gift of righteousness which God gives, or credits, to believers on the basis of grace (Rom. 3:21-5:17). The Book of Ephesians speaks about this new creation in Christ:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:8-10).

Being created in Christ Jesus is the work of God, not man. It is a spiritual creation, not physical, and is accomplished by a believer being born of God's Spirit and incorporated through that Spirit into the spiritual body of Christ, the church of God. The Letters of Ephesians and I and II Corinthians explain this truth:

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are

God's possession - to the praise of his glory (Eph. 1:13-14).

The body is a unit, although it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink (I Cor. 12:12-13).

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come! (II Cor. 5:17).

For the believer in Christ all things have become new because he is now a new creation in Christ. He has been baptized with the Spirit, not water, into the one body of Christ. As a result, the believer stands before God clothed with the righteousness, holiness and redemption that have been made possible by Christ's death and resurrection. All of this is God's own work of grace which he imparts to us, in Christ, through the Spirit. As Paul says:

You were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God (I Cor. 6:11).

It is because of him [God] that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption (I Cor. 1:30).

Christ died for us and paid the ransom price for the sins of all mankind (I Tim. 2:4-6). When we accept this sacrificial death of Christ for us by believing in him as our risen Lord, we receive the benefits of all that he accomplished for us. The gift of "righteousness" means that we have been justified, or acquitted of our sins, and therefore stand in a new right relationship with God: accepted and at peace with him (Rom. 4:23-5:2). The word "holy" means that

we have been set apart for God and are now God's "saints" or "holy people" with our citizenship in heaven (Eph. 2:19; Phil.3:20).¹⁶ The word "redemption" means that we have been bought back and set free from the spiritual bondage of sin and of Satan's realm of darkness and transferred into the dominion of Christ's kingdom or rule (Col. 1:13-14).

This redemptive work of Christ on our behalf is a truth that every believer should understand. It is through Christ's work that we are redeemed, not through our own work. As a result of believing in Christ and being incorporated into him, we identify with him in all that he did, is doing, and will do on our behalf. The following list shows our spiritual identification with Christ in all of his accomplishments:

"In Christ" we as believers:

- were crucified with him (Gal. 2:20),
- died with him (Rom. 6:3),
- were buried with him (Rom. 6:4),
- were made alive with him (Eph. 2:5),
- were raised up with him (Eph. 2:6),
- are seated in heaven with him (Eph. 2:6),
- will appear with him in glory (Col. 3:4).

It is precisely because of this spiritual identification of the believer with Christ in all of his accomplishments that we now stand before God clothed in the righteousness, holiness and redemption that are ours in Christ.

Biblically, Christ is *the* elect or chosen one of God in whom all of God's purposes are accomplished (e.g. Isa. 42:1; Luke 9:35; Eph. 1:1-14). All who are incorporated into Christ - through faith and the Spirit - become a part of God's elect or chosen people and thus share with Christ in all of God's purposes "for those who

love him" (Rom. 8:28; I Cor. 2:9; James 2:5). This is all in accordance with God's foreordained plan. In fact, the Book of Ephesians shows that God actually chose us in Christ before the creation of the world in order that we would become his children and live in intimate fellowship with him:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him [Christ] before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will - to the praise of his glorious grace which he has freely given us in the One he loves (Eph. 1:3-6).

God chose and predestined us to be his children before the creation of the world. This was his plan of salvation. God knew that man would sin and in his wisdom and love he prepared a plan so that through his Son, Jesus Christ, we could be redeemed back to him. In his wisdom, God knew that people would believe. Therefore in his love, he made it such that when we did believe we would become his children. God's choice and predestination of us, therefore, is based on his own foreknowledge of a people who would believe but with no interference in our freedom to choose. It was our decision to believe. God simply predestined the results of that belief - for us to become his children! The Book of Romans summarizes these wonderful truths in God's plan of salvation:

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And

those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then shall we say in response to this: If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written:

'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:28-39).

In Christ Jesus we are God's children; foreknown before the creation of the world; called to be his own chosen people; justified so as to be righteous and blameless before him. And, even though Christ has not yet returned, already assured of appearing with him in glory.

The People of God

All true believers in Jesus Christ together make up the one family of God and the one church of the body of Christ. This is a spiritual family and spiritual church which

transcends every man-made denomination, division or sect. The Spirit of God binds all believers in Christ into a new people of God united above and beyond all worldly distinctions. This collective sense of being the new people of God is stated in many different ways within the New Testament Letters. Sometimes Old Testament imagery (e.g. the temple of God) is used to describe God's people while at other times completely different and new terminology (e.g. the body of Christ) is introduced to describe the new spiritual realities that exist under the new covenant. Look at the Old Testament imagery used in the Book of I Peter:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God (I Pet. 2:9-10).

In the Old Testament the nation of Israel was the called and chosen people of God. The New Testament, however, reveals that because of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and his giving of the holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost a new covenant relationship has been established between God and his people. Now all who believe in Christ - irrespective of ethnic, social or religious background - are part of the new covenant people of God (cp. Matt. 21:33-43; I Pet. 2:4-10; etc.). As Paul says:

It is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus and who put no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3; cp. Gal. 6:16).

This is simply Old Testament language being applied to the new covenant people of God. All that was promised in the Old Testament to God's covenant people, Israel, now becomes the rightful inheritance of God's new covenant

people in a way far greater than the Old Testament people ever saw or conceived. This is all a result of the work of Christ and the giving of God's gift of holy Spirit to all who believe in Christ. Look at the following verses from the Book of Ephesians:

For through him [Christ] we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him [Christ] the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit (Eph. 2:18-22).

What magnificent truths! We are fellow citizens with all of God's people regardless of ethnic race or national boundaries. We are united together in a citizenship that transcends and supersedes the national citizenships of this world. Our allegiance is therefore first and foremost to God and his kingdom. No national, ethnic or family allegiance can ever take priority over that. We are members of God's household - bound together in God's family by his Spirit of which we are born. In fact, so great is this new relationship with God that the Bible teaches that we, as God's chosen people, are now the temple of the living God. God, the creator of the heavens and the earth, now lives in us by way of his Spirit!

One in Christ

Throughout the New Testament this new special relationship of God with his people is emphasized over and over along with the love and care that God's people are to have for each other. In Old Testament times it was often thought that only Israelites or converts to the

religion of Israel could be part of God's people. Gentiles, i.e., all of the other ethnic groups of the world, were thought to be impure and unclean. Though it was foretold in the Old Testament that these Gentiles would one day be blessed by God, it was never thought that they would be accepted as part of the people of God on an equal basis with Israel. However, as a result of the life, death and resurrection of Christ and then his giving of the holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost all barriers dividing God's people have been forever broken down (Eph. 2:11-18). Look at the Letters to the Galatian and Corinthian churches:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26-28).

The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink (I Cor. 12:12-14).

Water baptism in the name of Christ can be very meaningful and significant but it is only symbolic of a far greater spiritual reality. For it is only the one Spirit of God in which we are "all baptized" - at the moment we believe in Christ - that truly cleanses us and unites us together in the one body of Christ. This spiritual baptism into Christ is far greater than any kind of water baptism which we may undergo. For it is a baptism in the life-giving power of God's own Spirit which God himself, through Christ, pours out upon all who believe (Titus 3:4-7; cf. John 1:32-34; Acts 1:5; 2:33; 11:15-17; 15:7-9).

As a result of this God-given "unity of the Spirit" (Eph. 4:3) there are no longer any distinctions among the people of God on the basis of ethnic race, social and economic status or national citizenship. It makes absolutely no difference to God whether a believer in Christ is black or white, rich or poor, European or American because God is no respecter of persons - only of conditions (Acts 10:34-35). Anyone - absolutely anyone - who believes in Christ is accepted by God into his family on an equal basis with everyone else because we are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28).

The Mystery Of Christ

This truth concerning the equal composition of the church of the body of Christ - the new covenant people of God - was so revolutionary that it was not immediately understood by the people of New Testament times. In fact, it was not even revealed by God until many years after the original outpouring of the holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Instead, it was a "mystery" or "secret" hidden in God and never before revealed until it was finally made known to the apostle Paul and then to the other New Testament apostles and prophets. Paul's Letters to the Ephesian and Colossian churches set forth explicitly the wonderful truth regarding this mystery:

Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers

together in the promise in Christ Jesus (Eph. 3:2-6, emphasis added).

This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.....for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in all its fullness - the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:23b-27, emphasis added).

As a result of all that Christ has accomplished, *Gentile* believers in Christ now share equally with Jewish believers in all that God has promised to his people. All who believe in Christ - whether Jew or Gentile - are now "heirs together," "members together of one body," and "sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus". In addition, Christ, by way of the Spirit, now lives in each and every believer (Rom. 8:9-10). So incredible are these truths that had "the rulers of this age" known about this mystery "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (I Cor. 2:8). In fact, by instigating Christ's crucifixion Satan himself thought that he had accomplished his greatest victory ever over God; but in truth, it was exactly the opposite, because Christ's sacrificial death and his victorious resurrection sealed Satan's doom and gained victory forever for the people of God (Col. 2:9-15; Rom. 16:20). Now a new people of God is being formed made up of all who believe in Jesus Christ from every nation, family and ethnic race of the world. In this new people of God "there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all" (Col. 3:11). What a great truth! For when

Christ was personally present on earth he could only be in one place at one time. Today, however, he is present, by way of the Spirit, wherever there is a Christian believer.

Therefore, as the church of the body of Christ, with Christ in each and every member, we are his representatives wherever we may be in this world. The Apostle Paul sums up this wonderful truth in God's plan of salvation:

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20).

As God's children, created in Christ Jesus, foreknown and chosen before the creation of the world, it is now our joy, privilege and responsibility to "declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his wonderful light" (I Pet. 2:9), so as to bring others into the blessings of God's salvation as well.

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"In Ephesians the continuity of the new [Christian] community with the people of God in earlier times is stressed; not only so ... it was divinely chosen in Christ before the world's foundation (Eph. 1:4), it is the means by which God will accomplish his eternal purpose "in the fullness of times" (Eph. 1:9-10), and at present it provides an object-lesson of "God's manifold wisdom" to "the principalities and powers in the heavenly realm" (Eph. 3:10). [FF Bruce, *NICONT, Ephesians*, p. 244].

Notes & Quotes On the Bible

A Focus for Christian Unity:

"The Lord's Supper"

A Study of 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

by Jon Zens

Introduction

In the New Testament we should be struck by the utter simplicity that characterized life in the early churches. We are given a broad picture of church life, but many particulars - which are troublesome for us - are left untouched by the New Testament. As time elapsed, the visible church lost its original simplicity and became enmeshed in a quagmire of ecclesiastical machinery and theological speculation.

The Lord's Supper is a case in point. There is a simplicity about this ordinance in the sketchy New Testament data. Yet in post-apostolic times the remembrance meal (1) became embedded in hierarchical church structures so that it became a mysterious ritual to be "administered" by the "ordained," and (2) ended up being the source of endless speculation about "what happens" in the "sacrament."¹

The evidence indicates that this remembrance meal, and the instruction which accompanied it, was a centerpoint in Christian assemblies (cf. Acts 20:7). Eating together in the "breaking of bread" and remembering the Lord in the Supper were virtually synonymous in Christian worship.² Obviously, many things have changed in our practice since the early days. In this article, I would like to explore

¹William Barclay, *The Lord's Supper*, 1967, pp. 102, 104.
²*Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.

some basic points concerning the Lord's Supper - based on 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 - and compare them with our conceptions and practices.

The Historical Structure of the Supper

First of all, it will be helpful to isolate the threefold historical structure that exists in the institution of the Supper itself. Only by holding these three perspectives in proper balance can we even hope to approach the Supper correctly.

1. Remember the Past

In the Lord's Supper we remember the past. The covenant that brings us the forgiveness of sins was ratified, or "cut," by the shedding of Christ's blood. The Lord instituted the Supper on the eve of His impending death in the context of a Passover meal. "Remembrance" itself is a covenantal word. The Israelites were often commanded to "remember" God's acts of covenant faithfulness. In the Supper, Jesus has given us an ordinance by which we continually remember that our blessings were purchased through a costly price.

2. Enjoy the Present

In the Lord's Supper, we enjoy the present. Jesus has brought us into fellowship with others in the new covenant. When we come together "as a church," we can eat as a body in the presence of the Lord Jesus. The emphasis here is on a joyous meal, a covenant celebration. Again, in the Old Testament covenantal meals which celebrated the mighty acts of God on their behalf were enjoyed (Exod. 24:11). The pattern of redemptive history is that celebrative meals follow covenant enactment.

3. Look Forward to the Future

In the Supper, we look forward to the future: "you do show the Lord's death until he comes." This ordinance is to be repeated ("as often as you do it") until Christ returns. Each time we proclaim His death in the Supper, we are also reminded that He is returning. In His death, burial and resurrection Christ was removed from us physically. The Holy Spirit now gives us Christ's presence. When He returns, our faith will become sight.

Given these three dimensions - past, present, future - it is no wonder that in the early church the Lord's Supper was "the central action in Christian worship."¹ Although there is overlap, we might rightly generalize and say that in the Supper our faith looks back to the cross (Rom. 3:25), our love for Jesus and the saints is kindled by the Spirit (Rom. 5:5), and our hope is stirred up as we long for His return (Heb. 9:28; cf. 1 Cor. 13:13).

The past dimension gives the Supper its objective character - we come together to remember the definitive work of Christ. The present dimension emphasizes the Supper's social character - in order to remember His body, we must be one body (1 Cor. 10:16,17). The future dimension recognizes the tension of Christian experience - we enjoy now only the first-fruits, and long for the full harvest (Rom. 8:18,23).

The Historical Setting of the Supper

An Overview of 1 Corinthians 11:17ff

In the remark, "your meetings do more harm than good" (11:17), Paul probably has in view all the concerns he covers through 14:40.² These issues relate to "the disorders...in the public assemblies of the congregation."³

The first issue Paul isolates has to do with divisions evident "when they came

¹Ibid., p. 16.

²Charles Hodge, *1 Corinthians*, p. 216; R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of 1 & 2 Corinthians*, p. 455.

³Lenski, p. 454.

together as a church" (11:18). These divisions had a different twist, but certainly could not be totally divorced from the divisions described in 1:10-12; 3:3,4. Specifically, these divisions came to expression in connection with their practice of the Lord's Supper (which also involved a meal together; 11:20-22).

Paul does not condemn the meal aspect of their gathering. Rather, he rebukes their contradiction of what the Lord's Supper signifies - the unity of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16,17). The way they were coming together reflected schism, not bondedness. They were not eating together as a unit. The poor were thereby humiliated. The giving nature of Christ was not reflected in their sharing of food with one another. In such a setting, the Lord's Supper could only be done "unworthily" because the very way in which they came together was a denial of all that the Supper signified.

In order to correct this horrible situation, Paul recalls the apostolic tradition he delivered to them concerning the institution of this ordinance (11:23-26). Obviously, the focus of the Supper is Christ - we come together to remember Him. But this has social implications. It is impossible to eat the Lord's Supper if the brethren come together in disunity - eating at different times, and clustering in various separated groupings (11:20).

Verses 27-32 reflect the implications that Paul sees when the true meaning of the Supper is applied to the Corinthian situation. It is a very serious matter to go through the motions of the Supper together in a state of disharmony and division. Contextually, eating and drinking in an "unworthy manner" refers to the divided way in which the Corinthians were coming together (this is reinforced in vv. 33,34).

There is such a vital, organic connection between Christ and the body of His people on earth, that to eat and drink the Supper when the church is in a divided state is to sin against the body and blood of the Lord. You cannot sin against the brotherhood without also sinning

against Christ (1 Cor. 8:12; cf. Acts 9:4). Thus self-examination is in order with a view toward maintaining, and not violating, the unity of the body that is mandatory in the remembrance of the meal. Various visitations of God upon the saints occurred here because of their selfish, loveless actions that resulted in body divisions (11:30). Godly repentance is in order so that the body would be healed, and again reflect the oneness Christians have in Christ (11:31,32).

In vv. 33,34 Paul returns to where the problems began with some concluding remarks. Again, Paul assumes the propriety of their "coming together to eat" (11:33a). But in such meetings, they must wait until all are gathered before they eat (11:33b). If some are hungry and cannot wait, they should "fill up" at home. This would ensure that at the public gathering, the body would be one at the table, and not divided by (wealthy) early eaters who thus left the poor with nothing.

Some Implications/Questions

Is A Meal Part of the Lord's Supper?

At this point, I would have to answer the question by saying that to isolate the bread and the wine of the Lord's Supper from a meal is certainly unnatural. All the evidence points to the integral connection of the Lord's Supper with a meal. Consider the following:

1. The old covenant Passover involved a meal "which was meant to satisfy hunger as well as to commemorate the Exodus."¹ The evidence in Matthew, Mark and Luke suggests that the Last Supper was a Passover meal.² Since Christ ate the Passover dinner with His disciples before He instituted the ordinance, the early church continued that practice by eating an evening meal (often referred to as a "love feast")

¹Marcus Dods, *The Epositers Bible: I Cor.*, V, 1940, p. 683.

²Barclay, pp. 27,28.

together before the Lord's Supper was observed.¹

2. The "blood of the covenant" language (Matt. 26:28) suggests a parallel of the Lord's Supper with Exodus 24, where after the Mosaic covenant was ratified with blood, a fellowship meal was enjoyed (24:11).

3. In the context of Jesus' institution of the Supper, He and His disciples were eating a meal, i.e. "while they were eating" (Matt. 26:26; cf. 1 Cor. 11:25).

4. The accounts in Acts indicate that the brethren were fond of "breaking bread" (Acts 2:42,46; 20:7) together. Few would deny that "breaking bread" and the "Lord's Supper" were almost synonymous in the practice of the early church.²

5. In 1 Corinthians 11 we find that "coming together to eat" (v. 33) and "coming together as a church" (v. 18) coincide. These meals were called agape - love feasts - and became a marked feature of the early church. On a fixed day, generally the first day of the week, the Christians assembled, each bringing what he could as a contribution to the feast: fish, poultry, joints of meat, cheese, milk, honey, fruit, wine and bread. In some places the proceedings began by partaking of the consecrated bread and wine; but in other places physical appetite was first appeased by partaking of the meal provided, and after that the bread and wine were handed round.³

Lenski asserts that "the Agape is not a divine institution. Therefore Paul lays down no regulations concerning it."⁴ However, while there is truth in his remark, it would seem that

¹Robert G. Gromacki, *Called to Be Saints: An Exposition of 1 Cor.*, 1977, p. 141.

²Hodge, pp. 214,215.

³Dods, p. 683.

⁴Lenski, p. 462.

the burden of proof rests on him to show what sense Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 make if the ordinance is removed from a meal context. Just how do we propose to relate the Lord's Supper to the little piece of bread and the sip of wine that characterize our services?

Hodge puts a wedge between the Lord's Supper and a "common meal." Thus he believes Paul's words in 11:23-26 "are specially designed to separate the Lord's Supper as a religious rite from the social element with which it was combined."⁵ But it is not a question of "either/or." The Lord's Supper was embedded in a common meal. What Hodge separates, the early church viewed together. The Corinthian abuse did not rule out the meal dimension (11:33).

It was apparently "the very purpose of these congregational gatherings to celebrate the Lord's Supper."⁶ But the disorderly actions of the Corinthians made it impossible to have the Supper. Instead of taking all the food that was brought and apportioning it to all who were present so that each should receive a proper share, cliques were formed, and relatives, friends, those of one clique ate together, probably at private tables, the rich and prosperous separated from the poor, letting those who could bring little or nothing sit by themselves....when the Agape ceased to be an Agape, the Sacrament was also virtually impossible.⁷

Thus, for Lenski to say later that "to discern the Lord's body means to perceive that in the Sacrament that body is really present and received"⁸ totally misses the point of the context. The Corinthian problem was not related to "the elements" in the Supper, but to their broken relationships in the body of Christ.

The warnings and judgments of 11:27-32, therefore, must be seen in light of this

⁵Hodge, p. 235; cf. pp. 216,219,220.

⁶Lenski, p. 457.

⁷Ibid., pp. 458,459.

⁸Ibid., pp. 482.

problem which is twice articulated by Paul before and after the "institution" section (11:23-26). It appears to me that 11:23-32 has more often than not been considered in isolation from that which surrounds it. This has led to serious misunderstandings concerning taking the Supper "unworthily" and examining one's self.

What Does "Unworthily" Mean?

Clearly from the context, it means that the Corinthian gatherings were for the worse, and brought judgment, because "in their partiality and divisive spirit, they contradicted the truth of oneness in Christ."¹ Historically, the focus has been on the individual discerning the Lord properly "in the elements,"² but, as Barclay points out:

The person condemned is not the person who does not discern that the elements he takes in his hands are the Lord's body. The person condemned is the person who does not discern that Christians are the Lord's body, and must be in unity before they dare approach the sacrament.³

Why Is There "Self-examination"?

If it were not for the problems in Corinth, we would be left with only the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 to a disorderly church. He was speaking to a situation where God's hand had come upon Christians. It seems to me that we have removed "self-examination" out of its context and blown it out of proportion. Would Paul direct words parallel with 1 Corinthians 11:27-32 to a basically orderly gospel church?

Given the state of many churches today, Paul's warnings are certainly in order!

Traditionally, "examine yourself" has focused on the preparedness of an individual for taking communion. As Lenski comments, "the communicant is to test himself as to his fitness for the Sacrament."⁴ There is a place for self-examination, but when the Supper has been removed from its fellowship-meal context - its social dimension - the tendency has been for self-examination to be misunderstood and misapplied.

What Should the "Mood" Be in the Lord's Supper?

It should be one of celebration and joy. The table should not be a place of "gloom."⁵ However, in too many cases the atmosphere at the Lord's Supper is more like a funeral than a festival. We cannot be like the two sorrowful men on the Emmaus road (Luke 24:17,21). These men's' hearts came alive with joy when Jesus made Himself known to them in the "breaking of bread" (Luke 24:30-35).

Obviously, our blessings have come through a great price. We cannot reflect on the cross without a due sense of sobriety. But even from Christ's perspective there was "joy" mixed in with the knowledge of His impending death (Heb. 12:2). With joy we can remember His death in the past, enjoy His presence with us now, and look forward to His glorious return.

Do We Share Our Goods in the Supper?

Most of the time, the Lord's Supper in the early church was an occasion to share with the poor. For many, for the slaves and the poor, the Lord's Supper must have been the one real meal of the week. The idea of a tiny piece of bread and sip of wine bears no relation at all to

¹Gromacki, p. 144.

²Hodge, p. 231.

³Barclay, p. 109.

⁴Lenski, p. 480.

⁵Hodge, p. 233.

the Lord's Supper as it originally was.¹ There is something here in the spirit of all this that we need to recapture in our Lord's Suppers.

Why Do We Practice the Supper in Such a Different Way?

It is obvious that there is little, if any, resemblance of our Lord's Supper practice to that of the early church. Hodge admits that "these disorders [in Corinth] were of such a kind which, according to our method of celebrating that sacrament, seems almost unaccountable."² Barclay observes:

There can be no two things more different than the celebration of the Lord's Supper in a Corinthian home in the first century and a cathedral in the twentieth century. The things are so different that it is almost possible to say that they bear no relationship to each other whatsoever.³

The essential characteristic of our practice is its non-fellowship, non-meal setting. We try to have a Supper without a meal! The question we must face is this: are we right in continuing this individualistic approach? In light of all the Biblical evidence, does not our practice look out of order? On what textual basis can we continue our "tiny piece of bread and sip of wine" method?

The history of what happened is easy to trace. In time, the Agape was separated from the Supper, and it was "prohibited" by the Council at Carthage (AD 397).⁴ Abuses of the Agape are given as the reason why it faded out of church life.⁵ But every doctrine and practice have been abused in some way. We would not do anything

if we stopped because of abuses. The New Testament answer is to correct abuses, not to cease doing right because of abuse.

Implementing the Lord's Supper

If the New Testament data would suggest that our practice of the Supper needs to be changed, then how are we going to do it? First of all, the fact that our Lord's Supper practice is so "out of context" from early church practice is indicative of a broader problem: our church life in general is out of whack. Thus, the Lord's Supper issue is an indicator of some deeply-rooted problems in our overall conception of "church."

This means, secondly, that in most churches a period of time involving patient instruction and responsible experimentation and change is necessary. Traditions that block obedience and stifle edification die hard. So we must function in a tension where we consider (1) the necessity to obey light discovered from the New Testament, and (2) the necessity to bear patiently with those who are struggling. If we emphasize #1 without #2, we will cause strife to abound. If we emphasize #2 without #1 nothing will ever change and the status quo will go on.

Thirdly, it is important to see that capturing the spirit of the New Testament church life is the key. We are not talking about just changing the form to a situation where the Lord's Supper is celebrated in the context of a fellowship meal. Rather, when we get a vision of the kind of care and fellowship that should characterize Christian assemblies, we will see the value, blessing and edification of remembering the Lord together in a meal context. Changing a form cannot produce life. Instead, vibrant life brings with it a strong desire to employ those forms which will maximize edification.

As churches get a hold of New Testament principles, they can freely work out creative ways to implement a remembrance

¹Barclay, p. 100.

²Hodge, p. 214.

³Barclay, p. 99.

⁴Hodge, p. 210; Lenski, p. 488; Barclay, p. 60.

⁵Hodge, p. 219; Barclay, pp. 60,61.

meal that meets the needs and particulars of their circumstances. I believe that many saints know (painfully) in their hearts that there is something missing in the churches' practice of the Supper. May a consideration of the historical structure and setting of the Supper help us in recovering the truth as it is in Jesus.

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