

THE LORD'S SUPPER AS A MEMORIAL

(Part 12 – series on Baptist Distinctives)

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

REASON #7 “Why Denominations?”

Denominations can be valuable in adequately supporting and staffing Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries. Such institutions of higher learning demand far more resources than most individual local churches can supply. The cooperative effort of like-minded churches with similar roots and goals is vital.

INTRODUCTION: In our last study we saw how consistent with the other Baptist distinctives is the view of the Lord's Supper as a memorial ordinance. Baptists do not believe that this ordinance is a “means of grace,” but neither do we treat it as optional or unimportant. We are committed to protecting and defending it from any unscriptural significance or unworthy participation. That is why we exercise church authority in the way we administer it. This authority came from Christ through His apostles to the church.

OUTLINE: There are several features about this ordinance that have caused Baptists historically to hold it dear.

I. Its Essential Form

- A. Giving of thanks (v. 24a)
- B. Breaking of the bread (v. 24)
- C. Drinking of the cup (v. 25)

II. Its Great Importance

- A. Revealed by Christ (v. 23a)
- B. Commanded by Christ (“*this do*”)
- C. Instituted by Christ (Matt. 26:26-29)
- D. Practiced by the early church (Acts 20:7)

III. Its Memorial Nature

- A. Its relation to the Passover (1 Cor. 5:7,8)
- B. Its contrast with other views
 - 1. Transubstantiation
 - 2. Consubstantiation
 - 3. “Spiritual presence” or Reformed view

C. Persecution endured for this Scriptural view

1. Kaspar Schwenckfeld (1489-1561)
2. Balthasar Hubmaier (1480-1528)

IV. Its Relation to Other Distinctives

A. Biblical authority

B. Regenerate church membership

1. Associated with a demand to renounce idolatry (1 Cor. 10:16-21)
2. Associated with church discipline

C. Priesthood of believers

D. Salvation by grace through faith

E. Soul liberty

F. Congregational government

V. Its Administration by the Church (a Church Ordinance)

**A. Because of the church's responsibility to oversee its own members
(Acts 2:41; 10:47; Rom. 14:20)**

**B. Because of the church's responsibility to discipline its own members
(1 Cor. 5:3-5, 7)**

**C. Because of the corporate nature of the ordinance (Matt. 28:19; 26:27;
1 Corinthians 11-14)**

CONCLUSION: Baptists believe that Christ gave only two ordinances to the local church in this age – 1) baptism, and 2) the Lord's Supper. We believe that the authority for restricting these ordinances is vested in the church – not the individual. Furthermore, the authority is objective – not subjective. We do not stand in judgment on another's conscience, but neither do we believe that objective biblical truth should be subjected to one's feelings and personal opinions.

Through the faithful, scriptural observance of these New Testament ordinances, we proclaim Christ and His saving grace to others until He comes. The result should be "closer union with each other and renewed union with Christ" (William Barclay).