

THE LORD'S SUPPER AS A MEMORIAL

(Part Nine – series on Baptist Distinctives)

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

INTRODUCTION: Baptists have been persecuted more severely for their views on the Lord's Supper than for any other belief. Even today, the observance of the Table of the Lord has caused the most controversy among Christians. It is most unfortunate that what was intended by our Lord to be a "family affair," an occasion for communion with one another as well as with our risen Lord, should be the source of so much division.

Baptists tend to prefer the phrase "the Lord's Supper" over "Eucharist" or "sacrament" (which have become identified in the minds of many with the Roman Catholic mass). We hold only to the two ordinances instituted by Jesus Christ – baptism and the Lord's Supper, and we categorically reject anything else invented by churches or councils or papal decrees.

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
- B. Its contrast with other views
 - 1. Transubstantiation
 - 2. Consubstantiation
 - 3. "Spiritual presence" or Reformed view
- C. Persecution endured for this Scriptural view

IV. Its Relation to Other Distinctives

- A. Biblical authority
- B. Regenerate church membership
- 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
- B. Because of the church's responsibility to discipline its own members
- C. Because of the corporate nature of the ordinance (Matt. 28:19; 26:27; 1 Corinthians 11-14)

CONCLUSION: It is appalling to see how infrequent and incidental is the observance of this precious ordinance in many Baptist churches. How can we remember Christ 's death if we don't remember to observe His ordinance given to us for that purpose? While we as Baptists deny that any grace is conferred through the observance of this ordinance, we dare not think our communion with Christ is unaffected if we neglect its conscientious observance. He Who created us and "*knoweth our frame*" gave us this sacred memorial. He must have known we needed it.