

Issues Concerning the Lord's Supper

The Time Issue

John Isaac Edwards

The time of day the Lord's supper is observed on the first day of the week has become an issue with some. There are several different positions on the time issue. Some say:

1. The Lord's supper must be observed in the evening.
2. The Lord's supper can't be observed after 6:00 p.m.
3. The Lord's supper cannot be offered on Sunday evening, if it was offered on Sunday morning.
4. If the Lord's supper is observed on Sunday evening, everyone must take it (even though they observed it at the morning service).

Some have decided to meet but once on Sunday, not knowing what to do with the Lord's supper. There are two extremes to be avoided with this issue:

Binding Total Non-Observance. The Lord's supper observance is bound as to day, “the first day of the week” (Acts 20:7), but not as to hour. Thus, the Lord's supper may be observed at any time within the 24-

hour period that makes up the first day of the week.

The Lord's supper is both a collective and individual affair. It is collective in that it involves the church coming together (1 Corinthians 11:17-20). It is individual as “a man” is to “examine himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28). During the assembling of ourselves together on the first day of the week, who or what gives the church the right to deny a Christian the opportunity to fulfill his responsibility before the Lord?

For the same reason, it would be out of order to do away with Sunday morning communion and bind a Sunday evening only observance. Some have advocated such an observance on the basis of 1 Corinthians 11:33 teaching, “tarry one for another.” If this means we must all take the Lord's supper at the same time, then we need to pass the bread and let every person get their piece in hand and someone say, “READY, 1-2-3, EAT!” And the same would be true of the cup: “READY, 1-2-3, DRINK!”

Binding Complete Observance By All. It has been said that if an individual not present on Sunday morning partakes of the Lord's supper on Sunday evening, then all

Christians present should partake as well, even though they ate and drank at the morning service. To bind such a policy is to bind where the Lord never bound. If I properly observed the Lord's supper at the morning

service, I obeyed the commandment of the Lord.

This is an issue over which brethren ought not to be disturbed or divided.

The Transubstantiation Issue

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Transubstantiation (also known as Real Presence) is the Roman Catholic teaching that the elements in the Lord's supper are transformed into the actual body and blood of Christ.

Paragraph 1376 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church states, "Because Christ our Redeemer said that it was truly his body that he was offering under the species of bread, it has always been the conviction of the Church of God, and this holy Council now declares again, that by the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation."

This issue stems from a literal understanding of Matthew 26:26-28. Jesus said of the bread, "This is my body" and of the cup, "This

is my blood." These statements must be understood figuratively as Jesus was present in flesh and blood when He said these things. Jesus also said He was "bread" (John 6:48), "light" (John 8:12), a "door" (John 10:7), a "vine" (John 15:1), and other things which must be taken figuratively.

A misuse of John 6:53-58 has caused some to believe the transubstantiation doctrine. John 6 has no reference to the Lord's supper. If eating His flesh means taking the Lord's supper, then everyone who eats of the bread receives eternal life (John 6:51). The words of Christ are under consideration: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).

No matter what any man may say or do, the bread and cup do not become the actual and literal body and blood of Jesus.

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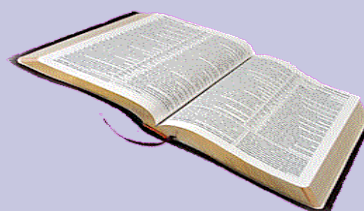
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Assembling Times:

Sunday @ 10:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.
Wednesday @ 7:00 p.m.



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