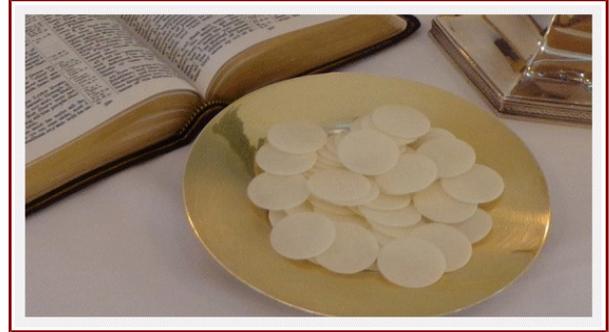


Spiritual Realities for Material Beings The Biblical Basis for Sacramental Worship

Are Sacraments real? Does God really choose to use material things to convey spiritual realities? Is a sacramental world view the Biblical world view?



What is a Sacrament?

Our Church defines a sacrament this way: From the Book of Common Prayer, Second Office of Instruction, p.617. The Prayer Book definition is printed in black; *Fr. Brad's comments are printed in gray*

A Sacrament is an outward and visible sign

(such as the bread and wine of the Eucharist, the water of Baptism, or the man and woman of Matrimony)

of an inward and spiritual grace

(The Body and Blood of Christ, The Regeneration of the Holy Ghost, The spiritual union of spouses)

given unto us;

(sacraments are effective, they work, because God gives the grace)

ordained by Christ himself,

(at the Last Supper, in the river Jordan, the Wedding at Cana)

as a means whereby we receive this grace,

(The grace is attached to the material sign)

and a pledge to assure us thereof

(The material reality assures us of the spiritual reality)

*Here is what's at stake. Does God appoint material things, such as bread or wine, to be a means by which he gives inward, spiritual grace? We answer yes, but we need a Biblical defense for certainty.

Defense #1: The Garden of Eden

Genesis 2:4-3:24 As you read, consider the sacramental nature of the two famous trees in eden. What effect did eating the fruit have: spiritual or physical? Natural or supernatural? Why was it necessary for Adam and Eve to leave Eden? How is this sacramental?

Genesis 2:8

And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of

the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of

the knowledge of good and evil.

Continuing in verse 16

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

In verses 19-23. God creates woman from man's side and gives them to one another.

When the woman is tempted by the Serpent to eat of the forbidden fruit;

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave

some to her husband, and he ate.

7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons.

In verses 8-20, the Lord confronts Adam and Eve, passes judgment upon them, and offers a the first glimpse of the Savior who will one day be born to a woman.

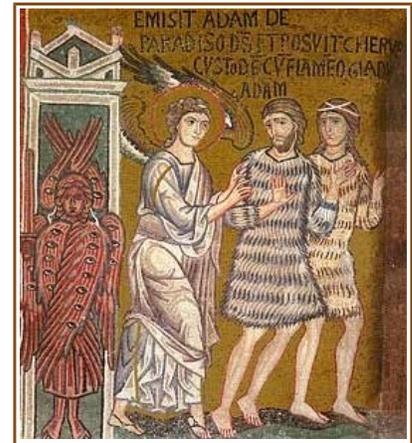
Following this judgment;

22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever"—

23 therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

What we learn from Genesis:

1. From the beginning God intended a deep, intimate communion between the unseen spiritual realities of heaven and the seen realities of the created world, and especially mankind.
2. One of the essential ways he communicated these realities between the seen and unseen was through sacramental use of substances. If Adam ate of the tree of life, he received what God promised. If he ate of the other tree, he also received what God promised. Eating seen realities resulted in receiving unseen realities.
3. The material object (trees and fruit) and the immaterial grace (life or death) were so linked by the promise of God that reception of one always resulted in the reception of the other.
4. The bond between the fruit of the tree of life and the grace of everlasting life was so strong that God ejected humans from the garden and set angels to guard the tree of life lest they eat and live forever in their sinful, fallen state.



Defense #2: The Passover

Exodus 12:1-13 Is there any real or spiritual benefit to eating the Lamb and putting its blood upon the door post? Did God offer any other way to receive those benefits?

Exodus 12:3

3 Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of this month they shall take every man a lamb according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household; 4 and if the household is too small for a lamb, then a man and his neighbor next to his house shall take according to the number of persons; according to what each can eat you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old; you shall take it from the sheep or from the goats; 6 and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs in the evening. 7 Then they shall take some of the blood, and put it on the

two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat them. 8 They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted; with unleavened bread and bitter herbs they shall eat it.

Continuing in verse 11

It is the LORD's passover. 12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. 13 The blood shall be a sign for you, upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall fall upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

What we learn from Exodus:

1. The passover records another event in which the seen and unseen worlds, heaven and earth, are brought together. An angel from heaven is going to execute God's judgment and wrath on the people of Egypt.
2. The only way to avoid this judgment of death from the unseen world is to kill an unblemished Lamb, eat its flesh prepared in a specific way, all while standing under a doorway which has been covered in the blood of that Lamb.
3. When the Angel passed through the land, only those who had the physical blood on the door posts were spared. The Lamb as both sacrifice and food provided the spiritual protection promised by God.

Defense #3: The New Testament and the Lord's Supper

Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:17-32. Is there any spiritual benefit or danger to partaking in the Lord's supper? What happens to those who eat the bread unworthily?

1 Corinthians 10:16

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

Continuing in 11:23

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 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." 25 In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. 29 For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. 31 But if we judged ourselves truly, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged by the Lord, we are chastened so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

What we learn from 1 Corinthians

1. By wine and bread, we really partake the spiritual reality of the Blood and the Body of Christ
2. The celebration of the Lord's Supper proclaims / makes present the death of Jesus
3. Profaning the physical elements of bread and wine profanes the Body and Blood of the Lord.
4. The punishment for profaning the spiritual Body and Blood is physical sickness and death.
5. Partaking of the seen element of Bread and wine are so connected to the unseen reality, by the promise of God, that eating and drinking always has an effect, either for good and blessing or for ill and cursing.

What is the Christian supposed to do about these Sacraments?

God has revealed that he works in this world and in our lives through Sacraments, therefore:

1. Know what they are and why they exist.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.
2. Avail yourselves of the grace available to you through the sacraments (partake often)
3. Prepare yourselves to receive in a worthy manner
(Book of Common Prayer p. 94 "Dearly beloved in the Lord...)

