

REFORMATION 500 WEEK 11 LUTHER ZWINGLI

Philip of Hesse, “along with other German and Swiss princes and rulers, faced three enemies: France, from the West; the Islamic forces or ‘Turks,’ from the East; and the Pope, ubiquitously [everywhere]. The princes could not afford to be divided; their lives and the survival of their provinces demanded a united front among the splintered reform movements to withstand these enemies at the gate” (Nichols, *Luther*, 117).

“But theologians on neither side would bless a military covenant unless there were first an agreement in religion. The Swiss felt that the Lutherans were still tainted with popery.” The Lutherans “believed the Swiss were of one stripe with the [radical reformers].” Plus, Luther was against using the sword “in the defense of religion because the sword belongs only to the magistrate to keep peace” (Bainton, 91f).

Prince Philip summoned an impressive gathering of theologians to his castle at Marburg on the first three days of October 1529. From the Swiss Confederacy, Zwingli was joined by John Oecolampadius, from Basel; and Martin Bucer, from Strassburg. “Luther was joined by Justas Jonas and Philip Melanchthon as representatives of Wittenberg” (Nichols, 118). “It was the first council among Protestants, and the first attempt to unite them” (Schaff, 7:637).

Both sides discussed fifteen articles, expressing the basics of evangelical doctrine. They agreed on all but the last article which concerned the Lord’s Supper. Both Luther and Zwingli condemned the Catholic doctrine of *transubstantiation* [the bread and wine *change* into the body and blood of Christ]; and “Zwingli agreed that the celebration is something more than a memorial because there is a spiritual communion with Christ” (Bainton, 92). Zwingli argued for a spiritual eating of Christ on the basis of John 6:63: “the words I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” “Zwingli reasoned: Christ ascended to heaven, therefore he cannot be on earth with his body” (Schaff, 7:642). But Luther insisted that “This *is* my body” (which he wrote with chalk on the banquet table) should be taken literally. Thus, Christ’s physical body *is in* the sacrament. “I believe, said Luther, that Christ is in heaven, but also in the sacrament, as substantially as he was in the Virgin’s womb. I care not whether it be against nature and reason, provided it be not against faith” (Ibid, 642).

The conference ended with this final statement: “although at present we are not agreed on the question whether the real body and blood of Christ are corporally present in the bread and wine, yet both parties shall cherish Christian charity for one another, so far as the conscience of each will permit; and both parties will earnestly implore Almighty God to strengthen us by his Spirit in the true understanding. Amen.”

The Conference “was by no means a total failure. It prepared the way for the *Augsburg Confession*, the chief [creed] of the Lutheran Church” (Schaff, 7:649).

Zwingli and his fellow Swiss went home and ended up fighting and losing a war against the Catholics. Zwingli was killed in battle, and his body was quartered by the executioner. “Luther did not soften at the news but regarded Zwingli’s death as a judgment for having taken the sword on behalf of the gospel” (Bainton, 94). “While eventually the Reformed tradition would claim Calvin as its foundational theologian, there would still be much in it that bore Zwingli’s imprint” (Gonzalez, 65).

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REFORMATION 500 WEEK 11: HEIDELBERG CATECHISM, QUESTION 28-30

Question 29: Why is the Son of God called JESUS, that is, Savior? **Because He saves us from our sins, and because salvation is not to be sought or found in any other.**

Question 29 begins to explain the biblical basis of article two of the Apostles Creed: “I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, our Lord.” We begin with the name *Jesus*, which is the NT form of the OT name, *Joshua*. Both *Joshua* and *Jesus* mean “the Lord saves,” or “Savior.” Through Joshua, God merely saved His people from external enemies. So, Joshua was a type and foreshadowing of the true Savior Jesus, the Son of God in human flesh. The angel told Joseph, “Do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matt. 1:20-21). “Whom does He save? His people, that is, all and only the elect given to Him by the Father [John 17:1-2, 9]” (Ursinus). He *purchased* His Church “with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). And by His Spirit He grants faith to His elect so they believe in Him and receive all the benefits of His death (Phil. 1:29). He said, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me” (John 6:37). Jesus does not save us part-way, and leave the rest up to us. He saves “to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25). Jesus said, “I give My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28; cf. 5:24).

Jesus is the *only* Savior, for He is the *only* Mediator between God and man. He said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). “Nor is there salvation is any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Question 30: Do those also believe in the only Savior Jesus, who seek their salvation and welfare from saints, themselves, or anywhere else? **No; although they make their boast of Him, yet in their deeds they deny the only Savior Jesus; for either Jesus is not a complete Savior, or they who by true faith receive this Savior, must have in Him all that is necessary to their salvation.**

If we truly believe Jesus is the *only* Savior, we will not seek salvation anywhere else. He is a *complete* Savior; and we are “*complete* in Him” (Col. 2:10). Jesus “does not confer salvation in connection with others, nor in part only; but He alone confers it entire, and in the most perfect manner. Hence, we justly conclude that all those who seek their salvation wholly or in part somewhere else [whether in the saints or in themselves], in reality deny Him to be an only and perfect Savior [Titus 1:16]” (Ursinus). “Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you?” (1 Cor. 1:13).

But is it not the case that we are helped by the prayers of the saints and not by Christ alone? When the saints (all believers) pray for each other they do not appeal to their own worthiness but to the worthiness of Christ alone. Furthermore, the prayers that we pray for each other do not save us, as if we could not be saved without them. Rather, the Lord (who does not need our prayers) is pleased to use our prayers to contribute to each other’s spiritual welfare (2 Cor. 1:11).

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