

THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER



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The Scriptural Basis for the Lord's Supper

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The Scriptural Basis for the Lord's Supper

I. The Old Testament Foreshadowing of the Sacrament and Its Historical Setting

A. The Passover and the Supper

1. As our Lord and His disciples gathered that first Maundy Thursday evening, they came together to celebrate no ordinary meal. This was the Passover, the most solemn meal for God's Old Testament people. It was to remind Israel of how the Lord once saved their first-born in Egypt through the blood of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12). This meal, however, not only pointed back to God's deliverance in Egypt through the blood of the Passover lamb, but it also pointed forward to the blood of the true Lamb of God who would redeem all men on the cross. As our Lord reclined at this meal for the last time, He was the fulfillment of the Passover ritual for all times. He is indeed our Passover Lamb, who was sacrificed for us (1 Corinthians 5:7).
2. Jesus used this setting to institute His New Testament meal of salvation.¹ In this meal where Old Testament believers ate the flesh of the Passover lamb, which was to picture for them the true Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world, Jesus, the very Lamb of God gave New Testament believers not only a picture of His flesh and blood with bread and wine, but He gave them His true body and blood where He bestowed upon them all the blessings of the cross.
3. Some have questioned this connection between the Last Supper and the Passover. They maintain that John's Gospel indicates that Jesus died on the Passover, the 14th day of Nisan, and not that the Last Supper occurred on that day. They assume that because John pictures Jesus as the true Passover Lamb, He died on the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan when the lambs for the Passover meal were sacrificed in the temple. However, the Synoptics state expressly that it was on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, that is, the 14th of Nisan, that Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples (Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7). There is no statement in John that specifically contradicts the Synoptics, but this statement could be understood that way: "Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover" (John 18:28). So they apparently had not yet eaten the Passover and the day was not the 15th but the 14th of Nisan. Still, this verse cannot refer to the paschal meal. The Jews were afraid of defilement; but such defilement automatically ceased at sundown and the Passover was eaten after sundown. The term "Passover" was probably used for all the festive meals which occurred during the days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Also, John speaks of the day of our Lord's death as "the preparation day of the Passover" (John 19:14). This has been understood to mean the day to prepare for the Passover meal, that is, the 14th of Nisan. But the day of the preparation among the Jews was the technical term for Friday, the 6th day of the week.² Thus, John does not contradict the Synoptics. The Last Supper was a Passover meal occurring on Thursday the 14th of Nisan and our Lord died on Friday the 15th of Nisan.³

B. The Manna in the Wilderness and the Supper

4. In 1 Corinthians 10:1–4 the Apostle writes, "I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea . . . all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same

¹ For a complete discussion of the connection between the Lord's Supper and the Passover meal see J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1966), 15–88.

² Josephus, *Antiquities*, in *The Works of Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Lynn: Hendrickson Publishers, 1980), 16:6, 2; Mark 15:42.

³ See also Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2015), 331–373.

spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was Christ.”⁴ St. Paul here compares the Exodus event with the two Sacraments of the church. Like Israel in Egypt we, by nature, were hopelessly enslaved in sin. Satan, that cruel Pharaoh, so controlled us that we did his every bidding and even did it willingly. So terrible was that bondage that we even lusted to do those things which could only harm ourselves and those around us. Yet Jesus, the Valiant One, came to our defense. In the battle of the ages on the cross He suffered all that we deserved for sin so that He might crush the old evil foe, our cruel task master, and free us from his tyranny. Jesus is the new Moses, who led us out of bondage in a new Exodus.⁵

5. Now as Israel became God’s people passing through the waters of the Red Sea, so we became a part of spiritual Israel, the Holy Christian Church, passing through the waters of Baptism. Here faith in the Redeemer was worked in our heart and we were liberated from the bondage of sin, death, and the devil. Having passed through the Red Sea of Baptism, the Christian is now in this present wilderness where we are fed with the heavenly manna,⁶ the Holy Supper, until we reach the heavenly Canaan beyond the Jordan of death. Augustine aptly summarizes this Exodus theme in one of his Easter sermons.

Regard yourselves as delivered out of Egypt from a harsh servitude, where iniquity ruled over you; and as having passed through the Red Sea by baptism, in which you received the seal of Christ’s bloody cross. Prune yourselves therefore of past sins, those enemies of yours which pursued you from the rear. For as the Egyptians perished in the very waters traversed by the people of God, so your sins were blotted out in the waters in which you were baptized.

Seek now the heavenly kingdom, the land of promise to which you have been called, and be vigilant in resisting temptations throughout this earthly life, which is nothing else than a desert wherein you are sojourners. By partaking of the holy Altar, you receive your manna along with the drink that flows from the rock. All this the Apostle Paul has in mind and inculcates in his preaching when he says, “I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all in Moses were baptized, in the cloud, and in the sea. And did all eat the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink; and they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them; and the rock was Christ.”⁷

6. The manna image of the Supper was influenced by Psalm 78: “Yet He had commanded the clouds above, and opened the doors of heaven, had rained down **manna on them to eat, and given them of the bread of heaven. Men ate angels’ food; He sent them food to the full**” (78:23–25; emphasis added). On the basis of these verses the Sacrament has at times been designated as the bread of heaven and the bread or food of the angels. For example, Thomas Aquinas writes:

The Bread of angels has
become the Bread of mankind;
This heavenly Bread puts an
end to all images;

⁴ NKJV. All Scripture references, unless otherwise noted, are from this version.

⁵ Brant Pitre, *Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist: Unlocking the Secrets of the Last Supper* (New York: Doubleday, 2011), 25, 45; see also Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 53–147.

⁶ Pitre, *Jesus and Jewish Roots*, 24.

⁷ Augustine, *Sermon Mai 89*, trans. P. Weller, *Selected Easter Sermons of St. Augustine* (St. Louis: Herder, 1959), 124–

O wonderful reality! The
poor, the slave, and the
humble eat the Lord.

*Panis angelicus fit panis hominum;
Dat panis caelicus figuris
terminum;
O res mirabilis; manducat
Dominum
Pauper, servus, et humilis.*

This same imagery can be found in the work of Danish Lutheran pastor and hymnwriter Thomas Kingo (1634–1703):

Eat, drink, and in thy heart be glad
For this is more than angel food;
And for the cup thy Lord now thank,
Which heaven's angels never drank.
(ELH 324:5)

C. Other Old Testament Foreshadowings

7. Melchizedek giving bread and wine to Abraham, the father of the faithful, has often been used as a type of Christ, giving the faithful His body and blood under the form of bread and wine in the Supper (Genesis 14:18). The influence of this type of Christ on theology in general and the Sacrament in specific was immense in Africa, especially in Cyprian and Augustine. Melchizedek, who was without beginning and end (Hebrews 7:3) prefiguring Christ, confirms the truth that Christ's priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7:17) and the New Testament Sacraments are superior to and the fulfillment of the whole Old Testament ritual and priesthood.⁸
8. There is a beautiful foreshadowing of the Lord's Supper in 1 Kings 19. Ahab, the king of Israel, and his wife Jezebel, enraged at the prophet Elijah, were seeking to take his life. Elijah fled southward to the Negev. Tired and despairing, he sat down beneath a broom tree and prayed, "It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life." This is the prayer of so many in every age who, having striven for the good and fought for the truth, find themselves standing alone without any apparent success in their efforts. But, God strengthened Elijah by sending an angel to provide the prophet with food, bread, and water. In the strength of that food he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There the Lord revealed Himself to him, assuring him that he was not alone for there was yet seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal. This is a wonderful foreshadowing of the Sacrament that strengthens us on the way, the *viaticum*, our companion on the journey of life, the life-giving flesh and blood of Him who is the source of all life.
9. Psalm 34 has often been associated with the Lord's Supper. Verse 8 reads, "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him." This reminds us of the great privilege we have in tasting all of the Lord's goodness in the Supper. Having tasted of the Lord in the Sacrament we can indeed say with the Psalmist, "I sought the Lord and He heard me and delivered me from all my fears. They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed" (Psalm 34:4–5).

⁸ Augustine, *City of God*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series*, vol. 2, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 16, 22; See also *Sermon Denis 3*, Daniel Sheerin, *The Eucharist* (Wilmington: M. Glazier, 1986), 102–103.

10. The Early Church fathers and the Lutheran fathers saw many pictures and types of the Lord's Supper in the Old Testament Scriptures. Gerhard enumerates a multitude of pictures of the Lord's Supper. Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine to Abraham, the father of believers, points to the meal of salvation of our great High Priest Jesus Christ. Pictures of the Supper are seen in the tree of life in the Garden of Eden, the Passover lamb, the manna in the wilderness, in David's invitation to Mephibosheth to eat at his table (2 Samuel 9:13), in Elijah's food (1 Kings 19:6–8), in Ahasuerus' feast (Esther 1:3), and in Isaiah's burning coal (Isaiah 6). Allusions to the Supper are found in the poor that eat and are satisfied (Psalm 22:26), in the Good Shepherd who prepares His table in the wilderness (Psalm 23; John 10), and in Psalm 111 where the Lord's wonderful works are remembered, His convent of redemption stands forever, and He gives food to those who fear Him.⁹

D. The Means of Grace Flow from the Cross of Christ

11. On that first Good Friday when the Roman soldiers came to break the legs of those crucified to hasten their death, they found that Jesus was already dead. Therefore they did not break His bones. "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:34). This statement indicates that Jesus truly died a natural human death, but the fathers found far more significance in this statement. They understood this passage in the light of the words of Zechariah, the Prophet, "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn (12:10). . . . In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness" (13:1). The God-man Jesus Christ, the Almighty Himself, was pierced on the cross for our salvation. The blood and water from His wounded side has provided that wonderful cleansing fountain for sin and uncleanness of which Zechariah speaks. It can wash away each stain and mark, each spot and wrinkle. His holy precious blood is the source of redemption for the whole world (1 John 1:7, 2:2).

12. That fountain of salvation, opened just moments after His death where full redemption was accomplished, continues to flow for us today in the water of Baptism, the blood of the Lord's Supper, and in His Word which is spirit and life. Here the Lord comes to us with all His blessing as St. John indicates, "This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth" (1 John 5:6). The means of grace indeed flow from the cross of Christ and make present for us all the benefits of Christ's redemptive sacrifice.¹⁰

II. The Words of Institution

A. The Institution Narrative Concerning the Bread

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Same Night in Which He Was Betrayed

⁹ Johann Gerhard, *A Comprehensive Explanation of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper* (1610), trans. Elmer Hohle, ed. David Berger and James D. Heiser (Malone: Repristination Press, 2000), 212–218; *Loci Theologici* (Berlin: Gust. Schlawitz, 1863), Locus 21, Para. 11–12, Preus ed. 5:6–7.

¹⁰ Martin Luther, *Weimar Ausgabe* Tr IV: 519–520, #4799.1–2 (hereafter *WA*); G. Stockhardt, *The Exegetical Lectures of Dr. George Stoeckhardt on the Three Letters of St. John*, trans. Hugo W. Degner (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1980), 116–118; Johannes Ylvisaker, *The Gospels: A Synoptic Presentation of the Text in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, with Explanatory Notes* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1932), 753–754; Carl Manthey Zorn, *Brosamlein: Kurze Andachten Für Alle Tage Des Jahres Dem Christenvolke Deutscher Zunge Dargeboten* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1909), 169–170.

13. The institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded in Matthew 26:26–29, Mark 14:22–25, Luke 22:15–20, and 1 Corinthians 11:23–25. The historical setting of the Supper was the Passover. It was the 14th day of Nisan, corresponding roughly to one of the last days of March or the beginning of April. On this, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Jesus functioned as the head of the household or family, sending Peter and John to make ready the Passover for the evening celebration (Mark 14:12–13; Matthew 26:17–19; Luke 22:7ff).
14. When evening came Jesus and His disciples arrived for the meal (Matthew 26:20). The celebration was formally opened when the head of the house spoke a prayer of thanksgiving and blessing upon the meal. The first cup of the feast was then passed around. It was at this point that Jesus declared to His disciples, “With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Luke 22:15). Also at this time there arose a contention among the disciples concerning who was the greatest, (Luke 22:24) and as a result, Jesus gave them the lesson of foot washing. This was normally the work of a slave, but Jesus performed this service here as an example of the humble loving service that Christians are to show to one another.
15. Meanwhile, the meal was served. The bitter herbs were dipped in vinegar or salt water. The roasted lamb was brought in, together with the sauce known as charoseth, and loaves of unleavened bread. By the time of Christ it had become the custom to recline at the table as at a Hellenistic banquet. The guests on their couches faced a low central table where the food was placed, leaning on their left elbow, with the right hand free for eating. The head of the house had the place of honor, which was either at the center or at one end of the three-quarter circle of guests. The place at his right (since the person reclining there would be “close to his breast” [John 13:25; 21:20]) was the second place of honor. The head of the house could converse more easily with him than with the other guests. This was the position of John the beloved disciple at the Last Supper.¹¹

2. He Took Bread and When He Had Given Thanks, He Broke It

16. When the meal proper was served, the small assembly sang the first part of the Great *Hallel* (Psalms 114 and 115:1–8) and the second cup of wine was passed around. It was at this point that Jesus took bread (ἔλαβεν ἄρτον). This was likely a large flat loaf of unleavened bread, the matzah, for only unleavened bread was used in the Passover. He took the bread and gave thanks or blessed it (Matthew and Mark have εὐλογήσας; Luke and Paul have εὐχαριστήσας). Both the giving thanks and the blessing refer to the same act of our Lord. This is the same terminology used in the Passover meal to refer to the blessing or benediction (the Kiddush) spoken over the bread and the cup. This blessing, however, must have been quite different from the usual Passover benediction, for the Lord said concerning the blessed and offered bread, “This is My body.” The words of explanation accompanying Christ's action are the key to understanding this thanksgiving and blessing. Chemnitz wrote concerning this blessing: “Mark uses the word ‘to bless’ (εὐλογεῖν) because it points to the special power of the divine Word, as in the account of the miracle of five loaves which were multiplied. . . . Therefore, because the bread of the Supper received this designation from God by the divine power of the Word of Christ whereby it is the body of Christ and the wine is the blood of Christ. Mark uses the word ‘to bless’ in order to show that it is the same power and has the same meaning in this passage as does the word ‘to thank’ (εὐχαριστεῖν).”¹²

¹¹ Johannes H. Emminghaus, *The Eucharist: Essence, Form, Celebration*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1978), 16.

¹² Martin Chemnitz, *The Lord's Supper*, trans. J.A.O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 104 (hereafter LS).

17. After our Lord blessed the bread, He broke it (*ἔκλασεν*). This breaking was of practical necessity because of the size of the loaves. They had to be broken into fragments to be eaten, even as one would slice a loaf of bread today. Luther wrote, “We must not interpret or use the word ‘break’ according to our own fancies but according to scriptural usage. Now in Scripture the word ‘breaking,’ especially where it is used in reference to bread or eating, is the equivalent of ‘dividing into pieces’ or ‘distributing.’”¹³ This breaking then is not an integral part of the institution. There is no need for a rite of fraction in order to have a valid Sacrament as Dom Gregory Dix implied. In fact, German Lutherans in general avoided the fraction because the Reformed emphasized the breaking in the interest of their symbolism.¹⁴

3. Take, Eat, This Is My Body Which Is Given for You

a. The Supper and the Real Presence

18. This blessed and broken bread Jesus gave to His disciples saying, “Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me” (*τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμενον· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*, Luke 22:19). Now whether Jesus distributed to each disciple individually or whether He simply passed it around cannot be ascertained. Nor is it important. But what is important is Jesus’ word concerning what was distributed, “This is My body.” Jesus did not say, “This is a picture of My body” nor did He say, “This only represents My body.” Rather He said, “This *is* My body.” It is the very body of Christ which was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered, died, and rose again for our salvation. This Greek verb *ἐστιν* can be understood in no other way than “is.” This is the confession of our Lutheran fathers: “It is taught among us that the true body and blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received.”¹⁵

19. Concerning His true body Jesus said to the disciples, “This is given for you.” This very body which they received on their lips was the same body which was the once-and-for-all sacrifice for sin on the cross. Having received Christ’s body in the Supper, the disciples received all the blessings of Christ’s redemptive work.

b. The Supper and the Consecration

20. These words, “Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you,” together with the words spoken over the cup, are the words Christ gave to the church so that in our Lord’s Supper celebration the Word may be joined to the elements, effecting the presence, as St. Augustine says, “If the Word be joined to the element, it becomes a Sacrament” (*Accedat verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum*). The consecration does not rest on Christ’s thanksgiving in the original Supper, for these words were not recorded for us in Holy Scripture. Rather, the consecration is based on the words, “This is My body . . .” added after Jesus had given thanks as he was about to distribute to His disciples. They are an integral part of the imperative “Do this” which Christ directs to His church.¹⁶ This is the exegesis of the Lutheran Confessions. The Lutheran Confessions declare that the Words of Institution cause the presence of Christ’s body and blood. “For where His institution is observed and His words are spoken over the bread and cup (wine), and the consecrated bread and cup (wine) are distributed, Christ

¹³ Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works* 37:332 (hereafter LW); see also LS 123.

¹⁴ C.F.W. Walther, *Walther’s Pastorale, that is, American Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, trans. John M. Drickamer (New Haven: Lutheran News, 1995), 169.

¹⁵ AC X in Theodore G. Tappert, trans. and ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 34 (hereafter Tappert).

¹⁶ LW 37:312ff; 37:190; 35:95.

Himself, through the spoken words, *is still efficacious by virtue of the first institution*, through His Word, which He wishes to be there repeated.”¹⁷

c. The Consecration and the Time of the Presence

21. The Words of Institution do not teach that Christ’s body and blood are present immediately after the consecration is spoken. The Words of Institution state that the Lord blessed the bread, broke it, and then gave it to the disciples saying, “Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you.” He did the same with the cup. These words show that the blessed bread and cup are Christ’s body and blood but they say nothing about the exact moment when the presence began. In fact, Jesus does not name the elements as His body and blood except in offering them.
22. St. Luke’s account of the Supper (Luke 22:19–20) and St. Matthew’s cup words (Matthew 26:27–28) indicate that the giving and speaking occurred at the same time in the original Supper. Here the present participle “saying” is used with the aorist main verb “He gave.” Smyth, in his *Grammar*, writes concerning the participle, “The action set forth by the present participle is generally coincident (rarely antecedent or subsequent) to that of the leading verb.”¹⁸ Since the speaking and giving were simultaneous in the first institution, they should be thought of theologically as if they occurred simultaneously now as well. The entire sacramental action must be seen as an indivisible unit. However, in our Supper the actions are not carried out simultaneously. In our Supper, the consecration occurs first and then the distribution and reception. When we say, “This is My body, this is My blood,” the “This do” of Christ’s command is not yet complete as it was when Jesus said these words in the original Supper. There has been no distribution or reception, apart from which there is no Sacrament, that is, there is no real presence. To demand that Christ’s body and blood must be present as soon as the consecration is said pulls apart conceptually the action commanded by Christ. It emphasizes only one action of our Lord’s command and not the rest of it. The efficacious power of the Words of Institution must be clearly taught, but not in a way that obscures the integrity of the whole *usus*. Forms of expression used by the church must not give the impression that elements over which the *Verba* have been spoken are the body and blood of Christ regardless of whether or not they are distributed to be eaten and drunk. Concerning the bread which He blessed, which He broke, which He distributed, concerning that bread He said, “This is My body.”¹⁹ In the original Supper, Jesus speaks of the elements as His body and blood only in giving them to the disciples.
23. Our Confessions teach that in a valid Lord’s Supper celebration the pastor stands in the place of Christ speaking Christ’s words which are still efficacious today by virtue of the first institution.²⁰ On this basis it is argued that when the pastor in Christ’s stead says, “This is My body,” then immediately it is Christ’s body. Note, however, there is a different sequence in the original Supper than in our Supper. In the original Supper “This is My body” was said at the distribution showing that it refers to the whole action. In our Supper “This is My body” is said in the blessing or consecration, but it likewise refers to the whole action. This argument connects Christ’s words said at the distribution, which words refer to the entire action, only to the blessing, an argument which is improper. The sequence of events is not the same in our celebration as in the original Supper. One cannot make an exact comparison in reference to time between the two as this argument advocates. This argument, therefore, is not valid. Jesus blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to them saying, “This is My body.” He did not say when

¹⁷ FC SD VII:75 in F. Bente, W.H.T. Dau, and Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Triglot Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Mott Press, 1955), 999 (emphasis original; hereafter *Triglotta*).

¹⁸ Herbert Weir Smyth and Gordon M. Messing, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 419.

¹⁹ Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent (Examen Concilii Tridentini)*, trans. Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 2, 248 (hereafter Ex.).

²⁰ FC SD VII:75 in *Triglotta*, 999.

His body was united with the bread, but He did say that it had occurred for the distribution. Likewise, the pastor today, standing in the place of Christ, blesses the bread with Christ's almighty Words of Institution, which effect the presence, and distributes Christ's body to those about to receive declaring, "This is the true body of Christ." While he cannot point out an exact moment of the presence, he declares as Jesus did that what is present in the Sacrament and is distributed to be received is the body and blood of the Lord.

24. Likewise, the assertion that one can be certain of the presence only in the eating and drinking cannot be proven on the basis of the Words of Institution. Christ did not say, "That which you now eat is My body, that which you now drink is My blood," but, "that which *I give you* is My body and blood which you are to eat and drink." Consequently, the elements are His body and blood so that they may be eaten and drunk. St. Luke's account of the Supper (ἔκλασεν καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων . . . ὡσαύτως μετὰ τὸ δειπνήσαι, λέγων . . . , Luke 22:19–20) and St. Matthew's cup words (ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων . . . , Matthew 26:27–28) indicate that the giving and speaking occurred at the same time in the original Supper. Here the present participle λέγων, "saying," is used with the aorist main verb ἔδωκεν, "He gave." Smyth, in his *Grammar*, writes concerning the participle, "The action set forth by the present participle is generally coincident (rarely antecedent or subsequent) to that of the leading verb."²¹ Therefore the present participle λέγων shows that the "saying" should be taken as occurring simultaneously with the action of the aorist main verb "He gave." Because Jesus said that the bread and wine were His body and blood as He gave them or distributed them, His body and blood were indeed present to be received by the disciples.
25. The bread words of St. Matthew's (Matthew 26:26) and St. Mark's accounts of the Supper (Mark 14:22–24) are not to be taken as showing consecutive action (as though Jesus named the elements His body and blood only after they were received), but as indicating simultaneous action, as the account of St. Luke's and St. Matthew's cup words.
- 25.1 The grammar of these texts allows this interpretation.
- a. In St. Matthew's words concerning the bread (Matthew 26:26), δοῦς does not have to be taken antecedent to the main verb "He said," it can also be taken coincident to the main verb and in this way it agrees with the other texts.²²
 - b. In St. Mark's words concerning the cup and the bread (Mark 14:22–24), the giving and saying can also be understood as occurring at the same time. The aorist indicatives connected by καί, can show simultaneous action.²³ There are times in Greek when the καὶ . . . καί construction as found here is translated "as soon as He gave it to them He said."
- 25.2 If Jesus said "Take, eat, this is My body" only after the disciples ate and if Jesus said, "Take, drink, etc." only after they drank, then these words of Jesus make no sense. Jesus would have been telling them to eat and to drink when they had already eaten and drunk. Rather these two phrases show that Jesus said these words as He was offering the elements so that the disciples knew what they were being offered, namely, His body and blood and so that they knew what they were to do with His body and blood.

²¹ Smyth and Messing, *Greek Grammar*, 419.

²² Ibid., 420.

²³ Ibid., 651.

- 25.3 St. Mark writes, “And having taken the cup and having blessed it, He gave it to them, and they all drank out of it. And He said to them, ‘This is My blood of the testament, that is being poured out for many’” (Mark 14:23–24). Here St. Mark relates that all the disciples drank from the cup and he records what the cup contained, namely, Christ’s true blood. If this text is understood as Jesus telling the disciples what they received from the cup only after they drank, would the disciples have known what they were receiving and would they not have received to their great spiritual harm? Also the *τοῦτο* in the phrase, “This is My blood of the testament” refers to the cup. If Jesus said these words after the disciples received, then the cup contained His blood only after the Supper was ended.

To make these accounts contradict the Lukan text and St. Matthew’s cup words by implying that Jesus said, “Take, eat, etc. Take, drink, etc.” only after the disciples had eaten and drunk goes against the natural sense of these texts as is seen above. Rather these accounts also show that the giving and the speaking occurred at the same time. If Jesus said that the elements were His body and blood as He gave them, then they were indeed His body and blood as he offered them to the disciples to be eaten and drunk.

26. The two phrases “Take, eat, this is My body” and “Take, drink, this is the new testament in My blood” indicate that Jesus said these words as He was distributing the elements. When someone hands a glass of water and says to another, “Take and drink, this is good water,” is it not the meaning that there is water in the glass being handed over and the other person is to take that water and drink? Can it possibly mean that he has already drunk and afterwards is being commanded to drink or that there is not water in the glass until he drinks? Of course not. Likewise our Lord uses simple language in His institution which even a child can understand. **The natural sense of these two phrases is that Christ is distributing His true body and blood which He wants them to eat and drink.** To say “Take and eat this” or “Take and drink that” indicates that the thing to be eaten and drunk is already present so that it can be eaten and drunk. This interpretation concurs with Stöckhardt’s exegesis of the Words of Institution. He writes, “Thus what the Lord had in His hands and distributed and what the disciples received and ate, that bread was the Body of Christ which He gave into death allowing it to be broken and slaughtered on the cross.”²⁴
27. There is another reason why the phrase “Take, eat, this is My body” (Matthew 26:26) or the phrase, “Take, this is My body” (Mark 14:22) does not allow one to think that Jesus only handed His disciples bread. The *τοῦτο* in the phrase “Take, eat, this is My body” is a neuter demonstrative and therefore cannot grammatically refer to the bread (*ἄρτος*) which is masculine. It is in the neuter, the same gender as the phrase “My body” in Greek (*τὸ σῶμά μου*) which is a clear reference to the sacramental presence of Christ’s body in the bread. It indicates that as Jesus handed the element to the disciples and told them to take and to eat, the sacramental union had occurred. The “this” (*τοῦτο*) which He told them to take was His body.²⁵
28. St. Matthew’s account concerning the cup reads, “And He took the cup and gave thanks, and *gave it to them saying*, ‘All of you drink from it. For this is My blood of the new covenant’” (Matthew 26:27–28). As He was distributing to them, He said to them, “Drink from it because this is my blood.” The “for” (*γάρ*) here has the force of “because.” They were to drink because it was His blood.²⁶ If Christ

²⁴ Also was der Herr in Händen hat und austheilt, was die Jünger nehmen und essen, das Brod, das ist der Leib Christi, den er in den Tod gibt, am Kreuz brechen and schlachten lässt. G. Stöckhardt, *Die Biblische Geschichte des Neuen Testaments*, 266.

²⁵ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), 1025–1026.

²⁶ LS 98–99.

meant what He said, then He was indeed giving or distributing to the disciples His blood which they were to drink. They were to drink *because* it was His blood, not *so that* it would be His blood.

29. Since Jesus said that the elements were His body and blood as He gave them, we know that His body and blood are present as we give or distribute, for we are commanded to do what He did. He said, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” One is to take bread and wine, bless them with Christ’s almighty words of consecration and distribute His true body and blood. Because of this consecration, Christ’s body and blood are truly present in the elements of bread and wine so that His body and blood may be distributed by the minister and received by the communicant,²⁷ the believer to salvation and the unbeliever to judgment.²⁸ The Scriptures and the Confessions teach that Christ’s body and blood are truly offered by the hand of the minister (*reichen, exhibeo*) and not that they can be present only when the eating is begun and as a result of the same.²⁹ Likewise, the Scripture and the Confessions do not teach that Christ’s body and blood must be present immediately after the Words of Institution are said.³⁰ “While one may hold a private opinion as to when the real presence begins, yet we reject the dogmatic assertion that in a valid celebration of the Lord’s Supper it must be maintained that the body and blood are immediately present after the Words of Institution have been spoken by the pastor or the dogmatic assertion that it must be maintained that the body and blood are present only in the reception.”³¹

4. In the Same Way Also, the Cup After the Supper

30. The Words of Institution continue: “In the same way also, the cup after supper” (*ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι*, 1 Corinthians 11:25). The phrase, “after supper” does not necessarily mean that the eating and drinking in the institution were separated by time.³² Rather this phrase shows that the cup which Jesus used, the third cup of the Passover, the cup of redemption (the cup of blessing according to 1 Corinthians 10:16), was at the end of the Passover proper followed only by the second part of the great *Hallel* Psalms 115:9–18 to 118 and a final cup. From the institution, one cannot assert when the Lord gave His disciples His body. It may have been directly before the giving of the cup after the Supper. To this view, however, Jeremias would not agree.³³
31. The main course of the Passover meal having ended, Jesus put away the Old Testament meal having been fulfilled in Him, and substituted for it the corresponding Sacrament of the New Testament. The bread which He took was probably from *aphikomen* (Hebrew transliteration of the Greek derivative, *epikomios*, that which comes last, the hidden Passover bread eaten at the *seder*.) The bread was usually eaten right before the third cup of the Passover. The *aphikomen* was used to commemorate the Passover lamb. Some have seen great significance in the fact that Jesus probably used this bread for the Sacrament. Following the assumption that Jesus used the *aphikomen* which represented the Paschal lamb to make present His body, Ceil and Moishe Rosen write:

We see, then, in the three pieces of matzo on the Passover table, a truth that remains hidden from most of the Jewish community to this day. That truth of the unique unity of the eternal God is expressed in the *shemah*, the most widely spoken utterance of faith in

27 AC X in Tappert, 34; AC XXII in Tappert, 50; Ap X:1 in Tappert, 179; Ap XXIV:80 in Tappert, 264; FC SD VII:10–11 in Tappert, 571.

28 FC SD VII:60–63 in Tappert, 580–581.

29 Ex. 2, 248.

30 Martin Luther, *St. Louis* edition, XX, 332–333 (hereafter *St. L.*); WA Br. IV; 366–388.

31 Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *The Lord’s Supper* (Mankato: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1997), 9:g.

32 LS 108–110.

33 Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 87.

all of Judaism, found in Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord.” In the original Hebrew, the word for “one” is *echad*, meaning a composite oneness, rather than the absolute number “one.” This same word, *echad*, appears in Genesis 2:24 to signify that Adam and Eve became “one flesh.” It appears again in Ezekiel 37:16–19 to describe the sign of the two sticks that became “one” in the prophet’s hand. The three pieces of matzo, then, depict the eternal unity of God: the ineffable *Name*, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush; the *Messiah*, the Son of David, who became flesh to effect absolute redemption for the entire human race; and the *Holy Spirit*, who guides and directs and empowers the redeemed of the Lord.

At the seder we single out the middle matzo, representing the Messiah, even as He was *foreordained* to die for the sins of the whole world. We break the middle matzo, signifying His *death*, for He was crucified, even as the psalmist and the prophets foretold in Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, and Daniel 9. We hide the middle matzo, signifying *burial*. Just before the third cup of wine, perhaps symbolizing three days, we “resurrect” the middle matzo, just as Jesus the Messiah *rose from the grave* in fulfillment of Job 19:25 and Psalm 16:10.³⁴

How fitting if the *aphikomen* was indeed used for the institution of the Holy Supper. It was a piece broken from the second of the three pieces of the matzo which formed the unity in Trinity. It was “broken,” “buried,” and now “resurrected.” This One, Jesus Christ, we now receive under the form of bread in the Sacrament.³⁵

5. This Cup Is the New Testament in My Blood

a. The Earthly Elements in the Supper

32. This, the third cup of the Passover which Jesus took, was a cup of wine, for only wine was used in the Passover. St. Matthew speaks of the beverage which was blessed as “this fruit of the vine” (ἐκ τούτου τοῦ γενήματος τῆς ἀμπέλου, Matthew 26:29). This is the liturgical term for wine in the Passover meal. This indicates that the Lord intended wine to be used in the Supper and not grape juice. He used this liturgical term to show that He wanted only grape wine employed in the Sacrament. Also, in April at the time of Christ such a thing as grape juice was an impossibility. There was no refrigeration in that warm climate. It could only be obtained when the grapes were freshly pressed before the juice naturally fermented.
33. The other physical element used in the Lord’s Supper was bread (ἄρτος). Notice that this is the more general Greek term for bread or loaf which is made from grain. While we know that unleavened bread was used in the last Supper, since it was a Passover meal and only unleavened bread was used in the Passover, still Jesus did not employ the proper term for unleavened bread (τὰ ἄζυμα) in the institution indicating that any bread made from grain may be used in the Supper. As a result of this, the Eastern Church has traditionally used leavened bread and the Western Church, unleavened bread. Jesus employed the liturgical term of the Passover for wine, fruit of the vine, to show that He wanted grape wine and only grape wine used in the Sacrament, but He did not use the proper term for unleavened bread as St. Paul does in 1 Corinthians 5:8, but the broader term for bread to indicate that any bread from grain may be used in the Supper. The earthly elements of the Sacrament, therefore, are wine from

³⁴ Ceil Rosen and Moïshe Rosen, *Christ in the Passover: Why Is This Night Different?* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1978), 91–92.

³⁵ See also, John Hainsworth, “The Force of Mystery: Anamnesis and Exegesis in Melito’s Peri Pascha,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 46, no. 2–3 (2002): 107, noting especially pp. 137ff.

grapes and bread from grain.³⁶ Gerhard assumes that the elements of bread and wine are needed for a valid Lord's Supper celebration. Also he maintains that both elements must always be used.

8. Those who are unable to drink any wine, for since the wine is an essential element of the holy Supper—as was shown above in chapter 9—it is thus better that such persons completely refrain from the Lord's Supper, so that no action is taken contrary to Christ's institution. . . .

8. That it would actually be better if one gave only the consecrated bread to the *abstemii* (the abstainers), who can drink no wine, instead of completely excluding them from the holy Supper. ANSWER: One actually finds few people who cannot ingest the (small) amount of (wine) required for us in the holy Supper. However, if they indeed cannot ingest even a tiny droplet of wine, then it is more advisable that they abstain from the holy Supper rather than have one undertake to do something contrary to Christ's institution. And, such persons are to be instructed (informed) that it is not the *deprivation* of the Sacrament because of a case of necessity, but rather the *despising* of the Supper which is damnable. Such persons are also to cling to this: that they all the more frequently and with intense devotion appear at the administration of the holy Supper and alongside the communicants lift up their sighs to God in order to share in the spiritual consumption of the body and blood of Christ.³⁷

b. Allusions to Exodus 24

34. Jesus took this third cup of the Passover, He blessed it even as He had blessed the bread, and gave it to them saying, “This is the new testament (covenant) in My blood” (τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἢ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι, 1 Corinthians 11:25). St. Matthew explains further, “which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins” (τὸ περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχυνόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, Matthew 26:28). The cup did not contain mere wine, but through the power of Christ's Word it contained His blood, the very blood which would be shed on the cross as payment for the sins of the world.

35. The Marcan-Matthean form of the cup words, “This is My blood of the testament (covenant),” is an allusion to the Sinai covenant and its accompanying ceremonies in Exodus 24.

And [Moses] rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient.” And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, “Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words.” . . . So they saw God, and they ate and drank (Exodus 24:4–8, 11).

36. The Marcan-Matthean form of the cup words are reminiscent of the ratification of the first covenant in Exodus 24:8. In fact, virtually the same vocabulary is used in the Septuagint version of Exodus 24 as is used in the Words of Institution. As the old covenant was sealed by animal blood sprinkled on the

36 A.M. Harstad, “Is Grape Juice Permissible for Sacramental Purposes?”, *Clergy Bulletin* 15, no. 4 (1955): 33–36; Gerhard Wilde, “Abendmahl mit Saft,” *Theologische Handreichung und Informationen* 1984, no. 1: 11; John Ude, “‘This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’ Does Scripture demonstrate that the sacramental use of grape juice is valid?”, *Journal of Theology* 49, no. 3 (September 2009): 41–52; “Opinion of the Department of Systematic Theology: The Fruit of the Vine in the Sacrament of the Altar,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 45, no. 1–2 (January–April 1981): 77–80.

37 Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord's Supper*, 430, 434.

people, picturing the blood of Christ, so the new covenant is sealed by the very blood of Christ through which we receive all the blessings of salvation. Real blood ratified the old covenant and the people were given that real blood in testimony of the fact that they received the blessing of the sacrifice. Likewise, real blood ratified the new covenant and God's people are still given that real blood of the true Lamb of God so that they are certain that the benefits of Christ's redemptive sacrifice apply to them.³⁸

37. There is a parallelism between the old covenant and the new covenant mediated by Christ. Both the old and the new are concluded and sealed by the outpouring of blood: the old covenant by the blood of animals, the new by the blood of Christ Himself. Christ's mediator-ship infinitely surpasses in effectiveness the mediation exercised in the old covenant, which is the great theme of the Letter to the Hebrews, "When Christ came as high priest ... He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption" (9:11–12).
38. It should be noted further that at the conclusion of the ratification of the first covenant there was a festive meal: "So they saw God and they ate and drank" (Exodus 24:11). Likewise, Christ instituted a festive meal where we receive all the benefits of His all-sufficient atonement sacrifice on the cross, which is the basis for the new testament. In this meal we indeed meet God face to face and eat and drink with Him, for Christ is both victim and host.³⁹

c. Allusions to Zechariah 9:9–11

39. There is a mention of the blood of the covenant in Zechariah 9:9–11. This is important in our present context, since all four Evangelists incorporate part of the Zechariah prophecy in the passion narrative. They point out that the words of Zechariah 9:9 are fulfilled on Palm Sunday: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt the foal of a donkey." Then, immediately after the promise of this king coming in humility, Zechariah has these words of consolation: "As for you also, because of the blood of your covenant I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit" (9:11). The humble King, who on Palm Sunday rode into Jerusalem on the donkey, gave His life as the sacrifice for all sin and shed His own blood to establish the new testament or covenant. The blood of this covenant He gives us in the Blessed Sacrament so that we may be free from the waterless pit of destruction.

d. Allusions to Jeremiah 31:31–34

40. The Pauline-Lucan form of the cup words "This cup is the new testament (covenant) in My blood" is an allusion to Jeremiah 31:31–34.

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them," says the Lord. "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, says the Lord, I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the

³⁸ LS 100–102.

³⁹ See Gaylin R. Schmeling, *From Wilderness to Promised Land* (Mankato: Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary Press, 2012), 64–67.

least of them to the greatest of them,” says the Lord. “For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jeremiah 31:31–34)

God’s Old Testament people expected a new covenant which would be established by the Messiah. The Pauline-Lucan form of the cup words points out that this prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled in the blood atonement of Christ. In Christ, God is truly our God who dwelt among men and continues to do the same in a most special way in the Supper (Jeremiah 31:33). The One who became incarnate in the Virgin Mary’s womb for salvation is now incarnate in the Sacrament, offering the treasure of salvation to all. As a result of Christ’s redemptive work, there is forgiveness from sin and guilt in the means of grace, the life-giving Word and the Blessed Sacraments (Jeremiah 31:34).

e. Allusions to the Suffering Servant

41. The Prophet Isaiah describes the Suffering Servant as glorious yet called to suffer. His glory comes from the fact that the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him (Isaiah 42:1), that the Lord uses Him to proclaim the message of deliverance (Isaiah 61:1), that the Lord establishes in Him His covenant with all people (Isaiah 42:6, 49:8), and gives Him as a light to the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6). At the same time, the Suffering Servant is destined to endure hardship (Isaiah 49:4), physical abuse (Isaiah 50:6), and finally death (Isaiah 53); but this is not His end. After He is cut off from the land of the living, He sees His seed and the Lord prolongs His days (Isaiah 53:10).
42. In the New Testament, Jesus is identified with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah by the voice of the Father at His Baptism: “This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Jesus was God’s servant, His Elect in whom He delighted. On Him God placed His Spirit (Isaiah 42:1–2). These words of the Father indicate that Jesus was the Suffering Servant destined by God to fulfill the vicarious sin-bearing mission of Isaiah 53. The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. By His stripes we are healed.
43. In Matthew 20:28 (Mark 10:45), Jesus Himself identified His work with that of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53): “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Jesus gave His life as a ransom for many in fulfillment of the prophecy (Isaiah 53:11). The preposition “for” in this context has the force of “as a substitute for” or “in behalf of.” In other words, One gave His life in the place of the many (“the many” is the normal Hebrew term for the whole multitude of mankind). This is Christ’s substitutionary satisfaction which He made for the whole world. Thus, He is the once and for all offering for sin (Isaiah 53:10; Hebrews 9:12). In His glorious resurrection, the benefit of that sacrifice was offered to the world and He sees many seed: those who are the sons of God by faith in Him (Isaiah 53:10). It is no wonder that Philip began at this Scripture, Isaiah 53, and preached Christ to the eunuch of Ethiopia (Acts 8:32).
44. St. Matthew’s cup words, “This is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matthew 26:28), makes a definite connection between the Supper and the sacrificial work of the Suffering Servant. The phrase “for many” is used here as in Matthew 20:28 (Isaiah 53:5, 11). Also, there is reference to the new testament (covenant) which is established in the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 42:6, 49:8). Jesus is the real sacrificial Victim in His body given for many and His blood poured out for many. Jesus is the expiatory Victim of the new covenant: “Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (1 Corinthians 5:7). The very body and blood which were the all-sufficient atonement sacrifice on the cross for the many are now present in the Holy Supper, conveying all the blessings of that sacrifice to the many. His blood poured out for many on Calvary to win salvation for all is now made present in the Sacrament so that all the benefits of the Calvary event may be applied to the church gathered as the body of Christ.

f. The Supper as Sacrifice

45. As was noted above (Paragraph 43), St. Matthew's cup words make a definite connection between the Holy Supper and the sacrificial work of the Suffering Servant. In what way, then, is the Sacrament a sacrifice? The Lord's Supper may be called a sacrifice because here Christ's body and blood, the propitiatory sacrifice of the cross, are present in the Supper so that the communicant may receive all the blessings of that sacrifice, forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. This Sacrament is a presentation of Christ's sacrifice in the midst of His people where all the treasures of the cross are made present for His people through His body and blood as Martin Chemnitz points out:

The fathers call the body and blood of the Lord which are present in the Supper a saving sacrifice, a pure host, our ransom, the purchase price of our redemption, the ransom for the sins of the world, a propitiatory sacrifice and a propitiation, **not because the body and blood of Christ are offered in the Mass by the action of the priest in order that they may become the ransom and propitiation for the sins of the whole world, but because that sacrifice which was once offered on the cross for our redemption and for the sins of the whole world—the body and blood of the Lord—is present, is dispensed, offered, and taken in the Lord's Supper, so that the power and efficacy of this offering, once made on the cross, is applied and sealed individually to all who receive it in faith.** Thus Cyprian says of the Lord's Supper: "This life-giving bread and the cup of blessing, hallowed by the solemn benediction, benefits the life of the total man, being at the same time a medicine and an offering, to heal our infirmities and to purge our iniquities."⁴⁰

46. The Holy Supper is also spoken of as a thankoffering or Eucharist. Out of gratitude for salvation full and free imparted to the church in the Sacrament through Christ's body and blood, the church, His body, offers itself, all that it is and all that it has, as a thankoffering to God on the basis of Christ's once-and-for-all sacrifice on the cross.⁴¹ Through Christ, Christians continually offer up sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving to God the Father (Hebrews 13:15).
47. **The Sacrament is a commemoration of the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross where the blessings of that sacrifice are made present for the church.** Here, however, there is no sacrifice or offering up of Christ's body and blood for the salvation of the world to appease the just anger of God. That was done once and for all on the cross. Christ's holy life for us and His death for sin on Calvary are the one all-sufficient sacrifice, as the writer to the Hebrews declares, "Unlike the other high priests, [Christ] does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself." (Hebrews 7:27, 9:12).⁴² If Christ is offered up continually to expiate sin, then Christ's once-and-for-all atonement sacrifice was not perfect and complete. To be sure, Jesus ever lives to make intercession for us, but He does this on the basis of His sacrifice offered once, not on the basis of the Mass continually offered (Hebrews 7:25). Christ's body and blood, the propitiatory sacrifice of the cross, are present in the Supper so that the communicant may receive the blessings of the cross, but they are not in any way offered to God in the Supper to appease His just anger over sin, because that was done once and for all on Calvary. In the Supper the propitiatory sacrifice is not offered to God, but God offers and gives the benefits of that sacrifice to His people. The sacrifice of the cross cannot be all-sufficient, offered once, and still need to be offered daily in the Mass.

⁴⁰ Ex. 2, 491.

⁴¹ Ap XXIV:16–65 in Tappert, 252–261; LW 35:99; Ex. 2, 486.

⁴² See also Ex. 2, 457–460.

48. The teaching that the sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Sacrament are identical, that is, **that the self-same offering sacrificed once on the cross is now continually offered in the Supper, is really a camouflage.** To say that the Supper is the same sacrifice as the sacrifice of the cross, meaning that in the Sacrament Christ's body and blood are offered up to appease God's just anger over sin, impairs the oneness of the once-and-for-all sacrifice on the cross (Hebrews 7:26–27, 9:12). **The sacrifice of the cross cannot be all-sufficient, offered once, and still need to be continually offered in the Mass.** The only way that the Sacrament is the same as the sacrifice of the cross is that in the Supper that very body and blood, which once accomplished redemption for all, are now present in the Supper conveying the blessings of that redemption to the individual. The Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions are extremely emphatic in their rejection of any form of eucharistic sacrifice which militates against the once-and-for-all sacrifice of the cross or makes the Sacrament a human work or sacrifice.

g. The Supper as Testament

49. The blessed cup in the Holy Supper is the new testament (covenant, *διαθήκη*) in Christ's blood. Translators have wavered in using "testament" or "covenant" as a translation for *diatheke*. *Diatheke* was used in the sense of a "last will and testament" from the time of Democritus (c. 400 B.C.). It was used exclusively in this sense in Hellenistic literature.⁴³ This term was used by the translators of the *Septuagint* (LXX) to translate the Hebrew *berith* (בְּרִית, Exodus 24:8, Jeremiah 31:32). The Old Testament dealt with the promises God gave to His chosen people. He placed Himself into a covenant relationship with Israel. He promised Israel great blessings without any merit or worthiness on their part. Here He did all and Israel did nothing. The covenant was not bilateral but unilateral, totally one-sided. It was always God's covenant not Israel's; *and it was never a mutual agreement*. This is the connection between the biblical understanding of God's covenant and testament. In both, one simply offers benefits and the other receives or inherits without any worthiness on his part.
50. In the *Vulgate*, Jerome used *testamentum* to translate *diatheke* throughout his New Testament rather than *pactum* or *foedus*, the regular Latin words for "covenant." Luther, like Jerome, used *Testament* to translate *diatheke* in the Words of Institution, while in the Old Testament he used *Bund* for *berith*. He used *Bund* whenever the context implied that the promise had not yet been fulfilled and *Testament* for the fulfillment of the promise, especially in terms of Jesus' death and His work as the God-Man. The *berith* of the Old Testament was the Gospel-promise of Jesus Christ, while the *diatheke* was the Gospel-promise completed in Christ.⁴⁴
51. At Luther's time, Nominalist theology viewed the Lord's Supper as a covenant or pact. If man did the best that was in him, God was covenantly bound to reward him with grace. Luther came to see that this covenant theology conflicted with the central article, justification by faith, and was thus moved to reject Nominalist sacramental theology.

[The Nominalists] hold that there is no power in the sacraments, but that grace is given by God alone, *who according to his covenant* is present in the sacraments which he has instituted. . . . Such views, however, must be carefully avoided and shunned, *because they are godless and infidel, contrary to faith and inconsistent with the nature of the sacraments.*⁴⁵

⁴³ William F. Arndt, Fredrick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek – English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 182.

⁴⁴ LW 35:84; see also "Diatheke," in *The New Testament: God's Word to the Nations (GWN)* (Cleveland: Biblion Publishing, 1988), 533–534.

⁴⁵ LW 36:64–65.

This influenced Luther's use of *Testament* rather than *Bund* in the Words of Institution.

52. Ideas similar to those faced by Luther in Nominalist theology are found today in what is designated as "covenant theology." Here one finds a mixing of grace and works under the heading of covenant. In addition to this, the average English-speaking person who hears the word "covenant" usually thinks in terms of a contract between two parties, each of whom has obligations and contributes something. It is thought of in terms of a bilateral agreement as though it means "let's make a deal." Now, while covenant can be a proper translation for *diatheke* in the Words of Institution if it is understood unilaterally, there is always the danger that it will be taken bilaterally. Thus "testament" is the best translation for this word in the Institution narrative.
53. Most modern Greek lexicons and other studies think that *diatheke* should be translated as "covenant." This opinion arises because they deny that God can die in Christ.⁴⁶ To this study the words of Adolf Deissmann are very important:

Perhaps the most necessary investigation still waiting to be made is that relating to the word *diatheke*, which so many scholars translate unhesitatingly "covenant." . . . To St. Paul the word [*diatheke*] meant what it meant in his Greek Old Testament, "a unilateral enactment," in particular "a will or testament." This one point concerns more than the merely superficial question whether we are to write "New Testament" or "New Covenant" on the title-page of the sacred volume; it becomes ultimately the great question of all religious history: a religion of grace, or a religion of works?⁴⁷

54. The fact that the Verba are Christ's last will and testament is of extreme importance because this indicates that these words must be interpreted literally.

When the last will and testament of a man has been executed, we are required under the law to observe the words with special care so that nothing be done which is either beside or contrary to the final will of the testator. . . . Now, because the Son of God in His last will and testament has not permitted His heirs the liberty of believing or doing whatever seems good to them, but has willed that we believe what He has spoken in His words of institution and do what He has commanded, therefore we should give very careful thought that we do not thrust anything upon these words of the last will and testament of the Son of God, lest we deprive ourselves of the benefit of eternal happiness conveyed to us by His will or our inheritance itself be taken from us as being unworthy because we have departed from the will of the Testator as it has been given to us in the words of His last testament.⁴⁸

If the words of a human will cannot be changed or modified, but must be taken literally, how much more shouldn't the last will and testament of God's Son be followed carefully and understood literally? On this basis we must oppose both the Reformed who refuse to take the Verba literally, saying that the bread and wine only represent the Lord's body and blood, and the Roman Church when it argues that Christ's body and blood are present apart from the divinely instituted use or action.

⁴⁶ J. Behm, "*diatheke*" in G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ed. Gerhard Friedrich and Geoffrey Bromiley, trans. Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-), 2, 127-132.

⁴⁷ A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World*, trans. Lionel R.M. Strachan (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), 337f.

⁴⁸ LS 27.

55. Because the Sacrament is the last will and testament of Christ, it is a gift or inheritance for God's people and not a sacrifice of Christ's body and blood offered in the Supper. The Sacrament contains all the elements of a last will and testament.

Since God in the Scriptures again and again calls his promise a testament he means to announce thereby that he will die; and again, in calling it a promise he means to announce that he will live. And thus, by that one word he wanted to make us understand that he would become man, die; and yet live eternally. . . .A testament is nothing but the last will of one who is dying, telling how his heirs are to live with and dispose of his properties after his death. . . .**Four things are necessary in a complete and proper testament:** the testator, the oral or written promise, the inheritance, and the heirs; and all of these are clearly visible to us in this testament. **The testator** is Christ, who is about to die. **The promise** is contained in the words with which the bread and wine are consecrated. **The inheritance** which Christ has bequeathed to us in his testament is the forgiveness of sins. **The heirs** are all the believers in Christ, namely, the holy elect children of God—wherefore Paul in Titus 1 [:1] calls the Christian faith the faith of the elect.⁴⁹

The Holy Supper is primarily a testament or a gift from God and not something we offer to God. “For just as one would act if ten thousand guildens were bequeathed to him by a good friend, so, and in even greater measure, we ought to conduct ourselves toward the Mass.”⁵⁰ Here is bequeathed to us the greatest treasure of all times, all the blessings of the cross.⁵¹

h. The Blessings of the Supper

56. The Words of Institution summarize the blessings of the Sacrament with the phrase “for the forgiveness of sins” which shows that the whole treasure of salvation is offered and given in this Supper. Luther aptly summarized the blessings of the Supper in the *Small Catechism*: “The benefit which we receive from such eating and drinking is shown us by these words: Given and shed for you for the remission of sins, namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.”⁵² Forgiveness of sins is the chief blessing of the Sacrament as the Words of Institution declare, and from it flows all the other blessings of the Supper.
57. The Holy Sacrament assures each individual personally of the Gospel declaration of forgiveness. In our weaknesses and failures we can often begin to wonder whether we are really forgiven. How can God forgive a wretch like me? Are my sins just too great to be pardoned? In this Supper the Lord Jesus removes our every doubt. As we come to the Lord's Table we are in spirit at Golgotha kneeling before the cross embracing His dying body and drinking from His five bloody wounds. It is Jesus' body hung on the cross and His shed blood which has paid for the sins of the world. As a kidnapped child is bought back by its parents with money, so Jesus bought us back not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and His innocent suffering and death. His body and blood are the ransom for sin. In the Supper we receive the very thing which paid for sins, the very thing which freed us from hell's destruction. Then no matter how great and terrible our sins may be, no matter how heavily they

⁴⁹ LW 36:179–180.

⁵⁰ LW 35:86–87.

⁵¹ For a further discussion of “testament,” see *The New Testament: God's Word to the Nations*, 531–540.

⁵² Martin Luther and Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *An Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism* (Mankato: Lutheran Synod Book Co., 1966), 24.

burden our conscience, receiving this Sacrament we need never wonder whether our sins are forgiven, for within us we have the very ransom money which paid for our sins, namely, His true body and blood.⁵³

58. The Holy Supper confers life. This is not temporal life which we received through natural birth, but it is that new spiritual life which has been regenerated in us through the new birth in Holy Baptism. Since this life is still weak and imperfect, and constant growth is necessary, the Lord Jesus has instituted this Sacrament as a true spiritual nourishment. It is the strengthening and food for our faith-life, as Chemnitz writes, “It becomes a heavenly and spiritual nourishment for both body and soul of believers unto eternal life.”⁵⁴
59. As the Christian travels in this life, he faces problems and troubles all the way. There are often financial difficulties in our home, bitterness in our family, conflicts with our friends, sickness, and even the death of those most near and dear. For this reason the German Lutheran fathers often speak of this life as the *Jammertal*, the “vale of tears.” Yet in every difficulty and problem of life the Lord Jesus says, “Come to My Table, all you that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest.” Through the Sacrament of His body and blood He gives us the strength to face all the problems and troubles of life and to do all things through Him, the power to overcome and obtain the victory. Here the Lord offers life-giving nourishment to resist all the attacks of the devil, the world, and our flesh, and the power to lead a more Christ-like life.⁵⁵
60. The Holy Supper confers salvation. Where there is forgiveness of sins there is also eternal salvation. In the Supper the believer receives the very ransom money that paid for his sins and freed him from destruction. This is what has thrown open the doors of heaven and broken every barrier down. As we receive His body and blood in the Supper we know that heaven is ours. “Thus the Sacrament is for us a food, a bridge, a door, a ship, and a stretcher, by which and in which we pass from this world into eternal life.”⁵⁶
61. As Christ walked among men, people were healed and raised from the dead by His very touch. His flesh and blood are life-giving. Then as we receive His glorified and risen body and blood into this dying body, we are assured that, even though it returns to the dust from which it was formed, on the last day it will break forth from the grave glorified like unto Christ’s glorified body, and so we will ever be with the Lord. Because of this, the Early Church fathers have often spoken of the Supper as the *viaticum*, “the food for the way,” which is a food preparing us for eternal life. Luther clearly points to the Sacrament as a pledge and seal of the resurrection and eternal life: “Similarly, the mouth, the throat, the body, which eats Christ’s body, will also have its benefit in that it will live forever and arise on the Last Day to eternal salvation. This is the secret power and benefit which flows from the body of Christ in the Supper into our body, for it must be useful, and cannot be present in vain. Therefore it must bestow life and salvation upon our bodies, as is its nature.”⁵⁷

6. This Do, as Often as You Drink it, in Remembrance of Me

a. This Institution Is To Be Continued Unto the End of Time

53 C.F.W. Walther, *Brosamen*, 108–117; LS 189; LW 36:174.

54 LS 61; LC V:23–26, in Tappert, 449.

55 Ex. 2:283; LS 191; LC V:66–70, in Tappert, 454.

56 LW 35:66.

57 LW 37: 134; see also 37:100, 132; Ex 2, 233–234.

62. Jesus concluded His institution with the command: “This Do, as often as you drink it in remembrance of Me” (τοῦτο ποιεῖτε, ὡσάκις ἐὰν πίνητε, εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν, 1 Corinthians 11:25). J. Jeremias theorizes that these words mean: “Do this that God may remember Me” or “Do this that I may be remembered before God.”⁵⁸ He holds that the formula of remembrance found here comes from the Passover (Exodus 12:14) and that the meaning of the Passover memorial is that God remembers Israel rather than that Israel remembers the Lord. However, this presupposition cannot be proven. The context both here and in the Exodus passage implies that God’s people are to remember His mighty act of redemption.
63. Therefore, this phrase is best translated, “This do, as often as you drink it in remembrance of Me.” The imperative is a durative present and denotes indefinite repetition: “This do again and again.” It is to be repeated until Christ comes again in glory (1 Corinthians 11:26). The phrase “in my remembrance” is certainly an echo of the Passover rite: “So this day shall be to you a memorial” (לְזָכְרוֹן, Exodus 12:14). This phrase does not mean that this Sacrament is only a reminder of Christ or of His death. This is a remembrance in which the salvation event of the cross is made present for God’s people. Each time Christians celebrate the Holy Supper they bring Christ’s great sacrifice into remembrance and receive the treasure of that sacrifice, the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.
64. When Christ said, “Do this in remembrance of Me,” He commanded us to continue this institution. What is necessary for a valid Lord’s Supper? Jesus said, “Do this,” do what I have done. One is to take bread and wine, bless them with Christ’s almighty words of consecration “This is My body, This is My blood” which effect the presence, and distribute His true body and blood. “If we are to do what He did, then indeed we must take the bread and bless it, and break and distribute it saying, ‘This is My body.’ For all this is included in the imperative word, ‘Do this.’”⁵⁹
65. Our Lord gave us His body and blood in the Supper for a certain use, to be distributed and received for the forgiveness of sins. Christ did not merely say, “This is My body.” Rather, He said, “**Take, eat,** this is My body.” Therefore, while the Words of Institution, by virtue of Christ’s original institution, effect the presence of Christ’s body and blood, the whole sacramental action (*usus*: consecration, distribution, reception) must be kept as a unit.⁶⁰ When there is no distribution and reception there is no Sacrament, that is, no real presence. This the writers of the *Formula* assert in the *Nihil Rule* of the Confessions: nothing has the character of a Sacrament outside its intended use.⁶¹

b. The Supper and Eschatology

66. The phrase “Do this in remembrance of Me” has definite eschatological implications. This is confirmed by St. Paul’s words at the end of his institution narrative, “As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). The Supper not only points us back to the cross, but also forward to our Lord’s second coming in glory. The Ambrosian liturgy underwent this interesting expansion of the Pauline text:

As often as you do these things, you will do them in remembrance of me, you will preach my death, you will proclaim my resurrection, you will hope for my coming, until I come again to you from heaven [*adventum meum sperabitis, donec iterum de caelis veniam ad vos*].⁶²

58 J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 237ff.

59 LW 37:187; see also FC SD VII:26 in Tappert, 573.

60 Ex. 2, 248–249.

61 FC SD VII:85–86 in Tappert, 584–585.

62 G. Wainwright, *Eucharist and Eschatology* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2003), 62.

67. This same eschatological emphasis is found in the words concerning the kingdom in the Last Supper account (Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25). In the Lukan account Jesus says before the institution narrative, “I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes” (Luke 22:18). Then after the institution He states, “I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:29–30). This conveys the idea that the Sacrament is the Messianic feast established by the Suffering Servant which fulfills the Passover and begins the celebration of the kingdom which will culminate in the feast of heaven (Revelation 19:9). Then as we eat and drink at His table in the Supper we have a foretaste of the eternal banquet, and we are assured that we will one day sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 8:11).⁶³
68. The Supper not only points us back to the sacrifice of the cross, but it at the same time points forward to the final consummation of our redemption on the last day (1 Corinthians 11:26). Each time we celebrate the Sacrament we do it eagerly awaiting the second coming, as the whole Ancient Church cried, *Maranatha*, “Lord come quickly.” The Father then gives us His Son under the form of bread and wine as a foretaste of the great wedding feast of the Lamb which will be ours at His second coming. In the Supper we for a moment step out of our mundane workaday existence where we carry one another to the grave, and we have a foretaste of heaven where the Lamb once slain Himself descends and angels prostrate fall. Here is heaven on earth as the fathers prayed, “Your Supper be my heaven on earth, till I enter heaven” (*Dass dein Abendmahl mein Himmel auf Erden werde*). Then as we eat at His Table here, we have the certainty that we will be at His Table there where we will eat of the heavenly manna and drink of the river of His pleasure forevermore.⁶⁴

III. The Pauline Theology of the Lord’s Supper

A. The Lord’s Supper and 1 Corinthians 10

1. The Sacrament and a Warning for the Christian Life (10:1–13).

69. This chapter begins with a reference to the Exodus from Egypt. Here the Lord gave Israel two great blessings: deliverance through the Red Sea and miraculous food. The Red Sea and the cloud which protected Israel are understood by St. Paul as a type of Baptism (10:2). The miraculous food and drink which the Lord provided are seen as a type of the Lord’s Supper (10:3–4; see also **Paragraphs 4–5** above). The Lord gave Israel these great blessings but many of them did not appreciate His gracious dealing with them, and rather went their own perverse way. Thus, God was not pleased with them and as a result they died in the wilderness, never seeing the promised land.
70. What happened to Israel is a warning to Christians today. All Christians have been redeemed by Christ the crucified. In Holy Baptism, faith in the Savior was worked in their hearts and all their sins were washed away in the blood of the Lamb. Their baptismal faith-life is continually refreshed and strengthened with spiritual drink and heavenly manna in the life-giving Word and the Holy Supper of Christ’s body and blood. But, sad to say, many Christians tire of these blessings, despise God’s means of grace, and are finally lost. In this way the tragic example of Israel is a warning for all believing Christians today. “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (10:12). This Scripture encourages all Christians to make a regular and consistent use of Holy Word and Blessed Sacraments.

⁶³ See also Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 444–512.

⁶⁴ LS 157.

Through these means of grace our faithful God, who will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able, makes a way to escape, that we are able to bear it (10:13).

2. The Nature of the Sacrament

71. Besides the Words of Institution, 1 Corinthians 10:16–17 is probably the most important portion of the Scripture in the study of the Holy Supper: “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a participation in the body of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a participation in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for all partake of the one bread” (Τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία ἐστὶν τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ; τὸν ἄρτον ὃν κλάμεν, οὐχὶ κοινωνία τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐστίν; ὅτι εἷς ἄρτος, ἐν σώμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν, οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν). St. Paul does not say that the cup and bread are only visual aids to help us understand Christ’s redemptive work. No, he says that the cup and the bread are a participation (κοινωνία), a partaking of Christ’s body and blood. The word κοινωνία with the genitive of object does not mean “fellowship in something” or “fellowship with someone.” It means an actual and real participation in something. In this case, it refers to an actual and real partaking of the body and blood of the crucified and glorified Christ. It is the very same body that came forth from the Virgin’s womb, died on the cross and rose again; it is the very same blood that flowed from His wounded side with which He washed away the sins of the world.

3. The Sacrament and the Consecration

72. St. Paul designates the cup “the cup of blessing” (τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας). This phrase is a rendering of *Kos Habb’rakah*, the third cup of the Passover, over which a special blessing was pronounced (See **Paragraph 30** above). St. Paul says this cup is “the cup of blessing which we bless.” This wording is more faithful to the original than the NIV which translates: “the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks.” Εὐλογέω means “praise” when it is used with God as its object, and therefore, it very closely approaches the meaning of thanksgiving as in 1 Corinthians 14:16. But when it is used with a thing as its object, as is the case here, it usually denotes “to bless” or “to consecrate.” Also, the NIV translates the parallel grammatical constructions in this text, the one which refers to the cup and the other which refers to the bread, in different ways, which is unwarranted.
73. In 1 Corinthians 10:16 the imperative “Do this” of the Words of Institution is particularly illuminated. Here “the cup of blessing which we bless” (τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας ὃ εὐλογοῦμεν) is explained. Notice that it is a cup which the church is to bless. Then the “Do this” is not only a command to distribute and receive, but also to bless. One can distribute and receive forever, but without God’s commanded blessing it is only bread and wine. It is God’s blessing which causes Jesus’ body and blood to be present. On the other hand, one can say God’s blessing forever, but if there is no distribution and reception there is no Sacrament, for Christ’s full institution has not been carried out.
74. Since the Lord has commanded that the bread and wine be blessed in order to have a valid Sacrament, what is the blessing that the Lord desired His church to use? Is it a eucharistic prayer complete with anamnesis and epiclesis? No, these prayers are based on tradition, not on Scripture. God would not have commanded His church to bless and then left it in the lurch as to how to bless. Rather, in close proximity to this Scripture where St. Paul particularly asserts that Christ’s followers bless, he also gives the church a Word of the Lord in liturgical form concerning the Lord’s Supper, “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed. . .” (1 Corinthians 11:23). These words which Christ gave to St. Paul He wanted delivered to the church for the celebration of the Supper. Then the blessing of the Lord which fulfills the “Do this” is none other than the Words of Institution as St. Paul recorded them in 1 Corinthians 11:23–26. Our

Lutheran fathers clearly express this understanding in the *Formula of Concord*: “. . . the cup of blessing which we bless, which happens precisely through the repetition and recitation of the Words of Institution.”⁶⁵

4. The Sacrament and the Moment of the Presence

75. In 1 Corinthians 10:16–17, St. Paul writes, “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a participation in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a participation in the body of Christ? Since there is one bread we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.” On the basis of this text it is argued that since St. Paul says that the cup of blessing which we bless is a participation in the body of Christ, therefore the presence begins as soon as the blessing is said. It is indeed true that St. Paul here tells the church to bless and that this blessing with the Words of Institution effects a participation in the body and blood of Christ, but he does not give an exact moment of the presence. This was not his purpose. He merely shows that a partaking in Christ’s body and blood takes place in the Lord’s Supper where there is the blessing, the distribution, and the reception.
76. Note that the Apostle makes mention of all three parts of the sacramental action: the blessing or consecration, verse 16a, the breaking or distribution, verse 16b, the partaking of the elements, verse 17. Paul is not pointing out an exact moment of the presence beginning at the blessing, for in the entire context the distribution and reception are automatically assumed as is indicated in verses 17 and 21. Rather, he shows that the entire action of the Sacrament must occur, otherwise there is no Sacrament, that is, there is no real presence. He does not intend to teach that the cup becomes a participation in the blood of Christ at the moment of the blessing or consecration any more than he intends to teach that the bread becomes a participation in the body of Christ at the moment of its being broken. If one asserts that St. Paul is telling us that Christ’s blood is present the moment the blessing is said when he writes, “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a participation in the blood of Christ,” then one could logically assume that the body of the Lord is only present in the distribution, for St. Paul also says, “Is not the bread which we break a participation in the body of Christ?” If St. Paul’s purpose was to state that the Lord’s blood was present as soon as the blessing was said, then he surely would have emphasized the same concerning the Lord’s body rather than only speaking of it at the distribution. While the text speaks only of the blessing of the cup and only of the breaking and the partaking of the bread, it is evident that the cup must not only be blessed but also distributed and drunk and the bread not only broken and eaten but also blessed prior to the distribution. The whole sacramental action must take place in order to have a valid Sacrament.
77. St. Paul does not teach that Christ’s body and blood are present immediately after the consecration is recited, nor does he make any precise statement concerning a moment of the presence. However, he does assert “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a participation in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a participation in the body of Christ?” **Here the bread as broken for eating and the cup as blessed for drinking are named a participation in the Lord’s body and blood prior to the reception by the communicants.** Thus, the Lutheran Confessions do not teach that the presence occurs only at the reception. Rather they state, “It is taught among us that the true body and blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received.”⁶⁶

5. The Effects of the Sacrament

a. The Supper as Union with Christ

⁶⁵ FC SD VII:82 in Tappert, 584.

⁶⁶ AC X in Tappert, 34.

78. St. Paul maintains that Christ's true body and blood are distributed and received in the Supper under the forms of bread and wine. Since this is the case, the Sacrament unites the participant with Christ. It affords a participation in the crucified and risen Lord. Here the Lord is present for us with all His wonderful gifts and benefits. To participate in Christ is to receive all His blessings. It means that Christ dwells in us and we in Him, ever undivided (John 15:5). This is our closest relationship with the Savior on this side of heaven.
79. There are many today who are seeking a closer walk with Jesus, a closer relationship with the Savior. There are times in every Christian's life when he feels very distant from the Divine Redeemer. At such times the Christian is not to attend some wild emotional revival to have an experience of Christ. He is not to try to wrestle with the Lord in prayer until he feels His presence. Rather, he is to go where the Lord has promised to be found, in the Word and Sacraments. In the Supper there is an intimate union with Christ, for here He comes into the believer with His body and blood and remains with him ever undivided, both here in time and forever in all eternity. Concerning this communion with Christ, Chemnitz writes, "Moreover, the Son of God testifies that in the true use of the Eucharist He grafts the believers into Himself as members that He may bear, sustain, guide, and quicken them, in order that they may be united with Him more and more and may be enabled to continue more firmly in Him and hold fast the benefits they have received."⁶⁷

b. The Supper and the Incarnation

80. By asserting that the God-man Jesus Christ is present in the flesh in the Sacrament, St. Paul is making a definite connection between the Lord's Supper and biblical incarnational theology. The Lord God in His blazing holiness and awesome wonder fills sinful man with horror. Before Him none may even dare to stand. The "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" of the Law must fill every one of us with dread and terror. When Adam and Eve heard the sound of the Lord God in the garden they were filled with fear and tried to hide themselves among the trees of the garden (Genesis 3:8). Moses on Mt. Sinai had to hide himself in a crevice of a rock while the beneficent glory of the Lord passed, and only then did he have a glimpse of the Lord's hind parts, but God's face he could not see lest he be consumed (Exodus 33:12-33). In the Law, God hides Himself behind the fire, smoke, thunder, and lightening of Mt. Sinai so that sinful man does not dare to approach. We know that we have broken every commandment in the book and deserve nothing but punishment. There can be only dread and terror of the *deus absconditus*.
81. But in the miracle of the incarnation, the mystery of God made flesh (John 1:14), Jesus took our form to show us His love. The Almighty God who sits enthroned between the cherubim (Psalm 99:1), who rides the thunder clouds of heaven became flesh, our human brother, so that we could feel the loving countenance of His face. We can only know God and His love by beholding the Christ-Child as Luther taught. He said "he did not know or worship any God except him who was made man; nor did he want to have another God besides him. And besides him there was no other God who could save us."⁶⁸ "Therefore, a Christian should know that he is to seek and find God nowhere else but on the Virgin's lap and on the cross, or however and wherever Christ reveals Himself in the Word."⁶⁹ Luther is saying, "I want to know no God or Son of God but the one of whom the Christian creed tells. If He is not man born of Mary, I want no part of Him." To meet God outside of the flesh will utterly destroy us, but in the manger and at the cross He is made known to us. Thus, St. Paul writes, "For I determined not to

⁶⁷ Ex 2, 239-240.

⁶⁸ LW 38:46 (WA 30 III:132).

⁶⁹ LW 69:67 (WA 28:136). See also LW 16:55 (WA 25:107), LW 26:29.

know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2).⁷⁰ The *deus incarnatus* is the *deus revelatus*. This is the great miracle of Christmas, incarnational theology.

82. Jesus became poor and lowly to raise us to His divine glory, eternal life in heaven (2 Corinthians 8:9). In the incarnation Christ took upon Himself our dying flesh so that, through unity with His divinity, He might conquer sin, death, and all our foes in that flesh and make us partakers in His divine nature as the sons of God with an eternal existence (Galatians 4:5; 2 Peter 1:4). All that the first Adam lost in the fall, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, restored for us in Himself—paradise regained and more, divine life in heaven (Romans 5:19). He partook in our suffering, death, and hell so that we may partake in His glory, life, and heaven—a wonderful exchange (*der fröhliche Wechsel*). Luther can even say, “Through faith we become gods and partake in the divine nature and name” (*Ja, durch den Glauben werden wir Götter, und theilhaftig göttlicher Natur und Namen*).⁷¹ Here Luther alludes to the *theosis* or deification theme of the Ancient Church. This is the great purpose of the Incarnation—He took our flesh so that we might share in His divine life.
83. The miracle of the incarnation, however, does not end here. It has continual significance for the Christian in the here and now. The all-powerful Word, who on the first Christmas came from heaven and became flesh in the Virgin Mary’s womb, is now incarnate for us in Holy Word and Blessed Sacraments. Whenever the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments administered, the miracle of the incarnation, God-with-us, is present for us.
84. In Baptism He comes to us personally, causing us to participate in the divine. Christ was born of woman so that we could be reborn as the sons of God through water and the Spirit (John 3:5; Titus 3:5). He was born of His mother Mary as a son of man, so we might be reborn as the sons of God in the watery womb of mother church. We were brought into fellowship and communion with the triune God being incorporated into the body of Christ (Matthew 28:19). Here faith in the Savior was worked in our hearts and in Christ we are the sons of God (Galatians 3:26–27) who are partakers in the divine, prepared to live in the new heaven and the new earth. This baptismal life and union with Christ, which is daily renewed through true repentance and faith and nourished through the Word and the Blessed Supper, will reach its full consummation in the resurrection of the body on the last day.
85. The all-powerful Word, which once leaped from heaven and lay in swaddling clothes and a manger so that the Shepherds could approach, is present for us in the swaddling clothes⁷² and manger of His Word, the Scripture. Here He is present with His comfort, counsel, and aid (Psalm 19:8–10; Psalm 119:92). As we read, study, and meditate on the Word, He is present for us just as certainly as He was for the Shepherds.
86. The Word, who became flesh, is now present with that flesh in a most special way in the Holy Supper. Here the altar becomes His manger⁷³ and we receive His flesh permeated with divinity which transforms us into Itself and prepares us for eternity.⁷⁴ As a result of the communication of attributes in the person of Christ (*genus maiestaticum*), Christ’s flesh is life-giving⁷⁵ or, as Luther says, filled with God or permeated with divinity (. . . *sondern es ist ein Leib und Blut, der voll Göttes ist, oder das*

⁷⁰ See also LW 31:53.

⁷¹ Erlangen 11:54.

⁷² LW 52:171.

⁷³ LS 153.

⁷⁴ LW 37:101.

⁷⁵ Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J.A.O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 474 (hereafter TNC).

durchgöttert ist).⁷⁶ Because Christ's body and blood are permeated with divinity, they are certainly life-giving as they are received in the Blessed Sacrament. Our Lord says, "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him . . . so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me" (John 6:54–57). While this passage does not specifically refer to the Lord's Supper, its promise certainly applies to all places where He is present for us with His blessings and, therefore, applies to worthy participation in His body and blood in the Holy Sacrament. Thus, there is no end to the benefits which the Lutheran fathers ascribe to this vivifying flesh and blood. It is a heavenly and spiritual nourishment for both the body and soul of the believers unto eternal life.⁷⁷ It is "a medicine of immortality, an antidote, that we may not die but live in God through Jesus Christ, a cleansing remedy through warding off and driving out evils."⁷⁸ With such an incarnational doctrine of the Supper, Chemnitz at times alludes to 2 Peter 1:4 and 1 Corinthians 10:16 expressing the benefits of the Supper with the *theosis* theme. Participation in Christ's body and blood in the Supper results in communion and union with the deity itself.

Therefore, in order that we might be able to lay hold on Christ more intimately and retain Him more firmly, not only did He Himself assume our nature but He also restored it again for us by distributing His body and blood to us in the Supper, so that by this connection with His humanity, which has been assumed from us and is again communicated back to us, He might draw us into communion and union with the deity itself.⁷⁹

c. The Supper as Incorporation into the Body of Christ

87. The union in Christ which the Lord's Supper grants constitutes at the same time a true communion among all members of His body. One cannot be united with Christ without also at the same time existing in communion with all the other members of this body. As He comes into us with His flesh and blood uniting us with Himself, so He comes into all the other communicants, drawing us together as His church. The Eucharist is both the supreme manifestation of the Church's unity and a powerful means to effect that unity. The Eucharist effects the unity of the church. Thus it has an effect analogous to that of Holy Baptism (Ephesians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13). In Baptism we were united with Christ and His body, the church, so in the Supper we are strengthened and preserved in that unity by receiving His body and blood. St. Paul says, "Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:17). Verse 17a indicates that there is one bread, one undivided Christ. Because we share in the one undivided Christ under the forms of bread and wine, we are incorporated into His body. Whoever partakes of the bread has a participation in the body of Christ, for the one bread is the body of Christ. Christ is so essentially in the elements that by receiving them we are united with Christ, and through Him with His church. As many kernels of wheat are ground together to form a loaf of bread and as many grapes are crushed to form one cup of wine, so in the Supper we become one body by partaking in His one body. Receiving His one body in the Sacrament, we become His one body, the church.⁸⁰ This is a wonderful fellowship where we will bear one another's burdens by showing love and compassion to each brother and sister in need. We will regard each other as members of Christ.⁸¹

⁷⁶ St. L. VII, 2353; LW 23:143.

⁷⁷ LS 61.

⁷⁸ Ex. 2, 234.

⁷⁹ LS 188; see also LS 143; TNC 55.

⁸⁰ LW 36:287; LS 143ff; LS 193.

⁸¹ LW 35:54.

88. For St. Paul, the church and the Holy Supper, as the other means of grace, stand in an intimate relationship with each other. Christians do not establish the unity of the church. It is not like joining a volunteer organization. The church is a creation of God through the means of grace. The means of grace are the marks of the church (*notae ecclesiae*) which show where the church exists.⁸² Both the church and the means of grace are dependent upon one another in a reciprocal relationship. The Supper assumes as a prerequisite the church, the body of Christ, gathered in His name where the minister, as the representative of Christ and as the representative of the church, speaks Christ's all-powerful words of consecration which effect the presence of Christ's body and blood. The church, on the other hand, is dependent upon the Lord's Supper as one of the means of grace by which the union of all her members with Christ and with one another is strengthened and intensified so that it is indeed the body of Christ.

6. The Sacrament and Church Fellowship

89. According to 1 Corinthians 10:17, "Since there is one bread we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." This text shows that the Lord's Supper draws us into Christ's one body, the church, one in faith, one in doctrine, one in love. The eating of the one and the same bread, the undivided Christ, unites us in His one body. All Christians, who in the Sacrament eat Christ's body and drink His blood, present themselves as one spiritual family. What they eat and drink together, Christ's body and blood, ties them together far more closely than any bands of blood. They are brothers and sisters in Christ. The unity that is effected in the Sacrament assumes a unity in doctrine and belief.⁸³

90. Because the Lord's Supper draws us into one body, we are to receive the Sacrament only with those who are one with us in Christ, those who teach His Word in its truth and purity (John 8:31). Partaking in the Supper is a confession of agreement in doctrine. To admit the heterodox to our altar and so to our church fellowship is a contradiction in itself. We come to the same altar professing to be one in doctrine and practice and we are drawn into one, while in reality we are not agreed with the heterodox and should be avoiding them because they are teaching doctrine contrary to that which we have learned from Holy Scripture (Ephesians 4:3; Romans 16:17). It would be hypocrisy on our part to allow someone to commune at the Lord's altar who does not accept the truths of Scripture or for us to commune at an altar where the truth of Scripture is not taught. Then we are really lying. We are publicly declaring that we are one when we are not one in Christ, that we are one body when we are not one body.

91. This principle of closed communion and church fellowship is applied in verses 18–33 of 1 Corinthians 10. The Corinthians, who knew that the Lord's Supper was a participation in the body and blood of the Lord, should also have realized that the heathen sacrificial meals involved association with devils and consequently should be avoided: "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and the table of demons" (1 Corinthians 10:21). The Early Church and the Church of the Reformation unanimously practiced closed communion.⁸⁴

92. Church fellowship or confessional fellowship is a participation in sacred things (*communio in sacris*), the means of grace. This fellowship is created by those very means of grace and is evidenced in every expression and manifestation of a common faith. Christians practice church fellowship on the basis of the pure marks of the church. The marks of the church are to be pure, that is, there must be complete

⁸² Ap VII:5 in Tappert, 169.

⁸³ Ex. 2, 302.

⁸⁴ Werner Elert, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), 115ff.; M. Wittenberg, "Church Fellowship and Altar Fellowship in the Light of Church History," *Logia* 1, no. 1 (October 1992): 23–64; St. L. XVII, 1180; St. L. XVII, 1346; FC SD VII:33 in Tappert, 575.

agreement in all the doctrines of Scripture in order to exercise fellowship. There are no degrees or levels in the practice of church fellowship and there are no expressions of a shared faith which are excluded from church fellowship. Church fellowship is a unit both in respect to the doctrine of Scripture, that is, there must be consensus in all the doctrines of the Word for fellowship, and in respect to the various expressions of a shared faith, that they all be considered a unit or an indivisible whole. There is either complete fellowship or none at all (Matthew 7:15–19; Romans 16:17; Galatians 1:8–9; Ephesians 4:3; 2 Timothy 2:16–19; 2 John 9–11).

B. The Lord's Supper and 1 Corinthians 11

1. Public Worship, the Public Ministry, and the Sacraments

93. The eleventh chapter of 1 Corinthians gives guidelines for proper divine worship in the body of Christ, the church. In verses 1–17 St. Paul speaks of women's position in the church. These verses address the Corinthians' custom of veiling and wearing long hair, which in their society gave expression to the principle of the headship of the man. Paul shows the Corinthians that the latter is a principle established by God in the manner and purpose of the women's creation. She was formed from the rib of Adam to be a suitable helper for her husband. Since the custom gave expression to the biblical principle, to refuse to follow the custom would be understood to be a denial of the biblical principle. This passage does not establish the custom as a universal practice which must be observed, but it does establish that social customs which give expression to the biblical principle of the headship of man in the family and in the family of believers will be observed by Christians as a witness of their faith. The Scripture establishes the headship of man in the home and in the household of believers, the church, but it does not discuss the implications of the order of creation for the secular realm (Ephesians 5:21–25; 1 Corinthians 14:34–35; 1 Timothy 2:11–15). We must always carefully distinguish between that which occurs in the secular realm and that which takes place in the spiritual realm.
94. On the basis of this passage and passages such as 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 and 1 Timothy 2:11–15, it is evident that women are not to teach men or have authority over men in the church, and thus they are not to officiate at the public worship service of Word and Sacrament (the Divine Liturgy). In 1 Corinthians 14:34 St. Paul says, "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says." This silence is not an absolute, for 1 Corinthians 11:5 presupposes that women can pray and prophesy in the assembly. St. Paul explains further, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence" (1 Timothy 2:12). Women are not to teach men or so speak in the church as to have authority over men. Women are indeed a part of the universal priesthood and may function in some of the forms of the public ministry, but the focus of their call is limited by divine directives. They may function in those forms of the public ministry where they do not exercise authority over men, such as the office of Christian day school teacher, Christian high school teacher, and deaconess.
95. While women may function in some of the forms of the public ministry, they are not to be in what we today refer to as the pastoral office, because here they would be in a teaching position in which they exercise authority over men. Women will not officiate at the public worship service of Word and Sacrament because they would have authority over men and because St. Paul stipulates that the one who so functions, who in the Ancient Church was designated the bishop (*ἐπίσκοπος*), is to be the husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2). Women will not read the lessons in the liturgy, preach the sermon in worship services, nor distribute Communion, either publicly or privately, for these things are intimately related to the pastoral office (1 Corinthians 14:34–35; 1 Timothy 2:11–15; 1 Timothy 3:1–2).⁸⁵

⁸⁵ See also LW 40:390–391.

96. These New Testament divine commands are based on divine order as it is manifested in the order of creation. The Divine Trinity is revealed in Holy Scripture as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The Father and the Son are referred to in masculine terms, not in neuter or feminine terms. The headship of God the Father in the Trinity is reflected in the headship of the father in the home and in the headship of the man in the household of believers. The Greek verb (ὑποτάσσω) used for the woman's subordination to man in Ephesians 5:21–15 and 1 Timothy 2:11–15 is the same verb used for the Son's subordination to the Father in 1 Corinthians 15:28. The scriptural concept of subordination does not imply superiority and inferiority or a lack of equality; rather it presents this headship as a divine structuring for orderliness and unity.
97. This same divine order manifested in the order of creation is to be reflected in the Office of the Public Ministry. The Blessed Trinity is revealed as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. The second person, the Divine Logos, became flesh as a male, our human brother, for us men and our salvation. As our Lord placed male apostles into the office of preaching the Gospel (Matthew 10:1; Luke 6:13; 2 Timothy 1:11), even so the apostles placed other men into office (Acts 14:23; 2 Timothy 2:2, 15, 24, 4:5) and commissioned these in turn to install still other men in the preaching office (1 Timothy 5:22; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5).⁸⁶ These men who officiate at the public worship service of Word and Sacrament are not only to function in behalf of the church, but also in behalf of Christ. They are to be Christ's representatives in the midst of His body, the church. As the second person is revealed to us in Scripture in masculine terms, and as He assumes human flesh as a male, so the one who is to be His representative in the divine liturgy is referred to only in masculine terms in the Scripture (1 Timothy 3:2). Thus the scriptural directives that women are not to be in teaching positions over men and that the one officiating at the Word and Sacrament liturgy is to be the husband of one wife and therefore male, reflects the divine order in the incarnation, the creation, and in the interpersonal relationships of the Trinity. At the same time, women may be in offices of the Public Ministry where they do not teach men or have authority over men.

2. The Nature of the Sacrament

a. The Earthly and Heavenly Elements in the Supper

98. Beginning with verse 18 of 1 Corinthians 11, St. Paul speaks of the Lord's Supper celebration in particular. When the early Christians came together to have the Lord's Supper, they often had a common joint meal of which all the members partook called the agape meal or the love feast. It was similar to the potluck church suppers of our time. Before eating, the guests washed their hands, prayers were offered, and the Scripture was read. After the meal an offering was taken for the widows and orphans, the kiss of peace was given, and communications from other congregations were read.⁸⁷ Thereafter followed the Lord's Supper celebration proper.
99. Disruptions, however, were occurring in the Corinthian assemblies so that St. Paul had to say, "Therefore when you come together in one place, **it is not to eat the Lord's Supper**" (1 Corinthians 11:20; emphasis added). Because of these disruptions the Lord's Sacrament was desecrated in their midst. In the agape meal, which was to show brotherly love and unity, there were divisions and factions. The rich gathered with the rich to feast together, while the poor had to sit and eat the little that was left over. One was hungry and the other was bloated and drunk (1 Corinthians 11:21). With such divisions in the congregation they were not receiving the Sacrament worthily. Some were so taken up with drinking and feasting that they did not distinguish the sacramental elements of the

⁸⁶ See also *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*, 10, *Triglotta*, 507.

⁸⁷ Merrill Unger, *Bible Dictionary*, 26.

Supper from the ordinary bread and wine of the agape meal which occurred before the Sacrament (1 Corinthians 11:29). The Apostle then reiterates the liturgical form of the Words of Institution, which he received from the Lord and delivered to the Corinthians for the consecration of the Supper in their midst, to remind them of the proper reverence they were to have for the Sacrament (1 Corinthians 11:23–26). After this he gives them a stern warning concerning unworthy participation in the Supper (1 Corinthians 11:27–34).

100. In St. Paul's admonition concerning worthy participation in the Supper, he clarifies certain points concerning the nature of the Sacrament. He states, "Therefore whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:27). In this statement St. Paul speaks of the consecrated elements as Christ's body and blood and as bread and the cup (wine). As in 1 Corinthians 10:16, St. Paul does not say that the bread and wine are changed into Christ's body and blood, but rather the bread and the wine are a communion or a participation in the body and blood of the Lord (*κοινωνία*). The change which is effected by the consecration is not an instantaneous replacing of one substance with another with only the accidents of bread and wine remaining. Thus Scripture does not teach the doctrine of transubstantiation as defined by Thomas Aquinas.⁸⁸ Rather, Christ so unites His body and blood with the bread and the wine that He can say that the bread and wine are His body and blood. It is not a change in substance, but a change created by union, the sacramental union of two substances.

101. As was stated above (paragraphs 80–86), there is a close connection between the incarnation and the Holy Supper. According to the hypostatic or personal union, the Divine Logos, who is the only-begotten of the Father, assumed into Himself a perfect human nature, which never subsisted in itself, so that the natures are so intimately united as to form one undivided person in Christ. The personal union is a union of the divine and human subsisting in the one *hypostasis* or person of the Son of God. The Lutheran fathers and the Ancient Church fathers⁸⁹ compare the union between the earthly and heavenly in the Sacrament with the personal union in Christ. In the personal union, the divine and the human natures form one undivided person in Christ. Similarly, in the Sacrament there is a union where the bread and the wine are united with the flesh and blood of the Divine Logos.

The particular character of this Sacrament requires that there be two distinct things or substances which, joined by sacramental union, make one complete Sacrament, even as in the one person of Christ there are two complete and distinct natures. For all antiquity uses this comparison. But Paul mentions bread and wine also after the blessing, 1 Co 10:16; 11:27. Likewise the fathers also taught the same. In order to testify that they do not approve the papalistic transubstantiation, they also usually used these terms, namely that in, with, and under the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ are present, offered, and received.⁹⁰

102. In the Supper there is both the earthly and the heavenly reality.⁹¹ One does not receive merely bread and wine as the Sacramentarians teach, nor does one receive only body and blood as Rome teaches. Rather, both the bread and wine and body and blood are received through the sacramental union. To put this in christological terms, Rome tends toward "Eutychianism" by saying the bread and wine are

⁸⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Cura Fratrum eiusdem Ordinis* (Matriti, Spain: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1964), III, 75, 5–7.

⁸⁹ John of Damascus, *The Orthodox Faith*, in vol. 9, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series*, ed. Philip Schaff (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) 4, 13.

⁹⁰ Martin Chemnitz, *Ministry, Word, and Sacraments: An Enchiridion*, trans. Luther Poellot (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 120; also see LS 153–154; FC SD VII:37–38 in Tappert, 575–576.

⁹¹ Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* IV, 18, 5, in vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 486; see also Ex. 2, 257–258; LS 46.

transformed into Christ's body and blood, while the Sacramentarians tend toward "Nestorianism" in that the body and blood are so separate from the bread and the wine that they are not received with the bread and the wine. The Lutheran doctrine is incarnational, a "Chalcedonian" approach to the Sacrament which distinguishes between the bread and wine and body and blood, but still holds them inseparably connected. It seems that both opponents of this view are not able to accept this intimate connection between the earthly and heavenly because they hold that the finite is not capable of containing the infinite (*Finitum non capax infinitum*).

b. The Supper and the Moment of the Presence

103. When St. Paul gives this warning concerning worthy eating of the Sacrament, he also has something to say about the time of the presence. He writes, "Therefore whoever eats this bread and drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord ... for he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself not **discerning the Lord's body**" (1 Corinthians 11:27, 29 [emphasis added]—*διακρίνων*—"To differentiate, to distinguish from ordinary bread, to recognize, to discern"—Luther, *unterscheiden*). Some of the Corinthians were not differentiating between the common food of the agape meal and the Holy Supper of Christ's body and blood which followed the agape meal. How were the Corinthians to distinguish the consecrated elements from mere bread and wine as St. Paul here urges if they were being offered only bread and wine? St. Paul's admonition presupposes that the presence of Christ's body and blood is an objective reality for the eating and drinking so that one can distinguish between Christ's body and blood and mere bread and wine, so that one can indeed discern or recognize Christ's body and blood, and not eat and drink judgment to himself. That bread and that wine which are blessed with Christ's almighty Word of blessing and offered to be eaten and drunk are not mere bread and wine but Christ's very body and blood.⁹²

3. The Proper Preparation for the Supper

104. In verse 27–34 of 1 Corinthians 11, St. Paul admonishes the Corinthians to receive the Holy Sacrament worthily.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

Before going to the Lord's Supper every Christian should carefully examine himself. The Order of Confession in our church aids the individual Christian in such self-examination. However, Confession, whether public or private, would not take the place of personal examination. Each Christian before coming to the Sacrament should examine his life in accord with the Ten Commandments. When we look into the mirror of God's Law we see our endless failures and sins and our desperate need for the forgiveness and strengthening of the Supper. If we do not see our failures, then we need to take a better look at the Law and understand its real intent. If we see our sins and are not sorry for them, we should not attend the Supper because we will not be a worthy guest. The

92 LS 133–134.

impenitent, that is, one who is not sorry for his sins, receives the Sacrament to his great harm, rather than to his blessing (1 Corinthians 11:30).

105. In order to obtain the benefits of the Holy Supper we need to be well prepared to receive it worthily, as St. Paul says (1 Corinthians 11:28–29). This, however, is not a worthiness brought about by the Law, but by the Gospel, and it does not consist of a perfect life and entire purity of the soul. Rather, to be worthy and well prepared means that we have a sincere sorrow over our sins, that we confess them, striving to do better, and earnestly long for the forgiveness of sins. At the same time this worthiness includes a confident faith in Jesus the Savior who paid for the sins of the whole world on the cross with His body and blood, and who gives us that very body and blood in the Supper for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

106. Also, it should be noted that believers whose faith is weak are not to be numbered among the unworthy. Those who feel their spiritual weakness and failure to live the Christ-like life, who desire to become stronger, are indeed proper guests at the Lord's table. Such the Lord will not cast away, but much more invites them to come, for He instituted the Holy Supper as strengthening, nourishment, and medicine for the weak and infirm. He extends to all the gracious invitation, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), and "Whoever comes to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

107. As a Christian prepares to receive the Blessed Sacrament, he will use questions such as these to examine himself.

- a. Am I truly sorry for all my sins in thought, word and deed?
- b. Do I believe that Jesus my Savior paid for all these sins on the cross?
- c. Do I believe that Jesus gives me in the Supper His body and blood for the forgiveness of my sins, life, and salvation?
- d. Do I sincerely desire with the aid of the Holy Spirit henceforth to amend my sinful life?

IV. Other New Testament References to the Lord's Supper

A. The Lord's Supper and John 6

108. In John 6, one of our Savior's longer recorded homilies is found. It was before the Passover, right after the feeding of the five thousand. Part of this homily is found below; notice how similar the Words of Institution of the Lord's Supper in the Synoptics are to verses 53–56 in John.

[Jesus said,] "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead.

He who eats this bread will live forever” (John 6:48–58).

109. These verses in John 6 have been understood by some as referring directly to the institution of the Lord’s Supper. John 6 is then held to be St. John’s institution narrative of the Sacrament. However the eating and drinking in John 6 refer to the eating and drinking which a believer does by faith (**spiritual eating**) through the means of grace, receiving all the blessings of Christ’s body and blood offered up for salvation. Therefore the Lutheran fathers teach that John 6 does not specifically apply to the Lord’s Supper because here the eating and drinking are figurative, while in the Words of Institution the eating and drinking are literal. **The second reason** that John 6 does not refer directly to the Supper is that the sermon recorded in John 6 occurred a year before the institution of the Supper. Therefore, the sermon in John 6 cannot apply to the dogma of the sacrament. **The third** and most important reason Lutherans reject this viewpoint is that the eating in John 6 always results in salvation (John 6:51), while in the Lord’s Supper the participants may eat judgment to themselves.⁹³
110. At the same time, there is a definite connection between the Words of Institution and John 6. This text speaks of the spiritual eating that is necessary for worthy participation in the Holy Supper. All communicants, both the worthy and unworthy, eat sacramentally with the mouth the very body and blood of Christ born of the virgin, but only those who eat spiritually through true repentance and faith receive all the wonderful blessings offered through that body and blood. Thus, John 6 applies to worthy participation in the sacrament, and in this sense speaks to the Holy Supper as our Confessions state.

There is therefore a twofold eating of the flesh of Christ. The one is spiritual, of which Christ speaks chiefly in John 6:48–58. This occurs, in no other way than with the spirit and faith, in the preaching and contemplation of the Gospel as well as in the Lord’s Supper. It is intrinsically useful, salutary, and necessary to salvation for all Christians at all times. Without this spiritual participation, even the sacramental or oral eating in the Supper is not only not salutary but actually pernicious and damning.⁹⁴

111. The way that we eat Christ’s flesh and drink His blood in the context of John 6 is by faith in the Savior (spiritual eating) through the Word and Sacraments. Through His Word, the Holy Scriptures, we come face to face with Him, the Bread of Heaven. Here He strengthens our faith in salvation centered in the bloody cross. When we read, study and meditate on the Word we receive the Bread from Heaven. In the Holy Supper we indeed eat His flesh and blood which is the true food and drink for our souls. This Bread of Heaven gives us the complete forgiveness of sins, for Jesus says, “I give my flesh for the Life of the World” (John 6:51). No matter how terrible our sins are and how many they may be, we are forgiven through Jesus flesh.
112. Here we are united into a wonderful relationship with the Savior. He says, “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him” (John 6:56). Through a regular use of Word and Sacrament, Jesus came to us and makes a dwelling place in us, never leaving nor forsaking us. His flesh is real food and His blood is real drink (John 6:51). In them is found the nourishment for our faith-life and the strengthening for our present pilgrimage. His flesh and blood empowers us to do all with a firm confidence in Him as the Savior.
113. Finally and most importantly as we are surrounded by death and dying on every side, today a friend, tomorrow it may be you; in this uncertainty Jesus says, “Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:54). Because we eat the flesh of the Lord and drink His blood, the death process in us is counteracted so that we

⁹³ Johann Gerhard, *Baptism and Lord’s Supper*, 340ff., 454; Ex. 2, 326–328; LS 235–240; Pieper Vol. III, 328–329; Gaylin Schmeling, *The Lord’s Supper in Augustine and Chemnitz* (Nashotah: Nashotah House, 1993), 46–48.

⁹⁴ FC SD VII:61, Tappert, 580–581.

will live again. Yes, this body is going to grow old and return to the dust of the ground but because we have received the Bread of Life at the final trumpet this very body will burst from the tomb glorified as our Lord's glorified body and will live forever with Him.

B. The Lord's Supper and the Acts of the Apostles

114. In the Acts of the Apostles "the breaking of bread" was the common term for the Lord's Supper. The term could refer to a common meal and does at times in the New Testament, but in the context of passages such as Acts 2:42 it has liturgical significance denoting the Supper. Here St. Luke gives a simple outline of worship in the New Testament church: "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread (τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου), and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). This summary statement concerning early Christian worship reminds us that the service centered in the apostles' doctrine, the teaching of the inspired, inerrant Scriptures. It included the fellowship which may be a term implying a general gathering of Christians or it may refer specifically to the agape meal. The breaking of bread, which is a Lukan term for the Lord's Supper, was a part of this Christian worship. In addition, prayer formed a part of early Christian worship. The prayers were either prayer in general, or the liturgical form of the service of the Word. Christians were to gather regularly around the means of grace (Hebrews 10:25). The early Christians may have celebrated the Lord's Supper weekly (Acts 20:7) or at times daily, for Acts 2:46 says that they continued "daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart."
115. An interesting use of the Lukan term "breaking of bread" is found in the account of the Emmaus disciples in Luke 24:13–35. All the way to Emmaus Jesus enlightened these two disciples with His light-bearing Word, making clear to them from Moses and the prophets that the holy cross was the very heart of the Gospel. As they approached the village, Jesus acted as if He would have gone further, but they urged Him strongly, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent" (Luke 24:29).
116. Jesus then entered their home and stayed with them. While He was at the table with them, "He took bread, blessed, and broke it and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him" (Luke 24:30–31). And later it was said of them, "The Lord was made known to them in the breaking of bread (τῆ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου)" (Luke 24:35). One cannot be absolutely certain whether the Emmaus meal was the Lord's Supper; however, it indicates what occurs in the Lord's Supper.⁹⁵ The Lord is made known to us through His body and blood. This mystery has been repeated, unfolded, enlarged, and sustained at every Christian altar since. The Christian experiences the presence of the risen Lord in the Holy Eucharist. Here He appears in a blaze of glory, the arisen Savior and King. As He made Himself known to the Emmaus disciples in the breaking of bread, so He manifests Himself to us in the breaking of bread. In the Holy Supper the Arisen One is present for us with all His Easter joy and blessings.
117. The risen Lord walked with the Emmaus disciples on the way, became a guest and then the host at their meal (Luke 24:13–35). He taught them His Word and revealed Himself to them in the breaking of bread. Now as the church gathers in Word and Sacrament worship, He is the host who gives Himself to us for food as the beginning of the messianic victory banquet, where all tears are wiped away and death is swallowed up forever, a foretaste of heaven.

C. The Lord's Supper in Hebrews and Revelation

⁹⁵ Our Confessions leave open the possibility that the Emmaus meal was the Supper. Ap XXII:7 in Tappert, 237.

118. In Hebrews 6, the holy writer appears to be alluding to both of the Sacraments. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame” (Hebrews 6:4–6). The Early Church fathers often spoke of Baptism as illumination or enlightenment (φωτισμός).⁹⁶ Here those who are enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and the Word of the Lord are most likely those who have been brought to faith in the Savior through Baptism and who have eaten the Lord’s body and blood, which is the heavenly gift in the Lord’s Supper. The holy writer gives a warning to these Christians and all of us. He warns, “If they commit the sin against the Holy Spirit by continually rejecting the Spirit’s call to repentance, they end their time of grace.”⁹⁷
119. In the book of Revelation, there are many allusions to the divine service and the worship life of the Early Church. The Revelation points to the wedding feast of the Lamb, of which the Lord’s Supper is a foretaste (Rev 19:19). We eat at His Table here assured that we will eat with Him forever in paradise. In Revelation 3:20, the Lord invites, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” He certainly eats and dines with us in the Supper, where He is both victim and host.⁹⁸ In Revelation 2:17 we are told, “To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat.” In the Supper, we eat of the heavenly manna and drink of the river of His pleasure forevermore.
120. Near the end of the book of Revelation, the Apostle John assures the elect, “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” (Revelation 19:9) The Lord’s Supper begins the messianic wedding banquet, the victory banquet, which will reach its full consummation in heaven. The Supper is the messianic feast which will culminate in the feast of the Lamb, the Lamb’s high feast. Then because we receive His glorified and risen body and blood in the Supper, which is the antidote for death, we know that this very body will one day break forth from the grave, glorified like Christ’s glorified body. Thus we will ever feast with the Lord in paradise above.

⁹⁶ Justin Martyr, *The First Apology* 1:61–65 in vol. 6, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 183–185 ff.

⁹⁷ Hebrews 13:10 may also allude to the Supper.

⁹⁸ Pitre, *Jesus and the Last Supper*, 509.

A Lord's Supper Prayer

O Lord Jesus, You who invite all that labor and are heavy laden in order to refresh them and to give rest to their souls, we pray You, let these guests experience Your love at the heavenly feast which You have prepared for Your children on earth. Keep them from impenitence and unbelief that no one may partake of this holy sacrament to his harm. Take off from them the spotted garment of their own righteousness and dress them with the garment of righteousness purchased with Your blood. Strengthen their faith, increase their love and hope, and after this life grant them a place at Your heavenly table, where they will eat of the eternal manna and drink of the river of Your pleasure forevermore. Hear us for Your name's sake.

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