

THE LORDS SUPPER. IS LIFE COMMUNICATED BY IT?

Much of Christendom believes there is life giving virtue in what is commonly called Holy Communion, Mass or the Eucharist. Scripture refers to this ordinance as the “Lord’s supper.”

“Eucharist” probably comes from the Greek word “eucharisteo” which is translated “gave thanks” in Scriptures relating to the Lords supper. This same word is also translated “gave thanks” in Mtt. 15:36 “*And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake [them], and gave to his disciples*” Clearly the seven loaves did not become the body of our Lord.

In this writing I desire to speak of that which Scripture calls the Lord’s supper. “*When ye come together therefore into one place, [this] is not to eat the Lord’s supper.*” (1 Cor. 11:20) (This supper is described in this chapter) As to “Holy Communion” and “Mass”, those names are not found in the Bible in reference to the Lord’s supper.

As far as 1 Cor. 11, where the expression “the Lord’s supper” is used, clearly it does not, in any way, present the supper as a life giving means. The following is what I refer to as the supper being “described.” “*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the [same] night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake [it], and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also [he took] the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink [it], in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.*” (23-26)

Twice we have the expression “*in remembrance of me*” The purpose of the Lord’s supper is the remembrance of Him in death. “*ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come.*” It is for the purpose of “remembering Christ in His death,” not for our “receiving” life. It seems the difficulty in understanding this ordinance is because of giving it the place of John 6. rather than the supper being the memorial of John 6. By John 6 I refer to verse 53:

“*Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*” (Jn. 6:53).

It is very important here to note “ye eat” might better be translated in English “shall have eaten.” The reason for this is because it designates a one time event, something accomplished by faith in the death of Christ for me, in order that I might have eternal life. This must never be confounded with the memorial by a believer of this event. The Lord’s supper is the memorial of Christ’s actual death, for believers.

John 6: 54-56-57-58 are properly rendered in the present tense “eats.” In those verses you have what Eternal life in us delights in. Eating as found in those verses are In the sense used in verse 57. “*As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*”

That is Christ did not receive life from the Father, but as becoming a Man, His whole purpose for life was the Father. We however received our Eternal life by means of the redeeming death of Christ

for us, Eternal life in us, will never forget the death of Christ for us as the means by which we received Eternal life from Him. Perhaps I could say, His death is the motivation of Eternal life, in us. As the Father was the motivating force, or Object, of our Saviour down here.

But the purpose of this writing is to show that there is no life imparting virtue to the actual bread or wine, used in the Lord's supper. Let us follow Scripture from its institution to the Christians at Corinth being told to observe it.

I say "at Corinth" but that epistle is for all Christians, or saints. "*Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, ... with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord*" (1 Cor. 1:2) The "bread" or "loaf" used in the Lord's supper never becomes the actual body of Our Lord.

"*And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed [it], and brake [it], and gave [it] to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.*" (Mt. 26:26). Clearly, the body of the Lord was that body (of flesh and blood) which held in His hands the Loaf which He Himself said, (of the loaf) "*this is my body.*" The Loaf here has to be symbolic.

"*And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake [it], and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.*" (Mark 14:22) Obviously, the Lord did not actually break His actual body in order for His disciples to eat His body. The bread is symbolic, our Lord had not two bodies. (One by which He brake the other.)

"*And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake [it], and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.*" (Luke 22:19) Here there is an important expression added. "*this do in remembrance of me.*" I believe this is because it is in its true sense the Christian view of the ordinance. A remembrance of His death. But again, the bread He brake, was symbolic, not His actual body.

But as to our verse, (Luke 22:19) It would make no sense to think that bread was to be "*given for you.*" The bread was symbolic of what Christ was to suffer for us on the cross. "*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,*" (1 Peter 2:24)

Now as to John's gospel, it is very noticeable, that he gives no account of the Lord's supper. Were it a necessary act for us today to receive life, as in Jn. 6 surely John would have been inspired to write of it.

John 6 gives the reality of Christ's atoning death, made good to us by faith. The Lord's supper for the believer is simply our remembrance of Him in that great Work. But a remembrance of Him in death is certainly not a repeating of His Work.

But the supper, (loaf and cup,) are representative of a Christ Who no longer exists in that form. (I mean as a dead Christ.) The Lord Jesus said, "*I [am] he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen ;*" (Rev.1:18) He said "*I am alive*" and that "*for evermore.*" No bread or wine can be the actual body and blood of Christ in death. They can be however, symbols by which we remember, or shew, His death by. He cannot die again and be "*alive for evermore.*"

“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Heb. 9:26) These verses and others, teach clearly that Christ’s work is done, never to be repeated, by means of a loaf of bread, or by any other means.

We have this life by faith. Not by eating bread and drinking the fruit of the vine. We do remember Him, in His death, by these means but there is no mysterious action that takes place with either the loaf or the cup. They remain symbolic, and represent His body given in death for us and the cup represents His shed blood in separation from His body.

It might be well to notice that Paul adds the word *“till He come.”* This would teach us that our Lord wants all of His own to remember Him in His death *“till He come.”* This was not just for the twelve apostles. It is our Lord’s desire for all of His own.

H. Short 7/13