The Lord’s Supper

Remembrance Without Ritual Magic

Series 1-10

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VerseQuest Ministries




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MINISTRIES

**The Lord’s Supper**

*Remembrance Without Ritual Magic*

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**Scripture References**

All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible. Biblical references are provided throughout this publication to encourage personal study, careful examination, and faithful understanding of God's Word.

**Purpose of This Publication**

*The Lord's Supper: Remembrance Without Ritual Magic* is a ten-essay biblical study examining the institution, meaning, observance, and doctrinal significance of the Lord's Supper. Its purpose is to teach sound biblical doctrine, distinguish Scripture from religious tradition, address theological misunderstandings, and direct readers toward the finished sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The doctrinal examinations and criticisms contained in this publication are directed toward religious teachings and practices, not toward the personal dignity of individuals. Readers are encouraged to examine all teachings in light of the Scriptures.

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*"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."* (2 Timothy 2:15)

**To God Be the Glory Through Jesus Christ Our Lord.**

**The Lord's Supper**

Remembrance Without Ritual Magic

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**The Lord’s Supper**

Remembrance Without Ritual Magic

**Introduction**

There are few ordinances in the history of Christianity that have been surrounded by more confusion, religious superstition, theological invention, and unnecessary controversy than the Lord's Supper. What Jesus Christ established in an upper room with a handful of disciples has been transformed by centuries of religious tradition into something that frequently bears little resemblance to the simple instructions recorded in the Word of God. Bread has become the subject of elaborate theories concerning supernatural transformation. The cup has been surrounded by claims of sacramental power. Religious authorities have constructed priesthoods, altars, ceremonies, and regulations around an observance that the Lord Himself explained with remarkable simplicity: "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Somewhere along the road from the upper room to the modern cathedral, men began acting as though the Saviour had forgotten to provide sufficient instructions. Apparently, taking bread, giving thanks, remembering His body, and proclaiming His death was not complicated enough for religion. It needed more ceremony, more mystery, more religious machinery, and, naturally, more human authority. But the Bible has a remarkable way of cutting through centuries of ecclesiastical fog with a few words that even a child can understand.

The purpose of this ten-essay series, The Lord's Supper: Remembrance Without Ritual Magic, is to return to the Scriptures and examine exactly what Jesus Christ established, what the apostles taught, and what the New Testament church is instructed to observe. We will begin with the Passover in Egypt, where God commanded Israel to place the blood of a spotless lamb upon the doorposts of their homes. We will follow that prophetic picture through the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, the final Passover meal, the institution of the Lord's Supper, and the inspired instructions delivered through the apostle Paul. Along the way, we will distinguish what belongs to Israel under the law from what belongs to the church under grace. We will examine the bread, the cup, the blood of the New Testament, the meaning of remembrance, the responsibility of self-examination, the seriousness of divine chastening, and the proper administration of the ordinance. We will also confront the doctrines that have transformed the Lord's Supper into something Scripture does not command. The objective is not to invent another tradition to compete with existing traditions. It is to allow the King James Bible to explain the ordinance without requiring assistance from centuries of religious speculation.

The foundation of everything we will examine is the finished sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul declared, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Those words connect the historical Passover with the greater Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world. In Egypt, the blood of the lamb marked the households protected from the approaching judgment. At Calvary, Jesus Christ shed His own precious blood to accomplish the redemption that no animal sacrifice could ever provide. Peter declared that believers are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19). The Passover lamb pointed forward to the cross, while the Lord's Supper points backward to that same cross. One anticipated the sacrifice, and the other remembers it. The historical settings and covenant administrations are distinct, but the Person toward whom the picture directs our attention is the same. The lamb in Egypt was a picture. The Lamb at Calvary was the fulfillment. The Lord's Supper is the remembrance. Confuse those distinctions, and before long you will have people attempting to accomplish through a religious ceremony what Jesus Christ already finished through His blood.

We must also settle something that religious confusion has obscured for generations. The Lord's Supper does not save anybody. It does not justify the sinner, regenerate the lost, preserve eternal life through repeated participation, or supply another payment for sin. Salvation is accomplished through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and received by grace through faith. Paul declared, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). He also wrote, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Notice where the redemption is found. It is in Christ. Notice what accomplished it. His blood. Notice the basis upon which God extends it. His grace. There is no mention of a ceremonial cup functioning as another instrument of justification. A person may participate in communion every week for fifty years, memorize every liturgical response, and possess a church attendance record that would impress the most demanding religious administrator, yet remain lost without personal faith in Jesus Christ. You cannot eat your way into heaven, drink your way into justification, or purchase eternal redemption through religious participation. The bread did not die for your sins. The cup did not shed its blood. Jesus Christ did.

One of the central doctrinal matters addressed throughout this series concerns the Roman Catholic understanding of the Eucharist and the Mass. Catholic doctrine teaches that through consecration the substance of bread and wine becomes the body and blood of Jesus Christ while the outward appearances remain. It also describes the Mass as the sacramental making-present of Christ's one sacrifice, rather than another historical crucifixion. Those claims must be represented accurately before they are examined. There

is no need to misrepresent Catholic theology when the biblical questions are already serious enough. Where did Jesus Christ command His disciples to worship consecrated bread? Where did He establish an earthly sacrificial priesthood to offer Him sacramentally? Where did Paul explain that communion requires a supernatural change in the substance of the elements? Where does the New Testament instruct believers to approach an altar for a sacrificial action through which Christ's offering is made present? These questions are not expressions of hatred toward Catholic people. They are questions concerning the authority of Scripture and the sufficiency of redemption. Sincere people can inherit religious teachings without ever examining their foundations. The appropriate response is not ridicule. It is an open Bible, an honest examination of doctrine, and a willingness to believe what God has written even when religious tradition insists upon something else.

And then we come to the passage that ought to settle the central question of sacrifice once and for all. Hebrews 10:12 declares, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." That verse contains more doctrinal truth than a hundred volumes of ceremonial speculation. Christ offered one sacrifice. That sacrifice was for sins. It was sufficient forever. And when the offering was accomplished, the Saviour sat down. Hebrews 10:14 adds, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The former priests stood because their repeated sacrifices could never accomplish final redemption. Jesus Christ sat down because His offering was complete. His continuing heavenly intercession does not mean His sacrifice must be repeatedly offered. The living High Priest ministers on the basis of the finished sacrifice He accomplished once. Calvary was not a down payment. It was not a partial settlement. It was not the beginning of a religious installment program requiring generations of priests to continue the transaction. Christ paid the price, God accepted the offering, and heaven received the victorious Redeemer. When Jesus cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30), He did not mean that the rest of the work would be completed by a committee wearing religious garments.

But this series will not confine its corrections to Roman Catholic doctrine. Protestant churches, Baptist congregations, independent fellowships, and other Christian assemblies have developed their own misunderstandings concerning the Lord's Supper. Some turn it into a means of obtaining forgiveness. Others treat it as a measure of spiritual superiority. Some impose mandatory schedules that Scripture does not establish, while others create restrictions based upon denominational membership rather than clearly demonstrated biblical commands. Still others treat the ordinance so casually that the entire observance becomes little more than a brief interruption in an otherwise crowded church program. One extreme surrounds the bread and cup with mystical claims, while the other reduces

the remembrance of Calvary to a mechanical routine. Neither extreme honors what Christ commanded. The Lord's Supper is not a religious carnival, and it is not a sacrificial laboratory. It is a solemn remembrance established by the Saviour Himself. The solution to ritual superstition is not irreverence, and the solution to careless observance is not the invention of additional commandments. The solution is obedience to Scripture.

We will also confront one of the most misunderstood warnings associated with communion. Paul declared, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:27). Some have used those words to frighten believers into thinking that communion threatens their eternal security, that personal perfection must precede participation, or that a forgotten sin can somehow undo the saving work of Jesus Christ. But Paul was correcting the disgraceful behavior of the Corinthian congregation, where divisions, selfishness, gluttony, and disregard for poorer believers had corrupted their gatherings. His command was, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). The examination concerns the believer's conduct, not his ability to manufacture righteousness sufficient to deserve Calvary. Yet the warning must not be softened into meaninglessness. Paul identified weakness, sickness, and even death among believers as consequences of divine chastening. Eternal security does not mean earthly irresponsibility. The Christian cannot lose the salvation Christ purchased, but he can certainly experience the Father's discipline when he refuses to judge his own conduct. Grace does not make sin harmless, and divine chastening does not make Christ's blood insufficient.

Another important subject concerns the fellowship of believers who participate in the ordinance. Paul declared, "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:17). Communion was never intended to become a religious performance through which people outwardly display unity while inwardly practicing contempt, selfishness, and division. The Corinthian believers had managed to gather around the same table while humiliating those who had nothing. Paul rebuked their conduct because it contradicted the sacrifice they claimed to remember. That principle remains important today. A congregation can possess correct doctrinal statements, properly arranged elements, impressive ceremonial procedures, and a magnificent sanctuary while treating its members in ways completely contrary to Scripture. Genuine Christian fellowship is established through Jesus Christ, not manufactured through institutional cooperation or the outward appearance of religious harmony. Biblical unity must never require abandoning biblical truth. A church cannot honor the body of Christ by despising the people who belong to Christ, and it cannot create genuine spiritual unity by pretending that doctrinal error no longer matters.

There is also the matter of who possesses authority over the ordinance. Must communion be observed every Sunday, once a month, four times a year, or annually? Must an ordained minister administer it? Does a dedicated church building possess some spiritual qualification that an ordinary home cannot provide? Should participation be restricted to one particular congregation, or should believers recognize their common membership in the body of Christ? These questions deserve careful biblical answers. Paul declared, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). He established the purpose without establishing a universally mandatory calendar. The early believers gathered for fellowship, teaching, prayer, and breaking bread, sometimes in homes and sometimes in other meeting places. The New Testament recognizes legitimate church leadership and orderly congregational practice, but it does not authorize every preference of church leadership to become another commandment from heaven. A pastor may organize the observance, but he did not invent the ordinance. A congregation may establish a schedule, but it does not own the calendar of God. The table belongs to the Lord, and nobody has been appointed to rewrite His instructions merely because a different arrangement would be more convenient for the denomination.

Throughout these ten studies, the principle of rightly dividing the Word of truth will remain essential. We will not confuse Israel's Passover with the church's observance of the Lord's Supper, nor will we transfer the ceremonial requirements of the Mosaic law indiscriminately into the present dispensation of grace. We will distinguish the believer's standing in Christ from his daily fellowship with Christ, justification from chastening, the finished sacrifice from its remembrance, and the spiritual body of Christ from the responsibilities of local congregations. We will allow Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, First Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, and Hebrews to establish their own inspired testimony, rather than forcing them into a system constructed beforehand. Second Timothy 2:15 commands, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." That command demands more than collecting verses that appear useful for defending a cherished tradition. It requires understanding who is speaking, who is being addressed, what God is revealing, and how the passage belongs within His unfolding dealings with mankind. A Bible verse torn from its context can become a dangerous instrument in the hands of a confident religious man. The remedy is not less Scripture. It is more careful attention to the Scripture God actually gave.

Above all, the Lord's Supper must bring our attention back to Jesus Christ Himself. We must never become so occupied with the bread that we forget His body, so fascinated with the cup that we forget His blood, or so absorbed in ceremonial questions that we neglect the Gospel the ordinance proclaims. Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, lived without sin,

fulfilled the will of His Father, willingly surrendered Himself upon the cross, shed His precious blood for sinners, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. His sacrifice accomplished eternal redemption, and His resurrection declared the victory of the crucified Saviour. He is now seated at the right hand of God, and the redeemed church awaits His return. The Lord's Supper points backward to His completed sacrifice and forward to that glorious expectation. Paul wrote that believers proclaim the Lord's death "till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). That final expression reminds us that the ordinance belongs to a period of waiting. The Saviour whose death we remember is alive, and the Lord whose sacrifice we proclaim is coming again. We are not waiting for another Calvary. We are waiting for the Christ who finished Calvary.

And that brings us to the reason this entire series matters. There are sincere Christians who have never been taught the biblical meaning of communion. There are Catholic readers who have inherited sacramental explanations without carefully examining the New Testament passages for themselves. There are Protestant believers who have participated in the Lord's Supper for decades without understanding its connection with the finished sacrifice. There are newly saved Christians who need instruction, church leaders who need to teach the ordinance accurately, and families who want to explain its significance to their children. There are also religious people who have mistakenly placed their confidence in a ceremony instead of the Saviour. Every one of them deserves something better than confusion, superstition, or a collection of denominational arguments. They deserve the truth of God's Word. The intention is not to win a contest of religious labels. It is to establish sound doctrine, correct false teaching, strengthen believers, and direct sinners toward the only One who can save them. Truth spoken in love does not require the surrender of conviction. Love without truth leaves people in darkness, and truth delivered without concern for people forgets the very souls the Gospel was given to reach.

So we will open the King James Bible and examine the Lord's Supper from its foundations to its proper observance, testing every major claim against the written Word of God. We will not turn a memorial into a means of salvation, a representation into an object of worship, or a minister into another mediator between God and men. We will not weaken the warnings against irreverence, and we will not permit those warnings to become threats against the eternal security of believers. We will preserve the seriousness of the ordinance without surrounding it with religious inventions. And when the final page has been read, the objective is that every reader will understand not merely how communion should be observed, but why Jesus Christ established it in the first place. The bread reminds us of His body given. The cup reminds us of His blood shed. The observance proclaims His death until He comes. The Passover pointed forward to the Lamb. The Lord's Supper points backward to the sacrifice. The empty tomb declares the victory. The heavenly throne

testifies that the work is finished. And the promise of His coming reminds us that the redeemed church will not be waiting forever. One Lord, one sufficient sacrifice, one finished redemption, and one glorious Saviour who deserves every bit of the honor. Remember Him. Proclaim His death. Await His coming. And never allow religious tradition to steal the glory that belongs to Jesus Christ alone.

**1 of 10. The Lord's Supper: From the Passover Lamb to the Upper Room**

Key Passage: "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:" (1 Corinthians 5:7)

**Introduction**

Long before the Lord Jesus Christ sat in an upper room with His disciples, broke bread, and took a cup, Almighty God had already established a picture so clear that a man would have to work overtime to misunderstand it. That picture was painted in Egypt, not with an artist's brush, but with the blood of a spotless lamb. It was not established in a cathedral, accompanied by religious pageantry, or administered by a priest wearing enough ceremonial clothing to furnish a department store. It began in humble Israelite homes while judgment was preparing to fall upon the greatest earthly power of that generation. God was about to deliver His people from bondage, and He established a memorial that would testify to that deliverance throughout their generations. Yet buried within that historical event was a prophetic picture pointing forward to something infinitely greater. The blood upon those doorposts anticipated the blood of Jesus Christ, and the lamb upon those tables foreshadowed the Lamb of God who would take away the sin of the world.

There is a reason the apostle Paul wrote, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:" (1 Corinthians 5:7). He did not announce that Jesus Christ had become another religious ornament to decorate an already crowded collection of ceremonies. He identified the fulfillment of a divine picture that had been unfolding for centuries. The Passover lamb was not merely an interesting feature of ancient Jewish history, and the crucifixion was not an unfortunate interruption of Christ's earthly ministry. The Lamb was provided according to the foreknowledge of God, and the cross was the appointed place where redemption would be accomplished. The trouble begins when men take the symbols God established to testify of His work and turn them into instruments supposedly possessing the power to perform that work. Religion is remarkably skilled at this particular trade. Give it a memorial, and it will eventually try to manufacture a sacrifice. Give it a reminder, and it will attempt to turn the reminder into a means of redemption.

To understand the Lord's Supper correctly, we must begin where the Bible begins, examining the Passover in its historical setting before following its prophetic significance to Calvary and its connection with the New Testament church. Israel was delivered from Egypt as a nation, while the church is composed of believers united to Jesus Christ under the present dispensation of grace. Those distinctions matter. The same God who commanded Israel to observe the Passover later revealed through the apostle Paul how believers should observe the Lord's Supper. The two observances are connected by the sacrifice of Christ, but they are not identical in purpose, historical administration, or covenant setting. Confuse the two, and you will eventually confuse the law with grace, Israel with the church, and remembrance with redemption. The Lord's Supper was never intended to obscure the cross beneath a mountain of religious tradition. It was given to direct our attention to the One who died, the blood He shed, and the salvation He finished.

**1. The Passover Began With God's Deliverance, Not Man's Religion**

Exodus 12 opens with the LORD speaking to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, establishing a new beginning for the children of Israel. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you" (Exodus 12:2). Notice where they were when God spoke those words. Israel had not entered Canaan. The tabernacle had not been constructed. The Levitical priesthood had not yet been established, and the covenant at Sinai had not yet been delivered. They were still in Egypt, surrounded by idolatry, subjected to slavery, and awaiting the fulfillment of God's promise to their fathers. Yet the LORD was about to mark their history with a redemption so significant that their religious calendar would begin with it. God did not wait until Israel had cleaned up its circumstances before announcing deliverance. He provided the means of deliverance while the people were still living in the land of their bondage.

God commanded, "In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house" (Exodus 12:3). The lamb was selected for a household, and provisions were made when a household was too small to consume it. The animal had to meet God's requirements rather than man's preferences. Exodus 12:5 declares, "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats." Here was no invitation to offer whatever happened to be convenient, damaged, aging, or otherwise unsuitable. The LORD specified the sacrifice. A defective animal might have satisfied an Egyptian butcher, but it would not have satisfied the divine command. The important question was never whether the Israelites considered their offering impressive. The question was whether they obeyed the word God had spoken.

The appointed lamb was kept until the fourteenth day, when the congregation was instructed to kill it in the evening (Exodus 12:6). That command established a deliberate sequence: the lamb was selected, examined, kept, and slain according to God's instructions. None of this originated in human imagination. Israel did not organize a religious committee, debate several promising alternatives, and eventually settle upon a lamb because sheep happened to be plentiful. God gave the instructions, and obedience required accepting His provision. This is the foundation upon which the entire picture stands. Redemption begins with God's initiative, not man's ingenuity. Later, when John the Baptist pointed toward Jesus Christ and cried, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), he was identifying a Saviour whose mission fulfilled the purpose toward which those ancient sacrifices pointed. The lamb in Egypt was selected by God's command. The Lamb at Calvary was provided by God Himself.

**2. The Blood on the Door and the Judgment in the Streets**

The LORD commanded the Israelites to take the blood of the slain lamb and strike it upon the two side posts and the upper door post of the houses where they would eat (Exodus 12:7). That instruction brings us to the distinguishing feature of the first Passover. God did not tell them merely to admire the lamb, discuss the lamb, sing about the lamb, or develop a religious ceremony celebrating the lamb's attractive qualities. The blood had to be applied where God commanded. A spotless lamb standing alive in the courtyard would not fulfill the instruction. A dead lamb with its blood disregarded would not satisfy the stated condition either. God had specified both the sacrifice and the appointed sign. The Israelites were not instructed to trust in their national identity, their ancestry, their personal decency, or their accumulated good deeds. They were commanded to act upon what the LORD had spoken concerning the lamb and its blood.

Exodus 12:12 reveals the approaching judgment: "For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD." The judgment was not a harmless religious illustration designed to provide material for a future holiday. It was real, terrible, and certain. Egypt's power could not prevent it. Pharaoh's throne could not overturn it. The multiplied idols of Egypt could not provide protection against it. Then came the promise in Exodus 12:13: "and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." Notice the wording carefully. God did not say that He would pass over because the occupants possessed greater moral accomplishments than their Egyptian neighbors. He promised to pass over when He saw the blood.

Moses instructed the elders to take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood, and strike the lintel and two side posts of their houses (Exodus 12:21-22). They were also commanded to remain inside until morning. The household beneath the blood was not free to rewrite the instructions because another arrangement appeared more reasonable. God's promise was attached to the means He had appointed. The picture points beautifully toward the finished work of Jesus Christ, although we must remember that the historical event concerned Israel's protection during a particular judgment in Egypt. In the fuller revelation of the New Testament, Peter declares that believers are redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19). The ancient household depended upon God's promise concerning the Passover blood. The sinner today must depend upon the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed for redemption. Salvation is not manufactured by admiring a sacrifice from a distance. It is received through faith in the Saviour God has provided.

**3. The Unleavened Bread, Bitter Herbs, and a Nation Preparing to Leave**

The Passover was more than the slaughter of an animal. God specified a meal, including the manner in which the lamb was to be prepared and eaten. "And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it" (Exodus 12:8). The lamb was not to be eaten raw or boiled with water, but roasted with fire according to the divine instruction. Nothing was to be left until morning, and anything remaining was to be burned (Exodus 12:9-10). These details belonged to the actual observance God commanded Israel, not to an imaginary ceremony reconstructed centuries afterward. The unleavened bread accompanied a people who were preparing for immediate departure, while the bitter herbs belonged to the solemn meal surrounding their deliverance from a bitter bondage. Egypt had been a house of affliction, and the LORD was about to break its hold. The meal was both preparation for departure and a testimony to the redemption God was accomplishing.

The people were instructed to eat with their loins girded, their shoes upon their feet, and their staff in their hand. Exodus 12:11 concludes, "and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover." This was not a leisurely banquet for people planning to spend another comfortable generation beneath Pharaoh's authority. They were preparing to leave. God was not negotiating improved working conditions with Egypt; He was bringing His people out of Egypt altogether. There is a difference between decorating the chains and breaking them, and the LORD had no intention of leaving Israel in captivity with a few religious privileges added to its miserable existence. His command demanded readiness because His deliverance was approaching. The people ate as those who believed God's word

concerning what He was about to do. Their obedience did not force God to keep His promise. Their obedience acknowledged the reliability of the God who had already spoken.

The unleavened bread also furnishes an important connection with Paul's instruction to the Corinthian church. He wrote, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Corinthians 5:6). Then he declared, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The apostle was addressing serious moral corruption in a New Testament congregation, not ordering Gentile believers to place themselves beneath every ceremonial requirement imposed upon Israel. He continued by instructing them to keep the feast "not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Corinthians 5:8). Here the Passover imagery becomes a powerful spiritual application. A church cannot honor the sacrifice of Christ while treating tolerated wickedness as harmless entertainment. Grace does not provide a hiding place for sin. It establishes a people whose conduct ought to reflect the redemption they have received.

**4. The Lamb Without Blemish and the Saviour Without Sin**

The requirement that the Passover lamb be without blemish was not an incidental detail inserted to make the animal more attractive. It anticipated the moral perfection of the One who would eventually fulfill the picture. Peter described the redeemed as those purchased "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19). Jesus Christ did not enter this world carrying the corruption of Adam's fallen race, nor did He accumulate sins during His earthly ministry that required personal forgiveness. Hebrews 4:15 declares that He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Second Corinthians 5:21 states, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The spotless lamb in Egypt could only picture the perfection of the Saviour. The animal was without a physical defect. Jesus Christ was without sin. One possessed ceremonial acceptability. The Other possessed absolute righteousness.

Isaiah had already foretold the suffering of Christ centuries before the crucifixion. "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). The prophet also declared, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). There stands the great distinction between the sinner and the Saviour. We are the wandering sheep, and He is the obedient Lamb. We are the guilty ones, and He is the innocent One. We deserved judgment, and He willingly bore the penalty for our sins. The cross was not an exhibition of divine helplessness. It was the appointed

sacrifice of the Son of God. Acts 2:23 describes Christ as delivered by "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Wicked men were responsible for crucifying Him, but their wickedness did not overthrow God's redemptive purpose.

Another remarkable connection appears in Exodus 12:46, where the LORD commanded concerning the Passover lamb, "neither shall ye break a bone thereof." When Jesus Christ was crucified, the soldiers broke the legs of the two men crucified beside Him, but they did not break His legs because He was already dead. John 19:36 explains, "For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken." The New Testament itself draws attention to this fulfillment. That is far stronger evidence than the imaginative connections men sometimes invent between unrelated passages. The Bible does not need a preacher to manufacture hidden meanings with enough creative stretching to pull the verses out of shape. God has supplied the connections. The Passover lamb was slain according to divine instruction, and the Lamb of God fulfilled the Scriptures in His death. A thousand religious inventions cannot improve upon one fulfillment plainly established by the Word of God.

**5. The Upper Room Where the Passover Met Its Fulfillment**

When we arrive at Matthew 26, the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ is drawing toward its appointed conclusion. His disciples came to Him concerning the preparation of the Passover, and He directed them to make ready. Matthew 26:19 records, "And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover." Mark 14 provides additional details concerning the furnished upper room where the meal would take place. This was no accidental gathering, no unexpected farewell arranged at the last moment because events had suddenly escaped the Lord's control. Christ knew what was approaching. He had already foretold His betrayal, suffering, death, and resurrection. The religious authorities were plotting His destruction, Judas would betray Him, and His disciples would soon be scattered. Yet the Lord remained completely aware of His mission. While men were arranging His arrest, He was preparing His disciples to understand the significance of His sacrifice. The upper room stood at the meeting place of centuries of prophetic expectation and the approaching reality of Calvary.

Luke records the words of Christ, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:" (Luke 22:15). There is tremendous significance in that statement. Jesus Christ understood the suffering that lay immediately ahead, yet He deliberately gathered with His disciples to observe the Passover and establish the memorial of His approaching death. He did not require anyone to explain to Him what the Passover meant. He was the One toward whom its prophetic significance had pointed. He knew the Scripture, the purpose of His coming, and the sacrifice He was about to accomplish. During the meal, He

also exposed the presence of betrayal among those gathered with Him. The shadow of Judas did not diminish the certainty of God's plan. Human treachery could bring wicked men to the cross, but it could not defeat the redemptive purpose accomplished there. The Lamb was moving toward the appointed altar, and no earthly conspiracy could alter the final outcome.

Matthew 26:26 records, "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." He then took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them. In Matthew 26:28, He declared, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Here the Lord established the elements that would become central to the church's observance of His supper. The bread directed attention to His body, and the cup directed attention to His blood. The One speaking those words was physically present before the disciples, yet He was describing the sacrifice that would shortly take place. His words did not authorize centuries of theological invention to be poured into a cup and served as divine revelation. The meaning of the ordinance must be governed by what Christ actually said and what the Holy Ghost subsequently revealed through the apostles.

**6. From the Passover Table to the Remembrance of a Finished Sacrifice**

Luke 22:19 gives the Lord's stated purpose for the bread: "this do in remembrance of me." The language is neither complicated nor mysterious. Christ was preparing His disciples to remember the sacrifice He would accomplish. The Passover commemorated the LORD's historical deliverance of Israel from Egypt, while the Lord's Supper would proclaim the death of Jesus Christ. One looked back upon the deliverance of a nation from physical bondage. The other directs believers to the crucified Saviour whose death secured eternal redemption. There is a tremendous difference between remembering a sacrifice and claiming that a religious ceremony performs the work of that sacrifice. The Lord did not tell His disciples to establish a new earthly altar where His death would have to be offered again to become effective. He commanded remembrance. When a man reads those words and immediately begins constructing a system that places saving power in the ceremony itself, he has left the plain command behind and entered the religious manufacturing business.

The finished character of Christ's sacrifice is established beyond reasonable dispute in Hebrews. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). The writer contrasts the repeated sacrifices associated with the former priesthood with the single sufficient offering of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 10:12 declares, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." The former priests stood ministering because their

sacrifices could never remove sin permanently. Christ offered Himself, accomplished redemption, and sat down. His sitting down was not a declaration that He had grown weary of religious activity. It testified to the completion of His sacrificial work. Hebrews 10:14 adds, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The cross does not require a ceremonial assistant to finish what Christ accomplished. The sacrifice was sufficient before any later minister ever lifted a cup or broke a piece of bread.

The apostle Paul subsequently delivered instructions concerning the Lord's Supper to the Corinthian church. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (1 Corinthians 11:23). His instructions included the bread, the cup, remembrance, self-examination, and the solemn responsibility of believers when observing the ordinance. Notice particularly his declaration, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). The action proclaims the Lord's death. It does not repeat His death, improve His offering, or secure another installment of redemption. Furthermore, the words "till he come" direct the church toward the future return of Jesus Christ. The ordinance therefore bears witness to a sacrifice already accomplished and a Saviour who is coming again. The church does not gather around a memorial because Christ remains helpless upon a cross. It remembers a crucified and risen Lord who lives forevermore.

**7. Israel's Passover and the Church's Supper Must Be Rightly Divided**

Here is where careful Bible study becomes absolutely necessary. Exodus 12 was addressed to the children of Israel in the historical setting of their deliverance from Egypt. The Passover became a continuing memorial in Israel's national life and was subsequently incorporated into the worship established under the Mosaic law. Exodus 12:14 declares, "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations." The chapter also contains regulations concerning participation, including instructions about strangers, servants, and circumcision. Those regulations belonged to Israel's appointed observance. They were not addressed to a New Testament congregation composed of saved Jews and Gentiles united in the body of Christ. A man who takes commands given to Israel under one administration and indiscriminately imposes them upon the church under another has not rightly divided the word of truth. He has confused the mail because he liked the instructions inside the envelope.

The apostle Paul commanded Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). That principle applies directly to our subject. The Passover and the Lord's Supper share essential connections through the sacrifice of Christ, but their historical settings and commanded observances must not be confused. Israel's Passover remembered

deliverance from Egyptian bondage, while Paul's instructions concerning the Lord's Supper were delivered to the church at Corinth. The Passover involved a lamb selected and slain according to the directions given in Exodus. The Lord's Supper uses bread and the cup to proclaim the death of the Lamb of God who has already been sacrificed. The Passover was associated with an appointed day in Israel's calendar. Paul's language concerning the church's observance is "as often as ye eat this bread" (1 Corinthians 11:26). The similarities reveal a divine connection. The differences preserve sound doctrine.

The New Testament church does not become national Israel by participating in the Lord's Supper, nor does participation place believers back beneath the ceremonial obligations of the Mosaic law. Ephesians 2:8-9 declares that salvation is by grace through faith, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Romans 3:28 states, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." The Lord's Supper must therefore never be presented as a work required to obtain justification or an instrument by which a saved person repeatedly purchases forgiveness. The believer's standing before God rests upon the finished work of Jesus Christ, not the frequency or outward correctness of his participation in a religious ceremony. Yet liberty under grace is not permission for irreverence. Paul's warnings to Corinth demonstrate that the ordinance must be approached seriously. Grace removes the burden of earning salvation, but it does not remove the responsibility of obedience. The church remembers Christ because it belongs to Him, not because the ceremony makes Christ belong to the church.

**Conclusion**

When the whole biblical picture is brought together, the beauty of God's design becomes unmistakable. In Egypt, the LORD commanded a spotless lamb, its blood applied according to His word, and a meal eaten by a people preparing for deliverance. The first Passover was a real historical event involving real judgment and real redemption from bondage. Yet God had woven into that event a picture that would reach its fulfillment in the death of His Son. The lamb without blemish pointed toward the sinless Christ. The blood protecting Israelite households during judgment anticipated the greater redemption accomplished through His precious blood. The Passover meal stood within Israel's covenant history, while the Lord's Supper would become the church's remembrance of the crucified Saviour. These truths are not competing explanations. They belong to the unfolding revelation of God's redemptive purpose. The mistake comes when men refuse to distinguish the original historical setting from its prophetic fulfillment and subsequent application to believers under grace.

We must also recognize the danger of permitting religious tradition to displace the plain testimony of Scripture. God did not provide the Passover lamb so future generations could

develop increasingly elaborate theories about ceremonial power. Neither did Jesus Christ establish His supper so men could build an entire system of supposed sacrificial necessity around the bread and the cup. The sacrifice that redeems sinners was accomplished by Christ Himself. His blood was shed at Calvary, His offering was accepted, and His resurrection declared the victory of the crucified Saviour. When He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30), He was not announcing that the foundation had been laid for generations of priests to complete His work. Redemption was accomplished. The sinner is called to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, not to trust in the religious elements that testify of His death. A memorial that directs a man to Christ serves its proper purpose. A ceremony that teaches him to trust in the memorial instead of Christ has become an obstacle to the very truth it was supposed to proclaim.

The Lord's Supper should therefore bring believers back to the simplicity, solemnity, and sufficiency of the Gospel. We remember a body given, blood shed, sin judged, redemption accomplished, and a Saviour who rose again and is coming back. We do not gather to manufacture another Calvary, replace the finished sacrifice, or turn ordinary elements into objects of worship. We gather to proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. That proclamation should produce gratitude without superstition, reverence without bondage, and obedience without the false notion that our works contribute to our justification. The Passover lamb in Egypt pointed forward to the cross. The Lord's Supper points backward to that same cross and forward to the returning Lord. Between those two memorials stands the greatest sacrifice in history, accomplished once and sufficient forever. The lamb in Egypt died so judgment would pass over the household. The Lamb of God died so sinners could be redeemed forever. And the Lord's Supper does not place Him back upon the altar. It reminds us that the altar's work has already been finished.

**2 of 10. The Lord’s Supper: The Night He Was Betrayed and the Ordinance He Established**

Key Passage: "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:" (1 Corinthians 11:23)

**Introduction**

There is something remarkable about the simplicity of the instructions Jesus Christ gave concerning the Lord's Supper and the extraordinary complexity men have managed to build around them. The Lord took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to His disciples. He took the cup and directed their attention to His blood, which would be shed for the

remission of sins. Later, through the apostle Paul, the Holy Ghost explained how the church was to observe this ordinance in remembrance of Christ. Yet somewhere between that upper room in Jerusalem and the elaborate religious ceremonies developed over succeeding centuries, men began acting as though the Lord had forgotten to include several hundred pages of necessary instructions. Suddenly, ordinary bread required theological explanations longer than some books of the Bible, religious officials claimed special powers over the elements, and ceremonies acquired an importance that threatened to overshadow the finished sacrifice they were supposed to proclaim. The question is not whether religious traditions can appear impressive. The question is whether Jesus Christ authorized them.

The apostle Paul begins his instructions with a statement that should settle the matter of authority before the discussion goes any further. "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (1 Corinthians 11:23). Paul did not claim that a council had voted upon the proper meaning of communion, that an ecclesiastical committee had improved the original procedure, or that centuries of religious custom had finally discovered what Jesus supposedly intended. He received his instruction from the Lord and delivered it to the church. Then he added the solemn historical setting: "That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread" (1 Corinthians 11:23). The Lord's Supper was established under the approaching shadow of betrayal, arrest, condemnation, and crucifixion. While Judas was preparing to sell his Master, Christ was preparing His disciples to remember His sacrifice. There is more doctrine in that contrast than in a warehouse full of religious decorations.

Before examining what the Lord's Supper means, we must establish precisely what the Lord commanded. Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the institution of the supper during the closing hours of Christ's earthly ministry. Paul subsequently delivers inspired instruction concerning its observance in the New Testament church. These passages must be compared carefully, respecting their historical settings and recognizing the distinction between Israel under the law and the church under grace. We are not at liberty to invent doctrines from the silence of Scripture, and neither may we dismiss commands merely because religious tradition has buried them beneath centuries of accumulated practices. The ordinance belongs to Jesus Christ. Its authority comes from Jesus Christ. Its purpose is to remember and proclaim the death of Jesus Christ. And if a religious system requires Christians to believe something about that ordinance which the Word of God does not teach, the proper response is not to rewrite the Bible. It is to examine the system.

**1. The Passover Setting: Christ Established His Supper Before the Cross**

The historical setting begins with the Passover, the annual observance God commanded Israel to remember the deliverance from Egypt. Matthew 26:17 records, "Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?" The disciples were not planning an independent Christian communion service according to a church calendar. They were preparing to observe a feast that belonged to Israel's covenant history. Christ had been born under the law, and His earthly ministry unfolded within the historical setting of God's dealings with Israel. Galatians 4:4 declares, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." That distinction matters tremendously. The supper was instituted before the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and subsequent revelation of church doctrine through Paul. To understand the Lord's actions properly, we must recognize the Passover setting without carelessly dragging every requirement of Israel's ceremonial law into the present dispensation.

Matthew 26:18 records the Lord's instruction concerning the location: "Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples." Mark 14:13-16 provides additional details concerning a man carrying a pitcher of water and a large upper room furnished and prepared. Luke 22:13 concludes, "And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover." Notice the simplicity of the entire arrangement. Christ directed His disciples to a prepared room, and they made ready according to His instructions. There is no appointment of a new ceremonial priesthood, no consecration of a sacrificial altar, and no elaborate ritual vocabulary introduced as a necessary condition for what would follow. The authority was not in the room, its furnishings, or the social standing of its owner. The authority was in the Lord who gave the instructions.

This setting also reminds us that Jesus Christ was moving toward the cross deliberately, not stumbling into an unexpected disaster. Matthew 26:2 records His declaration, "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified." He knew the appointed time, the approaching suffering, and the purpose for which He had come. The religious leaders imagined they were arranging His destruction, but their wicked plans did not surprise the Son of God. The Passover had pointed forward to the Lamb whose blood would be shed, and now that Lamb was preparing to offer Himself. John the Baptist had already declared, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The Passover table stood before the cross, while the Lord's Supper would become a remembrance of the cross. The entire movement turns upon one sacrifice, not an endless procession of religious performances attempting to accomplish what Christ came to finish.

**2. Matthew's Account: The Bread, the Cup, and the Blood of the New Testament**

Matthew 26:26 declares, "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." Those are the words of Scripture, and every part of them deserves attention. Jesus took bread. He blessed it. He broke it. He gave it to the disciples. Then He identified it with His body. Notice also that the Lord was physically present before the men receiving the bread. His body had not yet been nailed to the cross, and His blood had not yet been shed at Calvary. The disciples were watching Him perform the action while hearing Him explain its significance. The passage does not record Christ instructing them to adore the bread, establish a shrine around it, or attribute divine power to the hands distributing it. The bread was given in connection with the sacrifice He was about to accomplish. The central Person was the Lord Jesus Christ, not the material substance resting in the disciples' hands.

Matthew then records, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it" (Matthew 26:27). The following verse supplies the explanation: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Here we reach the foundation of the ordinance's connection with redemption. Christ speaks of His blood and the remission of sins, directing the disciples toward the sacrifice that would shortly take place. Scripture teaches that forgiveness rests upon the shedding of Christ's blood, not upon the supposed supernatural power of a ceremonial vessel. Hebrews 9:22 declares, "and without shedding of blood is no remission." The cup testified to the blood. The blood accomplished what the cup could never accomplish. A man may possess the finest chalice ever manufactured, but polished metal cannot wash away a single sin. Redemption was not purchased in a workshop, a sanctuary, or a ceremony. It was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 26:29 adds another statement that must not be overlooked: "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Christ connected the cup with the fruit of the vine and directed His disciples toward a future kingdom fulfillment. He did not establish a ceremony whose meaning was exhausted by the immediate evening. The supper looked toward His impending death, while His promise also pointed toward a future fellowship beyond the suffering of the cross. Those words preserve the distinction between the physical elements being used and the great realities to which they testify. Men may debate ceremonial substances until the candles burn down to the furniture, but Matthew's account demands that we keep our attention upon Christ's sacrifice and His promise. The bread and the cup matter because the Lord gave them meaning. They do not possess authority to change the meaning the Lord gave.

**3. Mark and Luke: Three Gospel Witnesses to One Divine Institution**

Mark 14:22 records, "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's account confirms the essential actions already recorded by Matthew. Christ took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and distributed it to His disciples. Mark then adds, "And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it" (Mark 14:23). The next verse declares, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many" (Mark 14:24). There is no contradiction between these accounts, nor does either authorize replacing Christ's instructions with a completely different ceremony. The details reinforce one another. The same Lord gave the bread and the cup, and the same approaching death supplied their significance. A doctrine requiring an elaborate priestly operation cannot establish its authority merely by pointing to the phrase "this is my body" while ignoring the rest of the inspired account.

Luke adds an especially important explanation concerning the purpose of the supper. Luke 22:19 declares, "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." The words "given for you" direct attention to Christ's voluntary sacrifice, while "this do in remembrance of me" establishes the memorial purpose. Those last words are not a theological footnote to be pushed aside when tradition becomes inconvenient. They are the Lord's own explanation of what His disciples were to do. Luke also records a cup before the distribution of bread and then the cup after supper in Luke 22:20. The passage must be allowed to speak in its own order instead of being compressed into an invented ceremonial script. Scripture gives us an actual historical account, not a blank page inviting men to construct whatever religious machinery suits their preferences.

Luke 22:20 states, "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Compare those words with Matthew's emphasis upon blood shed for many and Mark's matching declaration. Luke emphasizes that the blood is shed for the disciples, while all three accounts direct attention to the coming sacrifice. The difference in expression provides complementary testimony, not competing doctrines. Matthew records the blood of the new testament, Mark confirms the same truth, and Luke records the cup as the new testament in Christ's blood. The authority of the ordinance is found in the words spoken by the Lord, not in an elaborate theory imported centuries later. Religious tradition sometimes approaches Scripture like a contractor arriving at a completed building with a truckload of unnecessary materials. It insists that the original structure cannot possibly stand without its additions. But when the

Lord establishes something, the burden of proof belongs to the man who proposes to improve it.

**4. The Night He Was Betrayed: The Darkness Surrounding a Holy Remembrance**

The apostle Paul could have introduced his account by saying that Jesus established the supper shortly before His crucifixion. Instead, the Holy Ghost preserved a more piercing expression: "the same night in which he was betrayed" (1 Corinthians 11:23). Those words place the ordinance against the darkness of human treachery. Judas Iscariot had walked with Jesus, heard His teaching, witnessed His miracles, and enjoyed privileges that kings and prophets of former generations had desired to see. Yet familiarity with sacred things had not produced saving faith in his heart. John 12:6 identifies Judas as a thief who carried the bag and stole from its contents. The man who complained about the supposed waste of expensive ointment upon Christ was already helping himself to the money entrusted to his care. Religious appearance and spiritual reality were traveling in opposite directions. Judas could speak the language of concern while nursing a heart devoted to betrayal. A man may stand close enough to hear the truth and still remain determined to reject it.

John 13:21 records the Lord's declaration, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." The announcement troubled the disciples, and they began questioning who would commit such an act. The Lord knew the traitor before the others recognized him. John 13:27 records His words to Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly." Judas went out, and John adds the chilling observation, "and it was night" (John 13:30). The Gospel accounts supply different details surrounding the Passover meal and the betrayal, and we should not force every event into a speculative arrangement that Scripture does not explicitly establish. The essential truth remains perfectly clear. Jesus Christ knew the treachery unfolding around Him, yet He continued toward the cross in obedience to the Father's will. Judas was preparing to deliver Him into wicked hands, while Christ was preparing to give Himself for sinners. One man was calculating what he could receive for betrayal. The Son of God was preparing to accomplish redemption.

There is an important warning in this historical setting. Outward proximity to Jesus Christ does not establish inward possession of eternal life. Judas was one of the twelve, but John 6:70 records Christ's words, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Religious association did not regenerate that man, and outward participation in Christian practices cannot regenerate anyone today. A person may attend church, handle the bread, drink from the cup, repeat the proper words, and remain lost because he has never believed the Gospel. The Lord's Supper is not a spiritual vaccination against unbelief. It was not instituted to replace personal faith in Jesus Christ. Yet its setting also reveals the astonishing faithfulness of the Saviour. Human betrayal did not turn Him away from His

appointed sacrifice. While men displayed the worst of fallen humanity, Christ was moving toward the greatest demonstration of divine love. The supper remembers His faithfulness, not the religious accomplishments of those gathered around His table.

**5. Paul's Revelation: The Lord's Supper Delivered to the New Testament Church**

First Corinthians 11:23 establishes an important distinction between the historical institution of the supper and its inspired delivery to the church. Paul wrote, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." The apostle did not merely collect interesting details concerning a meal he had heard about from other believers. He identified the Lord as the source of the instruction he delivered. This matters because Paul was writing to a congregation living after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. The Corinthian believers were not Israelites observing the Passover under the Mosaic law. They were members of a New Testament church, and Paul was correcting their conduct according to the instruction he had received. The historical event in the upper room supplied the foundation, while Paul's epistle established authoritative instruction concerning the church's observance. The believer who wants to understand communion must therefore read the Gospel accounts and First Corinthians together, respecting the original settings of both.

The immediate context of Paul's instruction is particularly revealing. He did not introduce the subject because the Corinthians lacked a sufficiently impressive ceremonial performance. He addressed the matter because their gatherings had become corrupted by divisions and selfishness. First Corinthians 11:18 declares, "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it." Paul then rebuked their behavior, explaining that some ate excessively while others remained hungry. First Corinthians 11:21 states, "for in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken." Imagine that spectacle. A congregation was supposedly assembling to remember the Lord who gave Himself for others, while members demonstrated so little regard for one another that their gathering had become an exhibition of selfishness. They had managed to turn a remembrance of sacrificial love into an occasion for satisfying their appetites. That takes some extraordinary religious talent.

Paul's answer was not to introduce additional ceremonial machinery. He returned the Corinthians to the original institution of the supper and explained the seriousness of their conduct. First Corinthians 11:27 warns against eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord unworthily, while verse 28 commands, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." The apostle was addressing the manner in which believers participated, not establishing a doctrine that a Christian must become morally perfect before approaching the table. The distinction is vital. No sinner becomes worthy of

Christ's blood through personal achievement. Salvation rests upon His righteousness, not ours. Nevertheless, believers are responsible for examining their conduct and approaching the ordinance with reverence. The same chapter warns of divine chastening upon those who abused it. Grace does not turn the Lord's Supper into a meaningless religious snack. It teaches redeemed people to remember their Saviour with seriousness, gratitude, and obedience.

**6. This Do in Remembrance of Me: The Purpose Christ Actually Commanded**

When the Lord Jesus Christ explained the purpose of the supper, He used language so plain that the greatest difficulty lies in persuading religious men to leave it alone. Luke 22:19 declares, "this do in remembrance of me." Paul repeats the same instruction concerning the bread in 1 Corinthians 11:24 and concerning the cup in 1 Corinthians 11:25. The repetition is significant. Christ did not command His disciples to manufacture His body, summon His sacrifice into existence, or perform another offering to secure additional redemption. He commanded remembrance. That remembrance is not casual recollection of a dead religious teacher. It is the deliberate proclamation of the crucified and risen Saviour whose death accomplished salvation. The believer remembers His body given, His blood shed, the judgment He bore, and the grace made available through His finished work. When religious doctrine changes remembrance into a supposed necessity for completing redemption, it has exchanged the Lord's stated purpose for an unauthorized theological construction.

Paul gives the church an inspired explanation in 1 Corinthians 11:26: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." The word "shew" identifies the ordinance as a proclamation. The bread and the cup visibly direct attention to the death of Jesus Christ. Notice also the expression "as often." Paul did not establish a universal command requiring every congregation to observe the supper on a particular day of every week, month, or year. Acts 20:7 records disciples gathering upon the first day of the week to break bread, and Acts 2:42 includes the breaking of bread among the practices of the early believers. Those passages deserve careful examination, but they do not establish an elaborate mandatory calendar governing every congregation throughout the church age. The church should observe the ordinance faithfully and reverently, without converting its chosen schedule into another commandment. Scripture establishes the purpose. Human tradition must not pretend to possess equal authority.

The closing words of 1 Corinthians 11:26 are equally important: "till he come." The Lord's Supper does not merely look backward toward the cross. It also looks forward toward the coming of Jesus Christ. The One whose death believers proclaim is not presently confined to a grave, nor does He remain physically suffering upon Calvary. He rose again, ascended

into heaven, and will return according to His promise. First Thessalonians 4:16 declares, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." The church awaits its returning Lord, and the supper bears witness during that period of expectation. It is a remembrance established for believers living between the accomplished sacrifice and the anticipated return. Religion may become so occupied with the arrangement of the table that it forgets to look toward heaven. But the ordinance itself reminds us that the Saviour who died is alive, and the Lord who departed is coming again.

**7. What Christ Never Established: Priestly Powers, Sacrificial Altars, and Religious Additions**

Now we must address what the New Testament does not authorize. In none of the institution accounts does Jesus Christ establish a separate class of Christian priests empowered to transform bread into His physical body or perform a sacrificial offering necessary to convey redemption. The Lord took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and distributed it. He took the cup and explained its connection with His blood. Paul later delivered those instructions to the church. Scripture certainly recognizes pastors, elders, bishops, and other responsibilities within the local congregation, but those offices must not be confused with a separate sacrificial priesthood standing between the believer and the saving work of Christ. First Timothy 2:5 declares, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." The believer does not require another mediator to make Christ's sacrifice effective. A man may possess a religious title longer than his sleeve, but that title cannot add one drop of saving power to the blood shed at Calvary.

The book of Hebrews supplies the doctrinal foundation that must govern every claim concerning sacrifices and priesthood. Hebrews 7:27 describes Christ as One who does not need to offer sacrifices daily, declaring, "for this he did once, when he offered up himself." Hebrews 10:11 contrasts the former priesthood with Christ's completed offering: "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." The following verse declares that Jesus Christ, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. These passages establish the sufficiency and finality of His offering. The Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass describes it as a sacramental making-present of Christ's one sacrifice, not a new historical crucifixion. That distinction should be represented accurately, but the necessary question remains whether Christ's words and Paul's instructions establish such a sacrificial action. The institution passages command remembrance and proclamation. They do not explicitly

establish a new earthly altar upon which ordained ministers must sacramentally offer Christ.

None of this means that reverence, order, thanksgiving, or careful administration should be discarded. First Corinthians 14:40 commands, "Let all things be done decently and in order." A congregation may arrange its observance responsibly, appoint suitable leadership, prepare the elements, and maintain a solemn atmosphere without pretending that its chosen procedures possess divine authority equal to Scripture. The danger begins when human arrangements are promoted into indispensable religious requirements or when ceremonies are credited with powers the Bible never assigns to them. Mark 7:13 records Christ rebuking those who were "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition." That principle should concern every congregation, regardless of its denominational identity. Tradition may serve as an arrangement for practicing a biblical command, but it must never become the master of the command. The Lord's Supper does not need theatrical grandeur to possess spiritual significance. Its significance comes from the Saviour it remembers. The moment the ceremony becomes greater than Christ, the religious machinery has begun swallowing its own message.

**Conclusion**

The institution of the Lord's Supper presents a beautiful and solemn testimony to the wisdom of Jesus Christ. On the night He was betrayed, with the shadow of the cross falling across the upper room, He established a remembrance that would endure among His people until His return. Matthew records the bread, the cup, and the blood of the new testament. Mark confirms the same essential actions and declarations. Luke preserves the explicit command to remember Him. Paul delivers the institution to the New Testament church and explains its proper observance. Across those inspired accounts, the central message remains consistent. Christ gave Himself for sinners, and His people are to remember and proclaim His death. The ordinance is not an opportunity to improve the cross, repeat its suffering, or manufacture redemption through religious activity. It is an appointed testimony to the sacrifice that accomplished what no sinner, priest, ceremony, or human institution could ever accomplish. The simplicity of the command is not evidence that something is missing. It is evidence that the Lord knew exactly what He wanted His people to remember.

There is also a serious lesson in the circumstances surrounding its establishment. Christ instituted the supper while betrayal was unfolding, knowing that His disciples would soon demonstrate fear, confusion, and weakness. Yet the certainty of human failure did not diminish the faithfulness of the Saviour. He continued toward the cross and offered Himself according to the Father's will. That ought to silence the religious pride that imagines

redemption depends upon the achievements of those who participate in a ceremony. The disciples were not spiritual giants whose flawless conduct made Calvary necessary or effective. They were men desperately dependent upon the grace of God, and the same remains true of every believer today. Ephesians 2:8-9 declares, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." The ordinance does not contradict that truth. Properly understood, it proclaims the sacrifice through which salvation was accomplished. The table does not establish the believer's acceptance before God. It reminds the believer of the Saviour upon whom that acceptance depends.

Therefore, before accepting any explanation of the Lord's Supper, return to the upper room and read what Jesus actually said. Before submitting to the claims of a ceremonial priesthood, examine what the apostles actually taught. Before allowing centuries of tradition to define the bread and the cup, ask whether those definitions are established by the words of Scripture. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ, delivered to the church through inspired apostolic instruction, and commanded as a remembrance of His death until He comes. No religious organization owns the sacrifice it proclaims, and no ceremony possesses the authority to alter the Gospel. The believer's responsibility is to approach the ordinance with reverence, examine himself according to Scripture, remember the crucified Saviour, and proclaim the sufficiency of His finished work. Christ did not give His church an unfinished sacrifice requiring human hands to complete it. He gave His church a remembrance of the sacrifice only He could accomplish. The bread does not become the Redeemer, the cup does not manufacture redemption, and the ceremony does not finish Calvary. The Lord established the supper to remind His people of the One who gave Himself for them. And what Christ established by His authority, no religious tradition has the right to rewrite.

**3 of 10. The Lord’s Supper: This Is My Body, but Does the Bread Become Christ?**

Key Passage: "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." (Matthew 26:26)

**Introduction**

There are four words in Matthew 26:26 that have produced enough religious controversy to fill libraries, divide churches, establish priesthoods, and persuade millions of people that ordinary bread can become the actual body of Jesus Christ. Those words are "this is my body." The statement itself is simple. The confusion begins when men insist that the words

must mean something the surrounding passage does not establish. Jesus Christ was sitting with His disciples, holding bread in His hands, and preparing them for His approaching sacrifice. His physical body was present before them, His blood was still circulating through His veins, and Calvary had not yet occurred. Yet from that historical scene developed elaborate theological explanations claiming that bread undergoes a supernatural change of substance through priestly consecration. Before accepting such an extraordinary doctrine, we ought to ask an extraordinarily reasonable question. What did Jesus actually mean? The Bible is not a collection of mysterious religious ingredients waiting for an ecclesiastical chef to turn them into something the original Author never ordered.

The issue is not whether the Lord's Supper deserves reverence. It certainly does. Neither is the issue whether Christ's sacrifice is precious, whether His body was genuinely given, or whether His blood was literally shed for the remission of sins. Those truths stand at the very foundation of the Gospel. The issue concerns the relationship between the bread Christ distributed and the physical body He surrendered upon the cross. Did He command His disciples to remember His sacrifice through an appointed representation, or did He establish a ceremony in which bread would become His actual body? Did the apostles subsequently teach that a change of substance occurred, or did they continue calling the elements bread and the cup? And when Jesus spoke in John 6 about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, was He explaining a sacrament that had not yet been instituted, or was He teaching unbelieving hearers about the necessity of receiving Him by faith? These questions cannot be settled by enthusiasm, tradition, or religious intimidation. They must be answered by Scripture.

There is an important principle that must govern everything that follows. The Word of God must explain the Word of God. We do not begin with a theological system, arrange the verses around it, and then congratulate ourselves because the Bible has apparently agreed with our conclusions. We begin with the actual words of Christ, examine their context, compare the inspired accounts, and establish their meaning through the revelation God has given. Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 6, and 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 provide the necessary foundation. Hebrews supplies the decisive testimony concerning the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice. Throughout these passages, we must preserve the distinction between a spiritual reality and the physical object used to represent it. A wedding ring may testify to a marriage, but nobody with sound judgment imagines that swallowing the ring creates a husband or wife. Likewise, the bread may testify to the body of Christ without becoming the body it represents. The sign is important because of what it signifies, not because it possesses the power to become what it signifies.

**1. The Upper Room: Christ Was Holding Bread While His Body Sat Before Them**

Matthew establishes the circumstances plainly. "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" (Matthew 26:26). Notice the historical setting. Christ was observing the Passover with His disciples shortly before His crucifixion. He was not standing at a Christian altar in a cathedral constructed centuries later, and He was not instructing an ordained priest to pronounce a ceremonial formula over an offering. He took bread during a meal, blessed it, broke it, and distributed it. The same Jesus who spoke the words was physically sitting before the men who received the bread. His body had not disappeared. It had not been divided into pieces upon the table. The disciples could see Him, hear Him, and recognize the distinction between the bread in their hands and the Master who gave it. The passage records an action accompanied by an explanation, and that explanation must be understood within the actual scene.

Consider also what happened immediately afterward. Matthew 26:27-28 declares, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Christ was pointing toward His approaching death. His blood would be shed at Calvary, and the cup directed attention to that sacrifice. He then said, "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29). Notice that Christ Himself continued identifying the contents of the cup in connection with the fruit of the vine. There is no explanation here concerning a change of substance, no description of physical transformation, and no command to worship what remained in the vessel. The emphasis falls upon His blood, His coming sacrifice, and His promised future kingdom fellowship.

Mark 14:22-25 confirms the same essential testimony. Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and said, "Take, eat: this is my body" (Mark 14:22). He then took the cup, gave thanks, and distributed it. Luke supplies the indispensable explanation: "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Those final words establish the stated purpose of the action. The bread was given in remembrance of Christ. It directed the disciples toward the body He would surrender. If the Lord intended to teach that the bread underwent a physical or metaphysical transformation into His actual body, the institution accounts provide no explanation of how such a transformation occurs. Instead, they give an unmistakable command to remember Him. Religious systems may construct elaborate explanations of what allegedly happens to the elements, but no explanation deserves authority merely because it sounds mysterious. The biblical question remains whether

Christ taught it. The Lord did not leave His disciples wondering whom they were supposed to remember. He was sitting right in front of them.

**2. When Jesus Said "I Am," He Was Not Always Describing a Literal Object**

One of the most elementary rules of Bible interpretation is that language must be understood according to its context. Scripture contains historical statements, commandments, prophecies, figures of speech, comparisons, parables, and illustrations. Jesus Christ frequently used visible things to communicate spiritual truths. In John 10:9, He declared, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Nobody imagines that Christ became a wooden door suspended upon hinges. The point concerns access to salvation through Him. In John 15:1, He announced, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." That did not mean His physical body had developed branches, leaves, and grapes. The figure communicated the relationship between Christ, the Father, and those who abide in Him. When Scripture uses a physical object to represent a spiritual reality, we must not confuse the representation with the reality itself.

Consider another example. First Corinthians 10:4 declares concerning Israel in the wilderness, "and that Rock was Christ." Paul was explaining the spiritual significance of God's provision for Israel. The rock from which the water came was not literally the incarnate body of Jesus Christ standing in the wilderness. It represented Christ in the inspired application Paul was making. Likewise, Jesus declared in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world." That statement reveals His identity and saving significance without requiring us to imagine that His physical body consisted of sunlight. Scripture repeatedly employs this manner of expression. Its meaning is determined by the passage, not by a rule demanding that every occurrence of the word "is" establish a literal identity of material substance. Otherwise, we would have to conclude that Christ was simultaneously made of wood, vegetable matter, sunlight, and stone. That is not believing the Bible literally. That is refusing to understand ordinary language.

The Lord also used symbolic actions to teach His disciples. In John 13, He washed their feet and explained the lesson of humility and service. The water was real, the washing was real, and the lesson was spiritual. The physical action did not become meaningless because it communicated something beyond itself. Likewise, the Lord's Supper is not diminished when its bread and cup are understood as appointed representations. Christ's body was genuinely given, His blood was genuinely shed, and His death genuinely accomplished redemption. The elements direct believers toward those realities. A memorial does not need magical properties to possess biblical importance. A photograph of a departed loved one can awaken sincere remembrance without becoming the person

pictured, and a national memorial can testify to historical sacrifice without repeating the event. The Lord's Supper is greater than either example because Christ Himself established it. Yet its authority comes from His command, not from the assumption that remembrance requires material transformation.

**3. Paul Still Called It Bread After the Lord Established the Ordinance**

The apostle Paul provides some of the strongest evidence concerning how the church was instructed to understand the elements. In 1 Corinthians 11:23, he declares, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." He then recounts how Christ took bread on the night of His betrayal, gave thanks, broke it, and commanded remembrance. Paul was not relying upon a collection of uncertain rumors or delivering the conclusions of an ecclesiastical committee. He was giving inspired instruction to a New Testament congregation. First Corinthians 11:26 states, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." Notice the wording. Paul calls it bread while describing the church's continuing observance. He does not announce that the substance ceases to be bread after a minister blesses it. He identifies the elements by their ordinary names while explaining their extraordinary significance.

The same language appears in the warning that follows. First Corinthians 11:27 declares, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." Here the apostle connects irreverent participation with guilt concerning the body and blood of Christ, yet he still refers to the elements as bread and the cup. The warning demonstrates that the ordinance carries serious responsibility. It does not establish that the bread has become living flesh. Verse 28 continues, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." The words are plain. A man is to examine himself and then participate reverently. The apostle does not instruct him to inspect the bread for signs of divinity, bow before the elements, or depend upon a priestly transformation to receive salvation. His concern is the believer's conduct before the Lord.

First Corinthians 10:16 adds another important dimension: "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Paul does not reduce the observance to an empty gesture. It expresses fellowship and participation in the benefits of Christ's sacrifice. Yet he continues in verse 17, "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." Notice that Paul uses the figure of one bread to represent the spiritual unity of believers. Nobody argues that every Christian is literally transformed into a bakery product when joining the body of Christ. The apostle's language communicates a spiritual truth through a physical representation. The bread testifies to the body given for believers, while participation expresses their common fellowship in Christ.

The ordinance is meaningful precisely because Christ established it. The bread does not need to become God in order to direct believers toward God. It needs to serve the purpose God assigned to it.

**4. John 6: Eating His Flesh and Drinking His Blood Before the Supper Existed**

John 6 is frequently brought into the discussion because Jesus Christ declared, "I am the bread of life" (John 6:35). Later in the chapter, He spoke about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, and those statements have become central to arguments supporting a literal sacramental interpretation. But before importing the Lord's Supper into the passage, examine the historical setting. John 6 takes place during Christ's earthly ministry, long before the final Passover meal recorded in Matthew 26. The immediate circumstances follow the feeding of the five thousand, when a multitude pursued Jesus after witnessing His miraculous provision of bread. Christ rebuked their preoccupation with physical food and directed their attention toward something far greater. John 6:27 records His instruction to labor "not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." The subject is eternal life through Christ, not the mechanics of a religious ceremony that had not yet been established.

The Lord Himself explains the spiritual application before introducing the more difficult language later in the chapter. John 6:35 declares, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Notice the parallel expressions. Coming to Christ corresponds with satisfaction of hunger, while believing on Him corresponds with satisfaction of thirst. Then John 6:40 states that everyone who sees the Son and believes on Him may have everlasting life. John 6:47 makes the matter unmistakable: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life." There is the stated condition, and there is the stated result. The person who believes on Christ possesses everlasting life. Jesus had already identified Himself as the bread from heaven and explained how that heavenly provision is received. To interpret the later references to eating and drinking as a compulsory sacramental requirement, while ignoring these preceding explanations of faith, is to make the passage argue against its own foundation.

Now consider the language that created the controversy. John 6:53 declares, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." The Jews disputed among themselves concerning how Christ could give them His flesh to eat. Yet Jesus continued directing their attention toward the necessity of receiving Him and the saving significance of His approaching sacrifice. John 6:51 connects His flesh with what He would give "for the life of the world." Then, in John 6:63, He declares, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and

they are life." This does not mean Christ's actual flesh was worthless, for His bodily sacrifice was essential to redemption. It means His hearers were failing to grasp the spiritual truth of His words. The chapter's explanation of everlasting life centers upon believing on Christ. To turn the Bread of Life discourse into proof that salvation depends upon consuming consecrated bread is to mistake the illustration for the invitation and the ceremony for the Saviour.

**5. Transubstantiation: When Religious Philosophy Attempts to Define the Bread**

Roman Catholic teaching concerning transubstantiation deserves to be stated accurately before it is examined biblically. The doctrine holds that, through consecration in the Eucharistic celebration, the whole substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ and the whole substance of wine into His blood, while the outward appearances remain. Consequently, the elements continue to look, taste, and behave like bread and wine, even though Catholic teaching maintains that their underlying substance has changed. Catholic theology does not simply describe this as a crude physical transformation that could be detected by ordinary laboratory testing, nor does it claim that Christ is historically crucified again each time the Mass is celebrated. Rather, it asserts His real sacramental presence under the appearances of the elements. That distinction matters because false teaching should be answered in its actual form, not through a convenient caricature. Nevertheless, accurately describing a doctrine does not establish its biblical authority.

The decisive question is whether Jesus Christ or His apostles actually taught that distinction between an invisible substance and its unchanged outward appearances. Matthew 26 records bread being taken, blessed, broken, and distributed. Luke 22 records the command to remember Christ. First Corinthians 11 repeatedly identifies the elements as bread and the cup. None of those passages explains a change of underlying substance, establishes a philosophical distinction between substance and appearances, or commands believers to regard consecrated bread as an object of divine worship. The doctrine attempts to explain the words "this is my body" by employing categories that the institution accounts themselves do not supply. A theological explanation may be highly developed, carefully defended, and surrounded by centuries of religious approval, but sophistication does not automatically produce scriptural authority. An elaborate explanation of an unproven premise remains an elaborate explanation of an unproven premise. Scripture must establish the doctrine before religious philosophy is permitted to explain it.

There is also the question of worship. If consecrated bread is believed to be truly Christ Himself, then acts of adoration directed toward the consecrated host follow naturally within Roman Catholic practice. But if the elements are appointed representations of

Christ's sacrifice rather than Christ Himself, such adoration directs worship toward something God created rather than toward the living Saviour. Exodus 20:3 declares, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Jesus Himself declared, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). The issue deserves serious attention because sincerity alone does not determine whether an act of worship is biblically correct. Many Catholics approach the Eucharist with genuine reverence and a sincere desire to honor Christ. Their sincerity should not be mocked. But neither should sincere devotion prevent examination of the doctrine behind the practice. The question is not how deeply a person reverences the bread. The question is whether God ever commanded His people to worship bread as Christ.

**6. The Finished Sacrifice: Why the Cross Cannot Be Improved Upon by a Ceremony**

The book of Hebrews brings the question into its proper doctrinal setting. Under the Mosaic law, the Levitical priesthood offered sacrifices repeatedly. Those sacrifices served their appointed purposes within Israel's covenant system, but they could never accomplish the permanent removal of sin that Jesus Christ would accomplish through His own offering. Hebrews 10:4 declares, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." The former sacrifices pointed beyond themselves toward the greater sacrifice that was coming. Christ entered the world to do the Father's will, and His offering fulfilled what the repeated sacrifices could never accomplish. Hebrews 10:10 states, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." That expression must govern our understanding of redemption. Christ did not offer Himself as the first installment in a continuing series of sacrificial payments. He offered Himself once, and the sacrifice was sufficient.

Hebrews 10:11-12 presents the contrast with devastating clarity. The former priest stood ministering and repeatedly offering sacrifices that could never take away sins, but Jesus Christ offered one sacrifice for sins forever and sat down at the right hand of God. Hebrews 10:14 declares, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Verse 18 adds, "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." These statements leave no room for the notion that Christ's sacrificial achievement is incomplete or dependent upon additional human offerings. Roman Catholic theology maintains that the Mass sacramentally makes present the one sacrifice of Christ rather than creating another historical crucifixion. That distinction must be recognized. Yet the biblical challenge remains: Where did Christ command His church to perform a sacrificial action through which His offering is made present upon an earthly altar? The Lord's Supper is expressly described as remembrance and proclamation. The finished sacrifice requires faithful proclamation, not a new ceremonial mechanism for its supposed presentation.

The same truth concerns the believer's standing before God. Ephesians 1:7 declares, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Redemption is possessed in Christ, through His blood, according to God's grace. Romans 5:1 states, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The sinner does not become justified because a priest has consecrated bread, nor does the redeemed believer maintain eternal life through repeated ceremonial consumption. Salvation rests upon the person and finished work of Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper remembers that work, but it does not replace faith in the One who performed it. A man may attend thousands of communion services, possess an impressive religious history, and know every ceremonial response by memory while remaining lost without Christ. You cannot eat your way into eternal life, and you cannot drink enough from a ceremonial cup to substitute for faith in the crucified and risen Son of God.

**7. A Holy Remembrance Without Ritual Magic or Empty Religion**

Rejecting the claim that bread becomes Christ does not mean treating the Lord's Supper casually. The apostle Paul issued serious warnings concerning believers who participated unworthily. First Corinthians 11:29 declares, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." The immediate context concerns the disorderly, selfish, and irreverent practices of the Corinthian congregation. Paul had already rebuked their divisions, disregard for poorer believers, and abuse of their gatherings. The word "damnation" must be interpreted according to the context of divine judgment and chastening, not automatically equated with the loss of eternal salvation. Verse 32 explains that believers are chastened by the Lord so they should not be condemned with the world. The seriousness of the ordinance arises from its divine institution and its connection with Christ's sacrifice. A memorial can be holy without becoming a means of obtaining justification, and an act of remembrance can demand reverence without requiring a supernatural transformation of its physical elements.

Consider how Scripture treats other things God appointed for holy purposes. The ark of the covenant was sacred within Israel's worship, yet the Israelites were forbidden to treat it as an object of independent power detached from obedience to God. In 1 Samuel 4, Israel brought the ark into battle while living in spiritual rebellion, apparently imagining that its presence would guarantee victory. Instead, the Philistines defeated them and captured the ark. The lesson is unmistakable. A sacred object does not become a substitute for the living God who established its proper use. Likewise, the brass serpent Moses made in the wilderness served its appointed purpose when the bitten Israelites looked upon it according to God's instruction. Yet centuries later, Hezekiah destroyed it because the

children of Israel had begun burning incense to it (2 Kings 18:4). Something once used by God had become an object of unauthorized religious devotion. When a sign receives the worship belonging to God, the sign has been corrupted by the very people claiming to honor it.

The proper observance of the Lord's Supper therefore requires neither magical thinking nor careless indifference. Believers should gather with a clear understanding of Christ's finished sacrifice, examine themselves according to Scripture, remember His body given and His blood shed, and proclaim His death until He comes. The bread and the cup should be treated with respect because the Lord appointed them for that purpose, not because ordinary physical elements have become objects of worship. Paul commanded, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). The examination concerns the participant's conduct before God, not an inspection of whether the bread has become something else. A congregation that reverently observes the supper while trusting completely in Christ's finished work honors the ordinance as Scripture presents it. The right response to religious superstition is not irreverence. It is biblical obedience. We do not need to make the bread divine to make the remembrance sacred.

**Conclusion**

The testimony of Scripture concerning the Lord's Supper is clear when the relevant passages are allowed to speak in their proper settings. Jesus Christ took bread while His physical body remained present before His disciples, identified the bread with the body He would give, and commanded them to remember Him. He took the cup and connected it with the blood of the new testament that would be shed for the remission of sins. The Gospel accounts establish the historical institution, while Paul's instructions establish its continuing observance in the New Testament church. The apostle repeatedly calls the elements bread and the cup, explains that believers proclaim the Lord's death through their participation, and warns them against irreverence. John 6, examined in its original setting, identifies Christ as the bread of life and repeatedly connects everlasting life with believing on Him. None of these passages explicitly teaches that consecrated bread undergoes a change of underlying substance into Christ's body. The doctrine must therefore be judged by what Scripture says, not by how confidently tradition declares it.

This distinction is especially important for sincere Christians who have inherited explanations of the Eucharist without ever examining the passages for themselves. Religious upbringing can make a particular ceremony feel inseparable from Christianity itself, but familiarity is not proof of biblical authority. A person may have been taught from childhood that the bread becomes Christ, that priestly consecration effects the change,

and that adoration of the consecrated elements honors the Saviour. Such beliefs deserve careful examination rather than careless ridicule. The purpose of sound biblical correction is not to humiliate people who have trusted their religious instruction. It is to direct them toward the authority of God's Word. Acts 17:11 commends those who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." That remains the proper standard. No priest, pastor, denomination, council, or religious tradition possesses authority to establish doctrine contrary to Scripture. The truth does not become more authoritative because it is ancient, and error does not become truth because it has accumulated centuries of ceremonial decoration.

The Lord's Supper is a beautiful ordinance precisely because it directs our attention away from human achievement and toward the completed redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ. The bread remembers His body given for sinners. The cup remembers His blood shed for the remission of sins. The observance proclaims His death until He comes. Its power lies in the truth it declares, not in a supposed transformation of the elements themselves. When believers gather in obedience to Christ, they need not search for the Saviour inside the bread. They should look by faith to the risen Lord who offered Himself once for all and now sits at the right hand of God. The body that was crucified rose from the dead, and the blood that was shed accomplished redemption. The church remembers those truths rather than attempting to reproduce them through religious ceremony. The bread is not the Saviour. The cup is not the cross. The minister is not the Redeemer. Jesus Christ alone is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. A symbol of the Saviour must never be confused with the Saviour Himself, and a remembrance of Calvary must never be turned into a substitute for the finished work accomplished there.

**4 of 10. The Lord’s Supper: The Cup, the Blood, and the New Testament That Cannot Be Rewritten**

Key Passage: "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." (Luke 22:20)

**Introduction**

When the Lord Jesus Christ took the cup in that upper room and declared, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20), He was not introducing a mysterious religious beverage with supernatural powers concealed beneath its outward appearance. He was directing His disciples toward the most important blood ever shed in human history. That blood would not be spilled by accident, wasted through a miscarriage

of justice, or offered as a desperate attempt to rescue a failing ministry. It would be shed according to the eternal purpose of God, fulfilling the Scriptures and accomplishing redemption for sinners. Yet men have managed to surround that simple declaration with enough religious machinery to make the original supper almost unrecognizable. The cup has become the subject of sacramental theories, priestly claims, and theological controversies that frequently overshadow the very sacrifice it was appointed to remember. The Bible directs our attention to the blood Christ shed, while religious superstition keeps demanding that we examine what allegedly happens inside the cup.

There is a tremendous difference between the blood of Jesus Christ and the physical element used to represent that blood. One purchased eternal redemption. The other was appointed to proclaim it. One flowed from the sinless body of the Son of God at Calvary. The other was distributed to His disciples during a meal. One satisfied the demands of divine righteousness. The other reminds believers that those demands have been satisfied. Confuse those distinctions, and before long you will have people placing their confidence in drinking something instead of believing Someone. Scripture declares, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). It does not declare that redemption comes through the physical consumption of consecrated elements. Salvation is not poured into a cup by a religious official, and forgiveness is not measured by the number of communion services a person has attended. The saving power belongs to the crucified and risen Saviour, not to the vessel that commemorates His sacrifice.

To understand the cup correctly, we must examine its institution, the significance of blood in God's dealings with Israel, the promises concerning the new covenant, and the inspired explanation of Christ's once-for-all sacrifice in Hebrews 9 and 10. We must also preserve the distinctions God established between Israel and the New Testament church. The blood of Christ fulfills what the animal sacrifices could never accomplish, while the Lord's Supper provides believers with a solemn remembrance of that finished redemption. The question is not whether the cup deserves reverent treatment. It does, because the Lord appointed it for a sacred purpose. The question is whether the cup itself possesses the power to forgive sins, justify sinners, or transform an ordinary ceremony into an additional means of offering Christ. We will find that Scripture leaves no uncertainty about where redemption was accomplished. The blood was shed at Calvary, the payment was accepted in heaven, and no religious ceremony on earth can improve upon a transaction Almighty God has already declared complete.

**1. The Cup in the Upper Room: What Jesus Actually Said**

Luke 22:20 records the Lord's words with remarkable clarity: "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." The immediate setting is the Passover meal Jesus observed with His disciples shortly before His crucifixion. Luke identifies the cup in connection with the new testament and the blood Christ was about to shed. Notice the distinction between the physical object He handled and the sacrifice He described. Jesus was physically present before His disciples. His blood had not yet been shed upon the cross. Nevertheless, He used the cup to declare the significance of His approaching death. The statement is not an invitation to invent explanations concerning invisible changes in the substance of a beverage. It is a declaration concerning the blood that would establish the New Testament. The cup pointed to the sacrifice, and the sacrifice supplied the meaning of the cup. Remove Christ's approaching death from the passage, and the ceremony becomes an empty religious performance.

Matthew supplies additional information concerning the same institution. "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it" (Matthew 26:27). The next verse declares, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). Here Christ expressly connects His blood with the remission of sins. The Lord was not discussing a ceremonial accomplishment manufactured by the disciples. He was foretelling the redemptive significance of His own death. Then Matthew 26:29 records His description of the contents in relation to "this fruit of the vine." That expression is important because Christ continued speaking of the physical element in terms of its ordinary identity while directing attention to the extraordinary significance of His blood. The disciples were not commanded to worship the contents of the cup, preserve it as a divine object, or establish a sacrificial priesthood around it. They were instructed by the Saviour who would shortly shed His blood for sinners.

Mark confirms the essential account, recording Christ's words, "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many" (Mark 14:24). Paul subsequently delivers the ordinance to the church, repeating the declaration concerning the cup and adding the explicit command, "this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:25). There is the governing purpose, plainly stated. The disciples were to remember Christ, and the New Testament church was to continue that remembrance. Paul did not replace the original instruction with a theological explanation declaring that the cup had acquired independent saving power. He returned the Corinthians to what the Lord had established. First Corinthians 11:26 explains that believers proclaim the Lord's death through their observance until He comes. Religious tradition can construct an impressive ceremony around a simple command, but decoration does not equal revelation. The Lord did not

establish the cup so sinners could drink their way into salvation. He established it so redeemed people could remember the blood by which their salvation was purchased.

**2. The Blood of the First Covenant: From Egypt to Sinai**

The significance of blood cannot be understood without returning to the Old Testament, where God established its importance long before the institution of the Lord's Supper. In Exodus 12, the children of Israel were instructed to select a lamb without blemish, kill it according to God's command, and apply its blood to the doorposts of their houses. The LORD declared, "and when I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exodus 12:13). That promise concerned a real historical judgment upon Egypt and God's appointed protection of Israelite households. The blood was not decorative. It marked obedience to the provision God had established. Yet the blood of those animals did not possess the infinite redemptive value of the blood of Jesus Christ. The Passover was both an actual deliverance and a prophetic picture pointing toward the greater Lamb. Paul eventually identified that fulfillment when he declared, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The picture in Egypt pointed forward to the sacrifice at Calvary.

When God established His covenant with Israel at Sinai, blood again occupied a significant place. Exodus 24:8 records, "And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words." The setting was the covenant God made with the nation of Israel after delivering them from Egypt. It involved the words He had spoken and the obligations belonging to that covenant arrangement. We must not carelessly identify the Mosaic covenant with the New Testament simply because both involve blood. They belong to distinct administrations in God's unfolding revelation. Leviticus 17:11 subsequently explains, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." God established the sacrificial use of blood according to His own requirements, not according to human religious preference.

Hebrews 9 explains why those earlier arrangements matter. "Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood" (Hebrews 9:18). The writer then recalls the blood associated with the establishment of the former covenant. But Hebrews also demonstrates the limitations of animal sacrifices. Hebrews 10:4 declares, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Those sacrifices could serve their appointed covenant purposes and foreshadow the greater offering, but they could never accomplish eternal redemption. That distinction destroys the notion that religious repetition automatically produces spiritual completion. Israel possessed a divinely ordained sacrificial system, yet even that system could not perfect those who approached

God through its repeated offerings. How remarkable that men should now imagine a ceremony invented or developed under later religious authority can improve upon the sacrifice to which the entire former system pointed. God was not teaching mankind to trust in ceremonies. He was showing mankind the necessity of the perfect sacrifice only His Son could provide.

**3. The New Testament in His Blood: A Covenant Established by Death**

The promise of a new covenant did not originate in the upper room. Centuries earlier, God declared through Jeremiah, "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah" (Jeremiah 31:31). Notice the recipients named in the actual promise. God did not say that He would make that covenant with a Gentile institution that would eventually replace Israel. He named the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Jeremiah 31 continues by contrasting the promised covenant with the one Israel broke after being brought out of Egypt. It speaks of God's law written inwardly, of His people's knowledge of Him, and of the forgiveness of their iniquity. Those national covenant promises must be preserved in their proper setting. The church does not become Israel by borrowing Israel's name, and God does not cancel His covenant purposes because religious theology finds the distinction inconvenient. God's promises are not vacant property waiting for the next denomination to claim ownership.

Hebrews 8 repeats Jeremiah's promise and identifies Jesus Christ as the mediator of a better covenant established upon better promises. Hebrews 9 then explains why His death is essential. "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15). The following verse states, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator" (Hebrews 9:16). Christ's death was therefore not an incidental feature of an otherwise symbolic covenant. His shed blood provides the foundation of the New Testament. The former sacrifices anticipated a greater redemption, and the Son of God accomplished it through His own offering. No earthly minister created that covenant, no ecclesiastical council authorized its blood, and no religious ceremony supplies the death required to establish it.

At the same time, the New Testament church receives the spiritual blessings of redemption through the same blood Christ shed. Paul delivered the Lord's Supper to a predominantly Gentile congregation at Corinth, identifying the cup with the New Testament in Christ's blood. Ephesians 2:13 declares, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Gentile believers are brought near through Christ, not by becoming ethnic Israel or by placing themselves under the Mosaic law. The promised

national restoration of Israel and the present salvation of Jews and Gentiles in one body must be rightly divided without diminishing the sufficiency of Christ's blood for either. The Lord's Supper testifies to the sacrifice that establishes the New Testament and secures redemption. God wrote the promise, Christ shed the blood, and the Holy Ghost revealed the meaning. There is nothing left for religious tradition to renegotiate, amend, or improve.

**4. The Blood That Saves: Redemption Was Purchased at Calvary, Not Received From a Cup**

Romans 3:24-25 establishes the basis of justification with a clarity that ought to settle any argument about ceremonial salvation. Paul describes sinners as "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). He continues by identifying Christ as the One whom God has set forth "to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Romans 3:25). Notice the divine arrangement. God provides the sacrifice. Christ sheds the blood. Grace supplies the redemption, and faith receives the benefits. The sinner is not instructed to locate a priest who can place saving power into a ceremonial beverage. He is directed to Jesus Christ. The blood is effective because of the One who shed it and the sacrifice He accomplished. A cup may remind believers of that blood, but it cannot become an alternative means of justification. If religious consumption could accomplish redemption, Calvary would become an accessory to the ceremony instead of the foundation of salvation.

Romans 5:9 declares, "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." That is a tremendous statement. The believer's justification rests upon the blood of Christ, and the promise concerning deliverance from wrath rests upon Him as well. Colossians 1:14 adds, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Peter likewise declares that believers were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, but "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:19). Scripture repeatedly identifies the same foundation. It never transfers the purchasing power of Christ's blood to the physical consumption of communion elements. The cup is a witness, not a substitute. A witness may testify concerning a completed transaction, but the witness does not become the payment. Religious tradition may dress the witness in magnificent clothing, but the blood that redeemed the sinner was shed upon the cross.

John 6 is sometimes introduced to argue that eating and drinking are necessary for obtaining eternal life. Yet Jesus had already explained His meaning when He declared, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). He then stated, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). Those words were spoken before the

institution of the Lord's Supper and identify faith in Christ as the means of receiving everlasting life. His later references to eating His flesh and drinking His blood must be considered within that setting. The chapter is not permission to replace faith with sacramental consumption. The Lord was directing hearers toward Himself, not toward an ordinance He had not yet established. The sinner receives eternal life by believing on Christ, not by swallowing a representation of Christ. Salvation is received through faith in the Redeemer, not through confidence in the remembrance.

**5. Hebrews 9 and 10: One Sacrifice That No Religious Ceremony Can Repeat**

Hebrews 9:12 supplies one of the strongest declarations concerning the sufficiency of Christ's blood: "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Every important expression deserves attention. It was His own blood, not the blood of an animal. He entered once, not repeatedly. He obtained eternal redemption, not temporary religious credit awaiting renewal through another ceremony. The former high priest entered the earthly holy place with sacrificial blood according to Israel's appointed worship. Christ entered the heavenly reality as the perfect High Priest whose offering accomplished what the former sacrifices could never accomplish. Hebrews 9:24 declares that Christ entered heaven itself, "now to appear in the presence of God for us." The sacrifice was accepted in the presence of God. No earthly altar can increase the value of what heaven has already received.

Hebrews 9:25-26 continues the argument by explaining that Christ did not enter heaven to offer Himself repeatedly, as the high priest entered the holy place every year with the blood of others. Instead, the passage declares, "but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26). The repeated sacrifices of the former system pointed toward something they could not accomplish. Christ's sacrifice accomplished it. Hebrews 9:28 declares, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Notice the distinction. His first appearing accomplished the sacrifice, while His future appearing fulfills the expectation of those who look for Him. The Lord's Supper belongs to that period of expectation. Believers proclaim His death until He comes. They are not instructed to keep offering Him until He comes.

Hebrews 10 settles the matter with language that leaves religious ingenuity very little room to maneuver. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). Verse 12 declares that Christ offered one sacrifice for sins forever and sat down at the right hand of God. Verse 14 adds, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Then comes the conclusion: "Now where

remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18). The writer is explaining the finality of Christ's sacrificial offering, not forbidding believers from remembering it. A memorial proclaims the completed sacrifice. A doctrine requiring additional sacrificial activity must explain how that requirement agrees with the finality Hebrews so emphatically establishes. Christ did not sit down because the next shift of earthly priests was arriving to finish His work. He sat down because the offering was complete, the payment was sufficient, and redemption had been accomplished.

**6. The Cup of Communion: Fellowship With Christ Without Confusing the Sign**

First Corinthians 10:16 declares, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" The apostle is not describing an empty social gathering in which believers happen to share refreshments. The ordinance expresses their fellowship in the blessings secured through Christ's sacrifice. The word "communion" directs attention to participation and fellowship, while the blood of Christ identifies the redemption upon which that fellowship rests. Yet Paul continues speaking of the cup and the bread as the elements used in the observance. In the following verse, he connects the one bread with the unity of believers in one body. The physical representation communicates a spiritual reality. The meaning of the ordinance is not destroyed because its elements remain what they physically are. A flag can represent a nation without becoming its territory, and the communion cup can proclaim Christ's blood without becoming the blood that purchased redemption.

The immediate context of 1 Corinthians 10 also warns believers against fellowship with idolatry. Paul contrasts participation in the Lord's table with participation in the table of devils. First Corinthians 10:21 declares, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." The issue concerns spiritual allegiance and fellowship, not a chemical explanation of the contents of ceremonial vessels. Christians cannot profess exclusive devotion to Jesus Christ while knowingly participating in idolatrous worship. The cup is therefore serious because the Lord established it as an expression of communion with Him. That seriousness should lead to discernment, not superstition. Paul did not tell believers to investigate whether the cup had undergone a hidden transformation. He warned them against divided allegiance. The Lord's table was established to testify of fellowship with Christ, not to provide a religious disguise for fellowship with everything Christ condemns.

First Corinthians 11 addresses the manner in which believers participate. The Corinthians had introduced divisions, selfishness, and disgraceful behavior into their gatherings. Paul warned, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord,

unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:27). Notice that the apostle still calls the elements bread and the cup while explaining the seriousness of irreverent participation. He then commands self-examination before eating and drinking. The warning concerns the believer's conduct and failure to discern the significance of the ordinance. It does not establish that the elements possess independent divine power. Paul's explanation of chastening in 1 Corinthians 11:32 also distinguishes the Lord's disciplinary dealings with His children from condemnation with the world. Eternal security does not excuse irreverence, but neither does communion become a ceremony through which eternal life must continually be purchased. Believers must honor the sacrifice remembered without inventing saving properties for the elements used to remember it.

**7. The Cup That Religion Rewrites: When a Memorial Becomes a Means of Saving Grace**

The Roman Catholic understanding of the Eucharist provides a major example of how profoundly religious doctrine can expand beyond the explicit language of the institution accounts. Catholic teaching maintains that through consecration the substance of bread and wine becomes Christ's body and blood while the outward appearances remain. It also presents the Eucharist as a sacrament through which believers participate in Christ's one sacrifice and receive spiritual grace. Catholic theology does not teach that merely drinking from a cup automatically justifies an unbeliever, nor does it describe every Mass as another historical crucifixion. Those distinctions should be represented accurately. Nevertheless, the essential biblical question remains unanswered by an appeal to religious tradition. Where did Jesus Christ command His disciples to regard the cup as a transformed substance conveying sacramental grace? Where did Paul establish priestly consecration as necessary for the remembrance? The inspired accounts describe the cup, its significance, and the command to remember. They do not explain the system subsequently constructed around those elements.

The problem is not confined to Roman Catholicism. Any church can turn the Lord's Supper into a religious performance detached from its biblical purpose. Some treat participation as evidence that a person must be saved, regardless of whether he has believed the Gospel. Others approach the elements as though the ceremony itself removes accumulated sin. Still others observe the ordinance with such mechanical indifference that the death of Christ receives less serious attention than the announcements following the service. Both superstition and irreverence corrupt the purpose of remembrance. Christ did not command His church to depend upon the cup for salvation, but neither did He establish the supper as a meaningless custom to be hurried through between more entertaining activities. The proper standard is the Word of God. First Corinthians 11:26

declares that believers proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. The ordinance should therefore direct attention toward the sacrifice, produce gratitude for redemption, and encourage reverent examination before God.

There is a simple question every sincere participant should answer: Upon what am I trusting for the forgiveness of my sins? If the answer is Jesus Christ and His finished sacrifice, the cup serves its appointed purpose by directing remembrance toward that redemption. If the answer involves confidence in the ceremony, the officiating minister, the supposed transformation of the elements, or the accumulated spiritual benefits of repeated participation, the foundation has shifted away from the sufficiency of Christ's blood. Romans 5:1 declares, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." That peace is grounded in Christ, not purchased through religious consumption. Whether a person was raised Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, or entirely outside organized religion, the question remains the same. Has he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ? God did not shed the blood of His Son so a religious institution could appoint itself the distributor of salvation. The blood was shed so sinners could be redeemed through the Saviour who gave Himself for them.

**Conclusion**

The cup in the upper room directs us toward the blood of the New Testament, and that blood directs us toward the finished sacrifice of Jesus Christ. From the Passover in Egypt to the covenant established at Sinai, Scripture demonstrates the solemn significance of blood in God's dealings with His people. The former sacrifices served their appointed purposes while pointing beyond themselves toward the perfect offering that was coming. Jeremiah announced the future new covenant with Israel and Judah, while Hebrews reveals Jesus Christ as its mediator and explains the necessity of His sacrificial death. The New Testament church shares in the redemptive blessings secured through that blood without replacing Israel or assuming its national covenant identity. Paul's instructions concerning the Lord's Supper preserve the same essential distinction between the physical elements and the spiritual truths they proclaim. The cup remembers the blood. The blood secures redemption. Christ alone accomplishes the work, and faith rests upon Him.

There is no room in the Gospel for a doctrine that makes the sinner's acceptance before God dependent upon drinking ceremonial elements. The Lord Jesus Christ did not suffer upon the cross merely to establish a religious process through which forgiveness must be continually administered by human intermediaries. He shed His blood for the remission of sins, offered Himself once, obtained eternal redemption, and entered heaven as the perfect High Priest. Hebrews 10:18 declares, "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." That statement should govern every discussion of sacrificial

ceremonies. The issue is not whether a service appears solemn, whether its participants are sincere, or whether its traditions possess an impressive history. The question is whether its doctrines agree with the finished work of Christ as revealed in Scripture. Religious ceremonies cannot add value to His blood, and centuries of ecclesiastical authority cannot rewrite what God has already established. Calvary does not require improvement, and eternal redemption does not come with an expiration date printed upon the cup.

The Lord's Supper should therefore be observed with reverence, gratitude, doctrinal understanding, and complete confidence in the Saviour whose death it proclaims. When believers take the cup, they should remember the blood that was shed, the judgment Christ bore, the forgiveness His sacrifice secured, and the eternal redemption obtained through His finished work. They should examine themselves, honor the significance of the ordinance, and rejoice in the certainty that their salvation rests upon the Lord Jesus Christ. They should also remember that the One who shed His blood is alive forevermore and will return according to His promise. The church proclaims His death until He comes, not because redemption remains unfinished, but because the finished sacrifice deserves continual remembrance. The cup cannot forgive a sinner. The ceremony cannot justify a soul. The priest cannot improve the sacrifice. The blood of Jesus Christ accomplished what all the religious rituals in the world could never accomplish. The cup is the witness, Christ is the Redeemer, and Calvary is the payment. Never confuse the vessel with the victory, the remembrance with the redemption, or the sign with the Saviour whose blood was shed once for all.

**5 of 10. The Lord’s Supper: This Do in Remembrance of Me, Not to Repeat My Sacrifice**

Key Passage: "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)

**Introduction**

There are few commands in the New Testament that have been surrounded by more religious complications than the simple words of Jesus Christ, "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). The Lord did not establish a theological puzzle that required centuries of church councils to solve, a special priesthood to administer its supposed supernatural powers, or an elaborate ceremony to accomplish something His sacrifice had left unfinished. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and instructed His disciples to remember Him. Yet religious men have managed to build entire systems around the Lord's Supper

until the remembrance of Christ has sometimes become almost secondary to the ceremony itself. What began in an upper room with the Saviour and His disciples has been surrounded by altars, vestments, theological definitions, and claims of sacrificial authority that demand examination by Scripture. The question is not whether a religious performance can appear impressive. The question is whether it accomplishes what Christ commanded.

The distinction between remembering a sacrifice and repeating a sacrifice is not some insignificant disagreement reserved for theologians who have exhausted every other subject worth discussing. It reaches directly into the sufficiency of the blood of Jesus Christ, the finished character of His offering, the believer's justification before God, and the meaning of the Gospel itself. Hebrews 10:12 declares, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." That statement establishes a completed offering and a seated Saviour. The sacrifice did not require installments, renewals, improvements, or human assistance. Jesus Christ did not surrender His body upon the cross only to leave generations of religious officials responsible for making His offering effective. He accomplished redemption through His own blood. The Lord's Supper was established to proclaim that accomplishment, not to manufacture another sacrificial transaction. A memorial points toward what has been done. It does not pretend that the finished work remains unfinished.

There is also a glorious prophetic dimension to the ordinance that is frequently overlooked when attention becomes absorbed in ceremonial arguments. Paul declares, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). Those final three words are tremendously important. The Lord's Supper looks backward to Calvary and forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. It remembers a sacrifice that has been accomplished while anticipating the return of the Saviour who accomplished it. The church does not gather around the Lord's table to mourn as though Christ remains defeated, buried, and absent forever. It remembers the crucified One who rose again, ascended into heaven, and promised to return. The bread speaks of His body given, the cup speaks of His blood shed, and the entire ordinance proclaims His death until He comes. The cross is behind us, the coming of Christ is before us, and the finished sacrifice stands between them as the unshakable foundation of our salvation.

**1. The Night of Betrayal: Christ Established a Remembrance, Not Another Altar**

The apostle Paul introduces the Lord's Supper with a statement that settles the question of its authority. "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" (1 Corinthians 11:23). Paul did not claim that he received the ordinance from an ancient religious institution or from a

committee appointed to improve upon Christ's instructions. He received it from the Lord and delivered it to the church. Notice also the historical setting. The supper was established on the night of Christ's betrayal, when Judas was preparing to deliver Him into the hands of His enemies. Human treachery was unfolding while divine redemption approached its appointed accomplishment. The Lord knew that arrest, suffering, and crucifixion were before Him, yet He deliberately established a remembrance for those who would believe on Him. The betrayal revealed the darkness of man's heart. The supper revealed the faithfulness of the Saviour who continued toward the cross.

Paul continues, "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" (1 Corinthians 11:24). Every action is significant, but the Lord's explanation governs their meaning. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and directed His disciples to remember Him. There is no command here to establish a sacrificial altar upon which Christ must be offered repeatedly. There is no instruction concerning an ordained class of men possessing authority to transform the elements into His body. The bread directed attention toward the body He would surrender. The command directed attention toward the Person who would surrender it. Religious tradition may dress the occasion in magnificent garments, but no amount of ceremonial decoration can insert another command into the mouth of Jesus Christ. When the Lord says remembrance, we have no authority to substitute sacrificial repetition.

The cup receives the same explanation. "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" (1 Corinthians 11:25). Twice the Lord directs attention toward remembrance, first concerning the bread and then concerning the cup. The repetition removes any excuse for overlooking His stated purpose. The blood of the New Testament would be shed at Calvary, and the cup would testify to that accomplished sacrifice. Paul then explains that believers proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. If the Holy Ghost intended the church to understand the ordinance as a continuing sacrificial offering, this was the appropriate place to explain it. Instead, the inspired record emphasizes remembrance and proclamation. Christ did not establish a machine for manufacturing redemption. He established a memorial for proclaiming the redemption He Himself would accomplish.

**2. Remembering the Redeemer: The Difference Between a Memorial and a Sacrifice**

The Bible had already established the principle of remembrance in God's dealings with Israel. Exodus 12:14 declares concerning the Passover, "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations." Israel was commanded to remember the historical deliverance from Egypt, when the blood of the

Passover lamb marked the households protected during God's judgment. The subsequent observance did not cause the original deliverance to happen again. Pharaoh was not defeated annually, the firstborn were not judged afresh, and Israel did not need another miraculous departure from Egypt every time the feast was observed. The memorial directed succeeding generations toward something God had already accomplished. The historical setting belonged to Israel, and the instructions were given within God's covenant dealings with that nation. Nevertheless, the underlying distinction is unmistakable. Remembering an accomplished deliverance is not the same thing as accomplishing that deliverance again.

The Lord's Supper follows that principle while possessing its own distinct New Testament significance. Israel's Passover remembered deliverance from Egyptian bondage, while the church's observance proclaims the death of Jesus Christ. Paul identifies the prophetic connection when he declares, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). Notice the tense. Christ is sacrificed for us. The apostle does not command the Corinthian believers to continue sacrificing Him whenever they gather. The Lamb of God had already offered Himself, and the church was called to live in the light of that completed redemption. We must not confuse Israel's national deliverance under the historical Passover with the church's salvation through the Gospel of grace. The two observances are connected through Christ, but they are not interchangeable ceremonies. The Passover lamb anticipated the sacrifice, while the Lord's Supper remembers the sacrifice. The picture changed direction because Calvary had become a completed historical reality.

Remembrance also requires understanding the Person being remembered. Jesus Christ did not command believers merely to contemplate physical suffering detached from its redemptive meaning. His body was given for sinners, His blood was shed for the remission of sins, and His death accomplished the Father's purpose. Isaiah 53:6 declares, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." That is the substance of biblical remembrance. We were guilty, and He was sinless. We deserved judgment, and He bore our sins. We possessed no righteousness sufficient to justify ourselves, and He accomplished the sacrifice upon which our salvation rests. A ceremony that occupies the senses while leaving these truths unexplained has missed the very heart of the ordinance. You can arrange the table perfectly and still miss the Saviour entirely. Remembrance without biblical understanding becomes religious activity with an impressive appearance and a tragically empty center.

**3. His Body Given and His Blood Shed: Remembering What Calvary Accomplished**

When Jesus Christ declared, "This is my body which is given for you" (Luke 22:19), He directed His disciples toward the sacrifice of His own physical body. The incarnation was not an interesting theological episode disconnected from redemption. The eternal Son of God became flesh so that He could accomplish the will of the Father through His sacrificial death. Hebrews 10:5 records, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." The following verses explain Christ's willingness to do God's will, culminating in the offering of His body once for all. Peter declares that Christ "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24). The bread therefore points toward a real body that endured real suffering for real sinners. Yet the bread itself did not bear our sins. Jesus Christ did. A representation can proclaim the sacrifice without becoming the sacrifice it represents.

The cup directs attention toward the blood Christ shed, and Scripture leaves no uncertainty concerning its redemptive significance. Matthew 26:28 records the Lord's declaration, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Ephesians 1:7 explains, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Romans 5:9 declares that believers are justified by His blood and shall be saved from wrath through Him. These statements establish the foundation of redemption beyond the reach of ceremonial invention. The blood was shed by Christ, not produced by a religious minister. Forgiveness is secured through His sacrifice, not through the physical consumption of the contents of a cup. The vessel may direct remembrance toward the blood, but it cannot possess the saving virtue of the blood shed at Calvary. The ceremony announces what Christ accomplished. It does not supply what His sacrifice supposedly lacked.

The finished work of Christ must also be understood in connection with His resurrection. Paul declares, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The Lord's Supper particularly proclaims His death, but the Christ being remembered is the risen and living Saviour. We do not gather around the table as though Calvary ended with a defeated Messiah permanently confined to a borrowed tomb. The sacrifice was accepted, the grave was conquered, and the Son of God arose victorious. Romans 4:25 describes Him as One "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." The resurrection establishes the triumph of the crucified Christ and the certainty of the Gospel. The Lord's Supper remembers a death that purchased redemption, but it proclaims that death in the presence of a living Saviour who will never die again.

**4. Once for All: The Sacrifice That God Refuses to Repeat**

Hebrews 9 provides one of the strongest explanations of why Christ's sacrifice cannot be treated as an unfinished religious transaction. Under the Mosaic law, the high priest entered the holy place according to the appointed requirements of Israel's worship. Those ceremonies pointed toward the greater redemption Christ would accomplish. Hebrews 9:12 declares, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Notice the force of those expressions. Christ entered once, and He obtained eternal redemption. He did not obtain temporary forgiveness awaiting renewal through ceremonial participation. Hebrews 9:24 explains that He entered heaven itself, appearing in the presence of God for us. The earthly sanctuary possessed its appointed significance, but Christ accomplished what the former priesthood could never accomplish. His sacrifice was not merely better organized than the previous system. It was infinitely superior because the offering itself was sufficient.

Hebrews 9:25-26 further explains that Christ did not enter heaven to offer Himself repeatedly, as the former high priest entered with sacrificial blood year after year. Instead, Scripture declares, "but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26). The language is not uncertain. Christ appeared once to accomplish the sacrifice that puts away sin. Hebrews 9:28 then states, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." The same truth appears in Hebrews 10:10, where believers are sanctified through the offering of His body once for all. A repeated offering would contradict the very contrast the writer establishes between the former sacrifices and Christ's completed work. The cross was not an introductory payment followed by ceremonial installments. It was the appointed offering of the perfect Lamb of God. When Scripture says once, religious tradition has no authority to write again in the margin.

Hebrews 10:11-12 brings the argument to its magnificent conclusion. The former priest stood daily ministering and offering sacrifices that could never take away sins, but Christ, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God. That contrast is deliberate. The standing priest represented an unfinished sacrificial system, while the seated Saviour testified to a completed offering. Hebrews 10:14 declares, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Then verse 18 announces, "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." That is not a difficult theological riddle requiring a special committee to untangle it. It is a divine declaration concerning the finality of redemption. The Lord's Supper does not contradict that declaration because remembrance is not another offering. Christ did not sit down in heaven so earthly priests could stand up and finish His sacrifice. He sat down because the sacrifice was finished.

**5. The Mass and the Memorial: When Religious Tradition Changes the Question**

The Roman Catholic understanding of the Mass must be examined carefully because its doctrine concerns the very distinction between Christ's completed sacrifice and the ceremony appointed to remember it. Catholic teaching does not claim that Jesus Christ is historically crucified again every time Mass is celebrated. Rather, it teaches that His one sacrifice is sacramentally made present and offered in an unbloody manner through the Eucharistic celebration. That distinction should be acknowledged rather than replaced with an inaccurate accusation. Nevertheless, the biblical question remains unavoidable. Where did Jesus Christ command His disciples to perform a sacrificial action through which His offering would become present upon an earthly altar? Where did Paul instruct the Corinthian church that consecrated elements must be offered sacrificially by a specially ordained priest? The institution accounts speak of remembrance, and Paul speaks of proclaiming the Lord's death. The doctrine of a sacrificial Eucharistic offering therefore requires biblical authorization that those instructions do not explicitly provide.

The same difficulty arises when religious authority is permitted to establish additional requirements concerning the meaning of the elements. Catholic doctrine teaches that the bread and wine become Christ's body and blood through consecration, while their outward appearances remain. Yet Paul continues calling the elements bread and the cup when instructing believers concerning the ordinance. First Corinthians 11:26 states, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." The apostle emphasizes what the participants proclaim, not an invisible transformation whose mechanics must be explained by later theological categories. The Lord's words are not meaningless, and the ordinance is not an empty social custom. But its significance must be governed by Scripture rather than by a system built around claims the passage does not establish. A religious explanation can be centuries old, intellectually elaborate, and ceremonially impressive while still requiring more biblical proof than its defenders have supplied. Longevity is not inspiration, and religious complexity is not evidence of divine authority.

There is also the danger of mistaking reverence for biblical correctness. Millions of sincere Catholics approach the Eucharist believing they are honoring Jesus Christ, and their sincerity should not become an excuse for mockery. The purpose of doctrinal correction is to direct people toward the Word of God, not to ridicule those who have inherited religious teachings. Yet sincerity cannot transform a doctrine into divine revelation. Christ rebuked religious leaders who were "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition" (Mark 7:13). That warning applies wherever human authority displaces Scripture, whether in Catholicism, Protestantism, or an independent congregation. Any church can develop

customs that gradually overshadow the command they were intended to observe. The issue is not whether a ceremony can move the emotions, impress the senses, or claim ancient authority. The issue is whether Christ commanded it. When the Bible establishes remembrance, men have no authority to turn the memorial into another sacrificial offering.

**6. A Holy Remembrance: Reverence Without Superstition and Obedience Without Bondage**

Rejecting the idea that the Lord's Supper repeats Christ's sacrifice does not mean treating the ordinance carelessly. The Corinthians demonstrated precisely how Christians could corrupt its observance through selfishness, division, and irreverence. Paul rebuked them because their gatherings had become occasions for satisfying personal appetites while neglecting fellow believers. First Corinthians 11:21 declares, "for in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken." Imagine the disgrace. A congregation supposedly gathered to remember the self-sacrificing Saviour while behaving as though the most important concern was who received the largest portion. Paul warned that such conduct dishonored the ordinance. The Lord's Supper was never intended to become a religious picnic with the name of Jesus attached afterward. The sacrifice remembered demands solemn consideration, and the fellowship expressed requires believers to demonstrate concern for one another. Reverence begins with recognizing whom the ordinance honors.

Paul therefore commands, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). Notice that self-examination precedes participation, but it does not become a requirement to achieve personal sinlessness or earn justification. No believer possesses righteousness sufficient to stand before God apart from Christ. The examination concerns the manner of participation, the believer's conduct, and his recognition of the ordinance's significance. Paul warns that some Corinthians experienced weakness, sickness, and even death because of their abuse of the Lord's Supper. Yet he explains that believers are chastened by the Lord so that they should not be condemned with the world (1 Corinthians 11:32). That distinction preserves the difference between divine discipline and eternal condemnation. A saved man cannot make himself worthy of Calvary, but he can certainly behave in a manner unworthy of the remembrance of Calvary. Eternal security is not permission to treat holy things as common entertainment.

The Lord's Supper also expresses fellowship among believers who share the benefits of Christ's sacrifice. First Corinthians 10:16 asks, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" That fellowship rests upon union with Christ, not upon

a ceremony that creates salvation. Ephesians 2:8-9 establishes that salvation is by grace through faith, not of works. Communion does not contradict that truth. It provides an appointed remembrance for those who have received salvation through Christ. The ordinance should be observed faithfully, reverently, and according to Scripture, without inventing additional requirements concerning priestly powers, mandatory ceremonial formulas, or an allegedly necessary frequency of participation. Paul says, "as often as ye eat this bread" (1 Corinthians 11:26), without establishing a universally binding calendar. The Lord's Supper is too important to neglect, too sacred to abuse, and too clearly explained in Scripture to surrender to human invention.

**7. Till He Come: The Supper That Looks Toward the Returning Saviour**

The final words of 1 Corinthians 11:26 contain a tremendous prophetic promise: "till he come." The Lord's Supper was never intended to become an endless religious cycle with no future beyond another ceremony. Its observance belongs to the period during which the church awaits the return of Jesus Christ. Believers look backward to the completed sacrifice while anticipating the moment when their Saviour will call them into His presence. First Thessalonians 4:16-17 declares that the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, the dead in Christ shall rise first, and living believers shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. That is the blessed expectation of the church. The ordinance reminds us of the death that purchased redemption, while its concluding words direct our attention toward the One who will fulfill His promise to return. The church is not waiting for another sacrifice. It is waiting for the Saviour whose sacrifice is finished.

First Corinthians 15:51-52 declares, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." This passage concerns the transformation of believers when Christ gathers His own, a promise that must be distinguished from the prophetic events surrounding His visible return to establish His earthly kingdom. Israel's national promises, the future Tribulation, the Second Advent, and the Millennium must not be carelessly combined into one confused prophetic arrangement. The church's present expectation concerns the coming of Christ for His saints, while other passages describe His future revelation in judgment and kingdom glory. The Lord's Supper does not provide a complete prophetic timetable, but its words harmonize with the church's expectation of His return. Every observance quietly testifies that the present age will not continue forever. One day the church will have observed its final remembrance before seeing the Saviour face to face.

Matthew 26:29 records Christ's declaration that He would not drink again of the fruit of the vine until He drank it new with His disciples in His Father's kingdom. That promise belongs to its proper kingdom setting and must not be confused with Paul's revelation of the

church's catching away. Nevertheless, both passages direct attention beyond the suffering of Calvary toward the triumph of the living Christ. The Lord who established the supper knew that death would not hold Him, and His disciples were not being instructed to commemorate a permanently defeated teacher. Believers today should approach the ordinance with that same certainty. The church has work to accomplish while awaiting Christ's return, including the preaching of the Gospel, the edification of believers, and faithful obedience to the Word of God. Remembrance should strengthen that obedience rather than replace it with ceremonial satisfaction. We remember His death because it purchased our salvation, and we anticipate His coming because the One who purchased us has promised to return.

**Conclusion**

The Lord's Supper stands upon one of the clearest commands Jesus Christ ever gave: "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Those words direct believers toward His body given, His blood shed, and His sacrifice accomplished at Calvary. Paul delivers the same instruction to the New Testament church and explains that participation proclaims the Lord's death until He comes. Hebrews establishes the finality of that death, declaring that Christ offered Himself once, obtained eternal redemption, and sat down at the right hand of God. The former sacrificial system pointed toward a completed offering, while the Lord's Supper remembers that offering after its accomplishment. The ordinance does not establish another altar, authorize another sacrificial priesthood, or provide another means of purchasing forgiveness. It proclaims the sufficiency of the sacrifice God has already accepted. The cross was not a down payment upon redemption. It was the full payment, offered by the perfect Saviour and accepted by the righteous Father.

The danger of religious tradition is that it can gradually persuade people to place confidence in the ceremony rather than the Christ whom the ceremony is supposed to honor. A man may know every prescribed action, repeat every liturgical response, and attend communion services throughout his life while remaining ignorant of the Gospel of grace. Religious participation cannot replace personal faith in Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1 declares, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." That peace comes through the Saviour, not through ceremonial consumption. At the same time, believers must not react against superstition by treating the Lord's Supper as an insignificant custom. Christ established it, Paul delivered it, and Scripture commands reverent participation. The proper response to false teaching is not to abandon the ordinance but to observe it according to God's Word. We need neither ritual magic nor religious indifference. We need the truth of Scripture, the remembrance of Calvary, and obedience to the Lord who established the supper.

The church therefore approaches the Lord's table with gratitude for a finished sacrifice and expectation of a coming Saviour. The bread directs our thoughts toward His body given for sinners. The cup directs our thoughts toward His blood shed for the remission of sins. The remembrance proclaims the redemption that no sinner could purchase, no earthly priest could accomplish, and no religious ceremony could improve. When believers examine themselves, participate reverently, and proclaim the Lord's death, they honor the ordinance according to its biblical purpose. Yet even this remembrance is temporary, for the apostle attaches the glorious promise, "till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). The crucified Saviour is alive, the ascended Lord is coming again, and the redeemed church awaits His appearance. We do not return to the table because Calvary needs another sacrifice. We return because Calvary accomplished the only sacrifice that could save us. The bread remembers His body, the cup remembers His blood, and the ordinance proclaims His death until He comes. The altar's work is finished, the Saviour is seated, and the church is waiting for the trumpet.

**6 of 10. The Lord’s Supper: One Bread, One Body, and the Corinthian Church That Forgot Both**

Key Passage: "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Corinthians 10:17)

**Introduction**

There is something almost astonishing about a church that can gather around the Lord's table to remember the sacrifice of Jesus Christ while simultaneously demonstrating the very selfishness, pride, and division that His sacrifice ought to have condemned. Yet that was the condition of the Corinthian congregation when the apostle Paul addressed their disgraceful observance of the Lord's Supper. They had the bread. They had the cup. They had a gathering that apparently carried the name of the Lord's Supper. What they did not have was the conduct that should accompany a congregation remembering the Saviour who gave Himself for others. Some were eating excessively, others were going hungry, and the assembly had become divided by factions and social distinctions. Imagine gathering to remember the One who humbled Himself unto death while making certain that your fellow believers understood how little you thought of them. Corinth had managed to turn the memorial of self-sacrifice into a public exhibition of self-interest. Religious people have been improving upon that particular disgrace ever since.

The apostle's rebuke was not directed toward a congregation that had simply forgotten a ceremonial detail or arranged the furniture incorrectly. Their problem went far deeper than the order of service. First Corinthians 11:20 declares, "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper." That is a devastating statement. Paul was telling professing believers that their gathering had become so corrupted that the name they attached to it no longer accurately described what they were doing. They could call it the Lord's Supper, announce it as the Lord's Supper, and distribute the elements associated with the Lord's Supper, but their conduct contradicted its purpose. God is not impressed by a religious label when the activity underneath it has become a contradiction of His Word. A bottle marked medicine does not become beneficial because somebody printed an attractive label upon it. Likewise, a congregation does not honor Christ merely because it attaches His name to conduct that dishonors Him.

This passage demands careful attention because it addresses two truths that must never be separated. The Lord's Supper proclaims the death of Jesus Christ, and the believers observing it share a spiritual unity grounded in that same Saviour. First Corinthians 10:16-17 connects the bread and cup with communion in Christ's body and blood, while First Corinthians 11:17-34 exposes the disgrace of participating without proper regard for the Lord or fellow believers. We must distinguish the spiritual unity created through salvation from the artificial unity manufactured through religious organizations, denominational agreements, or the suppression of biblical doctrine. We must also recognize that eternal security does not excuse selfish conduct, and that the ordinance does not provide a ceremonial covering for an unrepentant heart. The Lord's Supper was never intended to become a stage upon which Christians could perform holiness while practicing contempt. A congregation may break the bread correctly while breaking fellowship wickedly, and God sees both actions with perfect clarity.

**1. The Cup of Blessing and the Bread of Communion: What Fellowship Actually Means**

Paul introduces the subject of communion in First Corinthians 10 with a solemn warning against idolatry. He declares, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry" (1 Corinthians 10:14). The immediate context concerns believers living in a Gentile environment where sacrifices to idols and participation in pagan religious practices were common. Paul was not addressing Israel at Sinai or instructing the church to return to the ceremonial requirements of the Mosaic law. He was addressing Christians whose allegiance belonged to Jesus Christ. Then he asked, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16). The language connects the physical elements with fellowship in the redemptive benefits of Christ's sacrifice. The cup

testifies to His blood, and the bread testifies to His body. Both direct attention toward the One who accomplished redemption.

The word communion in this passage cannot be reduced to the mere act of occupying the same building or participating in the same ceremony. Paul is speaking of fellowship grounded in Jesus Christ. Believers possess a common Saviour, a common redemption, and a common standing before God through faith in Him. Ephesians 1:7 declares, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." That redemption belongs to every saved person, whether wealthy or poor, educated or uneducated, socially prominent or practically invisible to the surrounding world. No believer purchases a superior position in Christ through financial influence, family reputation, or institutional importance. The ground around Calvary is remarkably unfriendly toward human pride. Men may establish elaborate social rankings outside the church, but the blood of Jesus Christ did not redeem one class of sinners at a premium rate and another class at a discount.

The context also makes clear that communion involves spiritual allegiance. Paul contrasts participation in the Lord's table with participation in idolatrous worship, declaring, "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils" (1 Corinthians 10:21). The issue is not whether a particular cup possesses independent supernatural power. The issue is whom the worshipper identifies himself with through participation. The Corinthians could not claim fellowship with Christ while knowingly joining religious observances that honored idols. Neither can Christians today employ communion as an outward declaration of devotion while deliberately embracing what Scripture condemns. Biblical fellowship is not a religious social club in which doctrine becomes an inconvenient distraction. The Lord's table declares allegiance to the Lord, and a man cannot honor that allegiance by treating every contrary spiritual association as equally acceptable.

**2. One Bread and One Body: The Unity Christ Established, Not the Unity Men Manufacture**

First Corinthians 10:17 declares, "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." Paul moves from the elements of the supper to the unity of believers who participate in the blessings of Christ's sacrifice. The many are described as one body, and the one bread serves as a fitting representation of their common fellowship. Notice that spiritual unity does not erase the reality of individual believers. Paul acknowledges that believers are many, yet they share membership in one body. Their common identity is established in Christ rather than manufactured through a ceremony. The Lord's Supper testifies to that unity, but the physical consumption of bread

does not create the body of Christ. A person does not become saved by eating, and a congregation does not become spiritually united simply because everyone received a piece from the same loaf. The symbol proclaims a reality established by God.

First Corinthians 12:13 explains the formation of that spiritual body: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." This is the work of the Holy Spirit, not the accomplishment of an earthly religious institution. The apostle identifies Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, as believers brought into one body through the Spirit. Ephesians 2:16 likewise explains that Christ reconciles believing Jews and Gentiles unto God in one body by the cross. These truths belong to the present church age and must not be confused with replacing Israel or transferring every national covenant promise to the church. The unity of the body of Christ concerns believers joined to Him through salvation. It is not the result of denominational membership, sacramental participation, or a human organization claiming exclusive ownership of the people of God.

There is an important distinction between biblical unity and the modern religious demand that Christians suppress sound doctrine for the appearance of agreement. Ephesians 4:3 instructs believers to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Notice that the unity belongs to the Spirit. Believers are commanded to preserve it, not manufacture it through doctrinal surrender. Ephesians 4:13 also speaks of "the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." Truth is therefore inseparable from genuine Christian unity. A hundred denominations can sign a declaration, exchange representatives, and hold an impressive ceremony without correcting a single false doctrine among them. Organizational agreement is not automatically spiritual fellowship. The Holy Ghost did not inspire the Scriptures so men could later declare doctrine unnecessary to unity. The church is one body because Christ is one Saviour, not because religious officials have managed to arrange a photograph in which everybody appears to be smiling.

**3. The Divided Church: When Carnality Sits in the Front Row**

The divisions at Corinth did not begin when the congregation gathered around the Lord's table. Paul had already confronted their factional spirit near the beginning of the epistle. First Corinthians 1:12 records believers claiming allegiance to Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or Christ in ways that produced division. Paul answered with the piercing question, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Corinthians 1:13). Those questions expose the foolishness of building factions around human personalities. Paul had not died for their sins. Apollos had not purchased their redemption. Peter's personal importance could not substitute for the blood of Jesus Christ.

Yet Christians were behaving as though their preferred minister determined their standing. Human pride had discovered a way to turn spiritual leadership into a competition. The church was beginning to resemble a collection of competing political parties rather than believers united around one crucified Saviour.

First Corinthians 3:3 continues the rebuke: "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" Paul was addressing believers whose conduct reflected fleshly attitudes rather than the spiritual maturity appropriate to their position in Christ. He identified envy, strife, and divisions as evidence of carnality. This is a needed correction to the mistaken idea that any congregation possessing correct doctrinal statements must therefore be spiritually healthy. A church can possess an accurate confession of faith while its members practice envy over positions, resentment over recognition, and bitter competition for influence. Sound doctrine must produce conduct consistent with the truth being taught. The Corinthians knew enough to identify prominent Christian teachers, but some had not learned how to treat fellow believers without behaving like rival political campaign managers. Their problem was not a shortage of religious vocabulary. It was an abundance of fleshly pride.

When Paul returned to the subject in First Corinthians 11, the same underlying condition had invaded the Lord's Supper. He declared, "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it" (1 Corinthians 11:18). The expression reveals that Paul recognized the connection between their established pattern of division and their disgraceful assemblies. Verse 19 acknowledges that factions could make those who were approved manifest, but that observation does not excuse deliberate quarrelling or authorize Christians to create needless divisions. The very next verses reveal how corruption had affected their observance. A congregation cannot cultivate pride throughout the week and expect a brief ceremony to erase its consequences when Sunday arrives. Communion does not provide a ceremonial broom for sweeping unrepentant carnality beneath a religious carpet. If the church is divided by sin, the answer is obedience to Scripture, not a more impressive arrangement of the table.

**4. The Hungry and the Drunken: When the Lord's Table Became a Social Divider**

First Corinthians 11:21 exposes the disgrace with uncomfortable precision: "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken." The problem was not merely that the Corinthians had selected an inconvenient time for their gathering. Their behavior revealed contempt for the very fellowship they professed to celebrate. Some had enough to indulge themselves, while others were left hungry. The contrast demonstrates that the needs of fellow believers had become secondary to

personal appetite. Whether particular participants possessed greater wealth, arrived with more provisions, or simply refused to wait for others, the result was unmistakable. Those who possessed abundance acted without proper concern for those who lacked it. Imagine remembering the One who gave His life for others while refusing to share an ordinary meal with the believer sitting nearby. The Corinthians were preaching one message through the ordinance and another through their appetites.

Paul's response becomes even sharper in the following verse. "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?" (1 Corinthians 11:22). That question reveals the seriousness of the offense. Their behavior was not simply bad manners. Paul described it as despising the church of God and shaming those who had nothing. The congregation had permitted social distinctions and personal indulgence to corrupt a gathering intended to honor Christ. Notice that Paul did not instruct the poorer believers to become less sensitive or the wealthier participants to make their selfishness appear more respectable. He rebuked the conduct itself. The church belongs to God, and its members are not entitled to treat one another as disposable accessories to their religious enjoyment. A congregation that reserves its finest attention for influential people while neglecting struggling believers has misunderstood whose name is written over the assembly.

James 2 addresses a closely related evil by condemning favoritism toward the wealthy. The passage describes a rich man entering the assembly in fine clothing while a poor man arrives in shabby apparel. The rich man receives a favored position, while the poor man is told to stand or sit beneath a footstool. James asks, "Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" (James 2:4). Although James addresses its own immediate circumstances, the moral principle reinforces Paul's rebuke. Financial prosperity does not establish spiritual superiority, and poverty does not diminish a believer's standing in Christ. First Corinthians 1:26 reminds the church that not many wise, mighty, or noble are called according to worldly estimation. God does not arrange His redeemed people according to society's preferred seating chart. If the rich man receives honor because of his possessions while the poor man receives embarrassment because of his circumstances, the congregation has brought the world's measuring stick into the house of God and called it fellowship.

**5. This Is Not to Eat the Lord's Supper: When the Ceremony Loses Its Biblical Purpose**

Paul delivers the central verdict in First Corinthians 11:20: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper." The statement deserves careful examination because it reveals that possessing the outward form of an ordinance does not guarantee faithful observance. The Corinthians were apparently assembling for an

occasion associated with the Lord's Supper, yet their conduct had so corrupted the gathering that Paul refused to identify their activity with its intended purpose. They had taken what belonged to the Lord and turned it into an occasion for personal indulgence. Verse 21 supplies the explanation by contrasting each person's own supper with the Lord's Supper. That distinction is devastating. The ordinance belonged to Christ, but their behavior suggested that their appetites had assumed ownership. A church can possess the correct vocabulary, maintain an established tradition, and conduct an orderly announcement while still missing the substance of biblical obedience.

The contrast between the Lord's Supper and a person's own supper must not be overlooked. The former remembers the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ, while the latter, as practiced by the Corinthians, had become an expression of selfishness. Christ declared, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). The entire institution directs attention toward the One who gave Himself for others. Yet the Corinthians approached their gathering as an opportunity to satisfy themselves without concern for their brethren. Their conduct contradicted the very sacrifice being remembered. There is a striking irony in the situation. They were attempting to proclaim the death of the One who gave everything while some participants apparently could not be bothered to wait for their fellow believers before eating. A church that remembers Christ's generosity while practicing deliberate selfishness has turned the memorial into an accusation against its own conduct.

The lesson reaches beyond Corinth without requiring us to invent additional commands. A congregation today may observe communion with polished trays, carefully arranged cups, solemn music, and an impressive presentation while overlooking bitterness, favoritism, or deliberate mistreatment among its members. None of those outward arrangements can compensate for disobedience. At the same time, the passage does not authorize abandoning the ordinance because some believers have abused it. Paul corrected the Corinthians and continued instructing them concerning its proper observance. Neither does he require congregations to abandon every shared meal or fellowship gathering. He condemns the selfish conduct that corrupted this particular assembly. The solution was not to eliminate remembrance but to restore its biblical purpose. Religious form has its appropriate place when it serves obedience, but form becomes a counterfeit when it replaces obedience. God never commanded His church to choose between correct doctrine and correct conduct. A congregation honoring Christ should possess both.

**6. Examine Yourselves: The Judgment That Begins With the Believer's Conduct**

Having exposed the Corinthians' disgraceful behavior, Paul returns to the institution of the supper and then issues a solemn warning. First Corinthians 11:27 declares, "Wherefore

whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." The word "unworthily" concerns the manner of participation. Paul was not teaching that sinners must achieve personal righteousness sufficient to deserve Christ's sacrifice before they may approach the table. No believer possesses such merit. Salvation is entirely by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The Corinthians' problem was their irreverent conduct, which contradicted the sacred meaning of the ordinance. Paul therefore commands, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). Notice that examination leads to reverent participation, not to a system of earning acceptance before God.

First Corinthians 11:29 continues, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." The following verses explain the nature of the warning. Paul declares that many among them were weak and sickly, and many slept. He then writes, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Corinthians 11:31). This passage must be understood in its immediate context rather than transformed into a threat that every struggling believer will lose eternal salvation by participating incorrectly. Verse 32 explains that believers are chastened by the Lord so that they should not be condemned with the world. The distinction between fatherly discipline and eternal condemnation is essential. God deals seriously with the conduct of His children, but His chastening does not overturn the finished redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ. Eternal security never meant that disobedience would be free from divine consequences.

There is also a warning against using these verses to make reckless accusations about suffering believers. Paul identified a particular condition within the Corinthian congregation and connected it with their abuse of the Lord's Supper. That does not authorize us to announce that every Christian suffering illness must have mishandled communion. Such a conclusion would exceed the passage. The proper application is self-examination before God. Believers must judge their own conduct, confess wrongdoing, and obey the instructions God has given. This is especially important when selfishness or disregard for others has become normal within a congregation. A person cannot correct corporate corruption merely by pretending the problem does not exist. The Corinthians needed to confront their behavior. The Lord's Supper is not a ceremonial hiding place for sin, and self-examination is not a religious performance conducted for the approval of the congregation. God sees what the participants would rather conceal.

**7. Tarry One for Another: Restoring the Lord's Supper to Its Proper Purpose**

Paul concludes his correction with an instruction so practical that its simplicity almost embarrasses the elaborate behavior it was intended to correct. "Wherefore, my brethren,

when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another" (1 Corinthians 11:33). The Corinthians did not need an elaborate new theological system to correct their immediate disgrace. They needed to wait for one another. The command strikes directly at the selfishness that had corrupted their gathering. Instead of rushing ahead to satisfy personal appetites, they were to show proper consideration for fellow believers. That instruction may appear elementary, but elementary obedience is frequently the very thing religious people neglect while occupying themselves with impressive religious discussions. A congregation can spend hours debating the finer points of communion while refusing to practice the common courtesy of waiting for its own members. Paul brought the matter back to obedience.

The apostle then adds, "And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation" (1 Corinthians 11:34). Here is the distinction between satisfying physical appetite and gathering for the Lord's appointed remembrance. The Corinthians were not prohibited from eating ordinary meals, nor does the instruction condemn fellowship meals conducted properly. Paul was correcting conduct that had turned their assembly into a disgraceful occasion of self-indulgence. If personal hunger was the governing concern, they possessed homes where that need could be satisfied without corrupting the Lord's Supper. The church's gathering was not intended to become a contest over food, privilege, or social standing. Christ's sacrifice was the central subject, and the fellowship of believers was to reflect its significance. The dinner table may satisfy the stomach, but the Lord's table was established to direct the heart toward Calvary. Trouble begins when the appetite takes command of the ordinance.

The final words of the chapter are also significant: "And the rest will I set in order when I come" (1 Corinthians 11:34). Paul had supplied the essential correction through inspired instruction, while acknowledging that additional matters could be addressed when he visited. The church was not abandoned to confusion, but neither was it handed permission to invent doctrines contrary to what Christ had established. Proper observance requires obedience, reverence, sound doctrine, and consideration for the body of Christ. The congregation should remember the Saviour whose body was given, recognize its fellowship in Him, examine its conduct, and avoid the selfishness that disgraced Corinth. Genuine unity does not require overlooking false teaching or pretending that serious sin is harmless. It requires believers to conduct themselves according to the truth they profess. The remedy for a divided church is not to pretend there are no divisions. It is to bring the members back beneath the authority of Scripture and the lordship of Jesus Christ.

**Conclusion**

The Corinthian church stands as a permanent warning against confusing religious participation with spiritual obedience. Those believers possessed the apostolic teaching

concerning the Lord's Supper, yet some were behaving in ways that contradicted the very sacrifice the ordinance proclaimed. Their divisions, selfishness, gluttony, and disregard for those who had nothing turned a solemn remembrance into an occasion for apostolic rebuke. Paul did not excuse their conduct because they belonged to a New Testament congregation, nor did he commend their gathering simply because it carried the correct religious name. He exposed their behavior and returned them to the institution of the supper. The bread represented the body of Christ given for believers, while the cup testified to His blood shed for their redemption. The members participating shared a common Saviour and belonged to one spiritual body. Their conduct should therefore have reflected that fellowship rather than contradicted it. A church cannot honor the sacrifice of Christ by despising the people for whom Christ died.

This passage also establishes the difference between genuine Christian unity and the religious appearance of unity. The body of Christ is formed through the work of the Holy Spirit, not through denominational agreements, institutional membership, or the physical consumption of communion elements. Believers are one in Christ because salvation has united them to the same Saviour. That unity must be preserved through obedience to Scripture, not through the abandonment of biblical truth. The Corinthians demonstrated that Christians can be spiritually united in position while behaving disgracefully in practice. Their failures did not make the finished work of Christ ineffective, but they brought divine correction upon the congregation. The Lord's Supper therefore calls believers to examine their conduct in light of their standing in Christ. The wealthy must not despise the poor. The influential must not humiliate the overlooked. The congregation must not substitute ceremonial agreement for genuine fellowship. The Lord did not redeem His people so they could build another earthly hierarchy around the table that remembers His sacrifice.

The final lesson is unmistakable. Jesus Christ established the Lord's Supper to proclaim His death until He comes, and the believers observing it are responsible for honoring both the Saviour and the fellowship His sacrifice has established. The bread must never become more important than the body it represents, and the ceremony must never become an excuse for mistreating members of Christ's spiritual body. Paul commanded self-examination, consideration for others, and reverent participation because the ordinance belongs to the Lord. The same principles govern the church today. We must preach the Gospel faithfully, maintain sound doctrine, correct sin, care for fellow believers, and remember the sacrifice that purchased our redemption. Outward ceremony cannot conceal inward disobedience from Almighty God. A congregation may have the correct bread, the correct cup, the correct minister, and the correct words while still getting the Lord's Supper completely wrong. The bread is one, the body is one, and the Saviour is one. If we cannot remember the One who gave Himself for us without despising those who

belong to Him, then perhaps the problem is not with the arrangement of the table. Perhaps the problem is with the people sitting around it.

**7 of 10. The Lord’s Supper: Let a Man Examine Himself, Not Mistake His Worthiness for Salvation**

Key Passage: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28)

**Introduction**

There are few passages in the New Testament that have been twisted into a more effective instrument of religious intimidation than Paul's warning about eating and drinking unworthily at the Lord's Supper. A Christian reads First Corinthians 11:27-29, sees the words "guilty," "damnation," and "unworthily," and immediately begins wondering whether he is sufficiently righteous to approach the table. Some have been taught that a forgotten sin might place their salvation in jeopardy, that an unresolved personal failure disqualifies them from remembering Christ, or that participating at the wrong moment could somehow undo the redemption purchased at Calvary. What began as an apostolic correction of a disorderly congregation has been transformed into a spiritual inspection station where frightened believers are encouraged to measure their personal worthiness against the perfect holiness of God. There is just one enormous problem with that arrangement. If personal worthiness is the requirement for approaching the Lord's Supper, nobody on earth qualifies, including the minister standing behind the table.

The apostle Paul did not tell the Corinthians to manufacture a righteousness sufficient to deserve the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He commanded them to examine themselves because their conduct had become disgraceful. First Corinthians 11:27 declares, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." The warning concerns the manner in which believers participate, not the possibility of sinners becoming personally deserving of Calvary. That distinction is not a theological technicality. It is the difference between salvation by grace and salvation by personal achievement, between reverence and religious terror, and between judging one's conduct and attempting to establish one's righteousness before God. The Corinthian believers were not being instructed to get saved all over again before taking communion. They were being rebuked for treating a sacred remembrance as an occasion for selfishness, division, and indulgence. Their behavior required correction, but the correction did not change the Gospel.

The Lord's Supper was established to remember the body of Christ given for sinners and His blood shed for their redemption. It was never intended to become a ceremony through which believers repeatedly prove themselves deserving of eternal life. Ephesians 2:8-9 declares, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." That truth does not disappear when the congregation gathers around the Lord's table. Neither does grace provide permission to participate carelessly, excuse known sin, or treat the sacrifice of Christ as an insignificant religious custom. Scripture establishes both truths without contradiction. The believer's standing rests upon Christ's finished work, while the believer's conduct remains subject to Christ's authority. A Christian does not approach the Lord's table because he has become worthy of the cross. He approaches because the worthy Saviour died for unworthy sinners, and that truth demands reverence rather than presumption.

**1. Read the Context Before Turning Paul's Warning Into a Threat Against Salvation**

The first responsibility in understanding First Corinthians 11 is to examine the situation Paul was actually correcting. The apostle begins his rebuke by declaring, "Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse" (1 Corinthians 11:17). That is hardly the introduction to an ordinary discussion of personal imperfections. Paul was confronting a congregation whose assemblies had become spiritually harmful. He specifically identified divisions among the believers and then exposed the selfish conduct taking place during their gatherings. Some were eating excessively while others remained hungry. The occasion supposedly belonged to the Lord, yet the participants behaved as though their personal appetites were the governing authority. The church had taken a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice and turned it into an opportunity for self-indulgence. Before applying Paul's warning to a trembling Christian worried about his personal worthiness, we ought to examine the people whose conduct actually provoked it.

First Corinthians 11:21 declares, "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken." The contrast exposes a congregation in which consideration for fellow believers had practically disappeared. Those with provisions were satisfying themselves, while others were neglected. Paul then asked whether they despised the church of God and shamed those who had nothing (1 Corinthians 11:22). Notice what he condemned. The problem was not that one believer had experienced an unwanted thought, another had forgotten to confess some minor failure, or a third felt insufficiently spiritual before the service. The problem involved observable, disgraceful conduct that contradicted the purpose of the gathering. They were remembering the One who gave Himself for others while refusing to demonstrate ordinary consideration for their

brethren. Corinth had apparently developed an impressive ability to celebrate self-sacrifice while practicing selfishness. Paul did not congratulate them for their creativity.

Then comes the devastating verdict: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20). Their gathering had become so corrupted that Paul would not recognize their activity as a proper observance of what Christ instituted. Only after exposing these conditions did he return to the original institution of the supper and issue his warning about unworthy participation. This sequence must govern the interpretation. A verse removed from its setting can become a weapon in the hands of someone who has no intention of explaining the surrounding passage. Paul was writing to a New Testament congregation about its conduct, fellowship, and accountability before God. He was not announcing an additional requirement for obtaining eternal life. The Corinthian problem was not that believers lacked enough personal righteousness to purchase the privilege of communion. It was that they were behaving disgracefully while claiming to remember the righteous Saviour who purchased them.

**2. Unworthily Describes the Manner of Participation, Not the Merit of the Person**

The wording of First Corinthians 11:27 deserves particular attention. Paul declares that whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord "unworthily" becomes guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. The warning concerns the manner of eating and drinking. It does not declare that a person must possess sufficient inherent worthiness to deserve Christ's sacrifice. There is a world of difference between participating in an unworthy manner and being an unworthy sinner saved by grace. The first concerns conduct. The second describes the very condition from which the Gospel delivers us. Romans 5:8 declares, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Christ did not wait for sinners to become worthy before offering Himself. He died precisely because sinners could never establish the righteousness required to save themselves. To make personal worthiness the condition of remembering that sacrifice would contradict the reason the sacrifice was necessary.

Consider the testimony of Paul concerning salvation. Philippians 3:9 describes the righteousness he desired as "not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." The apostle rejected the idea that his religious achievements could establish his acceptance before God. Before his conversion, he possessed impressive credentials within Judaism, but those accomplishments could never substitute for the righteousness found in Christ. Yet some religious teachers effectively resurrect the same system when they approach communion. They tell believers to examine their personal spiritual record as though a

satisfactory performance makes them deserving of the Lord's table. The contradiction is remarkable. A man rejects his own righteousness for salvation and then attempts to recover it as the foundation of communion. Religion has a peculiar talent for dragging the very chains of bondage into the room where grace is supposed to be remembered.

The distinction becomes even clearer when we consider the purpose of the ordinance. Jesus declared, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). The Lord's Supper remembers His body given and His blood shed. It does not celebrate the participant's achievements, moral superiority, or remarkable success at avoiding temptation. The believer is commanded to approach reverently because the sacrifice is holy, not because he has attained a holiness equal to the Saviour's. The bread does not announce that the congregation has become perfect. It testifies that Christ gave His body for sinners. The cup does not proclaim that believers have made themselves righteous. It points toward the blood that purchased their redemption. If the Lord's Supper required sinners to become worthy of Calvary before participating, the table would remain empty forever. Christ alone possesses the worthiness upon which our salvation depends.

**3. The Believer's Standing in Christ Is Not Recalculated at Every Communion Service**

The New Testament establishes the believer's position in Christ with language that cannot be reconciled with the notion that salvation must be recovered before every observance of the Lord's Supper. First Corinthians 6:11 declares, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Notice the three declarations. The Corinthians had been washed, sanctified, and justified. Paul was not writing to a congregation of sinless people, as the rest of the epistle abundantly demonstrates. He was addressing believers whose conduct frequently contradicted their standing. Yet their standing was grounded in the saving work of Jesus Christ. The apostle did not inform them that every moral failure required another justification. He rebuked them because they belonged to Christ and were responsible for conduct consistent with that relationship.

Romans 5:1 declares, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." That peace rests upon justification through faith, not upon successful participation in religious ceremonies. Ephesians 1:13 explains that believers, after hearing and believing the Gospel, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Ephesians 4:30 identifies that sealing as continuing "unto the day of redemption." The believer does not enter the Lord's Supper hoping that a ceremonial action will persuade God to maintain his salvation for another month. Eternal life is not issued in temporary portions according to a religious calendar. Jesus declared, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John

10:28). If communion could cancel or restore that promise, eternal security would become little more than temporary permission to remain saved until the next inspection.

This does not mean that a believer's conduct becomes unimportant after salvation. Quite the opposite. Because salvation is secure in Christ, the Christian has every reason to obey the Lord who purchased him. First Corinthians 6:20 declares, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The command to glorify God follows the reality of redemption. Obedience is the responsibility of the redeemed, not the purchase price of redemption. The same distinction governs the Lord's Supper. A Christian who behaves irreverently may experience chastening, loss of fellowship, and serious consequences, but his misbehavior does not make Christ's blood insufficient or require another salvation. The believer's position is established by the finished work of Christ. His daily conduct must answer to the authority of Christ. Confuse those two truths, and you will either turn grace into bondage or twist eternal security into permission for disobedience.

**4. Let a Man Examine Himself: The Mirror of Scripture, Not the Scale of Human Merit**

First Corinthians 11:28 contains the positive instruction that religious fear frequently manages to overlook: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Notice the order. Examine himself, and so let him eat. Paul did not command believers to spend the remainder of their lives standing at a safe distance from the table because they could not guarantee personal perfection. He instructed them to examine their conduct and then participate properly. The examination was meant to correct the abuses occurring at Corinth, not establish an impossible entrance requirement. Scripture provides the standard by which believers should examine themselves. James 1:22 declares, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Self-examination requires comparing conduct with God's Word, acknowledging disobedience, and responding accordingly. It is not an invitation to invent imaginary sins, rehearse every failure since childhood, or measure salvation according to the intensity of one's feelings.

Genuine self-examination should produce honesty before God. A believer harboring bitterness ought to confront that bitterness. A Christian knowingly practicing dishonesty ought to stop lying. Someone mistreating fellow believers should acknowledge the wrong and seek to correct it. Ephesians 4:31-32 commands the putting away of bitterness, wrath, anger, and malice while instructing believers to forgive one another as God for Christ's sake has forgiven them. First John 1:9 declares, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confession is not a ceremonial payment added to Calvary. It is the proper response of a believer who

acknowledges wrongdoing before the Lord. Repentance is not a performance designed to impress the congregation. It involves turning from the wrong rather than defending it. The man who examines himself honestly does not search for excuses to continue sinning. He brings his conduct beneath the authority of Scripture and deals with what God exposes.

There is a considerable difference between biblical conviction and the endless uncertainty produced by religious intimidation. Conviction identifies wrongdoing and directs the believer toward obedience. Unnecessary fear keeps asking whether another undiscovered failure might be hiding somewhere in the past, ready to invalidate everything Christ accomplished. The first has a biblical purpose. The second can turn self-examination into a revolving door from which the Christian is never permitted to emerge. David prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts" (Psalm 139:23). That prayer expresses willingness to be examined by God, not an attempt to achieve divine omniscience concerning every imperfection. The believer should not excuse what Scripture condemns, but neither should he invent conditions God never commanded. If examination never leads to obedience and participation, the examination has been turned into another religious obstacle. Paul did not say examine yourself and disappear. He said examine yourself and eat.

**5. Discerning the Lord's Body: The Meaning of the Memorial Must Govern the Manner**

Paul identifies a particular failure in First Corinthians 11:29: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." The expression "not discerning the Lord's body" must be understood in connection with the ordinance Christ established and the abuses Paul was correcting. The bread directs attention toward the body of Jesus Christ given for sinners. The cup directs attention toward His blood shed for redemption. Participation should therefore involve an understanding of the sacred significance of His sacrifice. The Corinthians had reduced an occasion of remembrance to an opportunity for appetite, indulgence, and social division. Their conduct demonstrated a failure to distinguish the Lord's Supper from an ordinary meal governed by personal desires. Paul did not condemn them for lacking an elaborate philosophical explanation of the bread. He condemned their irreverence toward the very sacrifice the bread was appointed to proclaim.

The wider context also reminds us that believers themselves belong to the body of Christ. First Corinthians 12:27 declares, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." The Lord's physical body given at Calvary and the spiritual body composed of believers are distinct biblical uses of the word, and they must not be carelessly confused. Nevertheless, Paul's rebuke of the Corinthians demonstrates that their disregard for fellow believers was directly connected with their abuse of the supper. They were shaming those

who had nothing while claiming to remember the Saviour who gave Himself for others. Whether one emphasizes the sacrificial body represented by the bread or also recognizes the congregation's failure to honor its fellow members, the immediate context condemns their irreverence. A man cannot claim to celebrate the love displayed at Calvary while deliberately humiliating the people who belong to the crucified Saviour. The contradiction is written across his conduct before he ever touches the bread.

This also exposes the weakness of turning discernment into a mere ceremonial formula. Some imagine that the most important question concerns whether the participant understands a doctrine of supernatural transformation in the elements. Yet Paul repeatedly identifies the elements as bread and the cup while addressing the practical misconduct of the congregation. First Corinthians 11:26 explains that believers proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. The central issue is whether they recognize the sacrifice being remembered and behave accordingly. This does not make the ordinance an insignificant symbol. Christ instituted it, and that divine institution gives it solemn importance. But the seriousness belongs to its connection with Him, not to an invented requirement that participants regard the bread as a physically transformed object. The Lord's table is not holy because a minister possesses extraordinary powers over its contents. It is holy in purpose because Jesus Christ commanded His people to remember the sacrifice by which He redeemed them.

**6. Weak, Sickly, and Sleeping: Chastening Is Not the Loss of Eternal Salvation**

The warning becomes especially sobering in First Corinthians 11:30: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Paul connects the congregation's abuse of the Lord's Supper with divine judgment that had brought serious physical consequences upon some of its members. The language includes weakness, sickness, and death, with sleep serving as a familiar biblical description of the death of believers. These were not insignificant matters. God was dealing with the Corinthian congregation seriously because their conduct had dishonored an ordinance established by His Son. Eternal security does not render the Christian immune from the consequences of disobedience. A believer may possess eternal life while suffering the chastening of his heavenly Father. The grace that saves a sinner does not transform rebellion into an acceptable pastime. God does not revoke His promises every time a child disobeys, but neither does He surrender His authority as Father merely because the child has been redeemed.

The following verses explain the nature of this judgment. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Corinthians 11:31). Then Paul declares, "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Corinthians 11:32). There is the doctrinal distinction that religious intimidation so

frequently ignores. Paul distinguishes the chastening experienced by believers from the condemnation awaiting the world. The word "damnation" in verse 29 must be interpreted in light of this explanation rather than automatically equated with eternal destruction. The passage concerns serious divine judgment upon believers who were abusing the supper. Hebrews 12:6 similarly declares, "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Chastening is not evidence that Christ's sacrifice has failed. It is evidence that God takes the conduct of His children seriously. A Father's discipline is not the same thing as a Judge's condemnation, and Scripture does not authorize men to confuse them.

We must also avoid the opposite error of applying this warning indiscriminately to every suffering Christian. Paul identified a particular problem in a particular congregation and connected certain consequences with that problem. He did not establish a universal rule that every believer experiencing sickness must have participated unworthily in communion. Job suffered without the explanations his friends confidently supplied, and their accusations should warn us against pretending to know the hidden cause of another person's affliction. John 9:3 likewise records Christ rejecting the disciples' attempt to explain a man's blindness through the personal sin of either the man or his parents. Sickness may arise for many reasons, and Scripture does not appoint ordinary believers as detectives authorized to pronounce divine judgments upon every afflicted Christian. The proper application of First Corinthians 11 is personal accountability, reverent participation, and serious regard for God's commands. Do not minimize the chastening God expressly reveals, but do not manufacture explanations for suffering that God has not revealed.

**7. And So Let Him Eat: The Lord's Supper Is for Remembrance, Not Religious Terror**

One of the most frequently neglected expressions in this entire passage is found at the conclusion of First Corinthians 11:28: "and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Paul directs the believer toward proper participation after self-examination. He does not establish a lifelong sentence of exclusion for Christians who recognize their own imperfections. The ordinance was given to remember Jesus Christ, not to reward those who imagine they have become sufficiently righteous to deserve Him. This does not mean a person should knowingly continue serious sin and treat confession as a meaningless formality. It means the appropriate response to conviction is obedience, not an endless attempt to become personally worthy of redemption. A believer who has sinned should deal with that sin according to Scripture. A believer who has wronged another should seek to make the matter right. But the correction must not become a doctrine that personal moral perfection establishes the right to remember Christ.

There is also a difference between the believer's self-examination and the local church's responsibility concerning public, unrepentant sin. First Corinthians 5 addresses a congregation that had tolerated serious immorality and instructs believers concerning discipline and fellowship. Those responsibilities must be handled according to Scripture rather than ignored under the mistaken idea that grace makes conduct irrelevant. Yet church discipline is not a license for religious officials to invent arbitrary requirements, humiliate struggling Christians, or make communion dependent upon personal loyalty to church leadership. Neither should the ordinance be used to imply that unbelievers can receive eternal life through ceremonial participation. Salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, and the supper remembers the sacrifice upon which that salvation rests. The table is not a courthouse where believers stand trial for their eternal destiny at every observance. Neither is it a playground where unrepentant wickedness receives a ceremonial wink. It belongs to the Lord.

The proper spirit of participation is reverent gratitude grounded in biblical truth. The Christian should remember that his sins made redemption necessary, that Christ's righteousness made redemption possible, and that His blood accomplished what human religion could never accomplish. He should examine his conduct without questioning the sufficiency of the Saviour. He should confess known wrongdoing without imagining that confession purchases another justification. He should recognize fellow believers as members of Christ's body rather than treating them according to wealth, position, or personal preference. Above all, he should remember the Person who established the ordinance. Paul declares, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). That is the purpose. The believer proclaims the death of Christ while awaiting His return. The Lord's Supper should produce reverence without superstition, conviction without despair, gratitude without self-righteousness, and obedience without bondage.

**Conclusion**

The warning concerning unworthy participation in First Corinthians 11 has been misunderstood because men have too often separated Paul's words from the congregation he was correcting and the Gospel he had already proclaimed. The Corinthians were not being commanded to achieve personal perfection before remembering Jesus Christ. They were being rebuked because their assemblies had become occasions for selfishness, division, indulgence, and disregard for fellow believers. Paul's command to examine themselves required honest recognition of their conduct and a proper response before God. The distinction between an unworthy manner of participation and an unworthy sinner saved by grace is essential. Every Christian was once a lost sinner without righteousness

sufficient to obtain eternal life. Salvation was accomplished by Jesus Christ and received through faith in Him. The Lord's Supper remembers that sacrifice rather than establishing another method of justification. The cross did not become effective because the sinner improved himself. The sinner was redeemed because the Saviour accomplished what no amount of personal improvement could ever accomplish.

At the same time, the security of salvation must never be confused with permission for carelessness. God expects His children to obey Him, examine their conduct, judge known wrongdoing, and treat the ordinance with reverence. Paul's warnings concerning weakness, sickness, death, and divine chastening demonstrate that the Lord does not regard deliberate abuse of His appointed remembrance as insignificant. Yet the apostle expressly distinguishes that chastening from condemnation with the world. The believer's eternal standing rests upon Christ, while his present conduct remains accountable to Christ. Both truths must be preached without compromise. Those who turn communion into a test for retaining eternal life undermine the sufficiency of redemption. Those who use eternal security as an excuse for irreverence undermine the seriousness of discipleship. Grace does not make sin harmless, and sin does not make the blood of Christ insufficient. The Christian is saved by grace, kept by the power of God, and commanded to walk in obedience to the Lord who redeemed him.

Therefore, when the congregation gathers around the Lord's table, let every believer remember what the ordinance was established to proclaim. The bread directs attention toward the body of Jesus Christ given for sinners. The cup directs attention toward His blood shed for the remission of sins. The command to examine oneself calls for honesty, repentance, reverence, and obedience, not a frantic search for personal merit sufficient to deserve Calvary. The warning against unworthy participation must be respected, but it must never be transformed into another gospel of works. Jesus Christ offered Himself once for all, obtained eternal redemption, and sat down at the right hand of God. His sacrifice does not require the believer to supply an additional payment through personal righteousness. The Lord's Supper remembers the payment already made and proclaims His death until He comes. A Christian does not come to the Lord's table because he has made himself worthy of Christ. He comes because Christ alone is worthy. Examine your conduct, judge your sin, obey the Scriptures, and remember the Saviour. The table does not proclaim the perfection of the participant. It proclaims the perfect sacrifice of the Redeemer.

**8 of 10. The Lord's Supper: Weak, Sickly, and Sleeping, When God Judges His Own People**

Key Passage: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1 Corinthians 11:30)

**Introduction**

There is a verse in the New Testament that ought to cause every careless Christian to sit up straight, close his mouth, and pay attention to what Almighty God has written. The apostle Paul declared, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30). That is not a description of a congregation suffering from an unfortunate shortage of vitamins, nor is it a general observation about the physical difficulties of growing older. Paul identified a specific cause for the weakness, sickness, and death experienced among certain believers at Corinth. Their disgraceful treatment of the Lord's Supper had brought divine judgment upon them. The church had been warned about its divisions, selfishness, gluttony, and irreverence, yet some apparently continued behaving as though remembering the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was little more than another opportunity to satisfy their appetites. God did not share their indifference. The Corinthians treated the Lord's table lightly, but the Lord did not treat their conduct lightly.

There are two dangerous errors that arise whenever this passage is discussed. The first is the notion that a Christian can live however he pleases because eternal security guarantees that God will never discipline him. That is not grace. That is presumption dressed in religious clothing. The second error is equally destructive: the teaching that sickness, weakness, or an untimely death automatically proves that a believer has committed some hidden sin or participated improperly in communion. That conclusion is not established by Scripture either. Paul identified a particular judgment upon a particular congregation for particular conduct. He did not appoint every preacher in subsequent centuries to become a divine detective, wandering through hospitals and informing suffering Christians that their physical condition must be evidence of secret wickedness. Biblical authority gives us the right to proclaim what God has revealed. It does not give us permission to invent revelations about what God has concealed. Where the Bible speaks, we must speak. Where the Bible remains silent, religious imagination needs to learn how to keep quiet.

The central distinction in this study concerns the difference between the Father's chastening of His children and the eternal condemnation awaiting those who remain outside Jesus Christ. Paul explains, "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Corinthians 11:32). Those words

are not an insignificant qualification tucked into the end of an uncomfortable passage. They provide the inspired explanation of the judgment described in the preceding verses. God was dealing with members of a New Testament congregation, and His chastening could involve consequences as serious as physical death. Yet Paul expressly distinguished that chastening from condemnation with the world. A Christian's eternal security does not cancel his earthly accountability, and the Father's discipline does not cancel the finished redemption purchased by Jesus Christ. We must preserve both truths without weakening either. The blood of Christ secures the believer's salvation, but the authority of Christ still governs the believer's conduct. Grace does not dismiss the Father's rod, and the Father's rod does not destroy the Saviour's promise.

**1. The Corinthian Church: When Communion Became an Occasion for Judgment**

The judgment described in First Corinthians 11 cannot be understood properly without examining the disgraceful conditions that preceded it. Paul begins his correction by declaring, "Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse" (1 Corinthians 11:17). Imagine receiving that assessment from an inspired apostle. The Corinthians were assembling as a church, yet their gatherings were producing more harm than good. Paul identified divisions among them and then exposed the selfishness that had corrupted their observance of the Lord's Supper. This was not a congregation struggling with an insignificant disagreement over the arrangement of the communion table. Their behavior demonstrated contempt for fellow believers and disregard for the sacred purpose of the ordinance. They were remembering the One who gave Himself for others while behaving as though their own appetites deserved first consideration. Their worship had become a contradiction of the sacrifice they claimed to honor.

First Corinthians 11:21 exposes the problem: "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken." Some had plenty, while others went without. Certain participants were indulging themselves while fellow believers were being neglected. Paul responded, "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?" (1 Corinthians 11:22). His language reveals that this was not merely poor table etiquette. They were despising the church of God through conduct that humiliated those who lacked provisions. The wealthy and comfortable had apparently forgotten that the same blood of Jesus Christ redeemed the poor and overlooked. Corinth had developed a remarkable talent for celebrating sacrificial love while practicing selfish indulgence. The Lord's Supper had become a banquet for the flesh when it was supposed to be a remembrance of the Saviour.

Paul then delivers a judgment upon the gathering itself: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20). That statement must be allowed its full force. Their gathering might have carried the correct name, included the proper elements, and followed familiar religious customs, but their conduct had contradicted the purpose of the ordinance. Consequently, Paul returned them to the institution of the supper by Jesus Christ and reminded them of the body given and the blood shed. Only after establishing that foundation did he warn against eating and drinking unworthily. The sequence matters. The physical judgments did not appear without explanation, and Paul did not introduce them as random disasters. The congregation had been treating a holy remembrance with deliberate irreverence. A religious ceremony cannot sanctify conduct that openly contradicts the Word of God. The Corinthians brought their carnality to the Lord's table, and God answered their presumption with judgment.

**2. Eating and Drinking Unworthily: The Conduct That Dishonored Christ**

First Corinthians 11:27 declares, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." The warning concerns the manner in which the ordinance is observed. It does not announce that Christians must become personally worthy of Christ's sacrifice through their own moral accomplishments. No sinner possesses that kind of worthiness. Romans 5:8 declares, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Salvation was provided precisely because human righteousness could never satisfy God's holy requirements. The Corinthian problem concerned irreverent conduct by believers who should have known better. They were abusing an ordinance that proclaimed the death of their Redeemer. To confuse unworthy participation with personal unworthiness before salvation is to replace Paul's rebuke with a different doctrine altogether. Christ did not die because sinners were worthy of His sacrifice. He died because sinners desperately needed a sacrifice they could never provide.

Paul continues, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Corinthians 11:29). The word "damnation" must be understood through the context that follows, where Paul explicitly identifies divine chastening rather than eternal condemnation. Likewise, failing to discern the Lord's body concerns a failure to recognize the sacred significance of the ordinance, particularly in a congregation whose conduct dishonored Christ and fellow believers. The bread directed attention toward His body given for sinners. The cup directed attention toward His blood shed for redemption. Yet the Corinthians were approaching the gathering with the appetite and selfishness appropriate to a disorderly banquet. They had forgotten the meaning of what they were doing. The problem was not that the bread lacked religious importance. The

problem was that the participants had ceased behaving as though the sacrifice it represented possessed any importance at all.

There is a lesson here for every congregation that observes communion. Reverence does not consist merely of speaking softly, dimming the lights, or arranging the elements with impressive precision. Those arrangements may accompany a solemn observance, but none can substitute for biblical obedience. A man may stand with folded hands and an appropriately serious expression while harboring bitterness, practicing deceit, or deliberately mistreating his brethren. The Lord sees beyond the appearance. First Corinthians 11:28 commands, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." The purpose of examination is to confront improper conduct and participate reverently, not to manufacture personal perfection or earn another justification. God is not impressed by a solemn face attached to an unrepentant heart. The Lord's table is not a theatrical stage where religious appearance can conceal deliberate disobedience.

**3. Weak, Sickly, and Sleeping: The Physical Consequences of Divine Chastening**

Now we arrive at the verse that gives this study its solemn title. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30). Notice that Paul does not speak vaguely about possible consequences somewhere in the distant future. He identifies conditions already existing among the Corinthians. Many were weak, many were sickly, and many slept. The apostle connects these consequences directly with their abuse of the Lord's Supper. The judgment had moved beyond the exposure of improper behavior into the realm of physical suffering and death. Scripture does not specify every medical condition involved, nor does it identify the individual believers affected. Those details belong to God's knowledge. What Scripture does reveal is sufficiently serious without the assistance of imagination. The Lord who purchased His church with His own blood possesses the authority to deal with His people when they persist in treating His commands with contempt.

The expression "many sleep" deserves particular attention because Scripture frequently employs sleep as a description of the physical death of believers. In First Corinthians 15:6, Paul speaks of witnesses to the resurrection and explains that some had fallen asleep. First Thessalonians 4:13 likewise addresses believers concerning those who are asleep, before describing the resurrection of the dead in Christ. The language does not establish the false doctrine that the redeemed become unconscious souls awaiting some distant awakening. The physical body dies, while the believer's departure from earthly life does not destroy his relationship with Christ. Paul declared his desire "to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Philippians 1:23). In First Corinthians 11, sleep therefore points toward physical

death as the most severe consequence named in the apostle's warning. God was not merely withholding a pleasant feeling during worship. Some members had apparently been removed from earthly life under His chastening.

Such a warning should destroy the careless notion that eternal security makes the Christian untouchable by divine discipline. A believer may possess eternal life and still experience serious consequences for disobedience during his earthly pilgrimage. The Corinthians were not the first people in Scripture to discover that God takes His holiness seriously, but their experience belongs to the New Testament church rather than Israel's national administration under the law. We must not mechanically transfer every judgment from one dispensation into another, yet neither may we pretend that God's character changes whenever the subject turns to grace. First Corinthians 6:20 declares, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Redemption establishes divine ownership. The Christian's body does not become private property after salvation. It belongs to the Lord who purchased him, and the Lord has not surrendered His authority over what belongs to Him.

**4. Judge Yourselves: The Mercy of Correction Before the Severity of Judgment**

Immediately after identifying weakness, sickness, and death among the Corinthians, Paul declares, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (1 Corinthians 11:31). That statement reveals the proper response to the warning. God was not encouraging believers to live in perpetual fear of mysterious judgments waiting to strike without warning. He was commanding them to examine their conduct and deal honestly with their wrongdoing. The Corinthians knew what Paul was correcting. Their divisions were evident, their selfishness was observable, and their abuse of the Lord's Supper had become public knowledge. They did not need another religious ceremony to conceal the problem. They needed repentance and obedience. Self-judgment requires the believer to stop defending conduct that Scripture condemns. The man who refuses to judge his own sin should not be surprised when God takes the matter out of his hands. It is far better to confess wrongdoing voluntarily than to continue it until the Father's chastening becomes necessary.

Biblical self-judgment is not the same thing as attempting to punish oneself sufficiently to earn forgiveness. First John 1:9 declares, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The believer confesses wrongdoing because God has already established the means of forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Confession does not add another payment to Calvary. Neither is repentance an emotional performance in which a person demonstrates how miserable he can make himself appear. Genuine repentance involves acknowledging sin and turning from it rather than explaining it away. A Christian practicing dishonesty should stop lying. One harboring

bitterness should address that bitterness. A believer mistreating fellow Christians should correct his conduct and seek appropriate reconciliation. There is no biblical virtue in apologizing eloquently while continuing the same behavior. God has never been impressed by a beautifully worded confession attached to a stubborn determination to continue sinning.

The command to judge ourselves also demonstrates the Father's concern for the spiritual condition of His children. God does not delight in unnecessary chastening, nor does He encourage believers to disregard the correction His Word provides. Second Timothy 3:16 declares, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." The Word of God supplies the standard by which conduct must be evaluated. A Christian who reads Scripture, receives correction, and obeys the Lord is exercising the self-judgment Paul commands. The Corinthians could have acknowledged their divisions, corrected their selfishness, and restored proper observance of the supper. Instead, some had persisted in their disgraceful behavior until divine judgment followed. The Bible provides correction before the rod becomes necessary. A wise believer listens when God speaks through His Word rather than waiting until disobedience has produced consequences that cannot be ignored.

**5. Chastened of the Lord: The Father's Discipline Is Not the World's Condemnation**

First Corinthians 11:32 provides the inspired explanation of the judgment described in the preceding verses: "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." That distinction is absolutely essential. Paul does not identify the Corinthians' chastening as the loss of eternal salvation. He expressly separates the Lord's disciplinary dealings with believers from condemnation with the world. Hebrews 12:6 reinforces this principle: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Notice the family relationship. The Lord chastens those whom He receives as sons. His discipline arises within that relationship rather than establishing a new requirement for entering it. An earthly father may correct his child without dissolving the family relationship, and the heavenly Father does not cancel the finished redemption of Jesus Christ whenever His child requires correction. Chastening is not the cancellation of sonship. It is the exercise of the Father's authority over a son who remains accountable to Him.

Hebrews 12:10-11 explains that divine chastening serves the believer's profit and produces the peaceable fruit of righteousness in those properly exercised by it. The passage does not pretend that discipline is pleasant. It acknowledges that chastening is grievous rather than joyous at the time. Yet God's purpose is not meaningless suffering or arbitrary punishment. His holiness requires that He deal seriously with disobedience among those who belong to

Him. At the same time, the severity of particular judgments must never become an excuse for portraying God as unpredictable or cruel. The Corinthian congregation received inspired correction identifying the conduct involved. Paul explained both the wrongdoing and the consequences. The Father's rod was not swinging blindly through the assembly looking for an unfortunate Christian to strike. God's discipline is neither a temper tantrum nor a religious lottery. It belongs to His righteous government of His children, and the believer's responsibility is to receive correction rather than despise it.

Now compare this with the believer's eternal standing in Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1 declares, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." John 10:28 records Christ's promise, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Ephesians 1:13 identifies believers as sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise after believing the Gospel. These statements establish salvation upon the work of Christ, not upon the Christian's success at avoiding chastening. We must also distinguish present discipline from the Judgment Seat of Christ, where believers' works will be examined, and from the Great White Throne judgment described in Revelation 20. Second Corinthians 5:10 concerns believers appearing before Christ to receive according to the things done in the body. Revelation 20:11-15 presents the final judgment associated with the lake of fire. These are not interchangeable events. Rightly dividing the Word prevents men from turning the Father's correction into eternal condemnation and the believer's accountability into another method of earning salvation.

**6. Not Every Sickness Is Divine Punishment: When Men Pretend to Know God's Hidden Purposes**

The specific judgment at Corinth does not authorize the sweeping accusation that every sick Christian must be suffering because of hidden sin. Scripture itself destroys that conclusion. Consider Job, whose suffering became the occasion for lengthy accusations from men who confidently claimed to understand what God was doing. Job's friends reasoned from their assumptions and repeatedly treated his suffering as evidence of wrongdoing. Yet the opening chapters establish that their explanation did not account for the actual circumstances. At the conclusion, the LORD rebuked their misrepresentation, declaring, "ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath" (Job 42:7). There is a warning for every preacher tempted to explain another person's illness without biblical authority. A man can possess a Bible, speak with enormous confidence, and still sound remarkably like Job's friends when he begins announcing divine judgments God has never revealed.

John 9 provides another unmistakable correction. When the disciples encountered a man blind from birth, they asked whether his condition resulted from his own sin or the sin of his parents. Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John 9:3). Christ was not declaring that the man and his parents had never committed any sin. He was rejecting the proposed explanation for that particular blindness. The disciples assumed that suffering required an identifiable personal offense, but the Lord exposed the inadequacy of their reasoning. The lesson applies directly to careless interpretations of First Corinthians 11. Paul identified divine chastening behind certain conditions at Corinth because the Holy Ghost revealed that connection. We possess no corresponding revelation concerning every person who becomes sick today. The authority to proclaim a revealed judgment is not permission to manufacture an unrevealed one.

The New Testament also records faithful servants of God experiencing physical affliction without presenting their illnesses as punishment for abusing communion. Philippians 2:27 states concerning Epaphroditus, "For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him." Paul commended that man's sacrificial service rather than accusing him of secret rebellion. Second Corinthians 12 records Paul's thorn in the flesh and the Lord's declaration, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Whatever the precise nature of that affliction, the passage explains its role in Paul's experience without identifying it as punishment for irreverent participation in the Lord's Supper. Second Timothy 4:20 even records Paul leaving Trophimus at Miletum sick. Scripture gives us no warrant to declare that illness a divine sentence for wickedness. The Bible teaches that God can chasten through physical suffering. It does not teach that every instance of physical suffering reveals divine chastening. Confusing those statements turns legitimate warning into reckless accusation.

**7. Restore the Lord's Table: Reverence, Repentance, and Obedience Without Religious Terror**

Paul's correction of the Corinthians concludes with an instruction that demonstrates how practical the remedy actually was. "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another" (1 Corinthians 11:33). The apostle did not respond to their disgraceful observance by constructing an elaborate system of religious intimidation. He commanded them to demonstrate consideration for one another. Their selfishness had corrupted the gathering, and obedience required correcting that selfishness. The following verse adds, "And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation" (1 Corinthians 11:34). The Lord's Supper was not established to satisfy uncontrolled appetites or display social superiority. Its purpose was remembrance of Jesus

Christ. The Corinthians needed to distinguish an ordinary meal from the solemn proclamation of the Saviour's death. Sometimes the correction a church needs is not another impressive ceremony. Sometimes it needs to obey the plain instruction God has already given.

Proper observance begins with remembering the sacrifice Christ accomplished. First Corinthians 11:26 declares, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." The bread directs attention to His body given, and the cup directs attention to His blood shed. The believer should approach with reverence, examine his conduct, confess known wrongdoing, and participate in a manner consistent with the sacred purpose of the ordinance. Yet none of this means that a Christian must achieve personal perfection or earn another justification before approaching the table. The believer's standing rests upon Christ's righteousness, while his conduct remains accountable to Christ's authority. Religious terror is not reverence, and careless presumption is not liberty. The Lord's Supper should neither become a courtroom in which believers repeatedly attempt to prove their eternal salvation nor a religious picnic where deliberate disobedience receives a ceremonial blessing.

The local church also has responsibilities concerning sound teaching and orderly participation. Pastors and teachers should explain the ordinance from Scripture, distinguish eternal security from divine chastening, and warn against irreverence without frightening sincere believers through unsupported threats. Those who struggle with sickness should not be publicly accused of hidden sin, and those who openly abuse the ordinance should not be reassured that God considers their behavior insignificant. Both responses distort the passage. The congregation should remember the Saviour, honor the meaning of His sacrifice, and treat fellow believers with the respect appropriate to members of Christ's body. Paul commanded, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). That instruction belongs to the broader conduct of the church and harmonizes with the solemnity of communion. A faithful congregation does not need superstition to make the Lord's Supper sacred, and it does not need threats against eternal security to make disobedience serious. The authority of Scripture is sufficient for both.

**Conclusion**

The warning of First Corinthians 11:30 stands as a solemn testimony that Almighty God takes the conduct of His people seriously. The Corinthian congregation had abused the Lord's Supper through divisions, selfishness, indulgence, and disregard for fellow believers. Paul exposed their misconduct, returned them to the institution of the ordinance, and warned them concerning unworthy participation. Then he identified weakness, sickness, and death among them as consequences of divine judgment. Those statements must not

be softened merely because modern Christianity prefers a version of grace in which God never corrects His children. The Lord who redeemed the believer also possesses authority over his earthly conduct. Yet the same passage expressly distinguishes that chastening from condemnation with the world. God's Word does not permit us to erase the warning, and it does not permit us to rewrite the warning into a doctrine that denies the security of salvation in Jesus Christ.

At the same time, the passage provides no authority for accusing every sick or suffering Christian of secret wickedness. Job's experience, the healing of the man born blind, and the afflictions recorded among faithful New Testament servants demonstrate that physical suffering cannot always be traced to personal wrongdoing. Paul identified a particular judgment at Corinth because God revealed its cause. We must teach that judgment exactly as Scripture presents it while refusing to invent explanations for circumstances God has not explained. The Christian should judge his own conduct rather than appoint himself the interpreter of every affliction experienced by someone else. He should receive correction, confess wrongdoing, obey the Word, and remember that his heavenly Father is both holy and faithful. The man who refuses to acknowledge revealed sin is presuming upon God's patience. The man who claims to identify unrevealed sin through another person's suffering is presuming upon God's knowledge. Both need the correction of Scripture.

Therefore, the Lord's Supper remains a solemn remembrance of the sacrifice that purchased eternal redemption. The bread proclaims the body of Jesus Christ given for sinners. The cup proclaims His blood shed for the remission of sins. Believers participate because they belong to the Saviour, not because they have become personally worthy of Calvary. They examine themselves because the Lord commands obedience, not because their eternal life must be purchased again at every communion service. And they remember that the Father who secures their salvation through Christ does not surrender His right to chasten them when they persist in disobedience. The church must preach both eternal security and divine accountability without weakening either truth. A Christian cannot lose the salvation Christ purchased, but he can lose fellowship, peace, health, and even his remaining earthly life under the Father's chastening. Calvary settled the question of redemption. It did not abolish the Father's authority. The blood keeps the believer secure, the Word calls the believer to obedience, and the Lord's table reminds him that the Saviour who died for him is worthy of something far better than careless religion.

**9 of 10. The Lord's Supper: How Often, Who May Partake, and Who Has the Authority to Decide?**

Key Passage: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Corinthians 11:26)

**Introduction**

There is something remarkable about the ability of religious men to take a simple command from Jesus Christ and surround it with enough regulations to make the original instruction almost disappear. The Lord established His supper as a remembrance of His body given and His blood shed, and the apostle Paul delivered that ordinance to the New Testament church. Yet Christians have spent centuries debating how frequently it must be observed, who possesses authority to administer it, where the ceremony may take place, and which believers should be permitted to participate. Some insist upon weekly communion, others observe it monthly or quarterly, and still others attach it to an annual religious calendar. Some churches open participation to every professing believer, while others require membership, baptism, denominational approval, or permission from church leadership. Before constructing another religious fence around the Lord's table, we had better establish whether the Lord commanded that fence in the first place. An ordinance established by Christ must be governed by Christ, not by the imagination of men who have appointed themselves supervisors over His instructions.

The central passage is First Corinthians 11:26, where Paul declares, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." Notice the expression "as often." Paul does not establish a particular day of the week, a mandatory interval between observances, or a universal calendar that every congregation must follow. He identifies the purpose of the ordinance whenever believers participate. They proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. That does not make the observance optional in the sense that Christians may simply disregard the Lord's command without concern. Neither does it authorize church leaders to invent a schedule and declare that their chosen frequency possesses the authority of divine revelation. Scripture provides examples of believers breaking bread and gathering for fellowship, but examples must be examined in context before being promoted into universal commandments. A practice may be wise, orderly, and spiritually beneficial without becoming a law that Almighty God never gave.

There are equally important questions concerning participation and administration. Is the Lord's Supper intended for saved people or for anyone who happens to attend a religious service? Does baptism establish the right to participate? Must a pastor preside, or can believers observe the ordinance in a home fellowship? What responsibility does a

congregation possess concerning public sin, disorderly conduct, and doctrinal confusion? These matters require biblical answers rather than denominational slogans. The Lord's Supper is not an instrument for manufacturing salvation, and it is not an opportunity to demonstrate institutional superiority. It is a solemn remembrance entrusted to the church, demanding reverence, discernment, and obedience. We must preserve the distinction between the spiritual body of Christ and the local congregations in which believers gather. We must also distinguish clear biblical commands from arrangements that congregations may establish for orderly practice. Where Scripture commands, obedience is required. Where Scripture grants liberty, humility is required. And where Scripture remains silent, religious authority ought to think carefully before opening its mouth.

**1. As Often as Ye Eat: The Frequency Christ Did Not Turn Into a Calendar**

Paul's declaration in First Corinthians 11:26 supplies the foundation for examining how frequently the Lord's Supper should be observed. He writes, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." The immediate context concerns the institution of the supper, the body and blood of Christ, and the responsibility of believers to participate reverently. Paul identifies what the church proclaims whenever the ordinance is observed. He does not prescribe a weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annual requirement. That omission is significant because the apostle was providing direct instruction concerning the observance. He addressed the bread, the cup, remembrance, unworthy participation, self-examination, and the consequences of irreverence. Yet he did not establish a mandatory interval. The absence of a specified interval does not diminish the ordinance's importance. It simply means that we must not manufacture a command where the inspired apostle supplied none.

Some Christians argue that communion should be observed every Sunday because the church gathered regularly upon the first day of the week. Others believe monthly observance provides adequate opportunity for solemn remembrance, while still others prefer quarterly participation to prevent the ceremony from becoming routine. Those concerns may influence how a congregation orders its worship, but none establishes a universally binding law. Frequency alone cannot guarantee reverence. A congregation may observe the supper every week with deep biblical understanding, while another may observe it every quarter with equal seriousness. Conversely, both congregations may conduct the ordinance mechanically, giving less consideration to Calvary than to the arrangements for refreshments afterward. The problem is not solved merely by increasing or decreasing the schedule. You cannot manufacture reverence by adding more dates to a calendar, and you cannot guarantee holiness by allowing fewer opportunities for participation. The heart must understand what the hands are doing.

The danger begins when a congregation treats its preferred schedule as evidence of superior spirituality. A church observing weekly communion has no authority to condemn another congregation solely because it observes monthly communion. Neither may a congregation that participates quarterly accuse weekly participants of automatically cheapening the ordinance. Romans 14:5 reminds believers that disagreements concerning the estimation of days must be approached with conscientious conviction before the Lord, although that passage does not specifically establish a communion schedule. Colossians 2:16 likewise warns against permitting others to impose judgment concerning religious calendar observances. Those passages reinforce the need to distinguish divine commands from human regulations. The Lord's Supper must be observed according to its biblical purpose, but its frequency should not become an invented test of righteousness. A church calendar may organize worship, but it must never be permitted to rewrite Scripture. The Lord commanded remembrance. He did not appoint denominational calendar committees as authors of additional revelation.

**2. Breaking Bread in Acts: What the Early Church Practiced and What It Proves**

Acts 2:42 provides an important description of the practices of the earliest believers: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Notice the company in which breaking bread appears. The believers continued in apostolic doctrine, fellowship, and prayer. Their common life was not centered upon elaborate ceremonial performances but upon the teaching delivered through the apostles and the spiritual fellowship established through Christ. Breaking bread belonged among their regular activities. However, we must examine the language carefully before assuming every occurrence necessarily identifies the formal observance of the Lord's Supper. In Scripture, breaking bread may refer to an ordinary meal, while certain contexts connect it with the remembrance Christ established. The surrounding passage determines the meaning. A man who finds the words "breaking bread" and immediately constructs a mandatory communion schedule has moved considerably faster than the text requires.

Acts 2:46 adds, "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." The passage describes the communal life of believers in Jerusalem during the earliest period following Pentecost. They continued daily with one accord, gathered in the temple, and shared meals from house to house. The reference to eating their meat strongly supports the presence of ordinary fellowship meals in this description. That does not exclude the possibility that the believers also observed the Lord's Supper, but the verse does not establish that a formal communion ceremony occurred daily in every household.

Furthermore, the historical setting must be respected. These were Jewish believers in Jerusalem during a significant transitional period recorded in Acts. The church's doctrinal instructions must be understood alongside the later inspired teaching delivered through Paul. The book of Acts records what believers did, but not every recorded activity becomes a universal command governing every congregation throughout the church age.

Acts 20:7 provides another significant example: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." The passage describes believers gathered at Troas upon the first day of the week, with Paul preaching during the meeting. Breaking bread is identified as a purpose of their assembly, making this passage particularly relevant to discussions of communion. Nevertheless, the account does not command all churches to observe the supper every Sunday. It records what occurred on that occasion. The same chapter describes Paul's lengthy preaching, the fall of Eutychus, and the extraordinary events surrounding that gathering. Nobody should imagine that weekly communion requires every preacher to continue until midnight or every congregation to maintain an upper-story window for the occasional sleeping listener. We must distinguish an inspired example from an inspired command. Both belong in the Bible, but they do not perform the same function.

**3. Who May Partake? The Difference Between Saved Believers and Religious Participants**

The Lord's Supper was established by Jesus Christ and subsequently delivered through Paul to the New Testament church. That distinction provides the starting point for determining who should participate. First Corinthians 1:2 identifies the recipients of Paul's epistle as "the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." Paul was addressing people identified with Jesus Christ through salvation, not inviting an indiscriminate gathering of unbelievers to receive eternal life through ceremonial participation. The ordinance remembers the sacrifice by which believers have been redeemed. It does not provide an alternative means of redemption for those who have never believed the Gospel. First Corinthians 15:3-4 establishes the Gospel concerning Christ's death for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection. Ephesians 2:8-9 establishes salvation by grace through faith apart from works. The proper foundation for participation is faith in the crucified and risen Saviour, not confidence that eating bread and drinking from a cup can accomplish what only His blood could purchase.

There is also an important distinction between a credible profession of faith and the ability of human beings to know another person's heart infallibly. A congregation may reasonably expect participants to profess faith in Jesus Christ and understand the significance of the

ordinance. It may teach children, visitors, and new believers what communion means and why it should not be treated as ordinary refreshment. Yet no pastor possesses divine omniscience concerning the salvation of everyone who approaches the table. Judas enjoyed extraordinary proximity to Jesus Christ, but outward religious association did not change the condition of his heart. Likewise, a person may possess church membership, baptismal records, and years of religious participation without ever having believed the Gospel. A membership certificate cannot regenerate a soul, and a denominational endorsement cannot replace the new birth. The church must teach the truth, exercise biblical discernment, and refuse to confuse outward credentials with the inward work of God.

Questions concerning young children and others who cannot yet understand the meaning of the ordinance should be approached through the same biblical principles. Paul commands participants to examine themselves and discern the Lord's body, which requires meaningful understanding rather than mechanical imitation. A child should not be handed communion merely because everyone else in the room is receiving it, as though the Lord's Supper were a religious snack distributed to avoid hurt feelings. Neither does Scripture establish a particular birthday upon which a believer suddenly becomes eligible. The relevant questions concern salvation, understanding, and reverent participation. Parents and church leaders should explain the Gospel and the ordinance carefully, without inventing arbitrary age requirements or pretending that children become spiritually mature by reaching a number on a calendar. The purpose is not to create unnecessary barriers for young believers, but to prevent an ordinance established for remembrance from becoming an activity performed without understanding.

**4. Open, Close, and Closed Communion: When Church Practice Becomes a Doctrinal Battlefield**

Christian congregations have developed several approaches to participation commonly described as open, close, and closed communion. Open communion generally permits professing believers in Jesus Christ to participate regardless of membership in the particular congregation conducting the service. Close communion commonly limits participation to those who satisfy certain doctrinal or fellowship requirements, sometimes including baptism, agreement with the church's teaching, and good standing in a congregation of like faith. Closed communion ordinarily restricts participation to members of the particular local church administering the ordinance. These distinctions are not always applied identically by every congregation, but they describe the principal approaches. Each position appeals to concerns such as doctrinal integrity, congregational responsibility, and proper observance. The biblical question is whether the particular

restriction being defended is commanded by Scripture or represents a congregation's judgment concerning orderly participation. A church may have reasons for its practice without possessing authority to announce that every different practice constitutes rebellion against God.

Those favoring open communion emphasize the spiritual unity of believers in Christ and the personal responsibility established in First Corinthians 11:28. Paul declares, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." The instruction places significant responsibility upon the participant. First Corinthians 10:17 also declares that believers, though many, are one bread and one body. Such passages provide a strong basis for recognizing that genuine membership in Christ's spiritual body is not confined to one local congregation or denominational organization. Nevertheless, open communion must not become indiscriminate communion. A profession of faith matters, sound doctrine matters, and unrepentant public sin cannot simply be dismissed as somebody else's private business. The New Testament does not teach that everyone in the building possesses an automatic right to participate regardless of unbelief, disorder, or open rebellion. The table belongs to Christ, and openness must never become an excuse for treating His commands as optional decorations.

Close and closed communion advocates commonly emphasize congregational accountability and the responsibility of church leaders to preserve order. Those concerns deserve serious consideration, particularly in light of First Corinthians 5, where Paul commanded the church to address open immorality among its members. Verse 11 even warns against keeping company with certain professing brethren persisting in serious wickedness, concluding, "with such an one no not to eat." That passage concerns fellowship and church discipline in its immediate setting, and its application to communion requires careful reasoning rather than careless assumption. Likewise, the pattern of conversion followed by baptism in Acts supports the ordinary importance of baptism in Christian obedience, but no passage explicitly declares that a visiting saved believer must possess the correct denominational baptismal credentials before receiving the Lord's Supper. A local church has genuine responsibilities concerning discipline and order. What it must not do is elevate its particular admission policy into a universal law unless Scripture actually establishes that law.

**5. Who Has Authority to Administer It? Christ, the Church, and the Question of the Priesthood**

The institution of the Lord's Supper begins with the authority of Jesus Christ Himself. Luke 22:19 records His command, "this do in remembrance of me." Paul subsequently declares, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (1 Corinthians 11:23).

The authority therefore flows from Christ through the inspired instruction delivered to His church. No earthly minister invented the ordinance, and no religious institution owns the sacrifice it proclaims. The question of administration must begin with that foundation. In First Corinthians 11, Paul addresses the congregation collectively concerning its gatherings, conduct, participation, and responsibilities. He does not establish an elaborate sacrificial priesthood possessing exclusive supernatural power over the bread and cup. The Lord's Supper was entrusted to the church as an appointed remembrance, not established as a mysterious operation that becomes effective only when a particular class of religious official performs it. The authority is in the Lord who commanded the remembrance, not in the supposed magical qualifications of the hands distributing the elements.

This does not mean that the office of pastor or elder is insignificant. Scripture establishes legitimate leadership within the local church and requires responsible oversight. First Peter 5:2 commands elders, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly." First Timothy 3 supplies qualifications for bishops and deacons, while Hebrews 13:17 addresses the responsibility of believers toward those who watch for their souls. These passages demonstrate that God has not left congregational life to uncontrolled confusion. A church may appropriately designate a pastor, elder, or other responsible believer to lead the observance, read the Scriptures, explain the meaning, and distribute the elements. Such arrangements serve order and sound teaching. They do not automatically establish a universal requirement that communion becomes invalid whenever a formally ordained pastor is absent. Biblical leadership is necessary for the proper care of the church, but leadership must never be transformed into a claim of authority Scripture has not granted.

The New Testament also teaches the priestly standing of believers in Christ. First Peter 2:9 speaks of a royal priesthood, while Revelation 1:6 declares that Christ "hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." That standing does not abolish pastoral offices or authorize every believer to disregard congregational order. It does, however, expose the error of treating Christian ministers as a separate sacrificial caste through whom believers must approach God for redemption. First Timothy 2:5 declares, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." The Lord's Supper does not establish another mediator. Christ is the Mediator, and His sacrifice is sufficient. The pastor serves the congregation through teaching and leadership, not by acquiring the power to create redemption within ceremonial elements. A minister may preside over the remembrance, but he cannot become the sacrifice remembered. Christ alone purchased redemption, and no religious office can improve upon His blood.

**6. Must Communion Be Observed in a Church Building? The Upper Room and the House Church**

The location of the Lord's Supper raises another question that has produced unnecessary restrictions. Jesus Christ established the ordinance in an upper room during the final Passover meal with His disciples. The setting was not a specially constructed Christian sanctuary, because the New Testament church had not yet developed the institutional arrangements familiar to later generations. Acts records believers meeting in various settings, including homes. Acts 2:46 describes believers breaking bread from house to house, while Acts 20:7 records disciples gathering at Troas to break bread. The latter account continues with a meeting in an upper chamber. These passages demonstrate that early Christian fellowship and gatherings were not confined to buildings designated exclusively for religious services. The holiness of the Lord's Supper does not depend upon stained glass, a steeple, a professionally furnished sanctuary, or a building committee's approval of the room. The Lord established the ordinance before any of those arrangements existed.

The New Testament also expressly recognizes congregations meeting in homes. Romans 16:5 refers to the church associated with the household of Aquila and Priscilla, while Philemon 1:2 addresses "the church in thy house." These references establish that a local congregation need not possess a dedicated commercial or institutional building to qualify as a church. A gathering of believers in a home may conduct worship, receive biblical instruction, pray, and observe the Lord's Supper with proper reverence and order. However, we must distinguish a genuine Christian assembly from the idea that any isolated individual meal automatically constitutes the congregational ordinance. First Corinthians 11 repeatedly emphasizes believers coming together, and Paul's corrections concern the conduct of an assembled church. The setting may vary, but the principles of fellowship, remembrance, and accountability remain important. The church is not made legitimate by expensive property, but neither is an ordinary meal transformed into communion merely because someone happens to mention Jesus before eating.

There are legitimate practical concerns when a home fellowship or smaller congregation conducts the ordinance. Participants should understand the Gospel, the purpose of remembrance, and the responsibility of self-examination. Those leading should explain the relevant passages accurately rather than improvising doctrines or treating the elements casually. If a congregation has recognized leadership, its observance should ordinarily be conducted in harmony with that oversight. First Corinthians 14:40 declares, "Let all things be done decently and in order." That principle does not require an elaborate liturgy, but it does prohibit the careless assumption that reverence and order are unnecessary. A family

gathering may include believers worshipping together, but the participation of children or unsaved relatives must be addressed with biblical understanding rather than mere inclusion for appearances. God does not measure the legitimacy of Christian fellowship by the square footage of the building. He measures obedience according to His Word. A humble room filled with believers remembering Christ is worth more than a magnificent sanctuary filled with ceremonial confusion.

**7. The Final Authority: Self-Examination, Church Responsibility, and the Lord's Own Instructions**

Paul's concluding instructions in First Corinthians 11 bring the entire discussion back to personal responsibility and congregational order. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). That command does not grant the individual permission to disregard every responsibility of church fellowship, but it does establish that personal examination cannot simply be transferred to another human being. A pastor may teach, warn, and exercise proper oversight. A church may address public sin according to Scripture. But no earthly official possesses the ability to examine another person's heart with divine certainty. The believer must stand before God honestly concerning his conduct and his understanding of the ordinance. The Corinthians were not commanded to secure a special certificate of ceremonial worthiness. They were commanded to judge themselves, correct their conduct, and participate reverently. The pastor cannot repent for the congregation, the congregation cannot believe for the individual, and no religious organization can make obedience unnecessary through an impressive membership policy.

This principle must also be balanced with the church's responsibility to address serious public wrongdoing. First Corinthians 5 demonstrates that congregational discipline is a biblical responsibility, not an optional inconvenience to be ignored whenever correction threatens attendance figures. Yet the same Scriptures forbid turning personal preferences into divine commandments. Some congregations establish policies concerning baptism, membership, or participation that reflect their understanding of biblical church order. Such policies should be examined carefully, explained honestly, and applied without favoritism. They must never be confused with the Gospel itself. Baptism is an important act of Christian obedience, but water does not regenerate the sinner. Church membership can express commitment to a local assembly, but a membership record does not place a person into the spiritual body of Christ. Communion proclaims the Saviour's death, but participation does not purchase justification. When religious institutions turn these distinctions upside down, they begin measuring spiritual life by the paperwork in their filing cabinets rather than by the saving work of Jesus Christ.

The governing principle remains the authority of Scripture. Second Timothy 2:15 commands believers to study and rightly divide the word of truth. That instruction requires us to recognize the historical Passover setting of Christ's original supper, the subsequent revelation given to the New Testament church, and the distinct responsibilities of believers under grace. It also requires separating commands from examples, historical descriptions from universal obligations, and legitimate church arrangements from doctrines that God never established. The Lord's Supper must not be abandoned because denominations disagree concerning its administration. Neither should it become the occasion for endless quarrels over matters Scripture leaves to responsible congregational judgment. The central purpose remains unchanged. Believers proclaim the death of Jesus Christ until He comes. The Lord never instructed His church to spend more time defending its communion regulations than remembering His crucifixion. The table belongs to Christ, and every arrangement surrounding it should serve the truth He commanded His people to proclaim.

**Conclusion**

The New Testament establishes the Lord's Supper as a solemn ordinance of remembrance, fellowship, and proclamation, but it does not supply the exhaustive ceremonial regulations that later religious systems have sometimes attempted to impose. Paul declares that believers proclaim the Lord's death as often as they eat the bread and drink the cup, without establishing a universally mandatory schedule. Acts records the early church continuing in apostolic doctrine, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer, while also providing examples of believers gathering in homes and on the first day of the week. Those accounts illuminate early Christian practice without automatically transforming every historical detail into a binding command. The ordinance belongs to saved people who understand the sacrifice being remembered, and its observance requires reverence and self-examination. Congregations possess legitimate responsibilities concerning order, teaching, and discipline, but those responsibilities must remain subject to Scripture. A church has authority to organize its obedience. It does not have authority to manufacture additional commandments and then accuse everyone else of disobeying God.

The disagreements surrounding open, close, and closed communion demonstrate why Christians must exercise particular care when distinguishing biblical convictions from denominational regulations. Genuine salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ, not through membership in a particular congregation. Baptism is commanded as an act of Christian obedience, but it does not purchase redemption. Pastors and elders possess real responsibilities within the church, but they do not constitute a sacrificial priesthood capable of improving upon the finished work of Christ. A church may gather in a dedicated sanctuary or in an ordinary home without changing the sacrifice being remembered. In

every setting, the governing questions remain the same. Is the Gospel being taught faithfully? Are participants approaching the ordinance with understanding and reverence? Is the congregation exercising appropriate biblical oversight? Is the death of Jesus Christ being proclaimed according to His command? Those questions deserve greater attention than the dimensions of the communion table, the title of the person distributing the bread, or the denomination printed upon the church sign.

Therefore, the Lord's Supper should be observed faithfully without superstition, responsibly without unnecessary restrictions, and reverently without turning the ceremony into another means of obtaining salvation. The bread directs attention toward Christ's body given for sinners. The cup directs attention toward His blood shed for the remission of sins. The congregation remembers the sacrifice that accomplished eternal redemption, while each participant examines his own conduct before God. The observance looks backward to Calvary and forward to the glorious return of Jesus Christ. Its authority rests upon His command, and its meaning is established by His Word. Let congregations make responsible arrangements where Scripture grants liberty, but let them never confuse those arrangements with the requirements of salvation or the authority of divine revelation. The Lord did not give His church a religious calendar to worship, a denominational gatekeeper to glorify, or a ceremonial priesthood to replace His finished sacrifice. He gave His people a remembrance of Himself. The bread is His appointed testimony, the cup proclaims His blood, and the church is commanded to show forth His death until He comes. Where God has spoken, let every man obey. Where God has not spoken, let no man pretend to speak for Him.

**10 of 10. The Lord’s Supper: The Roman Catholic Mass, Transubstantiation, and the Sacrifice That Was Finished Once for All**

Key Passage: "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;" (Hebrews 10:12)

**Introduction**

There is a remarkable difference between the simplicity of the Lord's Supper as Jesus Christ established it and the enormous religious system that has developed around the Roman Catholic Mass. In the upper room, the Saviour took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and commanded His disciples to remember Him. He took the cup and directed their attention toward the blood He would shed for the remission of sins. Yet centuries of ecclesiastical development produced a sacramental system involving consecrated

elements, ordained priests, sacrificial altars, Eucharistic adoration, and the assertion that Christ becomes substantially present beneath the appearances of bread and wine. What began with the command, "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19), became surrounded by doctrines requiring explanations considerably more complicated than the original instructions. The question is not whether those ceremonies appear solemn, whether millions practice them sincerely, or whether their defenders possess centuries of theological arguments. The question is whether Jesus Christ and His apostles actually taught them. Religious antiquity cannot turn human tradition into divine revelation, and an impressive ceremony cannot improve upon a finished sacrifice.

Before proceeding, one misunderstanding must be cleared away. Roman Catholic teaching does not maintain that Jesus Christ is physically crucified again in Jerusalem every time a priest celebrates Mass. Its official doctrine describes the Mass as a sacramental making-present of the one sacrifice accomplished at Calvary, offered in an unbloody manner through the ministry of an ordained priest. Likewise, transubstantiation does not mean that the consecrated bread develops the visible appearance of human flesh. It means that the substance of bread and wine is believed to become Christ's body and blood while their outward appearances remain unchanged. Those distinctions deserve accurate representation. There is no need to invent a ridiculous version of Catholic teaching when the actual doctrine raises sufficiently serious biblical questions. Does Scripture authorize an earthly priesthood to offer Christ sacramentally? Does the Lord's Supper involve a change of substance? Does the New Testament command believers to adore consecrated bread? Most importantly, does the biblical teaching concerning Christ's once-for-all offering provide any foundation for the sacrificial claims associated with the Mass?

The decisive testimony comes from Hebrews, where the Holy Ghost explains the difference between the repeated sacrifices of the former priesthood and the perfect offering of Jesus Christ. Hebrews 10:10 declares that believers are sanctified "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Hebrews 10:12 announces that Christ offered one sacrifice for sins forever and sat down at the right hand of God. Hebrews 10:14 adds that by one offering He has perfected forever those who are sanctified. These declarations establish the finality and sufficiency of redemption. The Lord's Supper proclaims that finished sacrifice without creating another offering or establishing another means of justification. This concluding study will examine the Mass, transubstantiation, priesthood, adoration, and the biblical meaning of remembrance, while preserving the distinction between doctrinal disagreement and personal hostility toward sincere Catholic readers. The purpose is not to attack people who need the truth. It is to expose religious claims to the light of Scripture and direct every sinner toward the Saviour whose blood accomplished what no ceremony ever could.

**1. The Upper Room: What Christ Established Before Religion Built Its Altar**

The institution of the Lord's Supper must be examined in its original historical setting. Matthew 26:26 records, "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." The Lord was observing the Passover with His disciples shortly before His crucifixion. His physical body was present before them, and His blood had not yet been shed upon the cross. He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and distributed it. Then He took the cup and connected it with His approaching death. Matthew 26:28 records His explanation: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Notice what the passage actually establishes. Christ directs attention toward His body and blood, but He does not explain a supernatural change in the substance of the elements or commission His disciples as sacrificial priests.

Luke supplies the explicit purpose of the ordinance. "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). The word remembrance is not an insignificant expression that can be dismissed whenever a later theological system requires something more elaborate. It is the Lord's own explanation. Jesus Christ was preparing His disciples to remember the sacrifice He would accomplish. The bread represented His body given, and the cup testified to His blood shed. His command did not establish a new earthly altar or describe a sacramental offering through which Calvary would become present in the manner subsequently asserted by Catholic theology. The language is direct, understandable, and sufficient for the purpose stated. Religious tradition may produce impressive explanations of invisible sacramental operations, but the original institution provides no explicit instruction concerning such operations. The Lord did not give His disciples a theological machine for manufacturing divine presence. He gave them a remembrance of the sacrifice He was about to accomplish.

Paul subsequently delivered the ordinance to the New Testament church, declaring, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you" (1 Corinthians 11:23). His instructions repeated the bread, the cup, and the command to remember Christ. Then he explained, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). Here the inspired apostle identifies the ordinance as a proclamation of Christ's death. He continues calling the element bread and describes the cup without explaining a change of substance. Neither does he instruct the Corinthians to appoint sacrificial priests whose consecration will make Christ substantially present upon an altar. His concern is remembrance, proclamation, reverence, and proper participation. The Holy Ghost provided an extended correction concerning the Lord's Supper without introducing the elaborate sacrificial structure associated with the Mass.

When the inspired instructions identify remembrance as the purpose, religious men should be exceedingly careful before announcing that something far more complicated is essential to its meaning.

**2. Transubstantiation: When Bread Becomes a Question of Religious Authority**

The doctrine of transubstantiation maintains that the bread and wine, through Eucharistic consecration, become the body and blood of Jesus Christ in substance while retaining their outward appearances. Catholic theology understands this as a real sacramental presence, not a merely symbolic reminder or an ordinary physical transformation measurable by natural observation. Its defenders appeal particularly to Christ's words, "this is my body," along with passages concerning the bread of life and communion in His body and blood. The biblical examination must therefore address those passages rather than pretending Catholic theology has no scriptural arguments whatsoever. Yet an appeal to Scripture does not automatically establish that the explanation attached to it is correct. The central question remains whether the text actually requires a change of substance. Matthew 26 records bread in Christ's hands, His physical body before the disciples, and His approaching sacrifice. It does not explain that the underlying substance of the bread became His body.

Scripture repeatedly uses physical objects to represent spiritual realities. Jesus declared, "I am the door" (John 10:9), and "I am the true vine" (John 15:1). Neither statement requires believing that His body became a wooden entrance or developed branches and leaves. First Corinthians 10:4 declares concerning Israel, "and that Rock was Christ." The rock represented Christ in Paul's inspired application, but the passage does not require a literal identity of physical substance. Likewise, the Lord's words concerning bread must be understood according to their setting and His stated command of remembrance. The fact that Jesus used the word "is" does not, by itself, establish that the element underwent a supernatural change. Biblical language includes representations, comparisons, and figures that communicate genuine spiritual truths without requiring literal material identity. A symbol does not become meaningless because it represents something greater than itself. It becomes dangerous when men begin worshipping the symbol as though it were the reality.

Paul's continued references to bread strengthen this distinction. First Corinthians 11:26 identifies what believers eat as bread while explaining its role in proclaiming Christ's death. Verse 27 again refers to eating "this bread," and verse 28 commands believers to examine themselves before eating "that bread." These are not statements describing a hidden change in substance. First Corinthians 10:16 connects the bread with communion in Christ's body, but verse 17 also describes believers as one bread and one body. The apostle

employs the element to communicate spiritual fellowship grounded in the sacrifice of Christ. Catholic interpreters understand this communion as supporting sacramental participation in His real presence. Yet the passage itself does not define that participation through the doctrine of transubstantiation. Its explicit teaching concerns communion, unity, and fellowship in Christ. The bread does not require a philosophical explanation of invisible substance before it can proclaim the Saviour. Scripture assigns the ordinance its significance, and no ecclesiastical definition can possess greater authority than the words God actually inspired.

**3. John 6: The Bread of Life Is Received by Faith, Not Manufactured by Consecration**

John 6 provides another major foundation for Catholic explanations of the Eucharist. Jesus declared, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (John 6:51). Later He spoke concerning eating His flesh and drinking His blood, language that disturbed His hearers and continues to generate controversy. Yet the historical setting matters. The discourse occurred during Christ's earthly ministry, before the institution of the Lord's Supper. The immediate circumstances followed His miraculous feeding of the multitude, whose members continued seeking Him because they had eaten physical bread. Christ redirected their attention from temporary food toward everlasting life. John 6:27 records His warning against laboring merely for food that perishes. The subject was the eternal life He provides, not an explanation of a ceremonial priesthood that would develop centuries afterward. We must begin where the chapter begins rather than importing later doctrines into its opening verses.

The Lord Himself explains the spiritual significance of His language before the more difficult statements appear. John 6:35 declares, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." The parallel is unmistakable. Coming to Christ corresponds with never hungering, while believing on Him corresponds with never thirsting. Then Jesus declares, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). Notice what He does not say. He does not require the listener to locate an ordained priest, participate in a future Eucharistic ceremony, or consume consecrated elements before obtaining eternal life. He identifies believing on Himself as the means by which everlasting life is received. The discourse directs sinners toward the Person of Christ and the saving significance of His approaching sacrifice. A man who reads the entire chapter will discover that Jesus was offering Himself as the Bread of Life, not handing His listeners instructions for entering a sacramental bread line.

John 6:53 contains the difficult declaration concerning eating the flesh of the Son of man and drinking His blood. Those words must not be ignored, but neither should they be

separated from Christ's repeated explanations concerning faith. He had already identified Himself as the bread from heaven and connected everlasting life with believing on Him. Later He declares, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). This does not diminish the importance of His actual bodily sacrifice, which was essential to redemption. It exposes the inadequacy of interpreting His teaching merely in earthly, physical terms. His flesh would be given for the life of the world, but eternal life comes through receiving the Saviour by faith. The Lord's Supper remembers the body He gave. It does not replace the faith by which sinners receive the salvation His sacrifice accomplished.

**4. The Roman Catholic Mass: Making Present What Christ Offered Once for All**

The Catholic understanding of the Mass goes beyond the assertion that bread and wine become Christ's body and blood. It teaches that the Eucharistic celebration possesses a sacrificial character because the one offering of Calvary is made sacramentally present through the ministry of the priest. Catholic doctrine distinguishes this from repeating Christ's historical crucifixion, maintaining that the sacrifice is one and the same, offered in a different manner. That distinction deserves recognition, but it does not settle the biblical objection. The question is whether the New Testament authorizes the church to perform a sacrificial action through which Christ's offering becomes present upon an earthly altar. Jesus commanded remembrance, and Paul identified proclamation of the Lord's death as the purpose of the ordinance. Neither passage explicitly establishes a new sacrificial ministry. A theological distinction may explain how a religious system understands its ceremony without proving that Christ authorized the ceremony in the first place.

The Roman Catholic Mass also assigns a particular role to the ordained priest, who is understood to act in the person of Christ in offering the Eucharistic sacrifice. Catholic teaching does not present the priest as an independent redeemer accomplishing another Calvary by his own power. Nevertheless, the ceremony assigns him a sacrificial responsibility that demands examination in light of the New Testament. Where did Christ commission His apostles to offer Him sacramentally upon earthly altars? Where did Paul instruct pastors to perform such an offering? First Corinthians 11 describes believers gathering, remembering, proclaiming, and examining themselves. It does not establish an altar service through which an ordained minister presents Christ as a sacrificial offering. A pastor may lead communion, explain Scripture, distribute the elements, and exercise proper oversight without claiming sacrificial powers. There is an enormous difference between a servant who proclaims the finished sacrifice and a priestly office claiming authority to offer that sacrifice sacramentally.

The difficulty becomes especially apparent when the sacrificial language of the Mass is examined alongside the purpose of the Lord's Supper. Paul declares, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). The church proclaims a death already accomplished while awaiting the return of the living Saviour. The ordinance is not described as an earthly extension of Christ's heavenly priestly offering. Catholic theologians argue that its sacrificial understanding does not diminish the once-for-all nature of Calvary because the Mass makes that same offering present rather than producing another sacrifice. Yet the biblical burden remains. Hebrews identifies Christ's sacrifice as complete, while the institution passages command remembrance and proclamation. If a doctrine requires an entire theological structure that the apostles never explicitly establish, the believer has every reason to question whether the structure came from divine revelation or from religious development.

**5. Hebrews 9: The Blood That Entered Heaven and the Offering That Cannot Be Repeated**

Hebrews 9 establishes a decisive contrast between the ministry of the former high priest and the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Under the Mosaic law, the high priest entered the most holy place according to God's appointed instructions, bringing sacrificial blood associated with Israel's covenant worship. Those arrangements were real, divinely commanded, and significant within their proper historical setting. Yet they were temporary shadows pointing toward something greater. Hebrews 9:12 declares concerning Christ, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Notice the language. Christ entered once, and He obtained eternal redemption. Not partial redemption, provisional redemption, or redemption awaiting completion through an earthly sacramental system. His blood accomplished what the former sacrifices could never accomplish. The altar at Calvary supplied the sacrifice, heaven received the victorious High Priest, and eternal redemption was obtained before any later church council assembled to explain it.

Hebrews 9:24 continues, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Here the location and nature of His priestly ministry become unmistakable. Christ did not merely enter another earthly sanctuary with more elaborate furnishings. He entered heaven itself. The former sanctuary represented heavenly realities, but Christ ministers in the presence of God. His heavenly intercession must not be confused with repeated sacrificial offering. Hebrews 7:25 declares that He lives to make intercession for those who come unto God by Him. Intercession continues because the risen Saviour lives forever, while His sacrificial offering was accomplished once. Those are distinct truths. A

living High Priest does not require a continuing series of sacrificial deaths to maintain the redemption His blood already purchased. His intercession rests upon the sufficiency of His completed offering.

Hebrews 9:25-26 presses the distinction even further, explaining that Christ did not enter heaven to offer Himself repeatedly as the former high priest entered year after year with the blood of others. The inspired conclusion declares, "but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26). Verse 28 adds, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." There is no uncertainty concerning the number of sacrificial offerings required for redemption. Christ was once offered. His sacrifice put away sin, and His future appearance fulfills the expectation of those who look for Him. The Catholic distinction between one historical crucifixion and its sacramental presentation should be acknowledged, but Hebrews supplies no instruction establishing that sacramental presentation as an additional priestly function of the church. The Scripture does not merely say that Christ began the work of redemption once. It declares that His offering accomplished redemption and that He will appear again, not to continue sacrificing Himself, but to fulfill His promised salvation.

**6. Hebrews 10: One Offering, One High Priest, and the Saviour Who Sat Down**

Hebrews 10 explains the limitations of the former sacrifices and then announces the perfection of Christ's offering. The opening verses describe sacrifices repeatedly offered under the law, which could never make the worshippers perfect. Hebrews 10:4 declares, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." The former system possessed divine authority within Israel's covenant administration, yet its repeated sacrifices could not accomplish final redemption. Then Scripture identifies the offering of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment toward which those sacrifices pointed. Hebrews 10:10 declares, "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." That statement identifies the offering, the Person who offered it, and its finality. The repetition associated with the former priesthood gives way to the sufficiency of Christ. What thousands of animal sacrifices could never accomplish, the Son of God accomplished through one perfect offering.

Hebrews 10:11-12 provides a contrast that should be engraved upon the conscience of everyone discussing the Lord's Supper. The former priest stood daily ministering and offering sacrifices that could never take away sins. Then Scripture declares, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12). The standing priest represents the continuing ministry of an incomplete sacrificial system. The seated Saviour testifies to the completion of His offering. This does not mean Jesus Christ has ceased His heavenly intercession or surrendered His

priesthood. It means the sacrifice required for redemption has been accomplished. Hebrews 10:14 confirms, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The former priests stood because their sacrifices could not finish the work. Christ sat down because His sacrifice did. Heaven has no unfinished invoice from Calvary waiting for an earthly priest to approve payment.

The priesthood of Jesus Christ is also distinguished from the former priesthood by its permanence. Hebrews 7:24 declares, "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." The following verse explains that He is able to save to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him because He ever lives to make intercession for them. Then Hebrews 7:27 declares that He does not need to offer sacrifices daily, concluding, "for this he did once, when he offered up himself." The New Testament also identifies believers as a holy and royal priesthood, called to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5, 9). That standing does not eliminate pastoral offices, but it does not establish a separate Christian priestly caste commissioned to offer Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice. First Timothy 2:5 identifies one Mediator between God and men, Jesus Christ. A pastor may direct sinners toward the High Priest, but he cannot become another mediator whose sacrificial ministry makes Christ's redemption effective. The church needs faithful ministers of the Word, not additional sacrificers of the Lamb.

**7. Eucharistic Adoration, Saving Grace, and the Gospel That Must Not Be Buried**

The practice of Eucharistic adoration follows naturally from the Roman Catholic belief that the consecrated host is substantially Jesus Christ. Catholics who kneel before the host do not generally understand themselves to be worshipping ordinary bread. They believe they are worshipping Christ truly present under the appearances of bread. That distinction matters when evaluating the intentions of sincere participants. Nevertheless, the biblical question remains whether God has established the consecrated element as an object of divine adoration. Scripture commands worship of God and forbids directing divine worship toward created things. Jesus declared, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). If the host remains bread appointed to represent Christ's body, adoration directed toward it is not authorized worship of Christ. The institution accounts contain no command to kneel before the elements, display them for worship, or preserve them as objects of divine presence. Reverence for an ordinance is not permission to transfer the worship belonging to the Saviour onto the substance used to remember Him.

Scripture provides a sobering illustration of how a legitimate religious object can become corrupted through unauthorized devotion. In Numbers 21, God instructed Moses to make a

serpent of brass so that those bitten by serpents could look upon it and live. The object served its appointed purpose within Israel's historical experience. Yet centuries later, the children of Israel began burning incense to it. Second Kings 18:4 records that Hezekiah destroyed the brass serpent because it had become an object of improper religious devotion. He called it Nehushtan, exposing what it actually was. The original divine appointment did not justify its later misuse. The example does not settle every question concerning the Eucharist, but it establishes an important biblical principle. An object associated with God's work must not receive worship merely because people have developed extraordinary religious claims concerning it. The brass serpent did not become God because God once used it, and the bread of communion does not acquire a right to divine adoration merely because Christ appointed it for remembrance.

Finally, the distinction between the Lord's Supper and the Mass must bring us back to the Gospel of salvation by grace through faith. Catholic theology describes sacraments as means through which God communicates grace, and it does not claim that the Eucharist operates independently of Christ. Yet the New Testament identifies justification through faith in the crucified and risen Saviour rather than through participation in sacramental offerings. Romans 3:28 declares, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Ephesians 2:8-9 establishes salvation as God's gift, not the reward of human works. A person raised within Catholicism deserves a clear explanation of those passages, not ridicule for having trusted religious instruction. The same applies to every Protestant or independent-church member whose confidence rests upon ceremonies, baptism, church membership, or moral achievement. The issue is not whether someone wears a collar, carries a rosary, attends a particular church, or possesses an impressive religious history. The issue is whether that person has believed the Gospel and rests upon the finished sacrifice of Jesus Christ alone.

**Conclusion**

The entire testimony of Scripture directs us toward one glorious conclusion: Jesus Christ accomplished redemption through His own blood, offered Himself once for all, and sat down at the right hand of God because His sacrificial work was finished. The Passover lamb in Egypt anticipated the greater Lamb who would take away the sin of the world. The supper established in the upper room directed attention toward His approaching death. The apostle Paul subsequently instructed the New Testament church to observe that supper in remembrance of Christ and to proclaim His death until He comes. Hebrews then establishes the absolute sufficiency of the sacrifice being remembered. Against that biblical foundation, the doctrines of transubstantiation, sacrificial Eucharistic offering, and adoration of the consecrated host require an authority that the institution passages do not

explicitly provide. The question is not whether those doctrines possess centuries of institutional defense. The question is whether they arise from the revelation God actually gave. The Word of God must judge religious tradition, because religious tradition possesses no authority to sit in judgment over the Word of God.

The purpose of exposing these doctrinal differences is not to encourage hostility toward Catholic people or congratulate Protestants for possessing a different religious label. Sincere people can inherit serious misunderstandings, and denominational membership does not guarantee a correct understanding of salvation. The Gospel must be proclaimed to every sinner with the same clarity. Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). His blood purchased redemption, His sacrifice satisfied divine righteousness, and eternal life is received through faith in Him. Religious ceremonies cannot improve upon that accomplished work. The Roman Catholic reader should examine the Mass in light of Scripture, just as every Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, and independent Christian should examine the traditions of his own congregation. Truth is not determined by the denomination written over the door. It is established by the God who inspired the Book. No church receives permission to contradict Him merely because its traditions are old, familiar, or deeply cherished.

The Lord's Supper should therefore be observed as Christ established it: a solemn remembrance of His body given, His blood shed, and His death proclaimed until He comes. Believers should approach the ordinance with gratitude, reverence, self-examination, and complete confidence in the finished work of their Saviour. They should not approach an altar imagining that another sacrificial action is necessary to make redemption effective, nor should they adore the elements as though the bread itself were their Redeemer. The crucified Christ is risen, the risen Christ is seated, and the seated Christ will return according to His promise. The church remembers His sacrifice because it was sufficient, not because it remains unfinished. Hebrews 10:18 delivers the final declaration: "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin." That statement is the death sentence upon every religious claim that diminishes the finality of Calvary. The bread did not purchase redemption. The cup did not shed its blood. The priest did not bear the sins of the world. Jesus Christ did. The altar at Calvary witnessed the sacrifice, the empty tomb declared the victory, and the throne in heaven bears witness to the finished work. One Saviour. One sacrifice. One sufficient payment. Offered once for all. And no religious ceremony on earth can add one thing to what the Son of God accomplished when He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30).

**The Lord’s Supper**

Remembrance Without Ritual Magic

**Conclusion**

After examining the Passover in Egypt, the upper room in Jerusalem, the words of Jesus Christ, the instructions of the apostle Paul, the warnings to the Corinthian church, and the claims of centuries of religious tradition, one great truth stands above every controversy surrounding the Lord's Supper: Jesus Christ accomplished redemption once for all, and no ceremony, priesthood, religious institution, or human invention can add anything to His finished sacrifice. The ordinance was never established to manufacture salvation, dispense installments of forgiveness, or place the crucified Saviour repeatedly before an earthly altar. It was established to remember Him. The Lord took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and declared, "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Those words are not difficult to understand. The difficulty begins when men refuse to accept their simplicity and insist upon surrounding them with theological explanations that the Lord Himself never provided. We have traveled through ten studies examining what Scripture actually teaches, and the conclusion is unmistakable. The Lord's Supper belongs to Jesus Christ. Its authority comes from Jesus Christ. Its meaning must be established by the Word of God. And its central message is the finished sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The bread remembers His body, the cup remembers His blood, and the ordinance proclaims a redemption that was accomplished long before the first cathedral was built or the first ecclesiastical council assembled to explain it.

Our examination began in Exodus 12, where the LORD commanded Israel to select a lamb without blemish, kill it according to His instructions, and place its blood upon the doorposts of their homes. Egypt was about to experience divine judgment, and the children of Israel were instructed to trust the provision God had established for their deliverance. The LORD declared, "and when I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exodus 12:13). Notice that the promise concerned the blood, not the personal accomplishments of those inside the house. The Passover became a memorial within Israel's national life, pointing backward toward the deliverance from Egypt while prophetically directing attention toward the greater Lamb who would come. Centuries later, John the Baptist pointed toward Jesus Christ and declared, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). The apostle Paul completed the connection when he wrote, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). The lamb in Egypt was not the final sacrifice for sin. It pointed toward the One whose blood would accomplish what no animal sacrifice could ever accomplish. The Passover belonged to Israel's historical deliverance, while the Lord's Supper belongs to the church's remembrance of Christ's accomplished

redemption. One looked forward to the Lamb who was coming. The other looks backward to the Lamb who has been sacrificed. And the difference between those two directions is the finished work of Calvary.

We then entered the upper room, where Jesus Christ gathered with His disciples on the night of His betrayal. What a remarkable setting for the institution of this ordinance. Judas was preparing to betray his Master, the religious authorities were plotting His destruction, and the cross stood immediately before Him. Yet the Lord was not surprised by the wickedness unfolding around Him. He knew why He had come, what He would suffer, and what His sacrifice would accomplish. Matthew 26:26 records that He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to His disciples. He then took the cup and declared, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28). There was no elaborate sacrificial priesthood introduced, no theological explanation of changing substances, and no command to establish an earthly altar upon which His offering would be presented sacramentally throughout succeeding generations. The Lord established a remembrance of the sacrifice He was about to accomplish. The apostles later received inspired instruction concerning its observance within the New Testament church. The institution was simple because the meaning was profound. The Lord did not need religious complexity to make His sacrifice important. Calvary would accomplish what all the ceremonies in the world could never accomplish.

One of the central controversies examined throughout these studies concerned the words "this is my body" (Matthew 26:26). Those words have become the foundation of elaborate sacramental explanations, especially the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation. Yet Scripture repeatedly employs physical objects to communicate spiritual truths without requiring that the objects become the realities they represent. Jesus declared, "I am the door" (John 10:9), and "I am the true vine" (John 15:1). Paul declared concerning Israel in the wilderness, "and that Rock was Christ" (1 Corinthians 10:4). These statements communicate genuine spiritual truths through representative language. In the upper room, Christ held bread while His physical body remained present before the disciples. He directed their attention toward the body He would give upon the cross. Later, when Paul instructed the Corinthians concerning the ordinance, he continued identifying the elements as bread and the cup. First Corinthians 11:26 declares, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." The apostle did not explain an invisible change of substance. He explained the proclamation of Christ's death. A symbol does not need to become the Saviour in order to testify of the Saviour. And when men begin attributing divine properties to the symbol, they had better establish that doctrine from Scripture rather than demand that Scripture submit to their theology.

The cup likewise brought us to the precious blood of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the New Testament through His death. The Bible leaves no uncertainty concerning the importance of that blood. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). Redemption is found in Christ, forgiveness is secured through His blood, and grace is the foundation of the believer's salvation. The cup remembers that blood, but the cup did not shed it. The minister distributing the cup did not purchase redemption. The congregation drinking from the cup did not contribute another payment toward the forgiveness of sins. Jesus Christ accomplished that work Himself. Hebrews 9:12 declares that by His own blood He entered once into the holy place, "having obtained eternal redemption for us." Notice that word eternal. Not temporary. Not conditional upon another ceremonial performance. Not a religious account that must be replenished through repeated sacramental participation. Eternal redemption was obtained through the blood of the perfect Saviour. You can polish the cup until it shines like the sun, surround it with gold, place it beneath magnificent architecture, and carry it through the most impressive ceremony imaginable, but the cup itself cannot forgive a single sin. The blood of Jesus Christ accomplished what no vessel could ever accomplish.

We also examined the central command governing the entire ordinance: "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Those words establish both its simplicity and its significance. The Lord's Supper is not an empty custom to be performed carelessly, but neither is it an instrument for recreating or completing the sacrifice of Christ. It is a solemn remembrance of His body given and His blood shed. The ordinance does not possess saving power independent of the Saviour it proclaims. A Christian may participate reverently because he understands what Christ accomplished, while another individual may participate outwardly and remain lost because he has never believed the Gospel. Religious participation cannot replace regeneration. A ceremony cannot manufacture faith. A person may spend decades in a church, attend every communion service, and know every prescribed response while remaining ignorant of salvation by grace through faith. Paul declared, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:28). The Lord's Supper does not contradict that declaration. It remembers the sacrifice upon which justification rests. Christ did not establish communion to give sinners another way to earn salvation. He established it so those redeemed by His blood would remember the price He paid. The memorial is important because the sacrifice is sufficient, not because the memorial possesses some additional power to save.

The Corinthian church supplied another sobering lesson concerning the difference between outward religious participation and genuine Christian conduct. Those believers

had managed to gather around the Lord's table while practicing selfishness, division, gluttony, and disregard for poorer members of the congregation. Paul rebuked them with the astonishing declaration, "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20). Think about that. They apparently possessed the elements, knew the occasion, and gathered under the appropriate religious description, yet their conduct contradicted the purpose of the ordinance. The apostle reminded them that believers were one body in Jesus Christ and that their fellowship should reflect the sacrifice they proclaimed. That warning has lost none of its relevance. A congregation can possess magnificent facilities, carefully arranged communion trays, beautiful music, and impressive religious leadership while its members practice bitterness, favoritism, and contempt toward one another. The Lord is not impressed by a beautifully decorated table when the people gathered around it are behaving in ways that dishonor His name. A church that remembers the Saviour who gave Himself for others should not require an apostolic rebuke before learning to care for those sitting beside them.

Then came the warning concerning unworthy participation, a passage that has frightened many sincere believers because its meaning has been confused with the question of eternal salvation. Paul declared, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 11:27). We established that the warning concerns an unworthy manner of participation, not the mistaken idea that Christians must somehow become personally worthy of Calvary before approaching the table. No sinner ever became worthy of redemption through moral accomplishment. Christ died precisely because sinners could never save themselves. Nevertheless, believers are responsible for examining their conduct and participating with reverence. Paul commanded, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28). Notice that examination leads toward proper participation. It is not intended to become an endless religious inspection during which frightened Christians attempt to discover whether their personal righteousness has finally reached an acceptable level. The Lord's Supper does not proclaim the perfection of the participant. It proclaims the perfection of the sacrifice. Examine your conduct, judge your wrongdoing, obey the Scriptures, and remember the Saviour. But never imagine that you have become worthy of His blood through your own achievements.

We also encountered one of the most serious warnings concerning the conduct of New Testament believers. Paul declared, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30). The apostle identified divine chastening within the Corinthian congregation because of its abuse of the Lord's Supper. That warning must not be softened merely because modern Christianity prefers a version of grace in which God never corrects His children. Yet neither should it be transformed into the reckless

accusation that every sick Christian must be suffering because of hidden sin. Scripture does not authorize such a conclusion. Job suffered without the explanations his friends confidently supplied, and faithful servants of God experienced afflictions that were not identified as punishment for abusing communion. The governing distinction appears in First Corinthians 11:32, where Paul declares that believers are chastened by the Lord so they should not be condemned with the world. The Father's discipline is not the cancellation of redemption. Eternal security does not abolish accountability. The Christian belongs to Christ forever, but he does not possess permission to treat the commands of Christ contemptuously. The same Lord who secures His children through redemption possesses every right to correct them through chastening.

Questions concerning the frequency, location, administration, and participation of the Lord's Supper demonstrated another important principle: Human arrangements must never be promoted into divine commandments without biblical authority. Paul declared that believers proclaim the Lord's death "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup" (1 Corinthians 11:26). He did not establish a mandatory weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annual calendar governing every congregation. Acts records believers breaking bread and gathering for fellowship, including assemblies in homes, but historical examples must be examined carefully before becoming universal requirements. The New Testament recognizes legitimate church leadership, orderly participation, and congregational discipline. Yet it does not establish an exclusive sacrificial priesthood required to make communion effective. Neither does it teach that a magnificent sanctuary possesses spiritual qualifications that a humble gathering of believers cannot possess. The question is whether believers are observing the ordinance according to Scripture, with understanding, reverence, and proper fellowship. The Lord did not establish His supper so denominations could spend centuries arguing over which organization possessed the most impressive regulations. Where God has commanded, Christians must obey. Where God has granted liberty, men must resist the temptation to appoint themselves lawmakers over the church of Jesus Christ.

Finally, we confronted the Roman Catholic Mass, transubstantiation, Eucharistic adoration, and the sacrificial claims associated with the Catholic priesthood. These subjects were examined because they concern the sufficiency of Christ's offering, not because Catholic people are enemies to be ridiculed or mistreated. Catholic theology describes the Mass as the sacramental making-present of Christ's one sacrifice, not another historical crucifixion. It teaches that consecrated bread and wine become Christ's body and blood in substance while retaining their outward appearances. These claims deserve accurate representation, but accurate representation does not establish biblical authority. The central question remains whether Jesus Christ or His apostles commanded

the church to offer Him sacramentally through an earthly priesthood or to adore consecrated bread as God. The institution passages establish remembrance, and Paul establishes proclamation. Hebrews establishes the completed offering of Christ. The additional sacramental explanations must therefore be judged against those inspired declarations. There is no reason to attack sincere individuals when Scripture provides the proper foundation for doctrinal examination. The disagreement is not settled by religious history, institutional prestige, or the emotional beauty of a ceremony. The question is what Almighty God has written, and no church possesses authority to correct the Author of the Bible.

Hebrews 10 brings the entire matter to its final and decisive conclusion. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). The former priests stood daily ministering because their repeated sacrifices could never take away sins permanently. But the inspired record declares, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12). Christ did not sit down because another group of priests was arriving to continue His sacrificial work. He sat down because His offering was complete. Hebrews 10:14 adds, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." And then comes the declaration that should settle every claim concerning the necessity of further offerings for sin: "Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18). Those words establish the finality of Calvary beyond the reach of ceremonial improvement. One offering. One perfect sacrifice. One sufficient Redeemer. Redemption obtained, forgiveness secured, and the Saviour seated at the right hand of God. Religion may continue constructing altars, but Scripture has already announced that the offering required for sin has been accomplished.

There is one more truth that must never be lost in all this discussion of ordinances, ceremonies, and doctrinal disagreements. The Lord's Supper was not established merely to provide Christians with another subject for argument. It was established to direct redeemed sinners toward the Lord Jesus Christ, whose love was demonstrated through His willing sacrifice. That does not mean doctrinal differences are unimportant. They are important precisely because the Person and work of Christ are important. The Gospel is not a collection of religious preferences that can be rearranged according to denominational taste. Paul declared that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The sinner who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ receives eternal life through the finished work of the Saviour. That truth must be proclaimed clearly to Catholic, Protestant, Baptist, independent, and unchurched readers alike. Nobody is saved because he selected the correct denominational label. Nobody is justified because he learned the

correct ceremonial vocabulary. The Gospel does not ask which religious organization issued your membership certificate. It confronts you with the crucified and risen Son of God and the question of whether you have believed on Him.

And we must never forget that the Lord's Supper carries a glorious promise reaching beyond the present age. Paul declared, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26). Those final words lift our attention from the remembrance of Calvary toward the expectation of Christ's return. The church does not gather around the Lord's table as though its Saviour remains buried in Jerusalem. He rose again, ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God. The same Lord whose death we proclaim will return for His redeemed people. First Thessalonians 4:16-17 announces that the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, that the dead in Christ shall rise first, and that living believers shall be caught up together with them to meet Him in the air. What a glorious expectation. Every observance of the Lord's Supper quietly testifies that the present period of waiting will not continue forever. One day the last piece of bread will be broken in remembrance before the redeemed are gathered into the presence of the One whose body was given. One day the last cup will be taken before faith gives way to sight. We remember His death today because we expect to see the living Saviour tomorrow.

So let this series settle the matter where it belongs, upon the authority of the King James Bible and the finished sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Let every reader return to the Scriptures, examine inherited traditions, reject false doctrine, and honor the ordinance according to the Lord's own instructions. Let no religious institution persuade you that redemption remains unfinished. Let no ceremony become more important than the sacrifice it represents. Let no minister claim a priestly authority that diminishes the one Mediator between God and men. Let no believer treat the Lord's Supper carelessly, and let no frightened Christian imagine that personal perfection is required before he may remember the perfect Saviour. Let the bread direct your attention toward His body given, the cup toward His blood shed, and the ordinance toward the glorious redemption accomplished at Calvary. Remember the Lamb who was sacrificed, the tomb that was emptied, the High Priest who is seated, and the Lord who is coming again. The Passover pointed toward Him. The prophets foretold Him. The cross revealed His sacrifice. The empty tomb declared His victory. The heavenly throne testifies to His finished work. And the Lord's Supper proclaims His death until He comes. The bread is not the Redeemer. The cup is not the payment. The priest is not the Mediator. Jesus Christ is the Saviour, His blood is sufficient, and His sacrifice is finished forever. No ritual magic. No unfinished redemption. No additional sacrifice. Just the glorious truth of a crucified, risen, and returning Lord who accomplished everything necessary when He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30).

# The Lord's Supper

## Remembrance Without Ritual Magic

"This do in remembrance of me." Luke 22:19

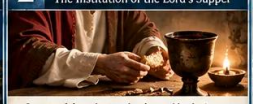
### 1 The Passover in Egypt
The Blood That Pointed to the Lamb



- A lamb without blemish (Exodus 12:5)
- The blood applied to the doorposts (Exodus 12:7)
- "When I see the blood, I will pass over you" (Exodus 12:13)
- A picture of the greater Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7)
- Israel's deliverance pointed to Christ's sacrifice

EXODUS 12:1-13 | 1 CORINTHIANS 5:7

### 2 The Upper Room
The Institution of the Lord's Supper



- Jesus took bread, gave thanks, and brake it (Matthew 26:26)
- "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19)
- The cup: "This is my blood... shed for many" (Matthew 26:28)
- A memory of His approaching sacrifice
- No command for an earthly sacrificial priesthood

MATTHEW 26:26-29 | LUKE 22:19-20

### 3 Bread, Cup, and Covenant
What the Elements Represent



- The bread represents His body given (1 Corinthians 11:24)
- The cup represents His blood shed (1 Corinthians 11:25)
- "This cup is the new testament in my blood" (Luke 22:20)
- A Memorial, not a means of salvation
- Remembers His death and anticipates His return

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26 | LUKE 22:19-20

### 4 This Do in Remembrance
Not to Repeat His Sacrifice



- The explicit purpose: "this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19)
- Not a recreation of His suffering
- Not a repetition of His offering
- A proclamation of His death (1 Corinthians 11:26)
- Looks backward to a finished cross
- Looks forward to a coming Christ

LUKE 22:19 | 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

### 5 One Bread, One Body
The Corinthian Church That Forgot Both



- Factions, gluttony, and divisions (1 Corinthians 11:17-22)
- "When ye come together... this is not to eat the Lord's last supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20)
- Communion: fellowship in Christ (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)
- The ordinance and the spiritual unity of His body
- Outward ceremony cannot hide inward disobedience

1 CORINTHIANS 10:16-17 | 11:17-22

### 6 Let a Man Examine Himself
Not Mistake His Worthiness for Salvation



- "Let a man examine himself" (1 Cor. 11:28)
- An unworthy manner, not an unworthy person
- Not a command to earn salvation
- Genuine repentance and reverence
- Discernment and unresolved sin
- Cannot lose salvation, but must judge conduct

1 CORINTHIANS 11:27-29

### 7 Weak, Sickly, and Sleeping
When God Judges His Own People



- "Many are weak and sickly... and many sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:30)
- Divine judgment upon believers who abused the ordinance
- Temporal chastening, not eternal condemnation
- "Chastened... that we should not be condemned with the [illegible]" (1 Corinthians 11:32)
- God's discipline is real, but not proof that every sickness is due to communion

1 CORINTHIANS 11:30-32

### 8 How Often, Who May Partake
And Who Has the Authority to Decide?



- "For as often as ye eat this bread..." (1 Cor. 11:26)
- No universally mandatory calendar
- Acts 2:42 and Acts 20:7
- Must a pastor administer it?
- Can believers participate outside a church building?
- Open, close, or closed commuuion
- Where Scripture commands, we obey
- Where Scripture leaves liberty, do not make new laws

ACTS 2:42 | ACTS 20:7 | 1 CORINTHIANS 11:17-34

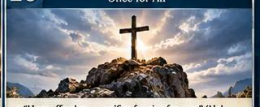
### 9 The Roman Catholic Mass
Transubstantiation and the Eucharist



- Transubstantiation: the substance becomes His body and blood
- The Mass as the sacramental making-present of Christ's one sacrifice
- The Eucharistic priesthood
- Adoration of the consecrated host
- Tested against Scripture
- No biblical command to worship consecrated bread

HEBREWS 9:24-28 | 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26

### 10 The Sacrifice That was Finished
Once for All



- "He as offeed one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Heb. (Heb. 10:12)
- By one offering He has perfected for ever (Heb. 10:14)
- His priesthood is heavenly, not earthly
- No repeated offerings required
- No biblical authority for adoring the host
- Calvary was sufficient, the offering was accepted, and the Saviour sat down

HEBREWS 10:10-14

### The Bottom Line

- The Lord's Supper is a remembrance of Christ's body given and blood shed.
- It does not save, justify, or repeat His sacrifice.
- We are to examine ourselves, observe it with reverence, and walk in love.
- It proclaims His death until He comes.
- The sacrifice of Jesus Christ was finished once for all.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."
1 CORINTHIANS 11:26

VERSEQUEST_MINISTRIES