

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Advanced Bible Correspondence Course**

### **Lesson 29: The Lord's Supper**

#### **LORD'S DAY 29**

**Q.78. DO THEN THE BREAD AND WINE BECOME THE VERY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST?**

**ANSWER: NOT AT ALL (A): BUT AS THE WATER IN BAPTISM IS NOT CHANGED INTO THE BLOOD OF CHRIST, NEITHER IS THE WASHING AWAY OF SIN ITSELF, BEING ONLY THE SIGN AND CONFIRMATION THEREOF APPOINTED OF GOD (B); SO THE BREAD IN THE LORD'S SUPPER IS NOT CHANGED INTO THE VERY BODY OF CHRIST (C), THOUGH AGREEABLY TO THE NATURE AND PROPERTIES OF SACRAMENTS (D), IT IS CALLED THE BODY OF CHRIST JESUS.**

**(A)MATTHEW 26:29; (B)EPHESIANS 5:26, TITUS 3:5; (C)I CORINTHIANS 10:16, 11:26; (D)GENESIS 17:10&11, EXODUS 12:11&13, 13:9, I PETER 3:21, I CORINTHIANS 10:3&4**

#### **The Biblical teaching of the Lord's Supper**

It is clear that the Bible speaks about a very far-reaching, close communion between Christ and the believers. They form, so to speak, *one* body, led by *one* Spirit. And this communion is even more especially strengthened by the use of the Lord's Supper, which speaks of eating the crucified body of Christ and of drinking His blood.

This gives rise to the question whether something happens to the bread and the wine; are they possibly changed in a mysterious, magical way into the flesh and blood of Christ, so that His flesh is really eaten and His blood literally drunk? However, nowhere in the Bible is there any support for such ideas to be found.

Bread and wine remain common bread and wine, just like the water in baptism remains water and does not change into the blood of Christ. Bread and wine in themselves accomplish nothing, no more that the water of baptism itself washes away sins.

And yet, there is something very special about the bread and wine (and about the water of baptism). They are elements of a sacrament. A sacrament does not involve

any magical change. However, the sacrament does serve as an illustration (a representation) and a warrant (an assurance). This warrant is so strong that the sign and that which is represented by that sign is indicated with the same word. And therefore, for instance, the bread in the Lord's Supper is called the body of Christ. This will be explained later on.

**Q.79. WHY THEN DOTHTH CHRIST CALL THE BREAD HIS BODY, AND THE CUP HIS BLOOD, OR THE NEW COVENANT IN HIS BLOOD; AND PAUL "THE COMMUNION OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST"?**

**ANSWER: CHRIST SPEAKS THUS NOT WITHOUT GREAT REASON, NAMELY, NOT ONLY THEREBY TO TEACH US THAT AS WINE AND BREAD SUPPORT THIS TEMPORAL LIFE, SO HIS CRUCIFIED BODY AND SHED BLOOD ARE THE TRUE MEAT AND DRINK WHEREBY OUR SOULS ARE FED TO ETERNAL LIFE (A); BUT MORE ESPECIALLY BY THESE VISIBLE SIGNS AND PLEDGES TO ASSURE US THAT WE ARE AS REALLY PARTAKERS OF HIS TRUE BODY AND BLOOD (BY THE OPERATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT) AS WE RECEIVE BY THE MOUTHS OF OUR BODIES THESE HOLY SIGNS IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIM (B); AND THAT ALL HIS SUFFERINGS AND OBEDIENCE ARE AS CERTAINLY OURS, AS IF WE HAD IN OUR OWN PERSONS SUFFERED AND MADE SATISFACTION FOR OUR SINS TO GOD.**

**(A)JOHN 6:55; (B)I CORINTHIANS 10:16**

### **Bread and wine: the body and blood of Christ**

Why then are bread and wine called the body and blood of Christ? And why does Paul speak about communion, through the partaking of the Lord's Supper, with the body and blood of Christ? It is because there is certainly something special about the Lord's Supper. First of all, something is being *taught* us by the Lord's Supper: the bread and the wine represent something. They point back to something. A comparison is being made. As common bread and wine serve to maintain our temporal, earthly lives, so our spiritual lives are maintained and our souls truly fed by the crucified body and the shed blood of Christ, because He gives us life through His death. Of this the Lord's Supper is a symbol, an illustration.

### **The Holy Spirit and the Lord's Supper**

But there is more: something also *happens*; but not by the bread and wine themselves, as if in those there were a special power. It takes place by the working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

With mouths we eat the bread and drink the wine, but the Holy Spirit makes us receive Christ by faith. By the use of bread and wine, the Holy Spirit assures us that we may believe that we have fellowship with the sufferings and death of Christ. As certainly as we taste with our mouths the holy signs of bread and wine (which are true tokens or proofs), so certainly we receive the object signified by it. Then the Holy

Spirit assures us in our hearts that the body of Christ has been crucified for *us* and His blood has been shed for *us*.

Therefore we may and can believe, and are assured by these signs, that we have received the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We have such a close communion with His sufferings *and* with His obedient life, that it is as if we ourselves have suffered the punishment for our sins and have always been obedient to God's law, so perfectly, that God is satisfied with it and therefore grants us forgiveness of sins and everlasting life.

Faith, if it is a living faith, also experiences that spiritual communion with Christ, for as God He is present through His Spirit and with His grace.

### **Bread and wine as a pledge**

In the answer, bread and wine are called pledges. A pledge serves as a guarantee or surety. So by giving a pledge, someone gives assurance that he will do what he promises. God thus assures His children, by giving the pledges of bread and wine, that He has forgiven their sins and He promises to give them life everlasting. Christ Himself has said: "*For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed*" (John 6:55).

### ***Questions:***

1. *What is strengthened by the Lord's Supper?*

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2. *What is experienced by believers at the Lord's Supper?*

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3. *Does this happen by a magic power which is present in the tokens, or by something else? Explain.*

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4. *How is Christ present at the Lord's Supper?*

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5. *Why are the bread and wine called "pledges"?*

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*Evaluator:* \_\_\_\_\_

## Meditation: The Lord's Supper

The Savior's gentle hand  
Knocks at your door today.

When a man goes thirsty to the well, his thirst is not allayed merely by going there. On the contrary, it is increased every step he goes. It is by what he draws out of the well that his thirst is satisfied. And just so it is not by the mere bodily exercise of waiting on ordinances that you will ever come to peace; but by tasting of Jesus in the ordinances – whose flesh is meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed.

Oh, look on the broken bread, and you will see this glory still streaming through. Here is the heart of God laid bare; God is manifest in the flesh. You are poring over your own heart, examining your feelings, watching your disease. Avert the eye from all within. “Behold Me, behold Me,” Christ cries. “Look to Me, and be ye saved.” Behold the glory of Christ. There is much difficulty about your own heart, but no darkness about the heart of Christ. Look in through His wounds; believe what you see in Him.

It is a pledge that Christ is yours. When you see the elements, your heart begins to burn; when you touch them, your bands are loosed; when you taste them, your eyes are enlightened; when you eat them, your whole soul is strengthened.

*Taken from Gems of Robert Murray McCheyne*