

I Am the Bread of Life

EXODUS 16:4-31 *The Manna for Moses*

Exodus 16:4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. — 13 That evening quail came and covered the camp, and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. 14 When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. 15 When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "It is the bread the LORD has given you to eat. — 31 The people of Israel called the bread manna. It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey.

JOHN 6:10-13 *The Miracle of Multiplication*

John 6:10 Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." There was plenty of grass in that place, and the men sat down, about five thousand of them. 11 Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. 12 When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." 13 So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

JOHN 6:24-51 *The Messianic Message*

John 6:24 Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. 25 When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" 26 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval." — 32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." — 35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." — 38 "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. — 47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." — 54 "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever."

A Supernatural Bakery

▲ *The manna for Moses*

Exodus 16:4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day.

Joshua 5:11 The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. 12 The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate of the produce of Canaan.

▲ *The miracle of multiplication*

John 6:11 Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. 12 When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted." 13 So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

A Sacrificial Body

▲ *Jesus was sent in a body*

John 6:32 Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." — 38 "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

▲ *Jesus would sacrifice his body*

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

A Spiritual Bread

▲ *Jesus is spiritual bread*

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. — 48 I am the bread of life. — 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven.

▲ *Jesus is sustaining bread — bread for earthly living — and bread for eternal life*

John 6:47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life. 49 Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. 50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." — 54 "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him.

▲ *Jesus is satisfying bread*

John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."

▼ *We should fast regularly*

John 6:27 Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

▼ *We should feast regularly*

John 6:57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever."

Consider this feast of faith — Consider the partaking of presence — Consider the memorial meal

Christian Communion

Common Questions

1) Where is the instruction for communion found in the Scriptures?

► At the Last Supper as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels

Matthew 26:26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." 27 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 14:22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body." 23 Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them.

Luke 22:19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." 20 In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.

► In the instructions from the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians

1 Corinthians 11:23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 27 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28 A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. 29 For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31 But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. 32 When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

2) Who should participate in the celebration of communion?

Christian communion is a celebration for believers. 1 Corinthians 11:27-31 expresses the need for spiritual preparation before receiving communion.

3) How often should believers or churches celebrate communion?

The New Testament provides no direct instruction regarding the frequency of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians 11:26 simply says "Whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup..." Weekly communion is not commanded by Scripture, nor is it prohibited. Communion should be celebrated with enough frequency to remind us regularly of the Lord's sacrifice for our sins.

4) What do we eat and drink in communion?

Transubstantiation is the belief that the communion elements, bread and wine, change literally and substantially into the real presence (body and blood) of Christ when consecrated with the words of institution and remain so as received by the partaker, even though they appear as bread and wine. Transubstantiation is the doctrine proclaimed by the Roman Catholic Church.

Consubstantiation is the belief that the bread and wine remain substantially the same while the real presence (body and blood) of Christ accompany the bread and wine when consecrated with the words of institution so that the partaker receives at the same time both bread and wine and body and blood. Consubstantiation is the doctrine proclaimed by some Eastern Orthodox churches along with Anglican/Episcopal churches and some Lutheran churches.

Martin Luther's doctrine of the **Sacramental Union** is the belief that the bread and wine remain substantially the same and at the consecration with the words of institution the body and blood of Christ are united with the bread and wine. Sacramental Union is the doctrine proclaimed by most Lutherans.

Believers in transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and sacramental union all assert that Christ is literally and substantially present in the communion, and therefore the partaker literally eats the body and blood of Christ at communion. These doctrines refer to the **real presence** of Christ in the communion. The real presence doctrines attempt to understand Jesus' teaching about eating his flesh and drinking his blood in John 6:25-58. Because believers in the real presence doctrines understand communion as the only method of eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood, they attribute salvific grace (sacramental status) to communion.

Transignification is the belief that the bread and wine in communion, upon their consecration, change in significance from mere food and drink to spiritually significant elements. That is, Christ's body and blood are not physically present but are indeed spiritually present. Transignification is the doctrine proclaimed by some modernist Anglican/Episcopal churches and by some modernist Roman Catholic theologians.

We believe that communion is a **memorial**, that the bread and wine are symbols of Christ's body and blood, serving as reminders (1 Corinthians 11:24-25; Luke 22:19) of Christ's atoning death. Participation in the Lord's Supper, then, does not impart a saving grace but is an opportunity for reflection, the stirring of our faith, and thanksgiving.

5) How, then, is Christ present in our communion service?

In our communion service, Christ is present spiritually according to his promise in Matthew 18:19-20: "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." As believers, Christ is with us always as he promised in Matthew 28:20: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." And of course, Christ is present in us as the Apostle Paul declared in Colossians 1:27: "To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

6) What is the difference between an ordinance and a sacrament?

A sacrament is a ritual or ceremony which imparts a spiritual provision of some kind. The word "sacrament" literally means to "make" (-ment) "holy" (sacra-). We practice ordinances (baptism and communion), which are religious ceremonies prescribed by the Scripture. In themselves, our ordinances do not impart spiritual provisions. They are Scripturally ordered ceremonies which paint significant physical pictures of spiritual realities.

7) Is communion necessary for salvation or the forgiveness of sin?

No. Because communion is an ordinance and not a sacrament, it is a celebration of a spiritual event that already occurred for us when we trusted the finished work of Jesus at the cross for the forgiveness of our sins.

8) Who may serve communion and when may believers celebrate it?

For us, any believer may serve communion. Believers may celebrate communion at church, in small group settings, or even at home.

9) What does the Assemblies of God say about communion?

Holy Communion. The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements--bread and the fruit of the vine--is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4); a memorial of His suffering and death (1 Corinthians 11:26); and a prophecy of His second coming (1 Corinthians 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers--till He come!

10) What is the background of the Lord's Supper?

Jesus' Last Supper was a celebration of the Passover, a commemoration of the sparing of Israel from the plague upon the firstborn in Exodus 12. The blood of a lamb was to be placed on the door frames of the houses, then the lamb was to be eaten in the house. The LORD declared in Exodus 12:12-14, "On that same night I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn—both men and animals—and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. The blood will be a sign for you on the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt. This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance."

At the Last Supper, Jesus built upon the Passover tradition and instituted a new celebration meal for his followers, the Lord's Supper, which commemorates the establishment of "the new covenant" (1 Corinthians 11:25), a covenant of grace and forgiveness established by His atoning death—the breaking of His body and the shedding of His blood. Jesus charged his followers regarding this commemorative supper, "Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

In communion — we remember — we refocus — we rest and rejoice — we reconnect