

Topic

● I INTRODUCTION

● A OT texts are important to understand the Eucharist

● 1 There was a covenant, a pact between God and Israel that was formed and sealed at Sinai

● a Exodus 24:4*

- (1) And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.
- (2) 5* Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD.
- (3) 6 And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7* Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient."
- (4) 8 And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."

● b Moses read the terms of the covenant

- (1) The people responded "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient."
- (2) An altar was set up
- (3) **A bull was killed and its blood collected**
 - (a) Blood in the Bible always symbolizes life
 - (b) Half the blood was sprinkled on the altar, symbolic of God
 - (c) Half the blood was sprinkled on the people
 - (d) These sprinklings showed that God and the people were now united by the same life

● c A covenant, pact between God and the People, results from the "pouring" of the Blood

- (1) Please note that the covenant is with the tribes as tribes
- (2) Individuals share in the covenant only because they belong to a tribe
- (3) The covenant is with a community, not with individuals

● 2 The Passover Meal also spotlighted blood, blood which marked homes with the sign of life so that the Angel of Death "passed over" them

● a Exodus 12:3*

- (1) "Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth day of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of his father, a lamb for a household. 4* 'And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take it according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb.
- (2) 5* 'Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats.
- (3) 6* 'Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7* 'And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two door posts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.
- (4) 8* 'Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. 9* 'Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire-- its head with its legs and its entrails.
- (5) 10* 'You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire.
- (6) 11* 'And thus you shall eat it: with a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD'S Passover. 12* 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike 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.
- (7) 13* 'Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt

● b Family units were to kill a one year old lamb, a lamb without blemish

- (1) "Unblemished" as applied to Jesus means "no sin"
- (2) They were told not to break any of the lamb's bones

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- (a) **Exodus 12:46***
 - [1] *"In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, nor shall you break one of its bones.*
 - (b) **The Gospel of John used this instruction to interpret why the heart of Jesus was lanced, why His legs were not broken**
 - [1] **John 19:31**
 - [A] *Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the sabbath, especially because that sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him.*
 - [B] *33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.*
 - [C] *35 (He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth.) 36 These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken."*
 - c **People were then to eat a meal with bread that had no yeast**
 - (1) **Exodus 13:3**
 - (a) *And Moses said to the people: "Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this place. No leavened bread shall be eaten.*
 - (2) Originally, this requirement of no yeast flowed from the nature of the celebration
 - (a) It focused upon the start of the new harvest
 - (b) As soon as possible, the first grains were collected and made into bread
 - (c) Since only the new was included, old yeast was not mixed the grain
 - (d) The bread was eaten as a supplication asking God to bless the harvest
 - (3) This practice of excluding yeast fit the Exodus interpretation: people fleeing Egypt had no time to wait for bread to rise
 - d **The blood of the lamb was put on their door posts**
 - (1) Remember that blood symbolized life
 - (2) Therefore, the angel of death "passes over" the homes protected by this sign of life
 - e **It is important to notice the communal aspect of this meal**
 - (1) **The meal can't be eaten alone**
 - (a) It requires a community, a group large enough to consume the entire lamb
 - (b) **By eating the meal at each succeeding Passover, those gathering claim an identity with the People who**
 - [1] Left Egypt
 - [2] **And formed the pact with God at Sinai**
 - (2) The past event, the making of the covenant, is not "recalled;" it is made present now to this community
 - f **In the Blood (Life) of Jesus, a New Covenant was and is formed**
 - (1) **A new union between God and humanity**
 - (2) A union with new life and new promises
- 3 **The Manna that fed Israel during the sojourn in the wilderness was also used to interpret the Lord's Meal**
 - a **Exodus 16:15***
 - (1) *So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat.*
 - b **God provided food through Moses to feed His people while they were in the wasteland**
 - c **Jesus provides the Bread of Life to nourish people in a spiritual wasteland, the world**
 - (1) **John 6:47**

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- (a) *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.*
- (b) *50 But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die.*
- (c) *51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*
- (2) Jesus cited the failure of manna to offer a life that endured
- (3) **And then He promised that there would be eternal life for those**
 - (a) Who believe in Him -- promised in the first part of the sermon
 - [1] John 6:47
 - [A] *I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. 48 I am the bread of life.*
 - (b) Who eat His flesh -- promised in the second half of the sermon
 - [1] John 6:54
 - [A] *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*
- B There is also a NT background to the Eucharist
 - 1 Jesus was constantly sharing meals
 - a **He is shown as doing this most frequently in Luke**
 - (1) One scholar claimed that, in Luke, Jesus is almost always
 - (a) Eating a meal
 - (b) Going to a meal
 - (c) Or coming from one
 - (2) **These scenes were included because they offered insight into the nature of the Church gatherings**
 - b **Table fellowship was sacred in the Near East**
 - (1) **The same source of life was shared**
 - (2) **So the parties shared the same life**
 - (3) **Thereafter, to offend the other is to offend the oneself**
 - 2 The meals that Jesus shared were almost always with the wrong people
 - a Matthew 9:10*
 - (1) *Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. 11* And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"*
 - b Mark 2:16
 - (1) *When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"*
 - c Luke 19:5
 - (1) *"Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. 7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"*
 - d **He eats with**
 - (1) **Crooks**
 - (2) **Prostitutes**
 - (3) **Sinners**
 - (4) **The unclean**
 - e The inclusion of His "disciples" in the selections from Mark and Matthew shows that the Church continued to invite the wrong people to share in the Lord's Meal
 - (1) The arguments in the above quotes are not with Jesus
 - (2) **They are with His "disciples," the Church**
 - 3 One scene is central as a background for the Eucharist: the Feeding of the Multitude-- one of the very few miracles included in each of the four Gospels

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- a One feeding is reported in both Luke and John (5000)
- b But two feedings are recorded in both Mark and Matthew
 - (1) This double feeding is important
 - (a) The 5000 represent a Jewish/religious crowd
 - [1] All the numbers have Jewish significance
 - [A] "Five" and "five thousand"
 - {1} The Jews felt they were a people formed by the Five books of the law, the Torah
 - {2} This crowd is the crowd assembled by the Law
 - [B] "Twelve" baskets
 - {1} The number has a reference to the 12 tribes
 - {2} it shows that Jesus offers far more than is needed to feed all 12 of the tribes of Israel, the whole of the People of Israel
 - {3} He offers enough to feed all nations, all peoples
 - (b) 4000 represent a Greek/pagan crowd
 - [1] Mark 8:1
 - [A] In those days when there was again a great crowd without anything to eat, he called his disciples and said to them, 2 "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat.
 - [B] 3 If I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way--and some of them have come from a great distance."
 - [C] 4 His disciples replied, "How can one feed these people with bread here in the desert?" 5 He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven."
 - [D] 6 Then he ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute; and they distributed them to the crowd.
 - [E] 7 They had also a few small fish; and after blessing them, he ordered that these too should be distributed. 8 They ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.
 - [F] 9 Now there were about four thousand people. And he sent them away.
 - [2] All the numbers have a pagan, a Greek, symbolism
 - [A] "Four thousand"
 - {1} Refers to those gathered by the four winds and/or from the four corners of the world
 - {2} Refers to all the nations, to the Greeks
 - [B] "Seven" is used to signify the number of loaves at hand and the number of baskets of left overs
 - {1} Therefore, the number suggests that Jesus offers a superabundance of love, enough love to more than feed the world
 - {2} It refers to the 7 deacons appointed to meet the needs of the Greek speaking Christians in Acts
 - (2) Jesus was sent to offer Himself to feed the hunger of both
 - (a) Jews and Greeks
 - (b) Catholics and non-Catholics
 - (c) Christians and non-Christians
- c How many does Jesus feed?
 - (1) The answer has an importance for our daily lives -- it is more than an academic question
 - (2) He feeds only the disciples in Matthew, Mark, and Luke
 - (a) He gives the food to the disciples
 - (b) They are to feed each other and all others
 - [1] Many starve to death waiting for God to feed them directly
 - [2] All the time He is offering to feed them through others

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- (c) All the feeding passages in these three Gospels reflects this distinctive way of feeding the crowds
 - [1] Mark
 - [A] Mark 6:41
 - {1} Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people.
 - [B] Mark 8:6
 - {1} Then he ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground; and he took the seven loaves, and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute; and they distributed them to the crowd.
 - [2] Matthew
 - [A] Matthew 14:19
 - {1} Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.
 - [B] Matthew 15:36
 - {1} he took the seven loaves and the fish; and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.
 - [3] Luke
 - [A] Luke 9:16
 - {1} And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.
- (d) Again the communal aspect of the meal is reflected in these stories
 - [1] The people were fed because they were part of a community
 - [2] They needed community, others, to feed them
 - [3] They couldn't be fed, weren't fed, directly by God as individuals
- (3) The understanding of the awesome divinity of Jesus that is reflected throughout the Gospel of John demands that John views all scenes from a very different perspective,
 - (a) John constantly alters stories to reflect the truth that Jesus, and Jesus alone saves us
 - (b) Therefore, Jesus does feed everyone in the crowd in John's sharing of this story
 - (c) John 6:11
 - [1] Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.
 - (d) Jesus saves us alone
 - [1] He does everything alone in this Gospel
 - [2] Including carrying His cross
 - [A] John 19:16
 - {1} Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus; 17 and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha.
 - [B] He does not do this in Mark, Matthew and Luke
 - {1} Mark 15:21
 - They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus.
 - {2} Matthew 27:32
 - As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross.
 - {3} Luke 23:26
 - And when they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, and laid on him the cross, to bear it after Jesus.
 - (e) God needs no help

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- d **The feedings clearly echo the Last Supper as it is reported later in Matthew, Mark, and Luke**
 - (1) The same Greek words are used in both the account of the feedings and the account of the Last Supper
 - (2) And they are used in the same order
 - (3) Matthew 26:26
 - (a) While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."
- 4 The Last Supper, of course, offers the best Scriptural background to the Eucharist
 - a **Was the Last Supper a Passover Meal?**
 - (1) **The answer is "Yes" in Mark, Matthew, and Luke**
 - (a) The account of the Supper in these Gospels is told in a manner that teaches us that Jesus was forming a New and Eternal Covenant
 - (b) **It was a covenant sealed in His gift of Life/Blood to us**
 - [1] Matthew 26:27
 - [A] Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."
 - (c) This presentation of the Last Supper as a Passover Meal explains why many Western Churches, (including the Catholic Church,) use unleavened bread in their liturgical celebrations
 - (d) Jesus used the most common food; its common looks best represents His use of it to remind us that He is present as servant
 - (2) **The answer is "No" in John**
 - (a) The Last Supper was eaten the eve before the Passover
 - [1] John 19:40
 - [A] They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. 41 Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid.
 - [B] 42 And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.
 - (b) **John wants to present Jesus as the Passover Lamb**
 - [1] **His blood spares us from the Angel of Death**
 - [2] **So Jesus was crucified at the time the priests at the Temple began killing the lambs which would be used at the Passover Meals that evening**
 - (c) This presentation of the Last Supper as a regular meal explains why many Eastern Churches (including Catholic) use regular bread with yeast in their liturgical celebrations
 - b **Jesus used the format of a Passover Meal, a Seder Meal**
 - (1) This traditional meal had a ritualistic format with an historical introduction interpreting its courses
 - (2) Unleavened bread was broken and shared at the start
 - (3) **Four cups of wine were spaced throughout the long meal**
 - (a) One was passed before the bread
 - (b) Jesus gave the Eucharistic symbolism to the third of these cups
 - [1] Matthew 26:27
 - [A] Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."
 - (c) This cup was shared after the main course was eaten
 - 5 The words Jesus spoke were stylized quickly into standardized liturgical forms in the Churches as they recalled the Last Supper in their weekly gatherings
 - a **Different geographical areas, of course, standardized these words for their liturgies in slightly different ways**
 - b These forms stressed different aspects of their experiences of Jesus

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- (1) Paul and Luke stressed the presence of Jesus
 - (a) Luke 22:19
 - [1] *Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."*
- (2) Mark and Matthew stressed the absence of Jesus:
 - (a) Mark 14:25
 - [1] *"Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."*
 - (b) We, amateurs, might think Jesus referred to a period of time after Easter
 - (c) Markan scholars believe Jesus was referring to the New Age after the Parousia
- 6 The words Jesus used included
 - a Not "body" but "flesh"
 - (1) The word "body" (as distinct from "Spirit") didn't exist in Aramaic and Hebrew
 - (2) Jesus said "flesh"
 - (a) This word was too harsh for Greek Christians
 - (b) So they softened it to "body"
 - (3) The word, much more graphic in eastern languages, refers not just to a loving memory of Jesus, but to the personal presence of Jesus
 - (4) John's "Bread of Life" Discourse seems to retain the original word Jesus used -- and the shocked reaction Greek Christians had to it
 - (a) John 6:60
 - [1] *On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?"*
 - [2] *61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you?"*
 - [3] *62 What if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! 63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.*
 - [4] *64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him.*
 - [5] *65 He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no-one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."*
 - [6] *66 From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.*
 - [7] *67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve.*
 - [8] *68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."*
 - b "Cup of my blood"
 - (1) A new union was being formed joining God and man
 - (2) This union was to be eternal: the resurrection proves we cannot break it
 - c "Do this"
 - (1) The meal was not to be a one time celebration
 - (2) Jesus clearly intends His followers to continue His action(s), to repeat the meal
- C The early Church understanding and practice can enrich our modern experience of the Eucharist
 - 1 After the resurrection, the Risen Jesus continued to share meals with His disciples
 - a John 21:12*
 - (1) *Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?" --knowing that it was the Lord. 13* Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.*
 - (2) *14* This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.*
 - b Luke 24:30*

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- (1) Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.
- c Luke 24:41*
 - (1) But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?"
 - (2) 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. 43 And He took it and ate in their presence.
- d He continued to celebrate fellowship with them
 - (1) His fellowship with them was not ended by their denial and abandonment of Him
 - (2) Again, it is important to note that all these meals were communal
- 2 The Church continued to celebrate sacred meals after Pentecost
 - a These meals included reminders of what Jesus did at the Last Supper
 - b There were variations in how they celebrated it
 - (1) In some a regular meal was eaten first with the Lord's Supper following
 - (2) In others the Lord's Supper was shared first with a meal following
 - (3) And in still others the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the middle of a meal
- 3 Our first historical account of the Lord's Meal does not come from one of the Gospels but from First Corinthians
 - a 1 Corinthians 10:16*
 - (1) 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? 17* For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.
 - b 1 Corinthians 11:17*
 - (1) Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18* For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.
 - (2) 19* For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.
 - (3) 20* Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21* For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.
 - (4) 22* What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.
 - (5) 23* For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24* and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."
 - (6) 25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." 26* For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.
 - (7) 27* Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28* But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.
 - (8) 29* For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30* For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.
 - c Paul wrote this account about 25 years after Easter
 - (1) He used the Lord's Meal to teach the Church its need for community
 - (2) The Corinthians were breaking into cliques, ignoring each other
 - (3) "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you"
 - (a) Paul uses these words as a technical phrase referring to the official passing on of an important tradition
 - (b) Paul tells us that what he teaches has the authority of Jesus to support it.
 - (4) "Since you come together not for the better but for the worse."
 - (a) Their "Mass" did them more harm than good!

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- (b) **The reason was because a lack of unity was tolerated!**
- (c) That's how essential community was and is
- (5) "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup."
 - (a) **The examination is to be done in order to see if the person is ready to receive the whole Body of Christ**
 - (b) This Body includes the whole Church as well as Jesus
 - (c) 1 Corinthians 10:16
 - [1] Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?
 - [2] 17 "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."
- 4 **The Book of Acts frequently referred to Church meals**
 - a Acts 2:46*
 - (1) So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.
 - (2) The early Christians first went to the Temple
 - (3) **Then they gathered at a home**
 - b Strangely, Acts refers to the meal only as the "breaking of the bread"
 - (1) Acts 2:42*
 - (a) And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers
 - (2) Acts 20:7*
 - (a) Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.
 - (3) Acts 20:11*
 - (a) Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed.
 - (4) Acts 27:35*
 - (a) And when he had said these things, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it he began to eat.
 - c There is an explanation for the lack of reference to the cup:
 - (1) **Wine was a luxury, a rare luxury, for all but the richest people**
 - (2) The household slaves and poorer classes (92% of the people and, probably, of Christians,) could not afford it
 - (3) In their meals many Christian, while including bread, usually could not include wine
- II **THE NT INTERPRETATIONS GIVEN TO THE MEAL**
 - A **Paul saw the Church as receiving the "body" and "blood" of Jesus**
 - 1 "Body," "flesh," referred to that which makes you, you, a specific individual
 - 2 **"Spirit" referred to a person's life force**
 - a So the meal made the very life of Jesus present
 - b It was seen by him as more than just making present the memory of Jesus
 - B **Mark saw the meal as establishing a new unity between God and us**
 - C **Early Christians had a practice of celebrating the Lord's Meal regularly**
 - 1 **They gathered after the Sabbath ended**
 - 2 **They began an all night vigil preparing for the anticipated return of Jesus before the dawn**
 - 3 **After the sunrise, the meal was a joyful and sad substitute celebrating**
 - a **Sadness over the absence of the glorious Jesus**
 - b **Joy over the presence of Jesus through the Sacrament**
 - D **The Church quickly began respecting Jesus as present with them through the meal**

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- 1 Jesus was seen as being here to serve us as indicated by
 - a The breaking of the bread
 - b The passing of the cup
- 2 Respect began turning into worship, a sign of the Church serving Jesus
- 3 The Gospel of John attempted to correct this
 - a John 13:3*
 - (1) Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, 4* rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself.
 - [B] 5* After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.
 - (3) 6* Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" 7* Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this."
 - (4) 8* Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." 9* Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"
 - (5) 10* Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you." 11 For He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."
 - (6) 12* So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13* "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.
 - (7) 14* "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 "For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.
 - (8) 16* "Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17* "If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.
 - b His was the last of the Gospels written
 - c He reflected a clear grasp of the Eucharist as reflected earlier in the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke
 - (1) The second half of His Bread of Life discourse reflected this
 - (a) John 6:48*
 - [1] "I am the bread of life. 49* "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50* "This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die.
 - [2] 51* "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." "
 - [3] 52* The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" 53* Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.
 - [4] 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 food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.
 - [5] 56* "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.
 - [6] 57* "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 "This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."
 - [7] 59* These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. 60* Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"
- (2) Strangely, there are no Eucharistic references included at the Last Supper in the Gospel of John despite the Bread of Life Discourse
- (3) But a new scene, the Washing of Feet, has been added
 - (a) Jesus humiliates Himself to serve us
 - (b) Then He interprets the washing
 - [1] John 13:13

Topic

- [A] "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. 14* "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."
 - [2] The Washing interprets the Meal
 - [A] Our sharing the Bread and the Cup with each other is intended to help us wash each other clean as we first experience Jesus washing us clean
 - [B] Note again how important community is to our understanding of the Eucharist
 - [C] There is no individualism, no "I receive Jesus" in the understanding of the Early Church
- E The Church began reserving, keeping, some bread left from the meal
 - 1 Not to honor or worship Him
 - 2 But to have Him available for service -- to take and feed Him to the sick
- III WHAT HAPPENS?
 - A The bread and wine become Jesus
 - B When does the change occur?
 - 1 In the Western Church during the words of consecration
 - a "This is my body" over the bread
 - b "This is the cup of my blood..." over the wine
 - 2 In the Eastern Church
 - a At the "epiclesis"
 - b At the calling down of the Spirit
 - C Today, both prayers are usually said in Churches in both the East and the West
 - D Why does the change occur?
 - 1 "Transubstantiation" is a technical term from Middle Age Scholastic philosophy used to explain the mystery
 - a The bread still looks like and tastes like bread
 - (1) It retains the "accidental" qualities of bread
 - (2) But the "substance" now becomes Jesus
 - (a) It is far more than it could ever be on its own
 - (b) In a similar way, we who are filled with His Spirit become far more than we could ever be
 - b The basis of Paul's argument with the Corinthians is that Jesus is present in and through the meal
 - c Therefore, there is more than a symbolic change
 - (1) The outward signs remain: the breaking of the bread and the passing of the cup
 - (2) The "invisible reality" becomes Jesus serving us to make us His one Body filled with His one Spirit
 - 2 The Sacrament is not magic
 - a No sacrament is magic,
 - (1) We do not control God
 - (2) We do not force God to act in response to our sacramental rites
 - b Jesus is not present because the priest says the words
 - 3 Rather, Jesus is present because this is what Jesus told the Church to do, ordered the Church to do
 - a His invisible reality demands a visible sign
 - (1) He must be present to us: it is His mission from the Father
 - (2) He must feed and unite with us by serving us equally with His love
 - b The Father gives us the Son because
 - (1) He needs us to know that He loves us as we are
 - (2) He needs us to be united with each other by this love

Topic

- c Jesus gives us the Church for the same reasons
- d And the Church offers us all the Seven Sacraments for the same reasons
- 4 So the priest says the words in obedience to the wishes of Jesus
- 5 The bread and wine are changed because we are obedient to Jesus
- E What is the relationship between the Sacrament and the Mass?
 - 1 They are not identical
 - a A person can receive the **Sacrament** and not be at **Mass**
 - b A person can be at **Mass** and not receive the **Sacrament**
 - 2 But there is an obvious connection between the two
 - a The **Sacrament** has its origins in the **Mass**
 - b And the ultimate purpose of the **Mass** is for us to experience Jesus through the **Sacrament, the Word, and the community**
 - 3 What happens at **Mass**?
 - a The mystery as experienced in the Western Church
 - (1) The Last Supper is re-celebrated
 - (2) We participate in the covenant of the Meal
 - (3) We bring Jesus into our time and space: here and now
 - b The mystery as experienced in the Eastern Church
 - (1) Jesus unites us to Himself
 - (2) He brings us into heavenly time!
 - (a) We share in the eternal worship of Heaven!
 - (b) The worship prayers used at Eastern liturgies cite many prayers included in Revelation describing Heavenly worship
 - (3) Christians are taken out of time to experience eternity
 - c Both experiences of the mystery are valid!
- E The Sign of this Sacrament is the key to interpreting it
 - 1 Remember that the sign begins not with the bread, but with the breaking of bread
 - a To experience the symbolism, we should use bread, not an esoteric looking "host"
 - b Jesus is experienced in and through the most **common signs: the members of the Church**
 - c The breaking is central to experiencing the sign
 - (1) The bread is not present to be appreciated or worshipped
 - (2) Jesus is present to break Himself on our behalf
 - (3) So we are challenged to allow Jesus to feed us, to serve us
 - (4) Notice Jesus said
 - (a) Not "make this"
 - (b) But "do this"
 - [1] Luke 22:19
 - [A] Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
 - [B] 20 And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."
 - 2 Please continue to remember that the sign also includes not the cup, but the passing, the sharing, of the cup
 - a We often forget that wine is part of the sign
 - (1) Jesus is present for more than assuaging the hunger of our hearts
 - (2) He wants us to know joy!, Superabundant joy!
 - (a) His first miracle in John teaches us this

Topic

- [1] John 2:1
 - [A] On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. 2*
 - [B] 3* When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." 4*
 - [C] 5* His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6* Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.
 - [D] 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. 8*
 - [E] 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside
 - [F] 10* and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."
- (b) **Jesus is at a wedding feast**
 - [1] The wine runs out
 - [2] He has stone water jars filled with water which he changes into wine
 - [3] He made between 120 and 180 gallons of wine -- a tremendous super-abundance
- (c) The symbolism of this miracle, this "sign," is important
 - [1] Water could only wash people clean but they soon became isolated anew -- that's all the OT Law could accomplish
 - [2] **Jesus is wine, joy, an ocean of joy**
 - [A] **He quenches the thirst of our souls with a life that is joy**
 - [B] **We need never thirst again**
- (3) Please note the word we use for Mass is "celebrate"
- (4) **God wants us to have joy**
 - (a) Spiritual joy
 - (b) Not a bodily feeling that cannot endure
 - (c) But a conclusion of the mind that can remain
 - [1] Based on the Good News
 - [2] Founded on the Good News that Jesus loves us!
- b Again, the passing of the cup, not the wine, is the sign of the Sacrament
 - (1) We are told that they all drank
 - (a) Mark 14:23
 - [1] Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many
 - (2) **The Cup signifies how He saves and unites us**
 - (a) **By giving His life, His Blood for us and for all others**
 - (b) **He offers it as a gift that endures**
- 3 Either sign alone is sufficient to experience Jesus
 - a **The bread denoting the Flesh challenges us to recall that Jesus Himself is loving us**
 - b **The wine denoting the Blood challenges us to recall that we receive the very Spirit of Jesus**
 - c The glorified Jesus is one
 - (1) Where His flesh is, there He is
 - (2) Where His blood is, there He is
- IV THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SACRAMENT
 - A Many have a shallow understanding and interpretation of the Eucharist

Topic

- 1 They believe that through the **Sacrament** we are **one with Jesus: this is true**
- 2 But we are also one with Jesus **in Baptism!**
 - a He offers us in Baptism the fullness of His Spirit
 - b He has no more to offer us in the **Eucharist**
- B **The correct interpretation challenges us to a much richer grasp**
 - 1 We **receive the "Body of Christ"**
 - 2 The term, **"Body of Christ"** is our key to unlocking the riches of the Sacrament
 - a The term refers to the **glorified Body of the Risen Jesus**
 - b But it also refers to His **Church**
 - (1) Each of us and all of us
 - (2) Alone and together!
 - c Paul uses both meanings for the **same** term in the **same** letter: First Corinthians
 - (1) **The glorified Body:**
 - (a) **1-Corinthians 10:16***
 - [1] **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?**
 - (2) The Church as a whole:
 - (a) **1 Corinthians 12:27***
 - [1] **Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.**
 - (3) Individual Christians:
 - (a) **1 Corinthians 6:15***
 - [1] **Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!**
 - [2] **19* Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20* For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.**
 - 3 These scriptural references explain the significance of the Eucharist
 - a They explain why this is the final Sacrament of initiation
 - (1) **Baptism brings us into the Church**
 - (2) **Confirmation offers us a share in the Church's mission**
 - (3) **The Eucharist makes us one with the entire Church**
 - b The social dimension is integral to the Sacrament
 - (1) We are **challenged to receive all Christians into our hearts**
 - (2) We are challenged to make their concerns as intimate to us as are our own
 - c This richer understanding of the meaning of Communion is disturbing to modern Americans
 - (1) It describes a reality we don't want in our society today
 - (2) We are increasingly individualistic
 - 4 Therefore, our reality as we receive Communion is a sad distortion of the Sacrament
 - a **Lord I want your head, your heart and this arm**
 - b **But I don't like that leg or your neck**
 - (1) Jesus must be one!
 - (2) **Rejecting part of Him is rejecting all of Him**
 - (a) Before his conversion, Paul, ("Saul,") was persecuting the Church
 - (b) **But Jesus asked**
 - [1] **Acts 9:4***
 - [A] **Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"**

Topic

- C Our Christian gathering is a Communal banquet,
 - 1 We do not eat alone at individual cafeteria tables
 - 2 Rather we celebrate as a community, not as individuals accidentally sharing the same time and place
- V CONCLUDING POINTS
 - A Christians Churches have either Open or Closed Communion
 - 1 Both Communions teach us religious truths
 - a Churches enjoy the right to offer their own interpretation to the sign
 - b Both sides should appreciate the understanding of the other side while continuing to offer their own views
 - 2 Open Communion offers a teaching
 - a All present at the service are invited to share regardless of their backgrounds
 - b The invitation signifies the desire of Jesus to feed all hearts
 - 3 Closed Communion also offers a teaching
 - a The invitation to share is limited to members of the Church
 - b The invitation and Communion signify the unity of those sharing
 - (1) We are all united as Christians by Jesus
 - (2) But we are not living this unity
 - c It is misleading to symbolize by an action something not lived in practice
 - d The Early Church had closed Communion within 70 years after Easter
 - (1) The Didache proves this
 - (2) It employs a mysterious quote of Jesus to justify closing Communion
 - (a) Matthew 7:6*
 - [1] "Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.
 - B How often should Communion be received?
 - 1 The old rule was once daily
 - a It was intended to correct the superstitious multiplication of Communion during the Middle Ages
 - b Several daily Communions were felt to multiply holiness
 - 2 The new rule is: as often as there is a good reason to be at Mass or to receive Communion a person should receive
 - C Remember: the Invisible Reality behind the visible sign of the Sacrament is Jesus feeding the hunger in our hearts
 - 1 He feeds each of us and all of us
 - 2 He feeds those who don't share in Communion and those who are not even present at it
 - 3 He feeds us now and always
 - 4 He offers us Himself and all the Church to feed us
 - 5 Our responsibility is to accept this feeding now and always
 - 6 Receiving Communion allows us the opportunity to accept this feeding with our whole persons, bodies, souls, and spirits