

# WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

## SHORTER CATECHISM

### LESSON # 47 (Q4LES8) - THE LORD'S SUPPER

1. **Prayer**

2. **Bible reading:**

3.

4. **Luke 22: 1 - 23**

3. **Review:** In our last lesson, we discussed the sacrament of baptism. Baptism is the first of Christ's New Testament sacraments. The representation, or outward sign of baptism is the washing with water, representing our acceptance of Christ as our savior. The inward, or "sealed and applied" part of the sacrament, is our ingrafting into Christ, partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's. We learned that baptism is to be applied only to members of His church, and that those who have not professed their faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are not to be baptized. Because children are a part of God's covenant, the children of believers are to be baptized.

4. **Introduction:** In this lesson, we will discuss SC questions 96 and 97. These two questions deal with the New Testament sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Question 96 defines Lord's supper. Question 97 tell us what is required of us when we participate in this sacrament. There is a whole lot more to meaning and administration of this sacrament than I expected.

5. **Questions & Answers:**

**Question 96:** What is the Lord's supper?

**Answer:** The Lord's supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed fourth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.

**Question 97:** What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?

**Answer:** It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their ability to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience, less, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgement to themselves.

## 6. The SC, LC, and WCF

- a. The WCF has an entire chapter, chapter 29, devoted to the Lord's supper. and we will use it in our discussion. The SC covers the Lord's supper in two questions, q96 and q97. The LC covers this subject in eight questions, q168 through q175. The material covered in the SC is in the LC, and a whole lot more, much of which we will cover. The LC contains two additional questions, q176 and q177, which discuss how the New Testament sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, agree, and how they differ.

## 7. What is the Lord's supper?

- a. The Lord's supper is sometimes said to be the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament sacrament of the Passover. Indeed, the first Lord's supper was at the time of Passover. There are similarities, in that the Jewish Passover celebrates the protection of the Jewish Children by the sacrifice and blood of a lamb, and the lamb is to be eaten. **(Luke 22: 1 – 23)** However, I found no scripture proofs for this, and the connection is not mentioned in any of my sources.
- b. The Lord's supper is a sacrament. Remember what a sacrament is? SC q92 tells us that a sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers.
- c. The Lord's supper is the second, and last of Christ's sacraments. The WCF, c29p1 says: *"Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night wherein He was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of His body and blood, called the Lord's supper, to be observed in His Church, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death; the sealing of all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His mystical body."*
- d. TV asks: *"What is the Lord's supper as to the nature of it?"* (Q96q2) I like this!

His answer: *“The Lord’s supper, as to the nature of it, is a sacrament and seal of the covenant of grace, wherein the mutual obligations, both on God’s part and on our part, which are made in baptism, are renewed and confirmed.”*

- e. The WCF says, in part, in c29p2: *“In this sacrament, Christ is not offered up to His Father; nor any real sacrifice made at all for remission of sins of the quick and the dead; but only a commemoration of that one offering up of Himself, by Himself, upon the cross, once for all: and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise unto God for the same:.....”* (Luke 22: 19 – 20 <sup>(19)</sup>*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.* <sup>(20)</sup>*Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”*)

So we are looking at a public renewal of our commitment to Christ, and of Christ’s commitment to our salvation; a commemoration of Christ’s sacrifice for us

Remember SCq25? (How doth Christ exercise the office of a priest?) Christ is our priest, and “Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in his making continual intercession for us.”

## 8. How is this sacrament represented, or signified?

- a. The representation is the breaking of the bread and distributing of the wine by the ministers of his Word, and the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine by his faithful.
- b. SC q96 says in part: *“The Lord’s supper is a sacrament wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ’s appointment....”* LC q168 has much the same words.
- c. So this sacrament not only consists of the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine, but the giving of these elements in the manner appointed by Christ, are also an important part of this sacrament.
- d. How has Christ appointed bread and wine to be given and received? LC q169 says: *“Christ hath appointed the ministers of his word, in the administration of this sacrament of the Lord’s supper, to set apart the bread and wine from common use, by the word of institution, thanksgiving, and prayer; to take and break the bread, and to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants: who are, by the same appointment, to take and eat the bread, and to drink the wine, in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and his blood shed, for them.”*

Many parts, the minister, thanksgiving, prayer, breaking of the bread, the eating of bread and drinking of wine are part of Christ's appointment. **(Mark 14:22 – 24** *“(22) 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. (23) And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. (24) And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.”)*

e. What does the breaking of the bread, and the drinking of the wine signify?

- The breaking of the bread signifies the breaking of Christ's body
- The wine signifies His blood shed for us.

The WCF, c29p5 states: *“The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to Him crucified, as that, truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; albeit in substance and nature they remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.”*

f. The SC says: *“not in a corporal or carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood.”*

This is referring to the bread and wine being representative of Christ's body and blood, and is directly in reply to the Catholic position. The WCF c29p7 says: *“Worth receivers outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament, do then also, inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally or corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then, not corporally or carnally, in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet, as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.*

My New Webster's 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dictionary says of carnal and corporal:

Carnal: “in or of the flesh; bodily; material or worldly, not spiritual.”

Corporal: “belonging or related to the body; physical, as in “corporal punishment.”; material, not spiritual.”

**1 Cor 10:16** says: ***“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 body of Christ?”***

Communion comes from communication, and means fellowship, intercourse between two or more persons.

Quite a lot of space is devoted to this discussion in the WCF and LC, and even TV spends most of his time refuting that the bread and wine are actually Christ's body and blood.

- g. What does the believer get out of participating in the Lord's supper?

Spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. The frequency with which the Lord's supper is performed varies, but if it is participated in properly, is a tool to help us grow spiritually, to help the process of sanctification. LC q170 says in part: *"so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal and carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really, while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death."*

## 9. The proper participation of the believer in the Lord's supper.

- a. To get the most out of this sacrament of Christ, it must be participated in properly. The SC q97 says we must examine ourselves of our ability to discern the Lord's body, of our faith to feed upon Him, and of our repentance, love and new obedience. The LC q 171 says: *"They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer."*
- b. So the proper participation in the Lord's supper requires more than showing up for the service and participating in the event. It is a chance to increase our faith by the elements mentioned above. Let's look at some of those listed in LC q171.
- Examine ourselves.
    1. of their being in Christ
    2. of their sins and wants
    3. of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith repentance
    4. love of God and the brethren
    5. charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong
    6. of their desires after Christ
    7. of their new obedience

**1 Cor 11:28** says, while discussing the Lord's supper: ***"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."***

- By renewing the exercise of these graces. By continuing to participate in this sacrament, we continue to examine ourselves in the items listed above, and our growth in grace continues. **(1 Cor 11: 25 – 26 <sup>(25)</sup> *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.<sup>(26)</sup> For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.")*

- By serious meditation. Pretty self explanatory. (same as above, emphasis on “remembrance”).
  - By fervent prayer. (2 Chron 30: 18 – 19 <sup>“(18)</sup> *For a multitude of the people, even of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover, otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one <sup>(19)</sup>That prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.*
- c. SC q97 ends with “less, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgement to themselves.”” What are we talking about here?

The WCF, c29p8 has this to say: *“Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament: yet they receive not the thing signified thereby, but by their unworthy coming thereunto are guilty of the body and blood or the Lord to their own damnation. **Wherefore, all ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Him, so are they unworthy of the Lord’s table; and cannot, without great sin against Christ while they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereunto.**”*

Remember way back in SCq19 (What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?). The answer starts “All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God,” Until you profess your faith in Christ, you still have no communion with God, and are unfit to even be in His presence.

- d. LC q172 and 173 discuss in detail who should or should not participate. (1 Cor 11:27 *“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.”*)

## 10. Baptism and the Lord’s supper.

- a. In what ways do baptism and the Lord’s supper agree? (LC q176)
- The author of both is God
  - The spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits
  - Both are seals of the same covenant
  - Both are to be dispensed by ministers of the Gospel and by none other

- Both are to be continued in the church of Christ until his second coming

b. In what ways do baptism and the Lord's supper differ? (LC q177)

- Baptism is to be administered only once.
- The Lord's supper is to be administered often.
- Baptism uses water as the sign and seal, of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ.
- The Lord's supper uses bread and wine to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul.

**11. Summary:** The Lord's supper is the second of Christ's ordinances. It is a sacrament and seal of the covenant of grace, wherein the mutual obligations, both on God's part and on our part, which are made in baptism, are renewed and confirmed. It is to be administered in accordance with Christ's instructions, by the breaking, giving and receiving of bread and wine, which represent Christ's body and blood. It provides us with spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. Only those who profess their faith in Jesus Christ should come to the Lord's table.