

# Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Matt 3:13-17; 28:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-29

SS Lesson for 02/08/2026

**Devotional Scriptures:** Acts 8:26-39

## OUTLINE

### LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

*Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

*Key Verse: Matt 28:19-20*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### BAPTISM OF JESUS (MATT 3:13-17)

*Baptism of Jesus by John (13-15)*

Baptized by John but was before and greater than John (John 1:14-16)

Baptized by John as the Lamb of God (John 1:29-34)

Baptized by John but Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:6-9)

*Baptism of Jesus confirmed by Holy Spirit (16)*

Confirmed by the Holy Spirit with wisdom and power (Isa 11:1-2)

Confirmed by the Holy Spirit to provide justice (Isa 42:1-3)

Confirmed by the Holy Spirit to provide the good news of salvation (Isa 61:1-3)

*Baptism of Jesus confirmed by God (17)*

Confirmed by God who loves Him and is pleased with Him (Matt 17:2-5)

Confirmed by God with honor and glory (2 Peter 1:16-17)

Confirmed by God by glorifying His name (John 12:26-28)

#### COMMANDMENT FOR BAPTISM (MATT 28:19-20)

*Commanded as part of making disciples (19)*

Making disciples through preaching the gospel (Mark 16:15)

Making disciples through the work of the Church (Eph 4:11-13)

Making disciples that put into practice biblical learning (Phil 4:9)

Making disciples through godly admonishing and teaching (Col 1:28)

*Commanded as part of godly teaching (20)*

Teaching with wisdom (Col 3:16)

Teaching with ability from God (1 Tim 3:2)

Teaching sound doctrine (Titus 2:1)

Teaching thought God's anointing (1 John 2:27)

#### PRACTICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (1 COR 11:23-29)

*Communion of the bread (23-24)*

Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:48-51)

Jesus is the Word of life (1 John 1:1-2)

The Word of life became flesh in the form of Jesus (John 1:14)

Jesus is the spiritual food without cost (Isa 55:1-2)

*Communion of the cup (blood) (25-26)*

The blood for the forgiveness of sins (Lev 17:11)

The blood that is powerful enough to cover ALL sins (Heb 9:13-15)

The shedding of blood that provides forgiveness (Heb 9:22)

*Required motives for communion (27)*

Motive of belief in Jesus (John 6:64)

Motives that must be godly (1 Cor 10:21)

Motives that are pure and full of godly light (1 Cor 4:5)

*Required examinations for communion (28-29)*

Examination and testing by God (Ps 26:2)

Examination giving careful thought to what we are doing (Hag 1:5)

Examination by verifying our faith (2 Cor 13:5)

Examination resulting in peace and clear conscience (I John 3:19-20)

### CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM THOMAS CONSTABLE

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

# Lesson Background and Key Verse

## Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

From its beginning, the church has observed two practices that mark its identity: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both practices have antecedents in the first-century Jewish world. Christian baptism has its roots in ritual cleansing practiced by Jews, a tradition that predates the first-century church. The Law of Moses prescribes cleansing with water for religious and physical purification (examples: Leviticus 14:8-9; 15:5-13; 17:15). But the Old Testament prophets promised a new baptism, a cleansing from impurity and sin (Ezekiel 36:25; Zechariah 13:1). In the Second Temple period, washings for purification were a part of Jewish life (compare Mark 7:1-4; John 2:6; etc.). During this time, it is thought that converts to Judaism underwent a "proselyte baptism" for joining the Jewish community. Ritual washing was necessary because Gentiles were considered unclean; rules prevented them from entering the inner courts of the temple or participating with Jews in local worship. The second practice in today's lesson is the Lord's Supper, also called Communion. The Gospels record the events of a "Last Supper"—the meal Jesus shared with his disciples the night before his crucifixion (Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-23; John 13:1-30). Although the apostle Paul was not present at that dinner, he shares an account of the same meal (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). Readers are meant to connect the Last Supper to the observance of Passover, a remembrance of God's liberation of the ancient Hebrews from their enslavement in Egypt (see Exodus 12:2-11; Deuteronomy 16:1-8). Celebrants would eat lamb, bitter herbs, and bread without yeast (Numbers 9:11). Likewise, the New Testament describes Christ as a Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7; compare John 1:29; Revelation 5:6). Thus, this meal and Christ's sacrifice on the cross serve as the fulfillment of Passover: through the giving of Jesus' body and blood, freedom and forgiveness of sins are available to all

## Key Verse: Matt 28:19-20

*19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

## Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

### Baptism of Jesus (Matt 3:13-17)

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

14 And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

### Baptism of Jesus by John (13-15)

*Baptized by John but was before and greater than John (John 1:14-16)*

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" 16 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.

### *Baptized by John as the Lamb of God (John 1:29-34)*

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.' 31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. 33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

### *Baptized by John but Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:6-9)*

6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." 9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

## **Baptism of Jesus confirmed by Holy Spirit (16)**

### *Confirmed by the Holy Spirit with wisdom and power (Isa 11:1-2)*

1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him, the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord

### *Confirmed by the Holy Spirit to provide justice (Isa 42:1-3)*

1 "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. 2 He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. 3 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice

### *Confirmed by the Holy Spirit to provide the good news of salvation (Isa 61:1-3)*

61 The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, 3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion, to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

## **Baptism of Jesus confirmed by God (17)**

### *Confirmed by God who loves Him and is pleased with Him (Matt 17:2-5)*

2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. 3 Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. 4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." 5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

### *Confirmed by God with honor and glory (2 Peter 1:16-17)*

16 We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

*Confirmed by God by glorifying His name (John 12:26-28)*

26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. 27 "Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."

### **Commandment for Baptism (Matt 28:19-20)**

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,  
20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

#### **Commanded as part of making disciples (19)**

*Making disciples through preaching the gospel (Mark 16:15)*

15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

*Making disciples through the work of the Church (Eph 4:11-13)*

11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

*Making disciples that put into practice biblical learning (Phil 4:9)*

9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

*Making disciples through godly admonishing and teaching (Col 1:28)*

28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.

#### **Commanded as part of godly teaching (20)**

*Teaching with wisdom (Col 3:16)*

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

*Teaching with ability from God (1 Tim 3:2)*

2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

*Teaching sound doctrine (Titus 2:1)*

1 You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

*Teaching thought God's anointing (1 John 2:27)*

7 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him.

## **Practice of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 11:23-29)**

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."  
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.  
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.  
29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

### **Communion of the bread (23-24)**

#### *Jesus is the bread of life (John 6:48-51)*

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."

#### *Jesus is the Word of life (1 John 1:1-2)*

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

#### *The Word of life became flesh in the form of Jesus (John 1:14)*

14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

#### *Jesus is the spiritual food without cost (Isa 55:1-2)*

1 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. 2 Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.

### **Communion of the cup (blood) (25-26)**

#### *The blood for the forgiveness of sins (Lev 17:11)*

11 For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

#### *The blood that is powerful enough to cover ALL sins (Heb 9:13-15)*

13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! 15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

### *The shedding of blood that provides forgiveness (Heb 9:22)*

22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

## **Required motives for communion (27)**

### *Motive of belief in Jesus (John 6:64)*

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.

### *Motives that must be godly (1 Cor 10:21)*

21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

### *Motives that are pure and full of godly light (1 Cor 4:5)*

5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

## **Required examinations for communion (28-29)**

### *Examination and testing by God (Ps 26:2)*

2 Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind;

### *Examination giving careful thought to what we are doing (Hag 1:5)*

5 Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways.

### *Examination by verifying our faith (2 Cor 13:5)*

5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you, unless, of course, you fail the test?

### *Examination resulting in peace and clear conscience (1 John 3:19-20)*

19 This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence 20 whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### **Commentary Thoughts from Thomas Constable**

#### **Verse 17**

Most of the Corinthians had been following Paul's instructions regarding women's head-coverings so he commended them (1 Corinthians 11:2), but he could not approve their practice at the Lord's Supper. They needed to make some major changes there. What they were doing cut at the heart of both the gospel and the church. This is the one certain situation in the Corinthian church that Paul addressed in chapters 7-16 that the Corinthians themselves had not asked him about. He wrote that he had heard about it (1 Corinthians 11:18).

By way of background, we need to remember that in antiquity meals typically accompanied public worship in the early church, in Judaism, and in the pagan world. The early Christians observed the Lord's Supper as part of such a meal, often called the love feast. Paul's concern was that the love feast had become an occasion, not of love for fellow believers, but of selfishness.

### **Verse 18**

"In the first place" evidently refers to all that follows in 1 Corinthians 11:18-34. Paul decided to wait to deal with other similar matters until he arrived in Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:34).

The context of the occasion in view was the assembling of the whole church family (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:23). When Paul later wrote his epistle to the Romans from Corinth, the Corinthian church was meeting in the home of Gaius (Romans 16:23). If there were several house-churches in Corinth at this time, probably all of them were guilty of this abuse.

The divisions (Gr. schismata) to which Paul referred here were social groupings within the church, not differences involving loyalty to leaders (1 Corinthians 1:12).

Evidently those who had reported this abuse in the Corinthian church to Paul had given him much detail about what was happening. Paul said he believed enough of this to conclude that there was a serious problem.

### **Verse 19**

Divisions or factions (Gr. hairesis) of this type have a positive side. They clarify whom God approves as faithful and trustworthy and who are not (cf. Matthew 10:34-37; Matthew 18:7; Matthew 24:9-13). God's approval (Gr. dokimoi) contrasts with what Paul had written earlier about being disapproved (disqualified, adokimos; 1 Corinthians 9:27) by God.

### **Verse 20**

In the Christian church's early years the Lord's Supper occupied a more central position in the life of local assemblies than it does in most churches today. The early believers often celebrated it daily or weekly (cf. Acts 2:42-46; Acts 20:7). However, it was just as impossible to observe this feast properly in an atmosphere of social discrimination as it was to do so while also attending feasts that honored idols (1 Corinthians 10:21).

### **Verse 21**

The Lord's Supper was usually part of a meal the Christians shared together, the so-called "love feast." In Corinth instead of sharing their food and drinks, each family was bringing its own and eating what it had brought. The result was that the rich had plenty but the poor had little and suffered embarrassment as well. This was hardly a picture of Christian love and unity (cf. Acts 2:44-46; Acts 4:32; Acts 4:34-35). Furthermore some with plenty of wine to drink were evidently drinking too heavily. They were eating their own private meals rather than sharing a meal consecrated to the Lord.

### **Verse 22**

This verse contains some of the apostle's most critical statements in this epistle. If his original readers chose to behave in such a selfish way, they should stay home and eat rather than humiliating their less fortunate brethren. Such conduct showed disrespect for the church as the temple of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:17).

"The early Church was the one place in all the ancient world where the barriers which divided the world were down. The ancient world was very rigidly divided; there were the free men and the slaves; there were the Greeks and the barbarians-the people who did not speak Greek; there were the Jews and the Gentiles; there were the Roman citizens and the lesser breeds without the law; there were the cultured and the ignorant.

The Church was the one place where all men could and did come together. . . . A Church where social and class distinctions exist is no true Church at all. A real Church is a body of men and women united to each other because all are united to Christ.

"A Church is not true Church where the art of sharing is forgotten." [Note: Barclay, The Letters . . . , pp. 112-13.]

### **Verse 23**

What Paul taught here came ultimately from the Lord Jesus Himself. This reminder stresses the importance of this revelation.

"The verbs 'received' and 'passed on,' which occur again in combination in 1 Corinthians 15:3, are technical terms from Paul's Jewish heritage for the transmission of religious instruction. His present concern is to establish that the tradition about the Supper they had received from him came from Jesus himself: 'I received [it] from the Lord.'" [Note: Fee, The First . . . , p. 548.]

The terminology used here does not require us to understand that the Lord Jesus communicated this information to Paul personally. Paul's wording suggests that he may have been repeating exactly what others had taught him. This is not a verbatim quotation from one of the Gospel accounts. [Note: See David Lincicum, "Paul and the Testimonia: Quo Vademus?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51:2 (June 2008):297-308.]

Paul described the night Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper as the night in which He was betrayed. This draws attention to the Savior's great love for His own. The Lord was graciously providing for His disciples when one of them was plotting to do away with Him.

There was an even more serious dimension to this problem. The Corinthians were sinning against the Lord as well as one another.

#### **Verse 24**

The Greek word eucharisteo, "to give thanks," accounts for the fact that another name for the Lord's Supper is the Eucharist. Likewise some Christians call it "the breaking of bread" because Jesus broke the bread, as Paul stated here.

There have been various interpretations of what Jesus meant when He said, "This is my body." There are four main views. Roman Catholics take it as a literal statement meaning the bread really becomes the body of Christ and the contents of the cup become the blood of Christ. They believe this is true when duly authorized representatives of the church conduct the service properly. This is the transubstantiation view. Adherents believe God transfers the body and blood of Christ into the substance of the elements. The bread and wine really become the physical body and blood of Christ.

A second view is not quite so literal. It is the consubstantiation view and, as the word implies, its advocates see the body and blood of Christ as present "in, with, and under" the elements. Christ is "really" present, though not physically present, in this Lutheran view.

The third major view is the spiritual presence view that Presbyterians and some other followers of Calvin hold. For them the spiritual presence of Christ is in the elements and, as in the former views, God ministers grace to the communicant in a concrete way through participation.

The fourth view is the memorial view. Advocates believe that when Jesus said, "This is my body," he meant, "This represents my body." In other words, they understand His statement as completely metaphorical. They view the elements as pictures or emblems of the body and blood of Christ. In contrast to the preceding views this one does not see Christ present in any special sense in the elements. Ulrich Zwingli, the Swiss reformer, promoted this view. Today most of the churches from the Anabaptist branch of Protestantism (i.e., Baptists, Methodists, independent Bible churches, et al.) follow this interpretation. [Note: For more information on these views, see articles on the Lord's Supper and synonymous terms in Bible encyclopedias.] As the following quotation clarifies, this view expresses how Jesus' Jewish disciples probably first understood "This is my body (and blood)."

"The identification of the bread with the body is semitic imagery in its heightened form. As in all such identifications, he means 'this signifies/represents my body.' It lies quite beyond both Jesus' intent and the framework within which he and the disciples lived to imagine that some actual change took place, or was intended to take place, in the bread itself. Such a view could only have arisen in the church at a much later stage when Greek modes of thinking had rather thoroughly replaced semitic ones." [Note: Fee, *The First . . .*, p. 550.]

Jesus invited his disciples to take the bread that represented His body. He thus gave them a share in His body and invited them to participate in the meaning and benefits of His death. His body was "for" them in a double sense. It was what secured atonement on their behalf (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3; Romans 5:6; Romans 5:8), and it was a body offered in their place (e.g., Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

The Lord's request that His disciples remember Him by partaking of bread and the fruit of the vine is rich with significance. Many followers remember their leaders by erecting stone monuments to their memories and making pilgrimages to these sites. In contrast the Lord Jesus made remembering Him easy yet profound. Eating the elements helps us appreciate the fact that Christ is really within us, and eating together reminds us of our unity with other believers in Christ's body, the church.

Remembering in biblical terminology does not mean just calling to memory. It includes realizing what the event remembered involved (cf. Exodus 13:3; Exodus 20:8; Deuteronomy 5:15; Deuteronomy 7:18; et al.). The Lord's Supper is not just something Christians do to bring the memory of Jesus back into fresh view, though it does that too. It is a memorial of the salvation that He accomplished by His death and resurrection. 1 Corinthians 11:24 contains the Lord's command to observe the Eucharist as do the Gospel accounts of the institution of this ordinance.

[Note: For further study of the ordinances, see Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, pp. 421-27, or any of the standard theologies.] It is impossible to be an obedient Christian without observing the Lord's Supper.

Some Christian groups refer to the Lord's Supper as one of the "sacraments." They mean the elements minister grace to the participant in a more direct and physical way than those who speak of it as an "ordinance," assuming they are using these terms properly. An ordinance or sacrament is a rite the Lord commanded His followers to observe.

Most Protestants believe there are two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper. A few Protestant groups include foot washing as an ordinance on the basis of John 13:12-17 (e.g., the Grace Brethren, some Mennonites, et al.).

### **Verse 25**

As Jesus had taken the bread and given thanks for it, so He also took the cup and gave thanks for it (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20).

When Jesus shed His blood on Calvary, that blood ratified (gave formal sanction to) the New Covenant that Jeremiah had predicted (Jeremiah 31:31-34, cf. Exodus 24:8). The New Covenant replaced the old Mosaic Covenant (Hebrews 8:8-13; Hebrews 9:18-28). Even though the Jews will be the major beneficiaries of the benefits of this covenant in the Millennium, all believers began to benefit from the death of Christ when He died. [Note: See Rodney J. Decker, "The Church's Relationship to the New Covenant," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 152:607 (July-September 1995):290-305.]

This arrangement resembles one that is possible to set up in a Charitable Lead Unit Trust under the Internal Revenue Code of the United States. Suppose there was a vastly wealthy and generous philanthropist of the magnitude of a John D. Rockefeller or Bill Gates. As he prepared his will he bequeathed millions of dollars to various charitable causes that would benefit millions of people all over the world when he died. He also wrote into his will that when his only son reached the age of 21 he would inherit billions of dollars. When this man died, his son was only five years old, so for 16 years he did not enter into his father's inheritance. However as soon as the philanthropist died the millions of dollars he had bequeathed to charity went to work immediately to help many people.

This illustration shows how the church enters into the blessings of the New Covenant. When Christ established the Lord's Supper it was as though He notarized His will; it became official then. The will is the New Covenant. When He died His "estate" became available to those He chose to profit from it. Soon many people around the world, Jews and Gentiles alike in the church, began to benefit from the blessings of His death. However His chosen people, His son Israel, will not enter into his inheritance until the appointed time, namely, the Millennium. Blessings for the church began almost immediately after Christ's death. Blessings for Israel will not begin until Christ's appointed time arrives.

Whenever the Jews celebrated the Passover the father who was conducting the service would explain the significance of each part to the rest of the family (cf. Deuteronomy 16:3). Jesus did the same for His disciples when He instituted the Lord's Supper.

### **Verse 26**

Paul continued Jesus' explanation. Participation in the Lord's Supper dramatizes the gospel. The service becomes a visual as well as an audio setting forth of the death of Christ and its significance.

"The Eucharist is an acted sermon, an acted proclamation of the death which it commemorates; but it is possible that there is reference to some expression of belief in the atoning death of Christ as being a usual element in the service." [Note: Robertson and Plummer, p. 249.]

Paul may have referred to "the cup" rather than "the wine," which would have been parallel to "the bread," to avoid the direct identification of the wine in the cup with blood. The idea of drinking blood was revolting to most people in the ancient world, particularly the Jews. [Note: Barrett, p. 268.] On the other hand, he may have viewed both elements symbolically, the cup being a symbol of one's lot in life, particularly judgment, and the bread a symbol of what sustains life.

The Lord's Supper is not only a memorial celebration looking back to Jesus Christ's first advent. It is also an anticipatory celebration looking forward to His second advent. Evidently when the Lord returns to set up His earthly kingdom He will establish a new form of worship that will include the offering of certain animal sacrifices (Ezekiel 40-46). These will be similar to the animal sacrifices the Jews offered under the Old Covenant. However since Jesus Christ has made a final sacrifice these animal offerings will evidently be memorial and entirely for worship, not for the expiation of sin.

Another possibility is that they will have some role in restoring fellowship with God then. [Note: See Jerry M. Hullinger, "The Problem of Animal Sacrifices in Ezekiel 40-48," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 152:607 (July-September 1995):279-89.]

"The Communion is not supposed to be a time of 'spiritual autopsy' and grief, even though confession of sin is important. It should be a time of thanksgiving and joyful anticipation of seeing the Lord!" [Note: Wiersbe, 1:607.]

In this section Paul reviewed and expounded the significance of the Lord's Supper so his readers would value and celebrate it appropriately.

"In short, Paul is doing one thing and one thing alone. He is impressing on the Corinthians the tremendous importance of doing just this: eating this bread and drinking this cup. It is, after all, a matter of celebrating the Lord's death." [Note: Troels Engberg-Pedersen, "Proclaiming the Lord's Death," in *Pauline Theology*. Vol. II: 1 & 2 Corinthians, p. 116.]

### **Verse 27**

An unworthy manner is any manner that is not consistent with the significance of Christ's death. This does not mean that every participant must grasp the fullness of this significance, which is hardly possible. Nevertheless everyone should conduct himself or herself appropriately in view of the significance of the Lord's death. Even a child is capable of doing this. The divisions that existed in their church (1 Corinthians 11:18) and their selfish behavior (1 Corinthians 11:21) constituted the unworthiness of the manner in which the Corinthians were observing the Lord's Supper. They had also lost the point of the memorial, which involves proclaiming salvation through Christ's death portrayed in ritual. The gospel goes out when we observe the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner.

Being guilty of Christ's body and blood means being guilty of treating them in an unworthy manner, of profaning them. It does not mean that such a person is in some special sense responsible for the death of Christ.

He explained that the Lord's Supper is more than a personal, introspective remembering. It has implications for the church because in His death Jesus Christ laid the foundation for a new community of believers who bear His name. Thus the Lord's Supper should lead us to reflect on our relationship to one another as Christians as well as to recall Calvary.

Paul proceeded to urge the Corinthians to change their observance of the Lord's Supper and explained what they should do to correct their conduct.

### **Verse 28**

"The Corinthians neglected to examine themselves, but they were experts at examining everybody else." [Note: Wiersbe, 1:606.]

The reason for examining oneself is to determine that we are partaking in a worthy manner rather than in an unworthy manner. In the context this would involve behaving in a loving and unselfish way toward our fellow Christians as well as being appreciative of the significance of the Lord's body and blood. We need to examine ourselves so the Lord will not have to examine and judge us for failing to participate worthily (1 Corinthians 11:31).

Having conducted this brief self-examination the believer should then proceed to participate. An unusually sensitive Christian might hesitate to participate after thoughtful reflection feeling overwhelmed by his or her personal unworthiness. However no one is ever worthy to partake. If someone thinks he is, he is not. We are only worthy because Christ has made us worthy. We need to partake feeling unworthy to do so. This attitude is part of what it means to partake in a worthy manner.

This simple reflection and participation lie at the very root of motivation for living a life that glorifies God. The church has invented many ways to motivate Christians to put Jesus Christ first in their lives. These include altar calls, "revival" services, campfire dedication services, and many others all of which have values. Unfortunately we have also neglected what the Lord Jesus instructed us to do that will motivate His people to live for Him better than anything else. If this observance has lost its punch, it is because those who lead it have failed to give it the preparation, attention, and priority it deserves in church life. The frequent observance of the Lord's Supper in a way that takes us back to the Cross is one of the most powerful and effective motivators for living the Christian life. If you think a frequent observance of the Lord's Supper tends to become tiresome, remember that your spouse never tires of your frequent expressions of love for him or her.

### **Verse 29**

Eating and drinking in an unworthy manner results in divine judgment. Judgment is inevitable at the Lord's Table. We judge ourselves (Gr. diakrino) before we partake and then participate in a worthy manner, or God will judge (krino) us. The "body" has a double sense: the body of Christ given on the cross, and the mystical body of Christ, the church.

"The 'unworthy' or 'inappropriate' participation in the Lord's Supper that entails eating and drinking judgment against the participants comes in not 'discerning (diakrinon) the body' (1 Corinthians 11:29). How members of the community view one another, whether they are sensitive to the poor and latecomers or whether the prevailing social customs dictate their behavior, becomes the decisive issue. Does the congregation recognize itself as the distinctive body of Christ?" [Note: Cousar, "The Theological . . .," p. 100.]

### **Verse 30**

In Corinth, God was judging with sickness and death. The reasons were the unjudged sin of selfish living (1 Corinthians 11:21) and thoughtless participation in the communion service.

### **Verse 31**

If God's people do not judge their own sins themselves, God will judge them. This judgment may involve physical illness or even, in extreme cases, premature physical death (cf. Acts 5; 1 John 5:16).

### **Verse 32**

We should regard God's punishment of Christians as discipline (Gr. paideia, lit. child training; cf. Hebrews 12:5-11). The condemnation God intends this discipline to spare us from experiencing is not eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord that the unsaved world will suffer (Romans 8:1). It is premature death and the Lord's disapproval at the judgment seat of Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 3:15; 1 Corinthians 5:5). This is another instance of wordplay in the Greek text. If we discerned (diakrino) ourselves, we would not come under divine judgment (krino). When God judges us (krino), it is to correct us so we will not be condemned (katakrino) with the world.

### **Verse 33**

Rather than disregarding the members of the congregation who had little or no food to bring to the love feasts, those who had plenty should share what they had. They should also wait to eat until all had been served.

Many churches these days have potluck suppers periodically that provide a modern counterpart to the first-century love feast. Some Christians have felt that we should practice the love feast whenever we observe the Lord's Supper today. Most have concluded that the love feast was just the setting in which the Lord's Supper took place in the early church. Jesus did not specifically command His disciples to observe the love feast as He urged them to eat the Lord's Supper. Therefore most Christians believe the love feast is not an ordinance of the church and we are not bound to perpetuate it as the early church practiced it.

*(Adapted from URL:<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dcc/1-corinthians-11.html>)*

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary***

Baptism is the ritual entry to the life of faith. It includes a public testimony of God's gifts of grace and the Holy Spirit. We follow Jesus' example when we undergo baptism; Matthew 28 challenges us to invite all people to become his disciples. The Lord's Supper is a meal of remembrance, thanksgiving, and anticipation. Instead of happening once for each person, it is celebrated regularly. The meal beckons us to examine our relationships with God and others. We share the meal with believers as the unified body of Christ, those who remember his sacrifice and look forward to his return. There are differences among believers when we practice baptism and the Lord's Supper. But neither Christ nor Paul anticipates either to be cause for division. We should carefully study these practices so that, with our church, we might understand their purpose in worship and ministry. We can practice both with an attitude of humility and joy, recognizing that they are from God and for God's people.