

# The Formula of Concord

## Lesson Seven

### On the Holy Supper of Christ On the Person of Christ

#### Introduction

1. Agree or Disagree. The Lutheran church is a Protestant church.
  
2. Share what you know about the Reformed teaching of the Lord's Supper.

*“Although those who teach Zwinglian doctrine are not be counted among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession – since they separated themselves from this confession immediately, at the time it was presented – we, nonetheless, want to report on this controversy because they are insinuating themselves and spreading their error under the name of this Christian confession.” (Epitome VII:1)*

#### Historical Background

- From a political standpoint, it would have been very advantageous for Lutheran and Reformed churches to have merged and taken a common stand against the Catholics  

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- Melancthon began to waver regarding the scriptural understanding of the Lord's Supper
- After Luther's death, Reformed teachings about the Lord's Supper made their way into many Lutheran schools and churches
- Crypto means... \_\_\_\_\_
- In this controversy there were three parties involved:
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) \_\_\_\_\_

## Search the Scriptures

1. According to these verses, what is truly present in the Lord's Supper? (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)
2. The Lutheran church confesses a "sacramental union of Christ's body and the bread, of his blood and the wine." Where is that taught in these verses?

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

3. How do these verses impress on us the fact that even unbelievers receive Christ's body and blood when they receive the Lord's Supper?

*1 Corinthians 11:27-29 Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.*

4. Calvin taught that the faith of the communicant makes Christ's body and blood present in the sacrament. Comment on that point in light of the previous two passages.
5. Which is correct?
  - a. The Bible teaches that the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper change into the body and blood of Jesus.
  - b. The Bible teaches that the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper represent the body and blood of Jesus.
  - c. The Bible teaches that the body and blood of Jesus are really present together with the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper.

*We believe, teach, and confess that in the Holy Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present, truly distributed and received with the bread and wine. (Epitome VII:6)*

*Some sacramentarians make every effort to speak using words that are very close to the terminology and formulations of the Augsburg Confession and of its churches and to confess that in the Holy Supper the body of Christ is truly received by believers. Nevertheless, if pressed to set forth their essential position in all candor and clarity, they all with one voice declare that the true, essential body and blood of Christ are absent in the Supper, as far away from the consecrated bread and wine as the highest heaven is from the earth." (SD VII:2)*

## Historical Background – The Person of Christ

1. How does a proper understanding of the person of Christ fit together with a proper understanding of the Lord Supper?
  - The Reformed did not believe that the physical body of Christ fully shared in the power and characteristics of his divine nature
  - The Reformed believe Christ's body is confined to heaven and therefore could not be present in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper
  - For this reason they teach that the bread and wine merely represent Christ's body and blood

*We believe, teach, and confess that the words of the testament of Christ are not to be understood in any other way than the way they literally sound, that is, not that the bread symbolizes the absent body and the wine the absent blood of Christ, but that they are truly the true body and blood of Christ because of the sacramental union. (Epitome VII:7)*

## Search the Scriptures

### **REAL PRESENCE**

*1 Corinthians 11:23-30 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.*

*1 Corinthians 10:16 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?*

## **RIGHT HAND OF GOD**

*Psalm 139:7-10 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.*

*Ephesians 1:19-23 That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

1. What do each of these passages teach about the “right hand of God” and the presence of God?

## **TWO NATURES OF CHRIST**

*Romans 9:5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

2. Which nature of Christ is spoken about in this passage?

*Matthew 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:*

*John 8:58 “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”*

3. What attributes truly belong to the person of Christ?

*Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

*Luke 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*

4. What attributes truly belong to the person of Christ?

*Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

*Ephesians 4:10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.)*

*Colossians 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,*

*John 5:22-23 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.*

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*...because in Christ there are and remain two distinct natures, unchanged and unmixed in their natural essences and characteristics, and because these two natures exist as only one single person, therefore, the characteristic of each individual nature is not ascribed to that nature alone, as if it were separated from the person, but it is ascribed to the whole person, which is simultaneously God and human (whether he is called God or a human being.) (SD VIII:36)*

## Application

1. Just how Christ's body and blood can be present in this Sacrament
  - a. cannot be explained, but is clearly what the Bible teaches.
  - b. can be explained by saying that the bread and wine are changed into Christ's body and blood.
  - c. can be explained by saying that the bread and wine represent Christ's body and body.
  
2. Does the Bible say that the earthly and the divine elements in Holy Communion are mixed together?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What are we trying to say by the phrase "in, with, and under"?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How is it possible for us to receive Jesus himself, his true body and blood, when we receive the bread and wine?

5. What about the elements of bread and wine? When does Christ come to them and when does he leave them?
6. If we are already forgiven because all sin has been forgiven by his sacrifice on Good Friday, why do we need to look to the Sacrament for forgiveness?
7. Do we eat and drink Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper the same way that we eat and drink the bread and wine?
8. Articles VII and VIII have been called the true test of the Lutheran theologian. Why might that be?
9. A scriptural understanding of the Lord's Supper encapsulates a scriptural understanding of other doctrines. Can you think of some?
10. In 1997, the ELCA and the Presbyterian Church USA agreed to commune with each other. Among other things, the agreement said:

“We cannot separate communion with Jesus Christ in his body and blood from the act of eating and drinking. To be concerned about the manner of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper in abstraction from this act is to run the risk of obscuring the meaning of the Lord's Supper.”

At the same time, the official teaching of the Presbyterian Church USA says, “The body of Christ is in heaven at the right hand of the Father; and therefore our hearts are to be lifted up on high, and not be fixed on the bread.”

What difference do you see between these two confessions?

11. Using what you have learned, how could you respond to someone who says that the differences between churches are unimportant and we should commune with anyone who is a Christian?

12. Articles VII and VIII defend the teaching of the Lord's Supper and person of Christ. How do these articles preserve and protect the gospel and the teaching of God's grace?

## Summary

*Therefore, in all humility and obedience we, too, should simply believe the clear, firm, plain, and solemn words and command of our creator and redeemer, without any doubt or argument, whether it makes sense to our reason or is possible. For this Lord, who is the incomprehensible wisdom and truth himself, has spoken these words, and he certainly can effect and accomplish everything that he promises.*  
(SD VII:47)

## During the Week

Read Article IX of the Formula of Concord, Epitome.

### **IX. OF THE DESCENT OF CHRIST TO HELL.**

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#### **STATUS CONTROVERSIAE.**

##### **Chief Controversy concerning This Article.**

**1]** It has also been disputed among some theologians who have subscribed to the Augsburg Confession concerning this article: When and in what manner the Lord Christ, according to our simple Christian faith, descended to hell: whether this was done before or after His death; also, whether it occurred according to the soul alone, or according to the divinity alone, or with body and soul, spiritually or bodily; also, whether this article belongs to the passion or to the glorious victory and triumph of Christ.

**2]** But since this article, as also the preceding, cannot be comprehended by the senses or by our reason, but must be grasped by faith alone, it is our unanimous opinion that there should be no disputation concerning it, but that it should be believed **3]** and taught only in the simplest manner; according as Dr. Luther, of blessed memory, in his sermon at Torgau in the year 1533 has explained this article in an altogether Christian manner, separated from it all useless, unnecessary questions, and admonished all godly Christians to Christian simplicity of faith.

4] For it is sufficient that we know that Christ descended into hell, destroyed hell for all believers, and delivered them from the power of death and of the devil, from eternal condemnation and the jaws of hell. But how this occurred we should [not curiously investigate, but] reserve until the other world, where not only this point [mystery], but also still others will be revealed, which we here simply believe, and cannot comprehend with our blind reason.