

# Heidelberg Catechism 78-80 – Corruption of the Lord’s Supper

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Man is prone to go to extremes 极端 Sometimes he minimizes 缩小 things and other times he exaggerates 夸张 things. Neither one is right, of course, but both are realities 现实 Christians do this as well. Today you will learn how some either overestimate 估计过高 or underestimate 低估 the Lord’s Supper, and what God has to say about that.

Our headings are: Do not overestimate the Lord’s Supper, and Do not underestimate the Lord’s Supper.

Our goals are: That you will properly understand the proper blessings of the Lord’s Supper, that you will thank God for them, and that you will fight to not allow the Lord’s Supper to be misused 误用

## Do not overestimate the Lord’s Supper.

Q&A 78 Are the bread and wine changed into the real body and blood of Christ?

No. Just as the water of baptism is not changed into Christ’s blood and does not itself wash away sins but is simply God’s sign and assurance, so too the bread of the Lord’s Supper is not changed into the actual body of Christ even though *it is called the body of Christ in keeping with the nature and language of sacraments.*

1. Review: The Lord’s Supper does not save. The Lord’s Supper is a symbol and seal of the covenant. You participate in the Lord’s Supper to show that you are in the covenant. The Passover was 先导 a bloody sign of the covenant, and the precursor of the Lord’s Supper. So the Passover was never salvic either. The Passover made the receiver think of the coming Savior when they killed the young lamb without spot, set aside for 4 days, had no bone broken, and its blood was daubed 涂抹 on their door posts...in the shape of a cross...as the Lord’s Supper does.

Exodus 12:11 ‘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. 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.

The blood on the door represented the shed blood of the true Passover Lamb of God: Jesus Christ. The lamb and its blood were a sign and mark that the Israelites were in covenant with God and he promised to protect them.

2. It is Christ, not the Lord’s Supper, who cleanses us from sins, through the working of his Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, Titus 3:5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

So those who think that they are saved by eating of the Lord’s Supper deny the Scripture.

3. The elements (bread and wine) are not supernaturally changed into the real body and blood of the Lord, as Roman Catholics teach. Note particularly V29 of Matthew 26. Jesus made it clear that the wine was still wine, not blood.

Matthew 26: 26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. 28 "For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom."

Because Roman Catholics believe that the Lord Supper becomes the real flesh and blood of Christ, they believe that it saves. Question: How do they explain that no regular person gets to drink the “blood” of Christ? Why do they deny the people? Rebellions were started in history, like in Bohemia, to get the wine, and even though they allowed Christians to drink the wine, it was only for a time.

4. How then do we explain the strong language that seems to suggest that we eat the literal body and drink the literal blood of Jesus Christ?

1Corinthians 10:16 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.

1Corinthians 11:26 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.

**a. The Bible uses strong language calling the elements the “body and blood” of the Lord to a show strong symbolic connection the sign (Lord’s Supper) and the thing signified (Jesus Christ).** EG: You might say: “He is a giant巨人” You don’t mean that the man is literally a 9 foot “giant.” You mean that the man is big and tall. There was a football player called “the bus.” He was called the “bus” to show he was unstoppable. Furthermore, Christ’s body is not present on earth. But we receive in our heart what he did while in his body.

**b. It is illogical不逻辑地 to say that we eat the literal body and drink the literal字面上的 blood of Jesus Christ.** The Apostle Paul pointed out that those who were drinking too much in church were becoming drunk. Wasn’t he literally reminding his readers that they were drinking alcohol, not human blood. **Drinking blood was forbidden.** Even the blood of animals had to be drained when the animal was killed.

**c. Another example to show that it is illogical to say that we eat the literal body and shed blood** of Jesus Christ.

1Corinthians 10:2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink, **For they drank of that spiritual Rock** that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

It is illogical to conclude that the Israelites drank Jesus. To argue otherwise is to over-estimating the Lord’s Supper.

**d. Even in the OT such hyperbolic夸张的 language was used** to make the hearer focus on the thing signified象征的 Genesis 17:10 "This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; 11 "and you shall be **circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant...**

Obviously the covenant was not circumcision (as Muslims like to argue), but the covenant was called circumcision to identify the symbolic work that was required: Circumcision of the heart.

## **Don’t underestimate the Lord’s Supper**

Q&A 79 Why then does Christ call the bread his body and the cup his blood, or the new covenant in his blood? (Paul uses the words, a participation in Christ’s body and blood.) *Christ* has good reason for these words. He *wants to teach us that* as bread and wine nourish滋养 our temporal世俗 life, so too *His crucified body and poured-out blood truly nourish our souls for eternal life.* But more important, *He wants to assure us, by this visible sign and pledge誓约 that we, through the Holy Spirit’s work, share in His true body and blood as surely as our mouths receive these holy signs in His remembrance,* and that all of His suffering and obedience are as definitely ours as if we personally had suffered and paid for our sins.

**1. The Lord’s Supper is spiritual food to the believer and must not be construed as merely a sign of remembrance.** It is more – much more. Look at the language the Lord.

John 6:51 "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." 55 "For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.

If you receive the Lord’s Supper which represents the potent有力的 saving work of Jesus Christ by faith, it is as if you were receiving Jesus Christ himself. The message of Christ’s work in the Lord’s Supper penetrates穿透 your soul – to its greatest depths – and it draws you to Christ even more. This makes you willing to work for him. The Lord’s Supper is comfort food for your soul.

**2. This Lord’s Supper holds all members of Christ church together, just like physical food holds the body together.**

Apostle Paul said that all Christians eat of the same loaf – even the Lord Jesus Christ. So the Lord Supper is a means of drawing brothers and sisters together. What a beautiful expression **of Psalm 133**. How good a pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity. Who spends time eating together after a bitter fight? Consider how many wonderful deals and agreements are made after a good meal together! Christians come together with love...even if we have issues we have to work to resolve解决. And doesn’t the Lord Supper also remind you of your need to learn to make sacrifices for others as well? This is covenant love. This is 1Cor 13.

Q&A 80 How does the Lord’s Supper differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?

The Lord’s Supper declares to us that our sins have been completely forgiven through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ which He Himself finished on the cross once for all. It also declares to us that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ, who with His very body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father where He wants us to worship him. But *the Mass teaches that the living and the dead do not have their sins forgiven through the suffering of Christ unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests. It also teaches that Christ is bodily present in the form of bread and wine where Christ is therefore to be worshipped. Thus the Mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ and a condemnable idolatry.*

**3. I am considering the Papal Mass 教皇弥撒 under the underestimation of the Lord's Supper also**  
because it is an underestimation of the Lord's Supper. However, the Papal Mass is not the Lord's Supper. Christians who come to the Lord's Supper do not do so in order to be forgiven. They come because they are forgiven. Look at the details of how this Roman Catholic Mass underestimates the Lord's Supper. Keep in mind that according to Roman Catholic doctrine, if you don't believe that Jesus dies every week in the Mass you are under the curse of hell.

**a When Jesus died on the cross he endured full suffering, once for all, for the sins of the world.** This means that he does not have to die again.

Hebrews 7:27 who [Jesus] **does not need daily**, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. Hebrews 9:12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place **once for all**, having obtained 贖取 eternal redemption. **25** not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another—**26** He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, **once at the end** of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

Hebrews 10:10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**. **11** And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. **12** But this Man, after He had offered **one sacrifice for sins forever**, sat down at the right hand of God, **13** from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. **14** **For by one offering** He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. **18** Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

**b. You are grafted 接枝 into Christ one time for all time and sealed one time for all time by the Spirit for eternity.**

Ephesians 1:13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, **14** who is the guarantee 保証 of our inheritance until the redemption...

**c. Jesus is in heaven...not on earth to be killed by Roman Catholics weekly...and will be there till the end of the world.** That's what Stephen saw there. That's what Hebrews points out.

Hebrews 8:1 Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,

**4. So worship God. Don't kill his Son repeatedly. If you seek to kill Jesus weekly you are underestimating his work.**

John 4:21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. **23** "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth..."

Colossians 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above...

### **Conclusion:**

Don't overestimate the Lord's Supper. Eating it does not save you. It is a sign and seal for those who are believers. Don't underestimate the Lord's Supper. It is a means of grace. It helps you to love God better and you are drawn in unity to your brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Considering what the Lord's Supper symbolizes for you and the blessing that it is for you: 1. Thank the Lord for Lord's Supper. 2. Take the Lord's Supper worthily – being well-prepared for it. 3. Guard the Lord's Supper so that it is not misused by hypocrites 伪君子 and bring judgment on themselves. 4. Prepare your children so that they will be soon ready to enjoy this nourishing food.

Finally: If you want the rich food that God offers you must first make your life right with him. God doesn't give his good gifts to his enemies. Ask him to count Christ's punishment as yours so his anger can be satisfied and you can become his child again.