

RUF Bible Study – The Book of Exodus  
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Exodus 12 – The Passover

We finished in our last passage with discussing how God's plagues show his uniqueness. They answer the question Pharaoh asked, "Who is the Lord that I should obey him?" The plagues answer. God is Yahweh. He is powerful, judging, saving and unique.

We have in Exodus 12 another key moment in Israel's history. We said that Exodus 3 and the burning bush revelation of God's name was essential in understanding God. But we should note that, as important as it was, neither Jews nor Christians celebrate the day Moses met God that way.

But both celebrate the Passover in Exodus 12. Knowing God isn't so much knowing about him, though of course that is essential. In knowing my wife, I first need to start with knowing her name. Maybe where she's from, what she likes. Those are good things, informational. But then I need to move to know what she's about. Her essence. Her mojo. What's her story?

God's essence, his story, is shown here in Exodus 12. His essence is a God who saves. We've finally moved past the preparation for his saving and we're about to hear about how it happens. God is bringing his people from slavery to worship by a redeemer. He is redemptive. And at the heart of his redemption is something rather odd – the bloody death of a helpless victim.

### ***The First Passover***

This is the last and worst plague. The word "plague" means blow, and God has repeated his blows upon Egypt nine times, weakening Pharaoh and his gods to the point that he is ready to deliver the knock out. It's a doozy, and is the subject of chapter 11. God tells Moses that he is going to take the firstborn son of everyone living in Egypt, from the greatest to the humblest. Against the greatest military state in the world, an enemy will come in and destroy the lives of the people.

It's important for us to grapple with this for a moment. God is calling in his debt, which he is allowed to do. All are guilty before him, and death is God's judgment. We talked earlier about how the firstborn child was the hope and life of the family. It symbolized *everything*. Thus, the death of the first born, even the animals, shows the extent and the seriousness of this debt.

We talked about the plagues and how when we disobeyed the Creator and his design we unleash the forces of destruction and chaos in the world and in our lives. Disobedience brings physical, emotional, spiritual, relational, familial, social breakdown.

But on this night, there is something else. It's not the general and natural judgment of consequences to sin. No, on this night, eternal divine judgment will come down. What we have on this night is a preliminary, temporary judgment day.

God tells Moses what to do to avert this wrath. Moses gathers the people and tells them. This is the ministry of the church. A Hebrew father had to go to the meeting, hear the prophet, believe him and do what he said. He was not allowed to come up with a solution to this problem on his own terms.

What did Moses tell him?

There is a way to avert the justice of God on this Judgment Night.

Your interest is piqued. Now, what would you expect the answer to be? I might think that a quest would be appropriate. Only the brave will survive this. You have to go out and prove yourself to be a man by killing an Egyptian and you only have six hours to do it. Go!

Or maybe a quiz. Only the smart will survive. Here's a test to see if you've been paying attention to what God has been doing. God told Moses his name is \_\_\_\_\_. You have to score over 90% to be saved.

How about the good people? That would make sense. We don't want bad people to be saved, so we're going to take an inventory of what you've been doing over the past few months, and see if you cut the mustard. You have to have 50 good works in order to make it.

Needless to say, none of those were God's solution. His solution was a lamb. I repeat – a lamb. Uhhhh...? Maybe a lion or a bull or a griffin? But a little, helpless lamb?

That's what God says. You're to select a spotless one, keep him for two weeks and then slaughter it. Eat all of the lamb, but make sure to put some of the blood on your doorposts. Remember that you're about to leave Egypt, so I want you to dress like

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**Please include the following statement on any distributed copy:** By Doug Serven, © Doug Serven, 2007, website: [www.ouruf.org](http://www.ouruf.org). For this series, I used commentaries on Exodus from Cole, Ryken, Childs, Pink, Cassuto, Motyer and Currid, as well *A House for My Name* by Leithart, *From Paradise to the Promised Land* by Alexander, and *The Gospel According to Moses* by A Dickson. I listened to sermons from Tim Keller and Les Newsom. The reader should assume that none of the ideas expressed are original to me.

it, in anticipation. Then, *12 On that night I will pass through the land of Egypt and strike down every firstborn son and firstborn male animal in the land of Egypt. I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt, for I am the Lord! 13 But the blood on your doorposts will serve as a sign, marking the houses where you are staying. When I see the blood, I will pass over you. This plague of death will not touch you when I strike the land of Egypt.*

God says, This is a really big deal, and I want you to commemorate this every year by doing the same thing. I won't bring the plague every year, but I want you to reenact this ceremony as my covenant people before God. You are teaching yourselves by doing this that I was a part of your story and that I will be a part of your story.

The people scattered. You have to imagine that most of them did what Moses had said. Some might not have, thinking that the old man had gone crazy.

Then we read: *28 So the people of Israel did just as the Lord had commanded through Moses and Aaron. 29 And that night at midnight, the Lord struck down all the firstborn sons in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sat on his throne, to the firstborn son of the prisoner in the dungeon. Even the firstborn of their livestock were killed. 30 Pharaoh and all his officials and all the people of Egypt woke up during the night, and loud wailing was heard throughout the land of Egypt. There was not a single house where someone had not died.*

Pharaoh's son died, just like God had said, and Pharaoh summons the ones he had banished. In his speech of anguish, Pharaoh calls the Hebrews the "children of Israel," acknowledging them as something other than slaves to be moved around and oppressed. He concedes all Moses and Aaron's demands, and withdraws all previous limitations. He even seeks a blessing from Moses, but mostly he wanted the plagues to be gone. Mostly he wanted the blessing without the liability, the shame, or the consequences.

This is how God brought his people out of slavery, how he set them free. Through judgment. Through sacrifice. Through faith.

#### *Through judgment*

Did you notice that the Israelites were under the penalty of death too? They were guilty just as the Egyptians were. All were judged. All owed a debt. The firstborn was the payment for all of them. There is equality before God in this regard. He didn't just let the Hebrew people "off." No, God requires payment. That's the way debt works. We have all offended God just as they did. The only way forgiveness can be reached is if the debt is paid by someone. Something has to be judged in order for forgiveness to happen. For all of them. For us.

#### *Through sacrifice*

But the debt could be paid by another. This is the principle of substitution. The debt must be paid. But you can substitute something that God allows to take the place of the offended party. It's blood can be offered on your family's behalf and God will accept that payment. He will see the blood, pass over, and you plague will befall to destroy you. The blood will save you.

It's important to note too that God tells his people to participate in this sacrifice in two ways. One is by identifying with the lamb. Bringing it into your house for two weeks makes it a part of your family. Killing it must have been hard. But then God tells them to eat it. They don't only sacrifice it, but they participate in the benefits of the sacrifice by taking it into their own bodies. This is a meal, a fellowship meal, a meal of participatory thank offering for God's provision of grace and goodness on their behalf.

#### *Through faith*

They still had to do this. This thing that really makes no sense. Lambs don't substitute for people. But God says they do. And if you believe this and do it, you will be saved.

Do you see the faith involved here?

Imagine a few situations. If you are a Hebrew, and you don't make the sacrifice and put the sign of the blood of the covenant on your house what would happen to your firstborn? He would die. Jewishness isn't the issue here.

If you were an Egyptian, and you got wind of what was happening, maybe your neighbor was Joaz and you and he were talking and he told you what the plan was, and if you did what God had said, what would happen to your firstborn? He would be saved. Egyptianness isn't the issue here.

Now imagine one other situation. A Jewish father wasn't sure, but did what God had said. He was frightened. His son was frightened. And they tentatively, applied the blood to the door, sat huddled in their little house and waited. What would happen? They would be saved. It is not the strength of your faith that saves you. It is what you place your faith in.

God sees the blood and passes over.

As A. W. Pink writes: "God's eye was not upon the house but on the blood. It might have been a lofty house, a strong house, a beautiful house; this made no difference; if there was no blood there judgment entered and did its deadly work. Its height, its strength, its magnificence availed nothing, if the blood was lacking. On the other hand, the house might be a miserable hovel, falling to pieces with age and decay; but no matter; if *blood* were on the door, those within were perfectly safe.

No was God's eye upon those within the house. They might be lineal descendants of Abraham, they might have been circumcised on the eighth day, and in their outward life they might be walking blamelessly so far as the Law was concerned.

But it was neither their genealogy, nor their ceremonial observances, nor from their works, which secured deliverance from God's judgments. It was their personal application of the shed blood, and of that alone."<sup>2</sup>

Commentator John Currid explains: "The shedding of blood signifies entrance into and being part of the covenant of God. Blood is the essence of life and thus it symbolizes the extremity of the covenantal relationship extending to life and death. The Hebrews bear the sign of God and live; the Egyptians have no sign and many die."<sup>3</sup>

Covering the doorposts is an external sign that those within are those numbered among the people of Yahweh. It is a pointer to their having been set apart as part of the community of God.

So let me ask you – what would you do? What would you have done?

Would you have believed Moses? Would you have gone off by yourself and done what you wanted? Would you have tried something other than a lamb? Would you have forgotten to eat the lamb, or missed out on the blood part?

Would you have had faith? Weak faith would work. Believing God and his sign, symbol and story was what you needed. Would have sacrificed the lamb?

What happened over the centuries is that this story was recounted again and again. This was the night where God's redemption of his people was not only recounted but reapplied. The tradition grew around this meal as the Jews made sense of God's command. They drank wine, which they understood as the blood of the lamb shed for the people to protect them. They ate bread, unleavened because they carried on it their backs when they left in haste. And of course they ate the lamb, as a sacrifice slain for them. This night marked a new beginning for Israel. It marked and commemorated the new birth of a people.

This communal act of worship was a sacrificial meal and a memorial. Eating the sacrificial lamb identified the people with the sacrifice and partaking of the benefits of it. As a memorial it was a reminder of God's act of redemption that brought them out of bondage.

But, and this is important, something was always missing. This sacrificial lamb never fully did the trick. Every year they had to go through it again. More lambs. More blood. More sacrificing. It never stopped. Would it ever stop? Where is the Lamb?

### ***The Great Passover***

Fast forward a few thousand years. There was a man born in a backwater town named Jesus. A lot of prophecy surrounded him. One of the chroniclers of his life history tells of Jesus and his cousin and their first meeting.

What would you say to your cousin? What would you say to anyone you met for the first time?

I'm not sure what you would say, but John said this: Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world! That is a crazy, strange greeting. Why would he say that?

Fast-forward three more years. This man Jesus of Nazareth is reported to have done miracles, healed people, walked on water, raised the dead, and he preaches a message unlike any of the other teachers. And he talks about his death all the time.

On Thursday afternoon, Nisan 14 (in what we now call the year A.D. 30 or 33 (most likely in April)), Jewish families would have taken their lambs to the Temple and the priests sacrifice them.<sup>4</sup> Then the lambs would have been taken home and roasted. And at sunset, the beginning of Nisan 15, each family took the Passover meal, just like we've talked about. This year would have been no different. Sure, there had been some trouble in Jerusalem, but there was always trouble there. No matter.

Put yourself there.

The preliminary course begins with a blessing of the feast day and the first of the four cups of wine by the head of the household. A word of Thanksgiving, the Kiddush is given. The preliminary dish follows, green herbs and bitter herbs. The main meal and second cup are served but not yet eaten. A boy asks the meaning of the meal, and the head of families explains. This is called the *haggadah*.

The family then sings the first part of the *Hallel* (Psalm 113 or 113 and 114). They next drink the second cup of wine.

The main meal is served, the Passover lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, a fruit puree and wine. A prayer of thanksgiving said over the third cup, the cup of blessing and they would sing the second part of the *Hallel* (Ps 114-118) and drink the fourth cup of wine.

Jesus has gathered his disciples, his family. He is the head of this household; therefore, he will lead the meal. He talks about his impending death and says that he will be betrayed by one of the men at the table. They look around, confused. He continues with the meal.

He took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it. Everyone was waiting for the words: "This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate when they came from the land of Egypt." Instead, on this night, this man said, "This is my body."

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<sup>2</sup> Pink, 84

<sup>3</sup> Currid, 241

<sup>4</sup> I consulted *Given for You*, Keith Mathison

They all know what is next, but there is no mention of the lamb in this meal. Jesus skips the Passover lamb. Why is this? In 1 Cor. 5:7 we read: *For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.* The Passover lamb wasn't on the table because he was at the table.<sup>5</sup>

Jesus next takes the cup of blessing, the third cup and says "This is my blood in the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Here Jesus adapts the liturgy by pulling from Exodus 24, Jeremiah 31 and Isaiah 52-53. There is a new covenant in his blood.

He further alters things by telling them that he won't drink the fourth cup until he comes again. His abstinence from it points to the unfinished and ongoing character of this first Lord's Supper. We're still participating in the first one, and the conclusion of this meal is not reached until Jesus drinks the fourth cup with all believers at the marriage feast of the Lamb.

In Mark, we're told that after the meal, Jesus and the disciples sang. They would have sang the Hallel and Jesus would have been singing from Psalm 116 about the cup of salvation, the death of the Lord's saints, of the servanthood of his people as they serve the Lord. In Psalm 118, Jesus would have been singing about being given over to death, and about life, about hope.

Do you see? Do you see what has happened? We have found the lamb! The sacrifice is paid once for all. This lamb of God has taken away the sins of the world. He identified with his people for a time. He was spotless, without defect. He died as a substitute, covering the debt owed by his people with his own blood. He died at twilight, when at the same moment thousands of lambs were being killed for the Passover.

The plague of death was put upon Jesus as the Lamb of God. He was utterly forsaken and when he cried out, My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me? The answer was silence. God led him up the mountain. God put his only son on the wood. Our firstborn sons were not really saved because of lambs. Our firstborn sons are saved because God had his firstborn son. He says, Your son can live because mine died.

This was the ultimate moment that history has been pointing to. Jesus says, I'm removing it tonight. This night is THE night.

We've been saying that Exodus is the story of redemption of God's people. That we are seeing the story that goes: from slavery to worship by a redeemer. Here we see the point of that story. Here at the cross, we find the meaning of the Passover and the meaning of the lamb. Do you see it? Do you feel the weight of glory here?

### ***Your Passover***

Our last point is one of application. We mentioned earlier that one of the two sacraments of the church is baptism. And baptism has as its antecedent circumcision, a rite instituted by God to show and mark his covenant people. In the New Testament, it is broader (it includes girls) and it is non-bloody.

We see the same thing here. The antecedent of the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist is the Passover. And it is broader, in that we celebrate it more often, and non-bloody. The blood has been paid.

The connections are enormous, and we've seen Jesus make them when he took the Passover with his disciples. He is the lamb, therefore we don't have one on the table. His body is the bread. His blood is the wine. His people are called to take it together. His leaders are called to administer it properly and orderly, with a certain kind of liturgy. His people are not to do it any way they want, with any elements they choose, at any time they wish. It is his supper. His meal.

It's a sacrificial meal and a fellowship meal. You are called to go to the table with fear and joy. Awe and confidence. You owe the debt. Your life is forfeit because of sin. You must pay with death.

There can be a sacrifice. You can receive the benefits of that sacrifice if you participate with it by faith. Mathison writes: "There is a connection between him and those who partake of this bread in faith. Christians are "in Christ." "They participate in the benefits of his act of redemption by virtue of true union with him to the degree that Paul can say that Christians have been crucified with Christ and have died with Christ. In the Lord's Supper, Christians partake of the true Passover Lamb. They partake of the great redemptive act on the cross. They are united to Christ and are seen 'in him.'"<sup>6</sup>

In the Passover, the participants are to take it and eat it. Not just to look at it. They don't offer it to God because God is offering it to them. It is not a propitiatory sacrifice – that happened on the cross. It is a sacrificial meal, inseparably connected with Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, but not the actual act itself.

So you are to take and eat. It is a meal. Sure a small meal, but a meal. We don't sit there and look at the elements, but we eat them. You make it a part of you. You participate by going past looking and actually ingesting the good news into your system. This isn't a literal thing going on here. It's spiritual, but it uses material means to communicate and actuate what God is doing.

A few thoughts for you:

Take the Lord's Supper frequently. In Acts we read about the early church moving to Sunday morning worship (because it was the day Jesus rose from the dead) and their incorporation of a more frequent Lord's Supper meal. So should we. It should be important for us to see, taste, touch and smell the signs of grace for us. It matters. Don't neglect the table.

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<sup>5</sup> Keller's phrasing.

<sup>6</sup> Mathison, 212

On the converse, make sure you don't go the other way and make the table filled with magical powers. It is bread. It is wine. It isn't going to magically transform your life. It should be attended by the Word of God adequately and properly preached. It should be done in public worship and administered by the elders of the church. It is not a private thing, not a wedding ceremony, not a cool deal to be done when you ask your girlfriend to marry you.<sup>7</sup> The table is to be shared with others in fellowship. It is a communal thing, a church thing. We should talk about it and share it together. It is a form of fellowship and evangelism.

The next time you take the Lord's Supper, you need to think. You need to identify with the debt you owe. You need to think of how offended God is by your sin. Frankly, we don't think of this often. We think it's no big deal. But it is a big deal. And if you don't have a God who judges sin, then neither do you have a God who loves. Do not think too highly of yourself. You are far worse than you think. Your life and heart are more wicked than you have ever dared to imagine. Do not come to the table lightly, friends.

Likewise, you are no better than anyone else. God is not interested in your brainpower, your test scores, where you buy your clothes, what group or club or sorority you're in. He's also not interested in your moral record, your good deeds, your philanthropies. He does not care for your achievements. If you approach the table on any of these things, you will be drinking your wrath.

I think of the verse in Stricken Smitten and Afflicted that goes:

*Ye who think of sin but lightly, Nor suppose the evil great, Here may view its nature rightly, Here its guilt may estimate. Mark the Sacrifice appointed! See Who bears the awful load! 'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed, Son of Man, and Son of God.*

You might copy and bring with you a copy of the Westminster Larger Catechism's section that goes through what is required and what is forbidden in the 10 Commandments. That will give you some things to confess.

Think. Consider. Associate.

But come. Others of you just won't come. You are too afraid. Your faith is too weak you think. You know of your deep sin, guilt and shame. You have done things, terrible things. Things you don't want to talk about. You think that you will be rejected if we knew them. So you hide them, lock them away where you think no one can see.

Friends like that, you need to come to the table. There isn't only judgment there. There is something else. It is the table of freedom. The sacrifice that saves. The judge who was judged is for you. He took the pain, the suffering, the weight, the guilt, the plagues for you. Do not sit in your chairs because you consider yourself unworthy. NO ONE IS WORTHY!

Your reluctance to throw yourself on God's mercy is bad for you. You know of your debt, but do not know of the incredible grace of the Lord, the one who doesn't make you pay but will provide a lamb for you, a sacrifice so that you can live in freedom to worship and glorify him. Come to the table in joy. Come with your head up, tears in your eyes but boldly before the throne of grace. He is able. He is willing. Nothing but the blood will save, but the blood will save!

Take his body and his blood by faith. It can be weak faith, but it is not the measure of your faith that matters – it is the one you put your faith in who is the acceptable sacrifice.

The Passover is not only about deliverance from Egypt, although it certainly is about that. Is about salvation from sin, and the Israelites are sinners. There is a sacrifice for sin, and if this is applied by faith, their sins are covered. Nothing but the blood will do.

We forget we are sinners in need of salvation. We honestly do. We think we are good people. We cover our sins from others, focusing on what we do right. We rationalize. We philosophize. We intellectualize. But deep in our hearts, deep in the heart of the hardest atheist, we all know that there is a God and that we are guilty before him. Whatever standard you choose, even if it isn't the Biblical one but one of your own making, you have fallen short. We forget even as Christians. We forget God sent his one and only Son. In the busyness of life, we don't often consider the importance of this fact. We are consumed with our lives, our decisions, our bodies, our studies. We forget. We forget the Son shed his own blood on the cross for our sins. It becomes common news. It's no longer amazing to us. We yawn about it.

The hymn says that we are prone to wander. We are prone to forget. What shall we do?

We have the Lord's Supper to help us remember. We can remember what we forget. We have a sort of Christian déjà vu as we come to the table and it seems vaguely familiar. Oh yes.... I owe a debt... Jesus pays the debt... that is an awesome thing that I can be forgiven, accepted and loved.... I can be free... Wow.

It's a sign and symbol of our oneness with Christ. Of his covenant with us and our, however faltering, covenant with him. In that sense it is like marital sex, which is what some have called a "covenantal renewal ceremony." The couple has made a commitment, a vow to each other. That vow doesn't need to be repeated each day, but there is a ceremony of oneness, of intimacy that goes along with that vow. It is a connector, a unifier. It tells the other person, I am here with you. I want to know you.

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<sup>7</sup> I've been hearing about this being done lately.

The Lord's Supper matters. Keely Steger, former OU and RUF student, writes about this in her own words:

*About 2 or 3 years ago, the gospel finally "clicked" for me. Well, actually it hit me over the head. It happened during communion at my church. Looking back on it, I never could really describe what happened during that time that made the gospel so clear. Yesterday, however, I was reminded.*

*Following another hard-hitting sermon from Romans which, I am shamed to say my mind slightly wandered during, we took communion. Not an unusual thing, as we do it every month. But the way Mike introduced the fellowship meal was incredible. It was amazing and heartbreaking. He talked about how we all want to have a "personal experience with Christ," but few of us know what that means or how to go about having one. And then he stated the obvious and simple truth that I don't know if I have ever acknowledged. He said that communion is exactly that: experiencing Christ. In communion, we are literally supping with Christ, as Scripture states. We are opening the door on which He is knocking, and He is coming in and supping with us. What a glorious thing! And then, before the juice was distributed, Mike explained that, at our church, we hold our cups until everyone has been served because we are all drinking from the same cup. "This is the cup of the new covenant." So we drink together, as one body, proclaiming the death of one Christ until we drink with Him anew.*

*It was an incredible experience. I was reminded that the body of Christ is not limited to the body in which I serve and worship with every Sunday, at Christ the King. The body of Christ includes all those in His church, all those who gather to worship on Sundays, even if they don't worship the same way we do. What a wonderful and poignant reminder of Christ's love for His bride.*

May it be for you the next time you take God's covenantal meal for you and consider your exodus from slavery to worship by a redeemer.

Some helpful things to think about:

Scots Confession:

As the fathers under the Law, besides the reality of the sacrifices, had two chief sacraments, that is, circumcision and the passover, and those who rejected these were not reckoned among God's people; so do we acknowledge and confess that now in the time of the gospel we have two chief sacraments, which alone were instituted by the Lord Jesus and commanded to be used by all who will be counted members of his body, that is, Baptism and the Supper or Table of the Lord Jesus, also called the Communion of His Body and Blood.

These sacraments, both of the Old Testament and of the New, were instituted by God not only to make a visible distinction between his people and those who were without the Covenant, but also to exercise the faith of his children and, by participation of these sacraments, to seal in their hearts the assurance of his promise, and of that most blessed conjunction, union, and society, which the chosen have with their Head, Christ Jesus.

Westminster Larger Catechism:

*Question 161: How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?*

Answer: The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered, but only by the working of the Holy Ghost, and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted.

*Question 162: What is a sacrament?*

Answer: A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another; and to distinguish them from those that are without.

*Question 163: What are the parts of a sacrament?*

Answer: The parts of a sacrament are two; the one an outward and sensible sign, used according to Christ's own appointment; the other an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified.

*Question 164: How many sacraments has Christ instituted in his church under the New Testament?*

Answer: Under the New Testament Christ has instituted in his church only two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

*Question 168: What is the Lord's Supper?*

Answer: The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, his death is showed forth; and they that worthily communicate feed upon his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; have their union and communion with him confirmed; testify and renew their thankfulness, and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body.

*Question 169: How has Christ appointed bread and wine to be given and received in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?*

Answer: Christ has 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.

*Question 170: How do they that worthily communicate in the Lord's Supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ therein?*

Answer: As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses; 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.

*Question 171: How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?*

Answer: 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, of their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of 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.

*Question 172: May one who doubts of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's Supper?*

Answer: One who doubts of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account has it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened.

*Question 173: May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, be kept from it?*

Answer: Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ has left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.

*Question 174: What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the time of the administration of it?*

Answer: It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that, during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fulness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.

*Question 175: What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?*

Answer: The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is seriously to consider: How they have behaved themselves therein, and with: What success; if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it, beg the continuance of it, watch against relapses, fulfil their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance: but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the sacrament; in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time: but, if they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterwards with more care and diligence.

