

The Purpose and Plan for the Church Pt. 7

Acts 2:42-47

Acts 2:40–47

And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles.

44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,

45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Introduction:

First John 2:15-16 says, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world."

When we are told *not* to love the world, the Bible is referring to the world's corrupt value system. Satan is the god of this world, and he has his own value system contrary to God's (2 Corinthians 4:4). First John 2:16 details exactly what Satan's system promotes: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life. Every sin imaginable can be summed up in those three evils; envy, adultery, pride, lying, selfishness, and more spring from those three roots.

The world is what we leave when we come to Christ. Isaiah 55:7 says that coming to God involves a forsaking of our own ways and thoughts. John Bunyan, in his book *The Pilgrim's Progress*, pictures the believer's position as having "his eyes lift up to heaven," holding "the best of books" in his hand, and standing with "the world as cast behind him" (p. 34).

Loving the world means being devoted to the world's treasures, philosophies, and priorities. God tells His children to set their priorities according to His eternal value system. We are to "seek first" God's kingdom and righteousness (Matthew 6:33). No one can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24), and we cannot be devoted to both God and the world at the same time.

When we enter God's family through faith in Christ, God gives us the ability to exit the world's rat race (2 Corinthians 5:17). We become citizens of another kingdom (Philippians 1:27, 3:20). Our desires turn heavenward, and we begin to store up eternal treasure (Luke 12:33; Matthew 19:21; 1 Timothy 6:18-19). We

realize that what is truly important is eternal, not temporal, and we stop loving the world.

To continue to love the world the way unbelievers do will cripple our spiritual growth and render us fruitless for God's kingdom (Matthew 3:8; Luke 6:43-45; John 15:1-8). In John 12:25, Jesus took this thought a step further when He said, "Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life." Not loving the world extends to our own lives as well. Jesus said if we love anything more than Him, we are not worthy of Him (Matthew 10:37-38).

In general, the term *world* in the Bible refers to the evil system controlled by Satan that leads us away from worship of God. John Calvin said, "The human heart is an idol factory." We can make idols out of anything. Any passionate desire of our hearts that is not put there by God for His glory can become an idol (1 Corinthians 10:31). Loving the world is idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:7, 14). So, while we are commanded to love the *people* of the world, we are to be wary of anything that competes with God for our highest affections.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Luke 9:23 And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Galatians 5:24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Mark 8:35 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it.

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Romans 6:1-23 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ...

Matthew 10:38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Philippians 2:1-30 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ...

1 Corinthians 15:31 I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!

1 Peter 4:1-11 Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God. For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. With respect to this they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; but they will give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. ...

1 Peter 2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

Colossians 3:3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Romans 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Review

- I. Christ is Lord of His Church**
- II. Christ Builds His Church**
- III. Christ Plans His Church**
- IV. Christ Gives Purpose to His Church**

Lesson:

- I. Christ is Lord of His Church**

II. Christ Builds His Church

III. Christ Plans His Church Separated

- A. Saved**
- B. Steadfast**
- C. Teaching**
- D. Fellowshiping**
- E. Celebrating Lords supper/ baptism**
- F. Praying**
- G. Giving**
- H. Praising**
- I. Fearing**

1. The Church was Separated

2. The Church was Saved

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

3. The Church was steadfast.

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

v.42 And they continued steadfastly — —

Pres Active Participle

46 So continuing daily — same word, and parsing

proskartereó: to attend constantly

Original Word: ΠΡΟΣΚΑΡΤΕΡΕΩ

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: proskartereó

Phonetic Spelling: (pros-kar-ter-eh'-o)

Short Definition: I persist

Definition: I persist, persevere in, continue steadfast in; I wait upon.

4342 *proskarteréō* (from **4314** /*prós*, "towards, interactively *with*" and **2594** /*karteréō*, "show steadfast strength," derived from **2904** /*krátos*, "prevailing strength") – properly, to consistently showing strength which *prevails* (in spite of difficulties); to *endure* (remain firm), **staying in a fixed direction.**
[4342 /*proskarteréō* means "to continue to do something with intense effort, with the possible implication of despite difficulty – 'to devote oneself to, to keep on, to persist in'"

4. The Church was Teaching

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine

continued steadfastly

προσκαρτερέω (4342)

verb: present, active, participle, nominative, plural, masculine

- 1 to adhere to one, be his adherent, to be devoted or constant to one
- 2 to be steadfastly attentive unto, to give unremitting care to a thing
- 3 to continue all the time in a place
- 4 to persevere and not to faint

doctrine

διδασχὴ (1322)

noun: dative, singular, feminine

- 1 teaching
 - 1 that which is taught
 - 2 doctrine, teaching, concerning something
- 2 the act of teaching, instruction
 - 1 in religious assemblies of the Christians, to speak in the way of teaching, in distinction from other modes of speaking in public

5. The Church was Fellowshiping

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship,
fellowship

κοινωνία (2842)

noun: dative, singular, feminine

[Find all occurrences \(approximately 18\)](#)

- 1 fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse
 - 1 the share which one has in anything, participation
 - 2 intercourse, fellowship, intimacy
 - 1 the right hand as a sign and pledge of fellowship (in fulfilling the apostolic office)
 - 3 a gift jointly contributed, a collection, a contribution, as exhibiting an embodiment and proof of fellowship

6. Celebrating the Lord's Table and Baptism

41 Then those who gladly received his word **were baptized;** and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*.

42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

It is important to note that these 2 ordinances have cost the life and ministries of many believers.

for instant

To deny infant Baptism as the Catholic church practiced it and to become an AnaBaptist (Rebaptizer) could easily cost your life.

It is a fact recognized by many recent historians, that the persecution of the Anabaptists surpassed in severity the persecution of the early Christians by pagan Rome!

Persecution began in Zurich soon after the *Brethren* had organized a congregation. Imprisonment of varying severity, sometimes in dark dungeons, was followed by executions. Within a short period the leaders of the *Brethren* lost their lives in the persecution.

Anabaptism was made a **capital crime**. Prices were set on the heads of Anabaptists. To give them food and shelter was a made a crime. The duke of Bavaria, in 1527, gave orders that the imprisoned Anabaptists should be *burned* at the stake — unless they recanted, in which case they should be *beheaded*. In *Catholic* countries the Anabaptists, as a rule, were executed by burning at the stake; in *Lutheran* and *Zwinglian* states, Anabaptists were generally executed by beheading or drowning.

To say that the Lords table should only be observed by believers only cost the ministry of Jonathan Edwards, and he was removed from his pastorate.

At the very heart of the controversy that led to Edwards's being fired was church discipline and especially the question of who was to be admitted to the Lord's Table. Jonathan Edwards had come to disagree with his venerable grandfather, and the shock to the unity of the church was enough to send Edwards tumbling out of his pulpit, twenty-three years of spectacularly faithful and fruitful ministry notwithstanding.

Edwards had seven more years to live. They would mainly be spent in Stockbridge, a mission settlement further west in Massachusetts. The last few months of his life were spent in Princeton, New Jersey.

John Piper

were baptized;

βαπτίζω (907)

verb: aorist, passive, indicative, 3rd, plural

[Find all occurrences \(approximately 87\)](#)

- 1 to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk)
- 2 to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, bathe

3 to overwhelm

Matthew 3:6

and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

Matthew 3:11

“As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Matthew 3:16

After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,

Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Acts 8:12

But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

Acts 8:13

Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed.

Acts 8:36

As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch *said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?”

Acts 8:38

And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him.

Acts 9:18

And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he got up and was baptized;

Acts 18:8

Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.

What about infant Baptism

Support

Historical

One argument in support of the baptism of infants comes from the fact that controversy over the practice is conspicuously absent from the history of the early church. There is no question that [Origen](#) was baptized as an infant in 180 A.D., just 80 years after the death of the last Apostle, John the Evangelist. There are other possible references to infant baptism at earlier dates, but these references are somewhat unclear in their meaning. Born in the mid fourth century (358 A.D.), [Augustine](#) wrote, "This doctrine is held by the whole church, not instituted by councils, but always retained." [Tertullian](#) (ca. 155-230) did argue in favor of [believer's baptism](#), but this was in reaction to the un-biblical practice that was being taught in some areas that Christians

should wait to be baptized until just before death, and not in reaction to infant baptism.

Narrative biblical passages

Acts 2:38-39 ~ "And Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.'"

Acts 16:14-15 ~ "One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.' And she prevailed upon us."

Acts 16:29-34 ~ "The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved -- you and your household.' Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God -- he and his whole family."

(Emphasis added.)

Supporters of infant baptism note that in the Acts 2 passage, "the promise is for you and your children..." in contradistinction to the adults present at Peter's address. The households of Lydia and the Philippian jailer were baptized. At issue is whether these households included children, and if those children were able to make a credible profession.

Those opposed to infant baptism note that the above passages are silent as to whether the households contained children, and (correctly) observe the weakness of an argument from silence.

While western culture emphasizes individual salvation, some supporters of infant baptism observe that God has expanded the extension of grace beyond individuals to families and households.

Didactic biblical passages

I Corinthians 1:14-16 ~ "I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel -- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power."

Colossians 2:11-12 ~ "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead."

Supporters of infant baptism observe the linkage in Colossians among circumcision, baptism, and life in Christ.

Parallels between OT and NT

Based on the linkage in Colossians, supporters of paedobaptism note that circumcision and baptism are both **signs** and **seals** of the covenant of grace.

Gen 17:9-14 ~ Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner —- those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

A few observations about Genesis 17.

- The **covenant** was between God and **Abraham**.
- The covenant was also between God and Abraham's descendants.
- The **sign** of the covenant was in **circumcision**.
- The eight-day-old male could not give his assent to enter into a covenant with God. It was the covenantal relationship of the male's father with God that demanded the circumcision.

- Compliance with the [sign](#) of [circumcision](#) was commanded; it was not optional.
- Circumcision was commanded for all of the household. In particular, it was not just for the believing Abraham, but also for:
 - the never-to-believe Ishmael, and
 - the not-yet-believing Isaac, and
 - those slaves that Abraham purchased.
- The sign of circumcision was given on the basis of Abraham's covenant with God, not on the basis of the recipient's covenant.

Romans 4:11 ~ And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.

A few observations about Romans 4:11.

- The "he" is Abraham.
- Circumcision is a [seal](#).
- The sealing ordinance is for "all who believe."

Possible objections anticipated

Here are some possible objections to the infant baptism point of view.

No examples

While there are no explicit examples of infant baptism, it should be noted that the doctrine of the [Trinity](#) or the personhood of the [Holy Spirit](#) are also constructed arguments. These arguments in support of infant baptism are also constructive arguments.

Salvation conferred by baptism

While [Catholicism](#) asserts that baptism is salvific, the adherents of infant baptism do not believe that the baptism in and of itself confers salvation. The Reformed adherents baptize not to save infants, but because they are commanded by a sovereign God who is able to save. Note that in Acts 8:13, Simon the Sorcerer "believed and was baptized." This did not confer salvation. See vv 21-22, especially "you are full of bitterness and captive to sin." No true believer would be a "captive to sin." Even [credobaptists](#) would be hard pressed to believe that baptism is sufficient for salvation.

Criticism

Historical

One of the arguments against the practice of paedobaptism is the fact that its theological foundation was not developed until [Ulrich Zwingli](#) in the sixteenth century. Some would attribute this to his desire to salvage the long-standing tradition of infant baptism in the [Roman Catholic Church](#) by finding a way to make the doctrine fit with Scripture. Opponents argue that if baptism is such a prominent theme - if it is commanded of the Church alongside the necessity of so basic a doctrine as repentance - then why did it take more than 1500 years to develop Scriptural support for baptizing infants?

According to earlier sources, infant baptism was a topic of discussion during the times of the early church. Without argument, infant baptism was even practiced by some at this time, claiming that the practice was apostolic tradition. Yet Tertullian, who is often recognized as a staunch defender of apostolic traditions, gave no defense for infant baptism.

According to the Didache, which served as an early church manual, instructions for baptism imply it is adults that are baptized:

"Before the baptism, moreover, the one who baptizes and the one being baptized must fast, and any others who can. And you must tell the one being baptized to fast for one or two days beforehand."^[\[2\]](#)^

Biblical

Perhaps the most well-known argument against paedobaptism is the fact the Bible contains no explicit examples of the practice. Rather, proponents of the doctrine point to accounts in the book of Acts that record the baptism of entire households and argue that the text implicitly includes infants, such as the examples above. However, [credobaptists](#) (those who believe that faith must precede baptism) argue that the context of both passages demonstrates that the conditions for baptism include, repentance, hearing the Word, and faithfulness to the Lord. Other New Testament verses which imply adult decisions as prerequisites for baptism include:

Matthew 3:5-6 ~ "Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins."

Galatians 3:27 ~ "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

Col. 2:12 ~ "...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead."

Question: "What does the Bible say about infant baptism / paedobaptism?"

Answer: There is much confusion about baptism in the various Christian denominations. However, this is not a result of the Bible presenting a confusing message on baptism. The Bible is abundantly clear of what baptism is, who it is for, and what it accomplishes. In the Bible, only believers who had placed their faith in Christ were baptized - as a public testimony of their faith and identification with Him (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4). Water baptism by immersion is a step of obedience after faith in Christ. It is a proclamation of faith in Christ, a statement of submission to Him, and an identification with His death, burial, and resurrection.

With this in view, infant baptism is not a Biblical practice. An infant cannot place his or her faith in Christ. An infant cannot make a conscious decision to obey Christ. An infant cannot understand what water baptism symbolizes. The Bible does not record any infants being baptized. Infant baptism is the origin of the sprinkling and pouring methods of baptism - as it is unwise and unsafe to immerse an infant under water. Even the method of infant baptism fails to agree with the Bible. How does pouring or sprinkling illustrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ?

Many Christians who practice infant baptism do so because they understand infant baptism as the new covenant equivalent of circumcision. In this view, just as circumcision joined a Hebrew to the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, so baptism joined a person to the New Covenant of salvation through Jesus Christ. This view is unbiblical. The New Testament nowhere describes baptism as the New Covenant replacement for Old Covenant circumcision. The New Testament nowhere describes baptism as a sign of the New Covenant. It is faith in Jesus Christ that enables a person to enjoy the blessings of the New Covenant (1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 9:15).

Baptism does not save a person. It does not matter if you were baptized by immersion, pouring, or sprinkling - if you have not first

trusted in Christ for salvation, baptism (no matter the method) is meaningless and useless. Water baptism by immersion is a step of obedience to be done after salvation as a public profession of faith in Christ and identification with Him. Infant baptism does not fit the Biblical definition of baptism or the Biblical method of baptism. If Christian parents wish to dedicate their child to Christ, then a baby dedication service is entirely appropriate. However, even if infants are dedicated to the Lord, when they grow up they will still have to make a personal decision to believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved.

The Lord's Table

- 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Perhaps the breaking of bread included both the Lord's Table and a common meal (cf. Acts 2:46; 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23–25; Jude 12).

Toussaint, S. D. (1985). Acts. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 360). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- 46 So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

Ac 20:7

7 Now on the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight

1 Co 10:16

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?

1 Co 11:23–26

- 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.

The breaking of bread (τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου [*tēi klasei tou artou*]). The word κλάσις [*klasis*] is an old word, but used only by Luke in the N. T. (Luke 24:35; Acts 2:42), though the verb κλάω [*klaō*] occurs in other parts of the N. T. as in verse 46. The problem here is whether Luke refers to the ordinary meal as in Luke 24:35 or to the Lord’s Supper. The same verb κλάω [*klaō*] is used of breaking bread at the ordinary meal (Luke 24:30) or the Lord’s Supper (Luke 22:19). It is generally supposed that the early disciples attached so much significance to the breaking of bread at the ordinary meals, more than our saying grace, that they followed the meal with the Lord’s Supper at first, a combination

called ἀγάπαι [*agapai*] or love-feasts. “There can be no doubt that the Eucharist at this period was preceded uniformly by a common repast, as was the case when the ordinance was instituted” (Hackett). This led to some abuses as in 1 Cor. 11:20. Hence it is possible that what is referred to here is the Lord’s Supper following the ordinary meal. “To simply explain τη κλασει του ἄρτου [*tēi klasei tou artou*] as=‘The Holy Communion’ is to pervert the plain meaning of words, and to mar the picture of family life, which the text places before us as the ideal of the early believers” (Page). But in Acts 20:7 they seem to have come together especially for the observance of the Lord’s Supper. Perhaps there is no way to settle the point conclusively here

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Ac 2:42). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

The History of Church if full of misunderstanding and abuse of the Lords Table

Roman Catholic

The Eucharist (Greek: 'thanksgiving') is a Sacrament, and like all Sacraments, it conveys grace to all who receive it worthily. The Eucharist also makes present Christ's sacrifice on the Cross in an unbloody manner, for that reason it is sometimes known as the **Holy sacrifice of the Mass**. Through it, forgiveness of sin may be obtained.

On consecration, the bread and the wine change completely into the actual body and blood of Christ. This change is known as **Transubstantiation** and Christ's presence in the elements is called the **Real Presence**.

From the Council of Trent (1545-1563):

"...By the consecration of the bread and wine there takes place a change of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood. This change the holy Catholic Church has fittingly and properly called transubstantiation."

Lutheran

In Lutheranism, there is a **Sacramental Union** of the bread and wine with the body and blood of Christ. In other words, Christ's body and blood are present "in, with and under " the forms of bread and wine. This is sometimes known as **Consubstantiation** (although Luther himself did not use this term).

Luther explained his view by using an analogy of an iron rod placed into a fire: both are united in the red-hot iron, yet both are also distinct.

Lutheranism rejects the view of the Eucharist as "making present" Christ's sacrifice on the Cross.

Reformed and Presbyterian

The Reformed and Presbyterian view derives from the teachings of John Calvin: Christ is not present literally in the elements, but he is spiritually present.

Those who receive the elements with faith can receive the actual body and blood of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit which works through the sacrament, a view sometimes known as **Receptionism**.

Calvin explained his view of the Eucharist in his Institutes:

"The rule which the pious ought always to observe is, whenever they see the symbols instituted by the Lord, to think and feel surely persuaded that the truth of the thing signified is also present. For why does the Lord put the symbol of his body into your hands, but just to assure you that you truly partake of him? If this is true let us feel as much assured that the visible sign is given us in seal of an invisible gift as that his body itself is given to us."

Other Groups

Many other groups (e.g. the Baptists) refer to the Eucharist as the **Lord's Supper** or **Holy Communion** and deny any form of physical or spiritual presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Rather, the Lord's supper is a remembrance of Christ's suffering and a reminder of his power to overcome

sin and death. This view derives from the teachings of the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli and is commonly known as **Memorialism**.

The Anglican and Methodist Churches have a wide variety of views on this subject.

The writer of Hebrews is inescapably clear about the singular nature of Christ's sacrifice.

For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; *nor was it that He would offer Himself often*, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. Otherwise, *He would have needed to suffer often* since the foundation of the world; but now *once* at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, so Christ also, having been *offered once to bear the sins of many*, will appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who eagerly await Him. (Hebrews 9:24-28, emphasis added)

Scripture does not waver on the finality of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf. He came to make a one-time offering for sin, never to be repeated. It was a contrast to the Mosaic

covenant, which necessitated a system of near-constant sacrifices. But none of the Old Testament sacrifices could actually atone for sin. They could only serve as a reminder of God's deliverance and foreshadow Christ's final sacrifice which would conquer sin.

In the practice of the mass, the Roman Catholic Church has reinstituted an unbiblical system of repeated sacrifices, blaspheming Christ and perverting His work on the cross. How important is the mass to Catholicism? The Catechism of the Catholic Church refers to it as "the source and summit of the Christian life." That is to say, it is the origin and the high point of the Catholic faith. It's not peripheral—it's the heart and soul of the entire system.

In his book *The Faith of Millions*, John O'Brien, a Catholic priest, explains the procedure of the mass.

When the priest pronounces the tremendous words of consecration, he reaches up into the heavens, brings Christ down from His throne, and places Him upon our altar to be offered up again as the Victim for the sins of man. It is a power greater than that of monarchs and emperors: it is greater than that of saints and angels, greater than that of Seraphim and Cherubim. Indeed it is greater even than the power of the Virgin Mary. While the Blessed Virgin was the human agency by which Christ became incarnate a single time, the priest brings Christ down from heaven, and renders Him present on our altar as the eternal Victim for the sins of man—not once but a thousand times! The priest speaks and lo! Christ, the eternal and omnipotent God,

bows His head in humble obedience to the priest's command.

Put simply, the Catholic Church won't let Christ off the cross. In the mass, the substance of the bread and the wine are supposedly transformed into the actual body and blood of Jesus, rendering Him as a repeated, incomplete sacrifice for sins. He's not Lord and Savior—He's the eternal Victim, perpetually bound to the altar by the power of the priest, visibly and ubiquitously symbolized in the Roman Catholic crucifix.

That's a direct denial of Paul's teaching in Romans 6:8-10. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is *never to die again*; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin *once for all*; but the life that He lives, He lives to God (emphasis added).

By denying the singular sacrifice of Christ, Catholicism imbues its illegitimate priesthood with artificial power and authority, enslaving its followers to a repetitious system of ineffective, ungodly offerings for sin. It's essentially paganism sprinkled with enough Christian terminology to deceive and delude souls, convincing them Christ's death on the cross was not enough to accomplish their salvation. In effect, the mass cancels out the real meaning of the cross.

In *Light from Old Times*, J.C. Ryle explained the theological and spiritual implications—and *imperfections*—of the Catholic mass.

Whatever men please to think or say, the Romish doctrine of the *real presence*, if pursued to its legitimate consequences, obscures every leading doctrine of the gospel, and damages and interferes with the whole system of Christ's truth. Grant for a moment that the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice, and not a sacrament—grant that every time the words of the consecration are used the natural body and blood of Christ are present on the communion table under the forms of bread and wine—grant that every one who eats that consecrated bread and drinks that consecrated wine does really eat and drink the natural body and blood of Christ—grant for a moment these things, and then see what momentous consequences result from these premises. You spoil the blessed doctrine of *Christ's finished work* when He died on the cross. A sacrifice that needs to be repeated is not a perfect and complete thing. You spoil the *priestly office* of Christ. If there are priests that can offer an acceptable sacrifice to God besides Him, the great High Priest is robbed of His glory. You spoil the scriptural doctrine of the *Christian ministry*. You exalt sinful men into the position of mediators between God and man. You give to the sacramental elements of bread and wine an honour and veneration they were never meant to receive, and produce an *idolatry* to be abhorred of faithful Christians. Last, but not least, you overthrow the true doctrine of *Christ's human nature*. If the body born of the Virgin Mary can be in more places than one at the same time, it is not a body like our own, and Jesus was not “the last Adam” in the truth of our nature.

In simple terms, the mass has nothing to do with the Christian gospel, nothing to do with the Christian life, and nothing to do with the Christian church. It rejects the true, biblical nature of God, Christ, sin, salvation, atonement, and forgiveness. It robs the cross of its meaning and replaces it with superficial, man-centered idolatry. It's a lie, a fraud, and a damning fabrication that enslaves hearts and ushers people to hell.