

Lesson four: The Mass (part one) – the bread

Intro: A very long sentence.

Ephesians 1 contains a statement that we dare not miss in our approach to discovering the error of, "The Mass." We find it in verse 15-23. Verses 15-21 constitute one of the longest sentences in the Bible. Let's read it.

An amazing passage is it not? Notice especially the exalted place of Christ in relation to His church. He is the Head of the church in every conceivable way. It is specifically this that observance of the Mass challenges.

Once again for newcomers: we are letting the Catholic Church speak for itself. Sources of Catholic Doctrine.

- Catechism of the Catholic Church- Edited by Joseph Ratzinger [Also known as Pope Benedict XVI (1994)]

Tonight we begin a two-part session on the Mass beginning with the bread.

The Mass was instituted by Jesus at the last supper [610-611, 1323, 1337-1340]

Catholicism declares that when in Matthew 26.26 Jesus said, "This is my body and Matthew 26.28, "This is my blood," he literally changed the bread taken from the loaf on the table and the wine contained in the cup or chalice into his literal body and blood. He then offered them as a **sacrifice** to his Father in heaven. According to Catholicism this was the institution of the first Holy Eucharist. When He said in Luke's version of the Last Supper in Luke 22.19, "Do this in remembrance of Me," He was commissioning the disciples and their line of **replacements** to observe the continual 'sacrament and sacrifice' called the Eucharist (thanksgiving GK) perpetually. The observance is both a *sacrament* and a *sacrifice*.¹ It is a sacrament in that it increases *sanctifying grace* and *actual grace* for the **recipient**. It is a sacrifice in that it continually makes a fresh offering for sins **to God**. The Mass is to be celebrated often even daily if possible; the more you do it the more grace you gain.

¹ Ott, pg 402

The consecration of the Mass requires the ministry of an officially ordained priest.

The Climax of the Mass happens when the priest repeats the words of Christ the he spoke at the last supper. At that time just like Jesus did at the last supper the elements (bread and wine) are substantially changed although their **appearance** is unaffected. This is called *transubstantiation*. Catholicism teaches five characteristics of Christ's presence in the Eucharist.

...in the sacrament of the Eucharist Christ is present, in a manner altogether unique, God and man, whole and entire, substantially and continuously. – Vatican II Sacred Liturgy no. 6.

- It is **unique** – there is no parallel in nature with what happens on the altar
- It is the God/Man – the elements become God and Man because like what was born of the Virgin the elements are "...the true body of Christ the Lord, the same that was born of the virgin... [1106, 1374]
- It is **whole** and entire – each minute part of the bread or crumb and each drop of wine contain the entire body and blood of Jesus.
- It is **substantial** – the outer appearance does not change; the inner substance does change into the flesh and blood of Jesus.
- It is **continuous** - This is astounding. As long as the bread and wine stay uncontaminated the presence of Jesus body and blood is permanent. They had better not drop a crumb or a drop of wine. A small gold-plated safe called a *tabernacle* is present on the table so that any consecrated wafers or wine can be stored there. A small lamp is left lighted since Jesus is eucharistically present in the *tabernacle*. When a Catholic passes by the tabernacle he is to genuflect and briefly keel on one knee in reverence.

The authority of the priest must be mentioned here. Reading from Ludwig Ott's book *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* as well as John O'Brien's *The Faith of Millions*

The Blessed Sacrament

Among the 7 sacraments of the Church the **Mass** is the greatest. Why? you might ask. The reason is because Jesus is **present** eucharistically.

What material food is in our bodily life, Holy Communion wonderfully achieves in our spiritual life. Communion with the flesh of the risen Christ, a flesh, "given life and giving life through the Holy Spirit," preserves, increases and renews the life of grace received at baptism [1392].

Since The Mass is seen to help attain to salvation the church encourages the participation in Mass as often as possible even daily. Catholics are required to receive communion at the weekly Mass, on certain feast days of the Church and at last once during the Easter season [1389, 2042, 2181, 1417, 2042]. To not do so in obedience to the church is a *mortal* sin. No catholic can receive the wafer (Eucharist) that does not believe in the real presence of Jesus in the elements. As the wafer is held in front of the person and before it is placed on the tongue the priest will say, "The body of Christ." The person is to say, "Amen," meaning, "Yes, it is true."

Worshipping the Eucharist. [1378-1381, 1418]

There should be no doubt in anyone's mind, "that all the faithful ought to show to this most holy sacrament the worship which is due to the true God, as has always been the custom of the Catholic Church. Nor is it to be adored any less because it was instituted by Christ to be eaten." – Vatican II "sacred Liturgy no. 21.

The Catholic Church teaches that the faithful are to "hold the Eucharist in highest honor...**worshipping** it with the same worship of *latria* or adoration that we offer to God [1178, 1183, 1378, 1418, 2691]. The church promotes the worship of the Eucharist with special orders of men and women who are dedicated to the continual worship of the Eucharist. The Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament , The Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood and the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament are a few examples.

A BIBLICAL RESPONSE

The bread and the wine are **symbols** or signs that point to the reality. Several facts:

There is not a scriptural **hint** that the elements changed at the Lord's Supper. Today as well there is no evidence of any change in the elements after it is

consecrated. Catholics object and say it is miraculous therefore beyond our observation.

If "transubstantiation" does indeed occur and the bread becomes flesh and the wine becomes blood, then **cannibalism** is being invoked.

Would a Jew be required to drink blood? If so, it would have been in direct contradiction and disobedience to Deuteronomy 17:10-14 where drinking blood is **forbidden** since the life of the flesh is in the blood. See also: Acts 10:14; Acts 15:29

There is no record of the Apostles ever **guarding** every crumb of bread and every drop of juice. It is never once stated that anyone ever worshipped the elements of communion.

After supper Jesus actually referred to the symbol of his blood as wine again. Was this transubstantiation in reverse (Mt 26:29)? When Jesus said "This is my body," he wasn't saying I am in your presence and soon to be in your stomach.

To say that priests world over, thousands of times every day handle the physical body of the Lord in each and every crumb and drop of wine is untenable in the scriptures. In the Bible Jesus was only in **one place** at a time. (Heb 1:3).

All problems are solved when we recognize that the elements are symbols and are intended to help us remember the **reality** of the cross not **reenact** the sacrifice of the cross thousands of times a day. No, a million times no! Heb 9:11-12

Jesus spoke **figuratively** very often in the scriptures even when referring to himself. (Bread, light, door, good shepherd, resurrection, life, way, truth, true vine...) He even stated that he was speaking symbolically right after the Lord's supper in *Jn 16:25*. Since the bread and wine are not literal spiritual food that enriches and increases grace but rather are reminders of his grace and sacrifice then ordinary bread and grape juice will do.

Eternal Life is through faith in Christ **Alone** - The main passage of defense for Catholics regarding the body and blood is Jn 6:51-59 especially v.51. *Jn 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." This represents a classic case of ignoring the context to prove a predetermined point of belief. He was using their own illustration about manna to point out that they didn't need a **meal** they needed the **Messiah!** He was pointing to the cross not a sacrament.

The Catholics will point out that many ceased following him at that point because it was a **hard saying** (v.60) just like transubstantiation is a hard saying. It is true it was a hard truth that Jesus communicated but that did not mean that they had understood the real meaning of his statements. Jesus declared that flesh profited nothing at all that His words were life (Jn 6.63-69). It was not eating his flesh or drinking his blood that saved them it was **faith** in his name that saved them. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!

Okay does it really make any difference? So what if a Catholic believes that Christ is present in the elements; is there really any harm done? Yes! A resounding yes is the answer. Catholics line up by the millions at Mass each week expecting to "receive Christ". The Bible uses that idea in Jn 1.12 and many other places but it has to do with receiving Jesus by faith one time for new birth and salvation not hundreds of times in a supposed buildup of grace that gives you a better chance of salvation. But what do Catholics actually receive? They receive a wafer that leads them to **false hope**. They think that they are increasing grace when in truth they are frustrating grace and replacing it with works.

Catholicism leads people into **idolatry** by asking that they "worship the Eucharist with supreme adoration [1378-1381]. GOD FORBIDS THE WORSHIP OF ANY OBJECT EVEN THOSE MEANT TO REPRESENT HIM [EXO 20.4-5]. *Is42:8 I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images.*

Catholicism is not simply another flavor of the same essence of Christianity; it is not even Biblical Christianity **at all**. How important is the Mass to Catholicism? In the New Catechism there are 9 paragraphs dedicated to justification (wrongly so) and 84 paragraphs dedicated to the Mass. It is the primary sacrament and the pinnacle ministry of the Priest.

We need to pray for and seek to evangelize our Catholic family, friends and associations.

The Mass: Error Versus Truth

The Catholic Church Teaches	The Bible Teaches
1. The Last Supper was a real sacrifice in which Christ's blood was poured out for our sins in the cup [610-611, 621, 1339].	The Last Supper was a Passover meal. Christ's blood was poured out for our sins at the cross (1 Peter 2:24).
2. The bread and wine become the real body and blood of Christ [1373-1377].	The bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23-25).
3. Christ's body and blood exist wholly and entirely in every fragment of consecrated bread and wine in every Roman Catholic church around the world [1374, 1377].	Christ is bodily present in heaven (Hebrews 10:12,13).
4. The consecrated bread and wine are heavenly food which help one to attain to eternal life [1392, 1405, 1419].	The bread and wine are symbols which help one to remember Christ (Luke 22:19).
5. God desires that consecrated bread and wine be worshiped as divine [1378-1381].	God forbids the worship of any object, even those intended to represent Him (Exodus 20:4,5; Isaiah 42:8).
6. Christ has ordained certain men to a ministerial priesthood to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross [1142, 1547, 1577].	Christ has ordained every believer to a holy and royal priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices, the praise of their lips, and lives yielded to God (1 Peter 2:5-10; Hebrews 13:15; Romans 12:1).
7. The Sacrifice of the Mass is the sacrifice of the cross [1085, 1365-1367]. Only the manner in which it is offered is different [1367].	The sacrifice of the cross was a historical event. It occurred once, approximately 2000 years ago, outside Jerusalem (Mark 15:21-41).
8. The sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated in the Sacrifice of the Mass [1323, 1382].	The sacrifice of the cross is finished (John 19:30).
9. The Mass makes present Christ in His death and victimhood [1355, 1362, 1364, 1367, 1409].	Christ should not be presented in His death and victimhood, for He has risen and is "alive forevermore" (Revelation 1:17,18; Romans 6:9,10).
10. At each Mass the priest re-presents to the Father the sacrifice of Christ [1354, 1357].	Christ presented the sacrifice of Himself to the Father "once at the consummation of the ages" (Hebrews 9:24-28).
11. The Mass is an unbloody sacrifice which atones for the sins of the living and the dead [1367, 1371, 1414].	Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Leviticus 17:11; Hebrews 9:22).
12. Each sacrifice of the Mass appeases God's wrath against sin [1371, 1414].	The once-for-all sacrifice of the cross fully appeased God's wrath against sin (Hebrews 10:12-18).

The Mass: Error Versus Truth

13. The faithful receive the benefits of the cross in fullest measure through the sacrifice of the Mass [1366, 1407].	Believers receive the benefits of the cross in fullest measure in Christ through faith (Ephesians 1:3-14).
14. The sacrificial work of redemption is continually carried out through the sacrifice of the Mass [1364, 1405, 1846].	The sacrificial work of redemption was finished when Christ gave His life for us on the cross (Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 1:3).
15. The Church is to continue the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of the world [1323, 1382, 1405, 1407].	The church is to proclaim the Lord's death for the salvation of the world (1 Corinthians 11:26).

ⁱⁱ Bracketed numbers are indexed to the numbered paragraphs of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.