

Lord's Day 29

Heidelberg Catechism

The Second Part – Of Man's Deliverance – Of The Holy Supper Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Question 78

Do then the bread and wine become the very body and blood of Christ?

Answer

Not at all; but as the water in baptism is not changed into the blood of Christ, neither is the washing away of sin itself, being only the sign and confirmation thereof appointed of God;¹ so the bread in the Lord's Supper is not changed into the very body of Christ,² though agreeably to the nature and properties of sacraments,³ it is called the body of Christ Jesus.

(Continued...)

Matt. 26:26

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

Mark 14:24

And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.

1 1 Cor. 10:1–4

Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

1 Pet. 3:21

The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

John 6:35

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:62, 63

What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

2 1 Cor 10:16 ff.

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 Cor. 11:20 ff.

When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's upper.

3 Gen. 17:10, 11

This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

Gen. 17:14

And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

Ex. 12:26, 27

And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

Ex. 12:43

And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof:

Ex. 12:48

And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

Acts 7:8

And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

Question 79

Why then doth Christ call the bread His body, and the cup His blood, or the new covenant in His blood; and Paul, the communion of the body and blood of Christ?

Answer

Christ speaks thus not without great reason, namely, not only thereby to teach us that as bread and wine support this temporal life, so His crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink whereby our souls are fed to eternal life;⁴ but more especially by these visible signs and pledges to assure us that we are as really partakers of His true body and blood (by the operation of the Holy Ghost) as we receive by the mouths of our bodies these holy signs in remembrance of Him;⁵ and that all His sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction for our sins to God.⁶

4 John 6:51

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

John 6:55, 56

For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

5 1 Cor. 10:16, 17

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? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

1 Cor. 11:26–28

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

Eph. 5:30

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

6 Rom. 5:9

Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Rom. 5:18, 19

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Rom. 8:4

That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit