

The Augsburg Confession

Article 10

The Lord's Supper

In the previous article the doctrine of Baptism was discussed. There the Lutherans point out to the emperor that they teach and administer the Sacrament of Baptism according to Scripture and not like the Anabaptists. Now in Article 10 they move on to the other Sacrament, and their teaching concerning the Lord's Supper. Once again the Lutherans were eager to show where they were in agreement with the Roman Church on the teaching of the Lord's Supper. This was in contrast to the followers of Zwingli who claimed that Christ's body and blood was only represented by the bread and the wine in the Sacrament.

Once again, this article is very short and concise as it describes the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament: *"It is taught among us that the true body and blood of Christ are really present in the Supper of our Lord under the form of bread and wine and are there distributed and received. The contrary doctrine is therefore rejected."*

Other Names for the Sacrament of the Altar:

The Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20);

Holy Communion (1 Corinthians 10:16);

the Lord's Table (1 Corinthians 10:21);

and the Eucharist (which means "thanksgiving").

It might seem from this article that there was no disagreement between the Lutherans and the Romans on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, but that is not the case as we will see when we consider Article 22 and Article 24. But it was important for the Lutheran's to clarify their teaching about this Sacrament and clearly point out that they were not agreed with the Zwinglians who denied that the body and blood of Christ were *"really present"* in this Sacrament. Here in this article, the Lutherans do not speak of a general presence of Christ (concerning His omnipresence) as Zwingli taught, but teach the specific (true) presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. (Compare hymn 306:3-5 in *The Lutheran Hymnal*.)

The Presence of Christ in the Sacrament

When we study the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper in various “Christian” denominations we will find three different ways of understanding the presence of Christ in the Sacrament.

<i>Group</i>	<i>Doctrine</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Roman Catholic	Transubstantiation	bread <u>changed into</u> body wine <u>changed into</u> blood
Luther	Real Presence	body <u>present with</u> bread blood <u>present with</u> wine
Zwingli *	Representation	bread <u>symbolizes</u> body wine <u>symbolizes</u> blood

* The vast majority of “Christian” denominations follow Zwingli and teach that Christ’s body and blood are only represented by the bread and the wine, and are not truly present.

The Real Presence

The chief arguments of Zwingli against the Real Presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper was that since Christ had ascended into heaven, it was impossible for His body to be present here on earth in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. But with Luther we believe that what God says, He can do, for with God nothing is impossible. More specifically, we believe and teach the Real Presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper for the following Scriptural reasons:

- First, because of the clear words of Jesus on Maundy Thursday evening when He instituted the Lord’s Supper. Jesus says, ***“This is My body”***, the same body ***“which is given for you”*** (Luke 22:19), and ***“This is My blood”***, the same blood ***“which is shed for many”*** (Mark 14:24).
- The apostle Paul describes the intimate relationship between the bread and Christ’s body, and the wine and Christ’s blood as a “communion” – a “sharing” or “fellowship”: ***“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 Corinthians 10:16).

- In addition, Paul states that unworthy communicants are guilty, not of bread and wine, but of the body and blood of Christ: ***“Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.... For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*** (1 Corinthians 11:27,29).

This point is worthy of special notice because Zwingli and his followers generally believe that an unbeliever does not receive the body and blood of Christ (even symbolically) because it is based on faith. Zwingli wrote: *“I believe that in the holy Eucharist... the true body of Christ is present by the contemplation of faith; that is that they who thank the Lord for the kindness conferred upon us in his Son acknowledge that he assumed true flesh, in it truly suffered, truly washed away our sins in his own blood; and thus everything done by Christ becomes present to them by the contemplation of faith. But that the body of Christ in essence and really – that is, the natural body itself – is either present in the supper or masticated with our mouth or teeth, as the Papists and some who long for the flesh-pots of Egypt assert, we not only deny, but firmly maintain is an error opposed to God's Word”* (Ulrich Zwingli in *Reckoning the faith of Ulrich Zwingli to the Roman Emperor Charles*). But based on the passages above we teach that an unworthy guest receives Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament not for the forgiveness of sins, but to his own great harm.

- While Scripture asserts that Christ's body and blood are truly present in this Sacrament, it also teaches that the bread and wine are not changed into the body and blood of Christ (transubstantiation). Paul clearly states that, in addition to the body and blood of Christ, we eat bread and drink wine in the Sacrament: ***“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup”*** (1 Corinthians 11:26-28).

Transubstantiation

In the Roman Confutation the Catholics agreed with the Lutheran statement in this article saying, *“The tenth article gives no offense in its words, because they confess that in the Eucharist... the body and blood of Christ are substantially and truly present...”*. And in the Apology the Lutherans paraphrase a section from the Confutation *“the substance of the bread is changed into*

the body of Christ” but do not note the difference between Transubstantiation and the Real Presence. It seems strange that the Lutherans did not address the subject of transubstantiation in the Augsburg Confession or the Apology. It may have been that the distinction between the Real Presence and Transubstantiation was not yet clearly defined at this time.

But, seven years later, when Luther writes his Smalcald Articles the lines between the Roman teaching of Transubstantiation and the Lutheran teaching of the Real Presence were clearly drawn. Luther writes: *“As regards transubstantiation, we care nothing about the sophisticated subtlety by which they teach that bread and wine leave or lose their own natural substance, and that there remain only the appearance and color of bread, and not true bread. For it is in perfect agreement with Holy Scriptures that there is, and remains, bread, as Paul himself calls it, 1 Cor. 10,16: The bread which we break. And 1 Cor. 11,28: Let him so eat of that bread”* (Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article VI). This article stresses the real presence of Christ’s body and blood in the bread and the wine of the Lord’s Supper, and the reception of every communicant of Christ’s body and blood. This Article is still applicable for us today since the Reformed churches still deny the presence of Christ’s body and blood and the Roman church still holds to the teaching of Transubstantiation.