How Did We Get Here

Lesson 7 The Lord’s Supper Student Notes

Follow each section with the presentation. Record key distinctions, questions, and supporting Scripture in the ruled space.

Slide 1 The Lord’s Supper

The central question is what Jesus intended and how Christians came to disagree. We will trace the observance from the New Testament through the early church and Reformation.

Scripture and sources Luke 22:14–20; 1 Corinthians 10–11

Notes

Slide 2 What Do We Call It?

The Lord’s Supper, Communion, breaking of bread, Eucharist, and Mass are terms with different origins and emphases. “Eucharist” comes from the Greek for thanksgiving; “host” is a more specific name for consecrated bread.

Scripture and sources 1 Corinthians 11:20; 10:16; Acts 2:42; 20:7

Notes

Slide 3 What Does the New Testament Establish?

Jesus identifies bread and cup with his body and blood, commands remembrance, and connects the cup with the new covenant. Paul describes participation in Christ and proclaiming his death until he comes.

Scripture and sources Luke 22:14–20; 1 Corinthians 10:16–17; 11:23–29

Notes

Slide 4 How Did “Eucharist” Become the Name?

The New Testament uses language of giving thanks. The Didache applies eucharistia to a Christian thanksgiving meal; Ignatius uses it as a recognized designation. Justin explicitly names the food and drink received “Eucharist.” Its meanings broadened rather than replacing one another.

Scripture and sources Didache 9–10, 14; Ignatius, Philadelphians 4 and Smyrnaeans 7; Justin, First Apology 65–66

Notes

Slide 5 How Did the Supper Become an “Offering”?

The Didache invokes Malachi’s “pure sacrifice”; Justin connects Eucharistic prayer and thanksgiving with sacrifice; Irenaeus emphasizes offering created gifts to God. These writers do not all use the word sacrifice in precisely the same sense.

Scripture and sources Didache 14; Justin, Dialogue with Trypho 41, 117; Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.17–18

Notes

Slide 6 Does Scripture Support the Supper as Sacrifice?

Jesus commands remembrance, and Paul speaks of proclamation and participation. Hebrews commends sacrifices of praise. These do not explicitly command offering the bread and wine as a sacrifice. Consider where early writers moved from direct teaching to theological inference, especially in their application of Malachi 1:11.

Scripture and sources Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 10:16–21; 11:26; Hebrews 13:15; Malachi 1:6–14

Notes

Slide 7 Early Views: What Is Received at the Table?

Ignatius associates the Eucharist with Christ’s flesh in opposition to Docetism. Justin describes the food as more than ordinary bread and drink. Irenaeus speaks of earthly and heavenly realities and connects the Eucharist to bodily resurrection. None supplies the later technical definition of transubstantiation.

Scripture and sources Ignatius, Smyrnaeans 7; Justin, First Apology 66; Irenaeus, Against Heresies 4.18.5; 5.2.2–3

Notes

Slide 8 From Mystery to Explanation

Ambrose emphasizes change through consecration. Augustine employs both sign language and language of participation. Paschasius stresses the identity of the Eucharist with Christ’s historical body; Ratramnus distinguishes the outward signs from spiritual reception. Avoid reading later denominational categories directly into these writers.

Scripture and sources Ambrose, On the Mysteries 9; Augustine, relevant sacramental writings; Paschasius and Ratramnus, On the Body and Blood of the Lord

Notes

Slide 9 When Interpretations Became Requirements

In 1059 Berengar was required to affirm a strikingly physical confession, including language of breaking and chewing Christ’s body. In 1079 a new confession emphasized substantial conversion of bread and wine. The issue became not only interpretation but also church authority to enforce a formula.

Scripture and sources Roman synods of 1059 and 1079; Berengar of Tours and Lanfranc

Notes

Slide 10 Transubstantiation Becomes Doctrine

The Fourth Lateran Council (1215) used the term transubstantiated. In the later scholastic explanation, the substance of bread and wine changes while their perceptible qualities remain. Aquinas developed the explanation; Trent reaffirmed it in 1551.

Scripture and sources Fourth Lateran Council, constitution 1 (1215); Aquinas, Summa Theologiae III, q. 75; Council of Trent, Session XIII

Notes

Slide 11 Luther vs. Zwingli: “This Is My Body”

Luther insists on Christ’s true bodily presence while bread and wine remain. Zwingli argues that “is” can be figurative and emphasizes remembrance, faith, and Christ’s bodily presence in heaven. Both appeal to Scripture but disagree about the words of institution.

Scripture and sources Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 10:16; John 6:63; Luther and Zwingli on the Supper

Notes

Slide 12 Marburg, 1529: Unity Stopped at the Table

At Marburg Luther and Zwingli reached broad agreement on fourteen articles, but Article 15 records disagreement concerning Christ’s bodily presence in the Supper. They agreed on important aspects of Christian faith and the Supper yet could not establish full theological unity.

Scripture and sources Marburg Articles (1529), especially Article 15

Notes

Slide 13 Calvin: Real Participation, Spiritually

Calvin teaches that bread and wine remain and Christ’s human body is in heaven. Through the Holy Spirit, believers genuinely receive Christ by faith and are spiritually nourished. He rejects both bodily presence in the elements and the claim that the Supper is only an empty memorial.

Scripture and sources 1 Corinthians 10:16; John 6:53–56; Acts 3:21; Calvin, Institutes IV.17

Notes

Slide 14 Four Major Understandings Compared

Roman Catholic teaching affirms transubstantiation; Lutheran teaching affirms sacramental bodily presence with bread and wine remaining; Calvin’s Reformed view emphasizes spiritual participation through faith; Zwingli’s memorial view emphasizes remembrance and proclamation. These are summaries, not complete descriptions of every church.

Scripture and sources Compare the traditions’ confessions and the words of institution

Notes

Slide 15 Return to Scripture: What Did Jesus Intend?

Christ commands remembrance; Paul describes participation and proclamation. The New Testament does not provide a single technical explanation of how Christ relates to the elements. Ask what Scripture requires Christians to affirm and what remains a theological interpretation.

Scripture and sources Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 10:16–17; 11:23–29; Hebrews 10:10–14

Notes
