

# **HOW IS CHRIST THERE?**

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# HOW IS CHRIST THERE?

FROM MARTIN LUTHER'S  
*Sermon on the Sacrament of Christ's Body  
and Blood against the Fanatics*

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# FOREWORD

What more is there to be said about the Lord's Supper? It is not that the more needs to be said, but the essence of the Lord's Supper, the heart of the matter, needs to be understood. Unfortunately, in the plethora of writings on the sacrament that have appeared among Lutherans since the end of World War II, such understanding has been lost, both among Christian academics as well as the basic person in the pew.

This work from Martin Luther, originally appearing in 1526, remedies this situation by providing a clear and precise explanation of not only the Lord's Supper, but also confession, both public and private. Here is found not a tome of ethereal theological ruminations, but a booklet using simple, down to earth examples, as tools for understanding how Christ can truly be present in the Lord's Supper with His body and blood "for us Christians to eat and drink" wherever and whenever it is celebrated throughout the Church.

More need not be said. The work speaks for itself. The greater historical and current theological context of the original work are provided by the translator, Holger Sonntag, in an extensive Afterword.

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Paul Strawn



# 1

## INTRODUCTION

There are two aspects of the Lord's Supper which should be understood and taught. The first is what is believed about it. This is called the object of faith (in Latin: *objectum fidei*). The object of faith is that which is believed. It is that to which we are to cling in faith.

The second aspect of the Lord's Supper to be understood and taught is faith itself. In other words: How is that which is believed used as it should be?

The object of faith is something outside of man, something man sees, namely, the Lord's Supper itself. We believe that there Christ's body and blood are truly in the bread

and wine.

Faith, however, is inside of man. It cannot leave man's heart. Faith consists in how the heart considers the Lord's Supper which is outside of man.

Up until now, I have not said much about faith's object, the Lord's Supper. I have instead written much about faith, which is certainly no bad thing!

Currently, however, many are maligning the Lord's Supper itself. Highly respected preachers are of various opinions concerning it. As a result, a large number of people have become utterly convinced that Christ's body and blood are not in the bread and wine. So it is this aspect of the Lord's Supper which must now be addressed.

From the outset it should be said: If a person is caught in this error, I would advise him not to take part in the Lord's Supper until he strongly believes Christ is present there with his body and blood. After all, the Words of Christ are simple and clear: "Take, eat; this is my body which is

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***They abandon clear words and follow their own ideas.***

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given for you. Drink of it all of you; this is my blood that is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me" (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:18-20; 1 Cor. 11:23-25).

We must insist on these words. They are spoken simply and clearly. Denying such simplicity and clarity takes great effort, as those who do readily admit.

Still they abandon clear words and follow their own ideas. They thereby turn light into darkness.

The person who wants to do the right thing and avoid

trouble beware! The devil has aroused much hairsplitting in the world concerning this subject. He would like nothing better than to suck the egg empty and leave us with only a shell. In other words, the devil would like nothing better than to remove the body and blood of Christ from the Lord's Supper, so that all that we receive is common bread and wine like what we have at home.

Those who reject the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine call us cannibals and vampires. They even call us worshipers of a baked god.

In this they are like the Arab philosopher Averroes (1126-1198). At one point he had been a Christian, but came to ridicule and blaspheme believers in Christ saying: "There is no people on earth that is more wretched than the Christians. They devour their god. No other people have ever done such a thing."

Admittedly this would be an excellent argument. It is this very argument the devil now advances everywhere against us

But God delights in doing what the world considers foolish and offensive. So Paul in 1 Cor. 1:23: "We preach the crucified Christ, an offense to the Jews, a foolishness to the Pagans" and in verse 21: "Because the world did not recognize by its wisdom God in his wisdom, God was well pleased to save by means of foolish preaching all who believe in it."

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***God delights in doing  
what the world  
considers foolish***

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So let anyone who does not believe the body of Christ to be present in the bread of the Lord's Supper believe it is

simply bread or even something else. It doesn't really matter what such a person believes. Like a person who drowns, whether it occurs in a creek or a river the result is the same.

So such people: If they abandon the Word concerning the Lord's Supper let them believe whatever they want and split into smaller factions whenever they wish. Already six or seven sects have formed on account of the Lord's Supper. They agree only that Christ's flesh and blood are not there.

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1. What are the two aspects of the Lord's Supper that should be understood and taught?
2. What is the difference between the object of faith, and faith itself?
3. Which one is outside of man? Which one is inside of man?
4. Which object of faith does Luther address in this book?
5. What were some in Luther's day teaching about the Lord's Supper?
6. Which of the words of Christ are simple and clear?
7. What did the Arab philosopher Averroes say about Christians?
8. What is it that God delights in doing in the world?
9. So what really is the heart of the matter?