

Q80*. How does the Lord's Supper differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?

A. The Lord's Supper declares to us that all our sins are completely forgiven through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he himself accomplished on the cross once for all.¹ It also declares to us that the Holy Spirit grafts us into Christ,² who with his true body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father³ where he wants us to worship him.⁴ But the Mass teaches that the living and the dead do not have their sins forgiven through the suffering of Christ unless Christ is still offered for them daily by the priests. It also teaches that Christ is bodily present under the form of bread and wine where Christ is therefore to be worshiped. Thus the Mass is basically nothing but a denial of the one sacrifice and suffering of Jesus Christ and a condemnable idolatry.

1. Heb. 7:27 – “Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself.”

Heb. 9:12 – “he entered once for all into the holy place, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.”

Heb. 9:26–28 – “for then he would have had to suffer again and again since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once and after that the judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”

Heb. 10:10 – “And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

Heb. 10:12–14 – “But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, ‘he sat down at the right hand of God,’ and since then has been waiting ‘until his enemies would be made a footstool for his feet.’ For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.”

John 19:30 – “When Jesus had received the wine, he said, ‘It is finished.’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

Matt. 26:28 – “for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

Luke 22:19–20 – “Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’”

2. 1 Cor. 6:17 – “But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.”

1 Cor. 10:16 – “The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?”

1 Cor. 12:13 – “For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

3. Heb. 1:3 – “He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,”

Heb. 8:1 – “Now the main point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,”

4. John 4:21–23 – “Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.’”

John 20:17 – “Jesus said to her, ‘Do not touch me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

Luke 24:52 – “And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,”

Acts 7:55–56 – “But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ‘Look,’ he said, ‘I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’”

Col. 3:1 – “So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

Phil. 3:20 – “But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

1 Thess. 1:10 – “and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.”

*Question and Answer 80 reflects the polemical debates of the Reformation and was added in the second German edition of 1563. The second and fourth sentences of the Answer, as well as the concluding phrase, were added in the third German edition of 1563. After the fourth sentence, the third German and Latin texts have a note to the section on consecration in the Canon of the Mass. As detailed in the preface to The Book of Confessions, these condemnations and characterizations of the Catholic Church are not the position of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and are not applicable to current relationships between the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Catholic Church.

Q81. Who should come to the Lord's table?

A. Those who are displeased with themselves because of their sins, but who nevertheless trust that their sins are pardoned and that their remaining weakness is covered by the suffering and death of Christ, and who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and to lead a better life. Hypocrites and those who are unrepentant, however, eat and drink judgment on themselves.¹

I. I Cor. 10:21 – “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.”

I. Cor. 11:28–29 – “But if someone says to you, ‘This has been offered in sacrifice,’ then do not eat it, out of consideration for the one who informed you and for the sake of conscience—I mean the other’s conscience, not your own. For why should my freedom be subject to the judgment of someone else’s conscience?”

Q82. Should those be admitted to the Lord's Supper who show by what they profess and how they live that they are unbelieving and ungodly?

A. No, that would dishonor God's covenant and bring down God's wrath upon the entire congregation.¹ Therefore, according to the instruction of Christ and his apostles, the Christian church is duty-bound to exclude such people, by the official use of the keys of the kingdom, until they reform their lives.

I. I Cor. 11:20 – “When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper.”

I Cor. 11:34 – “If you are hungry, eat at home, so that when you come together, it will not be for your condemnation. About the other things I will give instructions when I come.”

Isa. 1:11 – “What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or of goats.”

Isa. 66:3 – “Whoever slaughters an ox is like one who kills a human, whoever sacrifices a lamb like one who breaks a dog's neck, whoever presents a grain offering like one who offers pig's blood, whoever makes a memorial offering of frankincense like one who blesses an idol. Just as these have chosen their own ways and in their abominations they take delight,”

Jer. 7:21[–26] – “Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh.”

Ps. 50:16 – “But to the wicked God says, ‘What right have you to recite my statutes or take my covenant on your lips?’”