

# Is the Eucharist Just a Symbol?

by Sebastian R Fama

Is the Eucharist in fact the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ? Or is it just a symbol? The evidence clearly indicates that it is truly the former. Between John 6:48 and John 6:57 Jesus enforces this teaching numerous times. The most notable quotes are in verses 51 and 55.

In verse 51 Jesus says: **“The bread I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”** The flesh He gave for the life of the world was his human body. I am not aware of any biblical scholar who believes that something other than Jesus’s literal body was nailed to the cross. In verse 55 He reinforces His previous statement: **“For my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink.”** His meaning could not be clearer.

A year later at the Last Supper, Jesus fulfilled His promise: "While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, 'Take and eat, **this is My body.**' Then He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it all of you, **for this is My blood** of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins'" (Matthew 26:26-28). Note that Jesus held the bread and the cup in His hands when He said, "This is my body," and "This is my blood."

If I were holding a baby and I said: "This is my son." No one would think I was speaking metaphorically. Likewise, when Jesus holds bread in His hands and says: "This is my body," no one should think He was speaking metaphorically, particularly in light of His promise from a year earlier.

Paul affirms the Real Presence in 1 Corinthians 10:16 and 11:27-29. "The cup of blessing that we bless, **is it not a participation in the blood of Christ?** The bread that we break, **is it not a participation in the body of Christ?**... Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer **for the body and blood of the Lord...** For anyone who eats and drinks **without discerning the body**, eats and drinks judgment on himself." If the Lord's body and blood are not present, how can a wrong be committed against them?

The early Church had no problem understanding the clear words of Scripture. Ignatius of Antioch, a contemporary of the apostles, wrote the following in his *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*:

They [Those who hold heterodox opinions] abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which the Father, in his goodness, raised up again. They who deny the gift of God are perishing in their disputes 6:2-7:1 **[A.D. 110]**.

To deny the reality of the Eucharist is to deny that God is capable of supernatural acts.