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Visit lutheranism101.com to download the free Leader Guide.
Foreword

_Lutheranism 101_ books give you usable and comprehensive overviews of what Lutherans believe and teach. These beliefs rest upon the foundational discussions of who God is, who man is, and who Jesus is. Along the way, and because faith does not happen in isolation, the series also presents how this faith is confessed in what Lutherans do, both in their corporate practice and in their personal piety.

After the release of the original _Lutheranism 101_ book, numerous questions, comments, and suggestions were received, focusing on the meeting point between faith and practice. The _Lutheranism 101_ series grew out of this correspondence. Each book in the series picks one topic and explores the basics of the Lutheran teaching in that area. The author also explores practice in that area, the understanding being that one necessarily informs the other.

The very title, _Lutheranism 101_, points forward to learning and building up of the Christian faith through study and by participation in the Divine Service. _Lutheranism 101_ encourages the use (and, dare we say, acquisition) of the basic resources for a Christian’s study and growth: a Bible, Luther’s Small Catechism, a hymnal, and ultimately, the Lutheran Confessions.

What Lutherans believe and teach about the Lord’s Supper makes Lutherans distinct from all other Christians. The Lord’s Supper is a blessed gift, and the mystery of Jesus’ incarnation is the burning center of our salvation. His incarnation is also the center of the Lutheran teaching about this gift. _Lutheranism 101: The Lord’s Supper_ gives an overview of Jesus teaching regarding the Lord’s Supper; the problems that happen when some either don’t believe what Scripture says about His Supper, or try to say more than Scripture says; and how belief in whom Jesus is affects what we believe about the Sacrament and what we receive. Like the original book, _Lutheranism 101: The Lord’s Supper_ will never get too far away from the reality that it is all about Jesus.

Each chapter concludes with several questions that can be used to further the study and the discussion about the material. For those who may be leading a group discussion based upon the chapter, and for those individuals who want to check their answers against the author’s comments, a free downloadable guide is available online at lutheranism101.com.
## Abbreviations

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**Lutheran Confessions**

You will see many quotations from the Lutheran Confessions as found in the Book of Concord. The following list provides abbreviations used, what they mean, and examples of how you would find the text.

- **AC** Augsburg Confession
- **Ap** Apology of the Augsburg Confession
- **BEC** A Brief Exhortation to Confession
- **Ep** Epitome of the Formula of Concord
- **FC** Formula of Concord
- **SA** Smalcald Articles
- **SC** Small Catechism
- **SD** Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord
- **Tr** Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope

**Examples:**

- AC XX 4 (Augsburg Confession, Article XX, paragraph 4)
- Ap IV 229 (Apology of the AC, Article IV, paragraph 229)
- FC SD X 24 (Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Article X, paragraph 24)
- FC Ep V 8 (Epitome of the Formula of Concord, Article V, paragraph 8)
- LC V 32, 37 (Large Catechism, Part 5, paragraphs 32 and 37)
- SA III I 6 (Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article I, paragraph 6)
- SC III 5 (Small Catechism, Part III, paragraph 5)
- Tr 5 (Treatise, paragraph 5)
Navigating Lutheranism 101

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
Quotes from Martin Luther

MAKING CONNECTIONS
Connecting theology, faith, and life

NEED TO KNOW
Terms and phrases quickly defined

FROM THE BIBLE
Quotations from, well, the Bible

TECHNICAL STUFF
Big theological concepts in bite-size pieces

BELIEVE, TEACH, CONFESS
Quotations from the Lutheran Confessions
Making Connections

In This Section

- We lost life in the Garden of Eden.
- Jesus offers forgiveness, life, and salvation in His Supper.

To Eat or Not to Eat

The amazing beauty and design of this world is not an accident of evolution. Nor is the wonder of the human race. Creation is God’s gracious gift for the crown of His creation: mankind. On the sixth day, “God created man in His own image . . . male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27). He gave them dominion over His creation and placed them in the garden of Paradise.

God’s first recorded words to Adam were about food—what to eat and what not to eat. One of the pleasures of Paradise was God’s good gift of food—of eating of every tree in the garden but one (Genesis 2:16–17). Adam could worship God and receive His perfect love and life without end. He simply needed to obey God’s command not to eat the fruit of this one tree by which good and evil are known.

But we know what happened. Adam and Eve doubted God’s love and disbelieved God’s Word. Satan had rebelled against God, and he tempted Adam and Eve to rebel as well. Satan promised that the fruit of the tree would give more to their lives than God promised. So, greedy for what wasn’t theirs, they ate. The devil continues to speak this first lie. Nevertheless, God is the absolute giver, and there can be no more to receive than what He so freely gives. Instead of more abundant life through that forbidden fruit, our first parents received death. So did we through them.

FROM THE BIBLE

Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned. (Romans 5:12)
Paradise Lost

By eating what God had forbidden, Adam and Eve refused to worship God. As a result, they were prevented from eating of the tree of life. God’s angels blocked the way to the tree of life, and it has been lost to all people (Genesis 3:22–24).

God’s angels guarded the access, the way back to eternal life. God’s judgment on sin could not be reversed by human choice. If there was to be reconciliation with God, God would have to do it. If humans were again to enjoy the benefits of the tree of life, it would be as a gift of God.

God swiftly and graciously promised that gift. He did not leave our first parents without hope in this fallen world. His redeeming gift would be given through the male seed of the woman. God’s promised Redeemer would have an ultimate conflict with the serpent (Satan) and would defeat him with a crushing blow (Genesis 3:15).

This conflict would be costly for the victorious Redeemer; in fact, it would be deadly. The poisonous fangs of the serpent would find His heel, but the death of the mighty Rescuer would give us life and life-giving food.

The Tree of Life—Restored

About a century and a half ago, Lutheran pastor C. F. W. Walther identified the Lord’s Supper as the new tree of life now planted in God’s kingdom of grace. Walther wasn’t claiming that Paradise was fully restored in this fallen world. He was rejoicing in what Christ has won for us dying sinners on the tree of the cross. On that tree the Lamb of God finished our redemption. From that tree the risen Christ has again planted life-giving food on earth in His kingdom of grace. This food, of course, is not magic, but it is miraculous. The eternal blessings it bestows are received in faith and are extraordinary.

The Work of the Incarnate Lord

In the miracle of the ages, God became man and dwelt among us. Everything in the Old Testament points forward to His coming because He embodies the kingdom of God and is the Messiah who fulfills all the promises of God (2 Corinthians 1:20; Luke 24). Everything in the New Testament points back to His
incarnation and forward to His second coming. He gives us living hope for the future.

He also gives us God’s blessedness right now. The Incarnate One is still active, bestowing God’s kingdom on earth through His gracious gifts. What He began to do and teach before His ascension (Acts 1:1–3), He continues to do and teach. He does this through the Holy Spirit’s use of God’s Word and Sacraments.

A Miracle of Love in Bread and Wine

Holy Communion, one of the life-giving blessings God bestows on His Church, is the focus of this book. It is a miracle of love that reaches down through the ages to us. It is a miracle in bread and wine established by the God-man Jesus Christ. It is the gift of His true body to eat and His true blood to drink. It is forgiveness food, life-giving food, a feast of salvation. There is deep scriptural substance behind its description as the new tree of life planted in God’s kingdom of grace.

It is impossible to overstate the blessing of this heavenly food that the risen Lord serves to His Church on earth. It is impossible to understand the substance of this holy and gracious mystery apart from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Even then, we are reminded that unlike a secret that is made known, a revealed mystery still remains a mystery.

We human beings like to solve mysteries and explain everything. However, some of God’s gifts to us are far too great for us to comprehend. We can’t explain them. If we try, we might explain the mystery away. We may actually explain the forgiveness away. (Lutheranism 101, p. 149)

To Eat or Not to Eat

As God reveals more and more to us, we rejoice that God’s ways are above our ways as far as the heavens are above the earth (Isaiah 55:9). We rejoice also because in this gift He gives freely and abundantly of His undeserved love for us in Christ Jesus our Lord. (See TLSB, p. 2230, “The Lord’s Supper.”)

In fact, this gift of the Lord’s Supper links God’s first recorded words to Adam about eating in Paradise to God’s promise of feasting in paradise restored. In the Book of Revelation, God reveals Jesus eating with us and us with Him.
The Lamb’s Blessed Guests

There will be no hunger or thirst in heaven (Revelation 7:16). But there will be eternal feasting in the presence of the victorious, glorified Savior. Indeed, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:9).

This Lamb comes to His gathered people in weekly worship and invites them to eat of His body and drink of His blood. He clothes them with His own righteousness, the very wedding garment needed for the marriage supper of the Lamb. In His Supper He provides a foretaste of the feast to come in the new heaven and the new earth (Revelation 21). Through that feast, access to the tree of life is once again fully restored (Revelation 22:2).

**Eucharist** comes from the Greek word for “giving thanks.” This term for the Lord’s Supper is taken from Jesus’ giving of thanks as He gave the Last Supper. The Lord’s Supper is also called the Lord’s Table, Holy Communion, and the Breaking of Bread.
Study Questions

1. How did Lutheran pastor C. F. W. Walther describe the Lord’s Supper?

   By this description, what types of blessings was he attributing to the Sacrament?

2. Has the ascended Christ stopped doing and teaching on earth?

   Is the risen and ascended Christ still doing and teaching in weekly worship?

3. What do the angels guarding the way to the tree of life show us?

4. How is a revealed mystery unlike a secret?
Discussion Questions

1. Discuss how the Lord’s Supper is a mystery. Discuss also the service of a pastor as a steward (house manager) of this holy mystery and its relation to the liturgy (see 1 Corinthians 4:1–2 and Ap XXIV 80).

2. Discuss the paradox that we will no longer have the desire to seek after food and drink in heaven (Revelation 7:16) and yet there will be feasting at the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9). See the beautiful expression in the Post-Communion Collect that trumpets this truth: “That . . . we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end” (LSB, p. 166).

3. Discuss Holy Communion as a miracle of love in bread and wine.