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Biblical Discourse on the Theological and Practical Significance of the Lord's Supper

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the theological and practical significance of the Lord's Supper within its soteriological, koinonia, missional, and eschatological dimensions. Employing biblical analysis, theological literature review, and field observations, this research offers a profound understanding of the Lord's Supper and its application in contemporary church practices. The integrative approach adopted combines both theological and practical aspects, affirming that the Lord's Supper is not merely an institutional rite but a command of Christ, rich in meaning. The findings reveal that the Lord's Supper serves as a reminder of Christ's sacrifice while also strengthening the eschatological hope of the Christian community. This study underscores the importance of eschatological understanding in worship and daily life, contributing to the development of church practices that are more mission-oriented and eschatologically focused.

Keywords: *Lord's Supper, Soteriology, Koinonia, Mission, Eschatology*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi makna teologis dan praktis Perjamuan Kudus dalam dimensi soteriologis, koinonia, misioner, dan eskatologis. Dengan metode analisis biblis, tinjauan literatur teologis, dan observasi lapangan, studi ini menawarkan pemahaman mendalam mengenai Perjamuan Kudus serta penerapannya dalam gereja masa kini. Pendekatan integratif yang digunakan menggabungkan aspek teologis dan praktis, menegaskan bahwa Perjamuan Kudus bukan sekadar ritus institusional, melainkan perintah Kristus yang kaya makna. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Perjamuan Kudus berfungsi sebagai pengingat pengorbanan Kristus serta memperkuat pengharapan eskatologis umat Kristen. Studi ini menekankan pentingnya pemahaman eskatologis dalam ibadah dan kehidupan sehari-hari guna mengembangkan praktik gerejawi yang lebih berorientasi misi dan eskatologis. Kata-Kata Kunci: Perjamuan Tuhan, soteriologi, koinonia, misi, eskatologi.

Kata Kunci: Perjamuan Kudus, Soteriologi, Koinonia, Misi, Eskatologi

INTRODUCTION

The Lord's Supper is a central Christian sacrament with profound theological and practical significance. It serves as a reminder of Christ's sacrifice (1 Corinthians 11:26) while also embodying soteriological, koinonia, missional, and eschatological dimensions. More than

a mere act of remembrance, it fosters sanctification, strengthens solidarity among believers, and encourages evangelism and social mission, reflecting eschatological hope.

This study explores the Lord's Supper from a biblical perspective, focusing on its theological meaning and practical application in worship and Christian community life. Its novelty lies in integrating theological concepts with liturgical and communal practices, viewing the sacrament as a unified expression of hermeneutical, soteriological, koinonia, missional, and eschatological aspects.

Using biblical analysis, particularly of 1 Corinthians 11:26 and early Christian usage of "Maranatha," alongside case studies of its contemporary practice, this research aims to demonstrate that the Lord's Supper not only commemorates Christ's work but also reinforces active hope and ethical commitment to His second coming. The findings are expected to highlight its role in shaping a mission-oriented and eschatologically grounded Christian life. This article proceeds with a literature review, methodology, key findings, and an analysis of the sacrament's missional and eschatological implications, concluding with recommendations for further research and practical application within the Church.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study examines the theological and practical significance of the Lord's Supper, focusing on its soteriological, koinonia, missional, and eschatological dimensions. Through biblical analysis and a systematic review of theological literature, it aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of this sacrament in contemporary church life.

Biblical analysis, particularly of *1 Corinthians 11:26*, highlights the Lord's Supper as both a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice and an expression of hope for His return. The literature review explores how its soteriological and eschatological dimensions influence worship and Christian life, drawing on classical and contemporary theological works.

This study offers a novel perspective by integrating theological and practical aspects, emphasising that the Lord's Supper is not merely a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice but also a means to strengthen active hope in anticipation of His return. Using qualitative and hermeneutic analysis, it examines how eschatological themes shape Christian ethics, sanctification, and evangelistic mission.

The findings are expected to demonstrate that the Lord's Supper unites historical, liturgical, and eschatological dimensions, reinforcing Christian hope and ethical commitment. This study concludes with recommendations for incorporating eschatological understanding

into church liturgy and Christian life, enhancing its role as a tool for mission and spiritual formation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical Foundation

The study of the Lord's Supper requires a theological framework that integrates biblical theology, liturgical studies, and ecclesiology. Theologically, it has been widely discussed from historical, doctrinal, and sacramental perspectives. This study adopts an integrative approach, viewing the Lord's Supper as both a theological and liturgical practice with historical and eschatological significance.

Biblical exegesis and historical theology shape much of this discourse. Jeremias argues that Jesus' Eucharistic words carry deep soteriological significance rooted in Jewish Passover traditions, while Cullmann highlights its eschatological dimension as a foretaste of the *eschaton*. Liturgical studies further emphasise the communal aspect of the Eucharist, with Fee and Hays affirming that it fosters *koinonia* and calls believers to embody Christ's sacrificial love. Ecclesiology, Küng and Wright assert that the Eucharist not only commemorates Christ's atonement but also commissions believers for mission.

Thus, this study views the Lord's Supper as a theological, liturgical, and missional event, shaping Christian identity, ethical living, and eschatological hope.

Theological Foundation

The Lord's Supper is deeply rooted in soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. Key biblical texts include the Synoptic Gospels (*Matthew 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:19–20*) and Paul's instruction (*1 Corinthians 11:23–26*), portraying it as a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice, a means of fellowship, and a proclamation of eschatological hope.

Soteriologically, Ladd sees the Lord's Supper as a new covenant act fulfilling Old Testament sacrificial typologies, while Marshall views it as embodying Christ's redemptive work. Ecclesiology, Johnson and Köstenberger affirm that it strengthens *koinonia*, reflecting the Church's mission and ethical commitment. Eschatologically, Barclay and Beker highlight its role in anticipating God's kingdom, with *1 Corinthians 11:26* reinforcing the expectation of Christ's return.

This theological framework affirms that the Lord's Supper is not just a symbolic ritual but a dynamic act of worship integrating past salvation, present fellowship, and future hope.

The Lord's Supper in Biblical Discourse

The Lord's Supper (*κοινωνία τοῦ Κυρίου*, *koinonia tou Kyriou*) has played a central role in Christian worship since the early Church, embodying unity and fellowship among believers (*Acts 2:42, 2:46*). It commemorates Christ's sacrifice (*Luke 22:19–20*) and signifies communal participation in His body and blood (*1 Corinthians 11:23–26*).

In the early Church, it was an intimate communal act, often observed in homes. Under Roman persecution, it was celebrated in catacombs, reinforcing Christian identity and faith amid adversity. This setting emphasised the Lord's Supper as both an act of remembrance and an affirmation of Christ's victory over death.

Paul's warning in *1 Corinthians 11:27* underscores the Supper's spiritual significance, calling believers to partake with reverence. As Cullmann suggests, it holds eschatological tension—commemorating Christ's past work while anticipating His return. Moreover, Schillebeeckx argues that it remains a vital practice, shaping Christian ethics and identity.

This study examines the biblical and historical discourse surrounding the Lord's Supper, exploring its theological and eschatological significance. By analysing New Testament texts and their historical interpretations, it provides insights into its doctrinal development and ongoing relevance in Christian worship.

The Memorial and Sacrifice of Christ in the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a central Christian liturgical act that commemorates Christ's sacrifice and affirms His role as the sole Saviour. Paul declares, "*For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes*" (*1 Corinthians 11:26*), highlighting its significance in recalling Christ's atonement and anticipating His return.

Two primary elements—bread and wine—symbolise Christ's body and blood. The bread represents His body, broken for humanity's salvation (*1 Corinthians 11:24; 1 Peter 2:24*), while the wine signifies His blood, shed for the forgiveness of sins (*Luke 22:19–20; Ephesians 1:7*). As Marshall and Fee argue, these elements affirm the New Covenant and the believer's redemption through Christ.

Beyond remembrance, the Lord's Supper carries an eschatological dimension, pointing to Christ's second coming (*1 Corinthians 11:26*). Asserts that it encapsulates the tension between Christ's completed work and the hope of final redemption. It also serves as an act of self-examination (*1 Corinthians 11:28*), urging believers to renew their faith and live in accordance with Christ's teachings (Cullmann, 1962).

Moreover, the Lord's Supper fosters unity among Christians. *Acts 2:42–46* underscores its communal aspect, reflecting the fellowship (*koinonia*) that binds believers as the body of

Christ. This shared meal reinforces love, forgiveness, and ethical living, as notes, making it not just a ritual but a call to embody Christ's redemptive love (Schillebeeckx, 1963).

Thus, the Lord's Supper is more than a memorial; it is a transformative act of faith, reminding Christians of Christ's sacrifice, strengthening their spiritual commitment, and reinforcing their anticipation of His return.

The Meaning of σωτηρία in the Sacrifice of Christ

The Lord's Supper, as a central Christian sacrament, holds profound significance in the context of salvation (*σωτηρία/soteria*). It commemorates Christ's sacrifice on the cross, affirming His role as the Redeemer of humanity. The Greek term *soteria*, meaning "salvation", encompasses the full scope of redemption accomplished through Christ's atoning work. Thus, the Lord's Supper is not merely symbolic but a means of reflecting on and partaking in His salvific act (Kostenberger, 2013).

The bread and wine represent Christ's body and blood, sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins. Paul writes, "*This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me*" (1 Corinthians 11:23-24), underscoring the bread as a sign of reconciliation between humanity and God (Fee, 1987). Similarly, the wine signifies the New Covenant in Christ's blood (Luke 22:20), marking redemption and the fulfilment of salvation. However, Paul warns that the Supper's essence lies not in the elements themselves but in discerning Christ's sacrifice (1 Corinthians 11:29; Schillebeeckx, 1963) (Marshall, 1980).

Beyond remembrance, the Lord's Supper is a participation in Christ's life-giving work. Jesus declares, "*Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you*" (John 6:53-54), affirming that salvation is received through Him. It also reinforces Christ's exclusive role as the source of eternal life (John 14:6; Acts 4:11-12), reaffirming the supremacy of His redemptive work (Kostenberger, 2013).

The Supper fosters unity among believers, as Paul writes, "*Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body*" (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). It is both an act of remembrance and a communal participation in Christ's sacrifice (Fee, 1987). The Supper also holds an eschatological dimension, proclaiming Christ's return and the completion of salvation (1 Corinthians 11:26). Suggests, it signifies both past redemption and future fulfilment (As Cullmann, 1962).

Moreover, the Lord's Supper calls for self-examination (1 Corinthians 11:28), urging believers to align their lives with Christ's teachings. It strengthens Christian fellowship, as seen in Acts 2:42-46, where early believers shared in the breaking of bread, embodying Christ's love

and truth. Paul further affirms that through Christ's blood, believers receive forgiveness and redemption (*Ephesians 1:7*) (Marshall, 1980).

Ultimately, the Supper is not just a recollection of Christ's death but an ongoing participation in His salvation. It reminds Christians that salvation is not a past event but a lived reality, calling them to renewed faith and hope in Christ's return. As *1 Corinthians 11:26* states, it anticipates the culmination of human salvation, urging believers to live in eschatological expectation, awaiting the perfect restoration brought by His second coming.

The Meaning of *κοινωνία*: Unity and Fellowship in Christ

The Lord's Supper is more than a ritual; it embodies *koinonia* (*κοινωνία*), or fellowship, signifying unity among believers. Paul affirms this in *1 Corinthians 10:17*: "Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf". The Supper unites Christians, transcending social and cultural divisions, as they partake in Christ's body and blood (Fee, 1987).

Koinonia forms the foundation of Christian unity, emphasising that all believers share in Christ's redemptive work (Beker, 1980). Paul warns against division, stating, "When you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you" (*1 Corinthians 11:18*). The Supper should reinforce unity, not foster discord (Carson, 1991). It also signifies communion with God, as *1 Corinthians 10:16* highlights: "Is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?" (Johnson, 2006).

Beyond spiritual communion, *koinonia* has practical implications for relationships among believers. Paul urges, "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (*Ephesians 4:3-4*), stressing the Supper's role in fostering harmony (Wright, 2011). It also calls for forgiveness and reconciliation, as Jesus teaches in *Matthew 5:23-24*, reinforcing the need for restored relationships before worship (Murray, 2001).

The early Church celebrated the Supper in a spirit of mutual support, as seen in *Acts 2:42-46*: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Schillebeeckx, 1963). Paul warns that partaking unworthily, without recognising the communal nature of the Supper, brings judgment (*1 Corinthians 11:29*; Hays, 2012). The Supper thus calls believers to embody love, unity, and faithfulness (*Philippians 2:1-2*; Ladd, 1974).

Ultimately, the Lord's Supper is both a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice and a celebration of unity in His body. It invites believers to renew their commitment to one another and to live in shared hope, anticipating Christ's return (*1 Corinthians 11:26*). This

eschatological dimension will be explored further, highlighting how *koinonia* ultimately finds fulfilment in eternal life with Christ.

The Meaning of the Sanctification and Repentance Process in the Life of the Believer

The Lord's Supper is more than a memorial; it serves as a means of sanctification, calling believers to self-examination and repentance (Carson, 1991). Paul instructs, "Let a person examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 Corinthians 11:28), highlighting the necessity of personal reflection and turning away from sin (Barclay, 1975; Hays, 2012). Sanctification (*ἁγιασμός/hagiasmos*) is a process of separation from sin and growing closer to God, as affirmed in 1 Thessalonians 4:3 (Murray, 2001).

Repentance in the Lord's Supper involves both personal and social dimensions. Jesus teaches reconciliation before worship (Matthew 5:23-24), underscoring the need for peace within the Christian community (Ferguson, 2015). Paul further warns that partaking unworthily brings judgment (1 Corinthians 11:29), emphasising that participation requires genuine repentance and recognition of Christ's sacrifice (Jeremias, 1966; Marshall, 1980).

Sanctification is a continuous process. 1 John 1:9 assures believers that confessing sins leads to forgiveness and purification, reaffirming God's ongoing work in their lives (Schillebeeckx, 1963; Wright, 2011). Social repentance is equally vital, as seen in Matthew 18:15-17, where Jesus calls for reconciliation before presenting offerings to God (Beker, 1980; Küng, 1984).

Transformation through sanctification is lifelong. Paul urges believers, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (Romans 12:2), stressing that repentance must be ongoing (Ladd, 1974). The Lord's Supper, therefore, is not just a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice but a continual call to spiritual renewal and a commitment to living in holiness, fostering both personal and communal transformation.

The Meaning of Evangelism in the Proclamation of the True Gospel Through the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper holds a profound place in Christian theology, serving not only as a moment of fellowship and faith but also as a means of evangelism. Paul asserts in 1 Corinthians 11:26, "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." This signifies that the Lord's Supper is both a remembrance and an active declaration of Christ's sacrificial death for humanity's salvation.

The bread and wine are not mere symbols but represent Christ's body and blood, given for the world's redemption. As Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life... the bread that I will

give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world" (John 6:51; Ferguson, 2015). Each celebration of the Supper affirms that salvation is found solely through Christ's sacrifice.

The Greek term "katangellō" (καταγγέλλω) in 1 Corinthians 11:26 underscores the Supper's role in proclaiming the Gospel (Hays, 2012). The ritual calls believers to not only recall Christ's death but also to share the Gospel, in alignment with the Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19; Murray, 2001). Every observance of the Supper, therefore, reinforces the Church's mission to evangelise.

Additionally, the Lord's Supper embodies the fulfilment of Scripture, as Paul states: "Christ died for our sins... he was buried, and he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Each commemoration declares that Christ's atoning death is the cornerstone of salvation.

The Supper also conveys a missional dimension, affirming God's universal love: "This is my body, which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). It extends beyond believers, introducing the Gospel to those yet to know Christ. John 3:16 encapsulates this message: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (Carson, 1991).

More than a ritual, the Lord's Supper invites believers to live out the Gospel. Paul affirms that each Supper is a dynamic proclamation of Christ's sacrifice (1 Corinthians 11:26). This aligns with the social mission of evangelism, reflecting Jesus' ministry to the poor and marginalised: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18; Hays, 2012). Evangelism, thus, involves not only preaching but also tangible expressions of Christ's love.

True evangelism, as expressed through the Lord's Supper, proclaims Jesus as the sole Redeemer of humankind. The Supper reaffirms Christians' call to share this message, both in word and deed, strengthening the Church as a community united in faith and mission. It also fosters reconciliation, embodying the Gospel's power to restore relationships with God and among believers.

In conclusion, the Lord's Supper is a catalyst for deepening theological awareness and commitment to evangelism. It reminds Christians that evangelism is the proclamation of Christ's person and work—the only way to salvation. This sacred act reinforces the Church's identity as a living, witnessing community, actively engaged in the mission of spreading the Gospel in both personal and societal contexts.

The Meaning of Social Service in Christian Fellowship

The Lord's Supper, central to Christian liturgical tradition, embodies more than a mere sacramental observance. It signifies a call to social service, reflecting the Christian duty to care for others, especially the needy. In the early church, this meal was not solely a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice but also an occasion for communal sharing, addressing the needs of the poor (1 Corinthians 11:20-22). Paul's rebuke of the Corinthian church highlights that the Supper must transcend personal consumption and embody attentiveness and service (Fee, 1987; Hays, 2012).

Beyond individual communion with Christ, the Supper reinforces the relational bond among believers. Early Christians celebrated it as a communal meal, demonstrating social unity and resource-sharing, aligning with Acts 2:44-45. This practice underscored equality and solidarity, ensuring none were left in need. Paul's exhortation (1 Corinthians 11:22) condemns social disparities within the Supper, urging wealthier members to support the less fortunate (Marshall, 1980).

Set against the socio-economic struggles of early Christians, the Supper symbolised solidarity with the marginalised, addressing material and social injustice (Jeremias, 1966; Wright, 2011). It served a dual purpose: remembrance of Christ's sacrifice and a vehicle for social justice. This aligns with Christ's teaching in Matthew 25:35-40, which calls for tangible acts of mercy. Thus, the Supper renews Christians' commitment to serve others (Ladd, 1974; Küng, 1984).

As an expression of the church's broader mission, the Supper exemplifies living faith through service. Paul affirms this in 2 Corinthians 9:13, where generosity becomes a testimony of the Gospel (Carson, 1991; Ferguson, 2015). Service within the Supper is not mere obligation but a heartfelt response to Christ's love (Colossians 3:23-24; Murray, 2001). Galatians 6:10 further reinforces the call to active benevolence (Wright, 2013).

Ultimately, the Lord's Supper extends beyond ritual; it calls the church to embody Christ's teachings daily through justice and compassion. By feeding the hungry and aiding the vulnerable, believers manifest Christ's love in concrete actions (Beker, 1980; Schillebeeckx, 1963). Furthermore, the Supper invites the church to engage in broader social transformation, fulfilling Christ's Great Commission to teach and serve in love (Matthew 28:19-20).

The Meaning of the Eschatological Hope ἔσχατος in the Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a profound theological event that embodies both the historical reality of Christ's atoning sacrifice and the eschatological anticipation of His return. This sacred observance is not merely a retrospective act of remembrance but a dynamic proclamation of

the ultimate fulfillment of divine redemption in the Parousia. Through this sacrament, believers participate in a foretaste of the eschatological wedding feast of the Lamb, symbolizing the final union between Christ, the Bridegroom, and the Church, His Bride, as depicted in the Scriptures (Küng, 1984; Ferguson, 2015).

The Synoptic Gospels present Jesus instituting the Lord's Supper as a covenantal meal intimately linked to the coming Kingdom of God (Mark 14:25; Matthew 26:29; Luke 22:16-18). His declaration, "I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God," signifies an eschatological hope that transcends the present moment. This forward-looking dimension finds resonance in the parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), which emphasizes vigilance and readiness for the Bridegroom's return. Similarly, the parable of the wedding feast (Matthew 22:1-14) underscores the divine invitation to partake in God's redemptive plan, prefigured in the Lord's Supper (Jeremias, 1966; Carson, 1991; Köstenberger, 2013).

Paul articulates the eschatological dimension of the Lord's Supper explicitly in 1 Corinthians 11:26: "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." This statement underscores the Eucharist's dual function as both a commemoration of Christ's sacrificial death and an anticipation of His return (Fee, 1987; Hays, 2012). Furthermore, Paul's nuptial imagery in Ephesians 5:25-32 reinforces this eschatological perspective, portraying the Church as the Bride of Christ, sanctified and prepared for her ultimate union with Him. Just as marriage signifies an intimate and eternal bond, the Eucharist affirms the Church's eschatological expectation of consummation with Christ (Beker, 1980; Wright, 2013).

The Apostle Peter conveys an eschatological perspective by emphasizing a "living hope" through Christ's resurrection (1 Peter 1:3-5), assuring believers of an imperishable inheritance. This hope manifests in the Eucharist as the Church participates in Christ's sufferings while anticipating the "unfading crown of glory" (1 Peter 5:4) (Marshall, 1980). Peter's exhortation to holiness and vigilance parallels the eschatological themes found in the Gospels, reinforcing the Lord's Supper as a means of fortifying the Church in her expectant waiting (Barclay, 1975; Ferguson, 2015).

The eschatological climax of the Lord's Supper is vividly portrayed in Revelation 19:7-9, where the "marriage supper of the Lamb" signifies the final union between Christ and His Church. This ultimate feast fulfills the anticipatory elements inherent in each Eucharistic celebration (Ladd, 1974). The vision of the New Jerusalem as "a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:2) further solidifies the wedding banquet imagery as the culmination of God's

redemptive plan. The repeated proclamation, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" (Revelation 19:9), serves as both an assurance and a call to perseverance (Schillebeeckx, 1963; Murray, 2001).

The term ἔσχατος (eschatos, "last" or "end") encapsulates the eschatological urgency of the Lord's Supper. This sacred observance is not a static ritual but a living proclamation of the coming Kingdom (Cullmann, 1962). The Eucharist reaffirms the believer's commitment to the hope of ultimate restoration, demanding an ethical response characterized by holiness, love, and evangelistic mission (Wright, 2011). The sacrament functions as both sustenance for the Christian journey and a pledge of the glorious future awaiting the redeemed (Johnson, 2006; Sanders, 1995).

The Lord's Supper stands at the intersection of history and eschatology, simultaneously recalling Christ's atoning work and directing believers toward the fulfillment of divine promises. As a prelude to the wedding feast of the Lamb, it reinforces the Church's identity as the Bride of Christ, awaiting her consummation in the eternal Kingdom. This sacred meal continually renews the faithful in their hope, strengthens their witness, and reminds them that their ultimate destiny lies in the glorious return of their Lord and Bridegroom (Küng, 1984; Wright, 2013).

The Lord's Supper is central to Christian faith, encapsulating both remembrance and proclamation of eschatological hope. As 1 Corinthians 11:26 states, "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes again (ἄχρι οὗ ἔλθῃ, achri hou elthē)," emphasizing its dual role (Cullmann, 1967). The invocation of "Maranatha" (מָרָנָתָא, maranatha) further reflects the early Church's longing for Christ's return, reinforcing faith in divine restoration (Jeremias, 1966).

This sacrament symbolizes divine love, with bread and wine representing Christ's broken body and shed blood (Mark 14:22-24). Its liturgical repetition affirms the promise of complete redemption in Christ's second coming, serving as a pledge of God's eternal presence (Ladd, 1974). More than passive expectation, the Eucharistic hope calls for ethical living in love, obedience, and faithfulness (Beker, 1980).

Ultimately, the Lord's Supper functions as a means of sanctification, strengthening the Church as an eschatological community awaiting divine perfection. It compels believers to proclaim the Gospel, reaffirming that Christ's return will bring ultimate restoration. The urgency of ἔσχατος is inseparable from this sacrament, reminding the faithful of their mission to witness to a world in need of salvation. More than a ritual, the Lord's Supper embodies the

Church's commitment to proclaim Christ as the only Redeemer, ensuring that eschatological hope is both professed and lived out through faith and action (Sanders, 1995).

The Lord's Supper: Beyond a Sacrament, A Divine Worship for God's Glory and the Church's Calling

The Lord's Supper transcends its role as a sacrament or ecclesiastical tradition, embodying a profound theological reality that reflects God's concern for humanity and, ultimately, His own glory. Rooted in Christ's redemptive work, this sacred act serves as a divine ordinance through which believers remember the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ—the Saviour and King of God's Kingdom—while reaffirming their covenantal identity as the New Testament community, sanctified by His blood (Cullmann, 1962; Johnson, 2006).

As an act of worship, the Lord's Supper underscores God's unwavering commitment to humanity's salvation, culminating in Christ's sacrificial death and resurrection (Marshall, 1980). This sacred observance not only signifies the believer's personal redemption but also declares the supremacy of Christ as the Sovereign of God's Kingdom, who reigns in righteousness and will return to consummate all things (Fee, 1987; Wright, 2013). In this way, the Lord's Supper becomes a proclamation of divine sovereignty, affirming that history itself moves toward the fulfilment of God's ultimate purpose (Ladd, 1974).

Moreover, the Lord's Supper functions as a means through which the church, as Christ's body, is called to a life of communion, communication, and community in service to God's mission. This sacramental fellowship is not a mere ritualistic remembrance but a dynamic participation in the life of the church, strengthening believers in faith and compelling them to manifest Christ's love in both evangelism and social engagement (Beker, 1980; Küng, 1984). The communal dimension of this sacred meal underscores the unity of believers, who are bound together in the covenant of grace and commissioned to extend the reign of Christ through acts of service and proclamation (Ferguson, 2015).

In its eschatological essence, the Lord's Supper embodies the anticipation of Christ's return, when God's Kingdom will reach its consummation, and His glory will be fully revealed (Jeremias, 1966; Moule, 1978). As believers partake in the bread and the cup, they are reminded that their worship is not merely a reflection on the past but an active preparation for the future reign of Christ, when He shall establish the final restoration of all things (Hays, 2012; Kostenberger, 2013).

Thus, the Lord's Supper is not simply an ecclesiastical sacrament but a divine ordinance of worship, calling the church to glorify God by proclaiming the redemptive work of Christ,

living in covenantal fellowship, and actively participating in His mission. It serves as both a remembrance and a forward-looking declaration, reinforcing the believer's faith while magnifying God's sovereign purpose in history. As the church awaits Christ's return, this sacred observance remains a powerful testament to the ultimate hope of redemption and the fulfilment of God's glorious Kingdom (Schillebeeckx, 1963; Wright, 2011).

Thus, the Lord's Supper is not merely an ecclesiastical sacrament but a divine act of worship that unites the past, present, and future dimensions of God's redemptive work. It proclaims Christ's atoning sacrifice, reaffirms the church's covenantal identity, and calls believers to embody their faith through love, service, and mission. As an expression of eschatological hope, it strengthens the church's anticipation of Christ's return and the consummation of His Kingdom, where God's glory will be fully revealed, and all creation restored in perfect communion with Him. In this sacred meal, the church is continually reminded of its divine calling—to magnify Christ, extend His Kingdom, and live in steadfast faith as it awaits the fulfilment of God's sovereign plan.

In light of the eschatological significance of the Lord's Supper, the contemporary Church must embrace its divine calling to live out the implications of this sacred meal. The Eucharist is not merely a ritual of remembrance but a transformative encounter that shapes Christian discipleship and mission. The Church must reaffirm its covenantal identity, embodying Christ's love through worship, community, and service.

The Church must cultivate a liturgical practice that emphasizes both remembrance and anticipation. Worship should not only reflect on Christ's sacrifice but also foster a longing for His return, reinforcing the Maranatha prayer as a central expression of Christian hope. The Eucharist unites believers as the body of Christ, calling the Church to live in *koinonia* (fellowship). In an era of division, the Lord's Supper must serve as a tangible expression of reconciliation, fostering unity across cultural and denominational lines. The eschatological nature of the Eucharist propels the Church into mission. As believers partake in the sacred meal, they are commissioned to proclaim the Gospel, minister to the marginalized, and reflect the Kingdom's values in society.

The anticipation of Christ's return should inspire ethical living, compelling the Church to stand against injustice, care for the oppressed, and embody Christ's love in tangible ways.

The Lord's Supper stands at the intersection of history and eschatology, simultaneously recalling Christ's atoning work and directing believers toward the fulfilment of divine promises. As a prelude to the wedding feast of the Lamb, it reinforces the Church's identity as the Bride of Christ, awaiting her consummation in the eternal Kingdom. This sacred meal

continually renews the faithful in their hope, strengthens their witness, and reminds them that their ultimate destiny lies in the glorious return of their Lord and Bridegroom (Küng, 1984; Wright, 2013).

The Eucharist compels believers to proclaim the Gospel, reaffirming that Christ's return will bring ultimate restoration. The urgency of ἔσχατος is inseparable from this sacrament, reminding the faithful of their mission to witness to a world in need of salvation. More than a ritual, the Lord's Supper embodies the Church's commitment to proclaim Christ as the only Redeemer, ensuring that eschatological hope is both professed and lived out through faith and action.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored the theological and practical significance of the Lord's Supper, particularly its soteriological, koinonia, missional, and eschatological dimensions. By integrating biblical analysis, theological literature, and field observations, it has provided a deeper understanding of how this sacrament is both comprehended and practised in contemporary church life.

Unlike previous research that separates theology from practice, this study presents the Lord's Supper as a unifying rite that embodies salvation, communal fellowship, mission, and eschatological hope. The findings affirm that the Lord's Supper primarily commemorates Christ's redemptive sacrifice but also nurtures eschatological hope, directing believers toward the promise of ultimate restoration in Christ. This sacrament, therefore, serves as a reminder of divine reconciliation and a call to live in love, obedience, and faithfulness while awaiting His return.

The eschatological dimension of the Lord's Supper profoundly influences Christian spirituality, shaping worship and ethical conduct. Beyond a ritual, it functions as a means of sanctification, evangelism, and social service, encouraging believers to embody their faith in daily life. By incorporating eschatological awareness into liturgical practice, churches can enhance spiritual formation and ethical commitment among the faithful.

Future research should explore the reception and application of the Lord's Supper across diverse cultural and denominational contexts, assessing its impact on Christian mission and social engagement. This study contributes to the theological discourse by emphasising that the Lord's Supper is not only a memorial of Christ's sacrifice but also a source of living hope, strengthening the Church's anticipation of Christ's return and ultimate restoration.

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