***`The Teaching of the Lord***

***through the Twelve Apostles***

***to the Gentiles***

**Introduction**

***What are the Apostolic Fathers?***

Many Christian documents circulated towards the end of the Apostolic Age (70-100 AD). St. Luke references them in his Gospel (1:1-4). Some wrote Gospels. Others wrote epistles and homilies to congregations set up by the Apostles or their disciples. In some places, these were placed alongside some or all of the New Testament Scriptures.

These writings are divided into three categories: accepted, disputed and rejected. The accepted writings were those writings which were undoubtedly apostolic in origin. Not all of these writings were written by an Apostle, but the author had close personal connections with an Apostle (e.g., Mark with Peter and Luke with Paul). The disputed books had a questionable origin. Some were eventually placed into the New Testament canon (Ephesians, 2 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Jude). Some were left out of the canon (*Teaching*, 1 & 2 Clement, Barnabas, *Shepherd*, Ignatius, Polycarp). The contents of the rejected books proved that they were not of apostolic origin. Therefore, they were never accepted as part of Scripture.

The Apostolic Fathers fall in the disputed category. These writings were accepted in some parts of the Church but not others. They are not on the same level as the Scripture. However, their use in some regions give us the ability to study them as documents reflecting the attitudes and customs of the Church in the generation after the Apostles.

This series of books on the Apostolic Fathers is not intended to persuade Christians to throw away centuries of tradition concerning these writings. Christians who seek to understand early Church history may find these writings useful. These reader's editions are intended to give a clear text with thoughtful commentary. They are not designed to give a full history and interpretation of each document. In these books, I hope to increase Christian faith and knowledge.

***What is the Teaching?***

The *Teaching* is not Scripture. It gives some great insights into the mindset and practice of the late first-century Church. Many non-denominational churches strive to reclaim the apostolic Church's practice and teaching. The *Teaching* illustrates their practice and teaching in a contemporary light.

Several fragments are available in Greek, Coptic and Georgian. The only complete manuscript is found in the Jerusalem codex (1056). The translation below comes from Kirsopp Lake's 1912 edition of *The Apostolic Fathers*. Lake was one of the first to publish the text after it was discovered in 1873.

The *Teaching* was most probably written between 75-90 AD. Chapters 7-15 show that the Church still had wandering prophets going from town to town. These wandering prophets were the Apostles' disciples. There isn't the universal establishment of the bishop's office yet. When Ignatius writes his epistles around 115, there seems to be an established bishop in each of the receiving congregations.

**Chapter 1**

1 There are two ways: one of life and one of death. And there is a great difference between the two ways.

The *Teaching* is most widely known for its teaching of the Two Ways doctrine. There are two ways to live and move and have your being in this world (Acts 17:28). There is the way of life, following Jesus Christ. There is the way of death, ignoring Jesus Christ. Simply stated, Jesus is the “great difference.”

The first four chapters of the *Teaching* detail the way of life—the life of the saved. There are numerous quotations from the Gospels, especially St. Matthew's. These quotations firmly ground the *Teaching* as an ancient catechism. It does not follow the pattern of questions and answers, but it proclaims the Church's true doctrines. Scriptural quotations form a detailed description of the ways of life and death.

The *Teaching* begins with a reference to Deuteronomy 30:15: “See, I set before you today life and death, good and evil.” The choice stands before each person. Which way will you live your life? To live toward life or to live toward death. Jesus commands in the Sermon on the Mount: “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). Moses and Jesus agree that more will choose the way of death over the way of life.

2 Therefore the way of life is this: first, love God your Creator; second, your neighbor as yourself. Do not do anything to another you do not wish to happen to you.

The way of life is crowned by love of God (Deuteronomy 6:5) and neighbor (Leviticus 19:18). “On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40). These two great commandments are combined with the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12). Redeemed sinners show God's love for sinners to other sinners.

3 And these are the words of this teaching: Speak well of those who curse you. Pray for your enemies. Abstain from your persecutors as a religious exercise. For what sort of grace is it, if you love those who love you? Don't the Gentiles also do this? But love those who hate you. Do not have enmity. 4 Abstain from the desires of the flesh and bodily lusts. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him also the left, and there might be an end. If someone makes you a courier for one mile, go with him two. If someone asks for your garment, give him also your tunic. If someone takes from you what is yours, do not demand it back, for you are no longer able. 5 Give to everyone who asks you and do not ask back. The Father desires to give His own gifts to everyone. Blessed is the one who gives according to the commandment, for he is innocent. Woe to him who receives, for if a hand has received this, he is innocent. But to the hand who doesn't have a need He gives punishment, in order that He might take also from one. Being in anguish, he will be examined concerning what he has done. He will not go out from there until he has handed over the last quadran. 6 But also concerning this and to give peace, let your merciful acts sweat in your hand, until you know to whom you should give.

The teaching of life abounds in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Jesus encourages us through word and example to “speak well of those who curse you and pray for your enemies” (v3). On the cross, Jesus' first word is a word of forgiveness: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). He prays for those who drove the nails into His hands. He speaks well of them because “they know not what they do.” He intercedes for His persecutors so that they might one day come to faith.

This selfless love for the neighbor strengthens and emboldens itself against the lusts of the flesh that war against our own soul (1 Peter 2:11). In this warfare, it is not just your soul that becomes a casualty but also your neighbor. Understanding this spiritual internal warfare, the *Teaching* continues with the admonition to “turn the other cheek,” to “go the extra mile” and to give your tunic to the one who asks for your garment (Matthew 5:39-42; Luke 6:29-30).

The Christian's selfless love for the neighbor is a giving, sacrificial love. This love gives to those who ask of them because they know that God has lovingly given them everything. “He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:32). Those who imitate the Father's selfless sacrifice of His Son are blessed. Those who seek only to receive will receive punishment. Sirach tells us, “Do good to a godly man, and you will be repaid—if not by him, then certainly by the Most High” (12:2). This punishment is meted out until the last quadran is handed over and paid off (Matthew 5:26; cf. Matthew 18:21-35).

The final charge of this chapter grants that a Christian's sacrificial, selfless love can also hold onto their service for a time. If a Christian finds that something he or she has to offer is not needed at some point in time, he is to hold onto his service until the need arises again. This is seen in the Apostolic Church when property was sold when a Christian fell into great need (Acts 2:45). This practice finds itself in Israel's civil law in the practice of redeeming property for the next of kin (Leviticus 25:23-34). Withholding the exercise of a gift when there is no need is not a sin.

**Chapter 2**

1 And this is the second commandment of the teaching: 2 Do not murder. Do not commit adultery. Do not commit sodomy. Do not practice sexual immorality. Do not steal. Do not practice magic. Do not practice sorcery. Do not murder children by abortion nor give birth to them to put them to death. 3 Do not covet your neighbor's things. Do not swear falsely. Do not bear false witness. Do not speak evil. Do not remember evil. 4 Be not double-minded nor double-tongued, for death's snare is the double-tongue. 5 Your word will not be false, not vain, but it will be done completely. 6 Do not be covetous nor greedy nor hypocritical nor mean nor arrogant. Do not receive an evil plan against your neighbor. 7 Do not hate all men. Some you will rebuke. For some you will pray. Some you will love as your soul.

The second commandment of the Way of Life consists of a lifestyle molded by the Ten Commandments. Especially of note are the Second Commandment and the entire Second Table.

The greatest detriment to the Way of Life is being double-minded. Being double-minded always leads to being double-tongued. The double-minded try to bring two or more ideologies together to create one new whole.

This is not new. In the Apostolic Age, Gentile Christians sought to reconcile the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the pagan deities and worship from their former lives (1 Corinthians 8). Jewish Christians also sought to follow both the Mosaic law of the Old Testament as a faithful Jew and Jesus' teachings in the Gospels (Galatians 5:1-15; 6:15).

Jesus' words come back from the Sermon on the Mount: “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Matthew 6:24). The double-minded will fall because they cannot uphold both sides of their thinking. The words that come from the double-minded lead to death.

God's Word is not and cannot be false. It cannot be rendered null or be spoken in vain. "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be that goes out from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10-11).

The chapter ends with the injunction: “Do not hate all men.” This statement should not be taken in the manner that there are some that we are allowed to hate. Jesus calls us to love all people in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:43-48).

Christians are called to love all people, regardless of how they feel toward us. We are called to be children of God. God loves everyone—His children and His enemies. He seeks nothing more than that “all people [are] saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). To that end, God sends prophets and Apostles and pastors to “preach the Word. Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching” (2 Timothy 4:2). The *Teaching* shows that each of these purposes are necessary in teaching and preaching. Some Christians need to be rebuked for their unrepentant sin and arrogance. This is most brilliantly drawn out by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-18.

The Church has been given the divine authority to forgive and retain sins (Matthew 18:18; John 20:23). This authority is one that is easy to explain but not easy to implement. As Americans, we don't want to impose our values and our beliefs on someone else. In this postmodern age, we don't want to accept that there is actual, objective truth and standards that all people are called to maintain. The Church is called by her Savior and Lord to point out the sin in the lives of all men but also to proclaim Jesus' forgiveness to those who repent.

For all people, there is the need for prayer (1 Timothy 2:1). Some will have a bit more immediate and tangible need for prayer than others. For all Christians, there is also the need for love. To “love as your soul” is the second great commandment of the Law (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39).

**Chapter 3**

1 My child, flee from every evil and from every likeness of it. 2 Do not become quick-tempered, for wrath leads to murder. Neither be jealous nor contentious nor wrathful, for out of all these murder is begotten. 3 My child, do not become covetous, for these desires lead to sexual immorality. Neither speak obscenely nor haughtily, for out of these things adultery is begotten.

4 My child, do not be a soothsayer, seeing that it leads into idolatry. Neither be an enchanter nor a mathematician nor a magician, nor be willing to look at them, for out of all these things idolatry is begotten. 5 My child, do not be false, seeing that falsehood leads into theft. Neither love money nor vainglory, for out of all these things are thefts begotten. 6 My child, do not be a grumbler, seeing that it leads into blasphemy. Neither be stubborn nor an evil thinker, for out of all these things blasphemies are begotten.

7 But be meek, because the meek will inherit the earth. 8 Become patient and merciful and not evil. Be well at rest and keep the words which you have heard through everything. 9 Do not exalt yourself nor give your soul confidence. Do not let your soul be united with the lofty, but be united with the righteous and the lowly that you may raise them up. 10 Those who stand with you are doing good as well. They will receive favor, knowing that nothing exists without God.

The *Teaching* brings these together to a point in verses 7-8: “But be meek, because the meek will inherit the earth. Become patient and merciful and not evil and be at rest and good and keeping the words through everything, which you have heard.” The opposite of these evils is not goodness. The opposite of all these evils is meekness. Meekness is often defined as “softness of temper; mildness; gentleness; forbearance under injuries and provocations.” This definition helps us to understand Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount: “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). David takes this point a bit further in Psalm 37:11: “But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”

This inheritance comes through Christ's sacrifice because God's gift of meekness allows the Christian to have the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5). The mind of Christ is described by the *Teaching* in verses 8-9 with emphasis on patience, mercy and rest. Jesus came in the flesh in humility and self-abasement. The Christian, following Jesus' example, does not exalt himself but unites their soul with the righteous. With this humble self-abasement, God will raise the Christian up as He exalted Jesus and gave Him the name above every name (Philippians 2:9).

**Chapter 4**

1 My child, remember night and day those who speak God's Word to you. Honor him as the Lord. When one speaks of the Lord, there is the Lord. 2 Every day, seek out the presence of the saints, so that you may find rest in their words. 3 Do not make schisms, but make peace in contention. Judge righteously. Do not favor one man's face in reproof. 4 Do not be double-minded, whether it will or won't.

The encouragement of remembering spiritual teachers is greatly needed today. We live in the age “when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the Truth and wander off into myths” (2 Timothy 4:3-4). When a spiritual teacher teaches the Truth, people will turn away after something else that sounds more pleasing to them. There is little honor for solid Bible teachers in our world today. Spiritual teachers are now seen as dispensable and interchangeable.

The *Teaching* encourages the pursuit of good, solid Bible teachers. Not just on Sunday but “every day.” Good, solid Bible teaching gives the rest of Jesus' yoke and burden (Matthew 11:28-30). In this rest, peace is proclaimed instead of schism. Schism may occur because of another's itching ears, but the Word should never be used to cause schism in Christ's Church. However, the Word must always be used to judge righteously.

5 Do not stretch out your hands to receive, but draw them in to give. 6 If you have anything through your own hands, give redemption for your sins. 7 Do not doubt when you give nor grumble the gift, for you know the good Redeemer of the wages. 8 Do not turn away the one in need, but be a joint partaker in everything that belongs to your brother. Do not speak of what is your own, for if in the immortal realm you are a partakers, how much greater in the mortal?

This paragraph can be used to answer the question, “Should a Christian accept welfare?” Especially when you take verse five's “Do not stretch out your hands to receive.” Don't beg, it seems to say. But are Christians truly not to accept handouts from others? Absolutely not. Christian charity and welfare must begin with the household of God. This is seen in the primitive Church: “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:44-45). Those who received were also Christians. They stretched out their hands to receive help from their brothers and sisters in Christ. While the primitive Church had a welfare system, the *Teaching* encourages Christians to be more willing to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

Those who are puffed up by their own possessions are encouraged to pay for the redemption of their own sins. This, of course, cannot be done. No one can pay for their own sins. If this were so, Jesus would not have come into the world.

Again, the *Teaching* focuses the reader upon the thin line between the mortal and the immortal in Christianity. The encouragement to be willing to give walks this line. If Christians are partakers in Christ's spiritual blessings in Heaven, they should be willing to share and partake in each other's temporal blessings on earth. Those who grumble and refuse to share their temporal blessings may be refused the immortal blessings.

9 Do not withhold your hand from your son or your daughter, but from their youth teach them the fear of God. 10 Do not order your slave or maidservant, who hope in God, in your sharpness, lest they will never fear God who is over both. He does not call men with respect to person, but He calls those whom the Spirit has prepared. 11 But you slaves, be subordinate to your masters as being formed of God in shame and fear.

Parents are to raise their children in the fear of God (Deuteronomy 4:10; 31:13; Psalm 34:11). This upbringing is not to be done in sharpness but in mildness (Ephesians 6:4). Parents are to be the primary role models for their children, showing them the importance of their faith.

Becoming a parent isn't something that can happen when both father and mother have gotten their lives together. Children don't happen because the parents have everything together. Children happen because the Holy Spirit has prepared father and mother to be parents.

This is a good picture of God's calling by the Holy Spirit. One does not become a Christian because they have completed a certain plan of salvation. One becomes a Christian because the Holy Spirit has called them by the Gospel. The person's individual preparedness is not taken into account. It is strictly the Holy Spirit's work. So also the picture of parents. Many parents are unprepared for their role as parents, but hopefully they acknowledge the Holy Spirit's preparation of them to become parents. So a human cannot make themselves ready to become Christian. Everything is done by the Holy Spirit. The Christian merely submits to the Holy Spirit's call.

12 Hate all hypocrisy and everything that is not pleasing to the Lord. 13 Never forsake the Lord's commandments, but take heed of what you receive from another, neither adding nor subtracting. 14 Confess your transgressions in the assembly. Do not look upon your prayers with an evil conscience. This is the way of life.

In our assembling together as the Christian congregation, we must hate everything that is hypocritical. Hypocrites are the ultimate double-minded. They say one thing, but they believe another. This is not pleasing to the Lord. He wants each Christian to have a single mind which thinks and says the same thing.

With this single mind, we are able to abide in the Lord's commandments (John 8:31). We can truly be His disciples by taking heed to what we have received from our pastors and other Christian friends. This Word has been given to us in the same way as John received at the end of Revelation: “I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book” (22:18-19; cf. Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32).

There are many times that we have a doubled mind and a doubled tongue. These things must be confessed in the congregation. Corporate confession and absolution brings life everlasting as the forgiveness of sins is pronounced. Private confession and absolution brings this forgiveness as well. These are God's gifts that should not be despised. “The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working” (James 5:16). These prayers are the voice of the single-minded Christian who seeks the way of life as he or she follows Jesus.

**Chapter 5**

1 But this is the way of death. First, every evil is also filled with abominations: murders, adulteries, covetousnesses, sexual immoralities, thefts, idolatries, magicians, sorcerers, robberies, false witnesses, hypocrisy, double-mindedness, treachery, arrogance, evil, stubbornness, greed, foul language, jealousy, audaciousness, exultation, boasting, 2 persecuting the righteous, hating truth, loving falsehood, not knowing the wages of righteousness, not joining together for good nor judging righteously, not being wakeful for good but for evil, standing aloof from mildness and patience, loving foolishness, pursuing recompense, not being merciful to the poor, not anxious about those who suffer, not recognizing their Creator, murdering children, corrupting God's vessel, turning away the needy, oppressing the suffering, being advocates for the rich, lawless judges of the poor, altogether sinful. May you be delivered, children, from all these things.

After the delineation of the way of life, the *Teaching* turns to the way of death. He begins with a long list of sins that fills the way of death. This list of sins is very similar to many of the lists of sins found in Scripture. It begins very much like Matthew 15:19, but he adds several iterations of some of these sins. At the end of the list, there is a short prayer that the Christian be delivered from all of these sins. That they may follow the way of life, forsaking the way of death.

**# GALATIANS 5:19-22 #**

Gal 5:19-22 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

**Chapter 6**

1 See, do not let someone mislead you from this way of righteousness, since he teaches you without God. 2 For if you are able to bear the Lord's whole yoke, you will be perfect, but if you are not able, do what you are able. 3 But concerning eating, bear what you are able, and from too much idolatry give heed, for it is worship of dead gods.

This chapter sounds like God wants us to be “good enough” to get into Heaven. However, that is not what it says. “If you are able to bear the Lord's whole yoke.” No one is able to bear Jesus' whole yoke. We are called to take it upon us. Jesus' yoke is easy, but it is still difficult to bear (Matthew 11:29-30).

But doesn't “do what you are able” tell us that we only need to be “good enough”? Absolutely not. “Do what you are able” is an encouragement to still do, even though it isn't perfect. “We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand, that we may **walk in them**” (Ephesians 2:10). We follow Jesus because He has given us good works to do. We are not saved by these works. These works **illustrate** our salvation.

We are not able to perfectly bear Jesus' yoke; but when we drop it, His forgiveness is available. His forgiveness is living and active in the Christian's life. It is not a vain word from a dead idol's preacher. God's living and active Word allows us to bear Jesus' yoke even in our weakened state.

Our inability to bear Jesus' whole yoke often seeks to mislead us from the way of life (Matthew 24:4). This is the godless temptation to avoid God's Law because we are sinners. God could not possibly want to be near us. But God is near us. That is His purpose in placing the yoke upon us. He is near to all who are yoked with Jesus.

**Chapter 7**

1 And concerning Baptism, thus you should baptize. Having said all these things, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in living water. 2 If you do not have living water, baptize in other water. If you are unable to do so in cold water, do so in warm. 3 And if you do not have either, pour water out on the head three times in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. 4 And before you baptize let the baptizer, the baptismal candidate and all others who are able fast. Exhort the baptismal candidate to fast for one or two days.

Baptism is a debated topic in Christianity, especially regarding its mode. The *Teaching* expresses the ideal scenario for Baptism. The only requirement of Baptism is the invocation of the Triune God with the application of water. Baptism must be done in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The *Teaching* uses this Trinitarian invocation twice as it discusses Baptism. It's only found once in the New Testament (Matthew 28:19).

Baptism should be done in living water. This living water would be either a river or lake. This follows John the Baptizer's model of Baptism in the Jordan River (Matthew 3:13; Mark 1:9; John 1:28; 3:26; 10:40). Jesus speaks of the believer streaming out with living water, flowing from Him as the source (John 4:10-11; 7:38; Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13). In the great multitude of witnesses in Heaven, having washed their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14), Jesus leads them to streams of living water (Revelation 7:17). But if living water is unavailable, water should be drawn from the font for baptism.

Baptism should be done in cold water. Cold water has the aspect of refreshment. After a long day's work in the field, it feels more refreshing to take a dip into a cold body of water or to take a cold shower. The contrast of the cold with the sweat of a good day's work in God's creation reinvigorates the worker for what lay ahead of him that evening. So also, cold water reinvigorates the soul. The temperature of the water should be a natural temperature. No means should be taken to heat the water before Baptism. This hearkens back to the previous statement of Baptism in living water. The living water is in its natural temperature. For those who do not typically baptize in a river or lake, the water from the font or the baptistry should be cold. However, if warm water is the only water available, the Baptism will still be legitimate as long as it is done in the name of the Triune God.

Baptism can be done by pouring water on the baptismal candidate's head three times. When each of the members of the Trinity are named, water should be poured upon the candidate's head. In living water, there is also the option to be immersed. This immersion can be done once after the profession of the entire Trinity or after each Person is named.

Baptism should be preceded, especially in adult Baptism, by a period of fasting. Fasting is a spiritual discipline focused and centered in prayer. Fasting is not only the refusal to eat food. Fasting is primarily a channel for prayer (see “Excursus on Fasting” below). Those who fast properly seek to put their flesh into submission to God's will. Fasting reminds one of their dependence upon God. Before adult Baptism, the *Teaching* encourages that the candidate and the pastor fast for a couple of days before the Baptism. Other members of the congregation are encouraged to join them, showing the congregation as God's family, sharing each other's cares, burdens and joys.

**Chapter 8**

1 And do not let your fasting be with the hypocrites. For they fast on Monday and Thursday, but you fast Wednesday and Friday. 2 Do not pray as the hypocrites, but as the Lord exhorted in His Gospel. Thus you shall pray, “Our Father, who is in Heaven, let Your name be holy, let Your kingdom come, let Your will be done as in Heaven also on earth, our bread that suffices give to us today, and forgive us our trespasses, as also we forgive those who trespass against us, and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, because yours is the power and the glory forever.” 3 Three times a day you should pray thus.

Unfortunately, fasting is enjoyed by the hypocrites. The hypocrites, like the Pharisee praying in the Temple (Luke 18:9-14), and following Jewish tradition, fasted on Monday and Thursday. To keep from being lumped together with hypocritical fasting, Christians were encouraged to fast on Wednesday and Friday. Friday is the day of Jesus' crucifixion. The Wednesday of Holy Week was the one day Jesus did not enter Jerusalem.But fasting was not to be done publicly to boost the Christian's ego (Matthew 6:16-18). These days were standardized by Pope Damasus as the Ember days, days specifically set aside for fasting around the great feasts of the Church Year: during Lent, after Pentecost, in September (the beginning of the Jewish calendar) and during Advent.

In the midst and as the capstone of fasting prayers, the *Teaching* gives the Lord's Prayer. The *Teaching*'s version of the Lord's Prayer has five major differences in wording to Matthew 6:9-13:

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| **Matthew 6:9-13** | *Teaching* **8:2** |
| “Our Father who is in **the heavens**” (v9). “Heavens” is plural (). | “Our Father who is in **the heaven**”. “Heaven” is singular (). |
| “as in Heaven also on **the** earth” (v10). “The earth” has the definite article (). | “as in Heaven also on earth”. “Earth” does not have the definite article (). |
| “forgive us our **sins**” (v12). “Sins” is plural (). | “forgive us our **sin**”. “Sin” is singular (). |
| “for Thine is **the kingdom** and the power and the glory forever” (v13). Matthew ascribes “the kingdom” () to the Father. | “for Thine is the power and the glory forever”. The *Teaching* does not ascribe the kingdom to the Father. |
| The Matthew text ends the prayer with “Amen” (). | The *Teaching* has no “Amen” at the end of the prayer. |

None of these differences change the meaning of the Lord's Prayer in the *Teaching*. With antiquity's oral traditions, the differences between the singular and plural can be easily explained. Also the lack of verbiage, whether a definite article or the “Amen”, can be ascribed to a copyist error. The copyist simply skipped the word as he or she was copying the text.

Throughout the Scriptures, Heaven is seen both in the singular and in the plural. The singular is seen especially in Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven, 32 times in Matthew's Gospel. (The singular appears 75 times in Matthew's Gospel out of 492 total in Scripture.) The plural is seen in Scriptures 210 times in the ESV, including 14 times in the Creation account, 52 times in the Psalms. It is also found in St. Paul's report of being brought up into the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12:2).

Sin is also spoken of as either singular or plural. In the singular, it is used for the sinful condition. In the plural, it is used for the collection of individual sins committed. In the Lord's Prayer, we ask for the forgiveness of all our sins, but we also ask for the forgiveness of our sinfulness in the same petition.

The encouragement or injunction to pray the Lord's Prayer three times a day illustrates an early understanding of the Daily Offices of the Church. These Offices have a basis in the Scriptures:

* “Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and He hears my voice” (Psalm 55:17).
* “Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules” (Psalm 119:164).
* “When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously” (Daniel 6:10).
* [Peter said:] “For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day” (Acts 2:15).
* “Now Peter and John were going up to the Temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour” (Acts 3:1).
* “The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray” (Acts 10:9).

From the Psalmist, the monastic communities of the early Church came up with seven prayer hours to accompany the Divine Service on weekdays. The seven hours were: Prime, Matins, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. These hours have their own liturgy and selections of readings.

From Daniel and the Apostles, we have prayer hours three times a day. In the Apostolic Age, the three hours were centered around the hours of the Cross: Jesus was crucified at the third hour (Mark 15:25); darkness descended upon the earth at the sixth hour (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44); Jesus died at the ninth hour (Matthew 27:46-56; Mark 15:34-41; Luke 23:44-49).

**Excursus on Fasting**

Fasting means intentional abstinence from food, drink or activity as a spiritual exercise to humble yourself before God so that you can receive His gifts. Fasting was done by both Jews and Christians. The Greek and Roman philosophers never encouraged fasting. However, they believed in a notion of a Utopian existence where food and drink were no longer necessary.

Christians may fast in many ways. You may abstain from a favorite food, a beloved activity or a harmful habit. This sacrifice is designed to humble your soul before God (Psalm 35:13; 69:10; Daniel 10:12; Zechariah 7:5). Proper fasting does not include abstaining from something you despise. It can be a total fast with no food or a simple fast with a handful of items being withheld.

Fasting is usually done for three reasons: mourning the death of a loved one, repentance over sin and preparation for entering into a deeper relationship with God. Each reason has a different source. Mourning is centered in grief. Repentance is centered in sorrow. Preparation is centered in wonder.

Fasting for mourning is found throughout the Old Testament (Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 31:13; Daniel 10:2-3). Many times, Israel fasted over the death of the ruling king or a prophet. Esther and Mordecai, along with all the Jews in Susa, fasted after Haman published his annihilation edict. This led to the establishment of the annual Purim fast (Esther 4:3, 16; 9:31).

Fasting for repentance over sins is the result of the Law's crushing of the sinful heart. Nineveh fasted after Jonah preached their impending destruction (Jonah 3:5-9). Nehemiah and Daniel fasted over the exiles returning to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:4; Daniel 9:3). The returning exiles in Jerusalem fasted after Ezra read the Law to them, acknowledging their sinfulness (Ezra 8:23; Nehemiah 9:1).

Fasting in preparation for enlightenment is also found often in the Bible. Moses spent forty days on Mount Sinai fasting before he received the Torah (Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9). Daniel fasted before receiving the apocalyptic visions of the latter half of his prophecy (9:3; 10:2, 12). Cornelius received his vision to call Peter while he was fasting as he prayed to God (Acts 10:30). The church in Antioch fasted while they ministered. During one of these fasts, the Holy Spirit called for Paul and Barnabas to be separated for missionary work (Acts 13:2-3).

This preparation is referenced by the *Teaching* with regard to Baptism. Those who are about to be baptized are encouraged to fast. The baptizing minister and as many of the congregation as are able are also encouraged to fast (7:4). This fasting before initiation into the Christian Church culminated in the first reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in the Lord's Supper. This is evident especially from the practice of Baptism and Confirmation during the Easter Vigil service. The catechumens were taken from the Service of the Word, which constitutes much of the Vigil service, and taken into the place of Baptism. When they were baptized, they went straight from the baptismal font to the altar as the Lord's Supper was being consecrated on Easter morning.

The Lenten season of fasting also comes to us as a manner of preparation for spiritual warfare. The Lenten fast is modeled after the forty days Jesus fasted in the Wilderness before Satan's temptations (Matthew 4:2; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:2). In this life, Christians are constantly undergoing battles with the evil spirits and desires of this age. As Israel fasted before going into a physical battle (1 Samuel 7:6; 2 Chronicles 20:3), the Christian should fast in order to be prepared for the spiritual battle with sin, death and the devil.

These situations for fasting are encouragements for the faithful. Only one fast was commanded in the Bible. The fast of the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16:29-34; 23:36-32; Numbers 29:7). Other days were added in post-exilic Judaism for the remembrance of Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem (Zechariah 7:1-7; 8:19). This commandment gives the impetus for Jesus to speak about fasting as an activity that a Christian will do: “**when** you fast” (Matthew 6:16).

Just as God instituted four additional post-exilic fast days through Zechariah, the zealous among the Jews in the intertestamental period added two days a week (*Teaching* 8:1; Luke 18:12). The *Teaching* takes the hypocrites' fast days and encourages those who wish to continue this pious exercise to move it from Monday and Thursday to Wednesday and Friday (8:1).

While the *Teaching* taught fasting, the contemporary New Testament epistles say nothing about fasting. Without examples of this, many believe that fasting didn't arise for Greek congregations. The Greek world did not see a benefit in fasting.

However, the Jewish background of the Church becomes prevalent again after the Apostolic Age. *Teaching* 8:1 lists Wednesday and Friday as the proper days of fasting. During Holy Week, Jesus did not enter Jerusalem on Wednesday. He was presumably fasting. He was crucified on Friday. Therefore the Christian remembers the suffering and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ while they fast. This becomes important especially as Irenaeus discusses the Easter fast, where Christians were encouraged to fast for the entire time between the Good Friday service and Easter Sunrise services. The *Apostolic Constitutions* (written 375-380 AD) describe this great fast coming from the evening of Maundy Thursday until Easter Sunrise (V 19).

The exercise of fasting is not simply an individual exercise. It is primarily a communal exercise. God commanded all Israelites to fast on the Day of Atonement. The post-exilic fasts were encouraged upon all Jews. Fasting in these circumstances leads to the encouragement of faith in the entire community. Christians come together better in this moment of sacrifice and fasting. This gives the opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work within the community. The Christians at Antioch fasted when Paul and Barnabas were called to become missionaries (Acts 13:2-3). Jeremiah charges Baruch to read the words of the Lord on a fast day (36:6, 9; see also Baruch 1:14; 2 Baruch 86). Fasting from worldly things leads us closer to spiritual things.

While fasting is a profitable exercise, it falls under the realm of Christian freedom. There are no fasts that a Christian **must** observe. The season of Lent has been historically set aside, by the consensus of the Church, as a time of fasting and prayer to prepare Christians for Easter. Christian fasting is a matter of Christian freedom: “One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's” (Romans 14:5-8).

So, Christian, do you **have** to fast? No. Fasting is optional. However, freedom in the Gospel should never lead us to throw away what can be profitable. Many Christians who refuse to fast simply do not understand how it will profit their lives. Their sinful eyes only see this world's profits. They avert their eyes from what God may be calling them to do through exercises such as fasting.

**Chapter 9**

1 And concerning the Eucharist, thus you shall give thanks.

When the *Teaching* turns to the Sacrament of the Altar, it uses the name “Eucharist”, which means thanksgiving. Therefore, the *Teaching* uses the Greek  for both the name of the Sacrament and the action of thanksgiving.

2 First, concerning the wine cup, “We give thanks to you, our Father, by the holy vine of Your servant David, who was made known to us through Jesus Your Son, glory to You forever.”

The *Teaching* reverses the order of the consecration of the elements. Instead of our normal practice, as well as Jesus' institution—blessing the bread and then the wine—the *Teaching* has the prayer of blessing for the wine first. This arrangement may come from St. Luke's Gospel where there are two cups distributed: one before the bread (22:17) and one after supper (22:20). There are ancient customs of blessing prayers in the liturgy of the Sacrament throughout both the Western and Eastern churches. Anciently, these prayers were inserted into the Words of Institution after the corresponding words. Therefore, for those who accepted and followed the *Teaching*, this prayer followed Jesus' words of the institution of the wine as His blood (see below). Lutheran liturgies tend to combine the thanksgiving prayers to precede the Words of Institution, while Catholic liturgies have the thanksgiving prayers for the elements with the offering.

In this prayer of blessing for the wine, we are reminded that Jesus is the Vine which provides salvation for His disciples (John 15:5). Through the Vine, we receive the “fruit of the vine”, another name for the wine of the Sacrament (Matthew 26:29).

3 Then concerning the broken bread: “We give thanks to You, our Father by life and knowledge, which was made known to us through Jesus Your Son. To You be the glory forever. 4 Just as the broken bread is scattered over the mountains, it is gathered together and becomes one. In the same way, let Your congregation gather together from the ends of the earth into the same kingdom, because Yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.”

In the prayer of blessing for the bread, we are reminded of the process of bread-making. Bread is made by the gathering of many grains to be ground into flour and then combined into a dough. In this dough, each grain loses its own individual identity and simply forms part of the whole lump.

We pray for the Father to unite us, as individual Christians, into Jesus' mystical body, the Church. We should strive to be united in the one true faith. We proclaim to be members of the “one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.” This prayer asks God to bring this invisible, intangible reality into the visible realm for everyone to see through His glory and power (cf. *Shepherd* Similitude 9:162).

5 And let no one eat nor drink from your Eucharist, except those who have been baptized into the Lord's name. For concerning this also the Lord has said, “Do not give the holy thing to the dogs.”

The restriction for Eucharistic reception in the *Teaching* is Baptism. For Lutherans, this seems to be an obvious statement. But in the ancient Church, even centuries after the *Teaching* was written and received its limited acceptance, Baptism was often delayed until the deathbed. Many Christians in the second-sixth centuries would come and receive the Eucharist without Baptism. They had faith in Christ; but, in their personal self-examination, they did not believe that Baptism was absolutely necessary to distinguish Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

Baptism and the Eucharist are linked together as the two Sacraments of the Church. Both offer the forgiveness of sins through Jesus' institution and promise. But the cart should not be put in front of the horse. A recipient of the Eucharist should first be a baptized Christian. Therefore Jesus' injunction stands: “Do not give the holy thing to the dogs” (Matthew 7:6; 15:25-28; Luke 7:27-28).

**Chapter 10**

1 And after being satisfied, give thanks: 2 “We give thanks to You, holy Father, for Your holy name. Tabernacle in our hearts by the knowledge and faith and immortality You have made known to us through Your Son Jesus. To You be the glory forever. 3 Almighty Master, You planted everything for Your name's sake, You gave food and drink to men for enjoyment, so that they might give You thanks. You have blessed us with spiritual food and drink and everlasting life through Your Son Jesus. 4 Before everything we give thanks to You, because You are powerful. To You be the glory forever. 5 Remember Your congregation, O Lord, to deliver it from all evil and to fill it in Your love, and gather the sanctified from the four winds into the kingdom You have prepared, because Yours is the power and the glory forever. 6 May grace come and may this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If anyone is holy, let him come. If anyone is not, let him repent, for the Lord is coming. Amen.” 7 Entrust yourselves to the prophets to give the thanks as they desire.

The *Teaching* continues with a post-communion collect that asks God to do exactly what He promises to do in the Eucharist: forgive sins and grant salvation and eternal life. In this prayer the simple, temporal elements are shown to be elevated to a higher status because of their spiritual usage. Therefore, the congregation asks that God continue to provide for them in every way.

The prayer begins with an acclamation of the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer: “Hallowed be Thy name.” *“We give thanks to You, holy Father,* ***for*** *Your holy name.”* Our entire being and life and salvation are wrapped up in God's name. The Triune God put His name on us in Baptism. We proclaim the name of the Triune God as we partake of the bread and wine of the Eucharist.

*“Tabernacle in our hearts.”* We seek God to continue His work through Christ that He began when He was “conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.” He tabernacled among us in flesh and blood (John 1:14) and purchased redemption and the forgiveness of sins by the same flesh and blood.

*“By the knowledge and faith and immortality You have made known to us through Your Son Jesus.”* We seek Jesus to tabernacle in our hearts through the knowledge that He gives us in the Gospel. The Corinthians had written to St. Paul, “All of us possess knowledge.” St. Paul replies back, “This 'knowledge' puffs up, but love builds up” (1 Corinthians 8:1). Fleshly knowledge is not what is being cited as an effect of Jesus' tabernacling among us. The knowledge of faith and immortality is only found in the Gospel. God has shown us this knowledge through His Scriptures as they testify to Jesus (John 5:39). ## Life and immortality to light (2 Timothy 1:10) ##

*“Almighty Master, You planted everything for Your name's sake.”* God created everything in order to praise and glorify His name. The first commandment given to all living creatures was “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 1:22, 28). It was repeated again after the Flood (Genesis 8:17; 9:1, 7). Every living thing has been created by God for the purpose of praising Him. Even the stars were created to show signs in the Heavens that proclaim God's glory (Genesis 1:14; Psalm 19:1).

*“You gave food and drink to men for enjoyment, so that they might give You thanks.”* God provided for man to be fed from the fruits of the earth. Originally, man was vegetarian or possibly even vegan (Genesis 1:29). After the Flood, God gave the right for man to eat from the clean animals (Genesis 9:1-5). After Jesus' resurrection, every animal has been made clean and can be eaten faithfully (Acts 10:15). All of these things given for food have been given so that we might enjoy our life. As in this prayer, we are to acknowledge God's gift of feeding our mortal bodies with meat and vegetables and grain and “receive our daily bread with thanksgiving” (SC III 14).

*“You have blessed us with spiritual food and drink and everlasting life through Your Son Jesus.”* The prayer immediately turns from physical food and drink to spiritual food and drink. The Eucharist gives us the opportunity to sit at the Lord's table in His kingdom that never ends. We eat and drink physical bread and wine, but we also eat and drink the bread and wine of Heaven. This bread and wine give us everlasting life because of Jesus' sacrifice.

*“Before everything we give thanks to You, because You are powerful.”* The Eucharist is aptly named. We give thanks to Jesus before and after the meal for His great sacrifice for our sins. We give thanks before everything but also before everyone. David aptly speaks of the Eucharist in Psalm 23:5: “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.” This table, spread for us with Christ's body and blood, reminds us that our lives should be lives of continual rejoicing (Philippians 4:4) and thanksgiving (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Faith in Christ gives us the power to give thanks at all times. He gives us the power over death and the grave through the victory He won on the cross.

*“Remember Your congregation, O Lord, to deliver it from all evil and to fill it in Your love.”* As the body of Christ, the Church calls for God's remembrance of the congregation. In the Great Litany of the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil, the congregation is brought into remembrance every Sunday in several petitions:

* “For peace in the whole world, for the stability of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.”
* “For this holy house, and for those who enter it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.”
* “For this parish and city, for every city and town, and for the faithful who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.”

The congregation is lifted up before God because it is called by His command. The Church seeks deliverance from evil and for the filling of her heart with love. By remembering the congregation in prayer, the Church seeks God's presence and protection for the Church. Emphasized through Jesus' own words: “Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

*“Gather the sanctified from the four winds into the kingdom You have prepared.”* We must also look towards Jesus' words of comfort as He details the tribulations of the End Times: “He will send out His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:31). Each Christian congregation prays for the Church scattered throughout the world. Although we are scattered because of geography, ethnic culture, doctrinal confession and worship style, the entire Church prays for the Day when Jesus will gather the entire Church in Heaven and on earth around His table, where we will enjoy the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end.

*“Because Yours is the power and the glory forever.”* As the Lord's Prayer concludes with similar words, this post-communion prayer contains these words. The power and glory are all Jesus'. His power and glory are eternal. And this is why we praise Him in our worship.

*“May grace come and may this world pass away.”* In His eternal power and glory, Jesus comes to us with His grace. Part of this grace is for this world to pass away. This world must pass away when Jesus returns. As the primeval world passed away in Noah's flood, the world will pass away with fire on the Last Day (Genesis 6-9; Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33; 2 Peter 3:10). His grace sees us through the passing away of the world into the glories of His eternal Kingdom.

The kingdom where we never again need to shout, *“Hosanna to the God of David”* (Matthew 21:9, 15). The pleas for salvation will no longer be needed. We will be rejoicing in our salvation. The hymns of Revelation illustrate this distinction with Jesus' Triumphal Entry. Entering Jerusalem, the pilgrims shouted, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” They begged for Jesus to bring the promised Messianic kingdom. In Revelation, the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, the angels and the countless hosts of the saints throughout history still sing: “Worthy are You, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power, for You created all things, and by Your will they existed and were created” (4:11). "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing"(5:12). "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb … Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen"(7:10-12). "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God” (12:10). "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for His judgments are true and just; for He has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of His servants" (19:1-2).

*“If anyone is holy, let him come.”* Here we have one of the first inklings in Church history of the practice of close(d) communion. This practice revolves around the agreement between church bodies in the essential doctrines of the Church. Unfortunately, the required amount of agreement varies from one church body to the next. However, the Church in the Apostolic Age and the generation after had this simple rule: *If anyone is holy, let him come.* The communicant had to be examined by himself and the bishop before receiving communion. This was to ascertain that all those seeking to receive the Lord's Supper were a member in good standing of an orthodox congregation. Many times this was accomplished with a signed letter from the visitor's bishop witnessing to the person's good standing in the congregation. This was similar to the practice of the apostolic epistles being the Apostle's signature on the courier's good standing (Romans 16:1-2; Ephesians 6:21-22).

This practice is further attested by the ancient practice of dismissing the catechumens and visitors after the sermon so that only the communicant membership were allowed to witness the mystery of the Lord's Supper. The previous chapter has the admonition: “And let no one eat nor drink from your Eucharist, but those who have been baptized into the Lord's name, for also concerning this the Lord has said, 'Do not give the holy thing to the dogs'” (9:5). In the ancient Church, most adult Baptisms occurred on the Great Vigil of Easter after having been properly catechized by the bishop. The catechumens first saw the great mystery of the Eucharist on Easter morning immediately after their Baptism.

This practice was necessary for doctrinal reasons as well. Even in the first generation of the Church, there were many heterodox and heretical teachers seeking to lead away the faithful. This practice was also necessary for the safety of the congregation. Only those who had been vetted as baptized Christians were allowed into the Eucharistic service so that Roman spies (an immanent example of dogs) would not receive the Eucharist. Christianity was an illegal religion in the Roman Empire before Constantine's edict of toleration in 313 AD. Close communion was also a way for the Christian congregation to continue to survive in the times of persecution. When the *Teaching* was written in the mid-first century, the greatest of the persecutions hadn't even begun. But the admonitions given would give Christians the strength to persevere the upcoming persecutions.

*“If anyone is not, let him repent.”* The unrepentant are not allowed to receive the Eucharist. Those who are unholy—unrepentant—must repent before receiving the Eucharist. St. Paul also wrote, “Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself” (1 Corinthians 11:28-29). Those who discern the body of Christ in the bread and the blood of Christ in the wine acknowledge their sins and Jesus' mercy in dying on the cross to forgive their sins. Without this discernment, they receive judgment instead of mercy.

*For the Lord is coming.* St. Paul writes to Thessalonians words of encouragement because false teachers had come into their midst and taught that the resurrection of all flesh had already happened (1 Thessalonians 4-5; 2 Thessalonians 2). In each of his epistles to the congregation, St. Paul refers to the resurrection of all flesh in the future tense. The Lord will come. He hasn't already come. We haven't missed it. However, we must always look at Jesus' coming as being near. “I am coming soon,” He says (Revelation 22:7, 20). Therefore the Church throughout the ages has replied to this doctrine, “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!” (Revelation 22:20).

8 Concerning the oil thus you shall give thanks: 9 “We thank You, our holy Father, who was made known to us through Jesus Your Son, to You be the glory forever. Amen.”

These verses are found in Lake's Greek text of the *Teaching*. However, most of the historic translators of the text have omitted these verses. Even in Lake's *Apostolic Fathers*' Greek-English parallel, the English has no translation for the Greek column.

The most likely reason for this omission is that it focuses on chrismation. Chrismation is the anointing of the baptized with oil immediately following Baptism. This anointing illustrates the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon the baptized, giving the gift of faith. This anointing, while not usually done in Lutheran or Protestant congregations, is indicative of Peter's words: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). In the Old Testament covenant, kings and priests were anointed with oil when they were installed into their office (Leviticus 8:12; 1 Samuel 10:1; 16:13; Psalm 89:20). This repeated theme calls the Israelites and the Church a kingdom of priests. Exodus 19:6: “You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel." Revelation 1:5-6: “To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” Revelation 5:9-10: “And they sang a new song, saying, 'Worthy are You to take the scroll and to open its seals, for You were slain, and by Your blood You ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and You have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.'”

In the Apostles' ministry, they also anointed the sick with oil (Mark 6:13; James 5:14). Chrismation and the anointing of the sick are still done in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. This anointing of the sick is accompanied by prayer because “the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16 NKJV). One such prayer, found in the Orthodox service of healing says, “O Lord Almighty, Healer of our souls and bodies, who put down and raise up, who chastise and heal also, visit now in Your mercy our brother/sister, (name), who is ill. Stretch forth Your arm, which is full of healing and health, and raise (him/her) up from this bed, and cure this illness. Put away the spirit of disease and every malady and pain and fever. And if (he/she) has committed sins and transgressions, grant remission and forgiveness, because You love mankind. Amen.” This anointing prayer comes straight out of James 5:14-16.

The thanksgiving prayer for the oil simply gives thanks to God for making Jesus known through the Scriptures and the voice of the Holy Spirit. Chrismation visually illustrates the entrance of the Holy Spirit into the baptized's heart. On the night Jesus was betrayed, He prophesied the coming of the Holy Spirit, saying, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I have said to you” (John 14:26). Luther teaches this in the Third Article of the Creed.

The Holy Spirit gives us the faith to believe in Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit prompts us to call Jesus Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3). It is He who enlightens our darkened souls to receive the true Light of the World, “which gives light to every man” (John 1:9). The oil of chrismation is the seal of that enlightenment. In this enlightenment, the Holy Spirit grants us faith.

**Chapter 11**

1 Therefore, receive whoever comes teaching you all these things that have been taught before. 2 If the teacher himself adheres to another teaching for the teaching's destruction, do not listen to him. If he applies the Lord's righteousness and knowledge, receive him as the Lord.

Those who come preaching the Gospel and the doctrines of the Apostles should be received as the Lord Himself (Matthew 10:40-41). Those who come preaching “another Gospel” (Galatians 1:6-9; 2 Corinthians 11:4) should be rejected as being an antichrist. “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already” (1 John 4:1-3).

3 But concerning the Apostles and prophets, do so according to the doctrine of the Gospel. 4 And all the Apostles are coming to you. 5 He will not remain one day, except there be a need. If he remains three days, he is a false prophet. 6 And when he departs, let the Apostle take nothing except bread, until he finds shelter, and if he asks for silver, he is a false prophet.

Even in the early Church, there were people who presented themselves as Apostles and prophets. Whether they called themselves by the names of the Twelve or even the Seventy (Luke 10:1-17) or just promoted themselves as Apostles appointed by the Twelve, we cannot tell from history. However, the *Teaching* speaks of false prophets and Apostles that were going around Asia Minor.

Two tests are given to test the apostolicity of the travelling Apostle or prophet. The first regards the length of his stay. If he is a true Apostle or prophet, he will only stay as long as is necessary. If he comes to a congregation and finds it doing well and faithfully hearing God's Word and receiving the Sacraments properly, he will leave quickly. If he extends his stay in a healthy congregation, it is likely so that he might change the healthy practices into unhealthy practices.

The second test involves provisions he requests when he leaves. If the Apostle or prophet leaves requesting only the necessities for the body, he is true. He will be following Christ's admonition when He sent out the Seventy, “Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road” (Luke 10:4). The Seventy were sent out strictly to be provided for by those who would listen to them. So also the true Apostle or prophet. Any Apostle or prophet seeking to gain wealth through preaching the Gospel is a charlatan (Matthew 10:8; Luke 10:7).

7 Do not attempt to discern every prophet speaking in the Spirit, for every sin will be forgiven, but their sin will not be forgiven. 8 Not everyone who speaks in the Spirit is a prophet, but only if he walks in the Lord's direction. Therefore from his direction you will know the false prophet from the true prophet. 9 And do not eat with any prophet who divides the table in the Spirit, for he is a false prophet. 10 And every prophet who teaches the truth, but if he does not do what he teaches, is a false prophet. 11 And every prophet having been tested, is truthful, doing in the mysteries of the Church outwardly, and teaching you not to do, he will not be judged by you, for his judgment is with God, for in like manner the previous prophets did also. 12 And whoever says in the Spirit, “Give me silver or something else,” do not listen to him, and if on behalf of others he says to give, let no one judge him.

“Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1). Jesus says, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (Matthew 7:15). If the spirit being spoken has been discerned to be the Holy Spirit, the prophet should be regarded as Christ Himself. Those who attempt to discern the Holy Spirit according to their own understanding are committing a violent sin against the Holy Spirit. This is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit Jesus speaks about (Matthew 12:31; Mark 3:29). This blasphemy will not be forgiven because it entails the creation of heresies.

The early Church spent much of its energy in the first six centuries battling heresies. They took their faith seriously. They fought to make sure that the only spirit speaking in the Church was the Holy Spirit. They tested the spirits (1 John 4:1) to know whether they taught the truth or not. Unfortunately twenty-first-century Christians, especially in the West, have become lazy in their Bible reading and study. They no longer have a basis for testing the spirits. They follow after any spirit that sounds reasonable. When a pastor comes to them with God's Word to show them their sin or their error, they shut him out for being intolerant of their life. They enter into judgment over him who is a true prophet, which the *Teaching* reminds us is unwise to do. The true prophet always comes up short in their summation and judgment (Matthew 5:12).

The Holy Spirit is all about preaching the Gospel, the administration of the Sacraments and the provision for the neighbor. If a prophet or pastor comes into a congregation and preaches something that is against the Gospel, who belittles the Sacraments or takes advantage of the neighbor, he is not a true prophet. The Holy Spirit does not dwell in him. He should not be allowed to preach in the Church without reproof and correction.

**Chapter 12**

1 Receive everyone who comes to you in the Lord's name. You will know, when you have tested him, for you will have understanding on the right hand and on the left. 2 If a transient comes, help him as you are able. He should not remain with you more than two or three days, if necessary. 3 And if he wishes to dwell with you, being a craftsman, let him work and let him eat. 4 But if he doesn't have a trade, take care of him according to those of you who have understanding. No one may live with you as a Christian in idleness. 5 But if he is not willing to do this, he is trafficking upon Christ. Beware of such as these.

Christian hospitality welcomes everyone who comes in the Lord's name (Psalm 118:26). This is not a blind acceptance of their teachings or their lifestyle. Everyone still needs to be tested (1 John 4:1). When they have successfully passed the test, or when they have received reproof and correction, then they should be accepted as part of the congregation.

The *Teaching* illustrates a Christian guide for helping transients. By the very definition of the word, transients show up on the doorstep while they are passing from one place to another. They have not reached their destination, but they are in the midst of their journey. He should not stay among the congregation for very long unless the hospitality given to him urges him to want to dwell with the congregation. If he stays, he must contribute to the congregation with his talents. “If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10). The *Teaching* tells us that a socially irresponsible person “is trafficking upon Christ.” We should beware of anyone who seeks to take advantage of the Church's goodwill.

# Every Christian is a transient in this world. As the traditional Gospel hymn spells it out, “This world is not my home, I'm just passing through. My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue. The angels beckon me from Heaven's open door and I can't feel at home in this world anymore.” #

**Chapter 13**

1 Every true prophet, who wishes to dwell among you, is worthy of his food. 2 Like the workman, every true teacher is also worthy of his food. 3 Therefore every firstfruits you bring of the wine press and of the threshing floor, of oxen and of sheep, you will take and give the firstfruits to the prophets. They are your high priests. 4 If you don't have a prophet, give it to the poor. 5 If you make bread, take the firstfruits and give it according to the commandment. 6 Likewise when you open jars of wine or oil, take the firstfruits and give to the prophets. 7 Take the firstfruits of silver and clothing and every possession, whatever may be given to you, and give it according to the commandment.

“The laborer deserves his wages” (Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7; 1 Timothy 5:18). This is especially true among those of the clergy. They do not labor for themselves. They labor for the benefit of the souls around them. Jesus entrusted these souls to their care. So the pastor “is worthy of his food” because his focus should not be on his material needs. His focus should be on the proclamation of the Gospel. There are instances, as evidenced by St. Paul, where the pastor needs to have a second job so that the congregation isn't burdened by providing for the pastor and his family (1 Thessalonians 2:9). The congregation should provide a salary for their pastor unless it is absolutely incapable of doing it.

The *Teaching* illustrates ways for how the congregation may provide for their pastor from the blessings God has given them, even if those blessings have not included the finances to give the pastor a regular salary. The Israelites were instructed in the sacrificial laws to provide for the Levites. God did not allow the Levites to own property. Their obligation was for the Tabernacle and later the Temple. Their focus was for their ministry before the Lord. Because they did not own livestock or farmland, portions of the sacrifices were given to the priests to provide for their families (Leviticus 2:3, 10; 7:6, 9-10, 14). In this provision, it was the firstfruits of the offerings that were given to the priest. This is also why the largest portion of most congregations' budgets is provision for their pastor (salary, insurance, housing, car allowance, etc.). The firstfruits of the congregation belongs to their pastor.

If there is no pastor, then these same firstfruits should be given to the poor. We will always have the poor with us (John 12:8). They need to be provided for as well. The congregation's firstfruits should not stay with the congregation. God doesn't call us to stockpile our wealth for a rainy day. God calls us to use our wealth to help others.

**Chapter 14**

1 Come together each Lord's day to break bread and give thanks. Confess before each other your transgressions. Your offering should be clean. 2 Let no one disputing with his neighbor join your gathering until they are reconciled. Your offering should not be defiled. 3 For the Lord proclaims, “In every place and time offer to Me a clean offering, because I am the great King,” says the Lord, “and My name will be praised among the nations.”

Each congregation is encouraged to partake of the Eucharist every Sunday. The outline of the Divine Service encourages this as well. We come together to confess our sins, offer our firstfruits and give thanks by breaking bread together. Jesus' statement about fellowship is referenced: “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:23-24).

God does not accept every offering (Genesis 4:3-5; Acts 5:1-11). God desires clean offerings so that His name may be glorified in our offering (Malachi 1:11). Thoughtless offerings cast dispersion on God's name in the heart of the one offering as well as those receiving the offering. Offerings are to be made out of a heart free from malice, envy and strife.

**Chapter 15**

1 Therefore appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, meek men, not lovers of money, true, having been examined, for they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers. 2 Therefore do not overlook them, for they are your honorable ones along with the prophets and teachers.

Each congregation is given the ability and power to appoint bishops and deacons for themselves. This autonomous power can sometimes be abused (see *1 Clement*), but it is not done in a vacuum. Elsewhere in the Scriptures, neighboring bishops were brought into the bishop's ordination and installation services to confirm the congregation's appointments. The bishop was in charge of confirming the appointments of deacons in the congregation. Both of these procedures make sure that each of the men brought before the congregation meet the criteria set forth in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9). Being examined by the Scriptures, the bishops and the deacons are to be honored and supported as God's messengers and teachers in the Church.

3 Do not speak to one another in wrath, but in the peace you have in the Gospel. Let no one speak to anyone who sins against another nor let him hear from you until he repents. 4 Do your vows and merciful acts and every deed as you have it in the Gospel of our Lord.

Wrath brings torment upon both the speaker and the listener. Because Christians have been brought into the mystical union of the one body of Christ through Baptism, everyone should relate to each other in peace. The Gospel must predominate in our speech as Christians, but the Law has its place (Matthew 18:15-17):

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”

While unrepentant, a sinner should not be welcomed to the innermost fellowship of the congregation. This is most concretely expressed in the Lord's Supper. Only the repentant should be admitted to the Sacrament. If someone will not listen to the Church about his or her sin, they must be left to their sin (Romans 1:24-26). They must be treated as the Prodigal Son, whose Father waited for his return and ran out to meet him (Luke 15:11-24).

The *Teaching* points toward Matthew 6:1-6, Jesus' preparation for the Lord's Prayer, for the Christian's dutiful mercy. Merciful acts are to be done because God has prepared them for us to do (Ephesians 2:10). Merciful acts show the Christian's salvation (Matthew 25:34-40). They do not **cause** salvation. They are the **effect** of salvation. And they are done as though the least of our brothers is our Lord Himself (Matthew 25:40; Colossians 3:17).

**Chapter 16**

1 Watch over your life. Do not quench your lamps nor ungird your hips. Be ready. You do not know when our Lord will come. 2 Gather together frequently, seeking what is profitable for your souls. The whole time of your faith will not profit you, until you are made perfect in the last time. 3 For in the last days, false prophets and corrupters will be multiplied, and the sheep will be twisted into wolves. Love will be twisted into hate. 4 For as lawlessness increases they will hate each other and hand each other over. Then the deceiver of the world will appear as the Son of God and will do signs and wonders. The land will be handed over into his power. He will do lawlessness as has never been seen since the beginning of the age. 5 Then the creation of men will come into the fiery trial, and many will be scandalized and destroyed. Those who remain faithful will be saved by Him who was cursed. 6 Then the true signs will be manifested. Heaven will be spread out first. Then the trumpet will sound. Then the resurrection of the dead. 7 Not everyone will be raised. The Lord will come with all the saints, as has been said before. 8 Then the world will see the Lord coming down from above with the clouds of Heaven.

The closing admonitions, like those of St. Paul's epistles, give imperatives for the Christian life. The general admonition to “watch over your life” come straight from Jesus' mouth (Matthew 26:41; Mark 14:38; Luke 22:40-46). Jesus says this after He returns from His first prayer in Gethsemane. The Apostles had fallen asleep. Jesus encourages His followers to watch so that we might be ready when His time comes.

The admonition not to quench our lamps comes most directly from Luke 12:35. The *Teaching* has the two segments of the statement reversed from St. Luke. It also points towards Jesus' parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13). Only those who had oil in their lamps—whose lamps were not quenched—were able to enter the wedding feast. Only those who are ready will be able to enter the marriage feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:9). This readiness is necessary because we do not know when Jesus will return (Matthew 24:36, 42-44; Zechariah 14:5).

To make ready, Christians are encouraged to “gather together frequently, seeking what is profitable for your souls.” This is an important concept in the early Church, especially since the Apostles were either being martyred or held under arrest at the time the *Teaching* is being compiled and the epistle to the Hebrews is being written. Hebrews 10:23-25 encourages the Christian congregation to gather frequently: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” A Christian cannot consider himself or herself ready for the Day of the Lord if he or she does not gather with the congregation.

For those who say, “I can worship God in nature,” the *Teaching* says, “The whole time of your faith will not profit you.” Heaven's gates will not open just because you have been a Christian for decades. Polycarp himself, in his *Martyrdom*, promotes the length of his Christianity, “For eighty and six years have I been His servant, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” (9:3). While Polycarp has been commemorated as a saint throughout Church history, his faith is not contingent on length of time. His faith is contingent on the King who saved him.

This faith illustrates that Heaven is not opened to all who had once been a Christian. Heaven is opened only to those who are in the right relationship with God on the Last Day. “The one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; Revelation 2:10). These verses disprove the mistaken notion of “once saved, always saved.” A Christian may fall from God's grace. This was the whole point with many of the early Church's heresies. Some fell away from the Church, turning their backs on their congregations so that they might save their own life. The orthodox, in several of these cases, didn't want to allow the repentant back into the Church. The Church struggled through this especially in the third century. The positive disposition of the soul toward Jesus at any point in life does not lead to salvation. The positive disposition of the soul toward Jesus at the end of life leads to salvation. This faithful disposition will be perfected and revealed in the world to come when Jesus returns on the Last Day.

In the last days, the soul's disposition will be tested greatly. Revelation shows us the two beasts who will arise to lead the world astray (13:1-18). These beasts are the powers that seek to destroy and corrupt the Christian faith in the last days (1 Timothy 4:1). They will be successful because they will seek to twist people inward on themselves. People will become more selfish as time goes along (2 Peter 3:3). St. Augustine first coined the phrase *curvatus in se* to describe man's natural inclination of self-preservation. Due to original sin, man is so curved in on himself that he cannot escape himself. The false prophets and corrupters will use this to their advantage to turn many away from the Church in the last days. Lawlessness will abound throughout the world, as Jesus prophesied (Matthew 24:3-22). Families will even be torn apart in this time (Matthew 10:21).

Towards the climax of the abundance of lawlessness, the great deceiver—the Antichrist—will appear. He will appear like the Son of God and do great and mighty works in the sight of all people. He will draw many to himself, including Christians, with the openness of his power. While Jesus came into the world humbly, the Antichrist will come into the world haughtily. This should be a great sign for Christians. Those who seek to revel in their own power and notoriety are **not** to be considered as leaders of the true faith in Christ. The world will be handed over to the Antichrist because he worships and utilizes the power of “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). In his lust for power, the Antichrist will do unspeakable lawless deeds whose evil has never been seen before. God destroyed the world in Noah's day because of their wickedness, but their wickedness will pale in comparison to the Antichrist's wickedness in the last days.

In these last days, the whole world will enter into the fiery trials. They will face the fiery darts of the devil. Those who have the armor of God will be able to withstand his attacks (Ephesians 6:10-20). Those who endure in faith will be saved by Him who became a curse for us (Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Galatians 3:13). Jesus died on the cross, taking the curse of humanity's sinfulness, bearing God's wrath against sin, so that we might be empowered to endure in the faith to meet Him in the skies (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

On the Last Day, as St. Paul reminds Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), Jesus will return visibly to claim His brothers and sisters and bring them into their eternal reward. (See also Matthew 24:29-31 and 26:63-64.) He will come with all the saints who have gone before us and whose souls sit before Him in Heaven. These departed saints will be joined with their glorified bodies. Those still on earth will be caught up into the air and their bodies glorified “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:51-52). When all these things are accomplished, Jesus “will sit on His glorious throne” (Matthew 25:31) to judge the living and the dead.

This last chapter is not given as a timeline of events to prepare us for the Last Day. These things are given so that we might comfort each other with the Gospel promise that Jesus has overcome the world. He will return to judge the living and the dead (1 Thessalonians 4:18). While the prophecy of the world's lawlessness is unnerving and even scary, Christians boldly go forth with the knowledge that their Savior has overcome the world and is coming back to bring them to be with Him in Heaven. Amen.