

## HE TAUGHT AS ONE HAVING AUTHORITY AND NOT AS THE SCRIBES

unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh. For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, have thus delivered unto us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, "This do ye in remembrance of Me, this is My body;" and that, after the same manner, having taken the cup and given thanks, He said, "This is My blood;" and gave it to them alone. Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn.

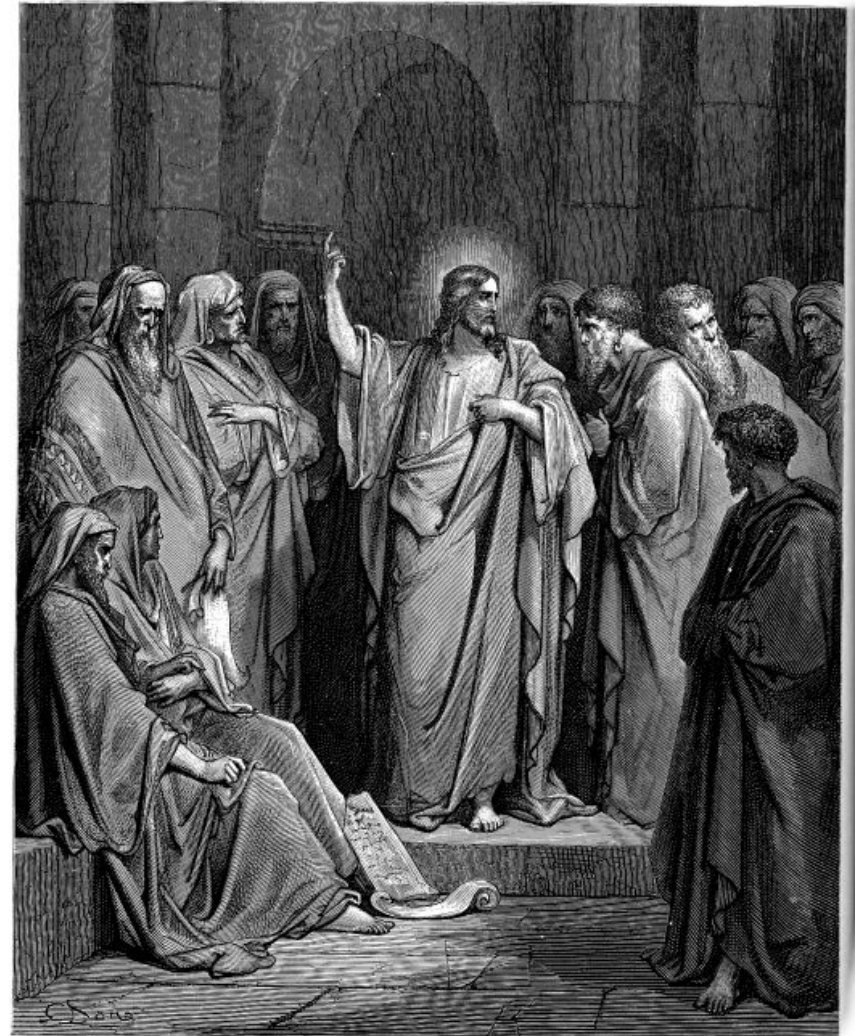
### CHAPTER LXVII -- WEEKLY WORSHIP OF THE CHRISTIANS.

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.

**For next Sunday please prepare St. Mark 1:29-39**

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

"Christ in the Synagogue" by Gustave Doré



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Mat 13:54 ...he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

.Today's Gospel St. Mark 1:21-28 [Year B, Epiphany 4]

✠ JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES WENT TO CAPERNAUM; AND WHEN THE Sabbath came, Jesus entered the **synagogue** and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their

synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.' But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A new teaching, with authority (εξουσίαν- ex ou **si** an)! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.' At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. [© NRSV]

### Rabbi, Synagogue and Eucharist

The **synagogue**, from a Greek word meaning *meeting place*, was at first a social and, increasingly, a religious site that was developed during the Jews captivity in Babylon. For some 70 years the Jewish upper classes were held hostage. Jews gathered at the *meeting place* for fellowship. Denied their worship at far away Jerusalem and unable or reluctant to construct another temple in Babylon, they also met on Sabbath mornings for Scripture reading, prayer and instruction given by a learned member of the synagogue who was eventually called a **rabbi**, the Hebrew word for *teacher*. The synagogue then (as now) featured two lessons from the Old Testament ( The Old Testament is called *The Tenach* by Jewish People.) Lesson one was taken from the *Torah*, the first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The second lesson was and is known as the *Haftorah*, taken from the *Nevi'im*, the books of the Prophets. The service included Tenach lessons, psalms, homily, various prayers and concluded with *The Peace*.

Some 5 centuries before Christ, Cyrus the Persian destroyed the Babylonian empire. He freed the Jews who returned to what is now Israel. The non-Temple fellowship and worship pattern continued in virtually every community because Temple sacrifices required a trip to Jerusalem. Most people visited the Temple only on great festivals.

Today we see Jesus fulfilling what might be called the role of visiting professor in the synagogue at Capernaum. In the minds of the synagogue leadership he was a sharp young Rabbi <sup>1</sup> who deserved to be heard. What they learned was that he had *exousian* (εξουσίαν - Greek for *authority*). It is by **his** that he acts. **We** act in the name of his *exousian*, praying, "through Jesus Christ our Lord..."

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<sup>1</sup> The word was becoming specific to *religious* teachers during Jesus' time.

## THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

First century Christians continued to worship in the synagogues but also gathered for **Eucharist** on Saturday nights or early Sunday mornings. The early-church Eucharist *began* with the offering of Bread and Wine; then followed *Lift up your Hearts*, Consecration, Communion, etc.

By the end of the first century Christians had become *persona non grata* in the synagogues. The expelled Christians continued a version of the synagogue service, namely, what is now the first half of our Eucharistic liturgy. Soon after the New Testament books were written the early Christians added passages from the Christian parts of the Bible. The first part of the Mass is a "liturgical relic" of the devotions that hostages developed in Babylon over 2500 years ago. We enrich the ancient pattern by adding the Epistles and the words and acts of Jesus, the Rabbi of Rabbis, the words called *Gospel* (Good News).

You can read one of the earliest accounts of the Eucharist in *The First Apology* (defense) of *Justin Martyr*, (c. 155) who writes of Baptism and Holy Communion: Consider Justin's three passages printed below:.

### CHAPTER LXV -- ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS.

But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to *genoito* [so be it]. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

### CHAPTER LXVI -- OF THE EUCHARIST.

And this food is called among us *Eukaristia* [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and