

THE CUP
AND
THE BIBLE

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WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THE CUP? (Part 1)

INTRODUCTION

As Christians, we are told to:

“*Speak as the oracles of God*” (1 Peter 4:11).

Therefore we must prove every teacher and his teaching by the authority of God’s Word alone. We must not forget that God’s authority cannot be found in men but rather in the Holy Bible.

A controversy exists among Christians concerning the Lord’s supper. It is all about a strange belief that some brethren are teaching. These brethren are led to believe that Christ used only “one cup” in the institution of the Lord’s supper, therefore, every congregation must use only one cup in its partaking too. The most dangerous conclusion of these brethren is that: “We won’t have fellowship with any congregation that uses many cups because it is sinful.” However, it is the purpose of this study to prove to all brethren that the New Testament *does not teach* the so called “One cup” issue.

Let me say in the beginning that, “If a congregation wants to use only one cup, (as long as it is not made a law), I believe the Lord will accept that.” I also believe that the Scriptures supports the use of more than one cup, and that the Lord Jesus Christ will accept that method as well. In other words, how many cups are

used is a matter of opinion and was within the realm of what is expedient. Before I go further in this study we need to understand the background of the institution of the Lord's supper.

BACKGROUND

There are records of the institution of this Supper in Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:12-17; Luke 14:12-17; and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. The context in the Gospel accounts shows that they gathered together to simulate the Jewish Passover (because it was not time for the Passover itself). They had their Passover meal and then Christ instituted the Lord's Supper. Luke 22:19,

“And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.”

A BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE RECOGNIZED

Christ is our “Chief Shepherd, (1 Peter 5:4). He is also our Director, Law Giver, and the One whom we must obey (Luke 6:46). But under our Chief Shepherd, there are “under shepherds,” called elders, bishops, pastors... Laws or instruction cannot be given to cover every detail that man encounters in serving the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, in congregations where there are no ordained church leaders (where there are no elders – men must make the decisions, and Christ has given them the authority and liberty to do so). Paul says,

“For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13).

Peter urged the elders to:

“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not by filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (1 Peter 5:2-3).

Christ has told us WHAT to do in all cases, and in some cases He has told us HOW to do it. Where He has not specified HOW to do something, the leaders of the congregation must decide how they will do it. For example, Christ and the inspired apostles required that one be baptized (IMMERSED IN WATER) for the remission of sins. That is WHAT they are to do! But the WHERE and HOW of baptizing one into Christ is left for man to decide. (There were in times past, those who insisted that baptism MUST be in “running water,” in order for sins to be washed away.) They were trying to bind their opinions on others, because the Lord did not specify “running water,” He just said “water.” Paul makes this clear in Ephesians 5:26, when he wrote that the church is sanctified by Christ “with the washing of water by the word.” Hebrews 10:22,

“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

WHY DOES “ONE CUP IN COMMUNION” COME UNDER THIS PRINCIPLE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION?

It Does So For the Following Reasons:

1. Jesus told us WHAT to eat and drink: “Eat the Bread, Drink the fruit of the vine.” He certainly did not mean for US to “drink the cup,” nor did He tell US to “drink from THIS cup.” If that is what Jesus meant, then two things, would have to occur. One, we would have to literally drink a “cup.” That is impossible (we will discuss this further on). And Two, if He meant “this cup (the one He was holding in His hands), that too would be impossible. If that were true, then every Christian on the face of the earth, would of necessity have to drink from “that cup,” every Lord’s day. IMPOSSIBLE! “That cup” is no longer available to us. Jesus does not require the ridiculous or the impossible.

Furthermore, if what the advocates of the “one cup” claim is true, then there could only be “one loaf,” a fact that they never mention. And everyone would have to break some bread off that loaf that they were going to eat. This shows the inconsistency of their argument. (*Actually it is more than an argument, it is a law that they have made, and are trying to bind it upon others.*)

Christ often used Metaphors in His teaching, saying, “I am the Door,” “I am the Way,” “I am the bread of life,” etc. He says, “*this bread is my body,*” and “*this fruit of the vine is my blood.*” HOW is it served to all Christians on the Lord’s day, is for each congregation to decide.

2. Christians must do that which is expedient and practical. There are some congregations with over a thousand members. Would it be practical to use only one loaf and one cup to serve that many people? How long will it take. It is neither expedient nor is it practical, not to say that it is not possible! Imagine, one loaf and one cup for 5,000 members!

3. The important thing is the CONTENT of the cup, and not the cup itself. When a large number of people partake of the Lord’s Supper, they are all partaking of the SAME CONTENT, the “*fruit of the vine.*” And they are eating the same thing, “*the bread.*”

4. The use of individual cups relates to externals and forces excessive concentration of the cup. (The vessel in which the fruit of the vine is served). And it may very well obscure their appreciation of the Spiritual Significance of that event to the ones worshipping of God.

It is obvious to me, that the Lord did NOT require WHAT some people claim He requires. If that is true, then it must fall in the realm of expediency. When Paul was writing about some things the Corinthians were doing that was wrong; he wrote,

“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; All things are

lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any” (1 Corinthians 6:12).

We need to recognize that there are some things which are expedient and there are some things that are not expedient. Using more than “one cup” to me, is more expedient, and not disapproved by God (or Christ) nor by inspired writers of the Bible.

NATURE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

It is the central and most sacred part of Christianity.

“Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the son of man ye have no life in you” (John 6:53).

There are seven words that describe things that we should do when we observe that supper.

1. **RETROSPECTIVE.** We are to look back to Calvary, bringing our minds to the night of His betrayal, suffering, and His crucifixion. Christ died for our sins, that fact focuses our thoughts and our hopes upon Him.

2. **PROSPECTIVE.** The Lord’s Supper causes us to look back, but it also causes us to look forward (prospectively). Jesus said, *“this do till I come.”* Unless Christ is coming again, all true meaning of this supper disappears. He is coming again! This is the faith of every true believer.

3. **INTROSPECTIVE.** According to Paul, it is necessary for every person to examine self. It should be a

rigorous self-examination. And examination of one's life, their sincerity, their devotion, and their dedication to the Lord.

4. **COMMEMORATIVE.** "*In remembrance of Me,*" Jesus said. It is a great Memorial. It is something that has been put in place to cause people to remember. Monuments in different countries are built as a Memorial to some famous people. They are built to cause people to "remember that person." The Lord's supper has been put in place to cause us to "remember Jesus Christ." Under the Old Testament, people were required to "remember their sins" each year. Under the New Testament, people are required to "remember that we have been redeemed (set free) from our sins."

5. **INSTRUCTIVE.** "*Ye proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.*" If we want to proclaim to others what Christ means to us, what better way than by observing the Lord's Supper every Lord's day. Books are cast aside, sermons are forgotten, words are ignored, but people cannot ignore the life of a faithful Christian when they demonstrate their faith when observing the Lord's Supper.

6. **CORRECTIVE.** Implied in this is the "self-examination" in 3 above. If one's life is out of harmony with Christ's will, they will make the necessary corrections before partaking of that supper. "*Let a man prove him-self,*" Paul wrote.

7. **SEPARATIVE.** Here more than anywhere else, there is a distinction made between the saved and the lost.

“Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood ye have not life in yourselves” (John 6:53).

All present in any assembly can sing, pray, listen to a sermon, and give money to support the Lord’s work—but only Christians are invited to partake of the Lord’s Supper.

CONCLUSION

Jesus said,

“He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up in the last day” (John 6:54).

Let us not be guilty of “binding things where Christ has not bound,” and by the same rule, “we must not let others bind on us things that Christ has not bound!” Christ has NOT bound “one cup” on us. It is the CONTENT, NOT THE VESSEL. It is WHAT is IN the CUP itself. How it is served must be left up to each congregation to decide. If it is the cup that Christ has bound on us, then we have to eat and drink His literal body and blood. I am not saying “transubstantiation” as the Catholic Church teaches because “transubstantiation” teaches that there is a *change* in the elements, that is, from the bread to the literal body of Christ and from the wine to the literal blood of Christ. But even that will not do because Jesus told us to EAT His flesh and not to eat a changed wafer or wine, so we have to eat Christ’s literal flesh and drink His literal blood.

But even the advocates of the “one cup” do not accept this interpretation, but then why do they teach one literal cup? For the bread Jesus said, “This **is** my body.” For the fruit of the vine, Jesus said, “This **is** my blood.” For the cup Jesus said, “This **is** my blood of the new testament.” Again Jesus said about the cup, “This **is** the fruit of the vine.” Consistency demands that either we have to eat and drink Christ’s literal body and blood and drink from one literal cup or take all as figurative. Those who teach that each congregation has to use ONE literal material cup teach that when Christ said “This **is** my body” and “This **is** my blood” He was speaking figuratively and not literally. They have no problem at all about interpreting this, and they are correct in their interpretation. But when they come to the cup, which is a part of the same context, then they use different interpretation. One cannot be consistent in his teaching. What they are doing is that they are not accepting Jesus’ own interpretation of WHAT the cup is. Jesus did not interpret what He meant when He said, “this **is** my body” and “this **is** my blood.” We interpret it ourselves. But about the CUP, Jesus interpreted it for us and yet, advocates of the “one cup” do not want to accept Jesus’ interpretation but they prefer their own interpretation and are leading others to destruction because they are making it a law.

Jesus’ interpretation of the cup is this:
Matthew 26:26-29,

*“...this (cup) **is** my blood of the new testament...”*

*“...I will not drink henceforth of **this** fruit of the vine until...”* (see also Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:17-20).

Paul’s interpretation is the same as Jesus’ interpretation:

*“The cup,...**is it not** the communion of the blood of Christ?”* (1 Corinthians 10:16, see also 11:25).

What is “the communion of the blood of Christ” the *material* cup or the *content* of the cup, that is, the fruit of the vine? Both cannot be! Remember, there is **ONLY ONE CUP**” not “cups”!

We have to choose whether to accept Jesus’s and Paul’s interpretation, that is, that the “cup” **IS NOT** the material cup or to accept the interpretation of men, that is, that the “cup” is the material cup. But remember that:

“We should obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

ONE CUP OR MANY? (Part 2)

The Bible's use of metaphors is interesting and instructive. In what we are going to study, attention is to be given to the metaphor of "the cup." We are going to study about different "cups" mentioned in the Bible.

The phrase "one cup" *never* appears in the Bible. When Christ and His apostles spoke of "the cup" *they were not talking about the physical vessel but about what was in it, and that for which it stood.* In fact, if we really want to know to what Jesus was referring when He spoke about the cup, if we let Jesus tell us and not other people, we would know exactly what the cup stood for. Jesus told us exactly what He meant by the "cup". Jesus stated in Matthew 26:26-29, "...this (cup) *is* my blood of the new testament...I will not drink henceforth of *this* fruit of the vine until..." (see also Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22: 17-20). Paul stated, "The cup,...*is it not* the communion of the blood of Christ?" (1 Corinthians 10:16, see also 11:25).

Jesus received a "cup" and said, "*Take this and divide it among yourselves*" (Luke 22:17). All agree that this is a straight command and a very clear one and easy to understand. If one believes that we have to use only "one (literal) cup" then we have to divide that "one (literal) cup" among ourselves because if we do not, then we are not obeying Jesus' command to "*divide it*

among your-selves” (Luke 22:17). There are not if’s or but’s, Jesus’ command is very clear: “*Take this and divide it among yourselves.*” What are we to divide among ourselves? According to the Lord, it is the “cup.” But we, who do not believe in one physical container for the Lord’s Supper obey Jesus because we understand Him clearly what He meant. Jesus did not mean for us to divide the container (and the “one cup” advocates agree with this without any exceptions), what Jesus meant for us to “*Take this and divide it among yourselves*” (Luke 22:17) was and is: *to divide the contents*, the fruit of the vine. If someone wants to be contentious, it is up to him or her but Jesus’ command is very clear. There is only one way to obey Jesus Christ and that is to “*Take this (cup) and divide it among yourselves.*” If we are not to divide the literal cup or container then the “one cup” is “the fruit of the vine” and not the container! If we are to divide the literal cup or container, then the “one cup” is “the container” and not “the fruit of the vine.” Both cannot be because there is ONLY ONE CUP! Jesus referred clearly to what we are to divide among ourselves as “THE CUP.”

Also, the apostle Paul, writing to Christians in the city of Corinth stated that the “cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion (sharing) of the blood of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:16). The “we” included Paul and Sot-henes at Ephesus (1 Cor. 1:1; 16:8, 19) and the saints at Corinth to whom he was writing. They were separated by many miles (kilometers) and the Aegean Sea, yet could all share, that is, have communion, in the “cup of blessing” on the first day of the week. On the

first day of the week Christians partake of the “cup of blessing” in Malta, England, Italy, Germany, France, Spain, United States of America, Switzerland, Australia, and in all the other countries where there are Christians. We do not partake from the same container but we all partake of the same “cup of blessing”, that is, *the fruit of the vine* which represents the blood of Christ. The same is true of those who partake in the same assembly from different containers. None partake from the same container, but “the cup”, that is the contents of the cup, (the fruit of the vine) is divided among themselves, and all partake of the same “cup of blessing,” that is, *the fruit of the vine* which represents the blood of Christ, thus communion.

Paul quotes Jesus as saying, “*This cup is the new testament in my blood.*” Paul added: “*For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show forth the Lord’s death till he comes*” (1 Corinthians 11:25-26). When Paul commanded the Corinthians: “Drink this cup,” was he speaking of the container or was he speaking of what was contained in the cup? You know that he could not have been speaking of drinking a container! But to be consistent, the advocates of the “one cup” should answer, yes, Paul was speaking of drinking a container!! But it would be absurd to do so! If the advocates of the “one cup” answer that Paul was speaking of what was contained in the cup (the fruit of the vine), then they are inconsistent in their teaching because they are teaching **two** cups and not **one** cup, the container and the contents! But there is only ONE CUP! We will see more about this later on in our study.

We drink what was in the container. Furthermore, no container can possibly represent the Lord's blood that was shed for the remission of our sins. It is the fruit of the vine that is symbolic of our Lord's blood.

There are sincere people who believe there should only be one container—or at most, four or five—on the table when the Lord's Supper is observed. They oppose individual communion cups and even cause division in the church which is condemned by God! (Romans 16: 17). But those who oppose individual communion containers fail to understand the figurative nature of the language both Jesus and Paul used. Paul used a figure of speech in which the container is used for the contents of the container. You know that is true, even if you do not know the nature of figurative speech. How could anyone drink a cup? We drink *what is in the cup*—not the cup itself. So it does not matter how many containers are used in serving the Lord's Supper. **The only way more cups could be used would involve adding milk or water or beer or Coca Cola.** The truth is: There is only one cup **worldwide**—the fruit of the vine. The one cup advocates, in fact, are introducing more than one cup by their erroneous teaching because each congregation, in their case, have one cup, and if there are 100 congregations, then there will be 100 cups. But if the cup is what Jesus and Paul say it is, *the fruit of the vine*, then the 100 congregations with all their individual cups, they are still using ONE CUP! Christians in England, Italy, Germany, France, Spain, United States of America, Switzerland, Australia, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark, South Africa, Ukraine,

Russia, Guatemala, and in all the other countries there are Christians drink the same cup as we do here in Malta. They drink *the fruit of the vine* and so do we.

The thinking that the bread must not be torn into two or more sections, that each member must break off a piece from the one cake resembles the error made concerning the cup. The “one bread” is the kind Jesus used to institute the Supper. It was unique. It is one (unique) in kind (unleavened bread, Matthew 26:17, 26), and one in emblem (the body of Christ). It is not unique in a literal cup because it was made of precious metal but it is unique because the fruit of the vine represents the precious blood of Christ.

Again in 1 Corinthians 10:16,

“...The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”

Just as with the cup, the “we” included Paul and Sothenes at Ephesus (1 Corinthians 1:1; 16:8, 19) and the saints at Corinth to whom he was writing. They were separated by many miles (kilometers) and the Aegean Sea, yet could all share, that is, have communion, in the “one bread” on the first day of the week. On the first day of the week all Christians partake of the “one bread” in England, Italy, Germany, France, Spain, United States of America, Switzerland, Australia, and in all the other countries where there are Christians as do Christians here in Malta. We do not partake from the same piece of bread, but of “one bread,” that is, the unleavened bread which Christ instituted as representing His body. A loaf of bread with 2 or 25

slices or pieces is still “one bread”. The number of pieces does not change the nature of what it is or what it represents. The erroneous teaching change the nature of the pure teaching of God’s Word. The material cup is being given more importance than that which really represent the body and blood of our Lord! We have to accept Jesus’ own interpretation!

DIFFERENT CUPS

(Part 3)

Now let us study what the Bible says about some of the different cups mentioned in it and then we continue our study about the “one cup” used at the Lord’s Supper.

I. The Cup of Happiness

In Psalms 23:5, we read,

*“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; **my cup** runneth over.”*

What better way to depict great joy and happiness than to speak of one’s cup of happiness? In the Shepherd Psalm quoted above the writer says, “My cup runneth over.” In a similar vein the Psalmist declared,

*“The Lord is my chosen portion and of **my cup**”* (Psalm 16:5).

The thought is that of joy unsurpassed, of happiness inexpressible, of a peace that is too deep for utterance.

II. The Cup of Bitterness

In Ezekiel 23:33-34 we read,

*“Thou shalt be filled with drunkenness and sorrow, with **the cup** of astonishment and desolation, with **the cup** of thy sister Samaria. Thou shalt even drink it and suck it out, and thou shalt break the sherds thereof, and pluck off thine own breasts: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God.”*

The Bible likewise makes use of “the cup” to describe great sorrow of heart, great bitterness of soul. In the verses quoted above, Ezekiel speaks of *the cup* of astonishment and desolation. After Jesus had asked James and John if they were able to drink the cup which He Himself was soon to drink and after they had affirmed their ability to do so, Jesus said,

*“My **cup** indeed ye shall drink”* (Matthew 20:20-23).

In Gethsemane, Jesus prayed,

*“My Father, if it is possible, let this **cup** pass away from me”* (Matthew 26:39, 42).

In the same passage, Jesus prayed,

“If this cannot pass away except I drink it, thy will be done.”

When Peter drew his sword, Jesus told him to put it away and asked,

*“The **cup** which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”* (John 18:11).

Jesus is seen drinking that cup in Gethsemane, in Pilate's and Herod's judgment halls, and on the cross. The disciples are often seen drinking that cup in their sufferings described in the Book of Acts and in the Epistles.

III. The Cup of Hypocrisy

We read in Luke 11:38-39,

*“And when the Pharisee saw it, he marveled that he had not first washed before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the **cup** and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.”*

The Pharisees were extremely critical of Jesus and sought every opportunity to find some fault in His life. Jesus hurled many scathing denunciations at these fault-finders, these self-righteous ones. Jesus once said to them,

“Ye cleanse the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness.”

To cleanse thoroughly the outside of a cup while leaving the inside without any attention whatever, is a most dramatic way of picturing hypocrisy. Scrupulous attention to outward details and disregard to the weightier matters, the inward state, is the picture Jesus is drawing.

IV. The Cup of a Small Deed

In Matthew 10:42 our Lord said,

*“Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a **cup** of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward”*

Jesus did not despise the day of small things. He believed that any deed, however great, if done from an impure motive, was ugly. But He also believed that any deed, however seemingly small, if motivated by love, is great. He praised the giving of the widow, though her gift was small as to actual monetary value. On the occasion mentioned above, Jesus taught this lesson in a very simple way.

God does not ask that His people do great deeds—only what they can. Dorcas could have remained idle, wishing she had a lot of money in order to build a garment factory and turn out garments for the poor by hundreds. But instead of doing that, she took up a small needle and when Peter arrived at her house after her death, those who were there held up the garments which Dorcas had made for Peter to see (Acts 9:36-41). David could have wished for a spear as big as the one Goliath had. But instead, he took a lowly sling and did what he could with it (1 Sam. 17:48-51). Peter and John could have wished for silver and gold in order to be able to help the lame man at the temple gate. Instead, they said, *“Such as I have give I unto thee”*

(Acts 3:6). They gave to him something that was far more precious than all the silver and gold on earth.

V. The Cup of Temptation

The apostle John says in Revelation 17:4,

*“And the woman was arrayed with purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden **cup** full of abominations, even the unclean things of her fornication.”*

Here, in apocalyptic imagery, John pictures the world as a woman with alluring enticements. She has in her hand a cup full of abominable things, offering it to those who would take and drink. We can see all sorts of things in that cup.

We can see all that produces lust in human hearts. We can see the motion pictures today, the impure literature that fills everywhere, the drugs of various kinds, the alc-oholic beverages, abortion, divorce—everything that the world offers to man in an attempt to bring about his dow-nfall. The contents of that cup are multi-faceted—all that the world has to offer in the way of pleasure. But what pleasure is found is very short-lived and ends in death. How subtle are the wiles of the world! And yet, how many people there are who are willing to take that cup and sip of its contents!

VI. The Cup of the New Testament

Here we come to the subject we are studying, that is, the cup of the New Testament. Matthew says,

*“And he took a **cup**, and gave thanks and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins”* (Matthew 26:27-28).

VII. The cup of the Lord

This passage is a record of the institution of the Lord’s Supper. Jesus later revealed to Paul the events of that night and Paul wrote of it. He gave a most serious admonition to Christians:

*“Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the **cup** of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord”* (1 Corinthians 11:27).

Here it is called the “cup of the Lord” since it is the Lord who makes the feast, and tenders the cup, just as “the cup of demons” with which it is contrasted, refers to what they offer and communicate.

Serious Christians partake of the bread and the cup in a serious manner. To them it is a serious matter and port-rays a serious event. When they forget the significance of the Lord’s Supper and cease to regard it seriously, they become “*weak and sickly*” spiritually.

VIII. The Cup of the Devil

Paul says, in 1 Corinthians 10:21

*“Ye cannot drink the **cup** of the Lord, and the **cup** of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.”*

There are some things that are impossible. To attempt to do two things that are absolutely opposite to each other such as drinking *the cup of the Lord* and *the cup of the devils* simply results in demon worship. The worship of Christ is nullified. Jesus said, “Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24). God will not tolerate the worshiper who owns allegiance to demons. *The cup of the Lord* is that cup which brings into communion with the Lord. *The cup of devils* is the cup which brings into communion with devils. We are said to be in communion with those between whom and us there is congeniality of mind, community of interest, and friendly intercourse. In this sense we are in communion with our fellow Christians, with God, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And in this sense the worshipers of idols have fellowship with evil spirits. They are united to them so as to form one community, with a common character and a common destiny. But surely Paul is not referring to two *material cups*! If *the cup of the Lord* is **one material cup**, then *the cup of devil* must also be **one material cup**! But we all know that this is not so.

IX. The Cup of God’s Wrath

John says, in Revelation 14:9-10,

*“If any man worship the beast and his image..., he also shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the **cup** of his anger; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy*

angels, and in the presence of the lamb.”

This is not a pleasant thought to contemplate—drinking of the cup of God’s wrath. But the fact of God’s wrath is a fact which all who believe the Bible must accept. Many evade mention of the severity and the wrath of God; they stress His goodness, kindness, and love. When this is done, only one side of God is presented. Paul called upon men to behold both the goodness and the severity of God, listen to what he has to say:

“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off” (Romans 11:22).

To neglect either of these is to present a distorted picture of the God of the Bible.

Now let me ask you some questions: Do you believe that all the *cups* that we mentioned *are literal cups* or figurative cups?

1. Is the *cup of happiness* a reference to a *material cup*?
Yes or No!
2. Is the *cup of bitterness* a reference to a *material cup*?
Yes or No!
3. Is the *cup of hypocrisy* a reference to a *material cup*?
Yes or No!
4. Is the *cup of a small deed* a reference to a *material cup*? Yes or No!

5. Is the *cup of temptation* a reference to a *material cup*? Yes or No!
6. Is the *cup of the New Testament* a reference to a *material cup*? Yes or No!
7. Is the *cup of the Lord* a reference to a material cup? Yes or No!
8. Is the *cup of the devil* a reference to a *material cup*? Yes or No!
9. Is the *cup of God's wrath* a reference to a *material cup*? Yes or No!

These nine cups are all metaphorically used. Happiness, bitterness, hypocrisy, a small deed, temptation, the new covenant, the cup of the Lord, the cup of the devil and the cup of God's wrath are all different cups. Each one of these has its particular meaning but none of these cups is to be understood as a literal material cup, *even "a cup of cold water only"* of Matthew 10:42 because Jesus is speaking about good deeds and this is a figure of speech.

All agree that the cups mentioned in 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9, are all metaphorically used. But it is argued, however, that because "cup" in the passages were it refers to the Lord's Supper is in the singular number, it is unscriptural for more than one cup to be used in communion. Let us carefully read every text used to support that contention.

1. **Matthew 26:27-28,**

"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the

new testament, which is shed for the remission of sins” (emphasis mine).

It is here clearly declared that whatever is called *the cup* is called *His blood*; that he told them to drink of it—His blood that was shed.

Question:

Did Jesus shed *a cup*? Is *a cup* “Blood”? Did they drink *a cup*? As a Roman Catholic I used to believe that the fruit of the vine becomes the real blood of Christ because Jesus said “*this is my blood*” (transubstantiation). But we all agree as Christians (even those who contend that one cup should be used) that the fruit of the vine *represents* Jesus’ blood. The *cup is* what Jesus shed; it was what they drank; it was His blood. But since that blood, shed for sins and drunk by them, is “*the fruit of the vine,*” then the word “*cup*” referred *only* to what was in the vessel. We agree that *the fruit of the vine*, though Jesus said that it was *His blood is not* His blood *literally* but symbolically, metaphorically speaking. Why then not the *cup* too?

2. **Mark 14:23-25,**

*“He took the cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, **This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many**”* (emphasis mine).

Question:

Did Jesus say that what was “*in the cup*” was *His blood*? Jesus gave them *the cup* and said, “*This is my blood...*” What was it that *represented* the blood? Was it *the cup* or *the fruit of the vine* that was **in the cup**? Jesus said “this is.” What is the “this is?” Both cannot be! They drank, all, of it. Since they could not drink the vessel, Jesus did not mean the vessel when He said, “this is” or of whatever He gave to them, “*Drink ye all of it.*” The *contents* of the vessel is what the Book calls *the cup*. It is one, for it is His blood.

3. 1 Corinthians 11:25,

*“After the same manner also he took the cup, when he has supped, saying, **This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me**” (emphasis mine).*

Here Jesus declares *the cup is* the new testament in His blood. Jesus said: “This cup” What cup? The material cup or the contents? Jesus tells us clearly what the cup is: “the new testament in my blood.”

Question:

Can any *vessel be* the New Testament? Can any *vessel be* Christ’s blood? Can any man drink *a vessel*? But remember, Jesus said, “*Drink it.*” The “*it*” refers to *the cup*, do you agree? They drank *it*. The “*it*” was His blood. The “*it*” was the New Testament in His blood. No vessel can be the New Testament and no vessel can be His blood. When they partook of whatever Jesus *called the cup*, they brought Him back to

memory. No literal vessel can make one think of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not shed a vessel but His blood!

4. 1 Corinthians 11:26,

Paul says,

“As often as you drink *this* cup”
(emphasis mine).

Question:

How often did you ever drink *a cup*? In verse 27, the same form of words is used. To “drink a cup” is a literal impossibility. Metaphorically it is true, but literally it is not true.

One of the rules of interpretation is: *A word or sentence is figurative when the literal meaning involves an impossibility.* (D.R. Dungan, *Hermeneutics*, pp. 195/6).

Great caution must be used in the application of this rule; otherwise we will have all the ignorance of self-constituted critics arrayed against the statements of the Word of God. We must pause long enough to know that impossibilities are really confronting us before we make the demand that the passage shall be regarded as literal or figurative. Literally, it is impossible to “drink the cup.” It is evident that Jesus did not intend for His disciples to drink “the cup” (literal cup). Hence we are bound to regard the “cup” as being the fruit of the vine in all the instances that it is mentioned regards the Lord’s Supper. But still, many are ready to make laws were Jesus Christ did not! They are quick to say that “one literal cup” should be used for all the congregation at the Lord’s supper. These people are making

laws were Jesus Christ did not! The are creating an impossibility in Jesus' words and making Jesus contradicting Himself! Either the literal cup is the cup that Jesus referred to or the fruit of the vine. Which one? There is only ONE CUP and not two! Which one is it? If it is the literal one, the material cup, then we cannot take the fruit of the vine because we will be using TWO cups and not one! Remember that:

“We should obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

5. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17,

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ. The bread (singular), is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that ONE BREAD” (emphasis mine).

1 Corinthians 10:16 does not teach “one cup.” The advocates of the one cup love to quote this text to justify their stand. The apostle Paul wrote,

“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ” (emphasis mine).

The one cup brethren misunderstand Paul here and jump to the conclusion that “even Paul said “the cup” (not cups) stands for the communion of the blood of Christ, therefore you use many cups.”

The Greek word for “communion” in the KJV is properly rendered “fellowship.” In fellowship we have communion which means – common-union. From the Gospel accounts, we talking about the fruit of the vine. Paul uses the same figure of speech in mind. Therefore, our fellowship with Christ’s blood is not symbolized by a Cup but rather the fruit of the vine. We drink the fruit of the vine to demonstrate our fellowship with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection.

Yes, “*cup*” is singular all the way. So is “*bread*.” It is one cup, because it is *the fruit of the vine* called *the cup* and is to the Christians the blood of Christ, **ONE BLOOD**. It is *one bread* because it is to the Christians the body of Christ and is *one body* (Ephesians 4:4). No matter how many loaves or wafers are on the table, there is but ONE BREAD, for there is but *one body of Christ*. No matter how many congregations there are, there is still ONE BODY. The *container* is **never used** a single time in any of these texts to represent anything. The *container* is **never meant** in any place where the word *cup* is found (in reference to the communion, I mean).

Question:

If there is to be but *one literal cup* (made of glass, silver, gold, clay, etc.), what are all the congregations to do about it? Can hundreds of congregations use *only ONE cup, not cups*? Some try to take this reasoning lightly, but it is a very serious matter! Corinth and Ephesus were far apart. Paul was at Ephesus when he wrote Corinthians about *the cup*. Yet the church at Ephesus and the church at Corinth used the *same cup*

—ONE CUP. The apostle Paul did not write, “*The cup of blessing which you bless,*” but “*which we bless.*” Both churches had the *same cup*, but not the *same container!*

The inspired apostle also said,

“*For we are all partakers of the one bread.*”

“All” were partakers of the “one cup.” Churches at both places were eating the **same bread** and drinking the **same cup**; therefore, the term cup does not refer to the *container*, nor bread to the *number of pieces on the table*. They represent *the body and blood of Christ*. Yes, the “bread” represents “the body” of Christ but the material cup *does not* represent the blood of Christ, it is the content, “the fruit of the vine” which represents “the blood” of Christ. The material cup has no importance at all. Whether we use one cup or many cups is of no importance, the important thing is that we use only fruit of the vine and not other minerals!

All grant there is but *one Bible*, also that there is but *one gospel* and only *one church*. That ONE BIBLE can be found in millions of homes any day; that ONE GOSPEL is preached by hundreds of men in hundreds of places every day, and that ONE CHURCH can be found in every section of a country at any time.

In the same way there is ONE CUP, ONE BREAD; and all the churches use that same ONE CUP and eat that same ONE BREAD every Lord’s Day. All use the same Bible, though there are millions of copies. We

do not contend that since there is but ONE gospel, only one copy of it should be seen in the church building at one time! There is ONE baptism, but surely no one will contend it must be performed in only one water hole.

Whether a church uses one vessel or two hundred, one loaf or twenty, we all eat of the same bread (one bread) and drink of the same cup (one cup) every time we meet in worship to commemorate the Lord's death.

Question:

If a congregation of 200 members use for each of its members a small cup for the fruit of the vine, we say that that congregation is using 200 "individual cups."

Now, according to this reasoning, if 200 congregations use each of them only ONE cup for its members, they, too, are using 200 separate cups, surely they are not using ONE CUP and surely they are ONE BODY (Ephesians 4:4), so are not they using "individual cups" too, in a larger scale?

But the 200 members of the one congregation and the 200 congregations together constitute the ONE CHURCH, which is the body of Christ, and ALL partake of the ONE CUP and not some of them partake of 200 individual cups while the others partake of *one cup* even though there are 200 cups, one for each congregation! Either all Christians have to use only **one** literal cup or not! If the "cup" represents the fruit of the vine (as Jesus said) then there is no impossibility at all but if the "cup" represents the material cup (as

some erroneously claim) then there is an impossibility and Jesus' words are made void!

If people push the idea of sharing one cup, and it actually turns into blood (as the Catholic Church teaches), then they should also push the idea of partaking in the same cup used that night by Jesus, which is impossible. The idea of "do it (likewise) as often as you drink it in remembrance of me" is not achieved by finding and using exactly the same bread and cup. The world cannot possibly share from the same vine Christ drank that night when even that very cup is not available anymore.

So, in treating the subject of individual cups we shall first investigate the biblical account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, and endeavour to ascertain the mode of administering the *initial* Supper. We are also compelled to deduce from Christ's command the mode in which He wished the supper to be celebrated. Not only must the Word be preached in its purity, but the Lord's supper must be administered according to divine command. Only three of the Gospels give an account of the institution Supper—Matthew, Mark, Luke—all of whom of record *kai labon poterion*," "and taking a cup." True, Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians makes use of the article—to *poterion*. Those who have been the ardent defenders of the *common* cup have held that the use of the article by Paul necessarily limits us to the use of but one cup. But his shall be treated later. It has also been claimed that Christ, when he said, "*this is my blood of the New Testament which is for many*," pointed to that one cup which he

had used, and thereby designated the use of one and only one cup. But why not say that He pointed to the *fruit of the vine*. He said “*I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine*” and not “I shall not drink again of **this cup**.” Then is it not more reasonable to say that Christ pointed to the “fruit of the vine”!

We shall for a *moment* concede them the point, however, we shall ask, “Where is that cup to which Christ is claimed to have pointed? If that particular cup was “*the blood of the New testament*,” then wherein are we justified in celebrating the Lord’s Supper, since we have not *that* cup? Again, were it *possible* to produce the *identical* cup which Christ used, *how* were it possible for all Christians to drink from *that one* cup? The absurdity of this argument against the individual cup lies in carrying it to its logical end; namely, producing that cup to which Christ is claimed to have pointed, and then use no other in administering the Lord’s Supper. It would require long years for *that one* cup to make the circuit, and many would never have the divine pleasure of communing with Christ. Those who have placed so great an emphasis on *poterion* have gathered a wrong conception of the word. Thayer, in his lexicon, says: “*poterion* by metonymy of the container for the contained, the contents of the cup.” Dr. Balentine says: “The Lord’s Supper is that sacrament or rite in which, by the institution and word of Christ, bread and wine are made to the believer of his body and blood.” Luke 22:20 says,

*“This cup which is poured out for you
is the new covenant in my blood.”*

If this cup here is a literal cup, we have a very serious problem. How can a literal “cup” be poured out for us? I would like to make two definitions right now, from Webster’s dictionary:

Literal:

- b: adhering to fact or to the ordinary construction or primary meaning of a term or expression: ACTUAL
- c: free from exaggeration or embellishment

Metaphor:

- a: figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them (as in drowing in money); broadly: figurative language—compare SIMILE

I provide these definitions to note an important point that I had just mentioned briefly on the previous page: If we are going to bind the accounts of the Lord’s Sup-per as a literal cup, then the conclusion we are forced to arrive at is that that one exact cup which Christ used (I will use for this cup the term “Holy Grail,” as it is commonly called) is the covenant in Christ’s blood, and to fully partake in a literal manner, *all Christians would have to use that very cup!*

I would like to ask those who contend for the one cup where in any account of the Lord’s Supper we are told that we are to “partake of one cup per congrega-tion.” I see only “cup.” To say that we are authorized to use *one* cup per congregation is a confession that

the Lord's Supper was meant as a metaphor. The cup (s) one use(s) in the Lord's Supper is symbolic of the cup used by our Lord on the night of His betrayal. The question only becomes, "how far are you going to extend the metaphor, one or many cups? Since the Supper was meant as a metaphor for all Christians, we have generic authority for the distribution of the fruit of the vine and the bread.

However, let us go to higher authority; returning to the account as given in Scripture, we see that Christ himself gave the true definition of the import of *poterion* when He said:

*"I will drink no more of the **fruit of the vine**, until the day when I drink it in the kingdom of God."*

Thus the Synoptics and Paul convey the same idea; namely, that the wine was His blood, and necessarily the cups had no essential import. The cup or cups, be they silver, gold, or glass, *have nothing to do with the validity of the Lord's Supper*. The validity lies in the CONTENTS, and the efficiency in the spirit in which it is received. Says a writer in the *Lutheran Quarterly*, "If the church provide the (individual) cups it would be expensive in a membership of 500 or 1,000, or 2,000." Granted that this would entail more expense to the church I would ask, "is not communion with Christ cheap at any cost?" Again, we venture to say that this writer has *at least* two cups in his communion set. Would it not be more *economical* to have but one cup? We find many of the great antagonists of the

individual (one) cup with at least two cups in use at the Lord's Supper. If two cups cause them not to stumble, why should fifty, a hundred, even a thousand, offend their taste? If the use of individual cups is unscriptural, we venture to say that the use of *two common* cups is equally contrary to divine command.

Question:

If a congregation has 2000 members, will they use one cup for all the members? Imagine how large that cup has to be! Or will they pour the fruit of the vine at intervals every time the cup is emptied? Is that the divine command? Are they using *one* cup, in that case, or *two* or the shape of the container makes a difference, now, too!! In Acts 2:41-42 we read:

“So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

In Acts 2:41, Luke tells us that:

“ALL those who had believed were together.”

And in verse 47 Luke tells us:

*“And the Lord was **adding** to **their** number day by day those who were being saved.”*

The three thousand were together. They would have partaken together of the Lord's supper on the first day of the week, as they did everything together: this is not assertion, this is a truth presented in Acts 2. Now, if the 3,000 in Jerusalem partook together, as the text clearly indicates, as they did all things together, then they would need more than one loaf and more than one cup. From this example we can return to the accounts of the Lord's Supper in the gospels and determine the FIGURATIVE language of the event—Christ never binds the “one” cup! Christ may have used one cup, but attached spiritual significance alone to the container, and spiritual significance alone is not authority to bind. ESPECIALLY when we are given an example when Christians COULD NOT possibly partake with only one cup, as we are given in not only Acts 2 but also in Acts 4:4, where the number of Christians is over 8,000! (see picture on pages 39, 40). Please think of this. How can one produce a huge cup that will contain the fruit of the vine for more than 5,000 members in the church at Jerusalem? In fact, the one cup doctrine minister a multiplicity of questions which we are told not to give heed (1 Timothy 1:4). We do not have a single example of the one cup teaching in the book of Acts.

Jesus said: “...Drink ye **all of it...**” (Matthew 26:27-28). Yes, that is the example that Jesus gave for us **to do**, to “drink ye ALL OF IT.” Not to drink ye all of **another** cup *like it* but “all of **IT**” the same cup that He had in His hands at that time! That is what the apostles did, they drank all **OF IT**. Yes, an example

is binding, so we all have to drink of **that SAME cup that Jesus used!** So here we will have another problem with the one cup advocates because they will say that we are NOT to use that same cup that Jesus used! How can we, we do not have it today! But that is what Jesus said, “drink ye ALL OF IT.” Are we ready to obey Jesus’ command to the full? NO!! They are not! But if we take the cup to mean the “fruit of the vine,” as Jesus meant it to be, “I will drink no more of the *fruit of the vine...*” then, yes, we are obeying Jesus’ command to the full!

Imagine all those Christians shown in the picture gathered together for worship using only **one** cup (container). What size that container has to be to serve all of them! One cannot **refill** the container every time it is emptied because Jesus *did not do that* and if we do that we will not be walking on the same example that Jesus gave and His example is binding (Matthew 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22:20)! How many times do one has to refill the container to serve all those Christians? Five times, ten times or even more? But if we really understand Jesus’ words and meaning of the *cup* as *the fruit of the vine* and not the container, then there

is no problem at all and we will be doing exactly what Jesus has commanded us to do.

A metonymy is a figure of speech in which the name of one thing is exchanged for another (see from page 44). That is, one thing is said but another is meant. For example, the expression that we find in 1 Corinthians 11:26, referring to drinking the fruit of the

vine, “...for as often as ye drink the cup...” has been misinterpreted by some so that they believe only one cup is necessary. However, a careful reading of the passage indicated that it is *the contents* that are being alluded to. One drinks the contents of a cup, not the cup. Part of distinguishing literal language from figurative is to examine the context to determine if what one reads is absurd.

There is no “Holy Cup” mentioned in the New Testament. We fall into will worship instead of spiritual worship in such cases! Christ can use one cup, and since His followers used more than one cup, it is clear that the issue is of no consequence to God. The advocates of one cup, if they wish, can use one cup and be pleasing to God. But if they make it a law on other Christians, then they are sinning! Christians can partake of multiple cups and still be pleasing to God!

We shall proceed one step further and assert that not only are individual cups permissible, according to Scripture, but that at the *initial* Supper individual cups were used. As proof for our assertion we cite the fact that at the Paschal feast there were four wine drinking periods, each one of which was known as a *cup*; Christ took one of these cups, or wine-drinking periods, when He instituted the Lord’s Supper which commemorates His death. Thus it is that the Synoptics say that He took “a cup,” meaning that He set apart one of the drinking periods which they should celebrate in remembrance of Him; so also Paul says that He took “the cup,” wishing to designate the particular cup or

drinking period which was set apart. It is also a well-known fact that at the passover table each person was provided with his cup for individual use. Since this is true, is it not likely that the same custom was observed when Christ transformed the passover in the Lord's Supper, and also that *individual cups* were used? Again, religious art tells us that each one of the apostles had his *own individual* cup at the initial Supper. But the question naturally arises in the minds of those who really want to know the truth about this matter, "How then was the *common* cup substituted for the *individual*?" The reply is very simple. Might it not have occurred thus? In the times of the hierarchical church, as in the Roman Catholic church of today, the cup was withheld from the laity—the pope or priest drinking all the wine for reasons which are known to all. The withholding of the wine from the laity made the numerous cups unnecessary and since the priest alone drank the wine his cup was the only one retained. Thus when the reformation came the one-cup idea was so rooted and grounded into the lives of the people that to have made a change would have hindered the progress of the reformation. To us it would seem that the common cup is the fruit, not the strict interpretation, but of the hierarchical church. Today the Catholic priest still uses *one cup* and they give it great importance. You see cups made of gold with precious jewels but what is most important is being put aside, that is, the fruit of the vine given to all the people. In the Catholic Church the people accept the *one cup* as containing the literal blood of Christ. One

the other hand, the advocates of the one-cup put significance on the material cup, significance *which the Lord did not put*. Our Lord said clearly:

“This (cup) is my blood of the New Testament ...” (Mathew 26:26-29).

*“I will not drink henceforth of **this (cup) fruit of the Vine** until...” (Mark 14:25).*

Do we accept our Lord’s words that the “cup” **IS** “*His blood of the New Testament*” or He was wrong when He said so because it has to be the material cup and not His blood of the New Testament? Do we accept our Lord’s words that the “cup” **IS** “*the fruit of the vine*” or He was wrong when He said so because it refers to the material cup? Do we accept our Lord’s words that He is “the Vine,” “the Door,” “The Way,” “The Shepherd,” “The Water of life,” “The Light of the World,” or He was wrong when He said so because all of these are to be taken *literally* and NOT *figuratively*, the same as we have to take the cup literally (according to the advocates of the one-cup)?

We will discuss this in our next lesson.

USE OF METONYMY IN THE SCRIPTURES

(Part 4)

Metonymy is a combination of two Greek words: “META” – Change, and “ONOMA” – name; Hence a change of name; the employment of one name or word for another. (**Hermeneutics** by D.R. Dungan.)

Examples:

1. They have “Moses and the Prophets” – which means the books or writings of Moses and the prophets (Luke 16:29).
2. “The earth was corrupt” means the people living in the earth were corrupt (Genesis 6:11).
3. “God so loved the World...: (John 3:16). He loved the people in the world.
4. Noah “prepared an ark to the saving of his house...” (Hebrew 11:7). “HOUSE” is the metonymy which stands for his family and not a physical structure.
5. “House of God” for the family of God (1 Timothy 3:15).
6. In our daily speech we say, when we are preparing water for some tea that “the kettle is boiling” but no one understands that it is the material kettle that is boiling but the water that is in it. Why, then, those who teach the “one cup” do not have any problem to understand perfectly what is meant by “the kettle is boiling” and in Jesus’ word they find it so hard to understand when in fact Jesus interpreted it Himself what He meant?

THE MEANING OF THE CUP

Metonymy....

Jesus was not speaking about the physical container or vessel but the contents and what it represented. The “Cup” is a metonymy. Jesus shows *what He meant* by the “CUP.” But, unfortunately, the advocates of the

“one cup” do not want to accept Jesus’ interpretation. They prefer their own. Notice...

1. “*This (cup) is my blood of the New Testament ...*” (Mathew 26:26-29). “*I will not drink henceforth of **this** fruit of the Vine until...*”
2. “*This (cup) is my blood of the New Testament ...*” (Mark 14:22-25). “*I will drink no more of the fruit of the Vine until...*”
3. “*This cup is the New Testament in my blood*” (Luke 22:17-20).
4. “*The cup...is it **not** the Communion of the blood of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 10:16).
5. “*This cup is the New Testament in my blood*” (1 Corinthians 11:25). Jesus said, “*Take this, (cup) and divide it among yourselves*” (Luke 22:17, 18). (Emphasis mine.)

Did Christ mean to divide the container or the content? The content could be divided by pouring it into separate vessels. In a party, tea is brought in a jug and the guest says, “Divide it among yourselves.” Can’t we divide it however we see fit? Of course we can. The same metonymy applies to the “CUP.” PLATES are not mentioned in the New Testament but the advocates of *one cup* use them for distributing the bread—Why? Christ took one cup—Christ did not take a plate. Will we be lost if we use a plate, because we do not get the authority from the Bible? What about the Hymn book? Will we be lost for using it? The advocates of the one cup are not consistent in their arguments in favour of the one cup. They make Jesus con-

tradict His own words. Jesus was very clear in His words and He said clearly WHAT the cup was.

Niether does 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 support the one cup doctrine. The metonymy of 1 Corinthians 11:25, 26 show definitely the metaphorical nature of this pasage. If we are to take the passage literally, as in we are being prescribed to partake of one cup, we begin to have a contradiction in Scripture. Examine what is said by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:25, when he talks about the cup in the Lord's Supper,

“In the same was He took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’”

And in Hebrews 9:13-14,

“For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling clean those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself up without blemish to God...”

So, which is it? Are we sanctified by Christ's blood or the Holy Grail? If the cup in 1 Corinthians 11:25 is to be taken literally, we are forced to accept the later conclusion, which is in direct contradiction with Hebrews 9. You see how the Word of God is made to contradict itself by the advocates of the one cup! How-

ever, if we accept that the cup in 1 Corinthians 11:25 is figurative, we can understand that the contents of the container, His symbolic blood, is what sanctifies, then we have harmony in Scripture. What do we drink in remembrance of Christ? Cup or wine? Again, the cup in this passage is not literal but figurative. Literally, what one would be saying is that there is no need for a congregation which has one cup to have a New Testament again because Christ said, *“this cup is the New Testament.”* But that would not be a correct interpretation. If we can’t interpret these passages, how can we deal with the book of Revelation? How can we refuse the 144,000 false doctrine presented by the Jehovah Witnesses? They take a verse out of its context and give it a literal interpretation. The same is being done by the advocates of the “one cup.” They take the word “cup” out of its context and give it a literal interpretation.

Therefore, since the focus is the blood, not the cup, and since the word “cup” is clearly used figuratively, this provides the generic authority to justify either one cup per congregation or multiple cups in one congregation. To bind the former with no specific authority justifying the law would be in direct violation of 2 John 9, which states,

“Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the father and the Son.”

What the advocates of the “one cup” are doing wrong is that they are combining what God has never combined—the cup and its contents. God has separated them. The cup *is not* the issue; the cup *is not* the new covenant; the cup *does not* signify anything. The blood *is* the issue, the blood *is* what the new covenant was made in, and thus the fruit of the vine which we partake of every first day of the week, which signifies the blood which Christ shed, *is* the only issue. The cup was *never* made an issue! The only issue remains the blood: that which was shed for us, that which allows us to be redeemed of our sins, and that which is symbolized by the fruit of the vine, not by the material cup, which we partake to “proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.” **No cup can proclaim His death; only that which symbolized His blood can proclaim His death, which gives life.**

WHERE INSTITUTED?

Christ and His disciples observed the Lord’s supper in an “Upper Room” (Mark 14:14-16, 22-25). Could we bind the Upper Room? Year after Christ’s death, the disciples observed the Lord’s Supper in an Upper Chamber and even on the third story (Acts 20:7-9). Is it necessary for us to follow suit?

HOW MANY ELEMENTS IN THE SUPPER?

Those who advocate one cup say there are three elements in the Supper:

1. That the bread represents the body.
2. That the fruit of the Vine represents the Blood.

3. That the cup (container) represents the New Testament.

But what does God's Word say? Paul said,

“For as often as ye eat this bread (bread first) and drink this cup (cup second) ...” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

There is no physical way one can drink a container but the contents. This is a very serious matter and not to be taken lightly. Paul says further,

“Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread (bread first) and drink this cup (cup second) unworthily, shall be guilty of the body (bread or body first) and blood of the Lord (blood second)” (v. 27).

Paul does not say one would be guilty of the *container* of the Lord (third thing). We have therefore ONLY two elements in the Supper, which are, The BREAD which represents the body and the *Fruit of the Vine* which represents the BLOOD. The container, the material cup represents nothing! One has to remember that we cannot add to the Word of God neither take from it (Revelation 22:18-19).

OTHER REFERENCES TO NOTE

In Matthew 26:27, Jesus:

“Took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying Drink ye all of it.”

- Did Jesus mean they should drink the container or contents?
- “All of it” is interpreted by the advocates of the “one cup” that it means to drink from the cup. But why not let Jesus tell us what He meant.

In verse 28, Jesus says,

“For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

- Was His blood the container or contents? In verse 29 Jesus says,

*“I will not drink henceforth of **this fruit of the vine**, until that day when I drink it new with you in my father’s kingdom”* (emphasis mine).

- Was the “fruit of the vine” the container or the contents according to the Lord and to Paul?
- When Jesus said “all of it” He meant that they all drink from the “fruit of the vine.” The subject is “the fruit of the vine” which represent Christ’s blood and not the material cup! Either one or the other!
- But we all know clearly what Jesus meant!

Jesus told His disciples,

*“For whosoever shall give you **a cup** of water to drink in my name...he shall not lose his reward”* (Mark 9:41; emphasis mine).

- If someone gave one of them *two* or more cups of water, would he lose his reward? Will he be disobeying the Lord?

The Samaritan woman asked Jesus,

“Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself and his children, and his cattle?” (John 4:12).

- Does that mean that all put their lips to the well?
- Or that they brought the water up in a bucket or some other kind of container and drunk the water?

In searching through these references and asking yourself whether it is the container or contents being spoken of, what answer do you get? Clearly the reference is to the contents AND NOT the container!

THE BREAD

“And as they were eating Jesus took bread, and blessed it...” (Matthew 26:26).

Break is “KLAO” in Greek and means to break, to break off pieces, used in breaking bread (a) of the Lord’s act in providing for people (Matthew 14:19; 15:36; Mark 6:6, 19). (b) of the breaking of bread in the Lord’s supper (Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:24). (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary*).

In English the word break can be seen in two ways:

1. One can break to eat.
2. One can break to divide.

Here one can take bread and break off to eat – No Sin. Another can take the bread and break to divide – No Sin. We can therefore choose any method from the two. It is “one bread” because it is one in kind (unleavened) and “one” in emblem (the body of Christ) and not in a literal cake (loaf) of bread He is talking of in the statement. “The bread which WE break...” (1 Corinthians 10:16). The WE included Paul and company at Ephesus and the Saints at Corinth and every place. Though separated by many miles (kilometers), yet they could all take the one bread, and so one cake (loaf) of bread was not intended. Christians all over the world partake of one bread. In a tea party, a jug containing the tea is brought and a loaf of bread is added. There are thirty people at the party and so the loaf of bread is cut into 30 slices. Does the number of pieces change the nature of what it is? I know that a loaf of bread with 30 slices is still “one bread.” Drinking tea from that one jug with different cups is still drinking from the jug, likewise if all share the fruit of the vine from one container with different cups, it is still drinking from that one Cup. So I urge those who advocate the one cup, please stop and do not continue to cause division among God’s people! The only one who is enjoying himself by what you are doing is Satan!

A final thought concerning historical evidence that the one cup brethren talk about: We must not forget that historical evidence is only useful as a help and cannot necessarily be the final point of decision. I do not believe in the birth and death of Christ because Josephus who is a notable historian, has affirmed it but rather because the Bible says so. There is no doubt that the use of many cups came into common practice from 1850-1900. Yet the question is not when it started but rather where can we get in scriptures that the early churches did use only one cup in their partaking of the Lord's supper? How many cups did the Jerusalem church use? If you know, where is the scripture?

One thing we should not forget is the language of the Bible. Figures of speech are common on all good books and thousands can be found in the best book in the world—the Holy Bible. When you take a figurative language to be literal it results in faulty interpretation and this is the problem with our one cup brethren. It is a problem with many denominational leaders, too, especially those who teach premillennialism. When we go out, what do we preach? Do we preach the cross on which Christ died? In 1 Corinthians 1:18 Paul says this is what he preached. He preached the cross but not the material of the cross! Paul was talking about the Gospel when he used the word cross.

QUESTIONS

Let me ask these three questions again which were asked by a Christian brother in a debate:

1. If, while serving the congregation the Communion, the loaf should be accidentally broken into pieces besides that which each Communicant breaks for himself, could the unserved portion of the congregation scripturally partake of it? If they can't scripturally partake of it, will they bring another loaf to serve the rest?
2. While passing the fruit of the vine to the assembly, if the Cup should be accidentally dropped and broken and its contents spilled, how would you scripturally serve the remainder of the assembly?
3. If the cup represents the New Testament and there was only one cup, how many New Testaments should be in the assembly? Can there be more than one New testament in the assembly?

CONCLUSION

Matthew says,

“For this is my blood of the New testament...” (Matthew 26:28).

Paul and Luke say,

“This cup is the New Testament in my blood” (1 Corinthians 11:25; Luke 22:20).

The word “testament” here is correctly rendered by A.S.V. as “covenant” which means agreement or contract between two parties or more. The Old Covenant was sealed with blood of animals followed by a promise from the people,

“All that the Lord hath said we do, and be obedient” (Exodus 24:3-8).

The New covenant was also sealed with Christ’s blood (Hebrews 9:13-22). Isaiah said,

“...by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities because he hath poured out his soul unto death...and bare the sins of many...” (Isaiah 53:11-12).

The statement of the prophet is the same as the statement of Christ:

“This is my blood of the New Testament...” (Covenant).

This means the plan of agreement or contract established between Himself and mankind for the great plan of redemption of sin. The blood was poured for as many as will accept the Sacrificial blood to cleanse them. Because:

“Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins” (Hebrews 9:22).

This statement therefore is not a literal Cup representing a literal Testament (as the third element in the Lord’s Supper) but an agreement for the plan of Salvation the blood was to give and is now giving.

In our examination we have seen that the contention of One Cup ONLY is not valid. If we will always approach subjects of the Bible with the attitude of earnest-

ly desiring to please God, and not men, then we will achieve the Unity Christ prayed for (John 17:17-21).

**THE SCRIPTURES TEACH CONCERNING
“*THE CUP*”:**

(Part 5)

The Scriptures teach concerning “*THE CUP*” By:

1. **Example** – Matthew 26:27; Mark 14:23; Luke 22: 20; 1 Corinthians 11:25.

2. **Command** – Matthew 26:27; 1 Corinthians 11: 2, 23, 25, 28, 33.
3. **Statement** – 1 Corinthians 10:16.
4. **Inference** – 1 Corinthians 11:26-27.

But What Is “*The Cup*”?

I. What “*The Cup*” Is **NOT**!

1. “*The Cup*” is the fruit of the vine (Matthew 26: 27-29);
2. The fruit of the vine is **NOT** the container:
3. Hence, the container is **NOT** “*the Cup*.”

II. **What** “*The Cup*” Is!

1. “*The Cup*” is the blood of Christ (Matthew 26: 28);
2. The blood is the fruit of the vine (Matthew 26: 29):
3. Therefore, “*The Cup*” is the fruit of the vine.

III. What do you drink, the cup or *the fruit of the vine*?

1. “*The Cup*” is the fruit of the vine (Matthew 26: 27-29);
2. The *fruit of the vine* is what you drink:
3. Therefore, you drink “*The Cup*.”

IV. What is the cup?

1. You drink “*The Cup*” (1 Corinthians 11:26).
2. You drink the contents—**NOT** the *container*:
3. Hence, “*The Cup*” is the contents—**NOT** the *container*.

One has to prove that “*as often as you drink this cup*” means that we drink the *cup* and not the *fruit of the vine* that is poured in that cup!

“THE CUP”
(fruit of the vine)

Matt. 26:27
Mark 14:23
Luke 22:17,20
1 Cor. 10:16
1 Cor. 11:25
1 Cor. 11:26
1 Cor. 11:27-28

“THE CUP”
(the container)

Just
One Scripture

JUST ONE

NOTE: The Scriptures teach only **ONE CUP**. Which is it—the container or the contents? Cannot be both, Else, More Than One Cup!!!

Please, let us humble ourselves and study. The devil is still at work. So, Questions like why do we partake the communion in mornings whereas it is called “Lord’s supper”? Should we lift it up from the table while praying? We should answer that Christ was concerned about the *eating* of the unleavened bread and the *drinking* of the fruit of the vine and not about postures and gestures.

Again, I would like to reiterate that it is not wrong to partake of the Lord’s Supper with one loaf and one cup, *but to bind such practice* when the Scriptures allow for the liberty is sin. However, those who know that we are allowed to partake with multiple cups must not offend those who do not see this liberty, and must

bend to not cause offence if the need arises, per Romans 14:13-20.

The cup was divided *before* the Lord's Supper was instituted. Therefore, the Gospels do show that the cup was "divided," therefore, Christ and His disciples may have used individual cups, too. Furthermore, the usage of the term "cup" is most certainly metaphorical, being metonymy, as was shown in this study.

We have seen that the "cup" in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, (verses 25-26) is not a literal cup, but is a metaphor. Just as the cup itself is not the new covenant, but the blood of Christ represents this new covenant, the cup is not the blood/fruit of the vine, for it merely holds the fruit of the vine. No one "drinks the cup;" this is a commonly used literary device, as we have seen, known as metonymy, when the whole is used to represent a part. We drink the contents of the cup, not the cup itself. Therefore, the nature of the container is of no relevance to the Lord's Supper, only its contents matter.

Therefore, there is no Scriptural basis by which to bind one loaf and one cup on the Lord's Supper. God has established the number of loaves and cups as a liberty for His disciples.

In your culture how do you eat and drink? With what container in your culture? Use it like that for we are not under bondage in such cases. If you visit a congregation that uses one cup, have fellowship with them. If they use many cups, do the same, for the container is nothing but *what it contains* represents the precious blood of Jesus Christ and not the material

that the container is made of, whether it be gold, silver, glass, clay or tin. One cup or many? The Bible do not say how many cups we should use in the Lord's supper. So why should anyone bind the scripturally unbound? That is what is happening with certain Christian people. They are trying to bind on other Christians what the Lord did not! We do so to bring confusion and division and the only thing that those who do so are doing is pleasing Satan and not the Lord!

CONCLUSION

Jesus told us WHAT to eat and drink: "Eat the Bread, Drink the fruit of the vine." He certainly did not mean for US to "drink the cup," nor did He tell US to "drink from THIS cup." If that is what Jesus meant, then two things, would have to occur, no matter how much one tries to explain himself out of it. One, we would have to *literally* drink a "cup." That is impossible. And Two, if He meant "this cup (the one He was holding in His hands), that too would be impossible. If that were true, as I have already said before, then every Christian on the face of the earth, would of necessity have to drink from "that cup," every Lord's day. IMPOSSIBLE! "That cup" is no longer available to us. Jesus does not require the ridiculous or the impossible.

"Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:10).

This brings to my mind what Jesus said in John 6:63 to correct the mistaken idea of the people about what

He had told them about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. They interpreted His words *literally* and He wanted to show them that their interpretation was totally wrong. Jesus said,

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

The trouble was in getting those people to see and understand that Jesus was telling them great *spiritual* truths *and NOT material and fleshly*. Today, the Catholic Church is still in the same error that the people in Jesus’ time were because she teaches that in John chapter six Jesus was talking about the Eucharist or the Lord’s supper which in fact has nothing to do with it at all. She takes the words of Jesus *literally* and thus teaches that we have to eat the body and drink the blood of Jesus (transubstantiation) even though Jesus Himself interpreted His words (John 6:63) and Peter himself understood well what Jesus meant (John 6:68). Today, some Christians are having the same problem. They put their trust in *material* things more than in *spiritual* things. They put their trust in a *material* cup more than in the *spiritual* meaning of the fruit of the vine which represents the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ even though Jesus Himself interpreted what the cup is (Matthew 26:27-29; Luke 22:18, 20)! What does the *material* (metal, clay, glass, gold, silver, etc.) of the literal cup represent? NOTHING! It is the *spiritual* that giveth life, the blood of Jesus

Christ which is represented by the fruit of the vine and NOT the metal, clay, glass, gold, silver, etc. that is represented by the material cup! The writer of Hebrews says that:

“...without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22).

Jesus said,

“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28).

It is not: “without the shedding of a cup.” It is not “this is my cup of the new testament, which is shed for many...” But it is the “blood” which is represented by the *fruit of the vine*! Is that blood represented by a *literal cup* or by the *fruit of the vine*? You answer that question!

So let us give heed to the admonitions given to us:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3).

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as

brethren, be pitiful, be courteous” (1 Pet. 3:8).

“Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin” (James 4:17).

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you” (2 Cor. 13:11).