

Must We Use Only One Cup?

Some believe that only one cup must be used during the Lord's Supper. They believe that to use more than one cup is sinful. Because of this, they refuse to fellowship anyone who uses more than one cup. Their belief comes from a misunderstanding of Matthew 26:27: *"And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it"* Their mistaken view is that the words "the cup" in this verse mean the container. Clearly, our Lord was **not** talking about the container. He was talking about what was in the cup!

Jesus tells us so in Matthew 26:29; *"But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."* It becomes clear then, that Jesus was not talking about the container in verse 27. He did not bless the container. We can know He was talking only about the fruit of the vine because He blessed the fruit of the vine; He gave them the fruit of the vine and they drank the fruit of the vine! We may better understand "the cup" when we think how these words are used

today. We could say to a friend, "Would you like some tea?" He may reply, "Yes, I would like to have a cup!" Our friend would **not** be asking for the container. He would simply be asking for the tea which is in the container. The same is true of Matthew 26:27!

In I Corinthians 10:16-17, we find that "the cup of blessing" is the communion of the blood of Christ. Plainly, the cup of blessing does **not** mean the container. It clearly means the fruit of the vine, which stands for the blood of Christ. This passage speaks of one body, one bread, and one cup of blessing. To teach that this passage speaks of one body, one bread, and one container is to change the Word of God (Revelation 22:18-19)! If an honest person truly believes that this passage teaches that one container can be used, he would also be forced to agree that **everyone** in the **one** body (all Christians throughout the world) would have to use a single container. Further, the single container would have to be used by everyone in the one body on every Lord's Day. This is not possible! There is no Scripture to support the idea of one container for each congregation within the one body. Those who bind the use of only one container actually use many cups themselves! The number of cups they use is equal to the

number of congregations who hold to this false teaching.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians from the city of Ephesus. The distance between the two cities is about 400 kilometers. Yet, Paul tells us that both he and the Corinthians were partakers of a single cup; the cup of blessing. Clearly, because of the great distance between them, they could not have been using the same container. It follows then that the cup **cannot** mean the container. It can only mean the fruit of the vine!

Those who say that only one cup can be used in the Lord's Supper are ignorant of human language. The "cup" is a figure of speech call "metonymy." A metonymy is a figure of speech where the container is named, but the contents (what is in the container) is meant. Jesus used metonymy in John 3:16 when He said: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son..."* Did God send Jesus because He loved the people who live in the world? The answer is obvious. God sent Jesus to die for the people in the world. The world is mentioned, but the people who live in the world are meant. It is the same with the cup. The cup is mentioned, but the fruit of the vine which is in the cup is

meant.

The number and type of containers to be used during the Lord's Supper is simply a matter of opinion. However, when one binds his opinion on another, he binds where God's Word has not bound. This is sin (Galatians 1:6-9)! We may, with God's approval, use any number of containers we choose when partaking of the Lord's Supper.



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