

REFUTING THE ONE “CUP DOCTRINE”

Mat. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-15; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:23-30.

Introduction.

1. There is no sin in using only one cup in passing the fruit of the vine in the Lord’s Supper. The sin is making a law that says only one container and no more may be used in the Lord’s Supper.
 2. This doctrine could very well be called: “The One Container Doctrine.”
 3. This doctrine is an example of “anti-ism,” that is, making a law which God did not make or binding where God did not bind. This is to make a law for God. Other examples: “saints only” doctrine; no eating meals on church property; anti-church cooperation, etc.
 4. On the other hand, “liberalism” seeks to undo laws that God has made, or loosing where God has bound. For example, some liberals teach that the Lord’s teaching on marriage, divorce, remarriage, in Matthew 19:4-6, 9 is not binding on non-members of the Lord’s church.
 5. We are forbidden to add to, or take away from, the word of God. Cf. Revelation 22:18-19.
- I. We Must do what the Lord said to do, and how He said to do it.
- A. We must act only upon the authority of Christ (Mat. 28:18; Col. 3:17), that is, according to His word—2 John 9; 1 Cor. 4:6.
 - B. We must partake of the Lord’s Supper according to the purpose which Christ gave [1 Cor. 11:24-25, 26, 28].
 - C. We must partake of it upon the first day of the week, that is, every Lord’s day—Acts 20:7; 2:42.
 - D. We must use only the elements that Jesus used: Unleavened bread & the fruit of the vine.
 1. Unleavened bread [Luke 22:1, 7, 15-20; cf. Exodus 12:15-20. Since Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper directly after the Passover, we know by implication that He used unleavened bread. Jesus lived and died under the Law of Moses, and never broke that law. He never sinned. 1 John 3:4-5].
 2. The fruit of the vine [Mat. 26:27-29].
 - E. The Lord’s Supper is for faithful members of the body of Christ (the church of Christ), who have communion with Christ in the Lord’s Supper [1 Cor. 10:16].
 - F. The Lord’s Supper reminds us of the nature of Christ’s sacrifice. He did this for mankind, as He said: “for you” (1 Cor. 11:24); “for many” (Mat. 26:28). Christ gave Himself for others [Gal. 1:4; 2:20; Rev. 1:5; Isa. 53:4-12].
 - G. Jesus blessed (gave thanks for) the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine [Mark 14:22-25; 1 Cor. 10:16; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 11:24-25].
 - H. These things are essential for Christians today.
- II. The “One-Cup” Doctrine is a Fatal False Doctrine & It must be Refuted!
- A. It places the emphasis on the container rather than the contents, the fruit of the vine.
 - B. It confuses the circumstantial (incidentals) with the essentials.
 1. Partaking of the fruit of the vine means that a container or containers would be needed (incidental / circumstantial).
 2. Partaking of the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine are essentials, but the containers used in doing so are not! God did not bind the kind of containers to be used.
 3. Furthermore, why would Jesus bind the container for the fruit of the vine but not the container for the unleavened bread? The fact is He did not bind either one!
 4. Another example pertaining to incidentals (the circumstantial) and the essentials.
 - a. Jesus commanded His disciples: “...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” [Mark 16:15].

- b. They were commanded to: Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.
- c. Thus, it was essential for them to go forth into the world; to preach; to preach the gospel; to preach the gospel to every creature.
- d. Yet, they were not commanded how to go. Although a means of going would be necessary, God did not bind any certain means of going. They might go: on foot, by boat, by animal, by chariot, etc. Today, we may go by any of these means and we might also go by: car, plane, train, bus, etc. These are the incidentals necessary in order to go, but God did not bind any one means of going. God did not bind the incidentals! Those pressing the “one cup” doctrine are binding that which is not essential to please God, by saying that only one container may be used!
- e. Jesus and His disciples partook of the Lord’s Supper in: “a large upper room” (Mk 14:15).
 - 1) Do those binding the one container doctrine make it essential to partake of the Lord’s Supper in: A large room? An upper story room?
 - 2) Their meeting together demanded a place to meet and assemble, yet, Jesus did not make a law concerning the place they were to meet.
 - 3) We are commanded to assemble on the Lord’s day [Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25]. This demands a place to meet. It might be in a house, a rented hall, a tent, in a field, under a tree, in a cave, etc. Yet, the Lord did not bind the kind of meeting place that we are to assemble to worship God!
 - 4) God gave the acts of Worship to be done on the Lord’s day [Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2; 11:23-26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16]. He binds us to worship Him in spirit and in truth [John 4:24]. Yet, He does not bind the place where we are to assemble!
 - 5) The “one-cup” doctrine binds things that Jesus never bound!

III. Confusing the Container with Its Contents.

- A. When Jesus spoke of “the cup,” He was referring to its contents: the fruit of the vine.

“26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. 27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; 28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say unto you, 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” (Mat. 26:26-29; cf. Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 11:23-25).
- B. When Jesus took the cup and gave thanks (Mat. 26:27-28), was He giving thanks for the container or its contents?
- C. What represented the blood of Christ which was shed for many, was it the fruit of the vine or the container?

IV. Metonymy

- A. The expression, “the cup” or “this cup” is what is called *metonymy*. *Metonymy* is: “a trope in which one word is put for another. A change of names which have some relation for each other” (Webster).
- B. Jesus also used *metonymy* on the night before His death, when He prayed: “...O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Mat. 26:39).
 - 1. When Jesus prayed that “this cup” might pass from Him, was He speaking of a literal cup (container)?
 - 2. Or, was He using the word “cup” to speak of His crucifixion? The answer is obvious.
- C. Other examples of Metonymy:
 - 1. The name “Jacob” is used to represent Israel, the descendants of Jacob (Psa. 53:6).

2. Jerusalem is personified as woman who has sinned and turned backward (Lam. 1:8).
3. Rachel is used to represent her descendants weeping for her children (Mat. 2:17-18; Jer. 31:15).
4. The "Lord's table" is used to represent the Lord's Supper in 1 Cor. 10:21.

V. Arguments made to Defend the One Cup Error.

- A. "The one container symbolizes the New Testament. There is only one New Testament, and therefore there is only one container."
 1. But, does the container represent the New Testament or the fruit of the vine which it contains?
 2. Jesus shed His blood for the New Testament (Mat. 26:28).
 3. The blood of Christ is represented by "the fruit of the vine," that is, "the cup." His blood is called: "the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13:20).
 4. If it were not for the shed blood of Christ, we could not have the New Testament! (Mat. 26:28).
- B. "A single container represents unity, whereas multiple containers indicate disunity."
 1. If this be the case, why did Jesus tell His disciples to divide the cup during the Passover (prior to instituting the Lord's Supper)? "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:" (Luke 22:17).
 2. The physical container is not that which represents unity among God's people! Such an argument is to introduce symbolism into the Worship that God never intended.
- C. "Since Jesus used only one cup, then we must use only one container."
 1. Again, we are not to bind that which the Lord did not bind.
 2. Jesus said nothing in the Sacred Text which indicates that we can only use one container.
 3. Did the Lord's church in Jerusalem use only one container?
 - a. The congregation numbered into the thousands (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7).
 - b. The people would not be able to lift such a container and the time required for thousands of people to partake of the fruit of the vine out of one container would have made the service last past the Lord's day!

VI. Friends, let us obey only what the Lord teaches! Let us abide in the doctrine of Christ.

- A. Let us oppose this and all other forms of false doctrine. Eph. 5:11; Rom. 16:17-18; Tit. 1:9-16.
- B. Let us not go beyond what is written. 1 Cor. 4:6. Let us not add to, or take away from, the word of God [Revelation 22:18-19].

"9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" [2 John 9-11].