

# Errors associated with Lord's Supper

## I. What is the Lord's Supper:

- A. A representation of the body and blood of Jesus (Matt. 26:26-28).
- B. A remembrance of the Lord's death (I Cor. 11:23ff).
- C. A proclamation (I Cor. 11:23ff).
- D. The Lord gave a direct command to do so (I Cor. 11:23-26).

## II. What the Lord's Supper is not:

- A. The assembly not the place for a social event (I Cor. 11:20ff).
- B. Social activities to be held in their proper environments (I Cor. 11:22, 34).

## III. Errors associated with partaking of the Lord's Supper:

- A. Are we eating the "Lord's Breakfast" on the "wrong day of the week?"
  - 1. While in Las Vegas Nevada working with the church on Vegas Drive, an elderly lady began a lengthy Bible study over when we partake of the Lord's Supper. She claimed that the church was in error for partaking of the Lord's Supper any time after 6:00 PM Sunday. Her reasoning: The Jews counted time beginning from evening to evening (i.e., 6:00 PM to 6:00 PM). The first day of the week would begin at 6:00 PM Saturday evening and run to 6:00 PM Sunday evening. She quoted Acts 20:7 from the "Good News Bible" which states, "On Saturday evening we gathered together for the fellowship meal."
  - 2. First: Note that the Bible uses the Jewish method of keeping time (Lev. 23:31-32; Matt. 20:1-16). The Roman method of keeping time was used as well (i.e., the time we use today). Example: Jn. 20:1, 19 (Roman method).
    - a. Some used Jewish and others used Roman method of keeping time. Ex. John used Roman method in Jn. 19:14 (i.e., Jesus was on trial at the 6<sup>th</sup> hour) and Both Matthew and Mark use Jewish method (as they have Jesus hanging on the cross at the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> hour; i.e., Mk. 15:25, 33). There is no contradiction; simply a different keeping of time.
    - b. How do we know that Luke was using the Roman method of keeping time in Acts 20:7? There are several factors that prove Roman method:
      - 1b. Luke was a Gentile (Col. 4:10-14).
      - 2b. Troas was a Gentile city in Asia.
      - 3b. Asia was a Gentile nation.
      - 4b. The real proof is in the text: Paul said, "*And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight*" (Acts 20:7 ASV).
        - 4b1. Notice that Paul intended to leave on the "*morrow*" (*epaurion*) = "the next or following day" (Moulton 150).
        - 4b2. Acts 20:11 states, "*And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.*"
        - 4b3. At the "*break of day*" Paul "*departed*" being the "*morrow.*" Note that if Luke would have been using the Jewish method of keeping time he could not have referred to the "*morrow*" as "*the break of day.*"
- B. Should we be partaking of the Lord's Supper twice on Sunday?
  - 1. A church in California is practicing mandatory two servings of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. They contend that since the church was assembled to partake of the Lord's Supper every one should partake of the Lord's Supper each time assembled on the Lord's Day. This gives those who were unable to be at worship on Sunday morning a chance to partake of the LS on Sunday evening with the whole assembly.
  - 2. This reasoning is faulty due to the fact that God gave a command to partake of the LS (I Cor. 11:23) yet never stated that it was mandatory for all saints to partake at the same time. The

purpose of the LS must be considered not the frequency taken on the first day of the week. The purpose of the LS is individual (i.e., individuals “*remember*,” “*proclaim the Lord’s death till he come*,” “*discerning*” the body of Christ in the assembly of saints).

C. Are we using “too many cups?”

1. Our recent gospel meeting produced many visitors and preachers from the “One Cup (container) Churches of Christ.” These brethren believe it to be sin to drink from more than one cup when partaking of the LS because the Lord used only one cup (Matt. 26:27-28).
2. Note that Jesus was not discussing the actual container but the contents of the container:
  - a. Matthew 26:27-28; “*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.*” Note that Jesus told the disciples to drink the cup (not literal but the **contents** of the cup). Secondly note that Jesus gave thanks for the **contents** of the cup and what it represented, not the cup itself. Note thirdly, that Jesus said that the **contents** of the cup represented His blood not the container itself.
  - b. I Corinthians 11:25-26; Paul said that we are to “drink the cup” but never meant that individuals should take a literal cup, melt it down, and drink it. The content of the cup is obviously meant.
  - c. Our one container brethren pass plates around that hold the bread to serve out of expediency; however, no where do we read of a plate being used.
3. The “*cup*” (*poterion*) = “cup, drinking vessel... the cup stands, by metonymy, for what it contains” (AG 695). The use of Metonymy (a figure of speech in which an attribute or commonly associated feature is used to name or designate something, as in ‘*The pen is mightier than the sword*’). Consider these examples:
  - a. II Cor. 1:21-22 and I Jn. 2:20; The words “*anointing from the Holy One*” are clearly used figuratively by metonymy to illustrate the effects of the gospel’s call. One who answers the call of the gospel is recognized as a Christian. Like the priest who was anointed by oil into the official office, so the Christian is figuratively anointed with the gospel call and is now a qualified saint (cf. Jn. 6:44-45).
  - b. Another example is found in Genesis 6:11; “*The earth was corrupt before God.*” The literal earth was not the corrupt subject but those who lived therein.
4. The cup is simply an expedient to get the command, “*this do in remembrance of me*” (I Cor. 11:23) accomplished. The amount of cups one uses is irrelevant in relation to the command. The point is taking the LS every first day of the week.
5. When a brother binds a matter of indifference upon others this then becomes a matter of doctrinal defense (cf. Gal. 2:1-5).

## Conclusion:

A division exists within the brotherhood over such issues as the LS. With any disagreement; whether that be over the LS, institutionalism, fellowship, false teachers, or any other doctrine, we should all be ready to give a defense of our faith (I Pet. 3:15). It is good when people are studying their Bibles and testing each other in the faith; however, when one has gone beyond the teachings of Christ and seeks to bind their conscience on others there is a problem (cf. Gal. 2:1ff). The scriptures are clear on when we partake of the LS, why we partake, and how many containers to use when drinking the fruit of the vine. When the apostle Paul relays Jesus’ message saying, “*this do in remembrance of me*” (I Cor. 11:23), such a direct command is not lacking in clarity.