

Issues Concerning the Lord’s Supper

The One Container Issue

John Isaac Edwards

There are those who bind the use of one container in the Lord’s supper observance. Let’s take a look at this issue.

Number of Elements in the Lord’s Supper. The Scriptures affirm there are two elements in the Lord’s supper: the bread and the cup. Count them. In instituting the Lord’s supper, “Jesus took bread (there’s one)...And he took the cup (there’s two)...” (Matthew 26:26-29). How many elements did you count?

The one container folks tell us there are three elements in the Lord’s supper. In his material, *The Divine Pattern Advocate*, Alfred L. Newberry states, “...there are three elements in the Lord’s Supper.” These three elements are the bread, the fruit of the vine and the container, we are told. They tell us the bread represents the Lord’s body (that’s right), the fruit of the vine represents His blood (and that’s right), and the container represents the New Testament (they are wrong on this count). Think about it: the Lord’s supper is a memorial to remind us of Christ who is not here. Why do we need a memorial to the New Testament when we have it with us? They have added an element to the Lord’s supper not instituted by the Lord.

The Cup in the Lord’s Supper. Those who bind the use of one container mistake the con-

tainer for the cup in the Lord’s supper. Jesus identified the Lord’s supper cup as the fruit of the vine. “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 many for the remission of sins. 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” (Matthew 26:27-29). The cup is the fruit of the vine; not the container!

What Was Done with the Cup. We better understand what the cup is when we learn what was done with it. The cup was taken, thanks was given for it, it was supped, it was given, it was divided, and it was drunk (Matthew 26:27-29; Mark 14:23-25; Luke 22:17-18, 20; 1 Corinthians 11:25-26). Did the Lord sup and give thanks for a container or the fruit of the vine? Were the disciples to divide and drink a container, or the fruit of the vine? Answer these questions and you answer the container question.

Consequences of the One Container Position. IF the cup in the Lord’s supper is the literal container...

We would have to use the original container used by Jesus in the institution of the Lord’s supper. Jesus said, “*This cup* is the new testament

in my blood...drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:25). We do not have to drink of the same container to drink one cup. We all drink of one and the same cup, when we drink of the fruit of the vine, “the pure blood of the grape” (Deuteronomy 32:14). There are those who refer to the one container folks as “one cuppers.” This is really a misnomer. They are better called “one container people” as the Scriptures teach only one cup and we use only one cup in the Lord’s supper - the fruit of the vine.

Second, we would have to drink the container. Didn’t the Lord say, “This cup...drink it” (1 Corinthians 11:25). If the cup is the container, as we are told, we would have to drink container,

contents, handle and all! If not, why not?

Third, the container would have to be the communion of the blood of Christ. Paul penned, “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” (1 Corinthians 10:16). It is the fruit of the vine, not the container, that represents the blood of Christ (Matthew 26:28).

Those who teach that the container in the Lord’s supper represents the New Testament and bind the use of one container in the Lord’s supper observance, teach something the Lord nowhere taught and bind something the Lord nowhere bound!

The Element Issue

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Some are divided over what Jesus wanted His disciples to drink in His remembrance. Catholics, Episcopalians, and some Lutherans say wine; others say grape juice, and Mormons say it doesn’t matter. Brigham Young wrote, “But the Lord has said to us it mattereth not what we partake of when we administer the cup to the people, inasmuch as we do it with an eye single to the glory of God” (*Discourse by President Brigham Young, Delivered at a Special Conference Held in Brigham City, August*

19, 1877). In the Mormon Church, “Water is commonly used instead of wine in the Sacramental services of the church” (*Doctrines and Covenants, Sec. 27, p. 40*).

When Jesus said, “this fruit of the vine” (Matthew 26:29), that is specific and excludes any other element. Also, it would have been unfermented as the setting is “the passover” (Matthew 26:19) and there was to be “no leaven found” (Exodus 12:19).

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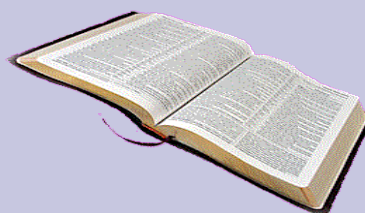
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