

The Lord's Supper

Unity in One Loaf
and One Cup



Brett Hickey

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“This do...in remembrance of Me.”

—Jesus, 1 Corinthians 11:24, 25

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.”

— 1 Corinthians 11:26

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Unity in One Loaf and One Cup

Introduction

The first time Bob¹ heard of a church using only one loaf of bread and one cup in the Lord's Supper, it seemed strange to him. He decided, however, to check it out. When he asked his preacher, he was told that those people are "one cuppers"—people who hold "traditions"—something with which he should not get involved.

Bob, being curious and committed to knowing the truth regardless of where it would lead him, decided to check into it a little more. After all, he had read in the Scriptures of a group of people who lived years ago in a remote village of Berea where the apostle Paul came preaching a doctrine they had never heard. The Scriptures report that these people did not let ignorance (something they had not heard of before), prejudice (preconceived ideas), superstitions (some existing religious beliefs), or anything else keep them from being curious and checking it out. To their honor—and

"These [in Berea] were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they *received the word with all readiness*, and *searched the Scriptures daily* to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11, italics mine).

eternal joy—they did not cut him off completely. The Scriptures report they were "*more noble* than those in Thessalonica," (KJV) a nearby city. Why were they called "noble" (or "fair-minded" Acts 17:11)? They were called "fair-minded" because they gladly received the word, although at first it was different from what they

Note: This booklet is the essence of a three part series on the Lord's Supper presented on *Let the Bible Speak*.

had ever heard before. They then searched the Scriptures to see whether these things were so (Acts 17:11). When they searched the Scriptures, they found what the apostle was teaching was the word of God. Like the people of Berea, Bob began to wonder, “Suppose these people who are disparagingly called ‘one cuppers’ are right?” After all, did not many of the people—even religious leaders—say the apostle Paul was teaching *heresy* (Acts 24:14)? So, Bob decided to give this new idea a careful, unbiased examination, comparing it with the Scriptures. He reasoned with himself: Did Jesus not teach, “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32)?

What he found may surprise many people. A careful study of the topic revealed convincing support that the Scriptures teach there is great significance in the use of one loaf and one cup in the Lord's Supper. Not only does one loaf and one cup symbolize unity, but in using one loaf and one cup we promote unity.

Sadly, many persons today, like people of old, may refuse to look into the Scriptures or accept evidence related to this topic because of not knowing, or because of their prejudices, or superstitions.

You are invited to examine the evidence as presented in the next sections with an open mind and sincere love of the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10-14).

The first section addresses the importance of unity, the importance of doing what God wants (in contrast to what *we* may want), and evidence of a close connection between unity and one loaf. The next section presents historical and linguistic evidence that using more than one loaf is from man, not God. It also presents evidence that God actually commands the use of one loaf. The last section presents evidence on the importance of using one cup in the Lord's Supper, not only because it symbolizes one covenant but because it symbolizes (and promotes) unity among God's people. God not only wants but expects—even commands—His people to use only one loaf of unleavened bread and one literal cup in the Lord's Supper.

Could this be one of those cases in which what one does not know *could* hurt? How sad it would be to find out on the Day of Judgment that prejudice might have kept us from examining the evidence and coming to a knowledge of the truth? (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12). May God help us all to be “noble” or “fair-minded,” having the courage and sufficient love of the truth to check it out to “see whether these things are so” (Acts 17:11).

Unity and One Loaf

The people of God have always sensed from within the need to worship Him, but the Old and New Testaments remind us repeatedly that we tend to become too casual about *how* we worship. God continually draws us back to true worship by His word.

“...that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”—Jesus in John 17:21

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”—Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 1:10

Worshiping God is our most important activity during any week. Even if we were to discover the cure for cancer, it would not exceed the significance of our worship, because the earthly and transient must always bend the knee to the eternal and Divine. When it comes to worship, it pays to get it right.

In the context of worship, no religious act is more sacred than the observance of the Lord’s Supper. The apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 11:27, “Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty

of the body and blood of the Lord.” We need to approach the observance of the Lord’s Supper with respect and restraint.

Unity among disciples intersects with this priority to make us more conscious and, hopefully, more conscientious about how we

observe the Lord's Supper. In fact, one of the most impressive sayings of Jesus in His prayer from John 17 is His emphasis on *unity among His disciples*. He petitions, "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:20-21).

All of us who seek to please God must reverently pause when we read these words. Unity is such a high priority for Jesus, and it must be for us as well. Perhaps the greatest opportunity we have to show that we share the Divine priority for unity is in how we observe the Lord's Supper.² The apostle Paul explains, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread" (1 Corinthians 10:16-17).

The Holy Spirit's message to the assembled congregation is to share *one loaf* when observing the Lord's Supper. Lamentably, many appear not to hear.

Hearts appear to be more focused on pleasing self than pleasing God. America—with her hundreds of television channels, XM radio, Playstations, I-Pods, and incessant sporting events—is on an entertainment high. If we are not careful, even committed Christians can bring the quest for entertainment into the house of worship. "Here I am. Entertain *me*. Please *me*. Cater to *me*!" A "me-centered" culture becomes one of the major challenges that Christians face in an era when we are dominated by the practice of catering to our own preferences. We must, therefore, recognize that our worship should be primarily focused on pleasing God, not pleasing ourselves.

At the funeral of King Louis XIV, perhaps France's greatest king, the cathedral was packed with mourners. The funeral was held at night time, and the only light in that vast cathedral was one lone candle by the casket containing the remains of that great monarch. At the appointed time, the court preacher got up to address the assembled clergy and dignitaries of France. He ascended the pulpit

and snuffed out the lone candle that symbolized the greatness of the king. Then, in the total darkness, he uttered four words: “Only God is great!”

We must regularly remind ourselves that only God is great, and He

alone is worthy of worship. We must constantly guard against moving from *God-centered* worship to *human-centered* worship. Jesus provides clear instructions to help us with proper focus. In His interview with the woman at the well, He emphasizes true worship: “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must

worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24).

This focus on *true worshipers* suggests that God distinguishes them from *false worshipers*. True worshipers are characterized by their determination to keep their worship directed to the Father and to be sure that all acts of worship are with the right spirit—the right attitude and frame of mind—and according to the truth found in the Scriptures. Jesus emphasizes this fact repeatedly, saying this element of worship is not optional. He says “those who worship Him *must* worship in spirit and truth” (*italics mine*).

Before looking more closely at the loaf in the observance of the Lord’s Supper, let us notice a few more guiding principles for worship.

We must give God what He wants in worship, not what we want. His wants should become our wants. This point is emphasized in both the Old and New Testaments. In Leviticus 10:1-3, God shook up the priesthood with a message of judgment for tampering with the worship of God. We read, “Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. So fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. And Moses said to Aaron,

‘This is what the LORD spoke, saying: “By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.” ’ ” Aaron, the High Priest, was stunned with the immediate retribution upon his two sons for their indiscretion in worship. After all, Aaron might have reasoned—as some do today—“all that really matters is that our worship is directed to God. There is no need to get all tangled up in the details.” Perhaps that was the thinking of Nadab and Abihu. Moses explained to his brother Aaron that this swift and lethal punishment was linked to a failure to regard God as holy.

“But, I thought...”

— • —

Would it be wise to remember
Nadab & Abihu?

Aaron’s sons had become too casual in how they worshiped. The Scriptures say they had offered “unauthorized fire” (ESV)—“profane fire...which he had not commanded them” (Leviticus 10:1, NKJV). In worship, we must *give God what He asks*.

This principle is expressed repeatedly in the New Testament as well. Paul exhorts in Colossians 3:17, “And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” All of our religious activity must be done “in the name of the Lord Jesus” or by the authority of the Lord Jesus. Earlier in the same epistle (Colossians 2:23), Paul warns against “will worship” or “self-imposed religion.” The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Orr, 1939) explains the meaning of this phrase as “worship originating in the human will as opposed to the divine, arbitrary religious acts, worthless despite their difficulty of performance.” We cannot devise our own way to worship and gain the acceptance of God.

Jesus also cautions against this type of violation—a problem He witnessed among the religious people of His day. He charged, “And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). Vain worship is worthless, meaningless worship: “a fault, a folly, signifies in vain, to no purpose” (Vine, 181). We must always insist on honoring the commandments of God over the commandments of men. In

establishing the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, Jesus commands, "...*do this* in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:24-25, italics mine).

If we must do what Jesus and the apostles did when He instituted the Lord's Supper, we need to know only what He did. Thankfully, the Scriptures are straightforward. We read in Matthew 26:26, "Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' " At least six translations say that "Jesus took a loaf..."³ The American Standard Version has this rendering in the margin also. Jesus "gave it" (a singular loaf) to the disciples, and they obeyed His command to eat from it.

C. E. W. Dorris writes in the Gospel Advocate's *A Commentary on the Gospel by Mark*:

"A loaf" does not mean two or more loaves, but one. The loaf, which was one, points to the body of Christ. Jesus had one body he offered for the sins of the world and the one loaf represents that one body. Two loaves on the Lord's table are out of place and have no divine sanction. One loaf is safe, two are doubtful, to say the least. It is always safe to be on the safe side" (Dorris, 1955, 328–329).

"A loaf" does not mean two or more loaves, but one... Jesus had one body... the one loaf represents that one body."
—Gospel Advocate, *A Commentary on the Gospel by Mark*

The point Dorris makes is validated by Paul's writing on the subject in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, though many, are *one bread* and *one body*; for we all partake of that one bread" (italics mine). At least twenty-nine translations⁴ render "one bread" as "one loaf."

It is critical to keep in mind that the only way the Lord's Supper is ever observed Scripturally is in a congregational setting. The

word “communion” means, according to Thayer’s Lexicon, “fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse; the share which one has in anything, participation...” (352).

Luke emphasizes in Acts 20:7, “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples *came together* to break bread...” (italics mine). Christians who follow the example of the early church always “come together” or assemble to break bread. We cannot Scripturally commune alone. Communion means joint participation.

Please note a few translations of 1 Corinthians 10:17—

- *Emphatic Diaglott* – “Because there is one loaf, we, the many, are one body; for we all partake of the one loaf.”
- *International Standard Version* – “Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, since all of us partake of the one loaf.”
- *New Century Version* – “There is one loaf of bread. And we are many people. But we all share from that one loaf. So we are really one body.”
- *Contemporary English Version* – “By sharing in the same loaf of bread, we become one body, even though there are many of us.”
- *Worldwide English Version* – “The bread is all one loaf. In the same way, we are many people but we are one body. We all eat from the same loaf.”

The Holy Spirit makes the truth plain in this Scripture: assembled Christians must share the same loaf that represents the one body of Christ. This conclusion harmonizes with the example found in the gospel accounts (Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19).

Considerable scholarship supports this truth. *The International Critical Commentary on 1 Corinthians* by Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer (1914, 1961) reads, “The single loaf is a symbol and an instrument of unity, a unity which obliterates the

distinction between Jew and Gentile and all social distinctions” (213).

John Stott writes “On Unity and Symbolism in the Lord's Supper” in his book, *Christian Basics*:

Five times in 1 Corinthians 11, in the space of eighteen verses, the apostle Paul uses the verb to “come together” in relation to the Lord's Supper. He seems to have regarded it as the main gathering together of the Lord's people on the Lord's Day... from different racial and social backgrounds, we express and experience our undifferentiated unity in Christ.

The breaking of the bread demonstrates this. It is not just that for centuries in Middle Eastern culture to “break bread together” is the way in which people pledge and cement their commitment to one another. It is also that the nature and means of our unity are symbolized in the bread we eat. “Because there is one loaf”, Paul wrote, “we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Corinthians 10:17). In order to retain this vivid symbolism, real bread should be used rather than wafers. Each communicant then receives a fragment from the same loaf, because each is a member of the same body, the body of Christ, the church. Further, since the loaf is an emblem of our crucified Saviour, it is our common participation in him (set forth visibly in our common participation in it) which makes us one (103-104).

Danker, Bauer, and Arndt write of *artos* (bread, loaf of bread) in their lexical notes in the Lord's Supper:

...acc[ording] to Pythagoras the *eis artos* [1 Corinthians 10:17] has served as a symbol of the union of the *philoi* [friends, BH] from time immemorial to the present. Partaking of the same bread and wine [grape juice, BH],...as proof of the most intimate communion... (Danker, *et al*, 136).

Alexander Campbell writes in a similar vein in *The Christian System*:

On the Lord's table there is of necessity but one loaf. The necessity is not that of positive law enjoining one loaf and only one, as the ritual of Moses enjoined twelve loaves. But it is a necessity arising from the meaning of the Institution as

explained by the Apostles. As there is but one literal body, and but one mystical or figurative body having many members; so there must be but one loaf. The Apostle insists upon this, “Because there is one loaf, we, the many, are one body; for we are all partakers of that one loaf” (1 Cor. 10:17)...Here the apostle reasons from what is more plain to what is less plain; from what was established to what was not so fully established in the minds of the Corinthians. There was no dispute about the one loaf; therefore, there ought to be none about the one body (See Campbell, online, “Breaking the Loaf,” Prop. III).

Barton W. Stone, the famous restoration preacher, penned an article in the *Christian Messenger* in 1834 titled, “The Lord’s Supper.” He wrote:

The body of Christ, crucified on Calvary, is represented by the one bread or loaf, and Christians united in one body are joint partakers of it. The New Translation is precisely according to the original text. Thus; “The cup of blessing

which we bless; is it not the joint participation of the blood of Christ? The loaf which we break; is it not the joint participation of the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, the many are one body: for we all participate of that one loaf.”



Barton W. Stone

1. In the Lord's Supper there should be but one loaf, to represent the Lord's body that suffered on the Cross—Two or more loaves destroy the very idea of the ordinance, as not representing the one body of Christ suffering and dying. The word “*artos*” is translated loaf in the text very properly; and this is the translation very commonly given by King James' translators [He then lists many examples; see endnotes.⁵]....

3rd. “We the many, are one body; for we all participate of that one loaf.” None but Christians who are united in the one body, are permitted to participate of the one loaf. They are joint partakers of the blood and body of Christ, and they alone; for they alone can keep the feast with unleavened sincerity and truth...

4th. Why is it more important that a person be immersed, than sprinkled! Because the latter action does not represent the burial and resurrection of Jesus, and because it is not justified by scripture.—And why is it more important to have one unleavened loaf in the Lord's Supper; than to have four or five loaves, or leavened bread? Because the latter do not represent the one body of the sincere, true, suffering Savior, and are not justified by the word of God. Let us cleave to the truth, and never substitute our opinions (Stone, 1834, 176–177).

If we want to do our part to answer Jesus' prayer for unity, and if we are committed to elevating the Lord's will over our own will in how we worship, and if we sincerely desire to regard the Lord as holy, we will use one loaf in the observance of the Lord's Supper. Remember the admonition of the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:29, "For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

Traditions

The New Testament emphasizes the importance of retaining Divine traditions. Some Bible students fail to distinguish between Divine and human traditions. According to Greek lexicographers, *tradition* (*paradosis*) refers to the "content of instruction that has been handed down" (Danker, et al, 2000, 762). The following two sets of Scriptures highlight the difference between the traditions of God that are to be honored and the traditions of man.

Traditions from the Holy Spirit

- 2 Thessalonians 2:15 "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and *hold the traditions which you were taught*, whether by word or our epistle" (italics mine).
- 1 Corinthians 11:2 "Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and *keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you*" (italics mine).
- 1 Corinthians 11:23 "For I *received from the Lord* that which I also *delivered to you*: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread..." (italics mine).

- 1 Corinthians 14:37 “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, *let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord*” (italics mine).
- 1 Corinthians 1:2 “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord....” Applies to “*all...in every place*” (italics mine).
- For those who do not keep these traditions: “But we command you, brethren,...that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and *not according to the tradition which he received from us*” (2 Thessalonians 3:6, italics mine).

Traditions from men

- Matthew 15:3 “He answered and said to them, ‘Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of *your tradition*’ ” (italics mine)? These were *their* traditions, not God’s.
- Matthew 15:9 “And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”
- Mark 7:6-9 “He answered and said to them, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: “This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 7 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” 8 For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men--the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.’ 9 He said to them, ‘All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.’ ”
- Colossians 2:8 “Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the *tradition of men*, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (italics mine).
- Titus 1:13b-14 “Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.”

Unity in One Cup: From God or Man?

When Professor J. W. McGarvey passed away in 1911, a newspaper in England, the *London Times*, said he was “the greatest Bible scholar on earth.” J. J. Haley wrote of him, “He had acquired more historical and textual knowledge of the Holy Scriptures than any man of his time.” McGarvey studied under Bible scholar and debater, Alexander Campbell, at Bethany College. The religious landscape has changed considerably since McGarvey’s demise a hundred years ago. Many believers are unaware of these changes and the controversy generated. Consider Professor McGarvey’s criticism of the introduction of individual cups in the communion.



A long-time member of the church of Christ wrote a letter disapproving of individual cups to the *Christian Standard*:

I have been a member of the church for forty-three years, and it has been my good fortune to be acquainted with several of our most learned and influential ministers—Alexander Campbell among them—and it seems strange to me that they did not find a necessity for the individual cup.

McGarvey responded,

It is not strange at all for such a necessity has not even yet been discovered. The desire for it has originated in the squeamishness of certain women with weak stomachs, and it is supported by the new fad among physicians about bacteria, those little bugs which hang on the lips of people, stick to the communion cup, then cling to the lips of the next participant and thence descend into the stomach of the latter, seize upon his vital organs, and eat away on them till some fatal disease ensues (McGarvey, 1910, 353).

Earlier, McGarvey rejoiced to report the rejection of individual cups among one denomination:

The fresh and verdant fad of the individual communion cups, which is all the rage now with members who care more for “keeping up with the procession” than for following the example of our Lord, has received a black eye recently...A Methodist bishop has refused to use them...and the Methodist Church, North, has forbidden the use of them to churches...

Whatever may be the special pleading in excuse for this innovation, it is perfectly clear that it aims to avoid that which the Lord enjoined in instituting the Supper; that is, the use of the same cup by a number of individuals. He could have directed each of the twelve to drink from his own cup, had he adjudged that to be the better way. But he did not, and we shall be far more likely to please him by doing what he did than by doing what he avoided. If it is wrong to change in the slightest degree the ordinance of baptism, it is still worse, if possible, to change the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper... (McGarvey, 1904, 890).

McGarvey hammered the point that the apostle Paul articulated in 1 Corinthians 11:2, namely, that our worship does not merit God’s commendation unless we “keep the traditions *just as* they were delivered...” (NKJV, italics mine). Examine the Scriptures (Acts 17:11) and see if McGarvey was correct in rejecting the use of individual cups in the Lord’s Supper as an unauthorized addition to the worship that is taught in the Scriptures.

History

Americans knew nothing of individual cups in the Lord’s Supper until about the turn of the 20th century. Drinking from the common cup began to fall into disfavor as alarmists called it unsanitary. Physician and preacher, J. G. Thomas, initiated the individual cups revolution. His first patent was granted in March, 1894⁶ (American Historical Society, 1921, 288).

A series of articles in *The New York Times* highlights the introduction of individual cups in the denominations and the resulting controversy that erupted in the mid-1890’s:

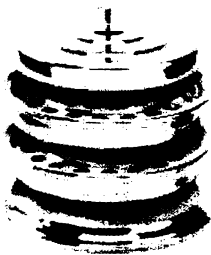
New York Times, September 29, 1894: The Bedford Avenue Baptist Church in Brooklyn, NY is believed to be the first to adopt the individual cup system.⁷

AD 1894

First patent for individual cups.

New York Times, September 30, 1894: Opposition arose to the individual cups within the Bedford Ave. Baptist Church. One member says, “To me the real trouble seems to be that when men begin exalting their own sanitary safety—real or imaginary—above all other considerations, spiritual or humane, we shall have to keep ourselves fenced off from our Christian obligations by a perpetual and skeptical quarantine. We shall have to keep the sick and the diseased at arm’s length. We shall have to visit those who are dying of contagious maladies by proxy. We shall have to hand ourselves to our infected brethren with a pair of tongs, as well as answer all appeals in the name of Christ with the reply that we are only acting under our doctor’s orders.”⁸

[He continues,]⁹ This new theory of our own enormous importance, carried to its logical conclusion would justify turning over all our Christian duties to a carefully-inoculated hospital corps, and we ought to refuse to worship God, according to this theory, in an atmosphere that has not previously been rendered antiseptically safe by a spray of corrosive sublimate. I don’t see any way clear, on the whole, to approve of Dr. Gunning’s new idea, a “sterilized Christianity.”



New York Times, March 13, 1895: A speaker at the Baltimore Methodist Conference stated, “It is the sense of this conference that the preachers in charge of the circuits and stations have neither Scriptural authority nor disciplinary right to introduce or to use individual cups in the administration of the Lord’s Supper.”¹⁰

New York Times, November 9, 1895¹¹ and January 6, 1896¹²: Inventions¹³ are developed “to restore the unity destroyed by individual cups while addressing sanitary concerns of drinking from one cup.”

Another interesting quote comes from G. C. Brewer (1948) in his autobiography, *Forty Years on the Firing Line*:

I think I was the first preacher to advocate the use of the individual communion cup and the first church in the State of Tennessee that adopted it was the church for which I was preaching, the Central Church of Christ at Chattanooga, Tennessee, then meeting in the Masonic Temple. My next work was with the church at Columbia, Tennessee, and, after a long struggle, I got the individual communion service into that congregation. About this time, Brother G. Dallas Smith began to advocate the individual communion service and he introduced it at Fayetteville, Tennessee; then later at Murfreesboro. Of course, I was fought both privately and publicly and several brethren took me to task in the religious papers and called me digressive (XII).

For those concerned about preserving the purity of New Testament worship, tracking the changes man has made over time is of great interest. The history of the individual communion cup is well documented.¹⁴ Men like G. C. Brewer would not have had to fight to introduce the individual communion cup if Jesus and the apostles had already introduced them.

Sanitation

Because of misinformation on the so-called dangers (see McGarvey on “Microbes,” 1900) of drinking from the common cup, it is worthwhile to note the studies compiled by Alton Bailey and Dr. James Orten (1993) in the booklet “Sanitation in Communion.” This booklet references a study conducted by William Burrows, associate professor of bacteriology, and Elizabeth Hemmons, instructor in the Walter G. Zollar dental clinic (22–24). The only time these scientists were able to detect the transfer of bacteria was when the first person left as much saliva as possible on the cup and the second drank immediately from the same spot. Then only one thousandth of one percent of the bacteria was transmitted from the first person to the second. Bailey and Orten emphasize the fact that “as much saliva as possible was left on the cup—even when the cup was not wiped, and participants were making conscious efforts to be ‘sloppy’ ”

(23)—which is not the case in the communion service. Others concur.¹⁵

If some Christians living today were alive then, no doubt they, like Naaman, would object to being dipped in the Jordan River (2 Kings 5); they would also object on sanitary grounds to Jesus using his saliva to heal the blind (Mark 8:23; John 9:6). Drinking from one cup, as with other commands of God, is a matter of faith. The people of God “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Was McGarvey right in decrying the use of individual cups in the communion as a departure from the New Testament pattern? First, we must determine when the Lord’s Supper was instituted whether Jesus and His disciples shared one drinking vessel or whether each disciple drank from his own cup. If there is no clear answer, then how many cups we use in the Lord’s Supper matters not. In such a case, no one can be faulted for worshiping with multiple cups. If, on the other hand, it can be shown that Jesus and His disciples shared one cup, then Christians must follow that example.

Just wondering...

Is using one cup any greater risk than:

- assembling with a group for worship?
- “visiting the sick?”

or, should Christians not do these either?

If such is the case, we would be obligated to follow the example of Jesus’ sharing one cup and one loaf with the disciples because: 1) Paul stresses the importance of “keep(ing) the traditions [‘ordinances,’ KJV] just as I delivered them to you” (1 Corinthians 11:2, NKJV); 2) Jesus commands when He instituted the Lord’s Supper in Luke 22:19, “...do this in remembrance of me.”

Some Christians have made this subject too complicated. Besides offering thanks for the loaf and the cup, only two actions are performed in observing the Lord’s Supper—the eating of bread and the drinking of the fruit of the vine. As sure as we cannot satisfy Jesus’ command to “*do this*” by omitting the Lord’s Supper

from worship on the Lord's Day, neither can we do just anything and say we have observed the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:20).

It would have been difficult for Jesus to issue a more straightforward command than "*do this*." And, we cannot obey the command "*do this*," by doing whatever we want; we cannot

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

—1 Thessalonians 5:21, KJV

show we love Jesus by responding to His command to "*do this*" by doing something similar to "*this*." We know soda and burgers in the Lord's Supper conflict with Jesus' command.

We must "*do this!*" But, when it comes to the cup, what did Jesus and the disciples *do*? We need to know so we can be sure we are obeying Jesus' command to "*do this*."

The Bible tells us what Jesus did in Matthew 26:27—"Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you"¹⁶ (as translated in NKJV, NASB, *Weymouth's NT*, TCNT, *Montgomery New Testament*, NAS95, NRSV).

- 1) Jesus *took the cup*—a literal cup, according to a host of lexicons, including Arndt and Gingrich, 702; Thayer, 533, "prop."; Danker, et al, 2000, 857). In Greek, the word *poterion* means a drinking vessel (Arndt and Gingrich, 702).
- 2) Jesus next *gave thanks* for the cup.
- 3) He *gave it* (a singular pronoun to indicate a singular cup) to the disciples.
- 4) Finally, Jesus told them to *drink from it* (singular pronoun again indicating one drinking vessel). There should be no need to be technical, but the phrase "drink from it" comes from the Greek phrase *pino ek autou*. Thayer indicates in his lexicon (510) that the use of the Greek phrase *pino ek* (drink of, out of) is used "with a genitive of the vessel out of which one drinks." Similarly, Danker, Bauer, and Arndt point out (664) that *pino ek* is "Followed by accusative of the vessel from

One...

- body (Ephesians 4:4)
- Spirit (Ephesians 4:4)
- hope (Ephesians 4:4)
- Lord (Ephesians 4:5)
- faith (Ephesians 4:5)
- baptism (Ephesians 4:5)
- body in Christ (Romans 12:5)
- God (Romans 3:30)
- Father (1 Corinthians 8:6)
- Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 8:6)
- Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5)
- heart (Acts 4:32)
- soul (Acts 4:32)
- accord (Philippians 2:2)
- mind (1 Peter 3:8)
- bread (1 Corinthians 10:17)
- __?__ loaf(ves) in Lord's Supper
- __?__ cup(s) in Lord's Supper

which one drinks..." So, those assembled were all commanded to drink from the cup (drinking vessel) Jesus handed to them. There is nothing difficult in Matthew's account about following Jesus' example and obeying Jesus' command to "do this."

As David Lipscomb (1911) put it, "Does anyone think that it was instituted by Jesus and observed by his disciples as an individual communion service? If not, why do it now?" (729-730). McGarvey (1904) answers, "But he did not, and we shall be far more likely to please him by doing what he did than by doing what he avoided" (890).

Is the gospel account in Mark 14:23 any less clear? "Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it." The only difference between Mark 14:23 and Matthew 26:27 is that Matthew records, "Drink from it, all of you," while Mark writes, "they all drank from it." So, while

Matthew emphasizes Jesus' command for all of them to drink from the one container, Mark focuses on the fact that they obeyed the command, and all drank out of the one container.

Mark's account also shows *how* they "divided" or "shared" the cup as Luke 22:17 mentions. They shared or divided the cup by drinking from the cup as it was passed from person to person. Again, Mark says "they all drank from it."¹⁷

Alford writes in *The Greek Testament*, "It was necessary for the celebration of the Lord's Supper, that all should eat of the same bread and drink of the same cup..." (571).

Alfred Edersheim, the notable 19th century Jewish scholar who converted to Christianity, concurs. He writes in *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* that Jesus "...passed the cup round the circle of the disciples" (Vol. 2, Book V, 496). He adds in a footnote, "At present a cup is filled for each individual, but Christ seems to have passed the one cup round among the Disciples" (footnote 3, 496-497).

This is exactly what Jesus and the disciples did; they shared one cup. Jesus tells us to "do *this* in remembrance of me." Can we "do *this*"? Of course, we can! Dare we do anything but "*this*"? No



wonder individual cups did not begin to be seen in Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches until the 1890's and in churches of Christ in 1912 (Phillips, 1970, 2007; Wade, 1986; Wade, 2006). Many congregations reject the Lord's pattern for the Lord's Supper, but there are still eighty-five million

Anglicans in the world, two million Episcopalians in America, and churches of Christ throughout the world that continue to share one cup when they assemble.

New Testament examples matter. The reason we must assemble for worship on the Lord's Day is because of the example of the early Christians.

In Acts 20:7, we learn that it was “on the first day of the week”—Sunday, the Lord’s Day—that the “disciples came together [as the church] to break bread [or to observe the Lord’s Supper].” Strange, is it not, that the example of *when* to observe the Lord’s Supper is greeted with open arms by many persons while the example of *how* to observe the Lord’s Supper is set aside as unbinding? The example of the Lord’s Supper is reinforced by the Lord’s command to “do this” and the Holy Spirit’s admonition to “keep the ordinances just as they were delivered” (1 Corinthians 11:2).

Lenski (1946, 2008) puts it well when he writes, “The point is that Jesus instituted...the use of one cup, that he bade all the disciples drink out of this one cup (Matthew), and that ‘they all did drink out of it’ (Mark). Any change in what Jesus did, which has back of it the idea that he would not do the same today for sanitary or similar reasons, casts a reflection upon Jesus which is too grave to be allowed when he is giving us his sacrificial blood...” (623).

This Cup Is the New Covenant

The force of Jesus’ example and command is sufficient, but another relevant point is worthy of note: the significance assigned to the cup containing the fruit of the vine.

Let’s turn to the account of the Lord’s Supper in Luke 22:20, and then to the restatement by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 11:25. In these accounts, Luke and Paul emphasize *the cup containing the fruit of the vine* while Matthew and Mark stress *the fruit of the vine contained in the cup*.

- Luke 22:20, “Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘*This cup is the new covenant in My blood*, which is shed for you’ ” (italics mine).
- 1 Corinthians 11:25, “In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, ‘*This cup is the new covenant in My blood*. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me’ ” (italics mine).

- Matthew 26:28 “For *this is My blood of the new covenant*, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (italics mine).
- Mark 14:24 “And He said to them, ‘*This is My blood of the new covenant*, which is shed for many’ ” (italics mine).

In these four accounts, the Lord mentions three sacred elements represented by three symbols. Can you name the three sacred elements and the symbols that represent them?

Most Christians realize that the body and blood are represented by the loaf and the fruit of the vine, but many overlook the *new covenant*, even though the covenant is mentioned in all four

accounts. Some say the covenant is insignificant, but Jesus could have omitted the new covenant from each of these passages had He desired to minimize its role. He did not! In light of the repeated warning not to add to or take away from God’s word (Galatians 1:8-9; Deuteronomy 5:32; Revelation 22:18-19), would omitting the covenant be

Fill-in the blank question:

“This _____ is the new covenant in My blood.”

- a.) blood
- b.) fruit of the vine
- c.) cup

any better than omitting the body or blood of the Lord? Had His blood not set in motion a new covenant, we would be doomed to seeking salvation under the old covenant—something we could never find.

Careful Bible students realize that the new covenant is mentioned in these accounts and is represented by the cup containing the fruit of the vine. “This cup is the New Testament in my blood” (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25). *The cup [containing fruit of the vine]* represents the New Testament.

As we compare the Scriptures that address the significance of the elements in the Lord's Supper, this determination becomes more conclusive. Notice the metaphors used in each of the following quotes on the Lord's Supper:

- “This [loaf of unleavened bread] is My body” (Matthew 26:26).
- “This [fruit of the vine] is My blood of the new covenant...” (Matthew 26:28).
- “This cup is the new covenant in my blood...” (Luke 22:20 and 1 Corinthians 11:25).

E. W. Bullinger (1968) says in his book, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, that each of these three sentences is a metaphor. He then explains several rules associated with metaphors:

The two nouns¹⁸ themselves must both be mentioned, and are always to be taken in their *absolutely literal*

Metaphor....

- What is it?
- Why does it matter?
- How can you tell?

sense, or else no one can tell what they mean (735, italics mine). The whole figure, in a metaphor, lies...in the verb substantive “IS” [caps in the original]; and not in either of the two nouns...(739). In all these (as in every other *Metaphor*) [sic] the verb means, and might

have been rendered, “*represents*,” or “*signifies*” (740, italics in original).

When we apply these rules to the three metaphors used in the Lord’s Supper we are compelled to conclude the following:

- 1) The (absolutely literal) loaf *represents* the (absolutely literal) body of Christ.
- 2) The (absolutely literal) fruit of the vine *represents* the (absolutely literal) blood of Christ.
- 3) The (absolutely literal) cup *represents* the (absolutely literal) new covenant.

From a linguistic standpoint, these three statements regarding the spiritually significant elements in the Lord’s Supper are parallel grammatically. The similarities are striking! What we discover from applying the same rules of grammar to each of these

sentences is that the cup containing the fruit of the vine represents the new covenant when sanctified by prayer.

Bullinger also writes of metaphors: “there may not be the least resemblance” (Bullinger, 735). Similarly, in his *Debate Notes on the Lord’s Supper*, George Battey (1994) points out two examples of metaphors where the symbol does not resemble that which it represents. In Galatians 4:21-31 we learn that Hagar is the *old covenant* and Sarah is the *new covenant*. One literal woman represents the old covenant; another literal woman represents the new covenant. Likewise, when Luke and Paul write, “This cup is the new covenant...,” a literal cup represents a literal new covenant. The only difference is in one sentence a literal woman represents the new covenant and in the other sentence a literal cup represents the new covenant. Sarah is the new covenant (Galatians 4:21-31). “This cup is the new covenant...” (1 Corinthians 11:25).

Again, Battey (1994) points out that three significant events transpired when Jesus died, and that Jesus gave us a symbol to represent each happening:

- 1) “His body was sacrificed. The one loaf signifies this [body].”
- 2) “His blood was shed. The fruit of the vine signifies this [blood].”
- 3) “The New Testament was ratified. The one cup (drinking vessel) signifies this [Testament].”

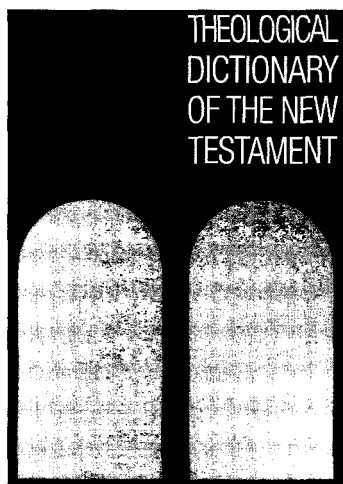
Battey then says that “every major covenant had a symbol to represent that covenant:

- 1) Covenant with Noah – rainbow (Genesis 9).
- 2) Covenant with Abraham – circumcision (Genesis 17).
- 3) The New Covenant – the cup (drinking vessel)” (Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25).

Several authorities confirm that the cup containing the fruit of the vine represents the new covenant. Neander, the religious historian, as quoted in Lange’s commentary, “The cup, then, with the wine it contains, symbolizes the New Covenant, and this covenant is established in the blood of Christ, which wine poured into the

cup...sets forth as shed for the expiation of sinful men..." (Lange and Schaff, 1870, 237; also, quoted and cited in Phillips, 1970, 2007, 20).

Thayer (1955) writes, "This cup containing wine, an emblem of blood, is rendered by the shedding of my blood, an emblem of the new covenant...1 Cor. xi:27..." (15). In other words, "wine" is "an emblem of blood" and "This cup containing wine" is an "emblem of the covenant."



The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Kittel, 1965, Vol. III) confirms this conclusion. This work reads, "The saying ... relates the cup with the red wine to the new *diatheke* (covenant). The cup represents the new divine order on the basis of the blood of Jesus. The blood which is shed, His violent death, **makes the cup a vessel of the new divine order** [bold added]. As certainly as the disciples drink the cup whose wine [or fruit of the vine—BH] represents the blood of Jesus, so certainly they share in the new divine

order [or covenant—BH] which is brought into being by the death of Jesus..." (736). William Lane (1974) makes essentially the same point in his commentary on Mark 14:22–25 (507).

T. Teignmouth Shore writes in his commentary, "The cup containing the symbol of the blood is therefore the pledge and witness of that covenant" (333). Professor F. R. Gay, of Bethany College wrote in 1910, "This cup (that is, the cup and its contents) represents the New Covenant...which is ratified by my sacrificial death" (quoted and cited in Phillips, 1970, 2007, 18).

H. M. Paynter writes in his book, *The Holy Supper*, "The cup symbolizes, and is a seal of the new covenant. 'The fruit of the vine,' then, must symbolize the blood of that covenant, and be the medium through which it is received" (182). Also, Paynter writes, "Nor is the cup put for the contents. It is not 'the contents,' but

the ‘cup,’ including its contents, that is the new testament” (Paynter, 163).

Renowned Scottish scholar Dr. James MacKnight (1795, 1954)¹⁹ explains in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:25: “*In like manner also he gave the cup, after he had supped on the passover, saying, This cup of wine is a representation of the new covenant made in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me, as shedding my blood to procure that covenant for you*” (182, italics in original).

Even James D. Bales (1973), though using individual cups, writes in an article in the *Firm Foundation*,

His blood is the blood of the Covenant, his blood made the Covenant operative, but the Covenant is not the blood itself, although the cups whose contents symbolized his blood was said to be the New Covent [sic]²⁰ in His blood (Luke 22:20). However, Christ is the mediator of the covenant (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). He is not the mediator of his blood. His blood dedicated the Covenant and made it operative (Heb. 9:15-26). His blood is the blood of the everlasting covenant, but it is not the blood of the everlasting blood—as it would have to be if the blood and the covenant are the same thing (Heb. 13:20) (4/452).

Bales correctly notes that the blood and the covenant are distinct items. Bales misses the truth by only one letter. In saying the “cups whose contents symbolized His blood was said to be the New Covenant in His blood,” he rightly associates the new covenant with the drinking vessel, but he makes an error in saying “cups” instead of “cup” as in the Biblical texts.

If, after Jesus issues this connection, a congregation replaces the one cup of the Scriptures with multiple cups, it mars the intended symbolism of this sacred memorial.

Figurative Language

Unnecessary confusion exists over the use of figurative language in the texts that address the observance of the Lord's Supper. Some Christians believe that the container that is so obvious in the text

somehow vanishes with the use of figurative language. This assumption is unwarranted.

How do we identify the use of figurative language? Consider the testimony of E. W. Bullinger:

It may be asked, “How are we to know, then, when words are to be taken in their simple, original form (*i.e.*, literally), and when they are to be taken in some other and peculiar form (*i.e.*, as a *Figure*)?” The answer is that, *whenever and wherever it is possible*, the words of Scripture are to be understood *literally*, but when a statement appears to be contrary to our experience, or to known fact, or revealed truth, or seems to be at variance with the general teaching of the Scriptures, then we may reasonably expect that some figure is employed (*Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, 1968, xv) (emphasis mine).

“...whenever and wherever it is possible, the words of Scripture are to be understood literally...”

—Bullinger, 1968, p. xv

No one is at liberty to exercise any arbitrary power in their use. All that art can do is to ascertain the laws to which nature has subjected them. There is no room for private opinion, neither can speculation concerning them have any authority.

It is not open to anyone to say of this or that word or sentence, “This is a figure,” according to his own fancy, or to suit his own purpose. We are dealing with a science whose laws and their workings are known. If a word or words be a figure, then that figure can be named, and described. It is used for a definite purpose and with a specific object (Bullinger, 1968, xi).

A failure to recognize this truth has led some Bible students to conclude that the word *baptism* is figurative and, therefore, does not demand immersion in water (e.g., Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:27). These people believe their argument is strengthened because they find examples of baptism used figuratively (Matthew 20:22-23; Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50).

In the following Scriptures, since the literal use of the word, “cup,” is not repugnant to reason, it would violate the rules of grammar

to declare the presence of figurative language. These passages establish, therefore, what was done when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper and show us how to obey the command, "This do" (KJV, ASV).

- Matthew 26:27 "Then He took **the cup**, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, 'Drink from *it*, all of you.' "
- Mark 14:23 "Then He took **the cup**, and when He had given thanks He gave **it** to them, and they all drank from **it**.'" "
- Luke 22:20 "Likewise He also took **the cup** after supper, saying..."
- 1 Corinthians 10:16 "**The cup** of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"
- 1 Corinthians 11:25 "In the same manner He also took **the cup** after supper, saying..."
- 1 Corinthians 11:28 "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of **the cup**." (all bold on this page added)

How can we tell if it is:

- **Literal?**
- **Metaphor?**
- **Metonymy?**

In the following Scriptures, however, just as a loaf cannot be a literal body and fruit of the vine cannot be literal blood, so, a cup cannot be a literal covenant; therefore, figurative language must be employed. As the loaf and fruit of the vine represent the body and blood of Christ, respectively, so the

cup represents the new covenant. Each, as discussed earlier, is metaphorical.

- Luke 22:20b, "**This cup** is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you."
- 1 Corinthians 11:25, "**This cup** is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me" (bold added).

Metonymy

A third use of the word "cup" in the Lord's Supper (in addition to literal and metaphor) is found in 1 Corinthians 11:26-27, "For as

often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

Since we know it is impossible to drink a literal cup, we know "cup" is figurative here. We need only to determine what type of figure is used in these instances. In both cases, *metonymy of the container for the contained* is employed. Bullinger explains that metonymy is "a figure of speech by which one name or noun is used instead of another, to which it stands in a certain relation."²¹ Metonymy does not make the originally named object (cup, in this instance) disappear. Instead, it demands the presence of the originally named object.

Consider another example of metonymy of the container for the contained: "I had a hole in the radiator last week and had to purchase a new one. How frustrating it was to lift the hood this afternoon and discover that the radiator was boiling."

The first use of the word "radiator" can be taken literally and, therefore, must be taken literally. The second use cannot be taken literally, so we must determine what kind of figure is used. It is a metonymy with the word radiator suggesting the water within it. Notice, though, that the metonymic use of "radiator" does not eliminate the existence of the radiator. Instead, it demands the radiator. In fact, it demands that there is only one radiator under consideration. For more radiators to be present, the individual would have to say that "the radiators were boiling."

In a similar way, when Paul speaks of "drink(ing) this cup", he refers, by metonymy, to their drinking the contents of the one container shared by the congregation at Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:26-27).

"In remembrance of Me"

While it is important to eat the bread and drink the cup, just as Jesus commanded, it is equally important to do so "in remembrance" of Jesus which takes time and thought. Using one loaf and one cup will take longer than it would if a congregation were using multiple

loaves and individual cups. Communion still would not take as much time as Jesus spent on the cross (Matthew 27:45). Will we sit in a heated building on cushioned pews, and complain or feel, “I do not have time?” *Our* sins sent Him to the cross, not His. In many ways the extra time to think about this reality could be invaluable to us, and glorifying to God.

Ironically, the first rift between brothers centered on worship (Genesis 4). So bitter was Cain over God’s rejection of his innovative worship that he killed his brother Abel. Division and dissension has plagued humanity ever since. After only three kings, division alienated God’s people from one another (1 Kings 12). Worship errors perpetuated this division also (1 Kings 12:28-33).

Against a backdrop of radicalism so extreme that textbooks teach children to hate,²² Christians across the globe gather at the Lord’s Table to enact 1 Corinthians 10:17, “For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.” In this simple, but sacred ceremony by sharing one loaf and one cup, believers demonstrate, as Paul puts it in Galatians 3:28, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” and signal to the world that they have been given the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18). Time meditating on these and related truths can only make for a more Christ-like week. Hence, we ponder in our hearts Jesus’ words: “do this...in remembrance of Me” (1 Corinthians 11:24,25). “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26).

Conclusions

1. Based on the abundance of information, the topic of “loaf” and “cup” in the Lord’s Supper appears to be very important both to God and man.
2. Contrary to what many people suggest, “traditions” are not inherently “bad.” In fact, many Scriptures command: “...keep the traditions just as I [Holy Spirit through Paul] delivered them to you” (1 Corinthians 11:2).

3. Many scholars conclude from history that when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, He used:
 - a. One literal loaf of unleavened bread—more than 29 translations render it “one loaf”
 - b. One literal cup containing unfermented “fruit of the vine”
4. Jesus commanded “...do this...” in 1 Corinthians 11:24 (for bread) and 11:25 (for cup). This is an “imperative” sentence. The Greek verb for “do” is second person, plural, present, active, imperative (Schenker, et al, 2006).
5. Evidence is cited (Appendix A) that language clearly signals singularity for loaf and cup in the Lord's Supper *more than 50 times*, and not one instance of plurality.
6. Research cited by Bailey and Orten (1993) shows "the risk of disease transmission is very small, and probably much smaller than that of contracting infections by other methods in any gathering of people" (22).
7. The practice of using individual loaves and cups is of recent origin—instituted in the late 1800's by men, not from God—hence, is a tradition of men, not from God.
8. The one loaf of bread not only symbolizes Jesus' one physical body, but symbolizes the one spiritual body, the church (Colossians 1:18, “He is the head of the body, the church”).
9. Not only is unity important—for which Jesus earnestly prayed—but division is an abomination in God's sight (Proverbs 6:16, 19; 1 Corinthians 1:10). Even if it were a matter of “liberty” to use more than one loaf and one cup, for “expediency sake,” everyone could use one loaf and one cup without offending others, thus helping to promote unity.

Who would insist on his or her way, thereby going against scholarship, wounding Christians' consciences, and contributing to division? May God help us to humble ourselves to His will—always, in pursuit of the “more excellent way” (1 Corinthians 12:31).

Appendix A

An Analysis of Scriptures Regarding the Lord's Supper with Respect to Singularity of the Bread and Cup

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In the Bible accounts of the Lord's Supper, singularity (or number) is communicated in several ways; for example, through:

- nouns (e.g., “bread” as opposed to “breads”; “cup” as opposed to “cups.”)
- verbs (e.g., “is”)
- articles (e.g., “the” as opposed to other modifiers such as “some,” “many”)
- pronouns (e.g., “it” and “this” as opposed to “these” or “those”)

As a result of this feature of language, singularity or number may be signaled three or more times within a single sentence. For example, consider the sentence: “These three boys are in the car.” In this short, simple sentence plurality in the number of boys is signaled four times, namely, in “these” (pl.), “three” (pl.), “boys” (pl.), and “are” (pl.). This feature of language is especially helpful with words in which the singular and plural are spelled the same (e.g. sheep, deer). In these cases other words in the sentence can clarify whether it is singular or plural. Consider the sentences: “The deer was in the field.” and “The deer are in the field.” It is not possible to tell by the word “deer” the number; however, the verb eliminates this ambiguity. This principle also applies in all the passages related to the Lord's Supper. So, even if “bread” or “cup” might, in some instances, refer to more than one, the other words (such as “the”, “is”) definitively identify whether it is singular. With respect to the Bible accounts of the Lord's Supper, a careful reader will not find one explicit instance of plurality in reference to “bread” or “cup”; however, **more than 50 times** singularity is signaled often more than once in the same sentence

(see analysis that follows). In Greek the signaling of number is often even more definitive than in English.

Scriptures related to the Lord's Supper:

Bread

- Matthew 26:26
26 And as they were eating, Jesus took **bread** [*arton*, a loaf, singular], blessed and broke **it** [singular, i-Gk (i-Gk means: “implicit in the Greek”) see endnote #²³], and gave **it** [singular, i-Gk] to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; **this** [singular] **is** [singular] My body.” (5 times)
- Mark 14:22
22 And as they were eating, Jesus took **bread** [*arton*, a loaf, singular], blessed and broke **it** [singular, i-Gk], and gave **it** [singular, i-Gk] to them and said, “Take, eat; **this** [singular] **is** [singular] My body.” (5 times)
- Luke 22:19
19 And He took **bread** [*arton*, a loaf, singular], gave thanks and broke **it** [singular, i-Gk] and gave **it** [singular, i-Gk] to them, saying, “**This** [singular] **is** [singular] My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” (5 times)
- 1 Corinthians 10:16- 17
16 **The** [singular] **bread** [*arton*, a loaf, singular] which we break, **is** [singular] **it** [singular] not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we, though many, are **one** [singular] **bread** [*artos*, a loaf, singular] and one body; for we all partake of **that** [singular] **one** [singular] **bread** [*artou*, a loaf, singular]. (9 times)
- 1 Corinthians 11:23-24
23 For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took **bread** [*artos*, a loaf, singular]; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke **it** [singular, i-Gk] and said, “Take, eat; **this** [singular] **is** [singular] My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” (4 times)

- 1 Corinthians 11:27-29

27 Therefore whoever eats **this** [singular] **bread** [*arton*, a loaf, singular] or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of **the** [singular] **bread** [*artou*, a loaf, singular] and drink of the cup. 29 For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (4 times)

Results: Regarding the bread (loaf), singularity is explicitly signaled a total of 32 times in English (25 times in Greek). Plurality is not signaled once in either English or Greek text related to the Lord's Supper.

❑ Singular: "bread" (9 times); "that" (1 time); "the" (2 times); "this" (5 times); "it" (1 time + 7 times i-Gk); "is" (5 times); "one" (2 times)

❑ Plural: "breads" (0); "loaves" (0); "these, those, them" (0); "are" (0); "were" (0); "two" or more (0)

[Note: A plurality of loaves (plural form of *artos*, Greek word for bread) is mentioned at least 20 times in the New Testament (e.g., Matthew 14:17, 19; 15:34, 36; 16:9, 10; Mark 6:38, 41, 44, 52; 8:5, 6, 19; Luke 9:13, 16; 11:5; John 6:9, 11. 13. 26). This information illustrates that the plural forms of the word were available to Jesus and the apostles had they wished to communicate plurality. Not only were plurals available, but Jesus and the apostles were aware of it, as evidenced by the fact that plural terms were used in reference to other matters, but not to the Lord's Supper.]

Cup

- Matthew 26:27-30

27 Then He took **the** [singular, i-Gk] **cup** [singular], and gave thanks, and gave **it** [singular, i-Gk] to them, saying, "Drink from **it** [singular], all of you." 28 For **this** [singular] **is** [singular] My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when

I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.” 30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (6 times)

- Mark 14:23-26

23 Then He took **the** [singular, i-Gk] **cup** [singular] and when He had given thanks He gave **it** [singular, i-Gk] to them, and they all drank from **it** [singular]. 24 And He said to them, “**This** [singular] **is** [singular] My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. 25 Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink **it** [singular] new in the kingdom of God.” 26 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. (7 times)

- Luke 22:20

20 Likewise He also took **the** [singular] **cup** [singular] after supper, saying, “**This** [singular] **cup** [singular] **is** [singular, i-Gk] the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.” (5 times)

- 1 Corinthians 10:16

16 **The** [singular] **cup** [singular] of blessing which we bless, **is** [singular] **it** [singular] not the communion of the blood of Christ? (4 times)

- 1 Corinthians 11:25

25 In the same manner He also took **the** [singular] **cup** [singular] after supper, saying, “**This** [singular] **cup** [singular] **is** [singular] the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink **it** [singular, i-Gk], in remembrance of Me.” (6 times)

- 1 Corinthians 11:26-29

26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink **this** [singular, i-Gk] **cup** [singular], you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. 27 Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks **this** [singular] **cup** [singular] of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. 28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of **the** [singular] **cup** [singular]. 29 For he who eats and drinks

in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. (6 times)

Results: Regarding the **cup**, singularity is explicitly signaled 34 times in English (26 times in Greek). Plurality related to the Lord's Supper is not signaled once in English or Greek text.

❑ Singular: "cup" (10 times); "the" (4 times + 2 times i-Gk); "this" (4 times + 2 times i-Gk); "is" (4 times + 1 time i-Gk)

❑ Plural: "cups" (0); "these, those, them" (0); "are" (0); "were" (0); "two" or more (0)

[Note: A plurality of "cups" is mentioned in other places in the New Testament (e.g., Mark 7:4, 8), but never used regarding the Lord's Supper. This fact also illustrates there were plural forms for these words available in Greek since they were used elsewhere in the New Testament (Mark 7:4, 8). Jesus and the apostles knew this and actually used them elsewhere, but not in respect to the Lord's Supper.]

Overall results for "bread" and "cup".

Singularity is explicitly communicated *66 times in English (51 times in Greek)* regarding the bread and cup in the Lord's Supper. Plurality is not signaled even once in either the English or Greek texts.

Note: Luke 22:17 is analyzed separately because, at least some, respected people believe it to be a part of the Passover supper, rather than the Lord's Supper; however, other respected people disagree.

- Luke 22:17 Then He took **the** [singular] **cup** [singular], and gave thanks, and said, "Take **this** [singular] and divide **it** [singular] among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

Results: In this verse singularity of cup is signaled four times; plurality of cup, none. The overall conclusion from this analysis is unchanged by including this verse.

Appendix B

Gospel Advocate Articles Against Individual “Communion”

After noting the opposition of David Lipscomb and J. W. McGarvey to individual cups, Dallas Burdette (2008) writes in *From Legalism to Freedom* (46-47), “Both McGarvey and Lipscomb later changed their views....” Burdette cites *The Sun Will Shine Again, Someday* (Wade, 1986) in support of both later modifying their views while Ronny Wade’s book mentions only Lipscomb’s change (64-65). Brother Wade told me by phone he had no knowledge of McGarvey wavering in his opposition. I relayed the discrepancy to Brother Burdette asking for documentation for his assertion. He said he is looking into it.

Meanwhile, the eight articles below by McGarvey, Granville Lipscomb and David Lipscomb, trace their disapproval of individual “communion” and explain the conditions in which David Lipscomb withdrew his opposition to individual “communion” at age 84 and in a period of what G. C. Brewer calls “great enfeeblement” (Brewer, 1955, 86). It is also important to hear Lipscomb’s opposition placed in context from Brewer’s perspective.

Brewer wrote an article published on February 3, 1955, titled, “Did G. C. Brewer Introduce the Individual Communion Cup Among the Churches?” He explained, “I agreed with (C. E. Holt and G. Dallas Smith) that we should...openly advocate...the individual cup.... Before we began to use it, however, I went to Nashville to talk...with Brother Lipscomb (who)...indicated that he was about ready to reach the conclusion that the individual communion service was not in violation of any scriptural principle.... I went back home and got the brethren to order individual cups...” (Brewer, 1955, 85-87).

Brewer relayed an exchange with G. Dallas Smith a little later:

“By all means,...get Brother Lipscomb in print...before it is too late. If you tell this after he is gone, you will not get anyone to

believe it, in view of the things that he has already written. I agreed that it would be wonderful if we could get Brother Lipscomb to say in the *Gospel Advocate* what he said to me personally.... The article from Brother Lipscomb appeared in the *Gospel Advocate* of January 7, 1915. With the help of this article, I got the individual cup introduced into the church in Columbia, Tenn., over strong opposition.... Without the article from Brother Lipscomb, this would never have been done” (85-87). Brewer claimed “victory.”

In a November 2, 1899 article titled, “The Breaking of Bread,” Granville Lipscomb wrote: “The bread of the Lord’s Supper was a single loaf of unleavened bread.... Just one loaf is proper for any number of disciples on any one occasion.... The careless custom of some who bring any number of loaves...is unbecoming and entirely inexcusable, considering the nature and design of this feast. [I]n like manner he gave them the cup and told them all to partake...” (690).

In an article in the “Queries” section on August 23, 1900, David Lipscomb responded to a question by A. O. Colley: “They did not have individual cups in the days of Jesus and the apostles.... The significance and symbolism...is destroyed by each having his own cup.... It would be no more of a violation of the order for each to have his own private loaf of bread. It destroys the significance and tends to separate and destroy communion...rather than promote it; it is a kind of pretentious pharisaism...” (534).

J. W. McGarvey’s *Christian Standard* article on “Microbes,” is reprinted in the July 11, 1901 issue of the *Gospel Advocate*:

“It is true that our Lord appointed it this way (passing one cup to many persons); but then he may have forgotten...he had made all these microbes.... Perhaps he reflected that the ...millions...destined to premature graves by swallowing these microbes...would die in a good cause.... We...propose to stop that...by having individual cups.... If any man cries out against it as being unscriptural...we will call him a legalist, a literalist, a Pharisee.... When the wheels of progress once get up steam behind them...the man who gets in the way will be run over.... Good-bye to the old conceit of restoring primitive Christianity!” (294).

In a February 16, 1905 article titled “Individual Communion Cup,” David Lipscomb reprinted a post in the *Central Baptist*:

“In response to a question from an esteemed brother, we...guess that a dozen or more Baptist churches in Missouri use individual communion cups.... The significance of the service is in no way marred by having a cup for each person. If we...abide strictly by the...institution of the supper by the Master, we would have to limit ourselves to one cup...” (100).

Lipscomb added, “It is claimed that disease is...transmitted by so many using the same communion cup. We doubt this...” (100).

In a November 12, 1908 article titled, “Individual Communion,” David Lipscomb wrote: “Communion is a joint participation of many...(1 Cor. 10:16, 17). This all means there was a joint partaking...of the body and blood of Jesus.... ‘Individual’ means each separately eats or communes with himself.... The idea of oneness is destroyed.... Individual communion cups means each one communing by himself and with himself, a joint participation all to himself and with himself...” (7).

David Lipscomb’s February 3, 1910 article, “Individual Communion Service,” posted a piece by the *Journal and Messenger*: “An advertisement of an ‘individual communion service’ says its use ‘has increased the attendance at the Lord’s Supper in thousands of churches.’ We can only say: The Lord have mercy on the nominal Christian who stays away from the Lord’s Supper because of a common cup on the table” (137).

Lipscomb then added: “.... The disciple who fails to commune because he has not the individual communion cup thinks more of the outside than he does of the inside. Such disciples strain at gnats and swallow camels. Such conduct calls to mind the...words of Christ: ‘.... Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.’ (Matt. 23:25-26.) Some people see themselves so prominently in all they do that they can never see Christ” (137).

In his July 6, 1911 article, “Individual Communion Set,” David Lipscomb fielded a question from J. B. White of Florence, AL.

After writing out the passages that address the Lord's Supper, Lipscomb wrote: "...Do not all these accounts indicate that all participated in partaking of the loaf and cup as indicative of the union with one another in Christ?... Does not the individual partaking destroy this idea of oneness in Christ and break the fellowship of Christians one with the other? God's ordinances and appointments all point to and encourage oneness...in Christ. Man's ordinances separate and destroy this oneness. Jesus instituted this joint fellowship in the loaf and the cup.... Why should it be changed?.... The ground on which the plea for the individual service is claimed is that it avoids disease.... Obeying God will bring no evil to man, temporal or spiritual" (729-30).

In a July 27, 1911 article titled "Individual Communion Service," Lipscomb responded to a letter defending individual cups from C. E. Holt by quoting 1 Corinthians 10:16-17. Lipscomb then added, "...This was a communion with one another in the body of Christ. A communion is 'a joint intercourse between two or more persons in a service.' To destroy the union in the service is to break up the communion. It is a joint union between them in remembering the Lord. *The Revision* gives 'a participation in' as a marginal reading. Macknight translates it: 'A joint participation.' Coneybeare translates it: 'We are partakers in the blood and body of Christ.' ...Let us change all else, but keep God's appointment as he delivered it, and he will keep us soul and body" (812-813).

The arguments presented by McGarvey, Granville Lipscomb and David Lipscomb in the *Gospel Advocate* in opposition to individual loaves and cups are worthy of cautious reflection. The fact that David Lipscomb hesitatingly withdrew his opposition in his later days, under what appears to be considerable pressure, does not lessen the force of the arguments he presented repeatedly and publicly beforehand.

Endnotes

¹ Not real name.

² The Scriptures never caution believers about any of the more common human concerns of germ avoidance, large assemblies or abbreviated services.

³ NRSV, The Living Bible, Emphatic Diaglott, Goodspeed NT, Montgomery NT, International Standard Version (2008), plus marginal note in ASV.

⁴ For example, 29 translations render “one bread” (KJV) as “**one loaf**” (1 Corinthians 10:17)—*Contemporary English Version*, *Darby Bible Translation*, *Emphatic Diaglott*, *God’s Word Translation* (1995), *Goodspeed New Testament*, *International Standard Version* (2008), *Jay Green Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, *James MacKnight Literal Translation of the Apostolic Epistles*, *Living Oracles*, *Montgomery’s NT*, *New American Bible*, *New Century Version*, *New Living Translation* (2007), *New English Bible*, *NIV*, *New International Reader’s Version*, *New World Translation*, *Olaf M. Norlie NT*, *The Living Bible*, *The Message*, *Today’s English Version*, *Today’s New International Version* (2005), *The New Jerusalem Bible*, *The Revised English Bible*, *The Revised Standard Version* (1946), *Word Pictures in the NT* by A. T. Robertson, *Worldwide English Version*, *Word Studies in the NT* by M. R. Vincent, *World English Bible* (WEB) (See *Biblios.com* for several translations.)

⁵ From Stone’s article on Lord’s Supper: “See Matthew 14, 17, 19 Mark. 6; 33, 44, 52, Luke 9, 13. Matthew 15.24, 36.-16, 19, Luke 11, 5, John 6, 8, Mark 8, 14 &c” [sic].

⁶ A copy of this patent is available upon request.

⁷ Source: *The Christian Work: Illustrated Family Newspaper*, Volume 57, 531

http://books.google.com/books?id=GYFPAAAYAAJ&pg=PA531&dq=new+york+times+1894+Bedford+avenue+baptist+church+individual+cup&hl=en&ei=LqNvToWIJdKgtgefyN3_CQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&sqi=2&ved=0CCsQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false (accessed Oct. 13, 2011).

⁸ Source: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F10B14FB3A5515738DDDA90B94D1405B8485F0D3> (accessed October 13, 2011). If a link fails to open for this or any of the following *New York Times* articles, go to: <http://query.nytimes.com/search/query?srchst=nyt&&srcht=a&srchr=n#top> Select: **NYT Archive 1851-1980**; in **Your Search**: window type: “individual communion cups”—click **Search** (archive of this and other articles on this topic).

⁹ A bracket [] within quotes indicates the words enclosed were

not in the original quote.

¹⁰Source: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F30E12FD3B5E10738DDDA0994DB405B8585F0D3> (accessed October 13, 2011).

¹¹ Source: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=F50713FE355911738DDDA00894D9415B8585F0D3> (accessed October 13, 2011).

¹² Source: <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=FA091EF93E5A16738DDDAF0894D9405B8685F0D3> (accessed October 13, 2011).

¹³ For more about "siphons" and "scallops" see <http://www.letthebiblespeakonline.org/divine.pdf> (pp. 31-32, accessed December 7, 2011).

¹⁴ See also: Phillips, 1970, 2007; Wade, 1986; Wade, 2006.

¹⁵ "People who sip from the Communion cup don't get sick more often than anyone else," said Anne LaGrange Loving, a New Jersey microbiologist who has conducted one of the few studies on the subject. "It isn't any riskier than standing in line at the movies." *LA Times*, January 01, 2005|William Lobdell | Times Staff Writer. <http://articles.latimes.com/2005/jan/01/local/me-beliefs1/2> (accessed November 10, 2011).

¹⁶ As translated in NKJV, NASB, *Weymouth New Testament*, TCNT, *Montgomery New Testament*, NAS95, NRSV.

¹⁷ As translated in NKJV, NASB, *Weymouth New Testament*, TCNT, *Bible in BasicEnglish*, NIV, NAS95, NRSV.

¹⁸ "All this establishes our statement that in a *Metaphor*, the two nouns (or pronoun and noun) are always literal, and that the figure lies only in the *verb*" (Bullinger, 1968, 740, italics in original).

¹⁹ republished by the Gospel Advocate Company in 1949, 1954.

²⁰ [sic] indicates the passage appears exactly as in the original.

²¹ For a more thorough explanation of the use of metonymy in the Lord's Supper and a discussion of other objections to one loaf and one cup in the Lord's Supper, see "Debate Notes" by George Battey." (Listed in Sources below.)

²²http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/postglobal/islamsadvanc e/2008/09/saudi_textbooks_teach_students.html (accessed December 11, 2011).

²³ i-Gk=singularity is implicit in Greek. i-Gk signifies that “this word was added by the translators for better readability in the English. There is no actual word in the the Greek text” for this word. However, it is important to recognize that the Greek scholars who translated the text were convinced that the idea communicated by the English word was implicit in the original text.

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- Sermon #842 Individual Cups: From God or Man?—Part 2
- (All these sermons are by Brett Hickey and are available in audio, video, and manuscript format at *LetTheBibleSpeak.com*.)

Afterword

Many who read this booklet may have come to believe that *bread* does not mean *bread* and *cup* really does not mean *cup*.

After examining (or re-examining) the evidence, you may feel much like the villagers in Han Christian Anderson's classic tale (1914), *The Emperor's New Clothes* or like the noble Bereans. You, like they, may know deep in your heart, after "searching the Scriptures," that what we are being told by the "experts" just is not so. But now you may feel confused.

False teachers, deceitful workers, even people who have deceived themselves can often sound convincing. Perhaps this fact is the reason the Scriptures caution us:

- "But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3).
- "Do not be deceived..." (1 Corinthians 6:9; 15:33; Galatians 6:7; James 1:16).
- "...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

There is tremendous social pressure to conform. But may Paul's words embolden all who seek truth. "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

God's word is not all that complicated. In our hearts we know what it says, especially about the Lord's Supper.

May we all have the clarity of perception, as the child in the story, to help us *see* what is true, regardless of the potential embarrassment or rejection by prominent people in the community (or church), possibly even family. Perhaps this idea is implied in Jesus' teaching: "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:4).

God help us to be courageous lovers of peace—and truth!

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The churches of Christ presenting this booklet make up a nondenominational, world-wide, brotherhood of congregations striving to duplicate the teaching and practice of the church of the New Testament. We believe that the key to answering Jesus' prayer for unity (John 17:17-21) requires:

- 1) placing the pursuit of truth above all secular concerns (Proverbs 23:23; John 8:32),
- 2) recognizing that the New Testament Scriptures hold the key to glorifying God to the greatest extent in worship and daily living (2 Timothy 3:16-17),
- 3) a genuine concern for the spiritual welfare of our fellowman (Matthew 22:34-40; 28:19-20), and
- 4) a willingness to discuss our differences with others with humility and respect (Isaiah 1:18; Ephesians 4:15).



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