

Cup of Blessing or Demons?

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1 Corinthians 10:15-22

INTRODUCTION

1. Please take God's Word and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 10.
2. In our last study, we looked at verse 15 which says, "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry."
3. As we looked at this verse, we saw the reason for it in the word "therefore."
4. Paul had just given the Corinthians examples of abusing their liberty by listing the sins Israel committed and were severely disciplined by the Lord.

5. So, since they craved after evil things, they were to learn from Israel's lesson and run fast from idolatry.
6. God forbids idolatry.
7. It is an abomination to Him.
8. It is rebellion against Him.
9. It brings His wrath and it is a work of the flesh.
10. So there is nothing good in it or that comes from it.
11. We further defined idolatry as more than bowing down or burning incense to a physical image. Idolatry is having any false god—any object, idea, philosophy, habit, occupation, sport, or whatever that has one's primary concern and loyalty or that to any degree decreases one's trust in and loyalty to the Lord. (MacArthur)
12. Now as he continues in verses 15-22, he gives 3 examples of participation in feasts: the Lord's Supper, the feasts of Israel, and the pagan festivals.
13. So as speaking to "wise men" (phronimos), "prudent," "sensible" (BDAG), "wise with understanding" (Louw-Nida),

"intelligent" (ANLEX), he tells them to "judge what I say."

14. The aorist κρίνατε asks for a definite and a final decision, one that, once made, need not be made again. (Lenski, R. C. H. The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963. Print.)
15. Paul tells them if they listen carefully, they will by the Spirit be able to judge correctly what he says. His exhortation is simple, scriptural, and logical. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)
16. In verses 15-22 Paul talks about "sharing" or "participating" 4 times and partaking 2 times.
17. This is the Greek word koinōnia which means to have in common, to participate with, or to have partnership.
18. The same Greek word is used of our being "called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9), of the "fellowship of the Spirit" (Phil. 2:1), of the "fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. 3:10), and of "participation in the support of the saints" (2 Cor. 8:4). (MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur

New Testament Commentary.)

19. We either share, have in common, participate with or have partnership with Christ or demons.
20. This entire section takes the Corinthians back to where he began in chapter 8 with eating meat sacrificed to idols.
21. In this section he is going to show how inconsistent it is to share or participate in a pagan feast and share or participate in the Lord's Supper and show how sharing in the feasts is becoming one with Christ or one with demons.
22. Notice the first example...



Sharers in the Communion (vv.15-17)

A. THE CUP OF BLESSING (V.16A)

1. Albert Barnes says, "The design of this verse and the following verses seems to be, to prove that Christians, by partaking of the Lord's supper, are solemnly set apart to the service of the Lord Jesus; that they acknowledge him as their Lord, and dedicate themselves to him, and that as they could not and ought not to be devoted to idols and to the Lord Jesus at the same time, so they ought not to participate in the

feasts in honour of idols, or in the celebrations in which idolaters would be engaged." (Barnes, Albert. Notes on the New Testament: I Corinthians. Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.)⁰

2. Paul begins with two questions. The first is, "Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ?"
3. The "cup of blessing" is a translation of the name *cós haberachah* (comp. Ps. 116:13), over which a blessing was invoked by the head of the family after the Passover.
4. According to the Mishnah (the writings of Jewish oral traditions also known as the oral Torah - Wikipedia), this is a prayer of thanks in which the speaker blesses God.
5. In a Jewish household the standard form would often be "Blessed be You, Lord God, King of the Universe, who created the fruit of the vine" (Mishnah Berakōth 6:1). (Thiselton, Anthony C. First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006. Print.)
6. The name is here transferred to the chalice in the Eucharist, over which Christ "gave thanks" (ch. 11:24; Matt. 26:27). (Spence-Jones, H. D. M., ed. 1 Corinthians. London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909. Print. The Pulpit

Commentary.)

7. In the celebration of the Passover in the Passover meal, four cups of wine were used, and the phrase may perhaps identify the third of these cups. (Thiselton, Anthony C. *First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006. Print.)

8. "The blood of Christ" is a reference to the death of Christ.

B. THE BREAD WHICH WE BREAK (V.16B)

The second question Paul asks continues in verse 16, "Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?"

1. As we eat the bread, we say, in effect, that we have all been saved through the offering of His body on the cross of Calvary and that we are therefore members of His body. (MacDonald, William. *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.)

2. In like manner it is implied that if Christians should partake with idolaters in the feasts offered in honour of idols, that they would be regarded as partaking with them in the services of idols, or as united to them, and therefore such participation was improper. (Barnes, Albert. *Notes on the*

New Testament: I Corinthians. Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.)_

C. WE ARE ONE BODY (V.17)

1. Paul shows the unity we have with Christ in the Communion by the word "one" in verse 17.
2. He uses it "one" 3 times.

He says, "Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread."

3. There is a single, common ground of unity, a single basis of salvation, namely, the “broken” body of Christ, represented by the bread which we break (v. 16b), and ... the shared blood of Christ (v. 16a) (Thiselton, Anthony C. First Corinthians: A Shorter Exegetical and Pastoral Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006. Print.)
4. The word "partake" (mertechomen, pres.act.ind.) means to "share, participate"
5. We are all one society; united as one, and for the same object. Our partaking of the same bread is an emblem of the fact that we are one. (Barnes, Albert. Notes on the New

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Sharers in the Altar (v.18)

A. LOOK AT THE NATION ISRAEL (V.18)

"Are they not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?"

1. In the OT sacrifices, the offering was in behalf of all who ate (see Lev. 7:15–18).
2. By such action, the people were identifying with the offering and affirming their devotion to God to whom it was offered.
3. Paul was, by this, implying how any sacrifice made to an idol (see vv. 7, 14) was identifying with and participating with that idol.
4. It is completely inconsistent for believers to participate in any such worship (v. 21). (MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. The MacArthur Study Bible. electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.)

B. IDOLS ARE NOTHING (V.19)

"What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?"

1. An idol in and of itself is nothing
2. To sacrifice to an idol is sacrificing to nothing
3. Paul is alluding back to 8:4-6 which says, "1 Corinthians 8:4-6 (NASB) Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, 6 yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.

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Sharers in Demons (vv.20-22)

A. GENTILES SACRIFICE TO DEMONS (V.20)

"No, but I say that the things which Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers with demons."

1. Idols may be nothing to Christians but they are to pagans
2. They believed they were gods
3. They had temples to Aphrodite with 1000 male & female prostitutes
4. The temple of Poseidon, who was the ruler of the sea and maker of earthquakes
5. They had one temple that was to "all the gods" (pantheon)
6. They worshiped the god Apollo, Hermes, Isis, Venice, Demeter and Asklepios who was the god of healing (<https://www.padfield.com/2005/corinth.html>)

B. CHRISTIANS PARTAKE OF CHRIST (VV.20-22)

Paul says at the end of verse 20 through verses 22, "I do not want you to become sharers of demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we?"

1. From God's viewpoint, it is irreconcilable to participate in the Lord's table and the table of demons (pagan festivals) because Christians would show solidarity with demons by

doing so. (Richison, Grant. Verse by Verse through the Book of 1 Corinthians. Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2007. Print.)

2. Idolatry is inconsistent, demonic, and offensive to the Lord.
3. It will provoke the Lord to jealousy.
4. God has holy jealousy because He will have no competition.
5. That is why God said Israel “made Me jealous with what is not God; they have provoked Me to anger with their idols” (Deut. 32:21).
6. The Lord deals strongly with idolatry because nothing is more offensive to Him than idolatry, which is the most detestable sign of unbelief.
7. Because Judah had gone “after other gods to serve them and to worship them, ... ‘behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I will send to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land, and against its inhabitants, and against all these nations round about; and I will utterly destroy them, and make them a horror, and a hissing, and an everlasting desolation’ ” (Jer. 25:6, 9).

8. John pictures an even more terrible judgment. “But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8).
9. Paul’s question, We are not stronger than He, are we? obviously is rhetorical.
10. Does the idolater foolishly think he is more powerful than God?
11. God will not allow idolatry to go unpunished, and no one can escape. Even His own children will not escape His severe chastisement if they persist in worshiping any sort of idol.
12. Some of the Corinthians had done that and had paid with their health, or even their lives (1 Cor. 11:30). (MacArthur, John F., Jr. 1 Corinthians. Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

APPLICATION

1. 1 John 5:21 says, "Little children, guard yourselves from idols."
2. See why?

3. We don't want to put anything or anyone before God and it become an idol.
4. We worship the One true God.
5. And when we share in the Communion, we are sharing in the blood and body of Christ.
6. We are identifying with Him.
7. And as we do this as a church, we are illustrating our unity as One.
8. It is no coincidence that we are sharing in the Lord's Supper this morning.
9. As we do, take into mind all that we have learned today.
10. And as we pray together, worship Christ who died in your place and provided you with forgiveness of all your sin.
11. If you're here today without Christ, repent and receive Him right now.
12. Let's pray.