

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## The “One Cup” churches of Christ

(Jerry Fite)

There are “churches of Christ” who believe the fruit of the vine should be partaken from “one cup”. When Jesus was instituting the Lord’s supper in the presence of His apostles, “*He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave to them; and they all drank of it*” (Mark 14:23). These churches think drinking of the cup is therefore the pattern to follow. Congregations drinking from multiple containers are perverting the pattern of our Lord, and therefore are sinning.

Following the pattern for the Lord’s Supper is important. For example, Jesus takes the bread first and blesses it, before giving thanks for the cup. The apostles eat the unleavened bread first, thinking of Jesus’ body which is offered for them, and then partake of the cup, thinking of Jesus’ blood which is shed for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:17-20, cf. I Corinthians 11:23-26). Honoring the definite pattern, all bless and partake of the bread first, and then give thanks and partake of the cup.

Luke reveals a detail that we must consider. Luke records

Jesus taking a cup as He begins to initiate the Lord’s Supper and commands His apostles to “*divide it among yourselves*” (Luke 22:17).

How did the apostles do this? We are not told. But we know from all accounts they did not drink the cup before eating the bread. After he told them to divide the cup among themselves, Jesus blessed the bread exhorting the apostles to partake in remembrance of Him. Then the apostles partook of the cup (Luke 22:19-20). Unless we think they divided the cup by sipping, but before swallowing, they forced the juice to the side of the mouth as they ate the bread, and then swallowed the fruit of the vine; we might consider something more probable. They could have easily divided the cup into separate containers. Jesus then instituted the Lord’s supper by blessing the unleavened bread reminding all that it is His body given for them, and after eating the bread, He gave thanks for the fruit of the vine as it reminds all of the blood which is poured out for them (Luke 22:19-20).

Drinking “of the cup”, was drinking “of this fruit of the vine” (Matthew 26:29). This is a

common figure of speech called *metonymy*. For example, How did Jacob, his sons, and his cattle all drink “of the well” (John 4:12)? Jacob, his sons and cattle did not place their lips on the well, but they all drank the contents of the well. When Paul says, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till He come when you “*eat the bread or drink the cup*” (I Corinthians 11:26); he is naming the cup, when its contents is to be understood. How do you drink the cup? You drink the contents of the cup.

The “one cup” churches of Christ really inject three elements into the Lord’s supper: The bread, the fruit of the vine, and the cup. Distinguished from the fruit of the vine, the cup is the new covenant. However, Jesus instituted the Lord’s supper with two elements, not three: the bread which represents His body, and the fruit of the vine which represents his blood. The fruit of the vine is poured out for not only the remission of sins, but is poured out to ratify the new covenant. In demanding “one cup” the “one cup” churches of Christ bind where God has not bound. They fail to acknowledge that respecting figures of speech is necessary if we are to properly understand scriptural Truth.