

# GLAD TIDINGS

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

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## THE CUP IN THE LORD'S SUPPER

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Jesus took “a cup” and instructed his disciples to all drink “of it” (Matt. 26:27). Paul reminded Christians that in the Lord’s supper when they “drink the cup” they proclaim the Lord’s death. (I Corinthians 11:26).

Some brethren believe we should use only one cup in dispensing the fruit of the vine in the Lord’s supper. In their minds, we sin every time we partake of the Lord’s supper using multiple containers. This is a serious charge, and must be soberly considered.

Since drinking a literal container is an absurd interpretation of “drinking the cup”, most recognize that a figure of speech is being used in reference to the Lord’s supper. It is not a *synecdoche*, the whole put for the part that each participant is drinking, for the “amount” being consumed is not the point of emphasis. Rather, the figure of speech is *metonymy*—the container named when the contents, that which one is to drink, is clearly understood.

Yes, some will say, but they still all drank from the cup. Drinking “from” or “out of”

something can still emphasize the contents. For example, the Samaritan woman referred to Jacob, “who gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his sons, and his cattle” (John 4:11). Is the emphasis upon the container, the well? If so, did Jacob, his sons, and his cattle all put their lips to the well’s opening and drink? They all drank “from” or “of it”. No, the emphasis is still upon the contents of the well. They all drank from the contents of the well—the water.

Is the action to “divide the cup” only scripturally done by “drinking it”? When Jesus began to institute His memorial supper, he “received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I shall not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come” (Luke 22:17-18). If “divide” means they “drank it”, then they partook of the fruit of the vine before they partook of the bread, for the cup is divided before He takes the bread in verse 19. Or, did they drink the cup and hold it on one side of their mouth, then take the bread and eat it, and then swallow the fruit of the

vine?

It can be logically inferred, if not necessarily so, that disciples in following the Lord’s command, divided the cup of blessing, which was the third cup of the Passover feast, into their own cups. Then, in the order the other writers (Matthew, Mark) give, Luke indicates they partook of the bread first, and then the fruit of the vine, which they had already divided among themselves in their own cups.

When Jesus says “*this cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you*” (Luke 22:20), He is not setting forth the “container”, by itself, as representing the “new covenant”, as some teach. For even in this passage, the emphasis is upon the ratifying blood of the new covenant, represented solely by the “contents” of the container (Luke 22:20). Needless division exists because some are determined to have three signifying elements in the Lord’s supper, the bread, the fruit of the vine, and the cup or vessel. Jesus only authorizes two: the bread and the fruit of the vine.