

What Does 1 Cor 10:15-22 Teach About The Lord's Supper (Part II)?

I. Review.

A. The question.

1. We have been considering the question "What does 1 Cor ...?"
2. The reason why I felt it would be helpful is that just recently various points have been made about the Lord's Supper based upon this passage. I thought it would be helpful therefore to look at the passage and see whether these assertions are justified.
3. I pointed out that before we can determine what they teach us today we must find out what was being taught to the Corinthians then!
4. Chapter 10 completes a discussion which began in chapter 8 concerning the eating of meat offered to idols (8:1, 4, 13).
 - a. Some Corinthian Christians, knowing that an idol was nothing (8:4), felt it was harmless to go into an idol's temple and eat (10). In chapter 8 he addressed the trap that this behaviour might present to the weak brother who did not have this understanding (8-12).
 - b. Chapter 10 comes at it from the standpoint that eating meat in an idol's temple was something that was wrong in itself.

B. An outline of Chapter 10.

1. 1-14. A warning against apostasy but particularly a warning against apostasy in these circumstances where the temptation was to eat meat in these pagan places of worship.
2. 15-22. Presents the other consideration – that eating meat in an idol's temple was inherently wrong, the climax being reached in vs. 21-22.
3. 10:23-11:1. Other situations that might involve meat sacrificed to idols.

II. The Answer To The Question.

A. The principle message of the passage.

1. This concerns not the Lord's Supper but the propriety of eating things offered to idols. In these particular verses Paul argued the sinfulness of doing such in an idol's temple based upon the significance of the Lord's Supper and the acknowledged benefits that had once been enjoyed by those who ate the Mosaic sacrifices.
2. Assuming the foregoing to be correct, the primary lesson does not directly address us inasmuch as we are not exposed to this particular temptation.

B. Are the stances cited justified on the basis of inference? These verses definitely do not require them by direct statement or command!

1. Stance one: It is a demonstration of unity or "oneness" between the brethren. Do we fail to express brotherhood unity by drinking from more than one cup or eating from more than one loaf? Is this a necessary inference/inescapable conclusion to be drawn from this passage? Remember that the question is not whether this concept is taught elsewhere but whether it can be sustained from this text. Time allows me to look at only one quote for each.
 - a. "Unity is such a high priority for Jesus, and it must be for us as well. Perhaps the greatest opportunity we have to show we share the Divine priority for unity is in how we observe the Lord's Supper. 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."

b. Must we infer from the quoted text (bearing in mind Paul's argument to the Corinthians) that the Holy Spirit's message to the assembled congregation is to share one loaf when observing the Lord's Supper? No,

- 1) We have already noted the better translation - "seeing that there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body".
- 2) Paul's point is not the importance of a single loaf as opposed to multiple loaves. It is the single source of blessing that the loaf represents. To partake of the blessings of Christ whilst at the same time share in what the devil offers is evil.

2. Stance two: It holds that we should use only one loaf when partaking.

a. "PROP. III. - On the Lord's table there is of necessity but one loaf. The necessity is not that of a 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) Notice that Campbell makes no attempt to establish the context and predicates his argument upon the basis that Paul was dealing with the meaning of the Supper. He was not. He was drawing a lesson from its acknowledged practice and applying this to another issue.
- 2) The argument follows the wording of an inferior translation which is difficult to justify except on the basis that Paul has moved on to discuss this new subject - the significance of the Supper. There is no contextual indication that such a change has occurred.
- 3) A similar objection to this assertion applies as that stated above. The apostle is focused upon the sinfulness of eating from the Lord's Table and the table of the devil. Jesus is the one bread and we cannot partake of His blessings and have fellowship with His adversary. The two are mutually exclusive.
- 4) If the "one body" is the universal church, which it is, then many loaves are actually broken on the first day which runs counter to his argument anyway.

Final applications.

1. This passage says very little about the manner of practice of the Lord's Supper other than to say that to share in it whilst at the same time partake of the devil's table is inherently wrong.
2. When quoting any passage in a topical sermon or discussion we must not only be aware of the context ourselves but carefully spell it out to those listening. If we fail to do this any point that we might establish will be blown away by the next person who erroneously quotes the same passage to advance a contrary position!
3. When trying to work out God's will in a matter. We can't take short-cuts and think we know the context of each passage we turn to - we must re-examine it and be sure.