

BAPTIST ALTERNATIVES TO CONTEMPORARY ECCLESIOLOGY

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Philip R. Bryan, Ph.D.

Thursday Afternoon

COMMUNION AND THE BODY OF CHRIST

The Supper Is For Communion, Not For Salvation

Introduction. -- Paul's discussion of the Lord's Supper is especially crucial to the present study.

(1) The Lord's Supper is one of the two ordinances given to the church. (2) Paul uses both of the expressions "*koinonia*" and "body of Christ" in his discussion of the Supper.

I. The General Context of Paul's Discussion

1. Paul's discussion of the Supper is limited to 1 Corinthians 10 and 11; perhaps a reference also in 1 Corinthians 5.
2. The larger problem with which Paul is dealing in 1 Cor 8-13 is the responsibility of members one toward another (cf. 8:9-13; 10:23f.; 11:22; 12:12-26; 13).
3. As it has been said, "indeed to eat and drink not discerning the Lord's body is to comport oneself in the Gathering oblivious of the needs of one's brother, that is, one's fellow member in the one body" (Stuart Currie).

II. A Warning Against Sacramentalism

1. In 1 Cor 10:1-13, Paul warns that the fact that one has been baptized and has eaten the Lord's Supper is no guarantee of salvation.
2. Probably he is combating a form of sacramentalism at Corinth.

III. A Warning Against Idolatry

1. Closely related and probably stemming from the warning in w. 1-13 is a warning against idolatry, vv. 14-22.
2. Paul uses the Lord's Supper as an example of why idolatry is wrong.

3. He shows that one cannot have fellowship (*koinonia*) with God's people as represented in the Lord's Supper and also have fellowship with the worshipers of demons.
4. Even these verses, however, should be interpreted in the light of his subsequent discussion in chapter 11 and vice versa.

IV. A Suggested Translation

1. The following translation is suggested by the author: 1 Cor 10:16-21.
 - (16) Is not [emphatic] the cup of (the) blessing [emphasis on "cup"] which we bless a sharing [*koinonia*] of the blood [genitive case] of Christ? Is not [emphatic] the loaf which we bless [emphasis on "loaf"] a sharing [*koinonia*] of the body [genitive case] of Christ?
 - (17) Because [there is] one loaf, we, the many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.
 - (18) Look at Israel according to [the] flesh -- are not the ones who eat the sacrifices sharers [*koinonoi*] of the altar [genitive case]?
 - (19) What then am I saying? That food offered to an idol is anything? or that an idol is anything?
 - (20) To the contrary, [I am saying this] because what things the pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons [emphatic] and not to God, and I do not wish you to become sharers [*koinonoi*] of the things [ton] of demons [genitive case].
 - (21) You cannot drink a cup of [the] Lord and a cup of demons. You cannot partake of [or, from] a table of [the] Lord and a table of demons.
2. This translation attempts to translate *koinonia* and *koinonoi* (the plural of *koinonos*, see lecture two) consistently, as well as the words in the genitive case ("of") immediately following them. Most English translations neglect this.

V. Some Observations and Conclusions

1. The *koinonia* (sharing) is with one another -- not a sharing **in** or **with** God.
2. They are sharing the meal, a meal which is eaten "in remembrance of me" (11:24-25).
3. Significant meaning in verse 17.
 - a. Is it a parenthesis in which "body" has a different meaning from verse 16? Even if it is parenthetical, it anticipates Paul's subsequent discussion in chapters 11 and 12.
 - b. Is verse 17 Paul's explanation of verse 16; a common expression which Paul may be quoting? In this case the crucified and risen body of Jesus is the basis of the church, the event which created and is creating it.
 - c. Those who share together at the table of demons, as well as those who share together at the Lord's table, have a *koinonia* which ties them together. By virtue of the broken body of Christ, represented by the one loaf, the participants at the Lord's table are "one body."
 - d. Because there is "one loaf" on the table, one should recognize that there is "one body" among the *koinonoi*. Since all share the one loaf, they are *koinonoi*, they have *koinonia*, they are "one body."
4. The church can be "one body" only because of the death of Christ; and only believers can be *koinonoi* at the Lord's table.
5. The act of sharing, however, also helps strengthen the *koinonia* and unity which the

members of the Corinthian church already have (cf. chapter 12).

6. Verse 17 states, therefore, that the loaf represents the Corinthian church as "one body," and it helps produce *koinonia* in the body.

The Supper Is For Communion, Not For Division

Introduction. -- (1) The admonition here is different from chapter 10, but the underlying view of the Supper is the same: (2) Both accounts in chapters 10 and 11 should be interpreted in the light of one another.

I. A Divided Church (1 Cor 11:17-22)

1. Paul warns that their observance of the Lord's Supper ("when you meet together") is "not to eat the Lord's Supper" (v. 20) -- it is their own. What they thought was the Lord's Supper was not really the Lord's Supper!
2. This was because "when you come together as a church, ... divisions exist among you" (v. 18).
3. This is true because the one loaf represents the unity of the body. A body with divisions is no longer a body.
4. The major abuse was a disregard for the other members. They were despising the church of God and shaming some of her members (v.22).

1Cor 11:17 (KJS) Now in this that I declare [unto you] I praise [you] not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. {divisions: or, schisms} 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. {heresies: or, sects} 20 When ye come together therefore into one place, [this] is not to eat the Lord's supper. {this...: or, ye cannot eat} 21 For in eating every one taketh before [other] his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. 22 What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise [you] not. {have not: or, are poor?}

II. A Serious Result (1 Cor 11:23-32)

1. This makes the violator guilty of the body and blood of the Lord (v. 27).
2. The Supper is, after all, a memorial to the death of Christ (vv. 23-26).
3. *Koinonia* must be present and the Supper which represents the *koinonia* must be shared together also.
4. Either violation is to eat and drink unworthily -- when someone eats and drinks "not discerning the body" -- i.e., the church as body of Christ -- he is eating and drinking judgment on himself. A contempt for the members of the body (cf. 12:20-27) will bring God's judgment.
5. The expressions to "despise the church of God," to "shame those who have nothing" (v. 22), to eat or drink "in an unworthy manner" (v. 27), to "not judge the body rightly" (v. 29), and to "judge ourselves rightly" (v. 31) all apparently refer to the same, underlying concept.

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the [same] night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24 And when he had given thanks, he brake [it], and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. {in...: or, for a remembrance} 25 After the same manner also [he took] the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink [it], in remembrance of me. 26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. {ye do...: or, shew ye} 27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink [this] cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. **28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of [that] bread, and drink of [that] cup.** 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. {damnation: or, judgment} 30 For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

III. A Suggested Remedy (1 Cor 11:33-34)

1. The participants, therefore, should "wait for one another" (v.33). Failure to do this shows a lack of love and appreciation for the brethren and produces judgement and keeps the supper from being the Supper.
2. The Lord's Supper is intended to bring communion (*koinonia*) and not division in the church.
3. For the participant to "examine himself" is to recognize his part and function in the body of Christ and his responsibility to the rest of the members. These words probably should be translated "prove himself" (cf. ASV) -- from δοκιμάζω. He "proves himself" to the church. The church then makes a decision about his eating or not eating ("let him eat").

33 Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. 34 And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come. {condemnation: or, judgment}

Conclusion. -- (1) The whole discussion of the Lord's Supper, therefore, has shown that the body of Christ, as illustrated by the symbol of the Supper, is best seen in the visible, concrete relations in the church (local, of course), and not in an invisible body containing all of the redeemed. (2) I believe, therefore, that the Lord's Supper should be observed only on the local church level, with only members of that church participating. The Supper is a picture of *koinonia*; we do not have body of Christ *koinonia* with those who are not members of our own church.

The author's belief is that this presentation sets forth basic biblical ecclesiology more appropriately and accurately than that of Conventional Ecclesiology. Let the reader decide for himself. The reader is referred to the author's web page for other articles on this subject, both historical and biblical. Some of the articles contain a number of the Greek and Hebrew texts cited as evidence in this series of lectures: <http://geocities.com/prbryan.geo>