

THE MESSENGER



“... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!” Romans 10:15

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The Doctrine of Transubstantiation

by Dempsey Collins

Luke 22:19, 20 – “And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, this is my body which is given for you...”

The Roman Catholic Church insists that this statement be taken literally. Thus their doctrine of transubstantiation (trans – from prefix meaning to change; substantia – Latin, means substance; hence, change in substance) teaches that the bread and the cup become the literal body and blood of Jesus. (Catholic Catechism, Book II, Int., pg. 156-158). In doing so, they miss the true purpose of the supper, which is spiritual and certainly not a physical cannibalistic meal.

With Jesus literal body of flesh and blood whole in all its parts before them, they knew they were not eating His literal body and drinking His literal blood. This is like many other metaphorical expressions which we understand are not literal.

I Corinthians 10:4	“The rock was Christ.”	
Galatians 4:25	“This Hagar is Mt. Sinai.”	
John 15:1	“I am the vine and my Father is the vinedresser.”	
John 15:5	“Ye are the branches.”	
John 10:9	“I am the door”	
Luke 8:11	“The seed is the word of God.”	
Luke 13:31, 32	“Go tell that fox,”	etc., etc.

Hagar is not literally Mt. Sinai, or the seed a literal word. Jesus is not a literal rock, vine, door and the disciples were not eating His literal flesh nor drinking His literal blood.

The bread then represents or is symbolic of Jesus body. It was to be a memorial, a remembrance of His body torn by the nails and pierced by the spear. It did not and does not become His literal body. Surely we cannot think of any element that would better picture to us the suffering body of the Son of God on the cross than pale, lifeless, unleavened bread. Bread is grain that has been harvested, crushed and baked. It has the life taken from it. The key words in the verse in understanding the purpose of the bread symbolizing His body are: “This do in remembrance of me.”

Vs. 20 “And in the same manner, He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’” Matthew’s account reads, “And He took a cup

and gave thanks and gave it to them saying, 'Drink from it all of you, for this is My blood of the covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of many for (eis) forgiveness of sins.'" 26:28

Jesus took "the cup". In the English language, there is a figure of speech known as a metonymy, which defined means: "a figure which exchanges the name of one thing for another because of some close relationship between them. One word is replaced by another closely related to it. It appears to say one thing but its true meaning depends on its relationship to another word." Metonymy is from two words: meta – change; onoma – name; hence, a change of name. Examples:

Acts 9:4, 5	"I am Jesus whom thou persecutes"
Acts 8:28	"reading Isaiah"
Luke 16:29	"they have Moses and the prophets"
Romans 9:13 (cf. Mal. 1:1-5)	"Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated"
Matthew 10:34	"I am not come to send peace, but a sword"
John 1:29	"...which taketh away the sin of the world"
John 3:16	"...so loved the world..." "pot boiling"

The Bible is abundant with such language. Other common ways of using metonymy: "Have you read Shakespeare?" & "The mayor spoke to the city of Indianapolis"

If the above is understood, then one should have no problem understanding Jesus' language in the gospels concerning the cup involved in the institution of Jesus' memorial supper.

Matt. 26:27-29 "And He took a cup and gave thanks, and gave to them saying, 'Drink from it all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed on behalf of many for forgiveness of sins. But I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'" "Jesus took a cup" – "the cup stands by metonymy for what it contains" (Arndt & Gingrich, pg. 702).

Notice that Jesus took a cup and gave thanks. Was He giving thanks for the container or for the contents? The cup is understood to be the contents because of the relationship between the cup and the contents. It is not the container.

The disciples were then told to "drink of it". Were they to drink of the vessel? Jesus then said "For this is my blood of the covenant..." To what does "this" refer? The antecedent of "This" is "it", that is what the disciples were to drink of or from. The antecedent of "it" is "cup" which Jesus took and gave thanks for. Therefore, if the cup is taken to literally mean the drinking vessel then Jesus is saying "this", the cup or drinking vessel, "is my blood of the covenant which is shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins." How ridiculous!

Also to say that the physical cup is meant to claim that there are three elements involved in the Lord's Supper...the bread, fruit of the vine and the cup, when there are unquestionably two. The various Greek lexicons concur that the cup stands by metonymy for what it contains. "The contents of a cup", metonymy (Moulton, pg. 325). "What is in the cup" I Cor. 10:21 of Matt. 26:29 "denoting the drink..." (Thayer, pg. 510). "The contents of the cup" I Cor. 11:25 (G.K. Berry, pg. 83). "The wine" (Vincent, Vol. I, pg. 227). "A cup for the contents," Greek English Lex. (Ed Robinson). "The contents of a cup." (Thomas Green, pg. 153). "The cup stands by metonymy for what it contains (Arndt & Gingrich, pg. 702).

News and Notes:

Remember to check the prayer list for those with ongoing spiritual weaknesses and physical illnesses.

"...Pray for one another...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." James 5:16