

Can we take The Communion outside the assembly?

Please consider these three questions:

- 1) Is it acceptable to God to take the cup before the bread at the Lord's table?
Please give a reason for your response.
- 2) Is it acceptable to God to take the Lord's Supper more than once each Sunday?
Please give a reason for your response.
- 3) Is it acceptable to God to take the Lord's Supper outside the assembly?
Please give a reason for your response.

The short answers are:

- 1) No, it is scripturally unauthorized. See 'Lord's Supper from Luke 22' for more details.
- 2) No, it is scripturally unauthorized. See 'Lord's Supper,' pages 25-30 for more details.
- 3) No, it is scripturally unauthorized.

For a more detail answer and the scriptural and logical evidence to justify those answers please consider carefully the following thoughts.

Sometimes it is amazing that there seems always to be an effort on the part of some to change the simple way God established for us to worship Him. Is it thought that we can improve on God's plan? Is it thought that God does not really care how we worship? Do we think that our suggested changes will be pleasing to God? Or will our *great improvements* be consider like the change effected by Nadab and Abihu, Leviticus 10:1?

Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. 2 So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.

The source of the fire was the only change. God had NOT said "Don't use any other fire." He had simply given them His choice of source! God authorized the use of *that* fire. When they chose to use a different, unauthorized, type/source of fire, they died!

Some may think we can't or shouldn't learn anything from their experience because they lived under the old covenant, and we live under the new. Let us look closely at three scriptures: Romans 15:4, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Galatians 1:6-9 all from the NIV.

Romans 15:4,

For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Paul says Leviticus 10:1-2 was written to teach us! What should we today learn from Nadab and Abihu? Of all the hypothetical lessons possible, would anyone deny that

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ONE lesson that we should learn is that nothing "unauthorized" can be part of our worship to God? They did not add fire to the worship they just changed the type or source of the fire. Such a small change, in our eyes. But such a totally devastating result! Remember, because of God's infinite love for us His actions toward us are ALWAYS fair, loving and best! This being so, let us all learn this most important lesson from this Old Testament story. But, what does the New Testament tell us?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The scriptures will completely furnish us unto every good work. The underlined words in the last sentence are very important. Since all will agree that our worship to God is a good work, the scriptures give us ALL the information we need to worship God in a manner acceptable to Him. Anything we do in the worship assembly must find its justification in the scriptures. If the directions for our actions are not found in the scriptures, it is not authorized by the scriptures and, therefore is not a good work and must be abandoned.

Galatians 1:6-9

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7 which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! 9 As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!

To pervert the Gospel of Christ is to turn away from Christ. Any such turning away from Christ or perverting of the Gospel will lead to condemnation! This is too serious to be taken lightly. Some seem to think you can't pervert the Gospel without overtly planning to do so. You can, of course, pervert the Gospel by planning to do so, but the planning is not necessary for the evil act of perverting to be accomplished!

For four interlinears to agree on the translation of one particular word is somewhat unusual, yet in verse 7 they all choose the English word *pervert* to translate the Greek μεταστρεψαι. The four interlinears are: Berry's (1897), Marshall's (1958), Comfort & Brown (1990), and Mounce & Mounce (2008).

This fact plus all the standard English translations (ASV, KJV, NIV, NKJV, RSV, YLT) also use the word *pervert*. Let us check the definition of this English word.

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Webster's New World Dictionary gives the meaning of *pervert* as: 1 to cause to turn from what is considered right, good, or true; misdirect; lead astray; corrupt 2 to turn to an improper use; misuse 3 to change or misapply the meaning of; misinterpret; distort; twist.

With this in mind, What would be necessary to pervert the Gospel of Christ? If we were talking about the writings on man, then any change might be argued as an improvement, not a perversion. But the writings of God, through His Holy Spirit, are absolutely perfect in every way. Every word was chosen by the Holy Spirit and was/is correct in every way. Therefore, ANY change, in any way, must be a perversion to that which is perfect, therefore a sin with the consequences of *eternal condemnation* for any who effected that change.

This should give great and serious pause to any who teach the Gospel. If anything other than the pure Gospel is taught, then this teaching is a perversion of the Gospel of Christ (whether intended or not) and will bring *eternal condemnation* on any who say the Bible teaches something, when in fact it does not. Any who think they have the wisdom and authority to give a meaning to the words other than what the words actually say, in context, is walking on the brink of disaster, because we teachers will be judged more strictly, James 3:1-2. Please check the details and context of Luke 12:24 also.

It is obvious that by our speech we can pervert the Gospel of Christ. Anytime we speak the meaning of a passage and are not correct we are perverting the Gospel! We teachers must be very careful about what we say the Bible teaches, because every mistake is a perversion of the Gospel. We must study diligently, pray fervently, possess the humility to change based solely on the evidence available, else disaster will befall us when (not if) we make a mistake. Praise God for His patience and forgiveness as we grow (which implies change) in our knowledge of Him and His Word.

Can we also pervert the Gospel by our actions? We all claim to teach and practice only what the Bible teaches. This is right and good. If we practice something religiously we are saying by our actions the Bible agrees with and teaches this particular practice. If, in fact, the Bible does not overtly teach or support this practice, then we are perverting the Gospel by our actions. Any religious practice which is scripturally unauthorized is a perversion of the Gospel. To be scripturally unauthorized simply means there is no scripture which teaches, condones, supports or justifies the action.

If our actions of: 1) taking the cup before the bread at the Lord's table, or
2) taking the Lord's Supper more than once each Sunday, or
3) taking the Lord's Supper outside the assembly
are not taught, condoned, supported or justified by the scriptures, then these actions are scripturally unauthorized and are a perversion of the Gospel.

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Will Acts 20:6-7 help us to answer number three?

Acts 20:6-7,

But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days. 7 ¶ On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

They were at Troas for seven days, yet waited until the first day of the week to break bread. Why? Maybe verse 7 tells us. Their first-day-of-the-week meeting was for the purpose of breaking bread. If we are to follow their example we too must have this same purpose for our weekly assembly, i.e. to break bread. Unless we have scriptures to tell us otherwise we can only take communion in our weekly assembly. If the scriptures are complete, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, we can only take communion when the scriptures say we can. Acts 20:6-7 and 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 both specify the first day of the week as the time for taking the Lord's Supper. Without other scriptural evidence to the contrary we can only take communion on Sunday and in the assembly.

I honestly seek you questions, comments and criticisms. Post a comment on my website: cliffbaird.wordpress.com or my email address is: c2baird@charter.net