

1 Corinthians 10:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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?

Analysis

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?—Paul uses two rhetorical questions expecting affirmative answers. **The cup of blessing** (to potērion tēs eulogias, τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας) references the third cup in the Passover meal, over which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. **Which we bless** (eulougoumen, εὐλογοῦμεν) means "give thanks for" or "pronounce blessing over."

The crucial word is koinōnia (κοινωνία, "communion/participation/fellowship/sharing"). This isn't mere symbolism or memorial—it's real spiritual participation in Christ's blood and body. The cup mediates fellowship with Christ's redemptive death; the bread mediates union with His sacrificed body. This doesn't mean the elements physically become Christ (transubstantiation) but that through them believers truly commune with Christ by the Spirit.

Paul's logic: if the Lord's Supper is genuine koinōnia with Christ, then eating at idol tables is koinōnia with demons (v. 20). You can't have fellowship with both. The sacrament isn't magic, but it's not merely symbolic either—it's Spirit-empowered communion with the risen Christ. This makes idol-temple participation not just unwise but spiritually adulterous.

Historical Context

The Lord's Supper originated in Jesus's Passover meal (Luke 22:19-20). Early Christians continued this practice (Acts 2:42, "breaking of bread"). Paul's teaching on *koinōnia* was likely understood against both Jewish sacrificial meals (where eating consecrated meat established fellowship with God) and pagan cultic meals (where participants shared fellowship with the deity honored). The cup and bread are means of grace through which believers commune with Christ.

Related Passages

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does understanding communion as true "participation" in Christ's body and blood change the way you approach the Lord's Supper?
2. What does it mean practically to have "fellowship" with Christ through the sacrament?
3. How can you prepare your heart to receive communion with proper reverence and faith?

Interlinear Text

τὸ	ποτήριον	τῆς	εὐλογίας	ὃν	εὐλογοῦμεν	οὐχὶ	
G3588	The cup	G3588	of blessing	which	we bless	not	
	G4221		G2129	G3739	G2127	G3780	
κοινωνία	τοῦ	αἵματος	τοῦ	Χριστοῦ	ἐστίν	τὸν	ἄρτον
the communion	G3588	of the blood	G3588	of Christ	is it	G3588	The bread
	G2842		G129	G5547	G2076		G740
ὃν	κλῶμεν	οὐχὶ	κοινωνία	τοῦ	σώματος	τοῦ	Χριστοῦ
which	we break	not	the communion	G3588	of the body	G3588	of Christ
G3739	G2806	G3780	G2842		G4983		G5547
ἐστίν							
is it							
G2076							

Additional Cross-References

Acts 2:42 (Parallel theme): And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1 John 1:7 (Sin): But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Hebrews 3:14 (References Christ): For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

Acts 2:46 (Sin): And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

1 Corinthians 1:9 (References Christ): God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Acts 20:7 (Parallel theme): And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

1 John 1:3 (References Christ): That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:11 (Parallel theme): When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

1 Corinthians 12:13 (Parallel theme): For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

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