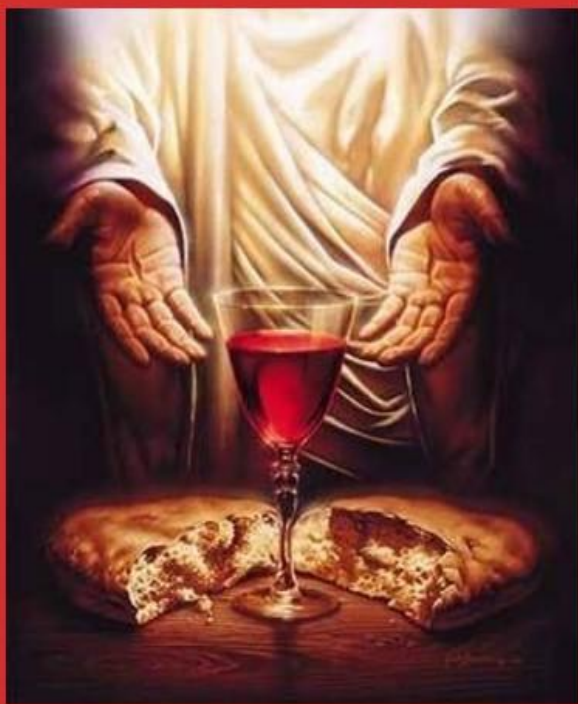


***WHO IS INVITED TO
His Table?***



by
Mark W. Fenison, ThM

Who is Invited to His Table?

Contents

Introduction

Whose Table?	7
Are the Lost Invited?	10
Are the Unbaptized Invited?	12
Are the Unchurched Invited?	14
What do the Biblical Precepts Teach?	16
Biblical Preparation	19
The Typical Significance of Leaven	24
The Corinthians Corrections	31
Evidence for Closed Communion	35
Sacrament or Ordinance?	45
The Value of a Symbol	50
The Mishnah Witness	53

Conclusion

Addendum – Objections to wine Considered

Who is Invited to His Table?

Who is Invited to His Table?

Introduction

“Prove all things; hold fast to that which is good” - 1
Thes. 5:21

Who is, and who is not qualified to partake of the Lord’s Supper, has been a heated topic of debate within professing Christendom. There are three basic positions among professing Christians; (1) Open Communion; (2) Close Communion; (3) Closed Communion.

The first opens the Lord’s Table to all who are present and wish to partake. The second closes the communion to all but Christians of like faith and order or those within their own denominational boundaries. The third closes the communion to the membership of the observing church.

1. Why is this such an Offensive Issue?

There are many reasons why some are offended by these various views. However, it would be fair to state that none practice their own particular view in order to purposely offend others. They practice it sincerely out of regard for their own personal convictions, family or church tradition.

What are some reasons why open communion advocates are offended at close or closed communion?

Some are offended because they believe that saving grace is actually and literally imparted through the elements of the Lord’s

Who is Invited to His Table?

Supper, and therefore, both close and closed communion would deny saving grace to those shut out.

Others are offended because they believe the Lord's Table should not be withheld from any professed believer, as they believe it is not a "church" ordinance but a "Christian" ordinance and therefore it should be open to all professing Christians.

Still others believe that the Lord's Supper is strictly an *individual* matter between that person and the Lord and no church has the right to refuse anyone but has only the responsibility to warn them to partake worthily.

On the other hand, advocates of close or closed communion are also offended at the practice of open communion for several reasons.

Many are offended at open communion because they believe it violates both the examples and teachings of scripture. They also believe that the typology behind the unleavened bread and wine are perverted when some, embracing another gospel, are invited to the Lord's Table. Some believe the typology of the "*one*" bread is violated when those of conflicting faith and order are invited to the table.

Many see that the New Testament consisted of only churches of like faith and order and that the ordinances were consistently observed in a church context rather than in a "Christian" context.

2. Our Approach to this Study

Some approach this subject strictly from a traditional [historical] point of view while others approach it strictly from the data

Who is Invited to His Table?

provided by the Scriptures. In secular church history anything and everything can be found and justified. However, the real issue is, what do the scriptures teach?

Traditions are valid if they are in harmony with the Word of God (Mt. 15). However, when tradition openly contradicts the Word of God, then Jesus says that the practice is “*vain*” worship before God:

“But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?.....But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” - Mt. 15:3, 9

The following study is based solely upon the explicit teachings and examples found in God’s Word. It is assumed that the reader believes that Scriptures are completely sufficient to establish all matters of faith and practice:

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.” - 2 Tim. 3:16

“To the Law and to the Testimony; if they speak not according to this Word it is because there is no light in them” - Isa. 8:20

“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.” - 1 Jn. 4:6

Acceptable traditions must be those handed down by the apostles

Who is Invited to His Table?

to the churches as found and explained in the New Testament scriptures. Professed Christians who reject Biblical based traditions are to be avoided:

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition he received of us.” 2 Thes. 3:6

Do the New Testament Scriptures provide sufficient information to define the traditions handed down to the churches by the Lord and His apostles? Do the Scriptures provide sufficient precepts and examples to guide us in determining exactly who should and who should not be invited to the Lord’s Table? We believe the New Testament is extremely clear on this subject.

Regardless of your own personal view, we cordially invite you to examine the Biblical evidences presented in the following pages.

Who is Invited to His Table?

Whose Table?

“When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s Supper.” - 1 Cor. 11:20

All Christians should be able to agree that the Table they are coming unto is the Lord’s Table. It is not my, our or your table, but the “*Lord’s*” table. Hence, it is the Lord alone who determines who is qualified to partake, and who is invited to His table. We should not invite anyone to His table He has not invited, and we should not exclude anyone from His table that He has not excluded. Agreed?

1. It is the Lord’s Table

Paul uses a special Greek term in 1 Cor. 11:20 translated “*Lord’s*.” It was a commonly used term, and understood by all citizens in the Roman Empire during the apostolic age. It was the term used especially for one special person who claimed to be both god and man, and who set apart the first Sunday of every month exclusively for all Roman citizens to worship him as “*Lord*.” It is the Greek term *kuriakos* and it referred not merely to those things that belong to Caesar but how they were to be used or observed according to his instructions.

Failure to observe his worship in accordance with his instructions often was punishable by death, imprisonment or exile. It appears that John was exiled on the isle of Patmos for failure to offer up a pinch of incense with the confession that “*Caesar is Lord*” on the *kuriakos* day set apart for that worship (Rev. 1:10). So the term *kuriakos* represented the proper observance and worship of Caesar as the god man.

Who is Invited to His Table?

However, the apostles refused to acknowledge Caesar as their god/man or “**Lord**” and gave that honor exclusively to Christ alone. Hence, both Paul and John took this term and applied it to Christ and to those things that belonged to Christ and his prescribed worship (1 Cor. 11:20; Rev. 1:10).

2. Theirs was not the “Lord’s” Supper

The Corinthians had improperly observed the Lord’s Supper. Although they supposed they observed the Lord’s Supper, Paul denied what they observed was “*the Lord’s*” (kuriakos) *Supper.*” Meaning, it was not observed according to how Christ instructed it to be observed, and thus ceased to be recognized by Christ, as His Supper. This rebuke was due to their failure to properly “*discern*” the elements used in the Supper.

*“Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink of this cup of the Lord, **unworthily**, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh **unworthily**, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, **not discerning the Lord’s body.**” - 1 Cor. 11:17-19*

As you can see, this failure to properly *discern* the Lord’s body as presented in the Supper was not taken lightly by the Apostle. He not only claimed that improper observance invalidated it, as the “**Lord’s**” (kuriakos) Supper, but brought condemnation and temporal judgments upon those who partook of it in this unworthy manner.

Would you agree that the communion table is the “**Lord’s**”

Who is Invited to His Table?

table and must be observed according to His instructions, rather than our way or your way? Would you agree that improper observance is not taken lightly by our Lord? Would you agree that failure to discern the Lord's body is a serious matter? Would you agree that the improper observance invalidates the act as the "*Lord's*" (*kuriakos*) Supper?

How would we determine what it means to partake of the Supper worthily?

Who is Invited to His Table?

Are the Lost Invited?

Since this is the “*Lord’s*” Table none should be invited but those whom the Lord invited to His table. Do we have any indications in the scriptures whom the Lord invited to His table?

“And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples.” - Mt. 26:18

The Lord never invited anyone to His table but “*my disciples.*” He never invited the lost to his table.

Those whom he invited were capable of doing it in “*remembrance of me*” - I Cor. 11:24-25.

The lost are still his enemies and have not received him by faith. They do nothing “*in remembrance of me.*”

Furthermore, Jesus was the only one that knew Judas Iscariot was a false professor (Jn. 6:64, 70-71; 13:10-11, 18), but when all the gospel accounts are carefully considered, it will be seen that Judas left immediately upon taking the sop in the Passover (Jn. 13:26-30). The Passover was divided into four divisions and each division was introduced by a cup of wine and a blessing. The sop was given at the close of the second division just before the third cup which was called the “cup of blessing” when the Lord instituted the Supper in the Passover events (see **The Mishnah Witness**).

However, even if you disagree and believe that Judas partook of the Supper, he did so at least as a *professed* believer.

Who is Invited to His Table?

Does any church have the right to invite anyone other than “*my disciples*” to His table? The lost condition violates the very symbols of the Supper.

Who is Invited to His Table?

Are the Unbaptized Invited?

*“Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, **beginning from the baptism of John**, unto that same day that he was taken up from us.....” - Acts 1:21*

*“And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers **rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.**” - Lk. 7:29-30*

As declared in our last chapter, Jesus invited only **“my disciples”** to partake of the Lord’s Supper. Jesus did not have any unbaptized disciples. Indeed, the very first *public* act of becoming a disciple was to submit to baptism. A professed believer who will not submit to baptism is in disobedience to God, in open sin, and is unworthy to partake of the Lord’s Supper. Those who reject baptism, Jesus said **“rejected the counsel of God against themselves.”**

Neither did the early churches invite any unbaptized believers to the Lord’s Table. The early churches were faithful to the Great Commission and the apostolic example:

*“**Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.**” - Acts 2:40-41*

In the Old Testament, no stranger could partake of the Passover

Who is Invited to His Table?

without first being circumcised:

"This is the ordinance of the passover: There shall no stranger eat thereof....when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner and an hired servant shall not eat thereof." - Ex. 12:43-48

Just as circumcision was a “*sign*” in the Old Testament of what a previous regenerated and justified (Rom. 4:11) condition, so baptism in the New Testament is a “*sign*” of a previous regenerated and justified condition (1 Pet.3:21). Hence, baptism is a prerequisite for admission to the Lord’s Supper as circumcision was a prerequisite for admission to the Passover.

Therefore, no unbaptized believer should be invited to the Lord’s Table.

Do we have any more right to invite to the Lord’s Table those whom the Lord did not invite? Does any church have the right to invite the unbaptized any more than the lost to His table? Both conditions violate the symbols of the Supper.

Who is Invited to His Table?

Are the Unchurched Invited?

*“Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out **among us**, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us.....” - Acts 1:21*

Take note of the precise language used by Luke. When it came to selecting another qualified person to fill the church office of apostle (1 Cor. 12:28) they were to be taken from among those who **“*companied with us all the time*”** among whom Jesus **“*went in and out*”** since the baptism of John right up to his ascension.

Luke is describing members of the early traveling church which numbered at least 120 in Acts 1:15. This is the same church Jesus gave the keys to administer discipline in Matthew 18:15-18. This is the same church He commissioned in Matthew 28:19-20. This is the same church that met in Acts 1 to fill a church office. This is the same church gathered together in one place in one accord in Acts 2:1. This is the same church the 3000 souls were **“*added unto*”** in Acts 2:40 and the same group called the “church” in Acts 2:47.

Moreover, Paul repeatedly describes the observance of the Lord’s Supper as a church gathered together in “one place.”

*“For first of all, when **ye come together in the church**...When he come together therefore **into one place**...Wherefore, my brethren, when ye **come together to eat**, tarry one for another.” - 1 Cor. 11:17,20,28*

The New Testament knows of no example of unchurched believers partaking of the Lord’s Supper.

Who is Invited to His Table?

The very symbol of the “*one bread*” or “*unleavened bread*” represents the observing congregation as a body that one sinful member can leaven the “*whole lump*” and the removal by church discipline can make that “*whole lump*” a “*new*” lump (1 Cor. 5:6-13).

Do we have any more right to invite to the Lord’s Table those whom the Lord did not invite? Have we the right to invite the unchurched any more than the unbaptized or the lost? All of these classifications violate the symbolism of the Supper, as the Supper at minimum requires a profession of salvation plus a relationship of practical unity with those that are observing the Supper.

Who is Invited to His Table?

What Do the Biblical Precepts Teach?

We have seen there are no examples in Scripture where anyone but baptized church members observed the Lord's Supper. However, some may object that silence is not sufficient to deny unbaptized and unchurched believers to the table.

This is the very same line of reasoning used by those who sprinkle, pour or immerse infants. They realize there are no New Testament examples that can be found where infants are baptized. So they reject silence as sufficient to prevent the baptism of infants.

However, just as there are precepts that condemn the practice of infant baptism there are precepts that condemn the practice of inviting the lost, the unbaptized and unchurched believers to the table.

The kind of "disciples" (Mt. 26:18) Jesus invited to the table had already been baptized and incorporated into the assembly. The Lord's Supper came afterward as an observance as church members:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. - Mt. 28:19-20

The primary verb "**teach**" in verse 19 is a translation of the Greek Aorist Active Imperative *matheteusate* which is a command (imperative mode) and means *make disciples*.

Who is Invited to His Table?

Immediately following this primary verb are three participles. These three participles modify this primary verb, and further describe how disciples are to be made. Those three participles are translated “*go....baptizing....teaching*”. They are placed in a logical and chronological order with each other and are by extension part of the command to make disciples (adverbial). The command to “*go*” is further described in Mark 16 to mean “*go preach the gospel*”, and this participle is found in the Aorist tense which assumes it has already been completed **before** “*baptizing them*”, as the participle translated “*baptizing*” is a present tense. This grammatical fact repudiates infant baptism as it requires evangelization by the gospel before baptism.

The third participle “*teaching them to observe all things I have commanded*” follows baptism and that would include teaching them how to observe the Lord’s Supper. However, in the first century, it is impossible to teach anyone how to observe anything without actually assembling together with them, just as it is impossible to baptize them without actually getting together with them and laying your hands on them. Thus the command “*teaching them*” is the command to assemble together with them as a New Testament congregation. For example, Matthew 18:15-18 cannot be observed outside the membership of the congregation. This inclusion of church membership is found in the first obedience of this commission in Acts 2:40-41

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. - Acts 2:40-41

Take note that the precise chronological order is observed in this first application of the Great Commission:

Who is Invited to His Table?

1. “*As many as received the word*” - “*go preach the gospel*”
2. “*were baptized*” - “*baptizing them*”
3. “*teaching them*” “*the same day there were added unto them...and they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine*”

Also take note of where observance of the Supper (“*in breaking of bread*” v. 42) is placed demonstrating that observance of the Supper is for “*my disciples*” and a disciple by Great Commission definition is a baptized believing church member.

The Great Commission is a command. It is a command with a prescribed order which demands that observing all things as He commanded follows salvation, baptism and addition to the congregation.

However, remember that the whole church at Corinth consisted of baptized believers and yet that alone was not sufficient for proper observance of the Lord’s Supper worthily. Hence, proper observance requires more than being a baptized believing church member. It requires practical unity with the other observers in doctrine and practice or this is “*not the Lord’s Supper.*” It requires removal of all known sin from the church body observing the Supper, as it must be observed without leaven or else it is “*not the Lord’s Supper.*” Each individual church member must deal with sin known only to them or it is “*not the Lord’s Supper*” to that individual.

These additional requirements to mere salvation fully repudiate the doctrine of *open* communion. They equally invalidate the doctrine of *close* communion.

Who is Invited to His Table?

Biblical Preparation

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” - 1 Cor. 5:6-8

We know that the Lord’s Supper is the application intended by Paul in these verses as the only Christian “*feast*” we are to “*keep*” that can be identified as “*Christ our Passover*” wherein Christ is “*sacrificed for us*” with the use of “*unleavened bread*” is the Lord’s Supper. So it is clear that Paul has the Lord’s Supper in view. However, why is Paul clothing the Lord’s Supper in the language of the Old Testament Passover?

1. House Cleaning

Paul clothed the Lord’s Supper in the language of the Old Testament Passover in order to show the church how to prepare themselves to observe the Lord’s Supper “worthily.” God commanded each family to purge out all leaven from their house in order to partake of the Passover worthily.

Ex 12:15 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread; even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

Ex 12:19 Seven days shall there be no leaven found in

Who is Invited to His Table?

your houses: for whosoever eateth that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he be a stranger, or born in the land.

In the New Testament it is the congregation that is identified as the “**house of God**” which observes “**Christ our Passover**” or the Lord’s Supper:

1 Cor. 1:2 *Unto the church of God **which is at Corinth,***

1 Cor. 3:9 *For we are labourers together with God: **ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.***

1 Cor. 3:16 ¶ *Know ye not that **ye are the temple of God,** and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

1 Tim. 3:15 *But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in **the house of God,** which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*

Therefore, the “**house**” which needs to be cleansed of leaven before partaking of the “**unleavened bread**” of the Supper is the church at Corinth.

Paul further continues to likened a known sinful member in the congregation to leaven that must be purged out before they could observe the Lord’s Supper worthily. Instead of purging him from the membership they gloried in their longsuffering.

1 Cor. 5:6 *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth **the whole lump**?*

7 ¶ *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that **ye may be a***

Who is Invited to His Table?

new lump, as ye are unleavened.

2. Purging the Lump

1 Cor. 5:7 ¶ ***Purge out** therefore the old leaven, that **ye may be** a new lump, as **ye are** unleavened. :8 *Therefore let us keep the feast, **not with old leaven**, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**

The proper church preparation to keep the Lord's Supper required cleaning out all leaven from the observing "house" which Paul now identifies with the "whole lump" that would become the "unleavened bread" to be used.

*7 ¶ **Purge out** therefore the old leaven, that **ye may be** a new lump, as **ye are** unleavened.*

Notice how Paul directly identifies the church body at Corinth to the "lump" of "unleavened" bread - "**ye may be**" and "**ye are**." When Paul says "**ye may be**" and "**ye are**" he is using the language of a metaphor which conveys representation and is the same thing as saying "*ye may represent a new lump*" and "*ye represent unleavened*" bread. Indeed in verse 8 he actually makes the transition from the properly prepared unleavened bread dough to the actual baked unleavened bread used in the Supper:

1 Cor. 5:8 ***Therefore let us keep the feast**, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; **but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.***

Hence, the "**unleavened bread**" used in the Lord's Supper represents the proper condition of the church body observing it, as

Who is Invited to His Table?

well as, symbolizing the literal body of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, they are not only a metaphorical “*house*” that must first remove all leaven in order to be prepared to observe “*Christ our Passover*” but additionally they are identified as the uncooked “*whole lump*” which has already been prepared by removal of all leaven in order to become the “unleavened bread” used in the Supper.

In this transition from a properly prepared “*whole lump*” unto the cooked “*unleavened bread*” Paul is expressing in the clearest language possible that the “*one bread*” used in the Supper has a dual application. It represents the metaphorical church body that is partaking of the Supper in addition to representing the literal body of Christ “sacrifice for us.”

1 Cor. 12:27 ¶ *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

Therefore, as the representative visible body of Christ at Corinth they must first purge out all known leaven of sin from their membership in order to “worthy” partake of the symbol of Christ’s literal body “sacrifice for us.”

The unleavened bread in the Lord’s Supper represents the affinity and unity existing between Christ’s sacrifice without sin and the public condition of the congregational body (1 Cor. 12:27 - “*ye are the body of Christ...*”) which partakes of that bread. Therefore, the observing church body must “*keep the feast not with old leaven...*”

What is the nature of the leaven that must first be removed from the observing church as a “*house*” of God so that the “*whole lump*” becomes a “new lump” worthy of the Supper as the

Who is Invited to His Table?

metaphorical “*body of Christ*”?

Who is Invited to His Table?

The Typical Significance of Leaven

1 Cor. 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul's use of *leaven* and *unleavened* has a clear application. He spells out that leaven symbolizes "*malice and wickedness*" or all that is opposite to "*sincerity and truth.*"

Paul's application is in perfect keeping with prohibition of "leaven" in the Levitical sacrifices that symbolize Christ's sacrifice as portrayed in the Passover and Supper (Lev. 2:4, 5; 6:16; 7:12; 8:2,26).

Le 2:11 No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the LORD, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire.

Paul's application harmonizes with how Christ Himself applies it in the gospel accounts:

Mt. 16:6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.....11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? 12 Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Who is Invited to His Table?

Mk 8:15 *And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.*

Lk. 12:1.....*he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

Leaven in scripture is used for false doctrine, hypocrisy, evil, division and everything contrary to righteousness. In regard to both the Passover and the Lord's Supper it has this meaning.

This should be obvious because the lamb used in the Passover was to be "*without spot or blemish*" as it represented the sinless life of Jesus Christ sacrificed in our behalf. Since the "unleavened" bread in the Supper also represents the metaphorical body of Christ partaking of it, then the condition of the church body observing it must be free from all known leaven or the church is partaking "unworthily."

Paul explicitly states that the "*whole lump*" represents the local congregational body of Christ at Corinth and to observe the Supper "worthily" they must purge out any known leaven so as to become a "new lump":

1 Cor. 5:6 *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? ¶ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.*

1. No Not to Eat with such a One:

1 Cor. 5:11 *But now I have written unto you not to keep*

Who is Invited to His Table?

company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

Paul is addressing the church at Corinth. Look at the following language in the very next verses:

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

When he tells them “*not to keep company*” with such a “*brother*” he is telling them to remove that brother from “*within*” or “*from among yourselves*” so that they do not partake of the Lord’s Supper with “*such an one.*” To be “*within*” refers to the membership of the church at Corinth. To be “*without*” is to be outside the membership of the church at Corinth.

The sins listed in 1 Cor. 5:11 are sins **known** to the congregational body prior to observing the Lord’s Supper, as they knew a fornicator was “*among them*” when partaking of the Supper (1 Cor. 5:1 “*commonly reported*”). They cannot partake of the Supper *worthily* as a church body until all such known leaven is removed as such known leaven violates the symbolism found in the bread they eat in the Supper:

1 Cor. 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Who is Invited to His Table?

2. What Kind of Leaven Invalidates the Supper

Paul is not demanding sinless perfection by the church or by individual members in order for them to partake of the Supper. He is merely demanding that all sin **known** to the church or sins **known** to the individual be dealt with prior to partaking of the Supper.

In chapter five he is commanding the observing church to remove **known** unrepentant sinners from their membership roles:

1 Cor. 5:1 ¶ *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you,.....*

1 Cor. 5:8 *Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness;....*

1 Cor. 5:11 *But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*

Notice that a “fornicator” is one but many other types of open known kinds of members that they are prohibited from eating the Supper with.

Therefore, before the church can partake of the Supper worthily it must first examine itself as a metaphorical body of Christ with all of its membership and deal with all **known** unrepentant sin.

In chapter 11:28-29 he addresses the individual member in the church and calls on that member to remove all sin **known** to themselves before participating in the Supper:

Who is Invited to His Table?

1 Cor. 11:28 *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

All **known** sin that has not been confessed and made right between himself/herself and God and between himself/herself and other participants in this Supper must first be dealt with, as the Supper manifests **practical unity** between the observers, as much as, between Christ and the observers.

3. The Leaven of Division

Cor. 11: 17 ¶ *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.*

This divided condition led Paul to claim that what they were observing could not be called the Lord's Supper (v. 20).

They were internally divided among themselves into various schisms due to differences in belief, practice and leadership but then came together to observe the Supper as though they were united as “**one bread**.”

1 Cor. 1:11 *For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.*

This is the essence of denominationalism at its root. Here is exactly how different denominations have their beginning. Internal division arises within a church and then the church splits over differences bringing into existence different kinds of

Who is Invited to His Table?

denominations believing different kinds of things.

1 Cor. 5:8 *Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

The “*unleavened*” and “*one*” bread demands **real** authentic practical unity in spirit, doctrine and practice between the observers:

1 Cor. 1:10 ¶ *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

At the very minimum this means the observers must be sufficiently united in faith and practice, so they can assemble and worship together in a true spirit of unity. If there is insufficient unity to do that, there is insufficient unity to observe the Lord’s Supper.

Hence, the Lord’s Supper cannot be properly observed by a group of believers who are **not** united in doctrine and/or practice. Hence, at the very minimum the Supper demands *close* communion if not *closed* communion. Those who practice *close* communion are united by one faith and practice although divided into separate church bodies.

The Supper demands **real practical unity** between the observers and between Christ and the observers. *Open* communion fails to obtain the unity demanded in the symbolism of the “*one*” bread used in the Supper. The bread symbolizes practical unity in regard to the essentials of real practical fellowship.

Who is Invited to His Table?

Paul did not deny they were saved people but demanded that more than mere salvation is required to properly observe the Lord's Supper worthily. Therefore, the Supper involves more than mere salvation but a properly sanctified church and individual members to observe it worthily.

Who is Invited to His Table?

The Corinthians Corrections

Chapters 5, 10 and 11 deal directly with the Lord's Supper and provide Paul's basis for asserting that their observance is not "*The Lord's* (kuriakos) *Supper*."

1. Chapter Five

In Chapter five they had not properly prepared themselves at the house of God to observe the Supper because they permitted open and known leaven in their midst. They are told what they must do first before they can keep the feast. They are told they cannot keep the feast "*with old leaven*." They must first "*purge out*" that leaven through church discipline as they are not "*to eat with such a one*" (v. 11).

7 ¶ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven,

11if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.....

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?

13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

2. Chapter Ten

In chapter ten they had member's fellowshiping with false

Who is Invited to His Table?

religions. They were attending the tables of false gods and then coming to the Lord's Table thus invalidating that observance as the Lord's Supper. Here they are told they cannot partake of the Lord's Supper with members who are attending/fellowshipping and partaking with false religions:

1 Cor.10:21 *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.*

To do so, invalidates the Lord's Supper so that "*this is not the Lord's Supper*" in God's sight as there can be no fellowship with Christ at His table with those who are also in fellowship/attendance/partaking with false religions as false religion and false doctrine have as their source "*devils*" or demons (1 Tim. 4:1b).

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; - 1 Tim. 4:1

3. Chapter Eleven

In chapter eleven they were assembling together in one place to observe the Lord's Supper but they did not speak "*the same thing*" (doctrine) because they did not share the same mind or opinion:

1 Cor. 1:10 ¶ *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*

Who is Invited to His Table?

In other words, it was like people of various denominations assembling together in a pretense of unity when in fact they were not united in doctrine or practice. This type of division invalidates the Lord's Supper as the Supper requires real practical unity between the observers to participate worthily in the Supper together.

*17 ¶ 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.*

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

*20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this **is not to eat the Lord's supper.***

So, as an assembly they were not qualified to come to the Lord's Table because practical disunity (differences in doctrine and practice) violated the unity represented in the "***one bread.***"

In addition, there are sins (leaven) that may be known only to the individual member that he/she alone must deal with or the Supper is invalidated in regard to his/her own person:

*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.

Who is Invited to His Table?

Since these sins are not known to the church, individual unworthiness does not invalidate the Lord's Supper for anyone but those individuals.

Notice that in all three chapters he addresses directly what cannot be done if the Lord's Supper is to be observed worthily by the Church and its members. Hence, more than mere salvation is required to observe Supper worthily.

Who is Invited to His Table?

Evidence for Closed Communion

Previously it has been shown by the process of elimination, and by Biblical precepts that the unsaved, the unbaptized, and the unchurched are not proper subjects for the Lord's Table. Also, it has been shown that it is a *church* ordinance rather than a *Christian* ordinance, as the “*one bread*” represents the observing metaphorical body of Christ or the church body in unity with Christ. This observing church body must also be in practical unity in doctrine and practice without openly known schisms. However, what about members of other churches which are like faith and order?

1. Proper Preparation

The “*whole lump*” represents the whole “*house*” responsible for purging out all known leaven within its boundaries. Thus, the observers are equal with the symbolism of the “*whole*” lump which is “*the house of God*” observing the Supper.

1. Because one member can leaven the “*whole*” lump - v. 6
2. Because the removal of just one member can transform the “*whole*” lump into a “*new*” lump. - v. 7
3. Because the removal of such a member is performed through church discipline - vv. 5, 11-13

Second, this “*whole lump*” is not merely equal to the “*house of God*” responsible for removing all leaven within its own boundaries, but that “*whole lump*” cleansed to be a “*new lump*” is metaphorically the “*unleavened bread*” used in the

Who is Invited to His Table?

Passover/Lord's Supper. Therefore, the "*unleavened bread*" used in the Lord's Supper represents the unity of the observing church body with the body of Christ as "*one body*."

1 Cor. 10:16.....*The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

The kind of metaphorical body represented in the Lord's Supper cannot possibly be all Christians or a universal invisible body of Christ consisting of all true believers. If that were the case then the following would also be true:

1. One sinning "*brother*" could leaven the "*whole*" universal invisible church.
2. No Christian on earth could partake of the Supper until every "*brother*" in open sin was first somehow removed from such a "*whole*" lump so that it would be a "*new*" lump.
3. The local church could remove and restore members in the Universal Invisible church by church discipline.

The only body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27) where "*all members*" can rejoice when only "*one member*" rejoices or sorrows when "*one member*" suffers is a congregational body of baptized believers who come together in one place to observe the Lord's Supper.

These characteristics equally deny that the "*whole*" lump and "*all members*" could be a mixture of members from various churches of like faith and order.

If the "*whole*" lump consisted of all churches of like faith and

Who is Invited to His Table?

order then that would allow any individual congregation to exercise discipline over the “*whole*” lump or membership of that denomination and reconstitute the membership of the “*whole*” into a “*new*” lump. The proper observers of the Lord’s Supper cannot exceed the limits of the symbolism of the “*whole*” lump. The membership of this “*whole*” lump can be changed into a “*new*” lump by discipline administered by the observing church. This eliminates *close* communion.

2. One Bread – Ch. 10

1 Cor. 10:17 *For we being many are **one bread**, and **one body**: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

Unfortunately, many read into Paul’s language post-apostolic era conditions which did not exist then.

The reader must remember that Paul is writing in a historical context where there were no competing denominations, and Christians were not separated by different faiths and practices.

His entire readership were members of the same kind of churches of like faith and order because he established them himself and taught them himself. That was his readership, and those churches exchanged his letters among themselves (Col. 4:16). What was believed and practiced by one was believed and practiced by all, as “*the faith once delivered*” (Jude 3).

His letters were written to correct any departure from what he delivered unto them, and bring them back into the unity of “*the faith*” once delivered, so that they would not be “*tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine*” (Eph. 4:14).

Therefore, when he uses the pronoun “*we*” he is not addressing

Who is Invited to His Table?

unbaptized and unchurched believers or professed Christians who would later depart from the faith. He is addressing those who were united in a common faith and practice as one kind of New Testament churches. This is a first century “*we*” and “*ye*” context.

When, and in wherever the church body observes the Lord’s Supper, “*we*” do so as “*one bread*” and “*one body*” wherein “*all*” partake within that observing church body.

Thus when he addresses the common faith and practice shared equally among New Testament Churches he uses the plural pronouns “*we*” and “*us*.”

1 Cor. 5:7.....*For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:*
8 Therefore let us keep the feast,

1 Cor. 10:16 *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?*
17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

However, when it came to the specific practice and problems of a specific congregational body he replaces “*we*” with “*ye*”:

1 Cor. 5:6 *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*
7 ¶ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.

1 Cor. 10:20 *But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.*

Who is Invited to His Table?

21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.

1 Cor. 12:27 *Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular*

Thus, when it is observed, and in whatever church body the Supper is being observed, this is how “*we*” do it as New Testament churches. Paul is referring to “*one body*” in kind, the kind that is found in the New Testament and the kind which actually observes the Supper whenever and wherever it is being observed (1 Cor. 12:27 - “*Ye are the body of Christ...*”).

Due to Post-apostolic ecclesiology and soteriology some believe the elements used in the Supper include all professed believers in all denominations solely because they are professed believers.

However, if the elements demanded only common salvation as the prerequisite to observe the Lord's Supper then why would Paul **deny** that this church full of saved people were qualified to observe the Supper worthily? He did not question their salvation but their sanctified fitness. He denied that mere salvation was sufficient to partake of the Supper worthily. There must not only be the absence of known leaven in their midst but they must exist in practical unity with those whom they are observing this Supper or they are unfit to observe this Supper.

1 Cor. 11:17 ¶ *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.

Who is Invited to His Table?

19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

20 When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.

It is true that the blood of Christ, as represented in the cup, demands that the observers share in the common salvation of the New Covenant. However, salvation is but one requirement, but not all that is required to observe the Supper worthily.

The kind of church observing the Supper is the kind that can administer church discipline so as to remove a “*brother*” from “*among you*” who is in known sin before the observing church can partake of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 5:5-13).

The “*unleavened bread*” in the Lord’s Supper typifies the kind of church body where a “*little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*” while church discipline can remove that “*little*” leaven so the “*whole*” lump membership is transformed into a “*new*” lump (I Cor. 5:6-7). This is impossible with the so-called universal invisible church. Therefore, the “*whole lump*” which “*ye are unleavened bread*” cannot possibly exceed the limits of the congregational body observing the Supper without perverting the very limits of the symbolism employed. The bread cannot be offered to more than it symbolizes. It symbolizes the congregational body observing it and their unity with Christ.

3. Observed “together in one place”

“For first of all, when ye come together in the church...When he come together therefore into one place...Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.” - 1 Cor. 11:17,20,28

Who is Invited to His Table?

The repetitive language above makes it clear that the Lord's Supper is a *church* ordinance not a *Christian* ordinance just as its additional qualifications exceed merely being a Christian.

Also, notice Paul says “*ye*” rather than “*we*.” They were to observe it “*in the church*” as opposed to their own personal houses (v. 21).

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.

The overall context makes it clear that the Lord's Supper is carefully restricted to a properly prepared local church body.

These qualified preparations to observe the Lord's Supper worthily eliminate any kind of public assembly but the New Testament congregation and its members:

1. Because the presence of a fornicating “brother” (or any other type of known sinner - v. 11) leavened the “*whole*” body preventing them from partaking worthily. This sinner is “*the old leaven*” in the church body at Corinth. Thus they failed to “*discern*” the Lord's body as represented by “*unleavened*” bread.
2. Because they were attending worship services that had demonic origin behind the doctrines and practices - 1 Cor. 10:20-21 (e.g. 1 Tim. 4:1). Thus, they failed to “*discern*” the Lord's body represented in the “*unleavened*” bread.
3. Because they were a divided body of believers (1 Cor. 11:17-18). They failed to discern the practical unity demanded as represented in “*one*” bread in the Supper..

Who is Invited to His Table?

Paul's symbolism for the observers (“*whole lump*” and “*ye are unleavened*”) cannot exceed the distribution and symbolic application of the “*one bread*” or “*unleavened bread*” used in the Supper.

4. Exceeding limits of Symbolism

1 Cor. 5:6 *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*

7 ¶ *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened*

There was a “*little*” leaven in their midst they must first “*purge out*” of their congregational house of God (described as a metaphorical “*whole lump*” of unleavened dough) so they can partake of the Lord’s Supper “*not with old leaven*” but as “*unleavened bread*.”

The immediate context makes it clear that this “*little leaven*” is the “*brother*” (v. 11) who has committed publicly known sin (vv. 1-3) concerning which Paul commands the congregational body at Corinth to turn over to Satan for discipline (v. 5, 12).

4 *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

5 *To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.....13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*

The fact that the “*whole*” lump can be leavened by a “*little*”

Who is Invited to His Table?

leaven, denies that the “*whole*” lump represents the family of God or all Christians. Also, the manner in which the “*little*” leaven is removed denies that the “*whole*” lump represents all churches of like faith and order or *close* communion. The “*whole*” lump is the congregational body at Corinth which includes this “*little leaven*” or the “*brother*” (v. 11) or “*that wicked person*” (v. 13) or “*such a one*” (v. 5) as a member of this congregational body of Christ. Removal is by church discipline and the consequence of his removal from the membership of that body is that the whole membership composition is changed to a “*new*” lump.

The Universal visible and Universal Invisible bodies of Christ concepts are full of such leavened members and these concepts are incapable of removing such members. Hence, the “*whole*” lump in this context cannot possibly represent these concepts.

As previously stated, Paul identifies this “*new*” lump with the “*unleavened bread*” used in the Lord’s Supper to show the affinity, unity and identity with the “*unleavened*” condition of the congregational body observing the Supper and the body of Jesus Christ “*sacrificed for us*” without sin.

8 *Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

Paul clearly tells his readers what “*leaven*” represents and what “*unleavened bread*” represents. Their condition as an observing body (“*whole lump*”) must harmonize with what “*unleavened bread*” represents.

The “*unleavened bread*” used in the Lord’s Supper is symbolic of the unity/oneness between Christ and the actual observing metaphorical body of Christ. This is only possible between the

Who is Invited to His Table?

members of a local congregational body of Christ. This is utterly impossible to achieve with “*the whole*” universal visible or universal invisible church concept.

Who is Invited to His Table?

Sacrament or Ordinance?

One of the most popular arguments for *open* communion is the belief that it is a *sacrament* rather than a symbolic ordinance.

The term *sacrament* comes from the Latin *sacramentum* and is found as a translation in the Latin text for the Greek term *mysterion* which is translated *mystery* in our King James Version. However, neither the term *mystery* nor the Greek term *mysterion* is ever used to describe, define, or explain the Supper or baptism anywhere in scripture.

This is an invention of Catholicism in order to express what they believe is *mysterious* about the Supper. Their *mysterious* supposition is that the bread and wine are transformed into the literal blood and body of Jesus Christ. They suppose this *mysterious* transformation conveys actual saving grace through partaking of His body and blood literally. This is what Catholics call *transubstantiation* which literally means the substance is transformed into something else. Catholics call this observance the “mass.”

Therefore, those who embrace the Lord’s Supper as a *sacrament* are offended at close or closed communion because they see it as rejecting what is necessary to obtain grace for salvation and spiritual growth.

This idea is based upon a false understanding, and misinterpretation of John 6:53-58. The whole passage from John 6:29 unto John 6:66 is about saving faith, and the metaphors used for saving faith. Jesus fully explains that eating and drinking are metaphors for partaking of him by faith (John 6:35, 47-48, 63-69).

Who is Invited to His Table?

This same mentality is behind those evangelicals who believe it can be, and should be administered outside the assembly in the hospitals and other places where believers cannot attend the church services, as though it were necessary for their salvation and spiritual growth.

However, Jesus said that “*as oft as ye do it*” you only “*shew*” forth his death till he comes again and it is to be done “*in remembrance of me*”:

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.

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.

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come. - 1 Cor. 11:24-26

He did not say, “*this do in order to be saved*” or “*in order to receive grace*” but rather “*this do in remembrance of me.*”

He did not say, “*Ye do obtain grace*” but “*Ye do shew the Lord’s death.*”

He did not command this to be done every Sunday or every service but “*as oft as ye do.*”

Failure to discern the “*Lord’s Body*” was failure to remove sin from your life before observing the Supper and thus failure to correctly “*discern*” the symbolism of the Lord’s body in the Lord’s Supper, and therefore distort that symbol.

Who is Invited to His Table?

The Roman Catholic Dilemma

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* clearly teaches that circumcision in the Old Testament is parallel to baptism in the New Testament as a sacrament:

“CIRCUMCISIONwas a sign of the covenant between God and his people Israel and prefigured the rite of Christian institution in baptism.” - p. 871

“527 Jesus circumcision, on the eighth day after his birth.....This sign prefigures that ‘circumcision of Christ’ which is Baptism” - p. 133

“1150 Signs of the Covenant....Among these liturgical signs from the Old Covenant are circumcision.....The Church sees in these signs a prefiguring of the sacraments of the New Covenant.” - p. 297

The whole soteriological structure of Roman Catholicism rests upon this premise, and if this premise is wrong the whole salvation doctrine of Rome is proven to be wrong. Indeed, the whole system of Catholicism collapses if they are wrong about sacramentalism.

Rome asserts that justifying grace, regeneration and indwelling of the Spirit of God are conveyed in baptism and maintained by the other sacraments:

“1275 Christian initiation is accomplished by three sacraments together: Baptism which is the beginning of new life; Confirmation which is its strengthening; and the Eucharist which nourishes the disciple with Christ’s Body and Blood for his transformation in Christ.” - p. 324

Who is Invited to His Table?

However, the dilemma for Rome is that Paul purposely uses circumcision in the case of Abraham in Romans 4:9-11 and denies that justification and remission of sins (Rom. 4:6-8) are received “*in circumcision*” but obtained by faith prior to, and without circumcision while Abraham was still “*in uncircumcision*.”

Since Rome claims that circumcision is parallel to baptism as a sacramental rite then Paul is completely repudiating the whole idea of sacramental salvation. Indeed, if the word circumcision were replaced with the word baptism as Rome suggests can be done then Romans 4:9-11 would read as follows:

*¶ Cometh this blessedness then upon the **baptized** only, or upon the **unbaptized** also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.*

*How was it then reckoned? when he was **baptized**, or in **unbaptism**? Not in **baptism**, but in **unbaptism**.*

*And he received the sign of **baptism**, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being **unbaptized**: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not **baptized**; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: - Rom. 4:9-11*

Their dilemma is obvious and increases with the fact that Paul sets forth Abraham as the pattern for “*all them that believe*” whether they lived before or after the coming of Christ. Thus Paul is clearly confirming the words of Peter:

To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. -Acts 10:43

The elect have always been justified by faith without connection to any divine rites. Such external rites are nothing more than an

Who is Invited to His Table?

external “*sign*” and visible “*seal*” of the imputed righteousness already received by faith in Christ.

Hence, sacramentalism is proven to be false altogether and thus the whole doctrine of Rome comes crashing down.

Who is Invited to His Table?

The Value of a Symbol?

Just because gospel ordinances (baptism, Lord's Supper) are symbolic in nature, does that reduce their significance? What is the significance of a symbol or figure?

The value or significance of a figure is found in its external form, as the form is designed to visibly convey truth(s) by its very design. Therefore, to distort or change the visible form is to distort or change the truth it was intended to convey. Hence, if it is a salvation type then the perversion or distortion of the visible form would pervert and distort the gospel truth it was designed to convey.

This is one reason why baptism must be by immersion as it is designed to be a visible form of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).

Ask Moses how serious it is to distort a gospel symbol? Paul tells us that the "**rock**" which Moses smote in the wilderness which provided Israel with water in the wilderness was a type or symbol of Jesus Christ:

And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. - 1 Cor. 10:4

Paul uses the direct language that denotes a metaphor where linking verbs are found such as **is, are, am, was**. For example, when Christ said "**I am the door....am the light of the world...am the true vine**" these all use the language of a metaphor and you simply replace the linking verb with the word "represent" and you have the true understanding of the figure of speech. So the words

Who is Invited to His Table?

“that Rock was Christ” means *“that Rock represented Christ.”*

If you will remember the story, Moses was commanded to smite the rock the first time. That symbolized Christ being smitten for our sins that we may partake of the water of life.

However, the second time he was commanded only to speak to the rock rather than to smite it. But Moses lost his temper and smote the rock two more times. For that act of disobedience he was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. Why? Because he distorted a gospel symbol and thus perverted the gospel itself, thus taught “another gospel” or a false gospel and no false gospel will obtain entrance into heaven (which the promised land was a type).

Christ was smitten by God but “once” (Heb. 10:10,14) and “once” was wholly sufficient to satisfy all of God’s demands for eternal life (symbolized by the water from the rock). Smiting the rock repeatedly symbolized Christ being recrucified over and over again and thus put Christ to open shame (Heb. 6:6).

That is precisely what Mass is all about. It is the denial that his death on the cross was totally sufficient for our salvation but rather in addition to the cross one must partake of an external rite that provides the literal body and blood repeatedly over and over again to obtain what was finished and completed by Christ’s death and resurrection “once” for all who believe.

How can a gospel type be perverted and how serious is it to pervert a gospel symbol?

The gospel type can be perverted by (1) those who participate in it; (2) by the purpose for participating in it; (3) by changing its visible form or its revealed specifications.

Who is Invited to His Table?

For example, the gospel is perverted in baptism when it is administered to the wrong candidate, for the wrong purpose by the wrong mode.

The Lord's Supper provides a type of salvation and several types of practical sanctification. The cup provides a type of the Lord's blood for remission of sins while the bread provides several types dealing with practical sanctification. The "unleavened" provides a type of removal of sin. The fact it is "*one*" bread provides a type of unity without schism with Christ among those observing it. Remember mere salvation is insufficient to observe the Lord's Supper worthily because the Corinthians were redeemed persons but still unfit to observe the Lord's Supper.

When a church opens the Lord's Supper to the lost, unbaptized, unchurched, public sinners or those who are not in practical unity with the observing church they fail to properly "*discern*" the types used in the Supper and thus pervert the truths which those symbolic elements are designed to convey.

Who is Invited to His Table?

The Mishnah Witness

Mt. 26:18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. 19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

The New Testament provides the historical background for the institution of the Lord's Supper. It was instituted during the Passover Supper with the materials normally found in the observation at the time of Christ.

The Jews have preserved for us their traditional practice in what is called *The Mishnah*. *The Mishnah* contains what was formerly called the oral traditions of the elders. The word *Mishnah* is derived from the Hebrew root *shamah* meaning *repeat*. These are the traditions that the strict Jew observed in the first century and the strict orthodox Jew still observes today. In regard to the Passover Supper the Mishnah says:

On the eve of Passover [from] close to [the time of] the afternoon offering, no one must eat until nightfall.

Even the poorest person in Israel must not eat [on the night of Passover] unless he reclines.

And they must give him no fewer than four cups of wine, even [if he receives relief] from the charity plate.

They pour the first cup [of wine] for [the leader of the seder].

Who is Invited to His Table?

The House of Shammai say:

*He recites a blessing for the day [first],
and then recites a blessing over the wine*

But the House of Hillel say:

*He recites a blessing over the wine [first],
and then recites a blessing for the day.*

[Then] they set [food] before him.

*He dips the lettuce before he reaches the course following
the [unleavened] bread.*

*[Then] they set before him unleavened bread, lettuce, and
a mixture of apples, nuts, and wine, and two dishes,
although the mixture of apples, nuts, and wine is not
compulsory.*

Rabbi Eliezer bar Tzadok says: It is compulsory.

*And in the Temple they used to bring before him the body
of the Passover-offering.*

They pour a second cup [of wine] for him.

And here the son questions his father.

*And if the son has insufficient understanding [to
question], his father teaches him [to ask]:*

Why is this night different from all [other] nights?

On all [other] nights, we eat leavened and unleavened

Who is Invited to His Table?

bread,

[but] on this night, [we eat] only unleavened bread.

On all [other] nights, we eat all kinds of vegetables, [but] on this night, [we eat only] bitter herbs.

On all [other] nights, we eat meat roasted, stewed or boiled, [but] on this night, [we eat] only roasted [meat]. On all [other] nights, we dip [vegetables] once, [but] on this night, we dip [vegetables] twice. And according to the son's intelligence, his father instructs him.

He begins [answering the questions] with [the account of Israel's] shame and concludes with [Israel's] glory, and expounds from "My father was a wandering Aramean" until he completes the whole passage.

Rabban Gamliel used to say:

Whoever does not mention these three things on Passover does not discharge his duty, and these are they: the Passover-offering, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs.

[The] Passover-offering [is offered] because the Omnipresent One passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt.

Unleavened bread [is eaten] because our ancestors were redeemed from Egypt.

[The] bitter herb is [eaten] because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt.

Who is Invited to His Table?

In every generation a person must regard himself as though he personally had gone out of Egypt, as it is said:

“And you shall tell your son in that day, saying: ‘It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.’”

Therefore it is our duty to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, extol, and adore Him Who performed all these miracles for our ancestors and us;

He brought us forth from bondage into freedom, from sorrow into joy, from mourning into festivity, from darkness into great light, and from servitude into redemption.

Therefore let us say before Him, Hallelujah!

After they have mixed for him the third cup he says the benediction over his meal

*[Over] a fourth cup he completes the Hallel and says after it the Benediction over song. If he is minded to drink [more] between these cups he may drink; only between the third and fourth cups he may not drink. - **The Mishnah**, Pesahim, 10:1-7, pp. 150-151. – emphasis mine*

As you can see, the Passover Supper is divided into four parts each introduced by a mixed cup of wine with blessing. The wine was mixed with three parts water so that none would become drunk during this Passover meal. Indeed, the Mishnah says:

*“They do not say the Benediction over the wine until water has been added unto it. - **The Mishnah**, Berakoth,*

Who is Invited to His Table?

7:5, p. 8

When they blessed the wine they said,

“Bless art thou.....who creates the fruit of the vine” -
The Mishnah, Berakoth, 6:1, p. 6

The dipping of the sop occurs twice. It occurs during the first cup portion and at the close of the second cup division. It was immediately after dipping the sop before the third cup that Judas left the Passover Supper.

Jn. 13:30 He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.

Therefore, Judas was not present at the institution of the Lord's Supper which occurred at the third cup.

At each cup there was a blessing said over the cup and each division opened with a “cup of blessing.”

During my college days at Lexington Baptist College in Lexington Kentucky, often I had done research at the libraries of the University of Kentucky and Lexington Theological Seminary.

I met a Jewish Rabbi completing his doctor's degree while doing research at the Lexington Theological Seminary and asked him if the Jews ever used grape juice in their history of the Passover. He immediately broke out laughing and then told me that the Jews have never used grape juice in the Passover but always used red wine.

We do know from the Scriptures that Jesus used materials normally found in the Passover meal. The Mishnah provides the

Who is Invited to His Table?

traditional practice among the Jews in the first and second century and what has continued to be the Jewish practice right up to this day.

Also while I was at Lexington Baptist College I was given the book entitled **The Laws of Fermentation and the Wines of the Ancients** by William Patton. Patton was very convincing that the wines of the Bible were unfermented grape juice. However, I decided to research his historical sources at the University of Kentucky Library. To my surprise I found that most of his historical quotations were taken directly from Dr. F.R. Lees in his Temperance Bible Commentary and those who followed Lees. Upon further investigation I found every single historical quotation was jerked out of its original context and made to mean exactly the very opposite. One of the most obvious perversions was his quotation from Homer concerning the “sweet black wine” given by Ulysses to the Cyclops. According to Patton this was unfermented syrup that had to be diluted with twenty parts of water to be drunk. Yet as any student of Homer knows, it was that “sweet black wine” the Cyclops requested which made him drunk. Hence, just because wine is “sweet” does not mean it is unfermented even as Isaiah shows that “sweet wine” can be intoxicating:

And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken [Heb. Shaker – intoxicated] with their own blood, as with sweet wine: [Heb. Aciyc – new wine] and all flesh shall know that I the LORD am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob. – Isa. 49:26

In my research, I ran into another book entitled **Wines of the Bible: an Examination and Refutation of the Unfermented**

Who is Invited to His Table?

Wine Theory by A.M. Wilson written in 1877.¹ Wilson was a Classical Greek scholar and was trained in both Hebrew and Latin. Wilson was also a self-described tee-totaler or non-drinker. Wilson lived at the same time as those whom Patton used for his sources. Wilson took every single one of their historical proofs and provided the reader with the context from which they were taken and exposed the dishonesty of Lees and others who simply quoted his false research.

This book has never been refuted and M'Clintock and Strong Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature, Vol. X says,

“The latest and most complete treatise on this question is that of Wilson, ‘The Wines of the Bible’ (Lond. 1877), which after minutely examining all the classical and scriptural references, arrives at the conclusion that ‘so far as the wines of the ancients are concerned, unfermented wine is a myth.’”

Charles H. Spurgeon upon reading Wilson’s work said,

“The Wines of the Bible: an Examination and Refutation of the Unfermented Wine Theory. By the Rev. A. M. Wilson. Hamilton, Adams & Co.

‘UNFERMENTED wine’ is a non-existent liquid. Mr. Wilson has so fully proved this that it will require considerable hardihood to attempt a reply. The best of it is that he is a teetotaler of more than thirty years’ standing, and has reluctantly been driven ‘to conclude that, so far as the wines of the ancients are concerned,

¹ This book can be downloaded free at our church website
http://victorybaptistchurch.webstarts.com/uploads/THE_WINES_book1.pdf

Who is Invited to His Table?

unfermented wine is a myth.’Mr. Wilson has written the thick volume now before us to settle the matter, and we believe that he establishes beyond reasonable debate that the wines of the Bible were intoxicating, and that our Lord did not ordain jelly or syrup, or cherry juice to be the emblem of his sacrifice.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (quotation not located)

In Charles Haddon Spurgeon's **The Sword and the Trowel** 1878 and page 406 he says:

YANIM; OR, THE BIBLE WINE QUESTION: TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE, OF THE RABBIS, AND OF BIBLE LANDS AGAINST RECENT SACRAMENTARIAN INNOVATIONS BY PROFESSORS WATTS, WALLACE, AND MURPHY, BELFAST; AND REV. WILLIAM WRIGHT, B.A., DAMASCUS..EDITED BY PROFESSOR WATTS. BELFAST: WILLIAM MULLAN. 6D.

Tatar ministers whose churches are tormented by the unfermented wine question will here find much help in keeping to the old paths. The document signed by Dr. Thomson of” The Land and the Book,” and by others of the more eminent missionaries in Syria and the Holy Land, ought to settle the question for ever. They bear witness that they have never met with unfermented wine in the East, nor are there any records, or traditions, that such wine was ever known there. The fact is — there is not, and there never was, and never can be such a thing as unfermented wine, though it suits some men to call their messes by that name. At the same time it should be observed that much which is called wine in this country is

Who is Invited to His Table?

not worthy of the name, and it is a shame to remember our Lord's death by drinking such vile decoctions. Let it be really wine, as pure and good as can be had, and no communicant has then any Scriptural right to object. As the slightest word on this subject generally brings a flood of angry letters, we beg to intimate that our columns are not open to discussion, and that our own mind is made up. We are at one with those temperate temperance friends who forbear to divide churches, and mar the unity of the saints upon this point: to them we wish Godspeed, and we hope ever to cooperate with them. They have their own sphere of action, and a very important one it is; and when pursued in subservience to the gospel, for the noble object of preventing and curing the great and crying sin of drunkenness, their work is philanthropic in the highest degree; nay, more, it is Christlike, and tends to benefit the souls as well as the bodies of men. To make men sober is one thing, to make them quarrelsome is another:: we are content with the former. (emphasis mine).

Spurgeon believed in total abstinence but when it came to the Biblical use of the term "wine" he did not support the unfermented wine myth.

Conclusion

I have attempted to present the objective evidence from the New Testament in regard to whom the Lord invites to His Table. The reader can be the judge if my attempts were successful or not.

My conclusion is that the Lord's Supper obviously requires more

Who is Invited to His Table?

than mere salvation to observe it worthily. It requires specified areas of sanctification in addition to being saved. Hence, the Lord does not open the table to just believers.

Moreover, the observers invited to the Lord's Table must not exceed the symbolism of the unleavened "**lump**" or "**bread**" used in the Supper. The "**whole**" lump is equal to the metaphorical application of the "unleavened bread" used in the Supper and that "**whole**" lump cannot exceed the boundary of church discipline which can change the "**whole**" lump into a "**new**" lump in regard to the total number of participants.

Furthermore, the qualified participants must be without known schism in doctrine and practice but of "one mind" in regard to the things essential for practical unity. All unrepentant sin known to the observing body must first be purged out before it can be observed worthily by the "**whole**" observing body. All known sin to the individual participant must be dealt with before that person can observe the Supper worthily.

Therefore, the Lord's Table is a *church* ordinance rather than a *Christian* ordinance. It is a *church* ordinance that reflects the condition of the church as a metaphorical *body* with its "**whole**" membership rather than a *denominational* ordinance.

In regard to the elements used in the Supper it is clear from the Scriptures that Jesus used the same traditional elements found in the Passover in the first century. The Mishnah provides a clear description of the traditional elements used by the Jews in the first century even up to this present day. They used one red wine with three parts water in order to prevent drunkenness. They used unleavened bread.

Who is Invited to His Table?

I. Addendum – Objections to Wine Considered

Those who argue for “unfermented wine” use certain passages in an attempt to disprove that “wine” in the Bible is always a fermented liquor.

A. Proverbs 23:31

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.

– Prov. 23:31

The argument goes like this. When grape juice is entering the process of fermentation it is bright red and the fermenting activity can be seen as it “moveth itself aright.” Hence, the conclusion drawn by advocates of “unfermented wine” is that this is a direct prohibition to drink fermented grape juice or wine.

However, this interpretation is not based upon a proper Biblical or historical interpretation of the immediate context.

1. Not all wine is “red” as many are white or clear.
2. The context is about those who stay up late intentionally to get drunk as the two preceding verses prove:

29 ¶ Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?

Who is Invited to His Table?

30 *They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.*

3. The wine under consideration is “mixed wine” not wine newly being fermented. The mixture used by the ancients to make their wine more powerful turned the color of the wine bright red.

Hence, this is not a prohibition to drink wine. It is a prohibition to abuse wine by intentionally mixing it for the purpose to get intoxicated.

B. John 2:9-10 – The Miracle at Cana

When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. – John 2:9-10

The text so obviously supports fermented wine that advocates of the unfermented wine theory immediately jump on the defense in their arguments. Their argument is that Jesus could not have supported drunkenness by supplying more fermented wine.

1. However, there are no “worse” versus “good” grape juice, as grape juice is grape juice.

2. The custom was to supply better wine at first until the guests had drunk sufficiently so they could not tell the difference between superior versus inferior quality of wines. They did not

Who is Invited to His Table?

have to become drunk for this to occur. Superior wines did cost more.

3. Jesus is not supporting drunkenness by merely supplying more wine. Each person was individually responsible for how much wine they drank. Jesus was not responsible for their abuse of wine any more than he was responsible for their abuse of food when he provided food.

C. What is Intoxication?

The ancients had clear guidelines to determine what was considered drunkenness. The guidelines depended upon the potency of the wine being drunk. Wine watered down was less potent and more cups could be drunk without becoming intoxicated.

The generic rule of thumb was three cups. The first and second cups were enjoyable. The third cup brought a state of joy. The fourth cup and onward brought on a state of drunkenness.

Intoxication is when you cannot restrain or control your physical and/or moral behavior.

D. Medicinal use of Wine

Although the scriptures never promote drunkenness, they do promote drinking for medicinal purposes to deal with physical problems (stomach) or mental sorrows and depression:

Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink,

Who is Invited to His Table?

and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more. – Prov. 31:6-7

He is not supporting drunkenness, but drinking to the point of joyfulness. The ancients considered that point reached by the third cup.

Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities. – 1 Tim. 5:23

If you have stomach problems, you do not want to use grape juice as it has no medicinal value. Mild wine and its alcoholic content kills germs and bacteria and promotes healing.

And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. – Lk. 10:34

The alcoholic content of wine stops infections and cleanses the wound. Grape juice provides no medicinal value.

E. The Contrast between The Baptist and Christ

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! – Lk. 7:33-34

As a Nazerite, The Baptist could not partake of wine. Furthermore, he lived on a diet of honey and locust and so they could not accuse him of being gluttonous. However, Christ was not a Nazarite but a Nazarine (from the city of Nazareth). He did come eating bread and drinking wine, and thus they accused him of

Who is Invited to His Table?

excess in both areas. This accusation would be groundless if he drank only grape juice or never ate regular food.

Conclusion

The Bible condemns eating food and drinking wine in excess, but it does not condemn eating food or drinking wine. Indeed, Romans 14 makes it clear that social drinking of wine is not a sin, unless it causes a weaker brother to stumble. Grape juice has never been a cause of stumbling for anyone.

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. – Rom. 14:21

However, the historical context of the Old and New Testament must be considered. Wine was absolutely necessary in the ancient world to prevent diseases from drinking impure water and/or foods. Wine killed germs and bacteria. It was drunk from the time of childhood on up to death as a medicinally necessity.

Today, in the modern cultures of the world we do not need to drink wine for medicinal purposes, as we have purified water, and food is regulated and dated to avoid food borne illnesses. Doctors have a wide variety of medicines. Hence, I avoid personal and social drinking as a testimony against the wide spread social abuse. However, in the Lord's Supper, wine is the proper symbol to show the cleansing power of the blood of Christ rather than grape juice. Grape juice has no typological value for the cleansing power of the blood or the "joy" of salvation.