

Does God need reminding?

Is the Lord's Supper a full meal to constantly remind God to bring about the Messianic wedding banquet?

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to add evidence to support the orthodox position that the Lord's Supper is a specific memorial in the local church and is *not* to be included as an integral part of a social meal and eaten along with other food. The defenders of the full meal practice use the argument that the Supper is a looking forward to the Messiah's wedding banquet on the last day, and thus is a full meal in a communal, social setting. Part of their case is that God asks his people to remind him of his promises, and specifically to remind the Lord Jesus to return and eat the Supper with us at the end. It is thus a reminder of the close of the age (indeed, a party at the end), rather than the Biblical presentation of a memorial of the cross.

The Biblical use of the word group 'remind'

There are perfectly good Hebrew and Greek words for 'remind', but they are never used of God. These are all the occurrences of the words in the NKJV.

Remind

No longer shall it be the confidence of the house of Israel, but will remind them of their iniquity. Ezekiel 29:16

For this reason I have sent Timothy to you ... who will remind you of my ways in Christ. 1 Corinthians 4:17

Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you. 2 Timothy 1:6

Remind them of these things. 2 Timothy 2:14

Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities. Titus 3:1

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things. 2 Peter 1:12

But I want to remind you. Jude 1:5

Reminder

But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. Hebrews 10:3

Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. 2 Peter 1:15

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder). 2 Peter 3:1

Reminding

I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you. Romans 15:15

Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you. 2 Peter 1:13

Interim conclusion

It can be seen that there is no scripture, which tells us to remind God about anything. All the reminding in scripture is applied to men.

Can it properly be said that God can be reminded?

In a nutshell, no! The point of reminding is the implication of an imperfect memory; someone reminds a person of something in case they have forgotten it.

Anthropomorphisms

Now it is true that God lowers his revelation of himself to our level in order to accommodate our limitations. Many times he uses anthropomorphisms in order to emphasise a point, or to make clear, what he is saying. Thus God may refer to himself as running to our aid, or quick to see our need, or hearing what we say; yet the Lord has no legs, eyes or ears because he is Spirit; he is an immaterial being. Despite this accommodation, God never tells us to remind him to do something.

Prayer

Now some may feel that there may be an implication in our prayer life that our petitions remind God to bless us, that they are a sort of reminder to God to remember his promises; but that is circumstantial. Petitions are requests, not reminders. God does not need to be reminded to bless us; he delights in blessing his children and gives us every spiritual blessing in Christ. Prayer is not a reminder but a request for help. Any implication of a reminder in prayer is the reminder to the believer of the promises of God upon which he stakes his faith in prayer; any sense of reminder is not for God's benefit but to strengthen our faith in the promise.

There are a very few occasions where a saint is recorded as asking God not to forget something, such as Ps 10:12, 'Arise, O LORD! O God, lift up Your hand! Do not forget the humble'. Perhaps we can compare this to the occasions when God says he will forget something in his condemnatory judgment, 'Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being priest for Me; Because you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children' (Hos 4:6). Cases like this are anthropomorphisms. God cannot forget and neither does he change his views on his people. Those chosen by him were chosen in eternity and are saved to the uttermost (Eph 1:3-5) because they are placed in Christ. If someone is rejected and judged it is because they were always reprobate; however, to the Israelites spoken to in this way it appeared as God letting them go and forgetting them. Those under God's chastisement also sometimes spoke of this trial as God forgetting them (Ps 13:1, 44:24, 77:9). He had not, of course, but from their perspective their ordeal was as if God had forgotten them.

The attributes of God

We must take great care in developing our theology or exegesis that we always honour the attributes of God. We must never interpret a scripture in a manner that dishonours his glory. To develop a teaching that implies God needs to be reminded, or that he encourages us to remind him, is not only unbiblical, but is also a demeaning of his name. God is perfect – he needs no reminding since he cannot forget anything. God is infinite – all that he does for us every day was determined in eternity, even the grace we need for our good works (Eph 2:10). God is sovereign and rules all events for our good – there is no need to remind God to fulfil a certain promise (Rm 8:28). God is almighty; there is nothing that can thwart his plan to build the church (Matt 16:18) – therefore anything God has declared will happen is certain to occur. There is never a case to remind God because a person who needs reminding is weak and imperfect. Such language is not fitting when talking about God.

Specific claims of reminding God

The defenders of this idea use the following scriptures to make their case.

Covenants

These are said to be reminders to God. *“Reminding” God of his covenant promises is a thoroughly Scriptural concept.* [Steve Atkerson, *Ekklesia*, p26.]

It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember my covenant which *is* between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth. Gen 9:14-16

Criticism of claim

Covenants are the means to establish friendship between certain men (the elect) and God. They are based upon God’s oath to bless those chosen. They are unilateral promises made by God and different covenants contain specific promises, such as the promise of an heir to David who would be king over all. The nature of the covenant is the security of God’s formal promise. So here, God promises to men and animals not to flood the whole Earth again, ‘I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature ... Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth’ (verse 9-10, 11).

When God says ‘I will remember my covenant’ he is merely referring to the certainty that the covenant will stand. There is no sense at all here that God needs to be reminded; it is merely affirming the surety of the promise. If God remembers a thing, it will never be forgotten. God’s own word states that he will not forget, ‘the LORD your God is a merciful God, He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them’ (Deut 4:31). Thus to say that God needs reminding not only denies his perfection but also his clear word. The command regarding the covenants is that we must not forget them, ‘Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you’ (Deut 4:23). We forget the covenant when we disobey God’s commands, ‘Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes’ (Deut 8:11).

Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.
Ex 2:23-25

Criticism of claim

Again, there is no sense that God forgot his covenant; if he did he would cease to be God because he would not be perfect. This is really just an idiomatic way of saying that God chose to act to defend his people at this time after a period of testing. The promise to Abraham would be fulfilled, and in God’s time the deliverance from Egypt was effected. There is no sense of God being reminded to do something here.

For thus says the Lord GOD: ‘I will deal with you as you have done, who despised the oath by breaking the covenant. Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.’ Ezek 16:59-60

Criticism of claim

Again there is no reminding going on here. God’s judgment had been upon the people for disobedience and there had been punishment. However, in due course God brought out a remnant to establish the covenant as he promised to the fathers. It is a Hebrew idiom to affirm that God did not forget his promises to Abraham.

To turn these affirmations that God did not forget his promise, even after much rebellion, into the need to remind God to effect his promise, is a gross misreading of scripture.

The Passover

This is claimed to be a reminding of God and a looking forward to the Messianic banquet. [Steve Atkerson, *Ekklesia*, p24.]

Criticism

The claim that a reminding of the end is a constituent of the Passover is certainly not highlighted in scripture. The Passover was a meal celebrating the deliverance of God and the establishment of Israel as God's possession; it thus typifies salvation from the world and deliverance from sin. All the constituents speak of the cross of Christ (slain lamb, application of blood; Exod 12:6-7) applied to God's elect during their time of pilgrimage on earth, not a celebration in heaven (eaten in haste, dressed to leave; Exod 12:11). It is also established in the context of judgment – the death of the Egyptian first-born (Exod 12:12); this is not in keeping with the heavenly banquet which appears after judgment is finished. Finally, it is specifically stated to be a memorial of a past event (Exod 12:14), not a reminder to God about the future. This is further emphasised in Exod 12:26-27, 'When your children say to you, "What do you mean by this service?" that you shall say, "It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households." So the people bowed their heads and worshiped'.

The Passover was clearly instituted to celebrate and remember a past event that caused the Lord's people to worship as they considered God's faithfulness and power extended towards their protection and deliverance. It cannot be used as an example of a ritual that points forward to the future Messianic banquet, still less to prove any precedent for reminding God.

Any sense of a future fulfilment is entirely devoted to Christ's cross. All the typology of the Passover is directed to the Passion of the Lord and not to the final banquet. Note:

- The Passover was a lamb – Christ is the Lamb of God.
- It was a lamb without blemish - Christ is without blemish, without any original sin or actual transgression.
- The lamb was male – Christ is the Son of man.
- It was a lamb of the first year – Jesus was still a young man.
- The lamb was taken from the sheep – as Jesus was separated out from his disciples.
- The lamb was kept from the tenth of the month, to the fourteenth before it was killed – Jesus was amongst the people and generally known for the period before he was killed.
- The lamb was slain – as Christ was killed by violence.
- The lamb was sacrificed between the two Jewish evenings [the first evening beginning at noon as soon as the sun began to decline, the other upon the setting] – so Christ was sacrificed at 3pm.
- The lamb was not boiled but roasted in the fire – Christ had the fire of divine wrath poured out on him.

- Not a bone of it was to be broken – this was fulfilled in Christ (Jn 19:36).
- It was eaten with bitter herbs, symbolising the severe afflictions and bondage the Israelites had suffered in Egypt that made their lives bitter. – Christ suffered the tribulations, persecutions and trials imposed by men.

The focus of the Passover is the sacrifice of Christ for the deliverance of his people; it is not directed to the Messianic banquet at all.

The Lord's Supper

The claim is that the Lord's Supper follows Old Testament practices that serve to remind the Lord to do something in fulfilment of a promise: *'Partaking of the bread and cup as an integral part of the meal originally served several important functions. One of these was to remind Jesus of his promise to return.'* [Steve Atkerson, *Ekklesia*, p26.]

Luke 22:15-18 is claimed to be a 'looking forward' and prophetic, to be celebrated as a full meal to remind Christ of his promise. *The Last Supper and the early church's Lord's Suppers all looked forward to a fulfilment in the wedding supper of the Lamb. (And what better way to typify a banquet than with a banquet?)* [Steve Atkerson, *Ekklesia*, p24.]

Then He said to them, 'With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' Lk 22:15-18

It is claimed that Rev 19:7-9 refers same food for supper as Lord's Supper. [Steve Atkerson, *Ekklesia*, p24.]

'Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.' And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, 'Write: "Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!"'

Criticism

Firstly, we have to note that Revelation 19 says nothing about the content of the marriage banquet. To claim that it is bread and wine is adding to scripture. In fact, the Lord says that he will eat of the 'Passover' (lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs). However, we know that the Passover feast is cancelled, along with all the other forms of Judaism, which are fulfilled in the New Covenant. Jesus is possibly saying that he will not eat until the kingdom comes in fulness, when he will eat food again with his brethren in celebration (a glorified spiritual body does not require food). Naturally this food will include wine, as at any celebration, and bread, along with many other foods for feasting (as the Passover was a festive meal). However, the argument of Atkerson rests upon Jesus referring to the bread and wine of the Supper, but this is not in view at all; Jesus refers to the Passover food and to wine. Jesus will only drink wine again when the Passover is fulfilled – i.e. at the cross. The fulfilment of what is typified in the Passover is the atonement, not the Second Coming.

Thus it is quite possible (even likely) to take the view that Jesus is not talking about the heavenly condition at all. 'Kingdom' here can mean either the heavenly glory or the coming Gospel dispensation after the cross. The Passover is not celebrated in either of those dispensations. Why? Because the Passover is fulfilled in Christ's sacrifice; with the cross the typology of the Passover is finished and fulfilled (1 Cor 5:7). Thus Jesus is firstly saying that he will not eat the Passover again ceremonially since it is accomplished.

Secondly, if Jesus did intend 'the kingdom' to refer to the end, he mentions fasting from wine until the end (v18) in order to emphasise the seriousness of the events shortly to come in his Passion to be remembered in the Supper. It puts an authoritative stamp on the importance of the New Covenant about to be established, and the central ritual of the Covenant to be celebrated by the church. We celebrate the Supper weekly knowing that the Lord is withholding from wine until the church is complete. He is waiting for all the elect to be saved before he celebrates fulfilling God's decree.

However, 'I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes' (v18), more likely means that the kingdom arrived at the resurrection. The initial ministry of Jesus was mentioned as the kingdom of God coming, or being 'at hand' (Matt 3:2), and the resurrection of Christ is the fulfilment of all that the kingdom means as Christ was given all authority by it (Matt 28:18). Christ is now King as the God-Man. The coming of the kingdom was after the cross and resurrection. It may not yet be fully consummated, but it is come; just as a king may reign for a long time before his coronation. In any event, the reference in Luke is not necessarily, nor even probably, about the future banquet.

[*Technical aside:* did Jesus drink wine after the Passover meal when the kingdom was being unveiled? In Jn 19:29-30 it says, 'Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.' Some have made the case that the key work of the cross (which establishes the kingdom) occurred just before Jesus died bodily: Jn 19:28, 'After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!'" The accomplishment was before he tasted the wine, and moments before he died physically. Thus the work of redemption occurred when Jesus had man's sin laid upon him, forcing the Father's withdrawal of his presence and the weight of wrath being placed upon the Lord in his heart (Matt 27:46). The reference in Luke 22:18 may refer to the fact that the kingdom was come when man's sin had been placed on Jesus, who experienced God's wrath for it, thus he then drank wine. Against this we note that: 1) The 'accomplishment' of Jn 19 was the fulfilment of all the things Christ had to do in his ministry and work before his death. 2) The full effect of redemption required Christ's death for sin. 3) This was not a celebratory drinking of wine, and Matt 26:29 affirms that it must be such by adding 'drink it new with you'. This tasting was not done in fellowship. 4) A better explanation is that Jesus 'received' the wine to his person to fulfil prophecy (Ps 22:15, 69:21); he was given it but did not actually drink it (Mk 15:23). Note that Jesus also ate various things (presumably accompanied by drinking) with the disciples after his resurrection (Lk 24:30, 41-43; Jn 21:12-13); but we cannot be certain that this included bread and wine.]

However, what is certain is that the context of the Supper establishes the focus of it, and this is the cross and the work of Christ in redemption. Jesus' mentions his personal fasting in one short enigmatic statement in three Gospels, but the context of the Passover meal was very many long statements about the nature of his work as redeemer and what would happen afterwards when the Spirit applied his atoning work to the church (see Jn 12-17). John does not mention this fasting from wine and does not consider it important in the Passion narratives. The establishment of the Supper as the new ritual of the New Covenant is centred in the midst of very long statements by Jesus about the cross, salvation, the Spirit and the church. While the Supper has similarities to the Passover, it also has many contrasts. What neither does is set to our attention on the future wedding banquet, but rather they both direct us to the cross.

There is absolutely no sense here of reminding God about anything. There is no command regarding this and not even any implication that we are to do it.

Interim conclusion

Far from there being a thoroughly secure case to prove that we are to remind God about certain promises, there is no case whatsoever. The word 'remind' is never used of God and the examples given to establish the argument have no interpretation involving the sense of reminding God. They all have the sense of remembering something that God did in the

past to establish faith in the present that God will continue to abide by his promises. Any reminding is the stimulation of the memory of key events in the minds of saints.

The Supper is a proclamation of Jesus' death and not a reminder about the future

Paul makes a clear statement that the purpose of the Lord's Supper is a proclamation of Jesus' death, **'For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes'** (1 Cor 11:26). This is as clear as it gets; the Supper is about the cross – first and foremost. 'Proclaim' = *katagge,llw (kataggello)*, meaning to declare, preach, announce, promulgate, make known, proclaim, publish, portray. The Supper announces and makes known the value of the atonement of Christ. The focus of the Supper is not our enjoyment of a future feast but the cross of Christ.

Paul states that we are to remember that Christ was given (we cannot argue about the word 'broken' here) for us in death, **'and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."**' (1 Cor 11:24). The symbolism of the bread is the body of Christ given up in death for us – not initially a pre-figurement of a future banquet. Paul then tells us to remember Christ's death in our participation of the bread.

He also plainly says that we are to remember, in the Supper, that Jesus shed his blood for us, **'In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."**' (1 Cor 11:25). The symbolism of the wine (cup) is the blood of Christ shed for sinners, not a festal banquet. Paul then says that Jesus himself commanded that we remember this as being the establishment of the New Covenant. The New Covenant came with the Resurrection and is applicable now; there is no attention on the end here. The symbolism is shed blood in death, not a wedding feast!

Without any shadow of doubt, the Supper is pre-eminently a remembrance, or memorial, of the cross of Christ and not an anticipation of the Messianic feast (though this may have a subsidiary value). Arguments based upon speculation of what passages in the synoptics may or may not mean do not override plain apostolic teaching given didactically. We start with what is clear and then work back to what is unclear. Paul's teaching is the earliest writing on the subject, thus making it of even more importance; it is also unlikely that his beloved colleague, Luke, would alter that meaning in his later Gospel.

The Lord's Supper is the central ritual celebrating the New Covenant, and the focus of the New Covenant is the act that established it – the cross. Without Christ's atonement there would be no New Covenant. The completion of the church is at the end of the age when the last elect person has been converted, then all believers are changed at the return of Christ. After this, the Messianic banquet occurs. Is this the central focus of the church or of the New Covenant? No it isn't. It isn't even the central matter of the events occurring at the end, which include the Lord's return, the final judgment, the restoration of the earth, the establishment of heaven upon the earth, the coronation of Christ's *existing kingship* and the sentencing of the wicked and demons to hell. To centre upon the feast instead of Christ's atonement, resurrection, ascension and present kingship (the latter are included in the ramifications of the atonement) is utterly foolish.

Virtually the whole evangelical church throughout history, and even many non-evangelical groups that call themselves Christian, have insisted that the Supper, while having some element of being forward-looking, is essentially backward-looking; a remembrance of Christ's death.

The idea that *anamnesis* ('remembrance') means that we are to remind the Lord in the Supper that he has not yet fulfilled his promise to bring about the Messianic banquet [e.g. Steve Atkerson, *Ekklesia*, p27] is novel and without foundation. In establishing the argument for this meaning people have to resort to obscure technicalities that are themselves arguable.

Apart from 'remembrance' being the clear meaning of reading the text without presuppositions, esteemed Greek scholars state that 1 Cor 11:24-25 means, 'memorial, remembrance, means of remembrance, recollection or reminder in terms of reminding us' [e.g. Bauer, Friberg, UBS Greek Dict., Thayer, Louw-Nida etc.]. Finally, if Paul states that the Supper teaches and preaches the death of Christ, how can that fit in with reminding God that he has not yet established the Messianic banquet?

When Eric Svendsen (a colleague of Steve Atkerson) says, '*By repeatedly partaking of the Supper ... we are 'reminding' Christ of our plight that we are still without a host at our banquet*' (*The Table of the Lord*, p121), he misses the whole point of the Supper, denies his own argument earlier in his book and approaches blasphemy. The Supper is a celebration of our union with Christ together and he is really present in the meal, but by his Spirit. We are not without a host at all, the Lord is with us: '**For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them**' (Matt 18:20). Svendsen's suggestion is a demeaning of Christ.

[This section is adapted from my paper, *Assessment of Eric Svendsen's, 'The Table of the Lord'*.]

The great danger in this - falling for demonic strategies

Satan's purpose

Satan is not primarily concerned with getting Christians to sin; he wants to make them completely ineffective, and temptation to sin is but one weapon. Christians that strive to live righteously must be nullified, so getting them to commit obvious sins is a waste of his time. So, Satan seeks to get sincere believers to depart from a reliance on God word. His first device is to convince Christians that God's word can be ignored or downplayed. Often the tactic involves an emphasis upon subjective impressions that pretend to be convictions of the Spirit; and this strategy works very effectively in Charismatic churches.

However, amongst folk that want to live righteously and also do not trust subjective impressions but honour scripture, Satan's ploy has to be different. Amongst these folk Satan tries to get them to dishonour God by denying his attributes or denying the person of Christ in some way. Such folk want to live right and honour the authority of the Bible, but get led astray by following some oblique human notion which they pin all their practice upon.

Examples of this would include folk who deny the sovereignty of God in all things, and thus water down their Gospel message and fail to live by faith. Another is the denial of either the human or divine nature of Christ. Though this seems incredible, this is actually happening amongst otherwise sincere evangelicals. Their theological defence of this is obtuse, arcane and very confused, but they claim to be Biblical even though they deny many truths about God and salvation. Anyone who denies the doctrine of Christ will easily fall for many lesser satanic deceptions afterwards. Thus this denial is particularly condemned and warned about (2 Jn 7-10).

Another example is the idea of mixing the Supper with a communal meal. The repercussions of this entirely dishonour the Lord Jesus and verge on blasphemy. It treats the cross of Christ as a small thing and turns attention away from the atonement to a heavenly party. It cheapens worship so that celebrating the Supper becomes part of social chit-chat and thus dishonours Christ's glory. It lacks all normal reverence for God in the gathered church, and thus denies God's person in preference for a celebration of community. While these people commonly tolerate fellowshiping with people who deny vital Biblical truths and affirm heresy, they will die in a ditch for the Supper as a meal. This illustrates the depth of their lack of discernment. Where God is practically dishonoured and disobeyed, lack of discernment quickly follows.

When such things have taken the place of scripture and God's honour, it becomes easy for Satan to lead them further astray. Where Satan could not turn them from reliance upon scripture, he trips them up by getting them to dishonour God's person and ruin worship. People who do not worship God Biblically are already fallen aside.

Tradition

The main group that centres on this notion to support their practice of breaking bread within a communal meal also denounces human tradition quite strongly. I agree with them on warning of the danger of human tradition. However, what they have unwittingly done is to establish their own human tradition – celebrating the Supper within a meal, something that is utterly unbiblical and unsupported by church history and evangelical theology. This has become their *raison-d'être*, their pivotal practice and banner. Churches that fail to practice this are considered sub-normal, while churches (which may have various heresies) that practice this are acceptable. Their tradition has become their measuring rod for orthodoxy, and this is one definition of a cult.

Judgment

Failing to honour Christ properly in the Supper leads to judgment:

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. 1 Cor 11:26-30

The Supper is to proclaim Christ's death, not look forward to a heavenly party. To celebrate the Supper in a manner unworthy of the Lord results in condemnation, and this condemnation involves physical infirmity or even death ('sleep'). This is very clear in this passage; there is no equivocation, just plain teaching. How can anyone fail to see this?

[Note: 'Unworthy manner' = *avnaxi,wj* (*anaxios*), doing something in an improper or unworthy manner; without merit. This Greek word is missing from the modern Alexandrian texts in verse 29 (thus not in NIV, NASB etc). 'Judgment' = *kri,ma* (*krima*) = an administrative decree, a verdict, judgment, sentence of condemnation by a judge, legal punishment.]

Final statement

There is no freedom to please ourselves when coming to the Table, or to devise human traditions to displace the scriptural requirement. The removal of the dignity due to God by over-emphasising community and mixing the Supper within a social meal is a travesty that will result in judgment. Those who defend this practice by affirming that we remind God of

his promises in the Supper add to their sin by denying his attributes and misrepresenting scripture.

The Lord's Supper is the central feature of the gathered local church and must be conducted soberly, righteously, peacefully and within its own context. It is the time for reverent worship along with thanksgiving. Thus there may be prayers, relevant Bible readings, subdued sung worship or even silence. The idea that the Supper can be conducted with people chatting and gossiping, and children playing is anathema. Thus,

Kids run wildly around having so much fun that they must be collared by parents and forced to eat something... people line up talking and laughing to serve their plates. In the middle of all the food sits a single loaf of bread next to a large plastic jug containing the fruit of the vine ... [women] eat while discussing home schooling child training, sewing Men stand to eat ... solving the world's problems ... this is the Lord's Supper, New Testament style! [Steve Atkerson, *Ekklesia*, p23.]

Nothing could be more wrong! This practice totally dishonours Christ, denigrates God's honour and denies his word. It stands condemned.

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