

DID PAUL SAY THAT TAKING COMMUNION UNWORTHILY IS HOMICIDE?

Paul calls Christ a Passover Sacrifice but it is obvious he was not a literal one. His blood was not taken and sprinkled over door posts. He calls Christ that in the past tense whereas it might make sense for somebody who believed in perpetuated sacrifice to say Christ our Passover is being sacrificed. Anyway, the non-literalism is a warning that we have to be careful how we interpret Paul.

Our Bible says that St Paul the apostle wrote, "Jesus said this is my body over bread and this is my blood over wine and asked us to remember him by doing this. Until the Lord comes therefore every time you eat this bread and drink this cup you are proclaiming his death" 1 Corinthians 11. The Catholic Church says that proclaiming means making his death present. That is stretching the meaning of the word too far. And besides the context says the rite was to be a memorial of Jesus. To remember Jesus is to proclaim his death. And every time you eat the bread and drink the cup you proclaim the death of the Lord Jesus. It is not the consecration or the words about eating body and drinking blood that proclaims the death but the eating and drinking itself! As you do violence to the bread by eating it so you copy the violence done to the body of Jesus. As you spill the wine down your neck so you copy the spilling of the blood of Christ. Its the eating and drinking that counts. It pictures Jesus giving his body in death and shedding all his blood in the process for us. Just as we get the bread and cup we have got Jesus.

If Paul believed in the Catholic doctrine of the Mass he would not have written in such a way. The sacrifice would be there at the declaration that the bread and cup are the body and blood. But Paul talks as if the only fulfilment of Jesus' command to recall the sacrifice is in the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup.

It is the consumption of bread and wine that proclaims the death of Jesus. If they were really the hidden body and blood of Jesus it would be more natural to write, "Until the Lord comes therefore every time you eat this flesh and drink this blood you are proclaiming his death".

Paul said that Jesus said that the cup was the new covenant in his blood and that whenever you drink it you shall drink it as a memorial of him. This clearly presupposes that the believers were just taking a cup. They were not saying, "This is my blood" over it. If they had been there would have been no need for Jesus to say that he must be remembered every time the cup was taken. The words would take care of the memorial. And if Jesus did intend the words to be said it would follow that his saying that everytime we take the cup we do so in memory of him that it follows he was emphasising that the ceremony was simply a memorial and there was no such thing as bread and wine turning into Jesus or the Eucharist being a sacrifice.

The Bible then states that Paul would have rejected the notion of bread and wine becoming Jesus without any noticeable change.

1 Corinthians 10 has Paul telling believers they cannot drink the cup of the Lord and drink the cup of demons and they cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. Catholics like this. It is supposed to prove that as the pagans used altars and offered drinks to the gods that Paul is saying you cannot partake of pagan sacrifices and partake of the Christian sacrifice, the Eucharist. He is supposed to be saying that both are in agreement about communion sacrifices. But real sacrifice is killing. Killing isn't mentioned in this text. What is put on the altar after sacrifice to be eaten is just what is on the altar. The sacrifice has been done.

It is said that Paul makes it clear that the worship using the bread and cup involves the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Now Paul says that anybody who takes the bread and wine unworthily or without faith or without recognising the body is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. This leads believers into the insane notion that to take communion sacrilegiously is actually in some real sense murder. The believers can point to Numbers 35:27, Deuteronomy 21:8, 22:8, Ezekiel 35:6 which say that saying you are guilty of the body and blood of somebody means homicide. Communion is just spiteful if it has that connotation and when it is given that connotation say in Catholicism. But perhaps Paul means it is symbolically homicide? If the bread and cup are only markers of Jesus' body and blood then to abuse them is homicide in a symbolic sense. The memory of Jesus' death is mocked. The Catholic Church pretends to believe that Paul meant the communion is a human sacrifice and to abuse it is murder. But surely if you need Jesus to die for your sin you are in fact a murderer whenever you sin? Paul did not say the sin of abusing the bread and cup was the only way to become guilty of Jesus' death. Thus there is no way you can read sacrifice into it. He spoke a lot of how our sins put Jesus on the cross.

Now the Church says that Paul talks as if the body and blood of Jesus are really present meaning the bread and cup become

them so to partake in a bad manner is homicide and a grave and dangerous sin. But it does not believe that at all. What it believes is that Jesus is present but not as crucified and dead or dying but as risen and glorious. Suppose the Church has a point about the real presence then the homicide link is only possible if the bread is the dying body of Jesus. It is evident that Paul means symbolic homicide - or it could be that guilty of the body and blood of the Lord is not inspired by the Old Testament texts at all. He may just mean it is an insult. Why did he not say guilty of murdering the Lord? He would have if he meant homicide for the Corinthians were not Jews and did not know the Jewish usage of the term as exemplified by the mentioned texts from the Jewish Bible. There is no evidence that Numbers 35:27, Deuteronomy 21:8, 22:8, Ezekiel 35:6 was behind his choice of words or that they were important to Paul or remembered by him.

The worst version of the notion that taking the bread or cup without recognising the body is that it means if you take them without believing that the bread actually is the body of Jesus. That is totally vindictive for belief is not a choice.

To think that Christians are happy with an apostle and a Jesus who says people must suffer and get sick and die if they take communion without recognising the body or unworthily is alarming and disgraceful and intolerable.

Paul wrote in Catholicism's infallible Bible that if Jesus has not risen then the dead are lost forever and we will not be saved from sin for our faith is useless (1 Corinthians 15). So sincerity cannot save if faith is futile. If we have the wrong view of the resurrection we will not be saved. This indicates that if we hold views regarding the atoning death of Christ that are wrong we will not be saved and God will not count us as Christians. In the sense that the atonement was the payment for sin it is superior in importance to the resurrection. So if Paul then believed that Jesus was sentenced by God to death for our sins in our place though he was innocent then we will not be saved if we reject that doctrine. Rome does reject that doctrine and has no official doctrine regarding the meaning of the atonement though all are obligated to think that Jesus saved them by his death. Both indicate that the Roman Church is neither Christian or infallible and is a barrier to salvation.

Paul said the Church has to have one doctrine about the resurrection and anything else is useless so by implication he invalidated Masses if he believed in Masses that do not intend what Christ intended by the atonement. The liturgy of the Church is defective when it does not explicate what kind of sacrifice and in what sense it is being offered so the Sacrifice of the Mass is invalid for the Church says belief that the Mass is a sacrifice is needed for validity and indeed that the main purpose of the Mass is to offer sacrifice and nothing else.