

A Brief Exegetical Reflection on Luke 22:17

“Then He took the cup and gave thanks and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves”.

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In my personal study of the passages related to the institution of the Lord’s Supper in the synoptic Gospels, I found it interesting that Luke’s description is slightly different from Matthew and Mark. I want to draw your attention to a forgotten detail in Luke’s account. I have noted this out of educational interest more than theological.

Matt: 26:27: Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you.”

Mark 14:23: “Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it.”

But Luke’s version is slightly different: “.....”Take this and **divide** it among yourselves” (22:17).

The Word “Divide” in Luke’s Account

We cannot simply ignore the word “**divide**” or “**share**.” What does it really mean? The Greek word for “divide” is *diameirizo* which means “to divide up, “to distribute,” “to separate,” “to part” etc. Famous New Testament Commentator Frederic Godet noted: “The distribution (*diameirizate*) may have taken place in two ways, either by each drinking or by their all emptying the wine of that cup into their own. The Greek term would suit both.” The content could be divided by pouring it into separate vessels. I am not drawing a dogmatic conclusion, but this is a possibility which the text allows. A good example is a host bringing coffee in a jug and asking the guests to “divide it among yourselves.” The disciples divided the element/the fruit of the vine, not the cup/container. According to Luke’s account, there is a real possibility that a single cup was blessed by the Lord, but it was distributed by dividing among the disciples in their own individual cup. This is a valid observation from the text; a good possibility.

Luke’s account gives us an additional detail that Matthew and Mark skims over.

Conclusion

I do not want to build a theology out of Luke’s account. But one thing is unmistakably clear: The “**cup**” in the LS is not about the “**container**” or the number of containers. It is the **contents** that is in view; that is the most important thing. The doctrine of the LS is related not to the container, but to the content.