

## **Universalism Brought to the Light.**

It is important to clarify what is meant by this word “Universalism” since it has been used to describe different schools of thought. By Universalism it is meant, the belief that suggests that all who receive Christ as their Saviour becomes a member of the true Church, which (as they claim) is a spiritual body of born-again believers. So then, according to Universalism, all who have been born-again are members of the Lord’s Church by virtue of the new birth. This is the subject to be briefly considered by the light of the inspired Word of God. All subjects should be considered by the light of the Holy Word of God while in time because that they will certainly all be judged by it in eternity, John 12:48.

The Bible proves that Universalism is simply a theory of men who have not seen the true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. This blindness is revealed in their teachings. In the definition given there are several denials of God’s Word that become obvious and these obvious denials present a lack of light on part of Universalism. These denials include, but are not limited to:

1. A misrepresentation of the new birth.
2. A failure to recognize the relationship of the new birth to Church membership.
3. A failure to recognize the authority granted to the Church.
4. A failure to recognize true baptism.
5. A failure to recognize who is to partake of the Lord’s Supper/Communion.

### **1. Universalism Seems to Misrepresent the New Birth.**

These thoughts should provoke thought and caution on the part of all. Universalism has a tendency to teach a loose doctrine of the new birth. There can be no limit on the amount of caution that should be applied when teaching a lost person what it means to become a child of God. No sincere person would ever want to be found guilty of deceiving a lost person into thinking that they were really born of the Holy Spirit. It is certain that God is not confused about the condition of a person’s soul. If a person thinks they are born of the Holy Spirit when they are only deceived, God will be altogether just to send that person off to the lowest region of Hell when they die.

By personal observation of practice and private communication with their teachers, it is noticed that the doctrine of the new birth is often misrepresented. Most seem to teach that a lost person can simply make a mental decision regarding a desire to be a child of God. This teaching ends with the person being announced a child of God based on their expression of desire to be a child of God. This teaching presents God's offering of salvation as a promise guaranteed on grounds of acceptance of God's gift of salvation. The greatest failure of this teaching is to neglect that true salvation results in real evidence within the born-again person. No one can definitely know that this evidence resides within another person. The person who has salvation must declare its presence for their own self.

The scriptures teach that a person has real evidence within their own person when they have truly believed on the Lord Jesus Christ with all their heart. Notice a few verses that present this fact.

- *(Rom 8:16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:*
- *(Gal 4:6) And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*
- *(1 John 3:24) ... And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

These are just a few of the verses that abundantly prove that there is real evidence within a believer that lets them realize that they are indeed a child of God. With this being true, no one, (not even those who teach Universalism) has the right to tell a person that they are a child of God. If anyone practices telling people that they are children of God, "Woe unto them". Let every Bible believer yield to the teaching of God's Word and let the redeemed of the Lord say so for their own self, Ps. 107:2.

## **2. Universalism Fails to Recognize the Relationship of the New Birth to Church Membership.**

Universalism expresses this failure by teaching that water baptism has no connection to Church membership. The Bible teaches contrary to this. The Bible teaches that the Church is the Lord's body in several verses. A few are presented here.

- (Eph 1:22-23) *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, {23} Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.*
- (Col 1:24) *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.*

The born-again are to unite their body to the Lord's body by baptism.

The scriptures teach that we enter "into" Christ by baptism. This is clearly taught in Romans.

(Rom 6:3) *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?*

This verse shows how we enter "into" Christ. We are baptized "into" Christ. In baptism we put our old ways of living to death in exchange for the new ways of Christ. This is the only reasonable action for the born-again child of God. They have the possession of the Holy Spirit within, so they follow through with putting the outer-man off by entering the Lord's body by baptism. In the new birth discussion, under point one, it was noticed how Christ enters "into" a person when they become a child of God. Then, as noticed in Romans 6:3, we enter "into" Christ by baptism. So then, entering Christ does NOT occur in the new birth, it occurs by baptism. When we enter Christ we are entering His body, i.e. the Church.

The Bible teaches the difference between the new birth and Church membership in the letter to the Galatians in the third chapter. Notice these verses.

(Gal 3:26-27) *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. {27} For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

these verses there is found the clear difference between Christ entering a child of God and a child of God entering into Him. First, people become children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Remember the verse quoted earlier from Galatians 4:6 that stated, “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts”. When a person becomes a child of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, the Lord enters into their heart. Then, the next step mentioned in Galatians 3:27 states that those who have entered into Christ did so by baptism. There is an obvious difference in having Christ enter into a person and having a person enter into Christ. These verses from Galatians clearly teach this difference. Moreover, this is the difference in being born-again and in the Lord’s Church body compared to being born-again and out of the Lord’s Church body.

### **3. Universalism Fails to Recognize the Authority Granted to the Church.**

Most of Universalism will teach that the only authority to be possessed by any organized group of worshippers is confined to the Bible itself. This statement may not hold true for all of Universalism but most would admit that this is their chosen view on authority. This statement presents that any group who follows the teachings of the scriptures are automatically authorized to perform their work. In this there is an obvious ignorance of the Lord's statement referring to the longevity of His Church. He stated that the very gates of Hell would never prevail against His Church, Matt. 16:18. So then, His Church has remained in existence ever since He set it into action. The many failures of Universalism has caused it to either ignore or deny this fact to be true.

The Lord gave His organized body authority to carry out the great commission. Some may claim that a wide diversity of people have been effective in leading lost souls to saving grace and that this success proves them to have part in the Church. This work of leading lost souls to saving grace is only a third of the work laid out in the great commission. All who have found grace by faith are admonished to beckon every lost soul to the waters of salvation. Notice this teaching: (Rev 22:17) *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* Pay attention that all who have heard the Lord are instructed to invite everyone else to the waters of salvation. Notice that those who hear are separated from the Bride in this verse. The Bride is the Church. She is not only to invite all to the waters of salvation, but she is to baptize, then teach the baptized to observe all that the Lord has commanded, Matt. 28:18-10.

In Matthew 16:16-19, the Lord told His Church that He would give it the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. A very important statement is made in the 19<sup>th</sup> verse of this chapter. It will be given here for consideration.

(Mat 16:19) *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

In this verse it is noted that the Lord told the Church that whatsoever it bound on Earth would be bound in Heaven while whatsoever it loosed on Earth would be loosed in Heaven. This is very important for consideration. It is particularly hard on Universalism.

This will become very obvious when the next verse that teaches this binding and loosing principle is presented. Let us consider that verse in this place:

*(Mat 18:17-18) And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. {18} Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

If there was any doubt before that this binding and loosing principle was directed to the work of the Church, there should be none now. Here it is plain that the Lord is telling the Church to count certain ones as heathen and publicans if they refused to hear it. A further investigation of this chapter would reveal that this one who was to be considered as a heathen was a brother who offended another brother and refused to repent of his deeds. Now let us consider the principle of Universalism in light of these facts. Universalism states that when a person is born-again they are in the Church at that time. Then the Lord directs the Church to loose certain types of brethren from it. What would Universalism suggest just happened to that “loosed” member’s salvation? This is something to consider isn’t it? Remember that the Bible teaches once born again, always born again. One wonders if Universalism makes this allowance?

The authority of the Church is discovered in the binding and loosing ability given to it by the Lord. The disorderly brother, mentioned in Matthew chapter 18, was loosed by the authority given to the Church. Just as keys are used to lock and unlock a door, the Lord’s Church is authorized to bind or loose a person from it’s membership. This Church action performed on Earth will determine who is in the Church membership in Heaven. Remember that the Lord said, whatsoever it bound on Earth would be bound in Heaven. Universalism normally jokes about this Bible teaching regarding the authority the Lord gave to His Church. Though Universalism jokes, it is plain that the Lord is very serious about this matter.

In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter five, we find another situation where the authority of the Church is being mentioned. Consider verses four, five and thirteen of this chapter.

*(1 Cor 5:4-5) 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.*

(1 Cor 5:13) *But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*

Here we find one who is an open fornicator. This person's fornication was common knowledge. In verse four, the Church at Corinth was charged to gather together and with the power of the Lord to put that wicked person away from it. Here we find the word "power" which also means authority. We see the power, or authority, of a Church being used to loose a member from it. Do we conclude that this person was loosed from the new birth or from the Church? If the new birth puts a person into the Church, this loosing took the person's new birth. Thankfully, the Bible teaches that a person who is born-again may enter into the Church by being bound to it through baptism. If a member becomes unrepentant in an error such as fornication, the Church must then use its authority to loose that member from it. This being so, the person remains a child of God though outside of the Church.

#### **4. Universalism Fails to Recognize True Baptism.**

Universalism has a tendency to accept any person who has been buried in water. This means, if the person feels that they have become a child of God and have been buried in water, then their baptism is readily accepted. Universalism does NOT attempt to discern between valid and invalid baptism. In all honesty, it seems that anyone who directs souls to the Lord and administers a burial in water is acceptable to Universalism. Does the Bible teach this to be the ways of the Lord's Church? Did the early Church conduct itself in this manner? Surely, all who sincerely want to be found in the truth would test their practice against the evidence found in the Bible. It is certain that the Lord will test all of our actions against His written Word, so how much more should we do the same?

In the scriptures we learn by example how the first Church conducted itself as it met with other children of God. Let us consider some verses to establish a pattern of conduct then we will consider others that deal especially with baptism.

*(Acts 18:24-26) And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. {25} This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. {26} And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.*

Here we find Apollos, preaching in a synagogue. Notice that he is described as being instructed in the way of the Lord. He was fervent in the spirit and taught diligently the things of the Lord. Even though all of these fine qualities were assigned to Apollos, he was lacking something. He was limited in his knowledge. The teaching he had was limited. He has a lot of the characteristics of Universalism. He was zealous, but lacking. It might be stated in this place that Apollos was just like Martin Luther and Charles Finny in later times. All were zealous but not in the true Church.

We find that there were two who were able to be a great influence on Apollos' life. These two were taught of an Apostle. They took Apollos unto them. Having taken him in, they taught him the way of God more perfectly. Herein reveals the nature of Universalism. Universalism puts all who know the Lord in the same group. If

Universalism was correct, should not Apollos have been perfect BEFORE coming into contact with Aquila and Priscilla? Apollos lived in a day when there were no great divisions among people who professed to be Christians. Their day was one of paganism and Jewish legalism. How, if all Christians come to the same point when born-again, could it be that there was a difference between Apollos and Aquila and Priscilla? The answer is plain. Apollos was NOT in the Church before he was brought more perfectly to the way of God.

Let's consider a section of the scriptures that presents the case that all baptism is not the same and has to be tested by the scriptures in order to discover its virtue. As we do this, the failure of Universalism regarding baptism will be exposed.

*(Acts 19:1-5) And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, {2} He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. {3} And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. {4} Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. {5} When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Here we find a group of disciples who met with the Apostle Paul. First, we want to recognize that these men were already disciples before the Apostle Paul met them. As they spoke with the Apostle Paul, they were questioned to find out if they have received the Comforter that was poured out on the Church on the day of Pentecost. These disciples had not heard about the Comforter being given to the Church. This led to Paul questioning their baptism.

At this point it becomes necessary to refresh our memory as to what happened on the day of Pentecost. We should focus our attention on the directions given by the Apostle Peter to those who had heard the sermon Peter preached. These who heard Peter were pricked in their hearts. When thus pricked, they questioned, "What shall we do"? In the answer to this question, we learn more about what Paul was dealing with as he met these disciples passing through the upper coasts of Ephesus.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter told these people that they should: 1) Repent and 2) Be baptized in the name of the Lord. What did Peter mention would follow them repenting and being baptized in the name of the Lord? Peter stated that when they repented and were baptized in the name of the Lord, they would receive the Comforter. Here the order of the Great Commission is found with the Comforter being exclusively limited to the body of the Church. Perhaps this is where Universalism gets so confused. Everywhere they see the Holy Spirit they see a new birth. Perhaps they make more of baptism than credit is given them. If Universalism makes receiving the Comforter the point of becoming a child of God, one would have to suppose that the Apostles really were NOT children of God until the day of Pentecost. This brings to light the many contradictions found in Universalism.

What really did happen when Paul met these disciples as he passed through the upper coasts of Ephesus? He questioned their baptism. He did not ask, “Are you sure you were born again”? Their standing of being believers was not questioned at all. Instead, he ask them, “Unto what then were you baptized”? We find the whole relationship of these disciples to the Church hanging on this question. It is obvious that the Comforter was promised to the Church before the Lord ascended back to Heaven and that it was received by the Church on the day of Pentecost. Why then did Paul find these disciples standing on the outside of this promise looking in? The answer is found in the baptism that they had. They had not been baptized in the name of the Lord. However, once these were baptized in the name of the Lord, and the Apostle laid his hands on them, they did receive the Comforter revealing that they too had become part of the body of the Lord. Recall the teaching of the Apostle James, “The body without the Spirit is dead”. These disciples united with the living body of the Lord Jesus Christ: the true Church.

### **Additional Points Regarding Baptism that Universalism Sometimes Question.**

There are a couple of points that should be addressed ahead of time. When Universalism is confronted with these thoughts, they normally present some questions that may cause uneasiness if not considered ahead of time. A couple of these points will be presented at this point.

Some things that Universalism questions about baptism:

- A. Cornelius and his household.
- B. The Samaritan believers and Philip.
- C. Why Philip could baptize the eunuch.

#### A. Cornelius and his household.

Universalism wants to know why the household of Cornelius received the Comforter before they were baptized. It has been presented here what the scriptures teach regarding the order of receiving the Comforter. The scriptures teach that a person must: 1) Repent and 2) Be baptized in the name of the Lord before the Comforter will fellowship with a child of God. This is found time after time in the New Testament. The one exception to this example is the household of Cornelius. What is so different about the household of Cornelius that God would act differently in his situation?

Cornelius is indeed a special situation. When the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Acts of the Apostles is read, you will learn that he was of the Italian band. He was therefore NOT a Jew. He was a Gentile. The significance of this is found when you consider how the Lord dealt with Peter before Peter went to Cornelius. The Lord presented to Peter that he should call no thing unclean that the Lord had cleansed. This point can be found in different places in the New Testament. Recall the woman at the well in John chapter four. She presented the attitude of the Jews towards the Gentiles. On that occasion it was discovered that the Jews had no dealings with these outsiders. The woman at the well marveled that Jesus, being a Jew, would even converse with her. Again, in the Galatian letter, Paul points out how Peter still had a problem interacting with the Gentiles. Paul said that he withstood Peter to his face over this error.

But what does this have to do with the Cornelius? Cornelius' house was the first Gentiles brought into the New Covenant relationship. The Church, composed of Jews, received the world wide commission, but had only went to other Jews to this point. The Church was finishing the work of confirming the first covenant with the Jews. They were also presenting the good news of the New Covenant to them. Then, here Peter is sent down to a household of Gentiles. Notice the statement of the brethren at Jerusalem who heard that Peter had went among the Gentiles. (Acts 11:2-3) *And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, {3} Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.* The question here becomes: would the brethren at Jerusalem had contended with Peter if Gentiles had already been brought into the Church? It is certain from the reaction of the brethren at Jerusalem that Cornelius' household was the first Gentiles brought into the Church.

Why then did they receive the Comforter before baptism? This was an indication to Peter and those brethren accompanying him that the New Covenant was to the Gentile nation too. The Apostle Paul was selected as a chosen vessel of the Lord to be sent to the Gentiles to show how that there was no nationality in the body of the Lord but the promise of God was extended to all the world. At the household of Cornelius, we find the fulfillment of what the Lord said, *Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,* (Mat 21:43). The Kingdom was to be given to the Gentile nation, as it is today. This meant that the Gentiles were to be brought into the Church relationship with the Lord just like the Jews.

#### B. The Samaritan believers and Philip.

Universalism would like to know why the Comforter was not given to the Samaritans once Philip had preached to them and baptized them. Here again, we see the order of receiving the Comforter. The lost are to: 1) Repent, and 2) Be baptized in the name of the Lord before the comforter will fellowship with a child of God. On the occasion when Philip had baptized these Samaritans, it was noted that the Comforter had not fallen on these believing, baptized Samaritans but they were "baptized in the name of the Lord". Here are some crucial points to remember.

- Philip was able to baptize in the name of the Lord. This is the Philip who was ordained as recorded in chapter six of this same book. How do we know that? Well, the Apostles at Jerusalem were said to have heard of the work going on at Samaria and sent Peter and John. We also know that this was not the Apostle Philip due to the fact that the Apostles are said to have remained in Jerusalem when Stephen was stoned to death. This leaves the Philip ordained as recorded in chapter six of the Acts of the Apostles to perform this work in Samaria. This ordained man was able to administer baptism in the name of the Lord. So then, the ordinance could still be administered even though the Comforter had not fallen on these baptized persons.
- Philip couldn't pass the gifts onto those he baptized. Philip, though he had the ability to lay hands on the sick and work miracles, could NOT pass this ability on to those he contacted. He was able to do the work authorized in the great commission but he could NOT pass the ability of the Apostles onto the generation following him. It is clear in these scriptures teaching about Philip at Samaria that he was not able to pass this ability on to the next generation. In as much as the generation following the Apostles could not pass this miraculous ability on to those they met, this miraculous ability must have ceased to exist in the Church with the death of the Apostles. This also connects with the teaching in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 13 that teaches that what would remain among the Church in the fellowship of the Comforter would be faith, hope, and charity. If all that accompanies these three gifts was considered, it would be noted that these are mighty gifts to have in possession.

### C. Why Philip could baptize the eunuch.

Universalism wants to know why a person without the express vote of the Church could administer valid baptism like Philip did with the eunuch. Here again, the times at hand has to be considered. Just as the brethren in the first Church was able to do miracles, speak in foreign languages never learned before, and heal the sick, there were other miraculous matters occurring in the Church. When Philip went down to meet the

eunuch, he was told to go to the eunuch. Once he had completed the task of teaching the eunuch, he was taken away out of sight. This was a miraculous event. Philip was fully authorized by the Holy Spirit to administer the ordinance of baptism to the eunuch. If someone would like to know if the true Church would accept such a baptism today, the logical answer would have to be given. Did the Holy Spirit sweep the administrator away before he made it to the water's edge? If the answer is "No" then the Church is not obliged to recognize the work. In all sincerity, the Church knew that the days of these miracles were going to cease. Philip could not even pass the miraculous abilities on to the Samaritans and the Apostles had laid hands on him. This also applies to the occasion when Paul was baptized by Ananias. Ananias was sent directly by the Holy Spirit to baptize Paul. This all happened in the days of these outward manifestations of miracles and have long since ceased.

How then does the Bible teach for this work of the Church to be carried into action? In the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Acts of the Apostles we find a great example in the Church at Antioch. Here we learn that the Holy Spirit called two Church members to a certain mission work. The Church then laid hands (ordained) these two brethren and sent them to the work. Notice that the Apostle Paul was ordained by the Church at Antioch. It is interesting to discover that even the Apostle came under the authority of the Church. From this work, we learn of the world wide commission being followed. This pattern is a great display of the work of the Lord being accomplished. There were NO individuals running off to do the great work of God. Rather we see the pattern of two being sent out on the field at a time. This brings to mind how the Lord paired those up He sent out on the limited commission. It helps us to see how the Lord works the same from Heaven as He did on the Earth. It should be realized that Paul, in his letters to the Churches, often had a group of brethren accompanying him during his mission work. These brethren were approved of the Churches and sent out to that work. So then, what is the big difference between Philip and Paul? Philip left Jerusalem under time of persecution while Paul departed from Antioch in time of relative peace. Other things may be mentioned regarding this subject, but those presented will suffice at this time.

## **5. Universalism Fails to Recognize Who is to Partake of the Lord's Supper/Communion.**

Universalism would have all who believes themselves to be children of God to partake of the Lord's Supper/Communion. Under these conditions, if a person believes that they are a child of God because they were immersed as an infant, they may partake of communion. If a person believes that immersion as an adult has made them a child of God, they may partake of communion. Universalism makes no difference on the ground of what a person believes made them a child of God. Does this reflect a conviction or a weakness about the new birth?

Universalism normally makes no consideration of the life style of those who partake of communion. The teaching of love for the Lord Jesus and recognition of His death prevails in most of these Universalism services. Does this form of communion service fit the pattern taught to the Church by the Inspired Word of God? Did the Lord deliver this ordinance to the Church in this fashion? Did the Apostles teach the Church to observe the communion in this manner? Let's consider the scriptures to determine the answers to these questions.

Let's first consider some scriptures in order to learn how the Lord delivered this ordinance to the Church.

*(Mat 26:25-30) Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said. {26} And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. {27} And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; {28} For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. {29} But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. {30} And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.*

*(Mark 14:19-26) And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I? {20} And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish. {21} The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is*

*written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born. {22} And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. {23} And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. {24} And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. {25} Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. {26} And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.*

*(Luke 22:14-23) And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. {15} And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: {16} For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. {17} And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: {18} For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. {19} And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. {20} Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. {21} But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table. {22} And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed! {23} And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.*

As these verses are studied, it is noticed that the order of the things that happened are the same in Matthew and Mark but different in Luke. In Matthew and Mark we find that the bread was taken then the fruit of the vine (juice) was taken. However, in Luke we find the fruit of the vine, then the bread, and then the cup AGAIN being taken. Notice the wording of verses 20 and 21 in Mark and compare them to Luke verses 21 and 22. From studying these three accounts, we learn that Luke is NOT careful to present the exact order of the things that happened during this the Lord's Supper. There is a passage of scripture that does clarify with certain detail what happened that night.

In order to learn exactly what happened that night, let's consider what someone who was actually there has to say about this occasion. Notice some verses from John chapter 13.

*(John 13:21-30) When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. {22} Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. {23} Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. {24} Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. {25} He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it? {26} Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. {27} And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. {28} Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. {29} For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. {30} He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night.*

Here we find an eyewitness account of what happened the night that the Lord instituted the communion in His Church. We realize from reading the other gospels that the communion followed the passover service. Part of the passover consisted of dipping bread in a vessel before it was eaten. This was referred to in John 13:26 as “dipping the sop”. When we read about this taking place, we learn that Judas Iscariot took the “sop” and went immediately out, verse 30. If Judas took the “sop”, which was part of the passover, and went out immediately, he was NOT present to take of the Lord's Supper/Communion. This is not obvious when you read Luke's account of what happened that night; however, it is very clear that this is what happened when you consider the eyewitness account given by John.

Why is this important to consider anyway? Well, it is plain that the Lord did NOT serve just anyone His Communion. He limited who He served to those eleven men whom He later gave the world-wide commission. These who He served the communion were the same ones who He authorized to make disciples, baptize those disciples, and teach the baptized disciples to observe all things He had commanded them. What did the

Lord teach these eleven about the communion? Did he teach them to serve it to betrayers? As a matter of scriptural example, He only served those who had been faithful to stay with Him during His trials here on Earth.

What did the Apostle Paul teach regarding who to invite to partake of the communion? Let us again consider the 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthian letter for this information.

*(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.*

Here we notice that the Apostle is addressing those who are considered to be brothers. This thought makes our mind go back to the points regarding the authority given to the Church by the Lord. Notice how the Church is commanded to deal with brothers who are unrepentant. Here we find that the Church is being taught to NOT eat with certain types of brethren. Do we suppose that this was referring to just any kind of meal? We should NOT make this assumption. This verse is clearly teaching who to invite to partake of the communion.

Recall that this same Apostle taught this same Church in chapter eight of this letter to eat casual meals with unbelievers under certain conditions. If a Church member can eat with an unbeliever, out in public, can he not eat with a believer out in public? This seems only reasonable. Why then would anyone think that 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:11 is dealing with anything BUT the communion? Church members are not restrained from eating a casual meal as long as it is received with thanks giving. This teaching in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:11 harmonizes exactly with the example of the Lord as He dealt with Judas Iscariot. So then, the Head of the Church expects His Church to partake of His communion in the same way He delivered it unto them.

Here we find overwhelming evidence that Universalism fails to recognize this Bible teaching. When this is considered, it should not seem as something amazing regarding Universalism. Universalism is not part of the Lord's Church body, so why should we expect it to keep something that was NOT entrusted to it?

## **Closing Comments**

There are many points that have been produced so that the judicial mind may consider the scriptures and discover some of the burdensome facts associated with Universalism. The truth of the scriptures has been presented to bring Universalism to the light. The points that have been considered regarding Universalism really just begins to address the “Tip” of the iceberg. These points have been presented in hopes that Universalism may be detected and avoided. The teachings of the Bible have been presented as well so that the right way of God may be detected and once detected, joined.

M Brawner