

## The Four Cups of The Lord's Supper

The passage that we refer to as "The Lord's Supper" is often taken for granted. Every week on the first day of the week, we follow a pattern set forth in the early church of breaking the bread and drinking the cup. Often we do this without really allowing the true meaning to play a part in our minds, hearts and souls in a way that has purpose and importance like it should. Perhaps it is because we have done it so many times in the past that it has become routine. Perhaps we are distracted in a way that we do not appreciate it with the proper mindset. For whatever reason we are lacking in this part of our worship, we must gain and retain significance of the Lord's Supper. I am persuaded this lesson will help freshen-up that perspective.

Matt 26:26-30 And while they were eating, Jesus took {some} bread, and after a blessing, He broke {it} and gave {it} to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave {it} to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. 29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." 30 And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

- As mentioned a couple of lessons ago, the Jews of the first century and even today, used four ceremonial cups of wine in the Passover Feast. They based this on the four phrases of deliverance of *Exodus 6:6-7* "Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.'<sup>7</sup> 'Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. This was the forward looking statement from God summarizing the deliverance of His people out of enslavement of Egypt.
- They celebrated the Passover of that historical night not only to commemorate their deliverance, but to be afforded the protection from the death of the first-born plague by the blood of the lamb on the doorpost.
- Simply and summarily put, this holy feast of Passover was a commanded Jewish feast about being delivered from both death and slavery. This is why the tradition of the Jews using four cups of wine developed around the passage of Ex 6:6-7, for each cup symbolized a form of that deliverance.

1. Cup One: I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians...

- This cup was usually taken with the hors d'oeuvres in the main house in preparation of the primary meal of the lamb. They would take some of the blood of the lamb and spread it on the doorpost of the entrance to the home just as directed in *Exod 12:7* *'Moreover, they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.* They drank the first cup of wine in recognition of the lamb that was slain and spreading of the blood on the doorposts.
  - Because the meal was being taken in an upper room and the doorposts of the house were downstairs, this cup of wine would have been taken downstairs. This is probably why we do not find this cup occurring in the upper room. We do have record of eating the hors d'oeuvres in the form of morsels.
2. Cup Two: I will deliver you from their bondage...
- This cup of wine was to be taken with the inquiry prior to the meal of the Passover. A young boy from the family was to ask "What does this mean?" This is found in *Exod 12:26* *"And it will come about when your children will say to you, 'What does this rite mean to you?' <sup>27</sup> that you shall say, 'It is a Passover sacrifice to the LORD who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes.'"*
  - They would then drink the wine of the second cup while recounting the glorious deliverance from Egypt. Since we have no record of a young boy in this upper room, perhaps we might better understand why John, the youngest of apostles, next to Jesus in the "good" seat. Perhaps he is in the place of the youngster? This is speculation based on historical practice.
  - Cup of wine #2 is actually the first of the two cups mentioned in the Luke account and is found in *Luke 22:17* *And when He had taken a cup {and} given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; The sharing of this cup communicated complete agreement and understanding of the meaning of the meal they were about to partake of. They are united that God delivered them from BONDAGE. *Exod 12:8* 'And they shall eat the flesh that {same} night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs.*
3. Cup Three: I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.
- This cup of wine was to be taken after the completion of the meal, focusing further on the salvation from the Lord, not necessarily from bondage, but JUDGMENT. *Exod 12:12* *'For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments-- I am the LORD.* They would all drink

of this cup in recognition of the “passing over” of judgment of death of the first-born.

- God with His outstretched arm used his power to deliver His people from the plagues and particularly the death of the first-born. This was the second cup mentioned not by Matthew or Mark, but by *Luke in 22:20 And in the same way {He took} the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.*
  - It was on this cup that Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper. All mankind was facing death and the necessity of the shedding of blood for a “Passing Over” of judgment that was to occur. Someone is going to have to die if there was not a shedding of blood to replace it! *Heb 9:22 "...all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."*
  - Jesus was focusing on the impending breaking of His body and the shedding of His blood for us on Calvary. If we did not nor will not keep that in memory, then there would be no “Passing Over” of the judgment of God for us.
4. Cup Four: I will take you for My people, and I will be your God.
- This fourth cup was referred to as the “Cup of God's Presence”. They referred to it as this because it was the closing of the meal and the focus was the gathering of God's people into ONE and in the PRESENCE OF GOD.
  - We do not see this ceremonial cup being mentioned by any of the gospel writers, perhaps because it did not take place for this last Passover. In fact, following Cup #3, Matthew and Mark both similarly state *Mark 14:25-26 "Truly I say to you, I shall never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." 26 And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*
  - It appears that Jesus closed His last earthly Passover by rejecting any further drinking (Cup #4) and going right to the closing hymns of the *Hallel*. It is very likely that Jesus' abstention from Cup #4, the cup of God's presence, was because the TRUE GATHERING to come in the KINGDOM of GOD is when we will dine with Him into the very PRESENCE of GOD Himself!
  - *Rev 19:9 And he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."*
  - The apostles Paul stated in *1 Cor 11:26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes*. What I want you to see is the phrase “until He comes”. There is a day in the future where the skies will be rolled back as a scroll and the Lord will descend from heaven to gather His saints, both living and in the grave. When we as Christians remember back

to the sacrifice of Jesus during the Lord's Supper, we are also remembering forward to the day that we will feast with Him in the Father's kingdom.

- Those of us that been saved by the blood of Jesus, the true Passover Lamb, have His blood smeared on the doorposts of our heart. We have a date with Jesus Christ in heaven on that glorious day when we will sit down for Cup #4, the Cup of the Presence of God.
- *Rev 21:3-4 And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them, 4 and He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be {any} death; there shall no longer be {any} mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."*