

Joseph and the Seder Cups

The Jewish Passover Seder employs the use of four symbolic cups. These four cups parallel those seen in the story of Joseph and, in type, the relationship between the Jews, the Gentile church and Jesus Christ.

THE SEDER

In the celebration of the Jewish Seder (Sa« der) there are four cups of wine used to commemorate the four "I wills" of God in Exodus 6:6.

Therefore say to the children of Israel: "I am the LORD;
I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians,
I will rescue you from their bondage, and
I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.
I will take you as My people, and I will be your God.

Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

The first cup is the cup of sanctification or "Bringing Out"; the second is the cup of judgment or "Rescue from Bondage"; the third is the cup of "Redemption"; and the last is the cup of "Taking", for He will take them as His people.

Jesus, at the Passover Seder in Jerusalem, used the third cup of this celebration before His death:

Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matt. 26:27-28

The fourth cup will be partaken later when He returns to set up the promised kingdom.

"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."
Matt. 26:29

These cups can also be seen in the life of Joseph. Like the first coming of the Mashiach, Joseph was rejected by his brethren and thrown into the pit of death¹, given over to gentiles for silver², lifted out of the pit of death³, preached to those who were in prison⁴ and exalted to the right hand of power⁵.

¹ Compare Gen. 37:24, Zech. 9:11 & Acts 2:23

² Compare Gen. 37:28, Zech. 11:13 and Matt. 27:9

³ Compare Gen 37:28, Jonah 2:6 & Acts 2:24

⁴ Compare Gen. 40:8 & 1 Peter 3:18-19

⁵ Compare Gen. 41:40 & Hebrews 8:1

THE CUP OF BRINGING OUT

While Joseph was in prison, he interpreted the dreams of two prisoners; a butler and a baker. The baker's dream dealt with the destruction of his body in the idiom of consumed bread. The butler's dream dealt with his being brought out of Pharaoh's prison in the idiom of the cup of wine.

This corresponds to the first cup of the Seder, the cup of "Bringing Out".

THE CUP OF RESCUE

While Joseph was prime minister of Egypt at Pharaoh's right hand, his brothers were starving for bread. The first time they came to Egypt to buy grain, they did not recognize Joseph, just as the Jews did not recognize Jesus at His first coming.⁶

The second time they come to Egypt they were expecting to be put into bondage by the prime minister.

Now the men were afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "It is because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may seek an occasion against us and fall upon us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys." Gen . 43:18

Instead of being thrown into prison, he rescued Simeon from bondage along with his brothers and personally served them a feast. What was served at the feast? Bread and wine! The cup of wine seen here is the cup of "Rescue from Bondage".

THE CUP OF REDEMPTION

Everything seemed to be fine as the brothers were preparing to return to Canaan. Unbeknownst to them, Joseph had an unnamed servant hide a cup in their bags of grain. This cup was a silver cup; silver is the idiom of *blood* and also *redemption*.

And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, "...put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. Gen. 44:2

Notice that the cup is empty or the contents already consumed. As a type, this cup has already been given as the New Covenant. The cup is then hidden within the bag or body of grain. In fact, the text states that it was placed in the *mouth* of the bag. Jesus wrote a letter to the Church of Laodicea where He stated,

"...because you are lukewarm... I will spew you out of My mouth.
Rev. 3:16

⁶ Compare Gen. 42:7 & John 1:11

The grain in the bags can also be seen as the individual believer, for Jesus also said concerning belief in Him,

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." John 12:24

The cup of Redemption is now hidden from view from the eyes of the children of Israel within the body of the Church.

What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were hardened. Just as it is written [in Isaiah 29:10]: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day." Romans 11:7-8

This cup was used for "divination" (as stated by the unnamed servant as well as Joseph). Yet Joseph stated clearly in Genesis 41:16 that dream interpretation is by God and not of himself. God forbade divination; this cup of redemption had thus become offensive to these Jews.

Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone" and "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.⁷

The hidden cup is now revealed to the Jews. They fall on their face knowing that this cup represents their guilt and condemnation!

Awake, awake! Stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury; you have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling, and drained it out. 1 Peter 2:7

It is very important to realize that the brothers were only guilty of killing Joseph, yet Joseph was not dead! In fact, he was right in front of them, only they were blinded to him.

The Nazis of World War II (and the anti-Semites of today) blamed the death of Jesus Christ on the Jews. They did this because they do not believe in a risen Savior who is alive today!

The brothers were guilty of being jealous of Joseph because God told him that the entire patriarchal family would bow down to him. The resultant jealousy led them to utterly reject their brother, thus refusing to have him reign over them. Joseph used the cup of redemption to draw his estranged brethren back into relationship.

I say then, have [the Jews] stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Romans 11:11

⁷ 1 Peter 2:7 with ref. to Psalm 118:22 & Isaiah 8:14

The cup of redemption, hidden within the Church as the *communion cup*, will be used to draw an estranged Israel to Jesus just as it did to the brothers in Genesis 45.

Thus says your Lord, the LORD and your God, Who pleads the cause of His people: "See, I have taken out of your hand the cup of trembling, the dregs of the cup of My fury; you shall no longer drink it." Isaiah 51:22

The first time they saw Joseph, the brothers did not recognize him; the second time they see him, they *will* recognize him.

"...for I [Jesus] say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" Matt. 23:39

THE CUP OF TAKING

There is yet one more cup to be ingested, the cup of taking. This is based on the final "I will" of God, which follows a completed sentence. This sentence pause has lasted over 1900 years! Jesus said to His disciples,

"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. John 14:1-2

The Mashiach of Israel is coming for His Bride. Soon He will take her away to the marriage supper. There we will partake of the *cup of taking* and see the final salvation of Israel consummated.

"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they have pierced; they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. Zech. 10:12

Come, and let us return to the Lord; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. Hosea 6:1-2