

Until The Kingdom

Drinking the Fruit of God's Vine

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Given 04-Apr-15; Sermon #1260Bs

Matthew 26:27-29 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 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.

At the Passover service Jesus gave wine to the disciples, and then pledges to not drink it again. The parallel scriptures in Mark 14 and Luke 22 repeat this promise.

Matthew 27:34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

They crucify Him at 9:00AM, and in verse 35 the soldiers “parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.” Over the next three hours, Jesus is bombarded with mockery and insults.

Then at 12:00PM we read in Matthew 27:45 there was darkness over all the land for the next three hours. For the next three hours, not so much as a glimpse is provided into what happens. This too is a fulfillment of prophesy:

Amos 8:9-10 ..I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and darken the earth in the clear day...I will turn your feasts into mourning like the mourning of an only son and the end thereof as a bitter day.

During these three hours it appears the official transaction begins. Remembering God is light and in Him is no darkness, as Jesus takes on our

sins, He is removed from the Father, which is the penalty of sin. This separation for the first time is so intense that Jesus cries out with a loud voice in Matthew 27:46, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Matthew 27:47-50 (KJV) Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

John 19:28-30 (KJV) After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

We have an apparent contradiction. He promises to drink no more of the fruit of the vine but here He receives it. Two possible explanations:

He does not really drink it.

He drinks but we misunderstood the promise.

Possibility 1: He does not really drink it

Mark 15:23 (KJV) And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not.

This is the same Greek word for *received* as used in John's account of the second time wine is offered, Strong's 2983 (*lamban?*, pronounced *lam-ban'-o*), meaning *to take* or *receive*. This word is consistently translated as *to receive* or *take*. Here in Mark's account of the first wine offered, the word is followed by an absolute negative: He received not.

Matthew's account of the first wine offered clarifies that when he had tasted it He would not drink. The first wine was drugged and He refused to drink because He wanted to die fully conscious, with nothing reducing His pain. But he did taste it, which is technically taking a little drink.

In John 19:30 "Jesus received the vinegar." John's account of the second wine offered uses the same words as Mark for *received* and *vinegar* but there is no negative. The Greek word *vinegar* in all three accounts of the second wine offered is *oxos*, Strong's 3690, meaning *sour wine*. According to almost all commentaries this was a common sour wine and water mixture known as *posca* used by Roman soldiers. The bowl was likely there for the soldiers.

Jesus refuses the first drugged wine but He receives the second mixture of water and wine. We could suggest it is no longer wine since oxidation and bacteria over time turn alcohol into acid.

But the promises state He will not consume any "fruit of the vine," which includes wine, grape juice and even vinegar.

Luke 22:15-16 And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

Jesus also promises he will not eat until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God! But we know from Luke 24 that shortly after His resurrection he sat and ate both meat and unleavened bread with the disciples. It appears He did both eat unleavened bread and drink of the fruit of the vine so let's move on to option #2.

Possibility 2: He drinks it but we misunderstood the promise

Summarizing the four promises to not eat or drink, Jesus says "not until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God," "until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God," "until the kingdom of God shall come."

Is the promise just about physical eating and drinking or is it much more? In I Corinthians 10:16, Paul refers to “the cup of blessing,” stating “Is it not the communion [fellowship, sharing] of the blood of Christ?” These symbols represent a shadow of the future things to come. Jesus says the next time I partake of the Passover meal and wine it will be together with you in the Kingdom of God! My Father’s kingdom will be open to you through my sacrifice, and at that time each year thereafter, you will partake of the redemption represented by my blood and body. “When I drink it anew with you” that is, in a new manner in a new covenant—the produce of God’s spiritual vine.

The Biblical imagery of the vineyard ties in here beautifully. We see the transition from the vineyard in the Old Testament representing physical Israel (Isaiah 5) to the New Testament representation of the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 20:1-11, 21:33-43). In John 15:5 Jesus tells us He is the vine, He is the way to the Kingdom and we are the branches, and the only way to be in the Kingdom is therefore to remain in Him attached to the vine.

In Psalm 22, written over 1000 years earlier, we see a clear account of Jesus’ sufferings. Long before His suffering that day He knew exactly what He was going to endure for us. Paraphrasing Psalm 22:

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.

Just before His death, extreme fatigue has set in and His shoulders are likely out of joint, as we see in Psalm 22. Because of the weight of His body held up by his arms, it took great effort just to lift His head and breathe. Combine that with the heat of the day and the loss of blood, and we can visualize His extreme thirst. John tells us: “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, says, I thirst.” In Psalm 69:21 we read “... in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink”.

In John's gospel we see an interesting connection between thirst and the living water. And here Jesus, the source of living water, expresses extreme thirst. As we think about the association of living water with God's Holy Spirit could this thirst be a representation of God's departure from Jesus because of our sins?

Throughout the event we see numerous fulfillments of prophecy and the intricately and perfectly woven living word of God. And perhaps there is one more.

Modern day Jews keep an elaborate ceremony and meal on Passover called the Seder. The Seder is defined in the Mishnah, which was recorded about 200 AD. But the source of the written Mishnah was generations of oral tradition dating back to the great Rabbi Hillel who lived before Christ and is believed to have returned from Babylon.

It is possible that the Seder service was being kept by Jesus' disciples. During the Seder service four cups of wine are consumed, with each cup standing for one of the four "I wills" in Exodus 6:6-7. A cup of wine is also filled and set aside for Elijah.

After the Hallel (songs of praise), the fourth cup of wine is consumed and a door is opened so that Elijah can come in and join the Seder. But in the gospel accounts, Jesus and the disciples depart right after the song, never mention Elijah, and also never consume that fourth cup. Could Jesus have been completing the Jewish Passover service by drinking that last cup before He dies?

Interestingly enough, the 4th cup represents "*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.*" Could a reference to the Seder be why Matthew and Mark record that some of them, when they heard Jesus cry out, said, "this man calls for Elijah?"

Very interesting, but speculative. What we do know is in the final moments of His life on earth, Jesus received mixed wine and water via a sponge on a

hyssop stalk. This further connects Him as the Passover lamb and with the sacrificial and cleansing ceremonies in the Old Testament.

Water mixed with wine is also symbolic:

I John 5:6 ...not by water only, but by water and blood.

Hebrews 9:19-20 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

During the time of Christ, just like today, there was confusion on which day to celebrate the Passover. Clearly, Christ set the record straight by keeping the Passover with His disciples on the beginning of the 14th. And then in perfect fulfillment of prophesy He died near the end of the 14th as an example to the Jews.

As Amos stated, He turned their feasts into mourning, like the mourning of an only son and the end thereof as a bitter day. As He was dying they could probably hear in the distance the noise from the temple and the death of the thousands of lambs and the singing of the priests. But there was only one truly perfect lamb sacrificed that day.

When He received the mixed wine and water, He said “it is finished,” completing the once-for-all ultimate sacrifice. And each year thereafter He is right there with us as we celebrate the Passover and “the cup of blessing” anew, that is a new covenant with us in His Kingdom that has been opened to us.

He is the vine—the way to the Kingdom. He is with us as we drink anew each year, and He waits in earnest expectation to the ultimate fulfillment of His great promise to us: when the Kingdom is completely fulfilled as God the Father descends from heaven to rule for all eternity in New Jerusalem.

Luke 22:28-30 (KJV) You are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

At that time Jesus will indeed drink the fruit of the vine anew with us in His Kingdom. That is a new perfect wine—the produce of God's spiritual vine!