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The Third Cup of Redemption

Matthew 26:27-29; Mark 14:23-25; Luke 22:20;

First Corinthians 11:25-26

About 9:00 pm on Friday evening the fifteenth of Nisan

The third cup of redemption DIG: What clues were given to the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection in Exodus? What did Rabbi Sha'ul add? How many cups of wine were/are consumed during the Seder meal? What are their names? What does each cup represent? What does the cup of Elijah have to do with the four verbs from the four cups? What do the four cups describe for believers today?

REFLECT: When will Yeshua drink the fourth cup of praise again? How can you drink it with Him? What does it mean to you that you are redeemed? How often do you think of the cost of your redemption? Do you take it for granted? Did you ever? Do you ever thank Messiah for His sacrifice and the spilling of His blood for your sins? Why not?



In the same way, after supper, Jesus took **the third cup of redemption**, also called **the cup of blessing**, and when He had given thanks He offered it to them saying: **Drink from it, all of you. This cup is the New Covenant** (see my commentary on **Jeremiah**, to see link click [Eo](#) - **The Days are Coming, declares the LORD, When I**

Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el) in My blood, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me (Matthew 26:27-28; Mark 14:23-24 Luke 22:20; First Corinthians 11:25). This becomes not just merely a physical redemption from the land of Egypt (see my commentary on [Exodus Bz - Redemption](#)), but a spiritual redemption that will come by the shedding of **His blood**. A clue from **Exodus** points to the fact that the **blood** of **Christ** would have something to do with **the Passover** (see my commentary on [Exodus Bx - He Will See the Blood and Pass Over that Doorway](#)). Rabbi Sha'ul added: **For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (First Corinthians 11:26).** During the course of **the Pesach** meal, participants drink **four cups of kosher Passover wine, the fruit of the vine:**

The first is the cup of sanctification or the cup of blessing. It is based on the promise from **ADONAI** that **I will bring you out (hotzeyti) from the yoke of the Egyptians (Exodus 6:6a).** In the *haggadah*, this cup is called *Kadesh*, or **the Cup of Sanctification**. The Hebrew word implies *separation* or *being set apart*, and an appropriate word for the first step of redemption from Egypt. At the beginning of every Seder, the *b'rakhah* is chanted, "Blessed are You O **Lord** our **God**, King of the universe who creates the fruit of the vine." Celebrants drink the first **cup** to thank **God** for bringing the children of Jacob out of **Egypt**.

The second is the cup of plagues, but it is not mentioned by any of the four Gospel accounts. It is based on the promise from **Ha'Shem** that **I will deliver you (hitzalti) from being slaves to them (Exodus 6:6b).** This goes beyond celebrating the deliverance from a life of slavery. It is called **the cup** of plagues, a reminder of the ten plagues upon **Egypt** (see my commentary on [Exodus Bj - The Ten Plagues of Egypt](#)). Although this **cup** represents the freedom of the Jewish people, **the rabbis teach that they are not to rejoice in the misfortunes of evil** (in this case, **the Egyptians**). As a result, this **cup** of **wine** is not tasted and enjoyed, but emptied by spilling out ten drops, one at a time, for each plague.

The third is the cup of redemption. It is based upon **God's** promise that **I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment (Exodus 6:6c).** This has always been **the cup** taken right after the main meal, immediately after the *afikoman* search (see [Kj - Breaking the Middle Matzah](#)). The Hebrew term *gaalti* implies buying back something that belonged to someone else. It's the same verb used in the redemption of a slave at **the Year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:47-55).** Each year when Jews celebrate the Seder, they are to remember that **ADONAI** paid an unbelievable price for the

redemption of **His** people. Before **Christ**, this was clearly understood to be the death of **the Pesach** lamb and the blood applied to the doorframe of the house (see my commentary on **Exodus By - The Tenth Plague of Death**). They were slaves, now they are free. The Cup of Redemption is a wonderful reminder of **God's** love for us. We were slaves to sin, now we are set free.

The fourth is the cup of praise (also called the cup of acceptance). It is based on **the LORD's** promise that **I will take you as My own people (*lakakhti*), and I will be your God. Then you will know that I Am the LORD who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians (Exodus 6:7).** At the very end of the Seder, the fourth and final **cup** is taken when the second part of Hallel (**Psalm 115-118**) is recited. This is the climax of the previous three **cups**. After the blessing is chanted again, **the cup** is shared, followed by songs of praise in celebration of our full redemption.

The famous messianic Jew Alfred Edersheim (1825-1889) observed that, "**the Lord** ended each phase of **His** ministry with a feeding. **He** ended **His** Galilean ministry with the feeding of the five thousand. **He** ended **His** Gentile ministry with the feeding of the four thousand. And **He** ended the Judean ministry before **His** death on the cross with the feeding of **His** own **talmidim** in the upper room."¹⁴⁰⁴

There are many wonderful symbols that are part of the Seder service and **the Passover** holiday. One of the most important symbols is in many ways, one of the most misunderstood symbols. It is called **the cup of Elijah**. In many ways this **cup** represents the messianic vision of the Jewish people.

At the Passover meal, the question is raised, "Why do we drink four cups of wine?" And the truth is that the **four cups** of wine represent the **four verbs** that are in **Exodus 6:6-7**, which describe the way **God** brought the children of Isra'el out of **Egypt**. These **four Passover verbs** are **bring out, save, redeem** and **take out**.

In fact, some rabbis argue that there should be a fifth cup of wine because there is a fifth verb, bring, in verse 8 of Exodus 6, which refers to the way God would bring the Israelites into the Land. Some rabbis felt that this was a separate process. It wasn't part of the redemption of the children of Isra'el; it was part of their future. So there was a division among the rabbis as to how many verbs applied to the redemption of the Israelites. Therefore, there was a difference of opinion as to how many cups of wine you should drink at the Seder.

And so the rabbis came up with a compromise. They said, we will drink four cups of

wine at the Seder, but we will pour **a fifth cup**. Even though it sits in the middle of the table - no one touches it. In the messianic future, when **the Messiah** comes, **He** will answer all of our questions. The most important questions, like how do we have peace in this troubled world? And the rabbis say that when the footsteps of **the Messiah** arrive, some of the other questions of life will be resolved. One of those resolved questions would be, do we drink **four cups of wine** or **five cups of wine**? Do we drink **the fifth cup of wine** at the Seder table?

This is **the cup of Elijah** and serves as a reminder that **he** will come **before that great and dreadful Day of the LORD** (see my commentary on **Revelation Bw - See, I Will Send You the Prophet Elijah Before the LORD Comes**). The hope is that **Elijah** will appear at our Seder and announce the arrival of King **Messiah**. So as long as this **cup** sits on a Seder table, untouched, it means that we still live in a world that needs to be redeemed. It reminds us that our work, our ministry is not completed.

While all the **cups** picture wonderful historical lessons, **the four cups** of the Seder also reveal critical spiritual lessons for us today. For both Jewish and Gentile believers **the cups** describe our spiritual journey. Like **the cup of sanctification**, we were set apart for a purpose; like **the cup of plagues**, we were delivered from the foolishness of our old life; like **the cup of redemption**, we were bought back by a faithful **redeeming kinsman (Ruth 3:9 CJB)**; and like **the fourth cup**, we **praise God** for our **acceptance** as **His** child (see **Bw - What God Does For Us at the Moment of Faith**). **Messiah** was about to fulfill the ancient promises illustrated by symbols of the Seder!

Most certainly **Jesus** celebrated the first three **cups** at the last Seder, but then **He** said something surprising at the end of the evening. Normally **the talmidin** would have expected to celebrate the end of the Seder with the drinking **the last cup**. That was what **they** had done **their** entire lives. At that point, however, **Christ** said: **I tell you the truth, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink new wine with you in My Father's Kingdom (Mattityahu 26:29; Mark 14:25)**. **He** was referring to **the final fourth cup of praise**, which **He** clearly did not drink. How inexplicable, yet, at the same time, how profound!¹⁴⁰⁵

Wine has been manufactured from earliest times and is first mentioned in the Bible in connection with the drunkenness of **Noah (Genesis 9:21)**, which in turn led to the sin of **his** son, Ham. The vineyard provided one of man's first sources of both sugar so necessary for his health and the alcohol so harmful to his health.

The pure blood of the grape (Deuteronomy 32:14) is, in itself, not only harmless but

sweet and beautiful. It is only after the grape sugar, through the fermentation process caused by the yeast bacteria that collect on the grape skins, is broken down into alcohol and carbon dioxide, that the wine becomes harmful. Fermentation is essentially a decay process, in which complex sugar molecules are caused to break down into the simpler molecules of alcohol. At body temperature, sugar taken into the system is inhibited from this type of decay and instead is a prime source of energy for the body's activities. Alcohol, on the other hand, is itself a cause of bodily decay, entering the nervous system and the entire bodily structure, causing damage everywhere it goes and, eventually, if enough is ingested, death.

Two Hebrew words for **wine** are used in the TaNaKh. The first (*tiros*), meaning **the pure blood of the grape**, and (*yayin*), meaning fermented or decayed juice. However, in the Greek language the same word (*oinos*), was used for both. The result is that in the B'rit Chadashah, the word wine can mean either the fresh **fruit of the vine**, or its decayed product, as the context may require. There is an abundance of both ancient Hebrew and Greek secular literature available to verify that both fermented and unfermented "wines" were in common use by the people of that day.

It is significant that, in establishing **the Lord's Supper**, **Yeshua** was always careful to use the phrase **fruit of the vine**, instead of wine, least **He** be misunderstood. Alcohol, the product of putrefaction and decay, and thus the perfect symbol of death, could certainly not represent the life-giving quality of the blood of **Messiah** symbolized in the cup at **His** table. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that **He** would create a substance which would cause drunkenness (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Bq - Jesus Changes Water Into Wine**). The wine which **He** made was, in fact, new wine from **the blood of the grape**, freshly created! It was not old, decaying wine, as it would have to be if it were intoxicating. There was no time for the fermentation process to break down the structure of its energy-giving sugars into disintegrative alcohols. It thus was a fitting representation of **His** glory and was appropriate to serve at the very first of **His** great miracles, and here, at **the last supper**.



The next time **Jesus** will drink **the fourth cup of acceptance** will be at the wedding feast of the Lamb on the earth to start the messianic **Kingdom** (see my commentary on **Revelation Eg - The Wedding Feast of the Lamb**). That is a Seder you won't want to miss. If you believe that **Yeshua** is **the Son of God: For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (First Corinthians 15:3-4)**. Then you will experience that Seder with **Him!**

Yerushalayim was quiet. The City of David seemed to be deserted. The streets were clear of people and animals with only the roofs and alabaster pinnacles catching the glow of the moon. On the wall of **Pilate's** headquarters a Roman guard folded his arms against the chill of an east wind and watched his off-duty comrades roll dice on the flagstones below. He laughed at the soldiers' arguments after each roll when his attention was diverted by the sentry at the twin gates, who stepped into the roadway and drew his sword.

He watched as the sentry, who spoke sharply to someone in the moonlight. In a moment the sentry was waving someone inside the praetorium, but whoever it was would come no further than under the twin gates. Through the courtyard torchlights the soldier above could see that it was **the high priest** and beside **him** the burly **chief of the Temple guard**.

They argued. The sentry thought, "They wouldn't be here unless they wanted something from **Pilate**." Always, it seemed to him, they wanted something done or they wanted something stopped. He watched and saw the soldier below sheathe his sword, cup his hands, and roar across the courtyard that **Caiaphas, the high priest**, desired immediate audience with **Pontius Pilate**, governor of Judea and Samaria, at the pleasure of Tiberius Caesar.



The sentry saw **the high priest** standing at the twin gates. Such superstitious people! He wouldn't come in to a Gentile's residence for fear of being defiled. What a fool. He was glad **Pilate** kept **him** waiting. The guards along the walls of Jerusalem called out the second watch of the night. In thousands of homes, the Seder was nearing an end.¹⁴⁰⁶