

Matthew 23-04-23b

We're in Matthew chapter 27, and we're looking at the Lord Jesus at the point of the crucifixion itself, when they give him this aksos, this sour wine, this vin yagre to drink, and it is laced with gall. When he tastes and recognizes what it is, it's possible that he couldn't see too well at this point. Or the contents of the cup being indistinct.

As soon as he recognizes the taste, he will not drink. He will not drink. And I find this to be so interesting because on the assumption that he is a Nazirite, and I think it's a pretty solid assumption, he would never partake of any fruit of the vine, not the seed, not the skin, not the juice, fermented, unfermented, mingled, unmingled.

This would violate the Nazirite vow. And the words that Jesus speaks with regard to the cup that he is going to drink, the first suggestion is in the upper room, as we saw in Matthew chapter 26, the words as he gives the cup to his disciples in 26-27, he 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.

But I say to you, verse 29, 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. This fruit of the vine, 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. In my father's kingdom.

We're sensitive to the distinction in between the kingdom of the son and the kingdom of the father. And it suggests that there is a cup of fruit of the vine that Jesus is going to drink new, new wine. What is the difference in new wine and old wine? Old wine you have with you always.

You can put it in skins. It's like these bottles of wine they save for years and decades. And you know, the Frank Sinatra song, it was a very good year.

At least he sang it. But vintage wine from fine old kegs. In these days, it would have been wine skins.

You can keep old wine. New wine is only available when? Not in the spring, not at Passover, only in the fall after the vintage, after the harvest of grapes. And they are pressed in a press such as existed at Gethsemane.

Could have been an olive press, could have been a grape press, but they have to be pressed and the juice collected. And to be wine, it would have to ferment for at least a short time. New wine is only fermented a very short time.

You don't put new wine into old wine skins because when you put the juice into a new wine skin, that wine skin is a part of the fermentation process and it stretches and gives as the fermentation takes place and gases are given off and so on. But it is the

fermentation associated with wine that was in a way like leaven. God's people were allowed to eat leaven almost all the time.

Only during the feast of unleavened bread were they to memorialize the concept of freedom from corruption. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. But a fermented drink would have had the same effect as leaven in the sense of producing bubbles, producing a gas that is an invisible agent that affects change, an invisible agent affecting change.

So I will not drink it. So what did Jesus have to say about the cup? You can go back to Matthew chapter 20, which we have, and I think this is not Matthew 20. I think it is.

It is Matthew 20, Matthew 20, verse 22. When the request is made, John and James to sit at Jesus' right hand and at his left in your kingdom, Jesus answered and said, Matthew 20, 22, you do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? What was baptism in that day? What did it represent? It wasn't simply contact with water, whether by sprinkling, effusion, immersion.

What was baptism? What was the purpose of that ritual? In the Jewish tradition, using a mikvah, it was leaving a previous life to enter into a new life. It was baptism buried in death and raised to a new life. This is why immersion was so effective as a teaching tool in the first century of the church, because so much scriptural truth that was not yet available because the scriptures were not yet available was depicted in that ritual fashion.

And God used ritual in the days when written scriptures were not readily available to depict death to the old life and rising to new life. So when Jesus says he is about to be baptized, he was baptized three plus years ago by John in the Jordan. So what is this baptism that he is about to be baptized with? This baptism, we often think of a baptism of fire.

John said, the one who comes after me, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. What does the baptism of the Holy Spirit do? We leave one kind of life and enter into another, don't we? At the point of salvation, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and it has fivefold work of indwelling, sealing, filling, gifting, and so on, is all wrapped up in that and initiated with that baptism. What does a baptism of fire do? This is going to purge away the dross and leave the precious metal behind.

It is going to consume the chaff so that the grain can be gathered into the barn. It marks a permanent change, entrance into something new, a new phase, a new way, a new plan and purpose. Jesus says, I'm going to drink a cup and I'm going to be baptized.

Can you drink the same cup and can you partake of that same baptism? And they say famously, we are able. Jesus says, you will indeed drink my cup and be baptized with the

baptism I am baptized with. But the outcome, whatever reward might attach, sitting on the right hand or the left, that belongs to the Father.

So what does this tell us about the cup that Jesus is about to drink? It is not a unique cup or John and James, Jacob, would not be able to drink it. Jesus says, you will indeed drink my cup and you will indeed be baptized with my baptism. So what kind of a cup is this that Jesus is speaking of? And of course you have no trouble remembering in John 18 and verse 11, when Peter brings out the sword to defend Jesus at Gethsemane and Jesus rebukes him and he says, shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me? John 18, 11, shall I not drink the cup? The earthly cup of the fruit of the vine, Jesus did not drink.

He is preparing himself to drink the Father's cup. In Luke chapter 12, verse 50, Jesus exclaims about the baptizing that is coming and how constrained he is until it is fulfilled. And then in Matthew 20, 22 here, you have the association of the baptism and the cup.

And you get the idea that they are part of the same thing. Drinking this cup is a rite of passage, if you will, that fulfills the Father's plan and purpose in one phase and begins and enters one into a new phase. And the expectation is enhanced.

And you remember one of my other beliefs or speculations, which is that the way that this is fulfilled for James and John is as the two witnesses of revelation and that they will similarly die in the fulfillment of God's purpose, in proclaiming truth and proclaiming God's glory and power over his enemies. And yet they will be allowed to die, allowed to lay in the streets and then be raised. And this drinking of the cup and baptism echoes the death and the raising of the Lord Jesus having accomplished one purpose and entering into another.

And the great thing is that our salvation and our deliverance from death and into eternal life is not the destination. It is a baptism out of this life and into a new life that will continue forward with potentials and actions and purposes and service and function and opportunities. It is a transition.

It is a passage. And there is so much more to come where in traditional Christianity, many times getting your ticket to heaven and walking the golden streets, that's kind of the end. There's nothing afterward.

So this notion of the cup, and then of course, Jesus' prayer in the garden, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done. And having assiduously avoided corruption, defilement, contamination of any kind throughout his earthly ministry for Jesus to not only come in contact with sin, but to bear the sins of the whole world is a tremendous cup to drink.

But then the cup that he enjoins his disciples to drink in the upper room, this is a covenant in my blood. I will not partake of the fruit of the vine until I drink it new with

you. This brings up another interesting question, at least in my mind.

I find all of these things interesting as I think about them. What is one of the most significant things that you know about the Passover, about the Seder that Jews observe? Many people believe that Jesus celebrated Passover in the upper room. What do you know about the Passover? What do you know about it? They have lamb served with bitter herbs.

They have unleavened bread because there was no time to let it rise. What else in the Jewish Seder? They're supposed to stand and remain indoors. What else about the meal? What famously happens at every Jewish Seder? There are four cups of wine in every Jewish Seder and each one is assigned a meaning.

None of which, by the way, is found in the Bible. But I'll read you a little bit here. Since this is the Feast of Passover and you do have cups being mentioned and we're looking at wine.

On Passover Seder tables, you will see a partitioned plate containing small amounts of specific food. This is the Seder plate. Each food is symbolic of an aspect of Passover.

A roasted shank bone represents the Pesach sacrifice, the lamb sacrifice. There's an egg representing spring and the circle of life. Bitter herbs representing the bitterness of slavery.

Haroset, an applesauce-like mixture with wine, nuts and apples representing the mortar used by the Jews in Egypt. Karpas or greens, often parsley to represent spring. Also placed on the table, three pieces of matzah, cracker-like unleavened bread representing the bread the Israelites took with them when they fled Egypt and salt water to represent the tears of the slaves.

At your seat, you may see a specific wine glass or Kaddish cup. The Torah commands, according to this, that at least four symbolic cups of wine be consumed during the Passover Seder. That's actually incorrect here.

This is an article, by the way, from the magazine Time when they're trying to explain the Jewish. And Time got it wrong because Torah doesn't say anything about wine at Passover. This is a Jewish traditional addition.

There may be one or two extra Kaddish cups at your table. One is a cup of wine for the prophet Elijah. This is actually the fifth cup because there are four cups associated with four different events.

And then the fifth one, because each of these was fulfilled. And then the fifth cup is Elijah's cup and they don't drink it because Elijah coming to announce Messiah and the kingdom has not yet been fulfilled. So they don't drink the fifth cup because that is yet

future.

But that is all Jewish tradition. It is not in Torah. And there's no indication that it was a part of Passover celebration, even in the time of Christ.

And the upper room meal wasn't Passover, in my view, in any case. But the question would be, well, did Jesus come to all of those Passovers, all of the previous 32 or 33 years, or from the time that he was a child until his death and not partake of the wine of Passover, which is the only feast that is specifically honored by the Jews with wine, but it's not the biblical part of the feast, just like the three different pieces of matzo bread. There are specifics you can read in Exodus for what is to be eaten and how Passover is to be observed.

But as with so many things, it has been adorned and accretion and addition and conglomeration has happened to Passover. But this cup is not going to be drunk, the Lord Jesus says, by himself until he drinks it new in his father's kingdom, which would indicate that throughout the millennial kingdom, when Jesus is on earth, reigning on the throne of David, with David and the sons of David, that if this is a technical and it's not the kingdom from the father given to the son, but that it is in fact the father's kingdom, which I think it is, then Jesus is going to have a new kind of cup that this cup represents something different. But we've talked about gall as a poison.

We've talked about myrrh as a palliative, which would lengthen suffering. And this one or both of these cups would have been offered by the soldiers. Luke 23, 36 specifically says that the soldiers offered him sour wine.

I think it is clear that there were two different occasions. It takes some time to get the pieces of the cross and assemble them to take the prisoner and get him down on the cross and so on. And that during this process, there would have been occasions for this to be offered.

Again, Jewish tradition says that all crucifixion victims that the Jews had any concern with, Jews who were being crucified, the Jews themselves would come up and attempt to offer them something to alleviate their suffering. But again, this may have inadvertently extended it in their desire to ameliorate the pain. They may have actually extended the duration, but if they could get enough into the victim to stupefy them, they might pass away in an unconscious state.

I think might've been the goal. So let's turn back now to our passage in Matthew 27. And we are going to skip down to verse 45, from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, there was darkness over all the land.

And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, that is my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And in looking as we

did two weeks ago at this saying, a perhaps more accurate translation and catching the thought and the intent of the Old Testament quote from which it comes, it is not emphasizing God turning his back and being absent, but the circumstance that is a part of the cup that God has given the Lord Jesus to drink. My God, my God, to what have you left me? It isn't why have you left the area, but to what circumstance have you placed me? You've left me in this situation. You have not delivered me out of this situation.

And the idea of presence is the victim. You've left me in this situation. I am drinking this cup and the magnitude of it and the awesome horror of bearing the sins of the world to what have you left me to endure? And once again, we looked at this two weeks ago, both in its Old Testament context and here.

Notice verse 47, some of those who stood there when they heard that said, this man is calling for Elijah. Eli sounds very close to Elia or Elias. And so they said, well, he's calling for Elijah.

Eli, Eli. So immediately one of them, those who hear him calling for Elijah, ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine. This is the same ox sauce and put it on a reed and offered it to him to drink.

So the question is, did he drink it this second time? The rest said, let him alone. Let us see if Elijah will come to save him. Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

And we know from John a bit more detail, but the three hours of darkness are not detailed here. The son behold your mother and woman behold your son are not detailed here. You see the amount of compression from the sixth to the ninth hour, there was darkness over all the land.

And about the ninth hour after the darkness, Jesus cries out and then this sponge of ox sauce is offered him. Turn over to John chapter 19 and we get a bit of a closeup at this point. John chapter 19, the story picks up in verse 28.

After this, woman behold your son, to the disciple behold your mother. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished that the scripture might be fulfilled said, I thirst. A vessel full of sour wine was sitting there.

They filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop and put it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, here he drinks it. He received the sour wine.

Why would he do this? He is just about to say it is finished and dismiss his spirit. He says, I thirst. They give him this wine.

He drinks it. Then he says it is finished and he dismisses his spirit. If he is about to dismiss his spirit, why the need to drink this sour wine, to partake of it? People say, well,

his throat was so dry, he was having difficulty speaking and he wanted to be sure that he could get his final utterance out clearly, but they don't have any trouble understanding him saying, I thirst.

It seems that Jesus intends to partake of this wine on purpose and significantly so to then say it is finished. This wine is transferred from the vessel to the sponge, to the hyssop and to his lips and he receives it. Didn't receive the first wine, but now that it is finished, he does.

And the words it is finished are tied grammatically to when he had received the sour wine, he said. Not when the darkness was lifted, not when he had taken care of Mary, when he had received the wine, it is finished. I think that this is a symbolic act on Jesus' part.

I think he did it on purpose. I think his hair being cut is not really an option at this point to signify the completion of his Nazarite vow, but partaking of the wine is the indication that his vow is complete. And having publicly and openly signified, John standing there witnessing this, John having known him as his cousin, having traveled with him for years and seeing Jesus partake of wine at this point has to know that vow is complete.

His work is truly finished. And Jesus says so and then dismisses his spirit. But look at the connection of the partaking of the wine to the statement, it is finished.

It isn't finished until he indicates the fulfillment of his vow. What it was his Nazarite vow to God, I have come to do my father's will. A body thou has prepared for me.

He is the perfect Passover lamb. And having accomplished the work of sacrifice, the work of atonement, of redemption, reconciliation, propitiation, having fulfilled his role as the suffering servant, his partaking of this wine is the sign that his dedication vow is complete. Having done so, he gave up his spirit.

What is our interpretation and application? We are here as the body of the Lord Jesus. We represent him in his physical absence. He is present in spirit.

He dwells within us when we qualify, when we have his word and keep it. What should our goal be? Once again, this is not that we all need to be Nazarites. What does the vow represent? Full dedication without exception, without compromise, without partiality, without admixture, without defilement, without corruption.

On those instructions, it is a full-time and visible sign. There is an action which is to refrain from defilement, to refrain from partaking of or coming in contact with that which corrupts. That is the, you would have to watch someone for a long period of time to know whether or not they drink wine, whether or not they have ever touched a dead body and so on.

But the hair on the head never being cut is an instant sign. Do you not know that under normal circumstances, Paul says, nature itself will teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a shame unto him, but there is glory in that shame if it is because of dedication to God. And the Nazarite vow to grow the hair long makes one instantly visible, instantly identifiable as someone who has set themselves apart and has dedicated themselves.

And over time, if you observe this Nazarite, having identified him by his hair, you will know him by his fruit, by his deeds, by his actions, by what he does and does not allow in his own life. And so it has a visible component that is recognizable at a glance, and it has an action component that is observation over time. Both of those are a sign that someone is dedicated to God.

To be a Nazarite from birth as Samson and as John the Baptist has a parallel. If we are dedicated from birth, our new birth, our salvation and entrance into new life, our time on this earth looking to God first and foremost and recognizing that we are under a sign. We are a part of a covenant.

There is a covenant. This cup is the new covenant in my blood. The word new there, you remember we had a little bit of a text note, but it is a covenant in the blood of Christ.

The blood of Jesus Christ, his son cleanses us from all sin and being cleansed, it is our goal to not be defiled, to not be corrupted. If it happens, reverse that, be restored, be renewed, be cleansed and continue to fulfill that purpose and that goal of separation and dedication. We will be able to partake of the cup when this vow, this period of dedication is complete and then enter into a new dedication, a new opportunity, a new purpose that God will have for us in the future.

And it's interesting to me that Jesus has finished his suffering servant vow here. What is he going to do as the King, Mashiach of Israel for 10 centuries? When he says, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom, in the same way that Jesus dedicated himself fully to representing the truth and bearing witness to the truth as the suffering servant, he is going to take a new Nazarite vow. This vow is complete.

It's complete before he dies on the cross. But when he sits down on the throne of his father, David and rules the millennial kingdom, he will have a new vow that he is going to respect for those 10 centuries. When that vow is complete, that kingdom is fulfilled and the new heavens and the new earth come in and he is the lamb and God the father is dwelling in the new Jerusalem and ruling from the new Jerusalem and the lamb is the light.

The Lord Jesus can partake of the cup at that point because his second Nazarite vow will have been fulfilled. And Jesus tells the disciples, even when I say it is finished on the cross and one vow is complete, there is a new vow that will not be complete until I drink

of the fruit of the vine in the father's kingdom. That's going to be a second fulfillment, a second it is finished.

Suffering servant, it is finished. Conquering king, it is finished. And then comes the celebration of that new wine.

You wonder if one of the fruits of the tree of life might be grapes because he's going to drink new wine in the father's kingdom. And we'll have to wait and see. But the Lord Jesus was so aware of who he was and why he was here in times of rest, in times of testing, in times of plenty, in times of great suffering.

He never forgot his identity, his mission and his purpose. We can dedicate ourselves in the same way and be careful to avoid anything in our lives to the point of plucking out the eye or cutting off the hand that would prevent us from entering into life instead of hanging onto it and forfeiting our birthright, forfeiting our inheritance, making our baptism and our initiation into new life, null and void in terms of its fruit. Something to think about.

And we'll continue our look at the Lord Jesus in the fulfillment of his work on the cross and the aftermath next week. But we'll close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you that every word that proceeds from your mouth, every word in scripture is inspired and profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction.

We pray that we can be rebuked and corrected and instructed as we look at the example of the Lord Jesus, not only appreciating his suffering and his atoning work on our behalf, but in his life, his dedication, never forgetting his commission, his purpose, his reason for having been born and the inevitable day of returning into your presence and being ready to be accepted and approved and to hear the words, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. We pray that we can follow that example, that God, the Holy Spirit will enable and enliven our understanding of your word and motivate and encourage us to live the life to which we have been called, looking forward to that day when we too can celebrate victory and fulfillment in the kingdoms which are to come. We pray it in Jesus' name, amen.