

What Is A Drink Offering?

Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:6 & 7: 'I am about to be sacrificed; poured out as a drink offering; the time of my spirit's release is at hand and I will soon go free. I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith'.

Paul was in Rome as a prisoner in chains. The ungodly and unrighteous ruler Nero sentenced Paul to death. He had already been tried once and was forsaken by everyone he depended on, but the Lord stood by him, strengthened him and delivered him out of the mouth of a lion (2 Timothy 4:16 & 17). At that terrible time in history, Jews and Christians were fed to lions as a form of 'sport' but Paul had been somehow delivered from that dreadful death. When Paul used the word 'release' it suggests he was longing for his departure from this world, and was anticipating his death. If we analyse the ministries that have changed the world and blessed people, you will find that with every one of them, their lives have been poured out. Not necessarily as a martyr, but in selfless service to God to the point where, like a drink offering, they have been completely poured out. Paul was getting on in years; was somewhat infirm and it was very cold in the prison. He had to send an urgent message to Timothy to bring a cloak with him before winter (2 Timothy 4:13 & 21). Paul had suffered terribly in His quest to spread the Gospel, yet there is not one single hint of defeat, self-pity or regret in any of his epistles. In his letter to Timothy, Paul comes to his three triumphant statements; "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith."

If we go back and study the Levitical priesthood, we see that the primary offerings were animals, birds, grains such as wheat or baked flour, wine and olive oil. God ordained with each sacrificial offering, there should also be a drink offering. It had to be wine, poured out together with the offering. That is what Paul was referring to. He was speaking as his life-blood was about to be poured out to seal the offering he was bringing to God; the fruits of his ministry. We can suggest that a life poured out in God's service like Paul's was, is an acceptable offering in the sight of God.

There is more to a drink offering than we think. The first place in the Bible where a drink offering was mentioned is in Genesis 35:14. Jacob set up a pillar of stone in the place where he had talked with God. He first poured a drink offering of wine and then he poured oil over it. If we look closely at the symbolism, we can see Jacob was, as it were, prophesying about the sacrifice of Jesus by his actions. We know that Jacob was the father of twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 49:28). The Lord changed Jacob's name to Israel (Genesis 32:28; 35:10). One of Jacob's sons was Judah; where we get the word Jew, and we know that Jesus was a Jewish Man from the tribe of Judah (Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:33 & 34; Hebrews 7:14). Jesus stated emphatically, "Salvation comes from the Jews" (John 4:22). Jacob poured the offering on a stone that he had set up. Jacob didn't just see a stone and use it; he set it up to make an altar. It was a pillar; a cornerstone. The Bible says God was going to lay a Cornerstone of salvation; a sure foundation (Isaiah 28:16). The scriptures tell us Jesus is that Cornerstone, set up by God (Luke 20:17; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:6 & 7). The drink offering of wine or grape juice symbolises Jesus' blood, poured out for us (Matthew 26:27 to 29; Mark 14:23 to 25; Luke 22:20; John 6:53 to 56). After the 'blood' came the oil, which symbolises the third Person of the Godhead; the Holy Spirit, Who has been poured into Christians for us to 'drink' (1 Corinthians 12:13). We know of course, we receive the Holy Spirit after we have been washed in the blood of Jesus; so Jacob poured the offerings in the correct order.

Moses' brother Aaron also prophesied about Jesus' blood sacrifice by his actions, like Jacob had. The Lord ordered Aaron to pour a quarter of a hin of wine and a quarter of a hin of oil over the sacrificial lamb (Exodus 29:38 to 41). The lamb as we know, is symbolic of the Lamb of God; Jesus. The wine is symbolic of Jesus' blood that was shed for us and the oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. No one knows exactly how much a hin was but it has been estimated to be between 5 and 7 litres. Here is the point: The amount of blood an adult man has in his body is approximately 5 to 7 litres depending on height, weight and stature of the individual. When Jesus died, He poured out His hin of blood for us.

Every one of Apostle Paul's three last statements, show us that his job was finished. We all need to finish our own race, we all need to keep the faith and we all need to fight the good fight. One major aspect of the Christian life is that it is a conflict. We can get to heaven without theology; but we can't get there without courage. Christianity is more of a test of our character than the intellect. How many of us really pour ourselves out like a drink offering, as Jesus and the Apostles did?

Amen and God bless you.

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