

What Is A Drink Offering?

In 2 Timothy 4:6 & 7, Paul says; "I am about to be sacrificed [my life is about to be poured out as a drink offering]; the time of my spirit's release from the body 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. He had already been tried once (2 Timothy 4:16 & 17) and was forsaken by everyone he depended on, but the Lord delivered him out of the jaws of a lion. Paul was sentenced to death by the ungodly and unrighteous ruler, Nero. When Paul used the word 'release' it suggests he was longing for his departure from this world, and was anticipating his death.

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 is referring to. He is speaking as his life blood is 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 by his actions. We know that Jacob was the father of the twelve sons who became the twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 49:28). God even changed his 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 & 3; Luke 3:33 & 34; Hebrews 7:14). In John 4:22, Jesus stated emphatically, "Salvation comes from the Jews." 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. It was a pillar; a cornerstone. In Isaiah 28:16 we read that God was going to lay a Cornerstone; a sure foundation. Luke 20:17; Ephesians 2:20 and 1 Peter 2:6 & 7 tell us that Jesus is that Cornerstone, set up by God. The drink offering of wine symbolises Jesus blood, poured out for us (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:23 & 24; 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 us Christians (1 Corinthians 12:13). We know of course, that we receive the Holy Spirit after we have been washed in the blood of Jesus; so Jacob poured the offerings in the correct order.

In Exodus 29:40 & 41, God ordered Aaron, Moses brother, to pour a quarter of a hin of wine and a quarter of a hin of oil over the sacrificial lamb. The lamb as we know, is symbolic of the Lamb of God; Jesus. The wine is symbolic of Jesus blood, shed for us and the oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. A hin was approximately 1½ gallons or roughly 22 English litres. The amount of wine poured out for the drink offering would have been about 5½ litres; approximately the same amount blood an adult man would have in his body. Jesus died when His blood was poured out for us.

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. The Apostle 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."

Every one of the last three statements, show us that his job was finished. We all need to finish our own race, keep the faith and 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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