

Greetings!

I hope the previous two *Just a Thoughts*, *The Bride* and *The Proposal*, have enticed you enough to hang in there for today's devotional, *The Passover Cups*. I really appreciate your encouraging feedback on this series, *The Fourth Cup*, and believe that each of us will have a renewed strength to watch for the return of our Lord.

If you need to read one and two of *The Fourth Cup* again to refresh your memory, click here: <http://www.newwine2go.com/jat/jat.htm>

The Fourth Cup (3), The Passover Cups

“With fervent desire, I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” – With those words, Jesus began His last meal and observed the Passover with His disciples on the night before His death.

Passover and The Lord's Table. What a divide they have brought to our Christian faith over the years and yet, are they so different from each other? Some people hold fast to the letter of the law seeing no tie between Passover and The Lord's Table (Communion), while others dismiss Passover as having no significance to the New Testament Church. However, God in His amazing ability to bring clarity from mystery, ties two different covenants together as He steps us from the old into the new.

Some believe that Israel is the Bride, while others argue that it is the Church. God, throughout history has always had for Himself a “people”, a people who have stood apart from all others as distinctly belonging to Him. They were His people, and His alone, a people of the covenant. Whether Jewish, or Gentile, those who entered into covenant with Him, became His people.

To restrict Jesus' coming to only one purpose is to misunderstand the fullness of why He came. Yes, it was to save men from their sins, to redeem us from the curse of the law, to renew His relationship with mankind, etc., but it was also to take for Himself a people; a bride. Like Isaac's father, Abraham, who sent his servant to find a bride for Isaac, so Jesus' Father sends His Holy Spirit to seek out among us, a bride for His Son.

Remember the young Jewish man's proposal from last week? Let me walk you through some comparisons between his proposal and Jesus' proposal to His bride.

- The young man proposed in the presence of her father. Jesus said that he hid nothing from our Heavenly Father, and that everything was in the open and under the watchful eye of our Father.
- The young man left the ketubah (his written promises) with her just as Jesus left us His promises through the written Word.

- He gave her a gift as a sign of his love and devotion and as a seal of their covenant. We have the gift of the Holy Spirit as our sign and seal of the covenant that Jesus made with us.
- Each of them drank from a cup. I'll make the comparison for the cup later.
- The young man would then leave her to go to his father's house to build their future home. This could take as long as a couple of years, and the son could only return for his bride when his father said he was finished building their house. Jesus said, "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Jesus also said that only His Father in heaven knows the day and hour of His return for His Bride.
- From that day she was called a "bride" and wore a veil to hide her face, indicating she was promised to another. The Bible says that we have "put on Christ" and that our "life is hidden with Christ in God". We become marked as His Bride.
- From the day her lover left, she would wait to hear the call of his "fellows" announcing his return and the commencement of the wedding celebration. The Bible tells us that the voice of the archangel and the sound of the trumpet will announce Jesus' return.

But, what of the cup?

At Passover, Jesus and his disciples drank from four cups. Though sometimes debated as to what each cup is called, their significance leaves no doubt regarding their place in our lives.

The first cup was the *Cup of Sanctification* based on God's statement, "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

The second cup was the *Cup of Praise (or Deliverance)* based on God's statement, "I will deliver you from slavery to them."

The third cup was the *Cup of Redemption* based on, "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm." It was with this cup that the Bible tells us, "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."

The fourth cup is yet the most intriguing for us; it is called the *Cup of Restoration* or the *Cup of the Kingdom*. This cup is based on God's statement, "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God."

It was at the fourth cup that Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Jesus *refrained* from drinking this cup since it is reserved for the day of the "restoration of all things"; when He returns for His bride. At the wedding feast of the Lamb, we will drink from this fourth and final cup together with Jesus.

Jesus left us with a cup and with the admonition to watch for His return. Each time we come to The Lord's Table we are reenacting the young girl standing by her window, drinking from her cup, while looking for her lover. Drinking the communion cup is not only about what Jesus did on the cross, but even more about His returning for us.

And that's just a thought . . .

Next Week: *The Fourth Cup (4), The Wedding Feast*

My Final Word

After learning about the four cups of the Passover, my concept of the communion cup was forever changed. Now, it brings hope in my heart for Jesus' return, and it reminds me that even though much time has passed, He will return for me!

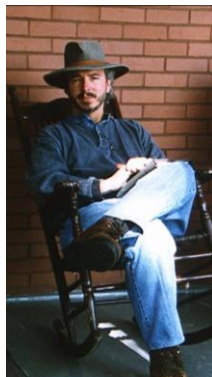
After preaching at a church recently, I was asked a question to which I answered, ***"The problem with the church today is that it has stopped watching for the Lord's return and is now waiting for His return."***

Waiting is inactive, while watching is active. Waiting can cause apathy and discouragement, while there is an air of anticipation involved in watching. Each time the young girl stood at the window with her cup and ketubah, her heart strengthened from the anticipation of seeing him again. The thought of her lover returning, as her lips touched the cup, kept her eyes looking toward the hill from which he disappeared.

The church must regain this hope!

Standing by my window,

Chris



Coming!

In this series, ***The Fourth Cup***, we've covered ***The Bride***, ***The Proposal*** and now ***The Passover Cups***. Next week we'll look at ***The Wedding Feast***. And then see where to go from there. Remember, if you would like to read one of the previous thoughts go to, www.justathought.org/jat/jat.htm.