

Cups of Wine

How many cups of wine are part of the Passover Seder? The Rabbis say there are either 4 or 5, related to the divine actions listed in Exodus 6:6-7.

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| 1. והוצאתי | I will take you out from under suffering in Egypt |
| 2. והצילתי | I will rescue you from slavery |
| 3. וגאלתי | I will redeem you by great judgments |
| 4. ולקחתי | I will take you to Myself as a people |
| 5. והבאתי | I will bring you to the land |

While there is no mention here of drinking wine, there certainly are 5 prophetic promises. Many commentators see that being taken as a people unto God is the greatest promise; and is repeated later in Exodus 19:5 (as well as I Peter 2:5, Revelation 1:6, 5:10).

Some Jewish traditions open a door for Elijah to come after the third cup. Some say that the fifth cup is fulfilled now that the Jewish people are back in the Land of Israel. Others say that the fifth cup should only be drunk at the coming of Messiah.

The earliest reference in Jewish literature to drinking wine at Passover that I am aware of is the New Covenant. All three of the synoptic gospels speak of Yeshua drinking the ceremonial wine with the disciples. Since this is the earliest Jewish source, it would be worth noticing how many cups are mentioned.

So, was it 4 or 5? Neither. Was it just 1 for the communion? No. What then? The most accurate detail is given in the gospel of Luke. The answer is 3!

The first cup is connected with the Passover meal.

Luke 22:17 – He took the cup, blessed, and said: "Take this and share it among yourselves."

The second cup was right after the meal; that was the cup that Yeshua sanctified to remind us of His blood that would soon be shed on the cross.

Luke 22:20 – And also the cup after the meal, and said: "This cup is the new covenant in My blood that is shed for you."

The first cup was during the meal and was blessed as part of the Passover celebration. The second cup mentioned here was right after the meal. That is the cup newly sanctified for the New Covenant. This "Last Supper" with Yeshua and His disciples was certainly a Passover meal. They celebrated all the aspects of the Passover; and then added another dimension. The meaning of the blood of the Paschal lamb comes to its fullness in Yeshua's blood.

That's two cups; where is the third? Third is not yet for us to drink, but we will drink it together with Yeshua in the Messianic kingdom to come:

Luke 22:18 – For I say unto you, from this time forth I will certainly not drink of the fruit of the vine until the coming of the kingdom of God.

There is a third cup. It is not for now but for the future. We do "not" drink it "until." The third cup is a cup of hope and promise. Yeshua said He will return. He said the kingdom of

God will come upon the earth. That kingdom is so real that we will drink together, eat together, celebrate together.

Will we celebrate the Jewish Passover or the Christian communion? That is a good question. Was the Last Supper a Christian communion or a Jewish seder? The answer is "both." At that time there was no separation. In the future there will be no separation. All will be united in the kingdom of Messiah.

So, Passover has three dimensions: past, present and future. The past looks to the exodus from Egypt; the present reminds us of the atonement by the blood of Yeshua; the future reminds us of the coming of the kingdom of God on earth.

Let us remember that third cup mentioned in the gospel of Luke. We believe in the coming of the Messianic kingdom with international peace, economic prosperity, righteous government, and true worship – with its capital in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-5; Revelation 20:1-6).

We do not drink the third cup now; we will in the future. It is our hope for a better world yet to come.