

Cups and Swords

The cup bearer

Genesis 40:13

“within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you will put Pharaoh’s cup into his hand according to your former custom when you were his cupbearer.”

In the Bible are references to a cup. Sometimes it’s a real cup that God commands to be made. Other times the cup holds wrath or wine. There are a few instances where the cup is a job. It’s called the cup bearer. I find it interesting that the first mention of a cup is in regards to Egypt’s Pharaoh and his cup bearer. The final mention of a cup in revelation is in regards to falling Babylon and the cup she fills. The cup in the Bible is very important for many reasons.

A cup bearer is a person who tastes the kings drink for poison. Not a great job. It might have drawbacks. In Genesis, we find Joseph languishing in an Egyptian jail. He is in there with the pharaohs cup bearer. Years later Joseph finds himself in a seat of power in the realm. His brothers come seeking help. Joseph places a cup in their bag to cause them trouble and confusion. The cup was connected to Joseph through a dream pharaoh had. It was mixed with deceit, famine, and revelation.

In the last days according to the book of Revelation, there will be deceit, famine, and revelation. The cup we are given can hold things like wrath, love, and wisdom. In Revelation this cup is what we sow. We do well and the cup is full of life. If we turn away from God and the cup is full of death and judgment. A cup in the Bible can be a good thing or a very bad thing.

Are we bearing the cup for others? Are we putting ourselves in harms way by tasting another’s cup? Does the cup we hold have our lives in our own hand? The cup in the Bible is very interesting. Most of the cup references are metaphorical. Yet, there is truth inside the cup. Jesus tells us that the religious rulers were cups that were not clean on the inside. Later, two disciples ask Jesus if they could sit beside him in heaven. Jesus asks them if they were willing to drink from the cup he drinks from. They said yes. Jesus said they surely would.

That cup Jesus talked about was judgment. That cup was death. You could also say it was sacrifice and giving oneself for others. He was telling the disciples that they would drink of that cup. They however looked at the cup as partaking in the kingdom reign. They wanted to rule with Jesus. That was the cup they dreamed of. They did not want to be the cup bearer of our sins like Jesus ultimately became.

What’s it all mean?

In reference to the cup that Jesus was talking about with his disciples, it’s not easy to understand. Jesus most likely was talking about his death. Those men would taste death one day. Jesus cup was also his mission for God. To die for the sins of all. Those disciples would die later as martyrs most likely because they followed Jesus. Also, maybe it’s all about the spirit filled life. Jesus had the Spirit of God within him. These men would soon be filled with that same Spirit. The cup reference from Jesus is not that clear cut.

What is clear is inside the cup. Joseph held a cup of pride. He later held a cup of humbleness. The cup bearer forgot Joseph for a time. God did not forget him. I do think that the cup in the brother's bag was symbolic. It is the cup Joseph bore for his brothers. Their salvation from the famine comes from Joseph's tough life. In the end they drank from the cup he poured out for them. He spared them because of his mercy and compassion. I love all the meaning and symbolism of the cup in the Bible.

I will talk about the cup of wrath in another lesson. Yet, I find that revelation 18 is looming in the darkness. We all have a cup of something. I know far too many people who are living in the past. There is regret, pain, suffering and anger. Why is my life like this? Why are people so mean? When will things be good? We bear our own cup. We drink the poison of disappointment. Isn't that the main reason we reject God, a parent, or friends? They disappoint. We disappoint ourselves. We all bear that cup.

It's interesting that we pour out wrath on others for their less than stellar actions. We don't tend to see dirt in our own cup. Yet, we clearly see dirt in others cup. If we have a bad disposition, is it possible we pass on that cup. How do we inspire others? Do we pass them a cup of love or poison? Revelation said we own the cup we bear. It's nobody's fault but our own for not choosing a better cup. Not choosing a better drink. What is inside the cup you bear?