

A STUDY OF THE DRINK OFFERING

By Andrew Langham

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1. INTRODUCTION

A lot has been written about the Levitical offerings, the burnt, the meat (or meal), the peace, the sin and the trespass offerings, but relatively little has been written about the drink offering and therefore it is probably the least appreciated of the offerings, despite it being one of the earliest recorded (it is one of only two known to have been offered before the giving of the law, the other being the burnt offering). This lack of understanding is probably due to the fact that it is entirely omitted from Leviticus 1-7 where all the other offerings are considered in great detail and from where most of the teaching regarding the offerings is found. However, once the typical teaching of the drink offering is understood, it is evident why the Spirit of God has omitted it in these chapters. The following is a brief meditation on the typical teaching of the drink offering and its practical application to our lives.

Firstly, it may help to give a few words as to the teaching of the 'Levitical' offerings. Here is a summary of these sacrifices. The **burnt offering** speaks of the death of Christ accomplishing the will of God for the pleasure of God, bringing glory to His name. It has in view Christ's work Godward, what Christ did for God. In terms of appreciation of Christ's death it is the highest, being the first detailed in the book of Leviticus.

The **meal offering** presents Christ in the perfect sinlessness of His Manhood, His perfect obedience, ever fulfilling the will of God from His birth up to, and including, His death on Calvary's cross. It has in mind the pleasure that God (and, to some extent, man) has from every obedient step of our Lord in this world.

The **peace offering** presents Christ as the One who has, through His death, reconciled God and man, allowing man to enter into the enjoyment of the blessed fellowship with the Father and with the Son in a settled peace, for it depends solely upon the work of Christ.

These first three are often called the 'sweet savour offerings' because a sweet savour accompanied them as they went up to God.

The **sin offering** presents Christ as the Sin Bearer, taking our sins upon Him during the three hours of darkness when He hung on the cross. It

has in view His suffering of the judgment our sins demanded in view of our being reconciled to a holy and a righteous God.

Lastly, of the Levitical offerings the **trespass offering** speaks of the death of Christ in meeting our need in regard to sins we commit as believers. It views Christ as the Advocate (1 John 2:1), on the basis of His work on the cross reconciling us to the happy condition of fellowship with the Father and the Son. It deals not so much with the penalty of sin but rather with the fact that full reparation has been made for the offence or injury sin has caused God.

In contrast to the Levitical offerings, which all speak of the work of Christ each in a different aspect, the drink offering speaks of the joy in the complement of that work. This explains why the drink offering is not mentioned in the opening up of the book of Leviticus which speaks of man's approach to God. This approach can only be on the basis of the death of Christ, and so there we have detailed all the offerings except the drink offering, which speaks not of the work or the death of Christ, but the joy of God in the completed work.

Under the law drink offerings were not to be offered alone (the case of Jacob's drink offering, offered alone (Gen. 35:14), was an exception, being offered before the law was given, but the typical teaching of the drink offering is still clearly seen there), but were to be offered in connection with the sweet-savour offerings (Num. 15:1-13), especially the burnt offering and its accompanying meal offering. They were never to be offered with the sin or trespass offerings. There could be no joy for God in Christ's sufferings when He was made sin upon the cross, hence the absence of any drink offering accompanying the sin and trespass offerings; but there is always joy for God in the total obedience of Christ, even unto death, in fulfilling the will of God, and so it was to accompany the burnt and meal offerings. However, this instruction God gave the children of Israel was for "when ye come into the land" (Num. 15:2), it was not for the wilderness but rather when they had entered the promised land. This again demonstrates that the drink offering speaks of the joy of God when His work is complete and His people are in full possession of their blessings. God's purpose did not stop with delivering the people out of the bondage in Egypt but in bringing them into relationship with Himself and giving them a land full of rich blessing for them to enjoy.

The linking of the burnt offering with the meal offering and the drink offering also shows that, while we may *distinguish* between different aspects of Christ's work or His Person, we can never *divide* it or Him, we must simply join with God in rejoicing in the blessed fruit of His incarnation, His

life, His death, His resurrection, His ascension and His glorification at God's right hand.

Two thirds of the occurrences of the drink offerings occur in the books of the law, especially the book of Numbers where there are 33 occurrences of the words, 27 of these appear in chapters 28 and 29 where significantly the peace offering is omitted. The difference in emphasis between these chapters and those already mentioned at the start of Leviticus is the key to understanding the doctrinal teaching of the drink offering.

If Leviticus 1-7 speaks of the approach of man to God on the basis of the work of Christ on Calvary's cross alone, Numbers 28-29 speaks of Christ's work Godward, it speaks of the delight God has in Christ's work and worship from man on this basis. This is clearly seen in the opening verses of chapter 28, "Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, *My* offering, and *my* bread for *my* sacrifices made by fire, for a sweet savour unto *me*, shall ye observe to offer unto *me* in their due season....." (Num. 28:2). This is also the reason the peace offering, being, speaking generally, a work manward is omitted from these chapters and the drink offering is so prominent. This stands in contrast to Leviticus 1-7 where the drink offering is absent and so much is said of the peace offering, more so than any other offering in the law of the offerings. The presence of the sin offering in Numbers 28-29 is because for man to offer worship to God the question of man's sin had to be first dealt with, but the emphasis in these two chapters is quite clearly on the sweet savour offerings and the accompanying drink offerings.

The numerous references to the drink offering in these two chapters shows the inestimable joy that God has in Christ because of the work He accomplished to divine satisfaction in glorifying God. That we can have part in this in worshipping God, in presenting Christ in all His perfection, is wonderful grace on God's part.

The amount of wine to be offered was also prescribed by the law. The drink offering was to be poured out (whether onto the sacrifice or beside it we are not told, although Gen. 35:14 and Phil. 2:17 suggest that it was poured onto the sacrifice) in its entirety before the Lord. There was no part of the offering to be consumed by the offerer, all was for God. Thus the drink offering, as the burnt offering, has in view Christ's work Godward (this would also explain the absence of any mention of a drink offering accompanying any peace offering).

However, we shall look at each occurrence of the drink offering in turn to determine what this offering typifies and to learn the lessons that the Spirit of God would teach us.

The drink offerings were to be composed of “strong wine” (Num. 28:7), which would answer to the animal sacrifices having to be without blemish, perfect in all respects (Lev. 22:17-25) and the meal offering having to be composed of fine flour with the exclusion of leaven and honey (Lev. 2:11). This is because the offerings are to speak to God, and to us, of the Lord Jesus Christ and hence they are to display the sinless perfection and absolute purity of His humanity (cf. 1 John 3:5; 1 Pet. 2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21). The wine was to be pure, in the sense that it was not to be watered down. Only perfection can please God. Christ’s perfect sinless humanity is *always* maintained in type.

The use of wine is also instructive. Wine is a symbol of joy both to God and to man (Judg. 9:13; Ps. 104:15), and this characterises the drink offering. It does not speak directly of Christ’s death or else the offering would be composed of blood which was poured out in the animal sacrifices, or consumed by fire in picture of the judgment of God. There is no such command, indeed the practice of offering blood as a drink offering was condemned by God (Ps. 16:4; 106:37-38). The drink offering speaks rather of God’s joy at the accomplishment of the work of Christ at Calvary. This will become clear when we consider the passages in more detail.

2. JACOB'S DRINK OFFERING (GEN. 35:14)

It is generally true that in Scripture the first occurrence of a particular word, or phrase, or name, or person gives a good summary of the teaching of its character. This is seen to be true in connection with the drink offering. The first and only occurrence of the drink offering in the book of Genesis occurs in the life of Jacob.

It was said by God before the birth of Jacob and his older brother Esau that they would be fathers of two nations of different characters, the one being stronger than the other, and the elder (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob) (Gen. 25:33), but instead of waiting patiently for God to accomplish His will in His own time, Jacob, aided by his mother Rebekah, repeated the mistake of his grandfather Abraham in trying to bring about God's promises in his own time and in his own way. While Abraham had a son, Ishmael, or Hagar the bondswoman, Jacob deceived his father into blessing him rather than Esau. Then, leaving Esau, Jacob fled to his mother's family at Padan-aram and, as he camped for the night at Bethel, God spoke to him in a dream (Gen. 28:12-15) confirming the covenant that He had made with Abraham (Gen. 15:1-6; 17:6-8; 22:15-18) and Isaac (Gen. 26:2-5). The line of promise was through Jacob not Esau, but Jacob's faith was weak and again he wanted to do things on his own terms promising, "If God be with me, and will help me, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; *then* shall the Lord be my God" (Gen. 28:20-21), and he left Bethel and went to Padan-aram. There he worked for his uncle Laban and acquired Leah and Rachel as wives and had great possessions.

It was fully 20 years later that God spoke to Jacob again telling him to return to his kindred, and so Jacob left Padan-aram at night for fear of Laban. As he approached home Esau came out to meet him with 400 men and Jacob was greatly afraid. He tried to appease Esau by sending out his cattle first of all in several droves as presents for him, and he even separated himself from his family until he was left alone, and an angel wrestled with him all night, and he was humbled. Esau forgave him when they met soon after and for the first time we have recorded that Jacob worshipped (Gen. 33:20). Finally, Jacob returned to where God had first spoken to him, Bethel, and there Jacob erected a pillar and poured a drink offering upon it, and poured oil upon it (Gen. 35:14).

It is in this context that Jacob offered a drink offering to God, and in this we see the basic teaching of the drink offering that we shall see repeated in other references. Jacob only offered this drink offering *after* God had taught him the many lessons that he had to learn. Only after having made peace with Laban and Esau and the humbling experience of wrestling with him an angel all night and receiving a new name, Israel, did Jacob return to the place where God had appeared to him and offer a drink offering. The drink offering was only offered after the *completion* of God's dealings with Jacob and he had entered into God's rest when he returned to the 'House of God'. This is the typical teaching of the drink offering. It is the joy of God in the completed work of Christ, when man is brought into possession of the blessings promised on the basis of Christ's work alone. Jacob had been stripped of all his own strength, had come to trust in God's strength alone, was in the enjoyment of earthly peace and had entered God's presence as a worshipper.

But why do we get the drink offering only mentioned in Genesis in connection with Jacob? Abraham fell also (Gen. 12:10-20) and was restored as did Joseph's brethren (Gen. 37-45), yet only in connection with Jacob in the book of Genesis do we read of a drink offering being offered. While what has been said of Jacob in connection with the drink offering is correct, this is only part of the reason why he is recorded as offering a drink offering. The full reason for this can be seen when we read such passages as Jeremiah 30:7 - which speaks of "Jacob's trouble". This historical record in Genesis is a picture of something far greater in God's plans for the nation of Israel. Scripture teaches us that the children of Israel will go through a terrible time of trial before they can be brought into their earthly inheritance in the millennial kingdom. They will be recalled to the land where they will suffer great tribulation, but this is in order for them to be brought to a point where they will repent of their rejection of their Messiah and confess their sin (Zech. 12:10-14). At this point Jesus Christ will return and deliver the faithful Jewish remnant and bring in the millennial kingdom. This Jewish remnant also will initially try to achieve God's blessings for themselves in their own way as they do today, fighting to possess the land of Palestine in their own strength, and will shortly do so when they put their trust in Antichrist. They have acquired much wealth in the world but God will strip them of all their possessions until they are left bare and they cry to Him for deliverance, wrestling with God until they finally learn of their sin and confess it before Him, and accept Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah. The judgment which will be about to slay them will be averted and they will be brought into a new relationship with God, when the name of Israel ('Prince with God') will

perfectly describe their state as a nation. God's promises for them will be realised and they will figuratively offer a drink offering - showing that the work of God is complete. God will have His joy in Christ's completed work in relation to Israel.

It is because of this fact that Jacob's life *as a whole* is a picture of the God's earthly people, Israel, that the drink offering occurs in his life rather than Abraham's or Joseph's or anyone else's. We shall see that the drink offering is mainly viewed in this way, as a picture of the joy of God in the completed work of Christ in relation to His earthly people, the nation of Israel; that is, in connection with passages which are a picture of the millennial kingdom. However, it is also viewed as a picture of the completed work in relation to the church, which relates to the present, for we are fully blessed *now* as a result of Christ's work. However, while these are the two ways the drink offering is generally viewed, it does have a present application for our lives. There *are* lessons for us *all* to learn about the things that bring pleasure to the heart of God. *All* the passages that mention the drink offering have in view what does or does not give joy to God and if we want to give joy to the heart of God we should study these passages and learn the lessons that the Holy Spirit, who recorded these instances for us, would have us to learn.

3. THE DRINK OFFERING TO ACCOMPANY THE CONTINUAL BURNT OFFERING (EX. 29:38-46; NUM. 28:3-8)

We first read of the drink offering in connection with the Israelites in relation to the continual burnt offering. The children of Israel were to offer “two lambs of the first year day by day continually”, one in the morning and the other in the evening, and each was to be accompanied by a meal offering and a drink offering of a fourth part of a hin of wine. It was to be offered at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord, and it was there that God said He would speak to them.

As the burnt offering speaks of the death of Christ accomplishing the will of God for the pleasure of God, we have in the *continual* burnt offering Christ presented “before the Lord” continually, day and night, the fire was never to go out (Lev. 6:13). There was always before the face of God the death of the Lord Jesus Christ in complete, perfect obedience to His will bringing a sweet savour to Him. It was on this basis, and this basis alone, that God could meet Moses and the children of Israel at the place where the offering was continually burning.

The continual burnt offering was accompanied by a meal offering, for while the death of Christ glorifying God is primarily in view, it cannot be separated from the preceding life of Christ in obedience to His Father’s will. The life of Christ demonstrated beyond any doubt, that the One who died on the tree was indeed worthy to die that death for the glory of God and for the blessing of man. Just as the Passover lamb had to be kept and observed for four days before being slain to ensure that it had no blemish (Ex. 12:3,6), so Christ lived His life in perfect sinlessness before the face of God and man before going to the cross, and so the burnt offering was always to be accompanied by a meal offering. How could there not be joy for God in this? Thus in both the passages dealing with the continual burnt offering, the drink offering, speaking of the joy the fulfilment of these two types brought to God, was then poured out to God to accompany the burnt and meal offerings.

In the next chapter (Ex. 30:9) there is a command not to offer strange incense, nor burnt offerings, nor meal offerings, nor drink offerings upon the altar of incense which was before the veil and before the mercy seat, in the

holy place. The correct place to offer these offerings was on the brazen altar which has in mind approach to God by the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. This altar was placed in the court of the tabernacle where everyone could approach. By contrast, the golden altar of incense was in the holy place, which only the priests had access to, and upon which Aaron had to offer incense twice daily, in the morning and the evening. This offering is in connection with Christ's High Priestly service to God, interceding as an Advocate on behalf of men to God, upholding God's saints in His presence. It was there before the veil that the needs of the holy, sanctified people were to be met, it sets forth what Christ is for us now as believers rather than what Christ did for us on the cross. Thus the drink offering's place was at the brazen altar, where it was to be offered along with the burnt and meal offerings, not the golden altar of incense. The drink offering has to do with the joy of God in the accomplishment of the great work of Calvary, bringing glory to Him, and allowing Him to go out in grace to man, not with Christ's work now as an Advocate interceding for us. Thus a drink offering would be inappropriate on the golden altar of incense and so it was forbidden to be offered there.

4. THE DRINK OFFERING TO ACCOMPANY THE NAZARITE VOW (NUM. 6:1-21)

The next reference to the drink offering is found in the book of Numbers, the book of the wilderness experiences. It is in relation to the fulfilment of the vow of the Nazarite. A Nazarite was a man or woman who separated themselves from food and drink connected with the vine and from all connection with dead bodies, and did not cut their hair for the duration of the vow. During this time of separation, he or she was holy to the Lord. When the vow was accomplished, the man or woman was to bring a burnt offering, a sin offering, a peace offering and a meal offering with the accompanying drink offering to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. The Nazarite was then to have his hair shaved, showing that the days of separation were complete, and the shaved hair was to be burnt with the peace offering. The priest was then to place the shoulder of the ram of the peace offering and an unleavened cake of the meal offering upon the hands of the Nazarite and wave them before the Lord. Only then, after all this, was the Nazarite free to drink wine again.

Without going into the details of this ordinance, the vow of the Nazarite speaks of the voluntary separation to the Lord for the Israelite whilst a work was undertaken for Him. For the Israelite these instructions were literal, but for us they are spiritual. We are to be a separated people, for example 2 Corinthians 6:17-18 warns us to “come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”. The separation is to be from all earthly joy (the fruit of the vine), and from sin and the result of sin (dead bodies), and is to last for our entire life here upon earth. This is the fitting condition for a pilgrim and a stranger, both of which we are (1 Pet. 2:11). The allowing of the hair to grow uncut speaks of subjection to the Lord (cf. 1 Cor. 11:2-16); thus we are to be separated to God.

When, for the Israelites, their path of separation is over, that is, they are brought through the time of trial (the great tribulation), and into eternal rest, they shall see Christ as typified by the four offerings mentioned here, firstly, by glorifying the Father in His death (the burnt offering); secondly, as fully answering the needs of man because of sin (the sin offering); thirdly, by

making eternal peace and communion between God and man (the peace offering); fourthly, they shall consider and celebrate the life of Christ, the perfect Man (the meal offering); and finally, they shall consider the joy Christ has brought to God (the drink offering). The days of separation will be over, there will be nothing to separate from (hence the absence of any mention of dead bodies in the section dealing with the fulfilment of the vow, Num. 6:13-21), and they too shall have joy, as seen in the Nazarite drinking wine, but still have no part of the drink offering, which is all for God. They will have part of the peace and the meal offerings, dwelling on the life of Christ, even going into death and in full communion with God, but only God can fully enter into and fully appreciate Christ in His burnt offering character. There was none of this offering to be eaten by the Nazarite. There is also no mention of the sin offering being eaten; it is offered, but man has no part of it. The absence of any trespass offering would also show that at this time there will be no remembrance of sins, they will have been put away by the death of Christ on the cross, never to be brought up again.

The drink offering is only offered at the end of the time of separation, that is, as Israel enters the millennial kingdom, when God's work for the individual Jews will have been completed and they are brought into the blessings of the kingdom. Thus again we see that the drink offering speaks of the joy of God in the *accomplishment* of Christ's work, not the work itself. There is joy for God as the people separate to Him throughout the great trial and enter the blessings on the basis of the accomplishment of Christ's work on Calvary, but not before. This principle will be seen again later in the absence of the drink offering in Leviticus 23 in connection with the feast of Unleavened Bread.

5. THE DRINK OFFERING IN THE FEASTS OF THE LORD (LEV. 23:13,18,37)

Three times in this chapter the drink offering is mentioned, in connection with the feasts of First Fruits, Pentecost and Tabernacles. In Numbers 29 we see that the drink offerings were mentioned as being offered on most of the feast days, and as they accompanied all burnt and meal offerings they would have been offered at every feast, but the Holy Spirit has seen fit to mention them in this chapter only in connection with three of the feasts. The teaching of this chapter is prophetic in nature (for the doctrinal teaching of the feasts we must turn to other chapters such as Ex. 12, Lev. 16 and Deut. 16), and it is well to be reminded at this stage what they speak of prophetically. The subject being very extensive it will have to suffice here just to state the prophetic teaching in order to concentrate on their connection with the drink offering.

The Passover was the first of the feasts, and speaks of the sacrificial death of Christ (1 Cor. 5:7). This is the basis of all God's dealings with man. The feast of Unleavened Bread, which immediately followed the Passover, speaks of the moral lives that should be led by all who come under the Lordship of Christ as a result of Christ's death (1 Cor. 5:8). The feast of First Fruits speaks of the resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:20). This was followed fifty days later by the feast of Pentecost which found its fulfilment in the descent of the Holy Spirit to form the Church as detailed in Acts 2.

The last three feasts all speak of God's yet future dealings with His earthly people after the rapture of the Church. The feast of Trumpets speaks of the regathering of the nation; the Day of Atonement speaks of the moral change in the nation when they accept Christ as their Messiah; and the feast of Tabernacles speaks of the millennial reign of Christ on the earth. Thus in the fulfilment of these last three feasts we see Israel brought into the fulfilment of all God's promises to them. With this in mind, it is instructive to now note which feasts are linked to drink offerings in this chapter. We have said that the drink offering is typical of the joy of God in the completed work of Christ for the delight of God and the blessing of His people and this is borne out by the three references in this twenty-third chapter of Leviticus.

Let us stress again, with the drink offering it is not the *work* of Christ itself in view, but rather, the *joy* for God in the *accomplishment* of that work,

hence it's absence in the Passover but it's presence in the feast of First Fruits; Passover speaking of the work of Christ, First Fruits speaking of God's acceptance of the work as finished to His eternal satisfaction (John 19:30; Heb. 10:10-18). Thus, there is joy for God in the result of the completed work, but not, as such, in the work itself. God could have no joy in forsaking the Lord Jesus upon the cross, although there is joy for God in the obedience of Christ which led to that cross.

There are two great results of the cross, there is the Church, and there is Israel. These must be viewed separately if we are to enter into God's thoughts as to His plans for man. However, both are blessed solely on the result of what Christ achieved on the cross. There is joy for God in the Church now, and we, as members of Christ's body, are in the full benefit of Christ's death, being "blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies" (Eph. 1:3). The Church is fitted for glory now, and so there is a drink offering in connection with the feast of Pentecost, God's work in relation to the Church being complete.

The feast of Tabernacles is also consequent upon the death of Christ, the nation of Israel entering into the rest of God in the millennium, but there is work to be done first. Two things have to happen; the nation of Israel has to be regathered (this is the feast of Trumpets), and they must repent of their actions in crucifying Christ (this is the Day of Atonement). Thus the accomplishment of God's work in relation to Israel is figured in the feast of Tabernacles whilst the work itself is prefigured in the feasts of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement. This is why in the feast of Tabernacles alone of these last three feasts is there mention of a drink offering.

The feast of Unleavened Bread is not associated with the drink offering, the reason being that this feast looks at all believers as individuals, living lives for the pleasure of God. God is still working in our lives, moulding them, forming us through our experiences into people who have a better appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Although, in one sense, we are saved from the penalty of sin now and can never be lost (Eph. 2:8), we are still being saved from the *habits* of sin in our lives (Phil. 2:12-13). This work of God is not complete until we put on our incorruptible bodies at the Lord's return for us (1 Cor. 15:51-53; 2 Cor. 3:18), *then* God's work in each one of us as individuals will be complete. Thus the feast of Unleavened Bread is not connected here with the drink offering, as God's work with each one of us in this second sense of salvation is not yet complete, although the end is certain. There can be no drink offering *during* the feast of Unleavened Bread as it is looked at prophetically. The same principle is seen in the ordinance of the

Nazarite, the drink offering comes at the completion of the vow and speaks of the end of our lives when we have passed through the time of trial in separation to God and have entered the rest of God.

6. THE DRINK OFFERING IN THE HISTORICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The five historical references to the drink offering are in: 1 Chronicles 29:21, 2 Kings 16:13,15, 2 Chronicles 29:35 and Ezra 7:17. All of these events are shadows of the inauguration of the millennial kingdom when alone there can be joy for God in His earthly people (as previously shown from the drink offering's mention in Leviticus 23 in connection with the feast of Tabernacles, but not with the feast of Trumpets or with the Day of Atonement). Here the drink offerings are mentioned in connection with specific aspects of the millennial kingdom rather than the overall picture, and so we can gain much more detailed teaching as to what brings joy to God. It is these passages in particular that give practical lessons for our benefit.

The first of these historical references (1 Chr. 29:21) is on the occasion of the enthronement of King Solomon, the king of peace. Solomon's forty year reign of peace over the people of God is generally recognised as typical of Christ's reign in the millennium where there will be universal peace for one thousand years (see Rev. 20:4-6; Mic. 4:3-5; Joel 3:9-10; Isa. 2:4, etc.). The drink offering is mentioned only once in connection with Solomon and this is at his enthronement. This is typical of the enthronement of the Man of God's choice to rule over man. There will be joy for God in the enthronement of His only begotten Son when He rules the earth in righteousness.

2 Kings 16 details Ahaz's rule in Jerusalem during which time Rezin, the king of Syria and Remaliah, the king of Israel besieged Jerusalem. Ahaz sent for help to Tiglath-pileser, the king of Assyria, giving him all the gold and silver from the temple and from his own treasure house as the price for his help. Tiglath-pileser defeated Rezin and captured the Syrian capital, Damascus, so ending the siege of Jerusalem. Ahaz then offered upon an altar many offerings including a drink offering. This is a picture of the delivery of the faithful remnant of Judah at the end of the great tribulation, oppressed both by their own people and the surrounding nations. The remnant look outside of themselves for help, giving up all they possess, all their self-righteousness, and own their need for a deliverer. This giving up of self-righteousness is clearly seen in the attitude of the remnant as expressed in the Psalms (c.f. the progression from Ps. 7:3 to the feelings of Ps. 32). The gold

and the silver would speak of their looking for a divine (gold) Redeemer (silver), Messiah. With the deliverance of the faithful remnant and their entering into their millennial blessings at the return of Christ, and the vindication of God's righteousness, there is cause for joy.

2 Chronicles 29 details the reign of Ahaz's son, Hezekiah. He was one of the last of the good kings of Judah. Under his reign there was a revival in the nation and the restoration of the temple worship which had lapsed for many years. The restoration included the offering of drink offerings with the burnt offerings (v. 35). Again, the millennium is in view, where another restoration of temple worship will take place as detailed in Ezekiel 40-47. This will be a cause of joy to God as once again the offerings are offered and the worship of God according to the pattern that He has ordered is restored. The Father seeks worshippers and the offerings speak of His Son in accomplishing His will, through which work alone man may approach Him as a worshipper, so there cannot but be joy for God in this restoration of temple worship in the millennial kingdom of Christ.

Ezra 7:17 is the last of the historical references to the drink offering and again speaks of revival in Judah. It is not in connection with the restoration of temple worship as in 2 Chronicles 29 (and as happened again in Ezra 1-6), but rather it is in connection with the mission of Ezra which was "to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances (Ezra 7:10). This was not immediately achieved because it was not until Nehemiah 8 that Ezra instructed the people in God's word. The people first had to be in a spiritual state to hear the word, and so there was a gap of many years until the people had separated themselves completely from the surrounding nations, both individually (Ezra 9-10) and collectively as a nation (Neh. 3-6). In the coming millennium, the law will be written upon the heart of the Israelites (Jer. 31:33). This will again be a cause of joy to God. His people will all know the law and keep it, honouring Him by their obedience. Thus the drink offering is used by the Spirit of God to show how this will again bring joy to the heart of God.

However, it is important to remember that these are but pictures, and all pictures fall short of that which they look on to. All these pictures fall short of the fulfilment of the blessings that will be present in the millennial kingdom: Solomon later went into idolatry (1 Ki. 11:4-8); Ahaz (an evil king and idolater) was later defeated by both Israel and Syria in battle (2 Chr. 28:5-8); Hezekiah, despite many good deeds done for God, foolishly revealed all his treasure to Babylon at the end of his reign ultimately leading to Babylon's invasion, the captivity of Judah, and the despoiling of the temple

where he had been instrumental in restoring worship (2 Ki. 24:13); and despite Ezra's work in instructing the people in God's word inwardly the hearts of the people were never right before God. Malachi, who prophesied only a generation or so after Ezra's teaching of the law to the nation, showed their total ignorance regarding, and disobedience to the law of Moses (Mal. 1:7-8, 12-13; 2:7-8, 17; 3:8, 13-14).

Thus in these four instances, we see four different aspects of the blessings the nation will be brought into because of the work of Christ and the joy that it will bring to God. Firstly, there will be joy for God with Christ enthroned as God's Man, sitting upon the throne of David, to rule God's people in righteousness (cf. Isa. 42:1). There will be joy in the deliverance of His people to enter the kingdom (cf. Ps. 105:43), joy in the restoration of temple worship and joy in the obedience of the nation in the keeping of the law. All of these occurrences glorify God; all speak of the time when God's plans for Israel will be achieved, when they enter the rest of God; all speak of the accomplished work of Christ in bringing blessing to His earthly people. Thus all are connected with the drink offering. Speaking of this time the prophet Zephaniah could write, "The Lord, thy God, in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. 3:17). He is not alone in such prophecies, the Holy Spirit inspired all of the prophets who wrote about present chastenings and to also write about the ultimate blessing of the nation. Truly this time of blessing will bring joy to the heart of God.

However, knowing that these four things bring joy to God, how are we to live so that these four things can be seen in our lives? How can we spiritually offer a drink offering, as it were, to God? Well, for us also to be linked in this way to the drink offering, bringing joy to God, we too must put Christ before all else, He must have the central, pre-eminent place in our lives. We must also place full confidence in God to deliver us from all dangers or temptations, we must never rely on our own strength, only by being dependent upon God can we bring joy to God. We must also gather in assembly according to the pattern that was entrusted to Paul and revealed to us today in God's word. How we gather is important despite what we are often told today. God has told us how to gather and if we ignore this and seek to gather according to man-made systems in defiance of His word, will He be pleased? He will not. However, there *is* joy for God when He sees an assembly gathered according to the pattern that He has given, where Christ is owned as Head and the Holy Spirit has full liberty to glorify Christ. God can rejoice in this. Let us seek to gather according to this pattern that He Himself has entrusted to us.

Finally, a knowledge and an understanding of God's word is needed, and, more importantly, an obedience to it (Jas. 1:22). Even as Christ Himself learned obedience (Heb. 5:8), thereby glorifying God, even so it should be with us. We must study and obey His word that we may know Him better and so are made "complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:17), better able to represent Christ in this world. By following the lessons to be learnt from these four historical events connected with the drink offering *we* can bring joy to the heart of God.

7. THE DRINK OFFERING IN THE PROPHETICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

As we have already seen the drink offering was to be of strong wine (Num. 28:7), there was no command to use anything else. It was to the nation's shame that during the times of the prophet Joel they were unable to offer the meal and drink offerings demanded by the law because of a plague of locusts which had destroyed the harvest (Joel 1:9,13). This was a direct consequence of the disobedience of the nation (Deut. 28:33) and only by repenting and throwing themselves on the mercy of Jehovah could the nation hope for deliverance and a return of the meal and drink offerings (Joel 2:14). There can be no joy for God in disobedience although with the corresponding call for repentance and the promise of deliverance there would be joy for God should they repent (Luke 15:7).

There is a similar case in the New Testament. There was no cause for God to joy in the Corinthian assembly under the conditions that existed at the time of Paul's first epistle, indeed, God's judgment was upon the assembly, so that many were sick, and some had even died at the hand of God (1 Cor. 11:30), but when there was godly sorrow working repentance in the saints there Paul could rejoice in them (2 Cor. 7:8-10) as could God. Paul did not rejoice in having to correct them, making them sorry, but he could rejoice that the sorrow led to repentance. To speak figuratively there was no drink offering offered in the Corinthian assembly at the time of the first epistle, but by the time of the second there was repentance on their part and then they were able to offer a drink offering to God. Perhaps we should ask ourselves a searching question, and one that we all should consider, how much joy is there for God in us, both in our individual lives and in the assembly where we gather? God desires to have joy in us, desires that we should offer up drink offerings along with the burnt and meal offerings, but if we are disobedient He will take steps to bring us back to the point where we can again bring joy to His heart of love, but this path will be hard for us, as it will be under the hand of the Lord in chastisement.

All the other direct references to the drink offering in the prophets, bar one, as well as Psalm 16:4, refer to idolatrous practices in connection with this offering. Isaiah 57:6, Jeremiah 7:18, 19:13, 32:39, 44:17-19,25 and Ezekiel 20:28 all refer to the pouring out of drink offerings by the children of

Israel and Judah to the gods of the nations, provoking Jehovah to judge His disobedient people. Psalm 16:4 tells us that the heathen nations had changed the wine commanded by Jehovah to blood offerings, an abomination to Him, even going as far as to offer their own children in sacrifice upon their alters, shedding innocent blood (Ps. 106:37-38). Every blessing that God has ever given to man, man has corrupted. This is true of the drink offering also. We must ensure that all our worship, and indeed all our thoughts, our words and our actions, are all directed to giving joy to God, anything else that aims at pleasing ourselves is like offering drink offerings to false gods, they are an abomination to God. Let us be careful to ensure that all our offerings to God are in a right spirit and according to truth.

The drink offering pictures the accomplished work of Christ. Like all the sacrifices of the Old Testament it was only a “shadow of good things to come” (Heb. 10:1). By one offering He perfected forever those that are sanctified (v. 14), and their sins and iniquities are remembered no more (v. 17), there could be no more offering for sin (v. 18). The idolatrous practice of using blood denied this great truth in type. The work of Christ being accomplished, to use blood in the drink offering would imply that a further offering for sin was needed. Instead, wine shows that with the death of Christ (as figured in the burnt and meal offerings) there is no more offering for sin, there is only the joy of Christ’s accomplished work (figured in the accompanying drink offering of wine), which gives us “boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus” (v. 19). The false doctrine of transubstantiation is the modern equivalent of the drink offerings of blood poured out to false gods, where the value of the work of Christ is denied; they have believed “another gospel” (2 Cor. 11:4). Thus it can be seen why the drink offering had to be offered in connection with the burnt and meal offerings. Unless we are in the good of these offerings, that is, unless we know that Christ has walked as the perfect sinless Man here upon earth and died upon the cross to the glory of God so that we are in the exalted place of being “accepted in the Beloved”, we *cannot* offer a true drink offering. The same is true if we stand in doubt of our salvation or our eternal security once we have believed the gospel. If we have doubts we are not in the good of the burnt or the meal offering and so the accompanying drink offering cannot be offered, our worship cannot bring *full* joy to God, nor will we have the settled joy of Christ’s work in our souls.

The drink offering shows us that Christ has fully answered all our needs, God demands no more from us and there exists only joy for God in those associated with the one true offering, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us upon God’s altar, the cross of Calvary.

The final reference in the prophets is in Ezekiel 45:17. In the visions, which cover chapters 40:1 to 47:12 of his prophecy, Ezekiel is shown the temple as it will be during Christ's millennial kingdom and in this vision he is told that it will be the prince's part to offer drink offerings in the millennial temple. As we saw when considering the historical references, there will be joy for God in the millennial kingdom. This is what is figured here again, the restored nation worshipping God according to spirit and truth in the way that God has prescribed. This brings joy to the heart of God. Should we not strive also to offer drink offerings to God in the assembly, that is, to bring joy to the heart of God through our worship of Him according to spirit and truth in the way that He has told us to?

8. A NEW TESTAMENT DRINK OFFERING

Finally, before closing our brief consideration of the drink offering, it may be profitable to look at one practical example, the pouring out of Paul's Life to God (Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 4:6). This is significant for us because Paul is the "pattern saint" (1 Tim. 1:16). This is why we are told so much about his life, because we are to follow him as he followed Christ (1 Cor. 11:1). Whilst we cannot emulate his work as an apostle or have the power he was given of God, we can, and should, emulate his devotedness and his faith, indeed we are exhorted to "In all things showing *thyself* a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, sound speech, that cannot be condemned" (Tit. 2:7-8a). His example can be described by his own words in Philippians 1:21 "For me to live is Christ, and to die gain", or by his words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1-18. That this was true of him in his life can be seen by what he endured for his Lord's sake (Acts 13-28; 2 Cor. 11:23-33), which life of devotedness was sealed with his martyrdom.

Writing to the Philippians Paul could say "Yea, and if I be offered [as a drink offering] upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me" (Phil. 2:17-18). He was not only willing to lay down his life for his Lord, but to do so in such a way that he would be exemplifying the teaching of the drink offering, for his work would be finished and he would enter into his rest where there would only be joy, for he would "be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1:23) and God would have abundant fruit in the completed work of His servant in the faith of the Philippians saints. There would be a lasting result of his labours which would bring joy both to him and those blessed through that work. In this he mirrored his Lord's work for God and for man. It would appear that at this time he was not called upon to lay down his life, for his work was not completed. Imprisoned again several years later he wrote to Timothy: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8). This is a great challenge to all who own the name of Christ. We may not be called upon to lay down our lives as Paul did (although we may be), but we are all called to serve God in one way or another. Who will take up

the challenge to follow Paul as he followed Christ, to fight the good fight and to keep the faith?

APPENDIX: A

Complete List of References to the Drink Offering in the Bible

1. Strong's Hebrew word number 5262

Genesis 35:14

Exodus 29:40,41; 30:9

Leviticus 23:13,18,37

Numbers 6:15,17; 15:5,7,10,24

28:7(x2),8,9,10,14,15,24,31

29:6,11,16,18,19,21,22,24,25,27,28,30,31,33,34,37,38,39

2 Kings 16:13,15

1 Chronicles 29:21

2 Chronicles 29:35

Psalms 16:4

Isaiah 57:6

Jeremiah 7:18; 19:13; 32:29; 44:17,18,19 (x2),25

Ezekiel 20:28; 45:17

Joel 1:9,13; 2:14

2. Strong's Hebrew word number 5261 (A Chaldean equivalent of the Hebrew word number 5262)

Ezra 7:17

3. Strong's Hebrew word number 5257

Deuteronomy 32:38

4. Strong's Greek word number 4689

Philippians 2:17

2 Timothy 4:6

The essence of the drink offering may perhaps be expressed in Hebrews 12:2, “[Jesus] for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

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