

PS-TEENS (AGES 13-17)

# The Cup of God's Wrath: A Canonical Word Study

*Psalm 75 • Jeremiah 25 • Isaiah 51 • Matthew 26 • Revelation 14 & 16*

Hebrew, Septuagint (LXX) & New Testament Greek — with NLT English

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## LESSON OUTLINE

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- 1 The Cup Image in the Bible — Ancient World & the Divine Council
- 2 Word Study — ποτήριον, θυμός, and ὀργή
- 3 Psalm 75 & Jeremiah 25 — The Cup Is Filled & Passed Around
- 4 Isaiah 51 — The Cup Taken Away & the Big Problem
- 5 Gethsemane & Atonement — Matt 26:39, John 18:11, Rom 3:25
- 6 Revelation & The Cup Comes Back — Rev 14:10 & 16:19

## SECTION 1 — THE CUP IMAGE IN SCRIPTURE

START HERE:

*When Jesus knelt in Gethsemane and begged God to "let this cup of suffering be taken away from me," He was not pulling a random metaphor out of thin air. He was referencing an image that runs through the entire Old Testament — one His Jewish audience would have instantly recognized. If you want to understand the cross, you have to understand the cup.*

Picture a courtroom, but on a cosmic scale. Throughout the **Ancient Near East (ANE)** — the world surrounding ancient Israel — the image of a god forcing someone to drink a cup of judgment was a widely known symbol. Think of it like being handed a consequence you cannot refuse. Surrounding cultures believed their gods dished out justice this way: you drink, you pay.

What makes the Bible's version unique is how it connects to the **Divine Council**. Scholar Michael Heiser spent years studying this concept: in Deuteronomy 32:8–9, God divided the nations and assigned spiritual beings to oversee them, but He kept Israel for Himself:

**LXX Deut 32:8:** ὅτε διεμέριζεν ὁ ὕψιστος ἔθνη... κατὰ ἀριθμὸν ἀγγέλων θεοῶ

**NLT:** "When the Most High assigned lands to the nations, when he divided up the human race, he established the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of **angelic beings**."

Here is the problem: those spiritual beings over the nations went rogue. They rebelled. So the cup of wrath is God's response to that cosmic rebellion — not just human sin, but the corruption of the entire spiritual order. When Psalm 75 and Jeremiah 25 describe the cup being passed to the nations, God is reclaiming territories that fell under rebellious spiritual powers.

This is bigger than "you sinned, so you get punished." The cup operates at a **cosmic level** — God setting right everything that went wrong in His creation. Keep that in mind as we trace the cup through the Bible.

**BibleProject Approach**

**Heiser's Divine Council Lens**

BibleProject emphasizes the *literary arc* of the cup image. They trace how biblical authors intentionally build on each other's vocabulary so the reader sees one unfolding story. Their focus: how the whole Bible tells one connected narrative about justice and mercy.

Heiser digs into the *cosmic background*. He asks: why does God pour wrath on the nations specifically? Because those nations were under rebellious spiritual beings (Deut 32:8). The cup is not random anger — it is God reasserting His authority over a creation that rebelled at every level.

## SECTION 2 — WORD STUDY: KEY TERMS

Before we trace the cup through Scripture, we need to learn the vocabulary. Three Greek words show up repeatedly in this theme. Knowing them will make everything click:

### ποτήριον

**potērion — "cup"**

Just means "cup" or "drinking vessel." By itself, it is neutral — like a glass on your table. What matters is what is *inside* the cup. In Matthew 26:39, it holds suffering. In 1 Corinthians 10:16, it holds blessing. Same word, completely different contents. Context is everything.

### θυμός

**thumos — "fierce, blazing anger"**

Comes from a root meaning "to boil." Think of water at a rolling boil — that is thumos. It is intense, white-hot fury. Revelation 14:10 and 16:19 use this word for God's anger. Thumos is the *heat* of divine judgment. Not an out-of-control rage, but powerful, blazing righteousness.

### ὀργή

**orgē — "settled, deliberate anger"**

Unlike thumos (which is hot and explosive), orgē is calm, resolved, and final. Think of a judge handing down a verdict after hearing all the evidence. This

is not God losing His temper — it is a settled judicial decision. Romans 1:18 uses *orgē* for God's wrath being revealed against sin.

**Why does this distinction matter?** Because in Revelation 14:10, both *θυμός* and *ὀργή* appear *together*. The cup holds both the blazing heat of *thumos* *and* the settled verdict of *orgē*. God's judgment is not a temper tantrum — it is righteous fury backed by perfect justice. That is what Jesus faced at Gethsemane. Let that sink in.

### SECTION 3 — PSALM 75 & JEREMIAH 25: THE CUP IS FILLED & PASSED AROUND

**Psalm 75:8** gives us the first clear picture of the cup. God is holding it, and the wicked have to drain every last drop:

*LXX Psalm 74:9 (= Hebrew 75:8): ὅτι ποτήριον ἐν χειρὶ κυρίου οἴνου ἀκράτου πλήρες κεράσματος*

"For a **cup** is in the hand of the Lord, of unmixed wine, full of **mixture**"

*"For the LORD holds a cup in his hand that is full of foaming wine mixed with spices. He pours out the wine in judgment, and all the wicked must drink it, draining it to the dregs."*

— Psalm 75:8, NLT

**What is "mixed wine" (κεράσματος)?** In the ancient world, wine was often spiked with spices and other ingredients to make it stronger. The NLT captures this well: "foaming wine mixed with spices." The Greek says the wine is ἀκράτου (undiluted — no water added) yet full of κεράσματος (mixture — extra ingredients). Translation: maximum strength, maximum potency. God's judgment is not watered down. Not even a little.

**Jeremiah 25:15** takes it further. Now God tells the prophet Jeremiah to physically carry the cup to nation after nation:

*"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: 'Take from my hand this cup filled to the brim with my anger, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink from it.'"*

— *Jeremiah 25:15, NLT*

Here is what is wild about the distribution order: Jerusalem and Judah drink *first* (v. 18), then Egypt, then the Philistines, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, Sidon, Arabia — and finally Babylon (v. 26). God starts with His own people. Judgment begins at home. Nobody is exempt, and the people who should have known better go first (see also 1 Peter 4:17). That should make us think.

## **SECTION 4 — ISAIAH 51: THE CUP TAKEN AWAY & THE BIG PROBLEM**

Isaiah 51 introduces a dramatic plot twist. Jerusalem already drank from the cup and it destroyed them:

*LXX Isaiah 51:17: ἐξεγείρου ἐξεγείρου ἀνάστηθι Ἱερουσαλημ ἡ πιοῶσα ἐκ χειρὸς κυρίου τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ θυμοῦ*

"Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, who has drunk from the hand of the Lord the **cup of wrath** (thumos)"

*"Wake up, wake up, O Jerusalem! You have drunk the cup of the LORD's fury. You have drunk the cup of terror, tipping out its last drops."*

— *Isaiah 51:17, NLT*

Notice the LXX uses ποτήριον τοῦ θυμοῦ — literally "the cup of the thumos." Remember thumos? The boiling, blazing anger. This exact pairing of "cup" + "thumos" will show up again in Revelation 14 and 16. That is not a coincidence — the biblical authors are using the same vocabulary on purpose across hundreds of years.

But then, five verses later, something huge happens. God *takes the cup away*:

*"This is what your Sovereign LORD says, your God, who defends his people:  
'See, I have taken from your hand the cup of terror. You will drink no more of  
my fury.'"*

— *Isaiah 51:22, NLT*

**Here is the theological crisis — and this is the key to the whole lesson:** God is a righteous judge. His justice *requires* that sin's consequences be dealt with. You cannot just wish them away — that would make God unjust. Yet here God takes the cup out of Israel's hand. The cup is not empty. Its contents did not evaporate. So if Israel is no longer drinking it... *who is?*

Isaiah does not answer the question. It just hangs there, unresolved, for centuries. But the answer finally comes in a garden, the night before a crucifixion.

## SECTION 5 — GETHSEMANE & ATONEMENT

The night before the cross, Jesus is in the Garden of Gethsemane. He is in so much anguish that Luke says His sweat was like drops of blood. He prays:

**Matt 26:39 (Greek):** *πάτερ μου, εἰ δυνατόν ἐστιν, παρελθάτω ἀπ' ἐμοῦ τὸ ποτήριον τοῦτο· πλὴν οὐχ ὡς ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλ' ὡς σύ*

"My Father, if it is possible, let this **cup** pass from me; yet not as I will but as you will."

*"He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying,  
'My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me.  
Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.'"*

— Matthew 26:39, NLT

The word ποτήριον here is the *same exact word* used in every single cup-of-wrath passage we have studied. Jesus is not making up a new metaphor. He is consciously identifying Himself as the one who will drink the cup that Isaiah said God would take away from Israel. The centuries-old crisis of Isaiah 51 finds its answer right here.

John's Gospel makes it even more direct. When Peter pulls out a sword to fight, Jesus stops him:

**John 18:11 (Greek):** τὸ ποτήριον ὃ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ, οὐ μὴ πίνω αὐτό;

**NLT:** "But Jesus said to Peter, 'Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the **cup** of suffering the Father has given me?'"

See the shift? In Matthew 26, Jesus asks if the cup can be taken away. In John 18, He has made up His mind — He is going to drink it. The cup that God removed from Israel in Isaiah 51? Jesus willingly picks it back up.

**How does this work theologically?** Paul explains the mechanics:

**Rom 3:25 (Greek):** ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι

**NLT:** "For God presented Jesus as the **sacrifice for sin**. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood."

That Greek word ἱλαστήριον (hilasterion) literally means "place of propitiation" — or in plain English, the place where wrath is absorbed and mercy is given. In the LXX, the same word is used for the lid of the Ark of the Covenant where sacrificial blood was applied on the Day of Atonement. Jesus absorbs the wrath. He drinks the cup. He

becomes the place where God's justice and God's mercy meet. The cup is not ignored — it is drunk. But Jesus drinks it in our place.

Paul says it one more way to make absolutely sure we get it:

*"For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ."*

— 2 Corinthians 5:21, NLT

**The cup that God took from Israel in Isaiah 51  
is the cup that Jesus drinks at Calvary.**

## **SECTION 6 — REVELATION & THE CUP COMES BACK**

So Jesus drank the cup for everyone who believes in Him. But what about those who reject Him? This is where Revelation picks up the story. The cup is not finished — it returns for the final judgment:

*Rev 14:10 (Greek): καὶ αὐτὸς πίεται ἐκ τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ κεκερασμένου ἀκράτου ἐν τῷ ποτηρίῳ τῆς ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ*

**NLT:** "...must drink the wine of God's anger. It has been poured full strength into God's **cup of wrath.**"

**Vocabulary check:** The word ἀκράτου (akratou) means "undiluted" — same concept from Psalm 75. And κεκερασμένου comes from κεράννυμι ("to mix"), the same root as κέραματος in Psalm 75. The wine is "mixed undiluted" — blended with spices but zero water added. Maximum potency. John in Revelation is deliberately echoing the Psalms. This is one continuous story.

The cup appears one final time:

*"God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup that was filled with the wine of his fierce wrath."*

— Revelation 16:19, NLT

The Greek of this verse piles up *every single term* we have studied: τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ οἴνου τοῦ θυμοῦ τῆς ὀργῆς — "the cup of the wine of the thumos of the orgē." Every wrath word stacked on top of each other. This is the final, unreserved outpouring of God's justice on those who rejected the grace offered through Christ.

**The gospel contrast:** For those who are in Christ, the cup was drunk at Calvary. It is finished (John 19:30). For those who reject Christ, the cup remains — and Revelation shows it will be administered in full. This is not cruelty. It is the necessary consequence of refusing the substitutionary sacrifice that was offered.

And as a reminder of what we have *now* because of Christ:

*"When we bless the cup at the Lord's Table, aren't we sharing in the blood of Christ?"*

— 1 Corinthians 10:16, NLT

The same word — ποτήριον — but now it holds blessing instead of wrath. Because Jesus drank the cup of wrath, we get to drink the cup of communion. That is the gospel.

## Fulfillment Tracking: One Cup, One Story

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**OT Promise**

God holds a cup of judgment for the wicked (Psalm 75:8)

**OT Action**

The cup is distributed to all nations (Jeremiah 25:15)

**OT Crisis**

God removes the cup from Israel — but who drinks it? (Isaiah 51:17, 22)

Fulfilled

Jesus drinks the cup at Calvary (Matt 26:39; John 18:11; Rom 3:25)

Future

The cup returns for final judgment on those outside Christ (Rev 14:10; 16:19)

Now

Believers drink the cup of blessing at the Lord's Table (1 Cor 10:16)

## Canonical Synthesis: The Cup Through Scripture

Passage	What Happens to the Cup	Key Greek	Why It Matters
<b>Psalm 75:8</b>	God holds the cup, full and ready	<i>ποτήριον, κεράσματος</i>	Judgment is prepared — full strength, no dilution
<b>Jeremiah 25:15</b>	Cup passed to every nation	<i>ποτήριον τοῦ οἴνου</i>	Nobody is exempt; starts with God's own people
<b>Isaiah 51:17</b>	Israel has already drunk it	<i>ποτήριον τοῦ θυμοῦ</i>	Judgment experienced through exile and destruction
<b>Isaiah 51:22</b>	God takes the cup away	<i>ποτήριον</i>	Grace steps in — but who drinks the rest?
<b>Matt 26:39</b>	Jesus accepts the cup	<i>ποτήριον, ἰλαστήριον</i>	Substitutionary atonement — the crisis is resolved
<b>Rev 14:10, 16:19</b>	Cup returns for final judgment	<i>ποτήριον, θυμός, ὀργή, ἀκράτου</i>	Final judgment for those who rejected Christ

## Discussion Questions

1. The cup of wrath is connected to the Divine Council (Deut 32:8). How does knowing that this is about cosmic rebellion — not just individual sin — change how you think about God's justice?
2. The same Greek word ποτήριον shows up in Psalm 75, Isaiah 51, Matthew 26, and Revelation 14. Why is it significant that biblical writers hundreds of

years apart used the same vocabulary?

3. Isaiah 51 creates a cliffhanger: God takes the cup away, but it is not empty. Who is going to drink it? How does this tension point you straight to the cross?
4. What is the difference between θυμός (blazing anger) and ὀργή (settled verdict)? Why does Revelation 14:10 use both at the same time? What does that tell you about God's character?
5. Jesus is both the one who *drinks* the cup of wrath and the ἱλαστήριον (mercy seat) where justice and mercy meet. How does that double role shape your understanding of what happened on the cross?
6. Revelation shows the cup returning for those who reject Christ. How should this reality affect the way we share the gospel with people around us?

## Word Study Cards

### ποτήριον (potērion)

Greek (LXX & NT) — "cup"

The central word in this whole study. Just means "cup" or "drinking vessel." Shows up as the cup of wrath (Matt 26:39; Rev 14:10) and the cup of blessing (1 Cor 10:16). The cup is neutral — what matters is what is inside it.

### θυμός (thumos)

Greek — "fierce, blazing wrath"

From a root meaning "to boil." Think of a pot boiling over — that is thumos. Used in Isa 51:17 LXX (ποτήριον τοῦ θυμοῦ) and Rev 14:10. The *heat* of divine judgment.

### ὀργή (orgē)

Greek — "settled, judicial wrath"

### ἱλαστήριον (hilastērion)

Greek — "sacrifice for sin / mercy seat"

Deliberate, measured anger — not an outburst but a verdict. Unlike thumos (hot fury), orgē is the calm, final sentence from a righteous judge. In Rev 14:10, both appear together: righteous heat + settled justice.

Used in Rom 3:25 for Christ. In the LXX, this was the lid of the Ark of the Covenant where sacrificial blood was placed on the Day of Atonement. Jesus is the mercy seat — the place where the cup of wrath meets sacrificial blood and mercy wins.

### κεράσματος (kerasmatos)

Greek — "mixture, mixed potion"

From κεράννυμι ("to mix"). Used in Psalm 75:8 LXX for the spiced wine in God's cup. In Rev 14:10, κεκερασμένου ἀκράτου = "mixed undiluted" — full-strength wine with extra potency. No water added. Ever.

### οἶν (kos)

Hebrew — "cup"

The Hebrew word behind all the OT cup-of-wrath passages (Ps 75:8; Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15). Also appears positively: "my cup overflows" (Ps 23:5) and "cup of salvation" (Ps 116:13). The LXX translates kos as ποτήριον, connecting OT and NT.

#### MEMORY VERSE

*"My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."*

— Matthew 26:39, NLT

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