

PS-KIDS • GROWING EXPLORERS (AGES 9-12)

The Cup of Wrath: From Judgment to Grace

Psalm 75, Jeremiah 25, Isaiah 51 & Matthew 26

Hebrew & Greek Word Exploration

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LESSON OVERVIEW

Did you know the Bible talks about a special "cup" over and over again? This isn't a cup you drink juice from — it's a word picture that describes God's fair punishment for sin. This cup shows up in the Psalms, in the Prophets, in the Gospels, and even in the book of Revelation. Today we're going to follow this cup through the Bible and find out about the amazing moment when Jesus chose to drink it — so that we could get a totally different cup instead. Get ready, because you're about to see how the whole Bible connects like one big story!

SECTION 1 — WHAT IS THE "CUP" IN THE BIBLE?

THINK ABOUT THIS:

"The night before Jesus was put on the cross, He got on His knees in a garden and begged His Father to 'let this cup of suffering be taken away from me.' But wait — there

was no real cup in His hands! So what cup was He talking about? Where did this idea come from?"

The Bible uses the picture of a cup to talk about God's judgment — that means the fair consequences that come when people choose to do wrong. This isn't just mentioned once or twice. It shows up again and again all through Scripture, from the Old Testament all the way to the New Testament. When the Bible says someone has to "drink the cup," it means they have to face the full punishment for sin.

The very first time we see this clearly is in Psalm 75. A worship leader named Asaph wrote it:

"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 does that mean? The cup is "full of foaming wine mixed with spices" — back in Bible times, people would mix strong spices into wine to make it even more powerful. This mixed-up wine is a picture of God's justice at full strength. And the wicked have to drink it "to the dregs" — that means down to the very last drop at the bottom. Nothing gets skipped. Think of it like getting every single consequence for every single wrong thing you did, all at once.

The big idea: God is patient. He gives people time to turn back to Him. But He is also perfectly fair. He doesn't just look the other way when people do evil. The cup is His way of showing us that choices have real consequences.

SECTION 2 — GOD SENDS THE CUP TO THE NATIONS

The prophet Jeremiah takes this cup idea and makes it even bigger. God tells Jeremiah to take a cup and pass it to country after country:

"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

Now, Jeremiah didn't actually walk around the world carrying a cup. This was a **prophetic vision** — kind of like a message from God shown in pictures. But the point is powerful: God's judgment isn't just for one group of people. Every nation that turns against God and does evil will eventually have to face this cup.

Jeremiah lists country after country — Egypt, the Philistines, Edom, Moab, Tyre, and a whole bunch more. The cup goes to *everyone*. Nobody gets to skip it. This tells us something really important: God's justice is for the whole world. He doesn't play favorites or let some people off the hook while punishing others.

The cup of wrath goes to every nation. Nobody is left out.

SECTION 3 — GOD TAKES THE CUP AWAY

Now here's where the story gets really interesting. In Isaiah chapter 51, we find out that God's own people — Israel — had already been drinking this cup. They had turned away from God, and the consequences hit them hard:

"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

Israel drank the cup. They went through terrible suffering. Their enemies conquered them and carried them far away from home. But then God does something amazing — He reaches down and takes the cup right out of their hands:

*"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

That's incredible news! God removes the cup from Israel. But think about this for a second: **the cup doesn't just vanish into thin air**. If God takes it out of Israel's hand, somebody else has to deal with it. The cup is still there. The punishment for sin still has to be paid. So... who drinks it?

Imagine you got in big trouble at school, and the principal said you had to serve a week of detention. Then your best friend walked in and said, "I'll serve it for them." The punishment doesn't disappear — someone still has to sit in that chair. That question — *who takes the punishment?* — hangs in the air for hundreds of years... until one night in a garden called Gethsemane.

SECTION 4 — JESUS AND THE CUP

On the night before He was put on the cross, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane with His closest friends. He walked a little farther ahead by Himself, fell face-down on the ground, and prayed:

*"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 Greek word Jesus used for "cup" is **ποτήριον** (potērion — say it like "poh-TAY-ree-on"). This is the exact same word used all through the Greek Old Testament for the cup of God's wrath. Jesus wasn't using a random word. He was pointing back to *Psalm 75*, *Jeremiah 25*, and *Isaiah 51*. He knew exactly which cup this was — the same cup we've been tracing through the whole Bible!

Jesus was so stressed and scared that He sweat drops like blood (Luke 22:44). This wasn't just fear of being hurt physically — it was the horror of taking the full cup of God's judgment against all human sin onto Himself. Every lie ever told, every cruel thing ever done, every wrong choice from all of history — all of it concentrated into one cup.

And Jesus **drank it**. He chose to take it so that we would never have to. He was the friend who walked into the principal's office and said, "I'll take their punishment."

1

Psalm 75: God holds the cup
Judgment is ready

2

Jeremiah 25: Nations must drink
Nobody is left out

3

Isaiah 51: God removes the cup
But someone still has to drink it

4

Matthew 26: Jesus drinks it
He takes it for all of us

SECTION 5 — THE CUP OF BLESSING

Because Jesus drank the cup of wrath for us, we now get to receive a totally different cup. The Apostle Paul calls it "the cup at the Lord's Table" — the cup of blessing:

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

— 1 Corinthians 10:16, NLT

This is the cup we drink at communion — the Lord's Supper! Check out this amazing switch:

The Old Cup

Cup of **wrath** (anger)
Full of judgment
Poured out on sinners
Brings death

The New Cup

Cup of **blessing**
Full of grace
Shared with believers
Brings life

Every time we take communion, we are celebrating this incredible trade. Jesus took our cup of wrath and gave us His cup of blessing. And here's something really cool: the same Greek word — ποτήριον (potērion) — is used for both cups. Same exact word, but with completely opposite meanings. That shows us just how powerful what Jesus did on the cross really was.

**Jesus drank the cup of wrath
so we could drink the cup of blessing.**

Small Group Discussion

1. Why do you think God uses the picture of a "cup" to describe judgment?
What makes this word picture so strong and easy to understand?
2. In Jeremiah 25, the cup gets passed to nation after nation. What does that tell us about how seriously God takes sin?

3. When God takes the cup away from Israel in Isaiah 51, the cup doesn't just disappear. Why is that important? (Hint: someone else still has to drink it!)
4. Why do you think Jesus was so upset and stressed in the Garden of Gethsemane? What was He really facing when He talked about "this cup of suffering"?
5. How does knowing about the cup of wrath change the way you think about communion (the cup of blessing) when we take it at church?

Word Study Cards

οἶς (kos)

Hebrew (Old Testament)

This is the Hebrew word for "cup." Say it like "kohs." You'll find it in Psalm 75:8 and Isaiah 51:17,22, where it means the cup of God's punishment. But the same word also shows up in Psalm 23:5 — "my cup overflows" — where it means a cup of blessing! One word, two very different cups.

ποτήριον (potērion)

Greek (New Testament)

This is the Greek word for "cup" — say it like "poh-TAY-ree-on." Jesus used this word in Matthew 26:39 when He talked about the cup of wrath. And Paul used the exact same word in 1 Corinthians 10:16 for the cup of blessing at communion. Same word — opposite cups!

θυμός (thumos)

Greek

"Wrath" or "fierce anger" — say it like "THOO-mos." This is the word used in Revelation 14:10 for the wine of God's fury. It doesn't mean God throws a fit like when you get mad. It means God's strong, fair response to evil — like a good judge who won't let criminals go free.

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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