

1. What Was the Drink Offering in the Old Testament?

In the Old Testament sacrificial system, the drink offering was a unique part of Israel's worship. It involved pouring out wine before the Lord on the altar. This act symbolized complete surrender, thanksgiving, and dedication to God.

Leviticus 23:13

“And the grain offering with it shall be two tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, a food offering to the Lord with a pleasing aroma, and the drink offering with it shall be of wine, a fourth of a hin.”

This was not an offering for consumption — it was poured out, signifying that something valuable was being given fully to God. The drink offering accompanied other offerings like the burnt and grain offerings.

Additional references include:

- Exodus 29:40,
- Leviticus 23:18,
- Numbers 15:5-10,
- Numbers 28:7.

The act of pouring out wine, a symbol of joy and abundance in Jewish culture (Psalm 104:15), represented the total outpouring of oneself in worship. It was a visual expression of love and gratitude toward God.

2. Why Was Wine Used?

God specifically commanded that wine, not water or any other drink, be used. This was purposeful. Wine in Scripture often symbolizes:

- Joy (Judges 9:13),
- Covenant fellowship (Isaiah 25:6),
- Blood and sacrifice (symbolically in the New Testament).

Wine carries weight in redemptive symbolism, especially in the context of covenants and sacrificial worship.

Wine foreshadows the blood of Christ, which would later be poured out for the new covenant. Even in the Old Covenant, God was pointing forward to Christ's ultimate sacrifice.

3. Where Did the Practice Begin?

Although formalized in the Mosaic Law, the concept of the drink offering predates the Law. We see it first practiced by Jacob after God appeared to him at Bethel.

Genesis 35:14-15

"Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had spoken with him, a pillar of stone. He poured out a drink offering on it and poured oil on it. So Jacob called the name of the place where God had spoken with him Bethel."

This moment was a personal act of worship. Jacob was acknowledging God's covenant promises and dedicating the place to Him. It mirrors the tithe Abraham gave to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:20), long before the law was given.

Just as the tithe began as an act of faith and devotion (not law), so did the drink offering. It was an expression of worship and surrender to God — a principle that continues under grace.

4. What Does the Drink Offering Represent in the New Testament?

The drink offering finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

At the Last Supper, Jesus used wine to represent His blood, which would be poured out on the cross.

Luke 22:20

“And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.’”

The language “poured out” echoes the Old Testament drink offerings. Jesus’ blood became the final, perfect offering, fulfilling what the drink offering had symbolized for centuries.

Philippians 2:17

“Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.”

2 Timothy 4:6

“For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.”

Both Paul and Jesus connected the drink offering with total sacrifice and dedication — not just in ritual, but in life and death.

In Christ, the drink offering was no longer symbolic. His actual blood was poured out on the altar of the cross. That offering is the foundation of the New Covenant, and it's remembered every time believers take Communion.

5. Application for Believers Today

- The drink offering teaches us to live lives of complete surrender to God.
- It reminds us that true worship involves sacrifice — not just of things, but of ourselves (Romans 12:1).
- Communion is a continual reminder of Christ’s blood poured out, fulfilling the ancient symbols with eternal reality.

Romans 12:1

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

A Shadow Fulfilled in Christ

The drink offering, first seen in Genesis and later codified in the Law, was always meant to point forward. In Christ, the shadow became reality. His blood, symbolized by wine, was poured out once and for all for our salvation (Hebrews 9:12).

So when we see wine in the Old Testament sacrifices, and again in the cup of the New Covenant, we are reminded of a God who

fulfilled every symbol in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

May the Lord bless you as you walk in the light of His finished work.

The Lord is coming!

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