

of your death is near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the Tent of Meeting, where I will commission him" (v. 14). So Moses and Joshua came and presented themselves. Then the Lord appeared at the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the cloud stood over the entrance to the tent. And the Lord said to Moses, "You are going to rest with your fathers, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake Me and break the covenant I made with them. On that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide My face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and difficulties will come upon them, and on that day they will ask, 'Have not these disasters come upon us because our God is not with us?' And I will certainly hide My face on that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods. Now write down for yourselves this song and teach it to the Israelites and make them sing it, so that it may be a witness for Me against them" (vv. 16-19).

Thus, in majestic language, in what became known as the Song of Moses, was portrayed, not

only the inevitable waywardness of the nation, but also the impregnable Rock of the Almighty, Who would judge His people and have compassion on His servants. "Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day", said Moses. "They are not just idle words for you—they are your life" (32:46,47). It was a song so powerful in its implications that it will be sung at the resurrection of the just, alongside the Song of the Lamb, when all nations shall rejoice with his people, singing:

"Great and marvellous are Your deeds,
Lord God Almighty.
Just and true are Your ways,
King of the ages.
Who will not fear You, O Lord,
and bring glory to Your name?
For You alone are holy.
All nations will come and
worship before You,
for Your righteous acts have
been revealed" (Rev. 15:3,4; cf. Deut. 32:43).

(To be concluded)

Exposition

Fruit trees as symbols in Scripture

The vine (3)

The symbology of winepress, wine and cup

David Green

AT THE CONCLUSION of [Part 1](#) dealing with the vine and vineyard symbology in Scripture we examined part of Jacob's blessing for Judah (Gen. 49:11). The second part of verse 11 provides a convenient starting point for looking at the symbology related to wine. The passage reads, "he [Judah] washed [NIV, will wash] his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes".*

This must refer to the day of vengeance when Jesus and the saints destroy the enemies of Israel:

"Why is your apparel red,
And your garments like one who treads
in the winepress?
'I have trodden the winepress alone,
And from the peoples no one was with
me.
For I have trodden them in my anger,
And trampled them in my fury;

* Quotations from the NKJV unless stated otherwise.

Their blood is sprinkled upon my garments,
 And I have stained all my robes.
 For the day of vengeance is in my heart,
 And the year of my redeemed has come''

(Isa. 63:2-4).

The same idea is expressed in the Apocalypse in connection with God's punishments being poured out on a wicked world. In vision John sees an angel coming out from the altar calling out to another angel holding a sharp sickle:

"Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.' So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress . . ."

(Rev. 14:18-20).

This is the last reference in the Bible to a vine, but in this case it refers to the nations of the earth who oppose the Lord Jesus when he returns:

"He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God . . . Now out of his mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it he should strike the nations. And he himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (19:13,15).

This very graphic symbology speaks to us of the nations of the earth being ripe for the judgements involved in the pouring out of God's wrath on the wicked. Just as treading out grapes produces blood-red juice, described as "the blood of grapes" (Gen. 49:11), so the treading down of the nations will involve much bloodshed.

It is interesting that another striking symbol of punishment is also connected with the vine. In both Old and New Testaments the drinking of a cup of wine (red, like blood, Ps. 75:8) is sometimes used to represent the pouring out of God's wrath on peoples and nations:

"If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation" (Rev. 14:9,10);

"And great Babylon was remembered before God, to give her the cup of the wine of the

fierceness of His wrath" (16:19).

This language is derived from a number of Old Testament passages. Just as wine makes people drunk, so the cup of God's wrath makes them stagger and go mad. This is a cup of wrath that the nations cannot avoid drinking down to the very dregs:



Babylon the Great, as pictured in Revelation 17, "drunken with the blood of the saints".

Source: *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, G. & R. Walker

"Take this wine cup of fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. And they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them" (Jer. 25:15,16);

"For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup,
 And the wine is red;
 It is fully mixed, and He pours it out;
 Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of
 the earth
 Drain and drink down"

(Ps. 75:8).

Wine a symbol of doctrine

Wine is used of teaching or doctrine, both good and bad. Just as wine is drunk and absorbed by the body to produce either a refreshing or drunken effect, so doctrine can be taken into hearts and minds to produce either knowledge of true wisdom or foolish and ungodly behaviour:

"Wisdom has built her house . . .

She has mixed her wine . . .

'Come, eat of my bread

And drink of the wine I have mixed.

Forsake foolishness and live,

And go in the way of understanding'"

(Prov. 9:1,2,5,6);

“Ho! Everyone who thirsts
... come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price . . .
Incline your ear, and come to Me.
Hear, and your soul shall live”

(Isa. 55:1,3).

In contrast to the wholesome doctrines of the Truth, the false teachings of the Babylonian harlot make the nations drunk. In language based on Jeremiah 51:7 we read in the Apocalypse that

“... the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication . . . having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication” (17:2,4);

“Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication” (14:8).

Wine a symbol of sacrifice

We conclude this study of the symbology of wine in Scripture by looking at wine as a symbol of

sacrifice. The obvious connection between red wine, “the blood of grapes” (Gen. 49:11), and shed blood has already been discussed in the context of the pouring out of God’s wrath on the wicked in punishment. The very opposite of this is a life laid down in love so that blood might be shed for the forgiveness of sins: “I lay down my life for the sheep” (Jno. 10:15); “but now, once at the end of the ages, he has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Heb. 9:26).

In our weekly remembrance of this great act of self-sacrifice, in which Jesus “condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3, AV), the cup of wine becomes the symbol of his “blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mt. 26:28); “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [mg. fellowship or sharing] of the blood of Christ?” (1 Cor. 10:16). The sacrifice of Jesus thus becomes a continual reminder to us of our need to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts (Gal. 5:24, AV), and the love of Christ constrains us to that end (2 Cor. 5:14, AV).

(Concluded)