

Mark 10:38

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

Analysis

Jesus answered James and John: 'Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?' (Οὐκ οἴδατε τί αἰτεῖσθε. δύνασθε πιεῖν τὸ ποτήριον ὃ ἐγὼ πίνω, καὶ τὸ βάπτισμα ὃ ἐγὼ βαπτίζομαι βαπτισθῆναι). Jesus exposed their ignorance—'ye know not what ye ask.' They sought glory without understanding the cost. The 'cup' (potērion, ποτήριον) refers to suffering and God's wrath (Isaiah 51:17; Jeremiah 25:15; Mark 14:36). The 'baptism' (baptisma, βάπτισμα) symbolizes overwhelming suffering—being immersed in affliction. Jesus would drink the cup of wrath at the cross and be baptized in suffering and death. True greatness requires sharing Christ's sufferings (Romans 8:17; Philippians 3:10; 1 Peter 4:13). James and John couldn't comprehend this—they'd later flee at Jesus' arrest (Mark 14:50). Only after resurrection and Spirit's coming did they understand.

Historical Context

The 'cup' symbolism appears throughout Scripture as divine judgment (Psalm 75:8; Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jeremiah 25:15-17; Lamentations 4:21; Ezekiel 23:31-34; Habakkuk 2:16; Zechariah 12:2). Jesus would drink this cup in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36) and on the cross, bearing God's wrath against sin. 'Baptism' of suffering echoes Psalm 69:1-2, 'waters are come in unto my soul... I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.' James did drink Jesus' cup—martyred by Herod Agrippa around AD 44 (Acts 12:2), first apostle killed. John drank it

differently—enduring persecution, exile to Patmos (Revelation 1:9), outliving other apostles to die of old age. Both suffered for Christ, though differently. Their confident 'We can' (v. 39) was naive but became reality through grace. Early Christians viewed martyrdom and suffering as sharing Christ's baptism and cup.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does the 'cup' and 'baptism' metaphor teach about the necessity of suffering in authentic Christian discipleship?
2. How does Jesus' question expose the difference between seeking glory versus understanding the cost of true greatness?

Interlinear Text

ο	δὲ	Ἰησοῦς	εἶπεν	αὐτοῖς	Οὐκ	οἴδατε	τί	αἰτεῖσθε
G3588	But	Jesus	said	unto them	not	Ye know	what	ye ask
G1161	G2424	G2036	G846	G3756	G1492	G5101	G154	
δύνασθε	πίνω	τὸ	ποτήριον	ὅ	ἐγὼ	πίνω	καί	τὸ
can ye	drink	G3588	of the cup	that	I	drink	and	G3588
G1410	G4095		G4221	G3739	G1473	G4095	G2532	
βάπτισμα	ὅ	ἐγὼ	βαπτισθῆναι	βαπτισθῆναι				
with the baptism	that	I	am baptized with	am baptized with				
G908	G3739	G1473	G907	G907				

Additional Cross-References

Luke 12:50 (Baptism): But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

John 18:11 (References Jesus): Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

Isaiah 51:22 (Parallel theme): Thus saith thy Lord the LORD, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold, I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again:

Psalms 75:8 (Parallel theme): For in the hand of the LORD there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them.

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