

Mark 14:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it.

Analysis

This verse captures the institution of the Lord's Supper, the cup representing Christ's blood shed for covenant redemption. "He took the cup" (λαβὼν ποτήριον, labōn potērion) describes Jesus' deliberate action during the Passover meal. The definite article "the cup" likely refers to the third cup of the Passover Seder, the "cup of redemption," drunk after the meal. Jesus transformed this Jewish ritual into a new covenant memorial. "When he had given thanks" (εὐχαριστήσας, eucharistēsas) is the verb from which we get "Eucharist." This wasn't mere politeness but profound thanksgiving to the Father for redemption, even as Jesus faced the cross. "He gave it to them" demonstrates the cup's purpose wasn't Christ's consumption but the disciples' participation. The Lord's Supper is participatory—believers partake of Christ's redemptive work. "And they all drank of it" emphasizes universal participation. All disciples drank, unlike Roman Catholic practice restricting the cup to clergy. The New Testament pattern is clear: all believers partake of both bread and cup. The cup represents the new covenant in Christ's blood (Luke 22:20). Old covenant blood was sprinkled on the people (Exodus 24:8); new covenant blood is received spiritually through faith, symbolized in the cup. This fulfills Jeremiah 31:31-34—God's law written on hearts through Christ's sacrifice.

Historical Context

This event occurred in the Upper Room during Passover, likely Thursday evening before Jesus' crucifixion on Friday. The Passover commemorated Israel's

deliverance from Egyptian bondage when the destroying angel passed over homes marked with lamb's blood (Exodus 12). The Passover Seder (order of service) followed prescribed elements: four cups of wine, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, lamb, and liturgical recitations. Jesus transformed this ancient ritual. The bread became His body broken; the cup became His blood shed—establishing a new Passover with Christ as the Lamb of God. First-century Judaism understood covenants were ratified with blood (Genesis 15:9-21; Exodus 24:3-8). The early church continued this practice as the central act of worship. Acts 2:42 records believers "continued steadfastly in... breaking of bread." Throughout church history, debate has surrounded this sacrament, but all Christian traditions recognize its central importance as Christ's own institution.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus' act of giving thanks for the cup representing His death teach us about submission to God's will in suffering?
2. How does the fact that 'they all drank of it' challenge practices that restrict the cup to clergy or limit who may participate in communion?
3. In what ways does the Lord's Supper serve as both a remembrance of Christ's past work and a proclamation of ongoing spiritual realities?
4. How should understanding the cup as representing the new covenant in Christ's blood shape our approach to communion and our daily walk?
5. What is the relationship between the Passover lamb's blood on the doorposts and Christ's blood in the cup, and what does this tell us about redemption?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	λαβὼν	τὸ	ποτήριον	εὐχαριστήσας	ἔδωκεν
And	he took	G3588	the cup	and when he had given thanks	he gave
G2532	G2983		G4221	G2168	G1325
αὐτοῦ	καὶ	ἔπιον	ἐξ	αὐτοῦ	πάντες
it	And	drank	of	it	they all
G846	G2532	G4095	G1537	G846	G3956

Additional Cross-References

Mark 14:22 (Parallel theme): And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

Matthew 26:27 (Parallel theme): And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

1 Corinthians 10:16 (Parallel theme): The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

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