

New Covenant In My Blood

Our study comes from Luke 22:19-20. Our study is about the last meal that Jesus shared with the disciples before His death. The meal is called the Passover. It is a meal that occurs once a year on Nissan 14. If you were to continue reading, you would find that later Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane. There He was arrested and put on trial before the Sanhedrin Council. Eventually, He was interrogated by Pontius Pilate and King Herod. Then He was returned to Pontius Pilate, traded for a thief and nailed to a cross. He was crucified, dying for our sins on a Friday. He was the Perfect Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

THE PASSOVER MEAL. As I have already said, our study is about the Passover meal that Jesus and His disciples shared before these events. Therefore, I would like to read verses 14 to 18 and make some comments along the way. Verse 14 says,

When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. Luke 22:14 (NASB)

We do not know the seating order of the apostles. We do not know who was seated next to Jesus. We can make some guesses. We do not know if Leonardo da Vinci was right in his Passover painting. We do not believe there was a formal table. They were literally reclining, because that is what the Greek text tells us.

Verse 15 teaches us that Jesus wanted to eat the Passover

Meal with the disciples.

And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer . . ." Luke 22:15 (NASB)

Verses 16-18 continue Jesus' statement.

“. . . for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." Luke 22:16-18 (NASB)

Notice that Jesus had taken a cup of wine. The Passover meal was organized around four cups of wine. As we look at this passage, it is important to understand which cup Jesus took,

because each cup has a significant meaning. We know that the Passover was organized around four cups. The first two were taken during the meal and the last two occurred after the meal.

The First Cup - Cup of Sanctification. When we look at verse



17, we are told,

And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves . . ." Luke 22:17 (NASB)

This is the first cup of the Passover meal. Jesus and the disciples were sitting or reclining. There is food on a side table. Jesus opens with prayers of praise and thanks. Then He drinks from the cup. That is what verse 17 tells us. Communion or the Lord's Supper had not started yet. This is simply the beginning of the meal.

In verse 18 we are told that Jesus would not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom.

For I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes. Luke 22:18 (NASB)

So Jesus makes the point that "someday in the future I will have an opportunity to drink with you again." All of this is all in the context of the first cup. It is the Cup of Sanctification.

Second Cup - Cup of Deliverance. When we come to verse 19, we are told Jesus took bread. We normally associate this bread with the bread taken during communion.

And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Luke 22:19 (NASB)

One might wonder if this is the second cup, the Cup of Deliverance, or the third cup, the Cup of Redemption. The second cup occurred between verse 18 and verse 19. How do we know that? The answer is that in the Jewish Passover, the matzo or unleavened bread comes after the second cup and before the third cup. So the second cup occurred between verses 18 and 19.

The unleavened bread speaks of or is symbolic of the sinlessness of Christ. That is, Jesus Christ was holy. He was sinless, perfectly, totally without sin. Unleavened bread was served during the Passover. It was without yeast. It was symbolic of the absence of sin. We are told that Jesus took the unleavened bread, gave thanks for it, and said, "This is symbolic of my body." The bread had a dual meaning. One of the meanings is that He is holy. The other message is that eventually His body would be broken.

Third Cup - Cup of Redemption. When you come to verse

20, Jesus takes another cup. It is the third cup because we are told,

And in the same way He took the cup . . . Luke 22:20a (NASB)

This is the third cup. And we are told,

... after they had eaten . . . Luke 22:20b (NASB)

Now I want you to notice the word "eaten." We are told after they had eaten! The Greek for meal is *deipeno*, and it means "to eat a meal." The way your Bible should read is, "After they had eaten the meal."

This helps us understand which cup this is. This is the third cup. Now at first you might say, "Who cares whether it is the first, the second, or the third cup?" The answer is there is something significant about the third cup. The third cup was called the Cup of Redemption. Jesus waited until the third cup, the Cup of Redemption, and then He said,

This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. Luke 22:20c (NASB)

He waited until the Cup of Redemption and then He said "poured out." The Greek word has the idea "to pour" or "to shed." There is a dual meaning to this word. Not only is Jesus' blood poured out, but it is also shed for us. That is, He was slain for us. He died for us. His death was a vicarious death. He died in our place. Then He said,

This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. Luke 22:20

In Matthew 26:28 and Mark 14:24, the words are scrambled. In Luke 22:24 Jesus said "the new covenant of My blood," but in Matthew and Mark Jesus said, "My blood of the covenant." At first you might think these phrases are identical. But the answer is they are really different. Because the emphasis is on "the new covenant" in Luke and then the emphasis in Matthew and Mark is on "My blood." One commentator said, "When Jesus said 'the new covenant of

My blood,' the emphasis was on the future reality of the promise. The promise is the promise of the new covenant." When Matthew and Mark said "My blood of the covenant," the emphasis was on salvation, on the death of Christ. There is an emphasis on the fulfillment of the promise of the new covenant in Luke. Matthew and Mark place the emphasis on the salvation that Jesus brings. It is important to see this. Watch this: Jesus' blood or death is essential to the coming of the new covenant. Jesus' sacrifice brings about the new covenant.

What is the new covenant? The word "covenant," *diatheke* in the Greek, simply means "an agreement." So when it says "new covenant," you should think of a new agreement. That is the idea. God promised us a new agreement.

THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS. Now I want to elaborate on this new covenant and its importance. In Hebrews 8:1 the writer of Hebrews teaches us that Jesus is our high priest. He teaches that Jesus is better than any earthly priest. He is better than any of the Levitical priests in the Jewish nation. The Jews believed because the Pentateuch taught that the only people who were allowed to be priests were members of the tribe of Levi. One of the problems with declaring that Jesus was a high priest, from a Jewish perspective, was that Jesus was not a Levite. So the writer of Hebrews has gone to a lot of effort in chapters five through seven to make the point that Jesus is a high priest. Here is Hebrews 8:1-2:

Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. Hebrews 8:1-2 (NASB)

The point the author is making is that we have a high priest, Jesus Christ. But He is not a priest after the levitical priesthood; yet He is a priest. The argument that the author has been using is that Jesus is a priest like Melchizedek. Melchizedek was a priest, but He was not a Levite. So Jesus could be a priest and not be a Levite. That is the basic argument he is making. The point that he makes is that Jesus is a better priest than even the priest Melchizedek. Let us pick

up his argument in verse 6.

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. Hebrews 8:6 (NASB)

Jesus Christ, our high priest, has a better ministry. In fact, He has "a more excellent ministry." He has a better covenant enacted on better promises. Do you realize what that means? Jesus has a better covenant, or the better promise is the new covenant.

How do we come to that conclusion? Look at the next verse.

For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. Hebrews 8:7 (NASB)

Verse 7 tells us that there was a first covenant. The author is referencing the Mosaic Covenant! Sometimes we call it the Mosaic Law. I think most of us are aware that when the Israelites left Egypt, Moses went up on a mountain, Mount Sinai, where He was given a covenant. The covenant was the Mosaic Covenant. Verse 7 says that was the first covenant.

Now obviously since the author of Hebrews speaks of a first covenant, he is also implying there is a second covenant, a new covenant or another covenant. So at the end of the verse he says, "There would have been no occasion to have sought a second." He is talking about a first covenant and a second covenant or in other words, an old covenant and a new covenant.

Now notice what the author of Hebrews does in verses 8 to 12. He quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34. I could not help thinking about the disciples. Jesus is in the upper room and the disciples are all around. Jesus has just finished telling them the bread speaks of His body, symbolic of His holiness, symbolic of the body that was going to be broken. Then He talks about the "new covenant of My blood." As soon as He said "new covenant," these Jewish disciples, who would have known the Old Testament, would have been remembering Jeremiah 31:31! Here is verse 8. It quotes Jeremiah 31:31-34.

For finding fault with them, He says,

“Behold, days are coming, says the Lord,
When I will effect a new covenant
with the house of Israel and with the
house of Judah . . .” Hebrews 8:8 (NASB)

That is the same phrase that Jesus used in Luke 22:20, when Jesus spoke of the new covenant of My blood. So Jeremiah is the reference to the new covenant. That is what Jesus was talking about. What do you think Jesus meant by that? What is significant about the statement, “the new covenant of My blood”? The answer to that question is what this study is about. It is important that Jesus referred to Jeremiah 31. He said that the wine in the cup was symbolic of the covenant of My blood. If you want to understand the significance of the communion cup, we need to understand what the new covenant is.

The author of Hebrews says,

“Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers
On the day when I took them by the hand
To lead them out of the land of Egypt;
For they did not continue in My covenant,
And I did not care for them,” says the Lord.
Hebrews 8:9 (NASB)

Every time I read verse 9, I notice that last part. Why did God not care for the Israelites? The answer is they were unbelieving, arrogant complainers. All they did was complain! Verse 8 is the new covenant. Verse 9 is the old covenant. Notice what He says, “It is not like the covenant which I made with their fathers.” Watch this: the new covenant is not like the old covenant.

It is important to notice that there are multiple Greek words for the word new. One means new in time. There is also a Greek word that means brand new—something that has never happened before. That is the word used here. It is unique. It is superior to anything that had happened in the past. Therefore, when He says in verse 9, “it is not like the old one,” He is right. This new covenant is superior. This new covenant is not just a warmed-over version of the old

covenant.

When we come to verse 10, the author is saying that the Mosaic Covenant was external and the new covenant is internal. It is important to catch the difference. He says,

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel
After those days, says the Lord:
I will put My laws into their minds,
And I will write them on their hearts.
And I will be their God,
And they shall be My people.” Hebrews 8:10 (NASB)

I just love this verse. The old covenant was all external. It focused on external behavior. It was ritualistic: priests, sacrifices, feasts, and all the pomp and ceremony that came with the sacrificial system. The new covenant is something internal. Watch what He says:

I will put My laws in their minds.

DEFINITION OF THE NEW COVENANT. In other words, the gospel will speak to the mind. Someone once said salvation starts with facts, followed by faith and then feelings. The gospel is about facts, faith follows, and then the feelings come. All too often Christendom has flipped things. We are motivated by our feelings to believe. Often we are not even interested in the facts. That is not how the gospel works. God says, “I will put them in their minds and in their hearts,” and then He said, “I am going to have a relationship with you.” I love that. “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

This week I had a very unusual opportunity. Some weeks ago I had a call. A caregiver for a woman asked me to visit her. The caregiver told me that the woman had visited our church once and she wanted me to pay her a visit. I did not recognize her name, but I agreed to go. This week my wife and I had the opportunity to pay her a visit. When we walked into her house, I saw that the floors of the house were without carpeting. We walked all the way to the back of the house into her bedroom. She was a quadriplegic sitting in a wheelchair and did not have the use of her hands. She was capable of very few motions. My wife was with me and spoke

to her. Immediately, I knew we were going to have difficulty understanding this dear woman. She spoke with great difficulty. She told us that she had Multiple system atrophy (MSA). This meant her muscles were atrophying, a very difficult situation. We conversed with her for awhile. Eventually, she said, “I am dying” and burst into tears—tears pouring down her cheeks. We got a tissue, took her glasses off, and wiped her eyes. She could not do that for herself.

The conversation continued, and at one point I felt the Holy Spirit urging me to ask her a very important question. I said, “If you were to die tonight, where would you go?” She could hardly answer my question. Her jaw was trembling. She was crying and said, “I do not know.” So I proceeded to ask her what she knew about Jesus Christ. Did she believe Jesus was God. She said, “Yes!” I asked if she believed that He died on a cross to forgive her sins. She said, “Yes!” I asked if she believed that He came back to life or was resurrected. She said, “Yes!” I asked if she believed she was a sinner. Then I told her, “Did you know that Jesus said there is only one who is good, and that is God. None of us are good.” If only God is good, that means none of us qualify to go to heaven. There is not a thing you or I can do to go to heaven. I read Ephesians 2:8-9,

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 (NASB)

I asked her, “Do you believe that?” She said, “Yes!” She said that she had been in church. She had some education about what the Bible teaches. Finally I asked her, “Would you like to ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins, and to give you eternal life?” She said, “Yes!” A little smile appeared on her face. I was starting to tell her, “You can just pray,” then it became clear that was going to be confusing. Therefore, I led her in prayer—gave her some words. Her words were the clearest words she had uttered the entire time we were there. She confessed Jesus Christ. She told God that she wanted her sins forgiven. She wanted eternal life. She said, “Thank you.” Then I went to John 3:16 and told her that there are two promises in John 3:16: she would not perish, and she

would have eternal life. She responded, “Wow!” It was so clear. “Wow!” Do you understand what God did for her? God spoke to her heart. The Holy Spirit spoke to her mind, spoke to her heart, and now she has a relationship with God. “And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” She is part of God’s family.

Hebrews 8:11 states,

And they shall not teach everyone his fellow citizen, And everyone his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ For all will know me, From the least to the greatest of them. Hebrews 8:11 (NASB)

Verses 10 and 11 teach us that it is the Holy Spirit who gives us understanding. I will never forget a woman in the church telling us that when she accepted Jesus Christ, all of a sudden she could understand the Bible. That is one of the surest indications that you are a Christian. You can open the Bible, read it, and understand it. I cannot tell you how many people have told me they read the Bible and they cannot understand it. It does not mean anything to them. That tells me they are not a Christian. That tells me that the Spirit of God is not within them, taking over and transforming them. That is why they cannot understand. Because verses 10-11 say, “I will put My laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts. And I will be their God, and they will be my people, and everybody will know me. For all will know me, from the least to the greatest of them.”

That is the work of the Spirit in their life. Now verse 12 says,

For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more. Hebrews 8:12 (NASB)

God says, “I will not remember your sins any more.” They are wiped clean. This is all of our sins: past, present, and future sins, all of them.

OLD COVENANT IS OBSOLETE. Verse 13 adds,

When He said, “A new covenant,” He has made the first obsolete. Hebrews 8:13a (NASB)

“New” implies that the old thing is going to disappear. That is exactly the message He is giving.

But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. Hebrews 8:12b (NASB)

Now you might say, “What is He really talking about? When He says ‘old,’ is He talking about the old covenant? Is He talking about the Mosaic Covenant?” And the answer is yes!

Now we will read Hebrews 9:1.

Now even the first covenant had regulations of divine worship and the earthly sanctuary. Hebrews 9:1 (NASB)

Verse 1 is discussing the first or the old covenant. Then verse 2 says,

For there was a tabernacle prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the sacred bread; this is called the holy place. Behind the second veil there was a tabernacle which is called the Holy of Holies, having a golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold . . . Hebrews 9:2-4a (NASB)

The author is writing about the temple. This section demonstrates that he is talking about the old covenant or the Mosaic Covenant. He is saying that the old Mosaic Covenant is gone. When Jesus died on the cross, He brought in a new covenant. The new covenant replaced the old one. The Mosaic Covenant is gone. It is obsolete.

In verse 6 we read,

Now when these things have been so prepared, the priests are continually entering the outer tabernacle performing the divine worship, but into the second, only the high priest enters once a year . . . Hebrews 9:6-7a (NASB)

The high priest entered the Holy of Holies once a year on the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement was the one

day of the year, when the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies. He offered the blood of bulls and of goats on that day.

In verse 11 the writer of Hebrews is going to show us that the blood of Jesus is better than the blood of bulls and goats.

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all having obtained eternal redemption. Hebrews 9:11-12 (NASB)

The message is Jesus does not need to die again. His blood does not need to be shed again.

In verses 13 and 14 the author is going to compare the blood of bulls and goats to the blood of Jesus. Verse 13 says,

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more . . . Hebrews 9:13-14a (NASB)

Did you catch the phrase? He says, “How much more...” The implication is of how much more value is the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit, the Holy Spirit offered Himself, without blemish, to God. He says that the blood of Jesus is better. The blood of Jesus is superior to the blood of bulls and goats. He stated,

How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Hebrew 9:14 (NASB)

Verse 14 makes the point that the blood of Jesus is better, and verse 15 gives us the benefit.

For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant.

The blood of bulls and goats could not bring in the new covenant. They were only good for the old covenant. Only

Jesus' blood was sufficient. Jesus had to die for the new covenant to become effective. How can we know the new covenant is effective? Verse 16 reads:

For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. Hebrews 9:16 (NASB)

Who made the new covenant? Jesus Christ did. Verses 17-18 adds this,

For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. Hebrews 9:17-18 (NASB)

The message is that the first covenant was inaugurated with blood and the new covenant was inaugurated with Jesus' blood. For those who are not sure, he quotes verses 19 and 20. He says,

For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU." Hebrews 9:19-20 (NASB)

Verse 20 is a quote from Exodus 24:8. Notice that in the Upper Room, when Jesus was instituting the Lord's Supper, He quotes part of Exodus 24:8. He rewords it and applies it to the cup that we take during Communion. Jesus' message is really very simple. His blood instituted the new covenant.

THE NEW COVENANT. Now what is the new covenant? The new covenant is the Spirit indwelling, empowering and transforming believers. That is the new covenant in a nutshell. That is incredible! Jesus was the only one who could institute the new covenant.

Now I want you to see something important. Hebrews 10:1 says,

For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to

come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? Hebrews 10:1-2 (NASB)

I want you to think about this for a second. If you were a Jew in Christ's time, every time you sinned, you needed to offer a sacrifice for your sin. You would have to do it again and again. It would be very repetitive. The Day of Atonement occurred every year.

Verse 3 continues with,

But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Hebrews 10:3 (NASB)

The animal sacrifices did not forgive sins. Those animal sacrifices were imperfect. They never permanently forgave sin. They were only temporary, waiting for Jesus died to make the final and perfect sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:11 describes the activities of the repetitive duties of the priests.

Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; Hebrews 10:11 (NASB)

Now watch this.

. . . but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN . . . Hebrews 10:12 (NASB)

The job was finished. Remember on the cross that Jesus said, "It is finished." "It is finished!!" The message is that Jesus died for our sins. A holy God lived a perfect life and died for you and for me. This is incredible!

CONCLUSION. Verses 15-18 conclude the author's argument.

And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

“THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM

AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD:

I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART,

AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM,”

He then says,

“AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS

I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE.”

Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin. Hebrews 10:15-18 (NASB)

The message is that Jesus does not need to die on the cross again. That implies our sins are forgiven once. You may ask, “Why are our future sins forgiven?” The author says otherwise Jesus would have to keep dying. He would have to do it again and again. But He did it once for all! He forgave all your old, former sins. He forgave all the sins that you might commit today. He forgave all your sins in the future. He did it once. He does not need to do it again.

He is the Perfect Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Think about what Jesus said to the disciples in the Upper Room during Communion when He took the third cup—the Cup of Redemption. He said,

“This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant of My blood.” Luke 22:20 (NASB)

When He said “new,” He meant that the sacrificial system ceased to exist. There are no more priests. The new covenant promises a new heart, an indwelling Holy Spirit, empowerment by the Spirit and total forgiveness of sins. That is great news!

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” John 11:25-26 (NASB)

He is our beautiful Savior!