

A NEW COVENANT

By Michael Reeder

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 26:26-30

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

OBSERVATION

The exodus from Egypt was a defining moment in Israel's redemptive history. The Israelites saw their God as the one true omnipotent God. The greatest kingdom on earth could not stand up to Yahweh, the God of Israel. In response to this deliverance, the Hebrew people celebrate the Passover, a feast that celebrates God's deliverance of the Hebrews from the hands of the Egyptians. Those who spread the blood of the sacrifice on their doorposts were spared from the passing death angel; they were passed over (Exodus 12:5-13). This was the last defeat of Pharaoh and led to the Israelites being released from 400 years of captivity. The blood from the sacrifice spared the follower from death and released them from bondage into freedom.

The sacrificial system was an imperfect system. The repeated act of sacrifice showed faithfulness, but the sacrificial animal, though without blemish, was imperfect and therefore the sacrifice was imperfect. But God had a plan that would perfect the sacrificial system and make a new covenant with people.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Jesus came to complete the sacrificial system and to be the new covenant with God. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, the perfect Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7; John 1:29, 36). There would be no need for another. Jesus was the once and for all fulfillment.

Passover was a reminder to Jews of God's deliverance. Each year it had to be repeated since the sacrifice was not perfect. As the Passover feast reminded the Jews of deliverance and of their need for a new sacrifice, the Lord's Supper reminds us of Jesus' sacrifice, the perfect, once and for all sacrifice. We eat the bread and drink the cup as a reminder of the sacrifice that Jesus made and to know that we have entered into the new covenant with God and become children of God through His Son Jesus (John 1:2).

OBEDIENCE

Easter is the celebration of Jesus completing the old covenant and becoming the new. The entire Easter season should be a remembrance and celebration.

The Lord's supper is an opportunity to remember the sacrifice of Jesus with honesty. As we walk through this season completely different than almost anyone can remember, the Supper can become an opportunity for families to remember and worship together.

Jesus came to be the sacrifice for all. He is available to anyone who believes in Him (John 3:16). If you have never trusted Jesus as your savior, now is the time. The prayer is simple: Jesus, I believe You came to die on the cross for my sins. I trust in You and accept Your gift of salvation.

PRAYER

Dear God, we thank You for the sacrifice of Your Son and for You providing the way of salvation. God, we pray at this Easter season that we remember Jesus and the gift He gave and that we use this time to tell others about You. In Your name we pray, amen.