

**Subject: *God's Covenant People***

**Scripture: *Matthew 26:26-30***

There is a growing interest in people finding out about their family ancestry. Companies now offer a service to research a person's DNA and determine a person's makeup. Some companies offer a service to research a person's family tree over several generations. People want to know their unique personal identity. Christians don't have to look very far to learn their background and identity. We just open our Bible and study, and we learn who we are.

We look into God's Word and we learn that before we came to Christ for salvation we were all sinners, lost, dead in sin, separated from God, alienated from Him and unworthy of God's love, desperately needing to be forgiven, reconciled, and justified by a righteous God. We find that once we were in Christ we have become new creatures, we are disciples of Christ, saints who are set apart for God and His purpose, and servants of Christ who are called to be faithful. We also learn that we are God's covenant people, included in the New Covenant. Every time we hear someone read God's Word we should listen as if he is reading from a will that includes our name.

### **1. The New Covenant was promised in the Old Testament**

To understand the importance of this New Covenant we need to understand something about a covenant in the Bible. A covenant was entered into after great thought, planning, and consideration. A covenant was not a spur of the minute decision, but a deliberate action.

- A covenant is a binding spiritual agreement between God and a person or group

God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses and the nation of Israel, and with David and his descendants. According to Romans 9:4, one of the great blessings of the Jews was God's covenants. A few of these covenants were conditional covenants, but most of them were unconditional covenants. God promised to do something for them without any conditions attached. God also promised a new covenant that would surpass all other covenants. Jeremiah was the first to speak of it.

**Jeremiah 31:31-33** <sup>31</sup> Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: <sup>32</sup> Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: <sup>33</sup> But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

### **2. The New Covenant was established at the Last Supper**

As Christ was eating the Passover meal with His disciples in the upper room on the night of His arrest, He spoke of the New Testament (covenant). This was the very purpose Christ came to earth and died on the cross. From now on His disciples would share the Lord's Supper or Communion to remember what He said and did for them. This was part of the apostles' teaching.

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26** <sup>23</sup> For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: <sup>24</sup> And when he

had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. <sup>25</sup> After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament (covenant) in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. <sup>26</sup> For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

Every time we share in Communion we remember Christ and the covenant He made with us.

### **3. The New Covenant was ratified (confirmed) by the blood of Christ**

When Jesus died and shed His blood on the cross the New Covenant was sealed and put into force. Jesus fulfilled the promise God made and replaced the Old Covenant, making it obsolete.

**Hebrews 9:15-17** <sup>15</sup> And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. <sup>16</sup> For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. <sup>17</sup> For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

Even in the OT covenants were ratified or confirmed by a blood sacrifice. They used an expression “to cut a covenant” to refer to the practice of cutting an animal sacrifice and laying the pieces on the ground. Then both parties to the covenant walked between the sacrificial pieces to indicate that the covenant was bound, and if either of them broke the covenant they would deserve to die like the sacrifice. We have a picture of God doing this with Abraham in Genesis 15, but the interesting thing was that Abraham was in a deep sleep and God walked through the pieces alone. This was to show that everything in the covenant depended on God.

When Jesus died on the cross as God’s perfect lamb He died alone. Everything in the covenant depended on Him. He said, “It is finished.”

### **4. The New Covenant provides rich and eternal blessings**

Whenever God was gracious to enter a covenant with a person or with Israel many blessings came with that covenant. But none of those covenant blessings compare with the blessings of the New Covenant.

We sometimes speak of the scarlet thread of blood redemption that runs through the Bible. It runs right through the Book of Hebrews which shows us that Christ was the perfect high priest who offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice and entered the perfect sanctuary and did all of this to accomplish a perfect salvation.

**Hebrews 8:6-7** <sup>6</sup> But now hath he (Christ) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he (Christ) is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. <sup>7</sup> For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

The Old Covenant had repeated sacrifices. Christ offered Himself only once. The Old Covenant was based on the blood of animals. Christ shed His own precious blood. The Old Covenant only covered sins for a time. Christ took our sins away forever. The Old Covenant was for Jews only. Christ died to take away the sins of the world.

The Old Covenant was temporary. The New Covenant is eternal.

**Hebrews 13:20** *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant.*

As God's covenant people we are blessed forever. We are forgiven, we are secure, and we have hope that is steadfast and sure. We have joy now and fullness of joy forever. We have peace now and perfect peace forever. No matter what happens to us nothing can change the blessings of God's covenant with us.

*The Solid Rock (3<sup>rd</sup> Stanza)*

*His oath, His covenant, His blood,  
Support me in the whelming flood;  
When all around my soul gives way,  
He then is all my hope and stay.*

*On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

## **5. The New Covenant was made because of God's love and grace**

Whenever God made a covenant with someone it was always out of love and grace. God was never under obligation to enter into a covenant with any man, much less sinful man. No one would ever think of asking Jesus to die for us. That would be presumptuous. It would be too much to ask, wouldn't it? The good news is that we didn't have to ask Him. He did it freely, of His own will. That's what makes it so special. He didn't die for us because we're so special. We're special because He died for us.

In Ephesians 2:12-13, Paul says that before salvation we were "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, but now in Christ we have been brought near by the blood of Christ." Once we were on the outside looking in, but now as believers we are on the inside looking up with hope.

By faith and repentance we accept Christ as Lord and Savior and we enter into the blessings of this covenant. Everyone is not included in this covenant by default. Only those who humble themselves and come to the Lord in genuine faith are in the covenant. Are you sure you are one of God's covenant people? How can you be sure?

- 1) God's covenant people are *humble*. They are amazed by God's grace.
- 2) God's covenant people are *grateful*. They are thankful for all blessings.
- 3) God's covenant people are *content*. They need nothing the world has to offer.
- 4) God's covenant people are *hopeful*. They look forward to Christ's return.

*For as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you show the Lord's death till He come.*