

# *Passover Traditions*

## *in the Time of Christ:*

### *Reclining and Four Cups*

When critics deliberately banished the original author, they themselves usurped his place, and this led unerringly to some of our present-day theoretical confusions. Where before there had been but one author, there now arose a multiplicity of them, each carrying as much authority as the next. To banish the original author as the determiner of meaning was to reject the only compelling normative principle that could lend validity to an interpretation.<sup>1</sup>

Within certain fellowships of God's people, some draw lines of fellowship over the use of how many drinking vessels can be utilized in the Lord's Supper. Some believers read the Synoptic accounts of the Eucharistic sayings with a wooden literalness. As a result of this kind of reading, many advance the notion that only one drinking vessel (common cup) can be used in the distribution of the fruit of the vine, which some maintain has to be the pure fruit of the vine, not wine. Also, several believers within this fellowship believe that the loaf cannot be broken; it must remain one whole. As a result of this conviction, many within this fellowship are known as "bread-breakers" while others are known as "bread-pinchers."

This study is not intended to discuss the Eucharistic sayings in detail, but rather, this essay is designed primarily to examine the Passover traditions in the first century. In discussing this tradition, attention is drawn to the Greek grammar of Luke 22:20 to illustrate that the "cup" in the Eucharistic writings does not refer to a literal cup, but to the wine. The word *cup* is utilized in a figurative sense. A brief explanation of the word *covenant* is discussed. A fuller discussion of the controversy concerning the one cup will be analyzed in detail in Chapter 2—"The Meaning of the Eucharistic Sayings in the Synoptic and Pauline writings."

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<sup>1</sup> E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 5.

## PASSOVER TRADITIONS

In order to understand the full import of what transpired on that eventful night with Jesus and His apostles, one must look at the Passover observance in the time of Christ. To begin with, it is significant that Jesus participated in activities that were innovations in the Passover as recorded in Exodus. **Nevertheless, it goes almost without saying that even though there were alterations, these changes were not anti-Scriptural.** In other words, these innovations did not violate any principle of commemoration ordained by God. For example, consider the following additions to the original Passover: (1) the introduction of four cups of wine, and (2) reclining. Originally, the eating of the Passover was done in haste, but in the time of Jesus, the custom was to recline or lean on the left elbow in token of one's freedom.<sup>2</sup> Thus, **the Passover observance by Jesus includes details that were not practiced in the original Passover described by the Torah.**

### Custom of Reclining

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record this **custom of reclining**. All three synoptic Gospels state that Jesus and the twelve reclined in their observance of the Passover. For instance, Matthew writes:

He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.' " <sup>19</sup> So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. <sup>20</sup>When evening came, Jesus was reclining [ἀνέκειτο, *anékaito*, "he was reclining"] at the table with the Twelve. (Matthew 26:18-20)

Mark pens the following words:

The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover. <sup>17</sup>When evening came, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. <sup>18</sup> While they were reclining [ἀνακειμένων, *anakeiménōn*, "reclining"] at the table eating, he said, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me." (Mark 14:16-18)

Luke records:

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<sup>2</sup> Harold A. Sevens, ed., *Messianic Passover Haggadah* (NC: Chosen People Ministries, Inc., nd), 16 where Sevens says, "The youngest child continues to ask: ... 4. 'On all other nights we eat either sitting upright or reclining; why on this night do we all recline?'"

When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined [ἀνέπεσεν, *anépesen*, he reclined] at the table.<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.<sup>16</sup> For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.” (Luke 22:14-16)

### Custom of Drinking Four Cups of Wine

The custom of drinking wine is mentioned by all of the synoptic writers. For example, during this celebration, Jesus and His disciples filled their cups four different times.<sup>3</sup> Matthew and Mark record that Jesus took “a cup” (ποτήριον, *potērion*),<sup>4</sup> but they do not tell us which of the four cups He used, nor do they mention the other three cups. **On the other hand, Luke and Paul identify “the cup” as the third cup in the Passover.**<sup>5</sup> They identify “the cup” that Jesus took to institute His supper by revealing to us that this cup was the cup “**after supper,**” that is to say, after the eating of the paschal lamb. Also, **Luke is the only one that mentions two of the four cups shared in the Passover.**<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, **Paul is the only one which gives the name of the cup employed.**<sup>7</sup>

Each filling received a particular name to focus attention on their blessings and redemption from bondage. For example, the **first filling** was called “the Cup of Consecration”; the **second filling** was called “the Cup of Proclamation”; the

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<sup>3</sup> Ceil and Moishe Rosen, *Christ in the Passover: Why Is This Night Different?* (Chicago: Moody, 1978), 71 says,

Also at the Seder table, beside each place setting, are small wine goblets—small because they will be filled with the sweet, red Passover wine four times during the Seder. **The custom of drinking four cups of wine dates back to ancient Temple times.** The Mishnah teaches that, according to two authorities, Rabbi Yohanon and Rabbi Benayah, **these four cups correspond to the four verbs in Exodus 6:6-7, describing God's redemption: I will *bring* you out; I will *deliver* you; I will *redeem* you; I will *take* you to be my people. (Emphasis mine—bold)**

<sup>4</sup> The definite article (τό) is found in the Alexandrian or Egyptian type of text. See Nestle-Aland, *Greek New Testament, 4<sup>th</sup> addition*, (United Bible Societies: Germany, 1993), 102.

<sup>5</sup> See Luke 22:20: “Likewise He also [took] the cup after supper (μετὰ τὸ δεῖπνήσαι, *meta to deipnēsai*), saying, ‘This cup [is] the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you’” See also I Cor. 11:25: “In the same manner [He] also [took] the cup after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink [it], in remembrance of Me.’” “**After supper**” is the clue in determining the cup that Jesus instituted His supper with. The participants always filled their cups with wine following the eating of the Passover lamb; this filling constituted the third cup, which is called “the Cup of Blessing.”

<sup>6</sup> See Luke 20:14-22. The cup in verse 17 is not the same cup mentioned in verse 20.

<sup>7</sup> “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?” (1Cor 10:16)

**third filling** was called by two names, namely, (1) “the Cup of Blessing” and (2) “the Cup of Redemption,” which also represented the blood of the Paschal lamb;<sup>8</sup> and the **fourth filling** was called “the Cup of Hallel,” that is to say “the Cup of Praise.”

### **Third Cup of the Passover Meal**

The third cup was the most appropriate for Christ to institute His memorial to represent His covenant blood, and, at the same time, to represent the new covenant sealed by His blood. **Since this third filling, to the Israelites, represented the blood of the Paschal lamb slain to protect the firstborn in Goshen, then, this third cup was the most suitable for Jesus to utilize to represent His blood shed or poured out for the redemption of the firstborn ones.** Jesus tells the disciples, “This is my blood of the new covenant.” Just as the third drinking was drunk to remind them of their redemption from Egyptian bondage, so, today, the third cup (the Cup of Redemption) is drunk to remind Christians of their redemption from sin through the pouring out of Jesus' blood upon Calvary.

This is the thought that Matthew conveys to those to whom he writes in his Gospel. He says, “He took the cup (ποτήριον, *potērion*), and gave thanks, and gave [it] to them, saying, ‘Drink from it (πίετε ἐξ αὐτοῦ, *πίετε ek autoû*), all of you. For this (τοῦτο, *toûto*) is My blood (αἷμά μου, *haimá mou*) of the new covenant, which is shed (ἐκχυννόμενον, *ekchynnómenon*,) for many for the remission of sins” (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, *eis áphesin hamartiōn*),<sup>9</sup> “is shed” is an

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<sup>8</sup> Ceil and Moshe Rosen, *Christ in the Passover*, 84 says,

**Immediately following that prayer, the host leads again in the blessing over the wine, and everyone drinks the third cup, commemorating the verse in Exodus 6:6b: ‘I will redeem you with a stretched out arm.’ This third cup is the *cup of redemption*, also at times called the *cup of blessing*. It is the *cup of redemption* because, say the ancient commentaries, it represents the blood of the Paschal lamb. See also Sevens, *Messianic Passover Haggadah*, 38 writes “**This cup that represents the New Covenant is the Cup of Redemption. It is the cup after the supper which our Messiah used to symbolize His death.** Because we know it is the Cup of Redemption (the cup after supper), we know that it was the Afikomen that He used to symbolize His death and resurrection.” The scriptures tell us that without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin (cf. Heb 9:22). The Scriptures further state that the life of the flesh is in the blood (cf. Lev. 17:11). (Emphasis mine—bold))**

<sup>9</sup> Matthew 26:27-28.

attributive participle<sup>10</sup> in Greek. Since this participle is nominative case,<sup>11</sup> neuter gender, and singular number, it must agree with the noun it modifies in case, gender, and number. This participle (ἐκχυννόμενον, *ekchynnómenon*) modifies the noun blood (αἷμά μου, *haimá mou*),<sup>12</sup> which is nominative, neuter, and singular. Also the word "blood" is predicate nominative, which means that it is identical to its subject, "this" (τοῦτο, *toûto*). The antecedent<sup>13</sup> of "this" is "it" (αὐτοῦ, *autou*), and the antecedent of "it" is "cup" (ποτήριον, *potērion*). Also, the word "cup" is nominative case, neuter gender, and singular number. Thus, according to Greek

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<sup>10</sup> A participle in the attributive position has the definite article; when the participle is in the predicate position it does not have the definite article. The participle is a verbal adjective. In fact, it is both a verb and adjective at the same time. Since a participle is an adjective, like any other adjective, it will describe a substantive and will agree in gender, number, and case with that substantive.

<sup>11</sup> Case is the distinction or mark of separation, which denotes the grammatical relation of a noun or a pronoun to other words in a communication. The purpose of case is to show relationship of words to each other. Thus, case has a distinct idea with separate forms for each image. These distinctions (ideas) are present in the Greek New Testament in order to express thoughts clearly. Some grammars give eight cases, while some only list five cases. Within the five case system, the grammarians have developed various nuances to still describe the eight case functions to express accurately the thoughts of the person communicating his ideas to others. The case of a word in Greek is indicated by the "case ending." In other words, the case ending is a suffix added to the end of the word. For example, the word "apostle" in Greek has eight (five) cases to denote its various functions. If it is the subject (subjective case), it will end with a sigma (ς, **s**), but if it is functioning as a direct object of the sentence, it takes a case ending nu (ν, **n**), which is equivalent to the "objective" case in English.

<sup>12</sup>In Luke's account, the participle (ἐκχυννόμενον, *ekchynnómenon*) does not modify blood (αἷματι, *haimati*), but cup (ποτήριον, *potērion*). In Luke the word *blood* is "dative case," not "nominative case" as in Matthew's account (αἷμα, *haima*). In Greek grammar, since the participle is a verbal adjective, the participle must agree with its noun or pronoun in "case" as well as in number and gender. In Matthew, both "blood" and "poured out" are "nominative case," but not so in Luke—blood is dative, but "cup" and "poured out" are nominative; therefore the participle does not modify "blood," but the word "cup." The participle in Luke, according to Greek grammar, can only modify "cup" which is "nominative case."

<sup>13</sup>Susan Emolyn Harman, House and Harman, *Descriptive English Grammar*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1931, 1950), writes, p. 45:

The word, phrase, or clause for which the pronoun stands is called the antecedent of that pronoun. Most pronouns have antecedent either expressed or implied, and they should agree with their antecedents in person, number, and gender. In *John gave me his books, and I gave them to his sister, John* is the antecedent of *his*; and *books* is the antecedent of *them*.... The antecedent of a pronoun may be another pronoun or a phrase or a clause. In *Everyone has his wishes sometimes denied*, the antecedent of *his* is the pronoun *everyone*.

syntax, the cup is that which they were to drink and that which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins.

## **THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW COVENANT**

It is in order to devote a brief amount of space to one of the most controversial sayings in the Eucharistic words of Jesus.<sup>14</sup> When Jesus said, “This cup is the new covenant,” or “This is my blood of the new covenant,” **one is conscious that the two sayings are not identical in phraseology, but, at the same time, are synonymous in meaning.** What does each writer seek to convey with the differences in phraseology? What did Matthew intend to convey? What did Luke intend to convey? In seeking a clear understanding of this startling phrase about the “new covenant,” we must keep in mind the blood of the Old Testament sacrifices to fully appreciate the sacrificial language of Jesus in associating His blood that is poured out with the new covenant and with the forgiveness of sins. The words employed by Jesus are very similar to the vocabulary spoken by Moses: “And Moses took the blood, sprinkled [it] on the people, and said, ‘This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words’” (Exodus 24:8).

What is the story behind these words spoken by Moses? Moses informs us that on a specially made altar, burnt and peace offerings were offered up, not by priests but by young men of the children of Israel. Then, the blood was collected and divided into two portions. After the blood was collected into two bowls, one portion was thrown upon the altar, the other portion over the people. After throwing blood upon the altar, Moses then read from the “book of the covenant.” Next, when Moses threw the blood from the second bowl over the people, he said, “This is the blood of the covenant.”

Moses penned these words about the “blood of the covenant” around 1445 BC, approximately 800 years before Jeremiah (31:31-34) spoke of God’s new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. This Mosaic covenant was temporary; it was not intended to be permanent. As mentioned above, Jeremiah prophesied approximately 800 years after the time of Moses concerning the “new covenant.” Then, about 600 years after Jeremiah, Jesus announced the “new covenant”. Jesus made this surprising statement during the

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<sup>14</sup> There are many Christians who believe that “the cup” refers to a container, not to the blood of Christ. And, as a result of this misunderstanding, these “one cup” Christians will not fellowship other Christians if they employ individual communion cups in the distribution of the fruit of the vine. This section briefly sets forth, hopefully, a sounder understanding of the term “cup” as it is utilized in the Gospels and Paul.

Passover meal. Three words, loaded with theological meaning, stand out; namely, (1) blood, (2) covenant, and (3) new. What does “this is my blood” really signify? In order to appreciate the full import of the blood of Jesus, one must also consider the meaning of covenant, especially “new covenant,” for it relates to the blood.

### THIS CUP IS THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD

Jesus ate His last Passover meal with His disciples on the night of His betrayal. During this meal, Jesus says, as reported by Luke and Paul, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink [it], in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:25). On the other hand, Matthew and Mark give His words: “For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,” (Matthew. 26:28). There is a difference in wording between Paul/Luke and Matthew/Mark. Matthew and Mark read, “This (τοῦτο, *touto*) is my blood (αἷμά μου, *haima mou*)<sup>15</sup> of the new covenant,” but Paul and Luke read, “This cup (τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον, *touto to potērion*) is the new covenant in my blood.” Whether one says, “**This is my blood of the new covenant**” or “**This cup is the new covenant in my blood**,” one is saying the same thing. But Luke, unlike Paul, adds an additional clause to the cup saying: τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον.<sup>16</sup> (*to hyper hymōn ekchynnomenon*, “that is poured out for you”). This clause is an attributive participle (participle preceded by definite article) in Greek and refers to “cup.” Since an attributive participle is adjectival in nature, it must modify a noun or pronoun in the same case, number, and gender. **In Luke’s Greek construction, “poured out” can only modify the noun cup. The Greek participle is similar in function to the participle in English.**

In English, the participle modifies the nearest noun, but this is not necessarily so in Greek. It may, but there are other factors to consider in determining which noun or pronoun the attributive participle modifies.<sup>17</sup> To illustrate the English participle, consider the following sentence: “The man, *sitting* by the door, is my Greek teacher.” In this example, *sitting* is a participle telling us something about the noun, *man*. The participle modifies its nearest noun, *man*. **But in Greek, the participle must agree with its noun in case, number, and gender, not the nearest noun as in English.**

Since a participle is a verbal adjective, it shares the characteristics of both

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<sup>15</sup> “Blood” is nominative case, not instrumental (dative of means) case.

<sup>16</sup> Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, et al., *The Greek New Testament*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), Lk 22:20.

<sup>17</sup> Matthew and Mark also use an attributive participle. Both men employed their participles to modify the noun blood, which is nominative case, neuter gender, and singular number, according to Greek syntax. The participle must agree with the noun it modifies.

verbs and adjectives. As a verb, participles have tense<sup>18</sup> (present, aorist, perfect) and voice<sup>19</sup> (active, middle, passive). As an adjective the participle must agree with the word it is modifying in case, number, and gender. In other words, the participle, in Greek, must be the same case, same number, and same gender as the noun it modifies. This rule is crucial to a proper translation of the Greek New Testament. This law of grammar is top priority to a proper understanding of the “cup” saying in Luke's Gospel. Luke tells us that the “**cup** that is **poured out** is the new covenant in my blood.”

**Many Christians apply an English rule of grammar to Luke's cup saying, rather than Greek syntax, that is to say, the participle modifies the nearest noun.** For example, a common translation of Luke 22:20 is as follows: “Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, this cup [is] the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you,” (Luke 22:20, KJV). In the KJV, “which is shed for you” is a non-restrictive adjectival clause<sup>20</sup> with the relative pronoun “which.” An adjectival clause may be introduced with relative pronouns, such as “that” or “which.” **In this English translation, the participle “shed” (poured out) is nearer the word “blood,” not “cup.”** Thus, according to the English rules of grammar, “poured out” modifies its nearest antecedent, “blood.” But with Greek syntax, as stated above, the participle does not necessarily modify its nearest antecedent, as in English, but rather, its nearest antecedent, in Greek, must be in the same case, number, and gender.

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<sup>18</sup> Tense is the quality of the verb that has to do with action. In other words, tense is time: past, present, future, and so on.

<sup>19</sup> **Voice** is that quality of verbs that indicates the relationship of the subject to the action. That is to say, the **active voice** means that the subject is acting, (“he is loosing”) the **passive voice** means that the subject is being acted upon (“he is being loosed”), and the middle voice represents the subject as acting in reference to himself. For example, “I am hearing myself” (direct middle), or “I am hearing for myself” (indirect middle). The middle voice is a “subjective” personal voice.

<sup>20</sup> Susan Emolyn Harman, *Descriptive English Grammar*, second edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1950), 304, state:

But nonrestrictive participial phrases require punctuation. Commas usually set them off. *The general, seeing the day lost, ordered a retreat* contains a nonrestrictive modifier, and the comma after *general* and the one after *lost* are necessary to indicate the meaning which the modifying phrase conveys. It is well to remember that nonrestrictive modifiers are not essential to the principal thought of the sentence. The chief idea to be communicated in the above sentence is *The general ordered a retreat*, and the participial phrase merely gives additional information. As a rule the participial phrase which introduces a sentence is nonrestrictive; as, *Having been offended, he refused to come.*

**In other words, the participle in Greek, unlike English, must refer to the noun or pronoun of the same case, number, and gender.** For example, the present passive participle (“being shed”) in Luke is nominative case, singular number, and neuter gender.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the noun to which the participle in Luke refers must also be nominative case, singular number, and neuter gender. Grammatically the only word in this sentence that the participle can modify is cup. The noun, “cup” (**ποτήριον**, *potērion*), is nominative case, singular number, and neuter gender. On the other hand “in my blood” (**ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου**, *en tō haimati mou*) is singular number, neuter gender, and dative case,<sup>22</sup> not nominative. This understanding of Greek syntax will assist one in grasping the sense in which Luke uses the term “cup.”

What was “being shed,” or “poured out”? Luke says that the cup was poured out. Luke and Paul give the words of Jesus as “this cup,” but Luke adds “that is poured out,”<sup>23</sup> which is “cup” in this context, not blood. But, on the other hand, Matthew and Mark give the words as “this is my blood that is poured out.” As mentioned above, in Matthew and Mark, the attributive participle modifies “blood.” Blood is equivalent to “this,” since blood is predicate nominative.<sup>24</sup> But

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<sup>21</sup> Greek has eight cases: (1) **nominative** [case of designation], (2) **genitive** [case of description], (3) **ablative** [case of separation], (4) **dative** [case of interest], (5) **locative** [case of location or position], (6) **instrumental** [case which expresses means], (7) **accusative** [case of limitation -- its main usage is that of direct object], (8) **vocative** [case of direct address]; number [singular or plural]; gender [masculine, feminine, neuter]. See Ray Summers, *Essentials of New Testament Greek* (Nashville: Broadman, 1950), 16-18.

<sup>22</sup> “Blood” (**ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου**, *en tō haimati mou*) in the Greek, case is instrumental (by), not dative (to). The **dative** (to), the **instrumental** (by), and the **locative** (in) cases are identical in form.

<sup>23</sup> Since the participle is verbal as well as adjectival in nature, one must determine whether the participle is verbal or adjectival. But **since this participle is attributive, then, it is adjectival in nature.** The present passive participle modifies “cup.” Thus the translation is restrictive, not nonrestrictive. In other words, the participle clause identifies “cup” as that which is poured out. An English sentence should help to clarify this rule. House and Harman write, p 303,304: “In *The girl wearing the red sweater is my sister*, we have a restrictive participial modifier, and hence no commas or other punctuation marks are needed. The phrase *wearing the red sweater* identifies the girl, and the sentence containing this phrase is read or spoken without any pauses.”

<sup>24</sup> **The predicate nominative or subjective complement defines or describes the subject.** The subjective complement is a noun or an adjective or the equivalent of either which completes the predicate and refers to the subject. When the subjective complement is a substantive (noun or pronoun), it is called a “predicate nominative.” Whenever the subjective complement is an adjective or any word or phrase used for an adjective, it is called the “attribute complement” or “predicate adjective.” The subject and verb are joined with a linking verb (am, are, was, were, etc.). For example, in the sentence, **I am he**, *he* is a pronoun in the nominative case which completes the predicate (*am*), refers to the subject (*I*), and is in a sense identical with

the antecedent of “this” is “it” and the antecedent of “it” is “cup.” Both “blood” and “cup” are nominative case, singular number, and neuter gender. The rule of Greek syntax confirms that it is “blood” that is poured out in Matthew/Mark, but in Luke, it is the “cup” that is poured out. Thus, the “cup” in Luke is equivalent to “blood” in Matthew and Mark.

**In both Luke and Paul, “cup” is used for” blood.”** What is poured out? Is it a literal container or blood? Which? Luke identifies the cup as the blood that is also mentioned in both αἷμά (*haimá*), and the word “cup” is nominative (ποτήριον, *potērion*). **Therefore, the word “cup” is that which is “being poured out.”** The blood of Christ represents this New Covenant and, at the same time, it is the blood that seals the New Covenant. Nevertheless, all the accounts mean the same thing. Whether one says, “**This cup is** the new covenant in my blood,” or “**This is my blood** of the New Covenant,” there is no material change. The cup (ποτήριον, *potērion*) is synonymous with blood (αἷμά, *haimá*), not a literal container or vessel. The blood is that which is poured out.

The New Revised Standard Version and the New American Standard Bible translate according to Greek syntax.

And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, ‘This **cup** that is **poured out** for you is the new covenant in my blood.’ (Luke 22:20, NRSV)

And in the same way [He took] the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This **cup** which is **poured out** for you is the new covenant in my blood.’ (Luke 22:20, NASB)

Notice that NRSV and the NASV both translate the attributive participle (τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον, *to hyper hymōn ekchynnomenon*, “that [which] is poured out for you”), in Luke 22:20, as an adjectival clause modifying the noun “cup,” which correctly translates according to Greek syntax.

Jesus spoke of His blood as representative of the new covenant. This new covenant brings the people of God into a personal relationship with Him through the forgiveness of sins. It goes almost without saying that this new covenant

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the subject.

Another example should suffice to illustrate the **predicate nominative**: Washington was made Commander-in-chief. Washington and Commander-in-chief are the same person. Both nouns are in the nominative case, the former being the subject, the latter the predicative nominative. The verb “to be” is followed by a predicate nominative, never a direct object. See **Susan Emolyn Harman**, *Descriptive English Grammar*, second edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1950), 232-238. “This is my blood.” Blood is a predicate nominative, that is to say, the word “blood” is the same as the subject (This). But the antecedent of “this” is “it” and the antecedent of “it” is “cup.” Even in Matthew/Mark, the “cup” and “blood” are synonymous.

constitutes a radical alteration from the old covenant. This new covenant represents a revolutionary break with the past. It represents a new approach to man's problem of relationship to God. In other words, God deals with sin once and for all. This new covenant answers this problem.

This new covenant is based on forgiveness through the atonement of Christ. Under the first covenant, their failure to comply with the Law brought them under the curse of the Law. That covenant depended upon obedience of the people. On the other hand, the new covenant relies upon the obedience of Christ, Matthew and Mark. In Matthew/Mark, the word "blood" (αἷμα, *haima*) agrees with the attributive participle (τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον, *to ekchynnomenon*), but also does the word "cup." But in Luke 22:20 "blood" is dative (αἵματι, *haimati*), not nominative (αἷμα, *haima*).

### JESUS IS PROPHETICALLY THE NEW COVENANT

The literal cup does not represent the new covenant, which is then, by some Christians, designated as twenty-seven books called the New Testament. Only the blood of Christ represents the new relationship between God and humanity. In actuality, Jesus is the New Covenant, not a book.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the new covenant would not be invalidated through lack of perfect obedience on the part of man. In other words, God provided the means whereby He could put away sin once and for all.

In seeking to draw attention to the wonder of this amazing truth, God through Jeremiah set forth the superiority of the new over the old: "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jeremiah. 31:31-34). Further, this covenant, according to Jeremiah, is "an everlasting covenant" (32:40). Also, Ezekiel speaks of this covenant as an "everlasting covenant" (Ezekiel 16:60) as well as a "covenant of peace" (37:27). Isaiah also writes about this covenant as an "everlasting covenant" (Isaiah 55:3). What is the New Covenant that the prophets predicted?

Leon Morris captures the essence of the new covenant when he writes: "This new covenant would be based on forgiveness, not on a profession of readiness to keep the law of God."<sup>26</sup> Exactly, how this is to be accomplished, the prophets do not disclose completely. Jeremiah, as mentioned above, sets forth the FACT, not the HOW of the new covenant. On the other hand, God through Isaiah, one hundred years earlier, tells the how, but not as fully developed as in Paul's writings. Nevertheless, Jeremiah speaks of Jesus prophetically as "the covenant."

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<sup>25</sup> See Isaiah 42:6: "I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles."

<sup>26</sup> Leon Morris, *The Atonement: Its Meaning & Its Significance* (Illinois: Inter Varsity, 1983), 30.

For instance, God exclaims: “I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles.” (Isaiah 42:6).

Yet, the Israelites only faintly understood these prophetic utterances. In fact, even after the coming of Christ, men still wanted to know about whom the prophet spoke, of himself or some other man. Luke narrates such a story in the Book of Acts. He informs us that a man from Ethiopia sought an answer from Philip as to whom the prophet Isaiah speaks. Philip begins with chapter 53 of Isaiah and preaches unto him Jesus.

God deals with the sin problem *in* and *through* Jesus Christ. In this way God demonstrates His righteousness *in* and *through* Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, God confirms His righteousness in justifying the ungodly by setting forth Jesus as a propitiation for sins. Forgiveness of sins can only be forgiven through the pouring out of His blood. Our Lord restated this thought in the Passover with His disciples. His blood not only ratified the new covenant, but, at the same time, His blood represents the new covenant. As we reflect upon Jesus’ death, we are conscious that His death was also substitutionary. In other words, Jesus died for us. He poured out his soul for many for the forgiveness of sins. These words of Jesus, as reported by Matthew (26:28), also point to Isaiah 53, especially verse 12:

Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

Deliverance is only through substitution. That was the meaning of the blood of the slaughtered paschal lamb. **Jesus poured out His soul for humanity.** The death that Jesus died was for the death of the world. He died for everyone. He bore the sins of the human race. He died in the place of every individual. The words “for me” and “in my place” should be upon the heart of everyone. Deliverance by the blood was the outcome of divine wisdom. Those seeking emancipation from eternal death must exercise faith in the blood; they can be assured that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin: “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28).