

A New Covenant

By Paris Reidhead*

In preparation, for coming to the Lord's Table, we are going to have a Bible reading today. Bible reading is an expression that we've inherited from our good British friends. It doesn't mean that I'm simply going to read but I'm going to tie together Scriptures, which have a point and a purpose. But they all relate to this matter of the Lord's Table.

Will you turn first please to Matthew Chapter 26 and I would read beginning with verse 26, Matthew 26:26. There will be no notes today, so if you would like make note of the Scriptures then you would have them for your use in the days to come. I want you to pay particular attention to the word testament, the New Testament, which is literally a new covenant. And we shall consider the matter of covenant as it relates to the Lord's Table.

I will begin read then from verse 26 of Matthew 26:

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament (literally the new covenant), which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Mat. 26:26-28).

There is going to be a new covenant sealed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ about to be shed about the time He spoke this on Calvary's Cross. You understood that in the Old Testament covenants were always sealed with blood. And therefore this new covenant will be so sealed.

Now if you'll turn please to Hebrews 8th Chapter you will understand why it was necessary for there to be a new covenant. Hebrews Chapter 8 and I'll like you to begin reading. It's hard to begin in this chapter at a given point, but for time sake, I will go back to the 5th verse:

“Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest” (Heb. 8:5-11).

He is quoting from Ezekiel the 36th Chapter. But in order that we might to see that there is in the plan of God this intention to do a new thing. I ask you to turn to Isaiah Chapter 43. The 43rd Chapter of Isaiah and I shall read for you verse 18 through 21.

Now God through Isaiah is speaking to Israel and to Judah and these are His words:

“Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old” (Isa. 43:18).

They took such great pride that they were the people of the covenant they had the revelation, they had the Temple, they had the Tabernacle in the wilderness, they had the Scriptures. Oh, they were so proud of all this, but they had done so little with it. In verse 22 He says, “But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel. Thou hast not honoured me with thy sacrifice” (Isa. 43:22).

Now in verses 18-21 He tells them what He is going to do. Don't just stand there and talk about how great it was yesterday, what wonderful people we were. “Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make

a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise" (Isa. 43:19-21).

What's He talking about there? He is talking about turning away from Israel and Jacob that have been so smug and complacent that they're the heirs of all God would do among men. And He says, "I'm going to the beasts in the field." Remember what it was that Peter saw in the vision there at Joppa when the sheet was let down from heaven, what was in it? All kinds of beast of the field, every owl and cormorants, all the things that were unclean to Israel to eat. And He is saying all of these people that you call unclean, all of these pagans, all of these gentiles and He denominates them by saying beasts of the field, dragons and owls. Such were we. Such were we.

Our forefathers, for the most part here, were from Europe. And when Paul said the barbarian and the Scythian, do you know what he is talking about? My forefathers. Not a very commentary way to view it. But we certainly weren't included as the logical heirs of the promises made to Israel. So what is God saying? He is saying, look I formed you for My praise, Israel. I called you to be a witness to Me. And you wouldn't do it. And don't think that you've tied My hands. Don't think I can't do something else. "Behold I'm going to do a new thing." I'm going to take these nations that you call unclean, and call pagan and I am going to bring rivers in to the desert, water in the wilderness, and they're going to drink of that water and they are going to show forth My praise and I'm going to do a new thing.

I wish you would turn to I Peter 2nd Chapter. I Peter Chapter 2. And let Peter add his testimony from that which you heard from Isaiah. Beginning with verse 9: "But ye." Who? the people to whom he is writing. Who is it that Peter included? Those that he saw in that sheet there in Joppa. That's the ones he is writing to. To all the redeemed. "But you are a chosen generation, *you are* a royal priesthood, *you are* an holy nation, a peculiar, *a purchased* people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; Which in time past were not a people, *which in time past were not the children of the covenant you were the Gentiles and the Pagans which in times past were not a people*, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (I Pet. 2:9-10). God is going to do a new thing.

Let's go back to Jeremiah. Jeremiah had such a clear picture of this. Jeremiah Chapter 31, beginning with verse 31. Thrilling to realize that the church of Jesus Christ new thing was not a new thing. God had talked about it in some detail long before. Jeremiah 31:31 to 34: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah: 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: 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. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

So when you take the cup and He says this is the cup of the New Testament, the new covenant in My blood. What is a covenant? That all who would repent of their sin and savingly receive Jesus Christ will become part of this chosen people, this royal priesthood, this people that shall show forth His praise. Because you see He has brought rivers of water into the desert and into the wilderness, that those of us who were not privileged to be born of Abram's heritage might still drink and become children of Abram through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and thus part heirs of the promise. The new covenant. The new covenant sealed with the poured out blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. That any and all who will repent of their sin and savingly embrace the Lord Jesus Christ will become part of God's new thing.

I think it is important to understand the weight and the meaning of the word. Turn please, in closing, to 1 Corinthians Chapter 11, which you may wish to hold open before you as we go to the Lord's Table. Verse 25: "After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament, *covenant* in my blood: *the new covenant sealed by My poured life by My shed blood* this do ye, as oft as ye *do this as oft as you* drink it," you are certifying again that you are a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ and you're in and under the new covenant.

Not the New Testament in the sense as compared to the Old Testament. This is the New Testament. It sounds as though we are certifying the Scripture. We are certifying the relationship of a new people that have been brought out of death into life. People that had no part in the promises made to Abram as far as the sons of Isaac and Jacob were concerned. But now God has reached out brought this river out to where we are even to Africa, the islands of the sea, and South America. And today far more the number of missionaries we have on stations that are known to us, are those that are going out.

When Marjorie and I were in the Sudan, I had a reason to go down to Pibor Post the Anuak area where Dick Lythe, who had been a church of England missionary, society missionary, now was a government official. And Dick had come into this area so that he could learn the Murle language. And he could minister to this large tribe of people never had the Gospel. And He asked for permanent assignment. He'd go into government service as long as they wouldn't move him. Because the custom was to move District Commissioners from one district to another on a rotation bases. He said, "I'll come, if I can stay there and not be moved." So he had been there many years, the time I knew him. He called to me one day. He had a boy come up and said, "Please come down to my office. I have someone I like to have you meet." And when I got down there, there was a man who had come to the Lord through Dick's ministry. And he was sitting there and he had in his hand a knotted piece of twine. Just look like knots all up and down the twine. And he said before he starts, "I asked to have you come." And this man sat there and he took the first knot, the first place he had gone after he had left. He is now reporting to Dick Lythe the government official on the trip he had taken out into a part of Africa that still is unknown. It's not really mapped. No one has seriously investigated it. It's called the (Ilemi) Triangle between Ethiopia, Kenya, and the Sudan. It is the least known part of the world today.

This man had gone out. He knew the languages and every knot was someone that he had won to the Lord. And a group of knots was a family. And a large knob of knots was the people in a village.

Now he started to talk, to tell us and, Dick is translating to me, as he is telling about going to this village and finding people that had been prepared. They'd a vision of the Lord. They had seen someone they called Jesus. Do you know anybody by the name of Jesus? And they said someone would come and tell us about Him. Do you have anything to tell us someone named Jesus? And he would unfold the knots, untie the knots and as he did he would tell the story. Each knot was a person that had opened his heart to Christ.

Tribes, whose languages had never been counted, never been included, villages of people who had never been numbered, place where no white man had ever gone. What's happening? The river is going into the wilderness. Not just the water from the mountains of Ethiopia and Sudan, but the river of life that flowed from Calvary, is being taken by an Anuak man, who is going down and sitting in the villages and telling the people about Christ. And some years after I had been there, when a missionary from the Sudan Interior Mission came down into that lowland part, the western sloop of the Ethiopian mountains. They found a small hut dedicated to the worship of Jesus Christ. And the company of people were saying, "We want you to baptize us." We found out later that it was this man, who had been going back and teaching them and instructing them.

Oh dear friends today, I am so glad that when He said I going to do a new thing He put all of His omniscience to the task. He put all His love into the task. He made all His power available for the task. And He uses everyone who drunk of that water and found life. It isn't all going to be done by those from America, England and Europe.

God is working today. As the river of life flowing out to the tribes. Someone said, "But they hadn't all heard." HOW DO YOU KNOW? How do you know they haven't all heard? "Well, we don't have missionaries everywhere." Maybe God has witnesses we don't know anything about. I don't know. He knows. I am glad He is taking care of it. I'm satisfied He did a new thing. And when we drink of this cup, we are certifying again that covenant that He made. That the beast of the field, the owls and cormorants and those things men call unclean drink of that water, would be part of that chosen generation, royal priesthood, holy nation that they may shew forth the praises of Him, who called them out of death into life.

Father in heaven, Father of Jesus, thank you for stirring our hearts with the expectance of our Lord's return. Thank you for encouraging us to understand, that where as we do the best we can. Thou doth do more than that and that Thou are working and moving in so many ways. And today as we can visualize that water of life being carried by those whom the mission's ministry of the world know not, but who are known to Thy. Thy servants, who love Thy and are walking with Thy and serving

Thy. Oh Father, we come again to this Table of Remembrance, we lift the cup and we hear Him say, "This is the blood shed for the remission of sins. The blood of the new covenant." Certifying it, testifying it we are part of it. That our lives are committed to Thy. To extent this message of Thy grace out to all the others like ourselves who were beast of the field unclean, no part in Israel's heritage. But still heirs of the promise through the Lord Jesus Christ. Bless this Table of Remembrance as this day forth. In Jesus Name. Amen.

* Reference such as: Delivered at Trinity Alliance Church of Fairfax County, VA on Sunday Morning, September 8, 1985 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

©PRBTMI 1985