

COURSE 10

THE SYMBOLIC “CUP” AND THE PROMISED NEW COVENANT

The concept of a symbolic “cup” was common in the Jewish idiom, often referring to one’s portion or lot. “Cup” was used in a metaphorical sense, as described in the following excerpt from *The Jewish Encyclopedia*:

“Cup” is frequently used in metaphors of good or of ill fortune, as in “My cup runneth over” (Ps. xxiii. 5, xvi. 5); “the cup of his fury” (Isa. li. 17, 22); “the bowl of the cup of staggering” (Zech. xii. 2, Hebr.); “the cup of astonishment and desolation” (Ezek. xxiii. 33). Babylon is a “golden cup in the Lord’s hand that made all the earth drunken” (Jer. li. 7). The “cup of consolation” (Jer. xvi. 7) is one offered to mourners; while the “cup of salvation” (Ps. cxvi. 13) is a cup of thanksgiving for deliverance, in allusion, perhaps, to the wine of the peace-offering (“shelamim”), or to the cup of praise and thanksgiving.²⁰⁹

Many examples exist of the cup used in a positive sense, symbolizing blessing or abundance:

^{NAS} Psalm 16:5 The LORD is the portion of my inheritance and my **cup**; Thou dost support my lot.

^{KJV} Psalm 23:5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my **cup** runneth over.

^{KJV} Psalm 116:13 I will take the **cup** of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

The cup was also used in a negative symbolic sense to indicate punishment, anger, or God’s vengeance. Sometimes it was the nations that would drink this figurative cup of judgment:

209 *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, vol. 4, p. 384, s.v. “Cup.”

^{KJV} Jeremiah 25:15 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine **cup** of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it.

^{KJV} Jeremiah 25:17 Then took I the **cup** at the LORD’S hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the LORD had sent me:

^{KJV} Zechariah 12:2 Behold, I will make **Jerusalem** a **cup** of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah *and* against Jerusalem.

Then when Israel rejected God’s ways and walked in unrighteousness, as a nation it was given this cup of judgment:

^{KJV} Isaiah 51:17 Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the LORD the **cup** of his fury; thou hast drunken the dregs of the **cup** of trembling, *and* wrung *them* out.

^{KJV} Ezekiel 23:31 Thou hast walked in the way of thy sister; therefore will I give her **cup** into thine hand.²¹⁰

Given this long Jewish history of using “cup” metaphorically, it’s not surprising that when early Messianic believers spoke of it, they understood its meaning to often be symbolic, figurative, or pointing out a certain truth. Paul was among many who spoke of a symbolic cup:

^{NAS} 1 Corinthians 10:21 **You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons;** you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

Demons, of course, do not have actual cups filled with drink for us; Paul is speaking both spiritually and figuratively, not of natural or literal cups.

So when we examine the Last Supper scriptures, it is imperative to keep in mind this metaphorical use of “cup” and the symbolic nature of the Messiah’s words:

^{NAS} Matthew 20:22–23 But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the **cup** that I am about to drink?” They said to Him, “We are able.” He said to

²¹⁰ Ezekiel 23 here is speaking to Judah as Israel’s figurative “sister.”

them, “My **cup** you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.”

^{KJV} John 18:11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the **cup** which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

^{NAS} Matthew 26:39 And He went a little beyond *them*, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this **cup** pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

The Last Supper cup was slightly different in that an actual cup was involved; however, the Messiah used the cup and its contents (the fruit of the vine) to symbolize aspects of the promised covenant, for he said the cup was the *new covenant*:

^{NAS} 1 Corinthians 11:25 In the same way *He took* the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the **new covenant** in My blood; do this, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.”

Some translations say *new testament* instead:

^{KJV} 1 Corinthians 11:25 After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the **new testament** in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it* ²¹¹ in remembrance of me.

In Greek, the word for “in” (as “in my blood”) can mean “in the sphere of” or “in the realm of.” Since the New Covenant could only come through the shed blood of Christ, here Jesus means, “This cup is the New Covenant which is *in the realm of* (and provided by) my shed blood.”

Spiritual Truth and Not a New Ritual

The Messiah’s words about the cup at the Last Supper clearly portrayed the New Covenant cup as a *spiritual* picture, not as instruction to perform a Communion ritual, as the Roman Church misconstrued it. The Greek scholar and commentator Lenski believed in some of Luther’s doctrine, such as consubstantiation, where the flesh and blood of Christ are supposedly within the bread and wine of the ritual. But even Lenski admitted that the Greek predicate is “the new covenant in My blood,”

211 The italicized “it” shows that this word does not appear in the original Greek.

and that the phrase “in My blood” modifies “New Covenant” (*not* “this cup”), as he states concerning the 1 Corinthians 11:25 scripture above:

The predicate is “the new testament in my blood,” and the ἐν²¹² phrase modifies “testament” and not “this cup.”²¹³

In other words, the Messiah is certainly not saying, “This cup *has* my blood in it” (as the Roman ritual teaches). Instead, the ἐν phrase (referring to “in my blood”) reveals that the “cup” of the *New Covenant* of which we partake *has its legal basis* in his shed blood, not in the blood of the animal sacrifices under the Old Covenant. He is showing that the New Covenant will come about and have its authority and be effectual *because of* his shed blood. The disciples came to understand this truth, and eventually they went out teaching that the Messiah’s shed blood is what provides *communion* with God in the promised New Covenant.

John wrote about this:

^{NAS} Revelation 1:5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us, **and released us from our sins by His blood,**

Paul wrote to the Ephesian assembly about this:

^{NAB} Ephesians 1:7 In him we have redemption **by his blood,** the forgiveness of transgressions . . .

He wrote about this same truth to the Hebrews:

^{NAB} Hebrews 9:12 he entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, **thus obtaining eternal redemption.**

^{NAS} Hebrews 10:4 For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Then Paul quoted King David (Psalm 40:6–8), showing that God had really taken no pleasure in the animal sacrifices, and that those sacrifices pointed further to the one who would come to do His will:

212 The Greek ἐν means “in,” and here Lenski refers to the “in my blood” phrase.

213 Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians*, p. 470.

^{NAS} Hebrews 10:5–6 Therefore, **when He comes into the world**, He says, “Sacrifice and offering Thou hast not desired, But a body Thou hast prepared for Me; In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin Thou hast taken no pleasure.

^{NAS} Hebrews 10:7 “Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come (In the roll of the book it is written of Me) To do Thy will, O God.’”

^{NAS} Hebrews 10:8 After saying above, “Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin Thou hast not desired, nor hast Thou taken pleasure *in them*” (which are offered according to the Law),

Continuing below, we see that He takes away the first covenant to establish the second one—the promised New Covenant—which would have its legal basis in a different shed blood, not that of sacrificed animals:

^{NAS} Hebrews 10:9–10 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Thy will.” **He takes away the first in order to establish the second.** By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The phrase “as often as you drink,” which we saw earlier in 1 Corinthians 11:25, refers to the drink that was the spiritual fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:29) and foreshadows spiritual partaking and fellowship with other believers. The fruit of the grapevine refers to that which is provided in the New Covenant, and here the Messiah points forward to the time just ahead of them at Pentecost, when the believers will be “drinking” the spiritual drink—the “new” wine that points to God’s spirit and His love:

^{NAS} John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If any man is thirsty, **let him come to Me and drink.**

^{NAS} John 7:39 **But this He spoke of the Spirit**, whom **those who believed in Him were to receive**; for the Spirit was not yet *given*, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The Promised New Covenant

We’ve seen that when Jesus said, “This cup is the *New Covenant*,” he was referring to the promised New Covenant. This had been foretold by many Jewish prophets, including Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Malachi.

Through Isaiah, God speaks of an everlasting covenant, indicating that it will take place in the future by saying the words, “*I will*.” The Jewish scholars who translated the Hebrew into Greek in the Septuagint also used a *future* form of the Greek to express “I will make an everlasting covenant.”

^{NAS} Isaiah 55:3 “Incline your ear and come to Me. Listen, that you may live; And I **will** make **an everlasting covenant** with you, *According to* the faithful mercies shown to David.

^{NAS} Isaiah 61:8 For I, the LORD, love justice, I hate robbery in the burnt offering; And I will faithfully give them their recompense, And I **will** make **an everlasting covenant** with them.

The following verse is big, with God speaking prophetically to the promised Messiah before he comes:

^{NAS} Isaiah 42:6 “I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, And I **will** **appoint you as a covenant** to the people, **As a light to the nations**,

This is just one more proof of who the Messiah really was. Only Jesus could bring in the promised New Covenant, for God appointed *him* and his sacrifice to bring it in. He is the sole Jewish man from the line of David who could truly be called a “covenant to the people” and a “light to the nations.” Each Sunday, the nations gather to read God’s word. They have learned of Moses and Abraham and to walk with God, all because of the Messiah. There have been many false Messiahs, but they are revealed as false since they were not appointed as a covenant, nor did they bring in the promised New Covenant, nor were they a light to the nations.

For example, during the Jewish uprising (AD 132–135) against the Roman occupation and Emperor Hadrian, who had erected a pagan temple to Jupiter on the Temple Mount, the famous rabbi Akiva endorsed Bar Kochba as the Messiah. Many believed him to be the Messiah, based on the rabbi’s proclamation. However, Bar Kochba did not have a promised New Covenant and therefore could not have been the Messiah. Nearly 600,000 Jews were killed by Rome in this uprising.



Christ is the seed of Abraham in which *all nations* will be blessed, as promised in Genesis:

^{NAS} Genesis 22:18 “And in your **seed all the nations** of the earth shall be **blessed**, because you have obeyed My voice.”

Paul explains this further:

^{NAS} Galatians 3:16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his **seed**. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as *referring* to many, but *rather* to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.

God also spoke through Ezekiel about this future covenant. Ezekiel begins chapter 16 with God showing him that Jerusalem (as the capital of Judah representing all Israel as the covenant nation) had broken the previous covenant. God then continues by speaking of the promised New Covenant:

^{NAS} Ezekiel 16:59–60 For thus says the Lord God, “I will also do with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath **by breaking the covenant**. Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I **will** establish **an everlasting covenant** with you.

God, too, speaks plainly about the New Covenant through Jeremiah, saying that it will *not* be according to the covenant under Moses:

^{NAS} Jeremiah 31:31–32 “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, **not like the covenant which I made with their fathers** in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, **My covenant which they broke**, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.

^{NAS} Jeremiah 31:33–34 “**But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days**,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his

brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their iniquity, **and their sin I will remember no more.**”

Under the Old Covenant there was a remembrance of sin (Hebrews 10:3), so why would God say here that He would no longer remember their sin when the New Covenant came? It is because the price for atonement has been fully paid, something that the animal sacrifices could never fully do.

God Showed That the Messiah Would Make a Firm Covenant, yet Be Cut Off

God spoke through Daniel, declaring that the Messiah would “*make a firm covenant,*” but He also shows that he would be cut off in the middle of the “week.”

^{NAS} Daniel 9:26 “Then after the sixty-two weeks **the Messiah** will be **cut off** and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end *will come* with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.

^{NAS} Daniel 9:27 “And he will make a firm **covenant** with the many for one week, but **in the middle of the week** he will **put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering;** and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate.”

Christ was cut off in the middle of the week, which is exactly in the middle of the “week” of seven years that Daniel meant. This happened in AD 30,²¹⁴ when Christ was crucified as God’s Passover lamb, thus paying the price that brought in the New Covenant. From God’s perspective, the “sacrifice and grain offering” ceased at the Crucifixion (Isaiah 66:3), and He would no longer accept animal sacrifices for sin.

Then, as the first-century historian Josephus explains, all the people who were still offering sacrifices were walled up in the city at Passover when Roman troops at-

²¹⁴ Astronomical science shows that a Passover full moon occurred on Thursday, the 14th of Nisan, in the year AD 30. Jesus was approximately 33½ years old at death, having begun his 3½-year ministry at about age 30 (Luke 3:23). Scholars mostly agree that Rome was off by a couple of years in estimating the beginning date of our calendar, so when taking into account the “zero year” (between 1 BC and AD 1), Jesus would have been born around 4 BC. He did not make it to his 34th birthday, which would have been around September or October of 30 AD.

tacked the Temple²¹⁵ (which occurred 40 years to the day later, in AD 70). Thus the sacrifice and grain offerings that ceased to be efficacious in God's eyes at Passover in AD 30 ceased *literally* during that Roman attack 40 years later. So whether Daniel was speaking of the sacrifices and grain offering as no longer valid in God's eyes after the Crucifixion, or whether he was speaking of them ceasing literally when the Temple was destroyed, both meanings could fit.

The number "40" is often meaningful in the scriptures: It rained 40 days and 40 nights in the flood during Noah's day, the Israelites wandered 40 years in the wilderness, and there are many other examples. The Messiah spoke of the generation of those who rejected him, saying they would be given the sign of Jonah (Luke 11:29–30). Jonah, who had spent three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, warned the people of Nineveh that they would be destroyed in *40 days*, but they repented and God turned away His wrath. It appears that the generation of people who rejected the Messiah were given *40 years*, but many failed to repent, and Jerusalem was then attacked by Rome at Passover.

As an aside, the scriptures show there was a definite Messianic expectancy during Christ's time, for Jewish scholars understood that the prophecies pointed to that time for the Messiah's coming. The following passage from the Talmud, written a few hundred years later by a rabbinic scholar, confirms this:

Said Rabh: All the appointed times for the appearance of the Messiah have already ceased.²¹⁶

God also spoke through Malachi concerning the promised covenant:

^{NAS} Malachi 3:1 "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and **the messenger of the covenant**, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.

In Isaiah 42:6, God said that He would appoint the Messiah as a covenant (i.e., New Covenant) to the people. God's son, the Messiah, would give up his very life and soul (Isaiah 53:10–12) as the true sacrificial offering that Abraham's example pointed to when he was ready to obey God and offer his chosen son, Isaac. However, God knew

215 Whiston, *The New Complete Works of Josephus*, "The Jewish War," 6.9.3–4, pp. 906–907.

216 Babylonian Talmud, Book 8, Tract Sanhedrin, ch. 11, p. 305, <http://sacred-texts.com/jud/t08/t0814.htm>.

that He would provide the true lamb (Genesis 22:8, 13) and Isaac—as the promised son—was a type of this.

God referred to the Passover sacrifice personally as “My sacrifice” (Exodus 34:25). The shed blood of the true lamb of God would be the true sacrifice that God would accept to bring us out of *spiritual* Egypt; hence Christ was crucified on the same day as the Passover lambs. This Mount of the Lord (Moriah) where God directed Abraham to offer Isaac is the same mount where He would later direct David to locate the Temple with its sacrifices. It was also very close to where the Crucifixion would take place.

Christ came to a place of commitment before God where he was willing to offer up not just his earthly life but his eternal soul to bear the sins of his brethren and all people, and thus pay the full eternal penalty for transgressions that the animal sacrifices could only point to:

^{NAS} Isaiah 53:3 He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

^{NAS} Isaiah 53:4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

^{NAS} Isaiah 53:5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

Isaiah continued to show the Messiah as the lamb sacrifice—the true Passover lamb who would be crucified on the very day that natural lambs were offered:

^{NAS} Isaiah 53:6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

^{NAS} Isaiah 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; **Like a lamb that is led to slaughter**, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

^{NAS} Isaiah 53:8 By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered That He was cut off

out of the land of the living, For the transgression of my people to whom the stroke *was due*?

^{NAS} Isaiah 53:9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.

^{KJV} Isaiah 53:10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make **his soul an offering for sin**, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Why on earth would the Lord be “pleased” to “bruise” (or crush) the Messiah? The answer is that, as the true lamb, the Messiah’s willingness completed God’s plan of redemption by paying the price for all transgressions. God was thus pleased with the outcome. He was now able to bring the people—all who would appropriate this offering by faith—into complete, unending communion with Himself. This was something the animal sacrifices could not fully accomplish.

^{KJV} Isaiah 53:11 As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see *it* and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.

Isaiah knew that the Messiah must first face death but he also foresaw the Messiah’s Resurrection, that he would “divide the spoil with the mighty.” Here we see that the Messiah would be resurrected, for God does not “divide him a portion” to the dead but to the living:

^{JPS} Isaiah 53:12 Therefore will **I divide him a portion among the great**, and **he shall divide the spoil with the mighty**; because he bared his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

At the Last Supper (which was the evening before the Passover lambs would be slaughtered and Christ would be crucified), the Messiah taught the disciples with a parable that they would later fully understand—that his *shed blood* is what provides the *New Covenant*:

^{NAS} Luke 22:20 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**.”

Theologians in Rome would later misunderstand these words and think that the Messiah was creating a new ritual.

God Said He Would Draw the Israelite People Back into a Relationship with Him

God said that in the last days He would draw the Israelites back into a covenant relationship with Him, and this is happening in amazing ways in our day.

^{NAS} Jeremiah 23:3–5 “Then I **Myself** shall gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and shall bring them back to their pasture; and they will be fruitful and multiply. I shall also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing,” declares the LORD. “Behold, *the* days are coming,” declares the LORD, “**When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch**; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.”

^{NAS} Jeremiah 31:10 Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, And declare in the coastlands afar off, And say, “**He who scattered Israel will gather him, And keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.**”

^{NAS} Isaiah 44:3 ‘For I will pour out water on the thirsty *land* And streams on the dry ground; **I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring**, And My blessing on your descendants;

Although God wanted to draw the Jews back into a relationship with Him, the Devil had other ideas—to alienate them from their promised New Covenant. By being portrayed as “Judaizers” and connected to the “perjury of the Jews,” as Roman Emperor Constantine had proclaimed, the Jews were essentially forced out of the promised New Covenant. This history should not be used to create animosity toward Catholics today, who had nothing to do with these events, and who mostly believe they are following the Lord; it is only so that we can accurately understand the effects of an all-powerful Roman government.

Remember, as we discussed in “Setting the Table 1,” these Jewish believers were later derisively called “Quartodecimans,” meaning “Fourteenthers,” since they honored the day the Messiah was crucified as the true Passover by keeping the 14th day of Nisan special. The Messianic believers did not yield to Roman doctrines and this angered certain Roman leaders.

The Roman Church eventually introduced new doctrines that most Jews would never believe. These new teachings included the woman Mary becoming God’s mother, a ritual where people were to ingest flesh and blood, and the worshipping of three Gods who make up the one God. These doctrines alienated the Jews from the New Covenant and helped to usher them back under the authority of the Pharisaic rabbis.

So instead of following the heart of the Jewish Messiah, who wept over Israel and desired to take her under his wing as a hen does her chicks (Luke 13:34), the Roman Church of the day and its world military power at that time rejected all things Jewish, including its idioms. This completed the Devil’s plan of alienating the Jews from the New Covenant that had been promised to them by their own prophets.

In fact, the Quartodecimans were not “Judaizers,” for they only wanted to continue to keep the 14th day special as their ancestors had done before them for many hundreds of years. The real Judaizers were those trying to bring the people back under the authority of the previous covenant and back under the law of Moses, a teaching that Paul spoke against:

^{NAS} Galatians 3:10 For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by **all** things written in the book of the law, to perform them.”

Paul shows that the law was only the schoolmaster (Galatians 3:24) that disciplined us until we could find justification in Christ, because none of us can keep the law perfectly.

^{NAS} Galatians 3:11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “The righteous man shall live by faith.”²¹⁷

^{NAS} Galatians 3:13 Christ **redeemed us from the curse of the Law**, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.”²¹⁸

217 Paul is referencing Habakkuk 2:4.

218 Paul is referencing Deuteronomy 21:22–23; “tree” can also mean a wooden plank or stake.

And, as the quote from Peter in the book of Acts points out, they should not put the yoke of the law on the Gentile disciples who were coming to the Lord:

^{NAS} Acts 15:10 “Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?”

Paul shows how the promises to Abraham were given prior to the law of Moses, and therefore that law that came later cannot invalidate these promises:

^{NAS} Galatians 3:17 What I am saying is this: the Law, **which came four hundred and thirty years later**, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify **the promise**.

^{NAS} Galatians 3:18 For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; **but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise**.

^{NAS} Galatians 3:19 Why the Law then? **It was added because of transgressions**, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, **until the seed should come** to whom the promise had been made.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did not have the law of Moses, and they still walked with God. Paul, a scholar in the law educated under the famous rabbi Gamaliel, said in verse 19 above that this law came into existence only because of transgressions in the wilderness.

^{NAS} Galatians 3:2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: **did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?**

^{KJV} Galatians 3:24–25 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, **we are no longer under a schoolmaster**.

Paul could not state more clearly that the law was the schoolmaster until Christ came to pay the price for all of the people’s sins. And by putting our faith in him (i.e., believing that he paid the price), we are no longer justified before God by keeping the law of Moses with its sacrifices, Sabbath laws, unclean people outside the camp,

circumcision, festivals, etc. After all, the law with its various animal sacrifices and ritual washings was never God's complete plan from the beginning, but rather it pointed forward and served as the schoolmaster until His plan would be revealed:

^{JPS} Jeremiah 7:22–23 For I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this thing I commanded them, saying: 'Hearken unto My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people; and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.'

We are no longer under the schoolmaster because now we look to Christ and what he did for our justification. Certain nonceremonial aspects of the law (do not steal, kill, commit adultery, etc.) do endure, for they are now written by the Lord in our hearts (Jeremiah 31:33). We fulfill the law as we walk in *agape* (Romans 13:10) and as we walk according to the spirit (Romans 8:4). Although we are not under condemnation from the law, we do not despise the blood of the covenant through wanton behavior (Hebrews 10:29).



In the book of Revelation, the Old Covenant is pictured as a moon with no light of its own but only reflected light from the sun—God's sunlight in the New Covenant shown through the Messiah. The New Covenant assembly is pictured as a woman with the moon (law) under her feet, still visible and undergirding her but no longer with the same legal standing; now she is clothed with the sun (New Covenant):

^{NAS} Revelation 12:1 And a great sign appeared in heaven: **a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet**, and on her head a crown of twelve stars;

^{YLT} Hebrews 10:1 For **the law having a shadow of the coming good things—not the very image of the matters**, every year, by the same sacrifices that they offer continually, is never able to **make perfect** those coming near,

“Make perfect” above refers at least partially to being perfect in conscience before God. The conscience always knew that the proper price for sin had not been paid with animal sacrifices:

^{YLT} Hebrews 9:9 which *is* a simile in regard to the present time, in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered, which are not able, **in regard to conscience**, to make perfect him who is serving,

As Hebrews 10:1 (above) shows, the law was only a “shadow” of the good things to come. It was never meant to be the be-all and end-all of what God wanted for His people. For those who still want to walk under it, the following scriptures should dissuade them:

^{NAS} James 2:10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one *point*, he has become guilty of all.

^{NAS} Deuteronomy 27:26 ‘Cursed is he who does not confirm **the words** of this law by doing them.’ And all the people shall say, ‘Amen.’

In other words, if you’re seeking to be justified by the law and thus avoid the curse that Moses spoke of, then you must keep the whole law perfectly.

The New Covenant Is Not Like the One under Moses

As we’ve discussed, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob walked with God and in His promises hundreds of years before the law of Moses (Torah/instruction) was given. So below Paul shows that since God’s promises to Abraham were not based on law, the law that came later under Moses did not make void the previous promises to Abraham.

In writing his letter to the Hebrews, Paul quotes Jeremiah 31:31–34 (i.e., concerning the promise of the new covenant), then makes his point:

^{NAS} Hebrews 8:8 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;

^{NAS} Hebrews 8:9 **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.

^{NAS} Hebrews 8:10 “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 upon their hearts. And I will be their God, And they shall be My people.

^{NAS} Hebrews 8:12 “For I will be merciful to their iniquities, And I will remember their sins no more.”

^{NAS} Hebrews 8:13 When He said, “A new *covenant*,” **He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.**

When Jesus (Yeshua) spoke of his blood and the New Covenant, he was simply pointing back to what God had instituted through Moses when He commanded the animal sacrifices. He was bringing the fulfillment that allowed many believing Jews to enter into the promised New Covenant, which would no longer require sacrifices because Christ paid the final penalty for sin for all who receive him:

^{NAS} Mark 14:23 And when He had taken a cup, *and* given thanks, He gave *it* to them; and they all drank from it.

^{NAS} Mark 14:24–25 And He said to them, “This is My blood of the covenant, which is **poured out for many**. Truly I say to you, I shall never again drink of **the fruit of the vine** until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

Above we see that it was probably after the disciples drank it that Jesus said, “This is My blood . . . which is poured out.” Jesus thus speaks of the fruit of the grapevine in the cup in a symbolic parable that the disciples would later understand.

It is very possible that Jesus here was “pouring out” the remainder from the cup, since the Greek is a present participle and since it was a symbolic comparison to the Old Covenant sacrifices in which animal blood was poured out at the altar. When the Passover lambs were slain, such as would have happened the day following this Last Supper, some of the blood of each lamb was *poured out* at the altar to be efficacious. Jesus uses the same Greek word for “pouring out” as that used in the Septuagint for sacrificial blood (this will be covered more in Course 11).

Whatever the full meaning of the Messiah’s words and actions, the scriptures make clear that this cup held only the “fruit of the vine,” which *represented* the New Covenant and the blood that God would now accept. The fact that Jesus says it was poured out for *many* indicates that his actions and words had a much bigger application (Mark 10:45).

Do his words spoken on his final night sound similar to anything Moses had said?

^{KJV} Hebrews 9:19 For when **Moses** had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, **he took the blood** of calves and of

goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, **and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,**

^{NAS} Hebrews 9:20 saying, “**This is the blood of the covenant** which God commanded you.”

^{NAS} Exodus 24:7 Then he took the book of the covenant and read *it* in the hearing of the people; and they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!”

^{NAS} Exodus 24:8 So Moses took the blood and **sprinkled it on the people**, and said, “**Behold the blood of the covenant**, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

Below, Peter’s words to the Jews of the Diaspora spiritually tie Christ’s blood back to Moses by speaking of “obedience” and “sprinkling” blood. Peter knew that this was what the Messiah was referring to at the Last Supper teachings:

^{NAB} 1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the chosen sojourners of the **dispersion** in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

^{NAS} 1 Peter 1:2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may **obey** Jesus Christ and **be sprinkled with His blood**: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.

This was a common method of speaking among spiritual New Covenant Jews, who would say something in the natural or literal sense (often something connected to the first covenant) but intend the spiritual truth behind it—its New Covenant application.

Last Supper Parables Were Shocking in the Natural Sense so They Would Be Remembered, Discussed, and Understood Later

Scriptures like those from Peter above may not have meant a lot in Rome, but they held very clear meaning to Jews within their first-century idiom. The Messiah’s somewhat shocking parables from the Last Supper would have stuck with them, and eventually after discussion, prayer, and God’s spirit leading, they would understand their full meanings. This is what Jesus knew would happen.

^{NAS} John 14:26 “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you** all things, **and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.**

The Jewish Peter was not writing about sprinkling one another with literal blood during a ritual of Communion (1 Peter 1:2), because no such ritual was kept. Peter understood that Jesus was speaking spiritual truth at the Last Supper, and therefore of applying blood *spiritually*, whereas under the Old Covenant the blood was sprinkled *naturally*.

Today, the members of the various churches that keep the Communion ritual do not sprinkle one another with the wine in an attempt to follow this verse, for they correctly interpret this verse *spiritually*, and not as something to do as a natural ritual.

In Course 2, we saw how the disciples taught that *we* are the body of Christ, which proves that they understood the parables concerning the one bread at the Last Supper. The same is true for the parables Jesus taught that night concerning his blood. By the disciples’ eventual teachings, we know they came to understand that they would *spiritually* apply the blood in the New Covenant:

^{NAS} Hebrews 10:19 Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence to enter the holy place **by the blood of Jesus,**

^{NAS} Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption **through His blood,** the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

Jesus does not say at the Last Supper that this is **the** blood of the covenant, as Moses did (Exodus 24:8); instead Jesus says this is **my** blood of the covenant. Not just any blood sacrifice, animal or otherwise, could pay the full price for all sin; it had to be the precious blood of God’s own son.

^{NIV} Matthew 26:28 This is **my blood of the covenant,** which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

The Messiah and the Ritual Purification

The symbolic cup containing the fruit of the vine (grapevine) symbolized the New Covenant, and Christ’s shed blood provided the cup of spiritual blessings available in the New Covenant. This spiritual life flows through the spiritual body of Christ, joining the believers in true communion with God and one another.

^{NAS} 1 John 1:7 but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son **cleanses** us from all sin.

The word “cleanses” above (*katharize* in the Greek) is often used to indicate ritual cleansing of the Jews. The Jews understood this Greek word in this context because various forms of it also often appear in the Septuagint, such as the four boldfaced words in the following two scriptures:

^{LXE} Leviticus 14:7 And he shall sprinkle seven times upon him that was **cleansed** of his leprosy, and he shall be **clean**; and he shall let go the living bird into the field.

^{LXE} Leviticus 14:11 And the priest that **cleanses** shall present the man under **purification**, and these *offerings* before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of witness.

These first-century Jews were very familiar with the Greek Septuagint. This translation of the Hebrew Old Testament by Jewish scholars often used the same Greek words for ritual cleansings or washings, such as when the leper above is pronounced healed and ritually clean.

At the Last Supper, Jesus spoke of the required Jewish practice of immersion in water (needed before entering the Temple), telling Peter he did not need another complete washing. Using this same Greek word *katharoi*, he then declared that not all of the disciples were ritually *clean* (this was because of what was in the heart of Judas—his plan to betray Christ):

^{NAS} John 13:10 Jesus said to him, “He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely **clean**; and you are **clean**, but not all *of you*.”

^{NAS} John 13:11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, “Not all of you are **clean**.”

After the Last Supper, Jesus points further to the coming New Covenant by explaining that it was because of God’s word coming through him and being accepted that the disciples were *ritually* clean (again using this same Greek word *katharoi*):

^{NAS} John 15:3 “You are already **clean** because of the word which I have spoken to you.

Paul also brings out this aspect of the New Covenant below as he explains that the Messiah spiritually “cleanses” the assembly of believers, “washing” her (the bride) with the water that is really the word of God. The word “cleansed” (*katharison*) comes from the same Greek root as the other words (“cleanses,” “clean,” etc.):

^{NAS} Ephesians 5:26 that He might sanctify her, having **cleansed** her by the **washing of water with the word**,

Below, this Greek word (*katharismos*) is used to describe one of the Jewish ceremonial washings:

^{NIV} John 2:6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for **ceremonial washing**, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

In the New Covenant, the disciples came to understand from the Messiah’s teachings that they would no longer need ritual cleansings in water, but that they would be “washed” by the word of God that he brought to them. John showed that in the new covenant God will cleanse (*katharisy*) us as we confess (or admit) our sin to God and ask for His forgiveness:

^{NAS} 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to **cleanse** us from all unrighteousness.

^{NAS} Acts 3:19 “Repent therefore and return, that your **sins may be wiped away**, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

While discussing the Pharisees’ requirement of washing hands before eating bread, Jesus showed his disciples that the things that come from outside and enter into man do not defile, but those things that defile him come *out* of man as a result of thoughts of the heart that are sometimes acted upon:

^{KJV} Mark 7:18–23 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into

the draught, purging all meats? And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

The Messiah’s sacrifice brought the fulfillment of the ritual cleansings that were required under the Mosaic covenant:

^{NAS} Hebrews 1:3b When He had made **purification** of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;

The Greek word for “purification” above is again *katharismos*, and this shows that through the sacrifice Jesus made and by us accepting his shed blood as the penalty for our forgiveness, we become ritually clean before God if we, by faith, receive this truth and apply it. This makes us fully able to enter God’s presence and receive spiritual sustenance.



Jesus was often somewhat contrary to some of the ritual washings and traditional cleansings when they were not originally from God, or if God was leading him otherwise. The Pharisees were upset when his disciples did not first wash before eating bread (Matthew 15:2). These disciples also baptized people in water, although Jesus himself refrained from this (John 4:1).

When Jesus turned the water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (after the wine ran out), he directed the water to be placed in the pots used for ritual purification. By turning this water into wine, he made the pots temporarily unfit for ritual purification according to rabbinic law (John 2:6). Thus the servants feared telling the head steward where the excellent wine came from (John 2:9), knowing that the pots of purification had been used.

In another example, the Lord almost seems to sport with the kosher Peter by giving him a parable in the form of a vision of unclean animals—which he tells the hungry Peter to “kill and eat”—knowing Peter’s strict adherence to the Jewish laws of never eating anything unclean (Acts 10 and 11). Indeed, most Jews who followed the law of Moses strictly avoided eating anything unclean. Peter said “Not so, Lord, for I have *never* eaten anything common or unclean,” but Peter later came to understand what the vision really meant—that God was cleansing the Gentile believers. The Messiah had also reached out and touched the unclean leper, immediately healing him (Matthew 8:3).

The Messiah knew that some of the rules for ritual purification were traditions of man and not from God, while others pointed further to New Covenant truth. So consider this: We see the strong will of Peter in saying—even to the Lord—“Not so Lord” when he felt very strongly about the kosher food laws given under Moses. Yet according to the Roman ritual, are we to believe that, at the Last Supper, the kosher Peter was fine with ingesting flesh and blood in a supposed ritual? It’s sad that this point has to be argued or even discussed, but to show the error of the long-lasting traditions of man, these first-century Jewish idioms must be considered.

The Apostles Grew in New Covenant Understandings After Receiving the Holy Spirit

The disciples would come to understand that it was the shed blood of the Messiah that now brought them ritual cleansing before God, and that in the New Covenant, forgiveness and cleansing were no longer found in Temple offerings or ritual washings. It is the Messiah’s blood and the acceptance of it—by spiritually placing it on the doorposts of our hearts (as in the Passover in Egypt)—that allows us to share in communion and fellowship with God and the assembly.

But the disciples did not fully understand these things at the Last Supper, as they did not yet comprehend that Jesus was really going to die and be resurrected (Luke 18:33–34; Matthew 16:21–22). Even on the day of the Resurrection, some of the disciples still did not understand. Having thought that Jesus was going to redeem Israel, they were distraught and very sad after the Crucifixion, thinking it had all been in vain (Luke 24:13–15, 21, 26). They made the following remarks to a man they did not recognize to be the risen Lord:

^{NAS} Luke 24:21 “But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.

The resurrected Jesus, still unrecognized by them, reproved them for their slowness of heart:

^{NAS} Luke 24:25–27 And He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

Even when the remaining 11 apostles were told by Mary Magdalene and the other women that Jesus had risen from the dead, they dismissed the news, thinking their words to be nonsense (Luke 24:10, 11). Jesus then reproached the apostles for their hardness of heart and unbelief concerning the women’s eyewitness testimony:

^{NAS} Mark 16:14 And afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining *at the table*; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they **had not believed** those who had seen Him after He had risen.

This is probably a primary reason why Jesus left the disciples with these parables at the Last Supper. He knew they could not yet handle the new truths and that it would take God’s spirit flowing through them later, starting with Pentecost, to begin to understand how they would soon be operating under the promised New Covenant. Just after the Last Supper, Jesus told them:

^{NAS} John 16:12 “I have many more things to say to you, **but you cannot bear *them* now.**

Some years later they came further into another major New Covenant truth that initially shocked them: God led them to no longer consider uncircumcised Gentile believers in the Messiah to be ritually unclean (Acts 10:28, 45; 11:1–3).

The doctrines that the apostles would teach later show that they came to understand the Messiah’s parables. Having already understood the symbolic cup, they would later comprehend the symbolism of the fruit of the grapevine—and see that they were now under a New Covenant provided by *his* shed blood.

Throughout this Course, we’ve seen that the words of Jesus concerning the symbolic “cup” and the New Covenant at the Last Supper—when understood in light of the Jewish idioms of that day—led the disciples into new truths.