

Administering The Lord's Supper, Exodus 24:7-8, Blood of the Covenant

When is the last time you thought about the covenant of the Lord? The answer to that probably tells you how much or little the covenant means to you.

Here is a quick test – when we secretly wonder whether God has forgotten us. It is the covenant that reassures us that God our Father would never forget us, because God always remembers that His covenant with us, cost Him His Son.

God the Father will never forget His Son's death, and so our Father God will never forget us. In fact, it is precisely because our Heavenly Father knows about OUR forgetfulness, that God has always instituted reminders for His people.

Today let me show you an important connection between two reminders - an Old Testament reminder of God's covenant, and this New Testament reminder.

In Exodus 24, God reminded His people of old about His covenant through a special ceremony that involved the sacrifice of animals. We are not surprised that during the ceremony some of the blood of the animals was thrown against the altar of God. We are not surprised that Moses read from *the Book of the Covenant*, though we may have needed the reminder that Moses actually called it *the Book of the Covenant*. But in that ceremony, something else happened that we may have forgotten, and so today we are benefited to be reminded.

Listen carefully to one verse - Exodus 24:8, “And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, ‘Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.’”

Had we forgotten that Moses sprinkled the blood of the covenant onto the people? What does it mean?

At the start of the ceremony, when the holy God looked at the people what did God see? Sinners! But after Moses sprinkled the blood of the covenant on the people, what did God see? God saw blood-covered sinners. What sort of blood? The blood of the covenant!

Have we forgotten what happened next in the covenant-reminder ceremony? 2 things 1) The people saw God! Normally that was fatal! But in this case, the sinners were sprinkled with the blood of the covenant. Another had died in their place for their sins, so God would not strike them down. Quite the opposite – the people got to see God! 2) the people ate and drank. After the people were set apart by the blood of the covenant, then the holy God had become their covenant God in a renewed way. The covenant was celebrated with a banquet – being reminded of the covenant called for the people to eat and to drink!

When Jesus was setting up the first celebration of The Lord's Supper, which would be a bloodless covenant reminder ceremony, He gave them the cup of wine and said in Matthew 26:28, “...this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Of course, while Jesus spoke these words, Jesus had not yet died, and so He had not yet shed His blood for us. Yet

Jesus already referred to His own soon-to-be-shed blood as *the blood of the covenant*. Clearly the fact that Jesus spoke the exact same phrase from Exodus 24, showed that Jesus was connecting these two ceremonies. God's previous covenant reminding ceremony on the Mountain called Sinai with the blood of animals is fulfilled in the new ceremony reminding us of what God is like by sealing that covenant to us once for all in the blood of The Lamb of God.

Later, after Jesus actually did shed His blood, and also did rise again, the writer of the Book of Hebrews confirmed the connection between the event at Sinai of the cleansing of the people, and the cleansing represented at the Lord's Supper, and even anticipating the final cleansing we receive from Jesus' blood, when Jesus' blood of the covenant brings us all the way into heaven itself. Listen to Hebrews 9:18-26, "*not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you." 21 And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. 22 Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. 23 Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. 25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, 26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."*

This bread and this cup that Jesus Himself set apart in The Lord's Supper express what both Moses and Jesus said, "the blood of the covenant." This phrase means that to this day God has fulfilled His promise to us to never forget us. The blood of the covenant is not accomplished by this cup any more than it was accomplished by the blood of animals. Both the blood of the animals, and the cup of the sacrament point to the once for all blood of the covenant, Jesus' own blood. That blood is represented by this cup. Today as we eat the bread and drink the cup, God seals certainty back into our forgetful hearts. By the eating and the drinking, we remember and celebrate God's loving bond with us, God's perfect fellowship with us, brought about only by the sacrifice of Jesus Himself. When we partake, we remember the full meaning of Jesus' words, "*My blood of the covenant.*"

God has not forgotten us. God is not angry with us. God is not judging us. God will never strike us down, because Jesus was already struck down for us. And

God raised Jesus on the third day, just as one day God will raise our bodies. When we eat this bread and drink this cup together, our shame is gone and we are freshly and fully reminded that we can and do entrust ourselves again to the final, perfect Mediator Jesus Christ. In eating and drinking, we rejoice in His faithfulness to us and we offer ourselves to Him as living sacrifices who remember His covenant.