

THE GOSPEL STORY

Lesson 11 "this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many..."

Text Under Consideration: Hebrews

Scriptural & Historical Context:

We have noted that the themes of redemption and creation find their completion in Christ. Significantly, when the Lord redeems and fashions a people it is with the purpose of establishing a relationship with that people. That was clearly seen when the Lord redeemed Israel from Egypt and made them into a people... His people if they would keep His covenant (Exodus 19.4-6). Likewise, Jesus came to this earth to redeem His people (Luke 1.68) a people who would be born anew into His Kingdom (John 3.5). And why did the Lord do this? Because He wants a relationship with this people... He wants to be in a covenant with them. Thus, on the night when Jesus and His apostles commemorated the redemption of Israel from slavery, He inaugurated a new feast meant to commemorate the establishment of His covenant with His new people. "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26.28)

Key Verses & Events:

- 📖 God forms a covenant with Abram (~ 2000 B.C., Genesis 15.18).
- 📖 God redeems Israel out of Egypt and forms a covenant with them (~1440 B.C., Exodus 24).
- 📖 Israel continually breaks covenant finally resulting in their captivity and the destruction of God's Temple (586 B.C., 2Chronicles 36).
- 📖 Through His prophet Jeremiah, the Lord promises to establish a new covenant (586 B.C., Jeremiah 31.31-34).
- 📖 Jesus states that His blood is the blood of the new covenant (A.D. 30, Matthew 26.28).

Creation
Genesis 1-2 · Undated

The Flood
Genesis 6-9 · c. 2350 BC (trad.)

Abraham
Genesis 12-25 · c. 2000-1800 BC

The Exodus
Exodus · c. 1446 or 1270 BC

Conquest of Canaan
Joshua · c. 1406-1380 BC

David's Reign
2 Samuel · c. 1010-970 BC

Babylonian Captivity
2 Kings 25 · c. 605-539 BC

Return from Captivity
Ezra, Nehemiah · c. 538-432 BC

Life of Jesus
Gospels · c. 6/4 BC – AD 30/33

Establishment of the Church
Acts 2 · c. AD 30/33 (Pentecost)

📖 The Hebrew author states that we are part of the new and better covenant (~A.D. 65, Hebrews 8).

The Story

1. Covenant is how God relates to humanity. Throughout Scripture, God forms binding relationships with people through covenants — with Abraham (Genesis 15), with Israel (Exodus 19), and ultimately through Christ.
2. God's covenants are rooted in grace. Each covenant offers blessings man could not obtain on his own — promises to Abraham, special peoplehood to Israel, and "better promises" in the new covenant (Hebrews 8.6).
3. The new covenant fulfills the promises of Jeremiah 31. Unlike the old covenant, it is internalized (written on hearts), personal (made with believers who already know God), and not dependent on succeeding generations being re-taught faithfulness.
4. The new covenant truly and finally forgives sin. The old covenant's sacrifices could not perfect the people (Hebrews 10.1-4), but Christ's once-for-all sacrifice does, and His continuing high priesthood means He intercedes for believers always.
5. Covenants are not one-sided — they require faithfulness. Jesus commanded his followers to "observe all that I have commanded" (Matthew 28.20). Keeping those commands is not legalism; it is covenant faithfulness.
6. Deliberate, persistent sin breaks the covenant relationship. Just as Israel faced curses for disobedience, those who willfully abandon Christ after knowing the truth face judgment, not continued forgiveness (Hebrews 10.26-27).
7. Grace within the covenant includes forgiveness for imperfect obedience. Christ's ongoing intercession as high priest means confession restores fellowship (1 John 1.8-9), giving believers boldness to approach God (Hebrews 4.14-16).
8. The new covenant was ratified by Christ's blood. As Israel's covenant was sealed with blood (Exodus 24), the new covenant is enacted in Christ's blood (Matthew 26.28), which we enter through baptism and commemorate in the Lord's Supper.
9. The covenant endures as long as both parties remain faithful. God's faithfulness is certain (Hebrews 10.23); the open question is always human faithfulness. Israel failed, but persevering faith preserves the soul (Hebrews 10.39).

For Further Consideration

1. Read Hebrews 2.17-18; 4.14-16; 7.23-25. How does Jesus' work as high priest give us assurance that we can remain in covenant with God?