

When We Accept The Bread And Wine In The Communion Service, What Are We Saying To Our Creator God?

We are confessing to God our total dependency on Christ's sacrifice to be a substitute death for our deserved death because of our personal sins.

Romans 3:23 [NIV] *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"*

Every human being has sinned [Greek "*hamartanō*" – to err or to miss the mark'] so that God cannot give us a glorified eternal body.

Romans 6:23 [NIV] *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

All we earn because of our missing the mark, failing to accomplish the goal we have been given life to reach, is eternal death.

But this is **not** all we are saying to God the Father!

Matthew 26:26-28 [NIV] *"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"*

The word translated covenant is a clearer rendering of Greek "*diathēkē*" than testament as in King James translation.

This is the New Covenant that is prophesied in:

Jeremiah 31:31-34 [NIV] *"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. "This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."*

Referred to by Paul

Romans 11:27 [NIV] *"And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

And the writer of Hebrews

Hebrews 8:7-12 [NIV] *"For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people and said: 'The time is coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother,*

saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

As the word "covenant" is used in the writings of the apostles we need to understand what entering into this New Covenant involves?

To do this we need to look at the Old Covenant that was the physical example or shadow of the New Covenant that God is making through Jesus Christ.

Genesis 15:1-6 [NIV] *"After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir." Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir." **He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars — if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.**"*

This was a promise that was based on faith.

Genesis 15:7-8 [NIV] *"He also said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it." **But Abram said, "O Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I shall gain possession of it?"**"*

Abram asked for confirmation of this promise that physically seemed so unreal.

How did God confirm His promise?

By making a covenant with Abram.

Genesis 15:9-10 [NIV] *"So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon." Abram brought all these to him, **cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half.**"*

Here was a blood sacrifice that was part of this covenant.

Genesis 15:17 [NIV] *"When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, **a smoking brazier with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces.**"*

This was God confirming this blood sacrifice.

Jeremiah 34:18 [NIV] *"The men who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf **they cut in two and then walked between its pieces.**"*

The human part to confirm the covenant was to walk between the pieces of the sacrifice. Although it is not recorded, Abram would have done this as his part of the covenant.

What was this walk between the pieces of the sacrifice symbolically saying?

These sacrificed animals represent my death, my blood that confirms the covenant.

This is what the disciples understood when Christ said this wine represents the blood of the covenant we are making.

We also must sacrifice our lives to enter into this New Covenant.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, **to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.**”*

Because of the mercy that God has shown we also should offer our body as a living sacrifice.

This is the only way we can become a disciple [follower] of Jesus Christ.

Luke 14:26-27 [NIV] *“**If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.**”*

The word translated “*hate*” is the Greek word “*miseō*” – to disregard one thing over another.

Our attitude towards our loyalty to Jesus Christ should be this disregard for everything else, even our own life.

The cross we carry is parallel to the cross Jesus Christ accepted and died on.

Romans 6:3-4 [NIV] *“**Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.**”*

We die and bury our old life and begin to live a new life totally dedicated to our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The baptism referred to in this scripture is that of total immersion as the Greek word “*baptizō*” indicates being covered wholly with a liquid.

1 Corinthians 11:25-29 [NIV] *“In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, **“This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”** For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. Therefore, **whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.**”*

We all need to examine our attitude of mind before and after we take communion.

Remember our part of the covenant we make with God is to die even as Jesus Christ did, by giving up His will in favour of God the Father’s will.

Matthew 26:39-44 [NIV] *“... He [Jesus Christ] fell with His face to the ground and prayed. My Father if it is possible, may this cup [of His spilt blood that Jesus had symbolically offered to His disciples] be taken from me. Yet **not as I will, but as you will** ... He [Jesus Christ] went away a second time and prayed, My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it [shed my life blood], **may your will be done** ... So He [Jesus Christ] went away once more and prayed the third time **saying the same thing.**”*

Before we accept the communion bread and wine we need to say the same words of total commitment to the will of our Creator God.