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The significance of the concepts **ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ** and **'AIMA** toward understanding a passover background of the Lord's Supper

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONCEPTS ΔΙΑΘΗΚΗ AND ΑΙΜΑ
TOWARD UNDERSTANDING A PASSOVER BACKGROUND
OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The meal which Christ ate with his disciples before his betrayal is the object of much debate and discussion. The traditional approach accepted the meal as Passover celebration and proceeded to show the corresponding replacements of the Supper for the Passover. Critical studies, however, leveled some serious questions for this traditional view. These questions received much of their impetus from the Gospel of John whose passion narrative presupposes the Passover was celebrated on Friday evening instead of Thursday. Critical studies working with the presupposition that the Supper was not a Passover meal searched for possible alternatives. The most important of these alternatives was the Kiddush meal, either to sanctify the Sabbath (G.H. Box¹) or the Passover (W.O.E. Oesterley,² G.H.C. Macgregor³). The traditional Passover understanding was again championed by Jeremias⁴ who offered solutions to the various objections raised by these men.

¹G.H. Box, "The Jewish Antecedents of the Eucharist," Journal of Theological Studies, 3 (1901-02), p. 363.

²W.O.E. Oesterley, The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 175.

³G.H.C. Macgregor, Eucharistic Origins (London: James Clark & Company, 1928), pp. 37-49.

⁴Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, translated by Norman Perrin (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1966).

The importance of such a study is not just that the events in the life of Jesus be clarified and harmonized, but that the real meaning of the Supper may be ascertained. If the Supper has no connection with the Passover, our theology of the Eucharist needs to be re-evaluated and harmonized to whatever is the real intent of Christ's institution. The aim of this study is to investigate the significance of the concepts διαθήκη and αἷμα toward such a Passover understanding of the Supper. Chapter II will examine the four accounts of the institution, evaluate the critical variants, and show significant similarities and dissimilarities of these accounts. Chapter III presents some of the scholarly attempts to deal with the implications of the contrasting emphases in these accounts. Chapter IV shows the importance of the Passover celebration for the covenant relationship between God and His people. Chapter V places the blood concept within this covenant and reveals its important symbolism. Chapter VI gives the various aspects of the Lord's Supper which make the covenant context possible for that meal. Finally, Chapter VII will draw together the implications of this study for any conclusions to be drawn on the Passover possibility. Preliminarily, this study of "covenant" and "blood" indicates the Lord's Supper can be appropriately placed within the Paschal context. These concepts cannot be used, however, to show the Supper must be restricted to this foundation, only that it is conceptually possible. To make such an identification

does no injustice to either the meaning of the Passover covenant or the Lord's Supper. The designations "Markan," "Lukan," "Matthean," and "Pauline" are used of the written accounts and do not enter into the question of authorship. The terms "Lord's Supper," "the Supper," and "Eucharist" are used quite interchangeably. All Scriptural references quoted are taken from the Revised Standard Version. Areas of study which are not included in this study are such items as the chronology of passion events, dating of the accounts, harmonizing the four accounts, harmonizing the Supper with Passover regulations, the "new covenant" of Jeremiah, or the New Moses typology.

CHAPTER II

THE FOUR ACCOUNTS OF THE INSTITUTION

The Institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded by each of the Synoptists and also by Paul in 1 Cor. 11. Our study would most assuredly be much easier if these four accounts were in agreement, but this absolute agreement is not there. Investigation of the Greek text shows that the Nestle text has retained the best readings and also that there are essentially two different forms of the cup sayings recorded.

Mark records the Last Supper immediately following Christ's prediction of betrayal by one of the twelve (Mark 14:22-25). Notably Mark places the cup saying after all have already drunk of the cup. With this cup Jesus is recorded announcing the significance of the action just performed with the words, "ΤΟΥΤΟ ἔστιν τὸ αἶμά μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυννόμενον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν" (Mark 14:24).¹ The first item with any significant textual variants is τῆς διαθήκης. A large number of manuscripts read the variant "τὸ τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης."² Even though there is this large number of manuscripts and versions supporting this reading, these are all of a relatively late date (the earliest being E and Ω

¹Aland, Kurt, editor, Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1964), p. 436. Hereafter referred to as Synopsis.

²Ibid., critical apparatus, p. 436.

of the eighth century³). Therefore the best reading is retained by Aland. The dropping of ἔκκυννόμενον has the very limited support of only two fifth century manuscripts D and W.⁴ The interpolation of εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν (as in Matt. 26:28) has no significant manuscript support⁵ so the Aland text must stand as read.

Matthew follows the Markan context of placing the institution before the betrayal (Matt. 26:26-29), but departs by recording the cup saying before the cup is passed to the disciples. Generally the same manuscripts and versions which supported the interpolation of καινήσ into the Markan account also support the addition here. The text has the support of the best manuscripts, including the Papyrus P³⁷ of the third century, the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus of the fifth century.⁶ Instead of the πολλῶν of Mark 14:24, Matthew reads εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν (Matthew 26:28).

Luke departs from the above in several ways. The Lukan account precedes rather than follows the fortelling of his betrayal; the Supper immediately follows the instructions to prepare for the Passover (Luke 22:1-14). Luke also includes

³Ibid., pp. xiv-xxvii.

⁴Ibid., critical apparatus, p. 436, xvi-xvii.

⁵Ibid., critical apparatus, p. 436.

⁶Ibid., critical apparatus, p. 436, xiv-xv.

two eschatological statements preceeding the institution (one of these is place by Matthew and Mark following the cup saying). The cup saying itself varies, "τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου, τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν" (Luke 22:20). This reading is beset with few variants. For instance, the insertion of ἔστιν supported by only the ninth century manuscript U is too insignificant to warrant any serious consideration.⁷ The Lukan reading changes the τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης found in Matthew and Mark to ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου in which the covenant becomes the predicate nominative. Also significant for the Lukan account is the textually undisputed inclusion of καινὴ (only Marcion drops this reading).⁸

The Pauline account is essentially the same as the Lukan with two exceptions, the inclusion of ἔστιν and the use of ἐμῶ instead of μου (1 Cor. 11:25).⁹ For the latter of these, there is some strong textual evidence to bring Paul's account into agreement with Luke. The third century Chester Beatty papyrus P⁴⁶, plus the fifth century manuscripts

⁷Ibid., pp. 436, xvii.

⁸Ibid., p. 436.

⁹Novum Testamentum Graece, critical apparatus by Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, and Kurt Aland (Twenty-fifth edition; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1963), p. 445.

Alexandrinus and Ephraemi,¹⁰ all give some credance to this variant. The force of the evidence, however, still favors the Nestle text.

From this preceeding examination of the Greek texts, it becomes evident that there are essentially two different forms of the cup sayings. Matthew and Mark concur on "my blood of the covenant," while Luke and Paul concur on "the new testament in my blood." Previously the possibility of being able to construct the Markan reading into Aramaic was seriously questioned. Emerton later discovered evidence from the Targum to the Psalter in which this type of expression is used. If these dialects permitted the use of a genitive after a noun with pronominal suffix, Emerton concludes we "must not consider it impossible in the Aramaic of Christ's day."¹¹

Some have attempted to do away with the difficulty of explaining two differing accounts by making them mean the same thing. Boismard, for example, makes the Markan account signify "my blood which ratifies the alliance" and the Pauline "The new alliance ratified (concluded) in my blood." "In" here is used in a Semitic causal sense, "by means of."¹² There are many scholars who will not concede this explanation. Behm

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 14-16.

¹¹J.A. Emerton, "Mark XIV.24 and the Targum to the Psalter," Journal of Theological Studies, 15 (1964), pp. 58-59.

¹²M.E. Boismard, "The Eucharist According to Saint Paul," The Eucharist in the New Testament, a Symposium (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1964), p. 128.

shows that the Markan version makes the direct description of the wine as the blood of the covenant. Paul, on the other hand, describes the contents of the cup as the new covenant in virtue of his blood. It is this latter account which states, in effect, that the death of Jesus establishes the new covenant.¹³

Another significant difference is the presence or absence of *καινή*. Cooke makes this directly dependent on the theological framework of the writer. The unique and definitive nature of the Supper is indicated by the word "new." Luke and Paul wish to emphasize the superiority of this covenant over the Mosaic, so it is pictured in such contrasting terms as to almost indicate a replacement. This is not new in the absolute sense, for *καινή* is a link with the whole Old Testament teaching regarding the establishment of another covenant, perhaps the new covenant of Jeremiah 31 specifically.¹⁴ New implies contrast rather than something categorically different, for an organic unity between the Supper and Sinai continues to exist. Even though the chosen people of God repeatedly broke the Sinaitic covenant, God did not. God carried

¹³Johannes Behm, "*διαθήκη*," Theological Dictionary of the Bible, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), II, 133.

¹⁴Bernard Cooke, "Synoptic Presentation of the Eucharist as Covenant Sacrifice," Theological Studies, 21 (1960), p. 35.

it out through renewal of His people and here specifically in the Messianic action. This is what the words of the Last Supper declare.¹⁵ The absence of "new" in Matthew-Mark does not effect the Pauline usage; absence highlights the continuity between old and new implicit in their theology.¹⁶

¹⁵Edward F. Siegman, "The Blood of the Covenant," American Ecclesiastical Review, 136 (1957), p. 168.

¹⁶Cooke, p. 34.

CHAPTER III

THE DOUBLE ORIGIN OF THE EUCHARIST

The delineation of differences on the basis of *ἡδύνη*¹ was only a primitive preview of the argumentation arising over these traditions. Further examination revealed two fundamental elements within the Eucharistic celebration which derive from the two forms which the accounts take; a memorial of the sacrificial death of Christ and an eschatological joy initiated by the resurrection. This double strand is also basic to the supper tradition itself and not only to the practice of the early church.¹

This eschatological joy in the Eucharistic celebration was rooted in two basic ideas. First, the Last Supper was seen as a continuation of the chain of meals the disciples experienced with their Lord. These meals were indicative of a development toward more complete, firmer fellowship.² The early Christian's understanding of the Supper was not very complex. Christ is not yet regarded as descending into the elements, but His coming, His presence, is non the less real. His presence is not associated particularly with the elements involved, but within the entire context of the Supper, He

¹R.A. Fuller, "The Double Origin of the Eucharist," Biblical Research, 8 (1963), pp. 60-62, 64.

²Ragner Bring, "The Lord's Supper--its origin and significance," Augustana Quarterly, 19 (October 1940), p. 294.

comes to participate in the meal, not specifically to serve as the food. Therefore "the joy manifested by the early Christians had its source in the consciousness they had of eating with the Risen Christ."³ Secondly, this feeling of fellowship belonged within the context of Christ's concern for the Kingdom of God. Although this reign of God was a present reality, the Kingdom would not be fully realized until this Kingdom was openly revealed.⁴ The Last Supper was a farewell meal, but at the same time an anticipation of the Messianic banquet. Not until the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God would Jesus again eat the Passover and drink the fruit of the vine (Luke 22:16,18; Mark 14:25).⁵ The Supper was a "pledge of Christ's own 'parousia' and a guarantee to the disciples that they would stand in His Kingdom."⁶ The immediate background for this pledge of Messianic fellowship is the resurrection joy which was symbolized by the meals Christ ate with his disciples after that great event. "The

³Oscar Cullmann, "The Meaning of the Lord's Supper in Primitive Christianity," Essays on the Lord's Supper, translated by J. G. Davies (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958), pp. 15-16.

⁴Bring, p. 292.

⁵A. J. Higgins, The Lord's Supper in the New Testament (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), p. 11.

⁶G. H. C. Macgregor, Eucharistic Origins (London: James Clark & Company, 1928), p. 85.

Resurrection, so to speak, produces or releases the Eucharistic meals."⁷

The death memorial element developed very early under the passion symbolism, namely that which represented Christ as the "true Paschal Lamb." The implications of these symbols led the Supper to become a Christian "Haggada," a "showing" or "proclamation" of the Lord's death.⁸ No doubt those who had adopted the theology of Christ as the true Paschal Lamb were "confirmed by that dating which places the crucifixion when the lambs were being slain in the temple" (the Gospel of John). Furthermore, the view which considered the Eucharist as the Christian counterpart of the Jewish Passover would support the Last Supper as Passover celebration.⁹ This sacrificial emphasis has been traced to the Suffering Servant theology of Isaiah 53 (Macgregor),¹⁰ and, on the other hand, also to the sincere desire of Paul himself to keep this unique redemptive significance from being lost (Aulen).¹¹

⁷Gustaf Emmanuel Hildebrand Aulen, Eucharist and Sacrifice, translated by Eric H. Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 134.

⁸G. H. Box, "The Jewish Antecedents of the Eucharist," Journal of Theological Studies, 3 (1901-02), p. 365.

⁹F. C. Burkitt, "The Last Supper and the Paschal Meal," Journal of Theological Studies, 17 (1915-16), p. 296.

¹⁰Macgregor, p. 101.

¹¹Aulen, p. 135.

However, the evidence is not sufficient to suppose that Paul intended to replace the Eucharistic ideas of early Christianity with others, but merely to bring these ideas to greater completion by making the connection with the Last Supper and the Crucifixion. The emphasis on the Crucifixion is the added dimension of Paul for the Lord's Supper. Cullmann recognizes both "a historical and an internal link between the two, for the recalling of the Eucharist is expressly tied to the night in which he was betrayed."¹² "For I received of the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread..." (1 Cor. 11:25). We must not view this emphasis as evidence of the antagonism between Paul and the early church. This would only be true if that Supper would stand in exclusive relation to the Risen Lord or the Crucified Lord. This is one and the same Lord and Paul brings death and resurrection into an inseparable unity--"so indeed both elements remained a part of the Eucharistic celebration."¹³

The preceding section has shown two strands of Eucharistic celebration which arise from the double nature of its origin. Which of these elements was emphasized by a particular account and whether the events pictured point to the Passover depends largely on the theological interpretation of the tradition or

¹²Cullmann, p. 17.

¹³Aulen, p. 135.

the writer.¹⁴ The developement and interaction of these strands can be explained and understood in one of three possible ways.

One possible approach is to regard the eschatological motif as the original tradition and the sacrificial arising from the later interpretation of the church tradition. Macgregor defines the two constituent elements of the original Supper as the cup with eschatological saying and the distribution of bread with comment. This eschatological cup was gradually pushed out of the tradition by the covenant cup, because the cup saying was assimilated to the comment spoken over the bread. Macgregor does not consider the latter a part of the original tradition, but the result of the redemptive emphasis of the church. Luke gives evidence of this line of developement in the remnants of eschatological saying he preserves.¹⁵ Or as Aulen states, "It is clear that the resurrection constitutes the immediate background of Eucharistic meals in the primitive church."¹⁶ This does not mean that the sacrificial element is now devoid of all value. It is evident that this also has very primitive origins in the tradition and as such must be considered, at least in part, as springing from basic ideas in the Supper. As Fuller

¹⁴Burkitt, p. 297.

¹⁵Macgregor, pp. 72-74.

¹⁶Aulen, p. 134.

maintains,

The very earliest celebration was determined by the eschatological saying and the interpretive words were introduced into the cult meal tradition already in the Palestinian church before Antioch.¹⁷

Higgins would not agree with Fuller, however, for he denies that "of the covenant" was in any sense a part of the saying of Christ. This phrase grew out of Paul's covenant theology and his representation of the Lord's Supper as the inauguration of a new covenant ratified in the blood of Christ.¹⁸

Another approach considers the sacrificial, covenant emphasis part of the original intent and tradition. Hook views the covenant idea so fundamental to the teaching of Christ that it would substantiate the emphasis placed by Paul. Covenant idea is correlative to the Kingdom of God idea and since this was in line with the theological import of Paul's message became a part of Paul's account.¹⁹ F. J. Leenhardt, as quoted by Higgins, calls 1 Cor. 11 "Pre-pauline," that is, representing Christ's concern that participation in the Kingdom is prepared by covenant.²⁰ The originality of the Pauline

¹⁷Fuller, p. 64.

¹⁸A. J. Higgins, The Lord's Supper in the New Testament (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), p. 33.

¹⁹Norman Hook, The Eucharist in the New Testament (London: Epworth Press, 1964), pp. 53-55.

²⁰Higgins, p. 32.

tradition is also supported by Behm²¹ and Brilioth²² to make this second approach a real option.

Already implicit in the second approach is the moderate approach which does not attempt to validate one tradition over the other, but explicitly treats both as legitimate concurrently developing themes. The question is then not either-or but both-and. Benoit views both as the result of liturgical traditions,²³ while Schweizer recognizes both the interpretive sacrificial words and the eschatological emphasis originating in Jesus, although "certainty is not possible." The "shed for many" does not find its origin in the Hellenistic memorial meals, but is of Palestinian origins. He defines three operative motives: (a) Preview of the Messianic banquet; (b) The covenant; (c) The meaning of Christ's death "for many." Therefore the developed Eucharist looked to the past (death "for many"), to the present (the covenant), and to the future (eschatological saying, Messianic banquet).

²¹Johannes Behm, "διδάχνη," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 133.

²²Yngve Torgny Brilioth, Eucharistic Faith and Practice, translated by A. G. Herbert (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), p. 8.

²³P. Benoit, "The Accounts of the Institution and what they imply," The Eucharist in the New Testament, a Symposium (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1964), pp. 72-73.

Even so it is difficult to assume that Paul would have structured his account as he did if he found anywhere evidence of The Eucharist with reference only to the eschatological fulfillment. Paul stresses the fact that he was relating what he had received from the Lord, so it is clear that Paul himself "knew of no different or earlier tradition."²⁴ Marxsen accepts the fact of change and transformation within the traditions but still traces these traditions to Jesus Himself. "Der Ursprung des Abendmahls . . . liegt bei Jesus selbst."²⁵

²⁴Eduard Schweizer, "Das Herrnmahl im Neuen Testament," Theologische Literaturzeitung, 79 (1954), pp. 577-592.

²⁵Willi Marxsen, "Der Ursprung des Abendmahls," Evangelische Theologie, 12 (1952-53), pp. 301-303.

CHAPTER IV

THE PASSOVER AS COVENANT

"The Passover was the most deeply cherished and widely popular of all the sacrifices." This celebration not only expressed the close relationship between God and His people, but also was powerful force in establishing that fellowship.¹ This fellowship was grounded in the deliverance effected by God and was the instrument this nation becomes His people. In the light of this mighty divine action the Passover takes on new meaning. The Passover is probably much older in origin than the time of Moses, but the unique significance is not. From this time on it recalls that deliverance and the covenant relationship which comes through it.²

The Passover is a memorial not of sacrifice but of that deliverance. The Egyptian Passover was designed to protect the Israelite households. The purpose of the Passover celebration, however, was not just to recall the memory, but "aspired to associate the feasters to the realities which it signified."³ Each year the event was to become a present reality again for all the worshippers. The Mishnah states that a man "must

¹Norman Hook, The Eucharist in the New Testament (London: Epworth Press, 1964), p. 36.

²Harold Henry Rowley, The Rediscovery of the Old Testament (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1958), p. 300.

³Hook, p. 44.

so regard himself as if he came forth out of Egypt." The event of old does not remain in the past, but accomplishes today the same function for those who enjoy its benefits. All were saved in that deliverance and brought into the fellowship resulting from that deliverance. The Paschal ritual was the means of keeping the awareness of this fact alive in the hearts and lives of the people.⁴ This perpetual didactic character and function of the Paschal celebration is indicated by the question which the children ask about the Supper and the answer which would follow.⁵

You shall observe this rite as an ordinance for you and for your sons for ever. And when you come to the land which the Lord will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. And when your children say to you, "What do you mean by this service?" you shall say, "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he slew the Egyptians but spared our houses." And the people bowed their heads and worshipped. (Exod. 12:24-27).

The old deliverance was followed by the Covenant of Sinai, when Israel pledged herself to God in gratitude for the deliverance wrought.⁶ The Sinai covenant created the people of

⁴F. J. Leenhardt, "This is My Body," Essays on the Lord's Supper, translated by J. G. Davies (London: Epworth Press, 1958), p. 40.

⁵J. C. Rylaarsdam, "Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George A. Buttrick, et. al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), III, 667.

⁶Rowley, p. 302.

God whose choice had already begun in the Exodus. The Pasch celebration became "the covenant sealing feast" and signified the sense of brotherhood which was so essential to that covenant. Those who partook of this feast were pledged and sealed the benefits of Exodus and covenant.⁷ The Pasch both commemorated and renewed the Sinai covenant and also served a "role of orientating history in function of a controlling attitude of will." The continuing celebration wishes to make this theology of history a part of each generation.⁸ At the inauguration of the Sinai Pact Moses and Seventy elders ascended Mt. Sinai; they saw God, ate and drank with Him. This is the theology of a covenant meal: "God gives to the envoys the fellowship of his table and this is the pledge of the covenant."⁹ The Narrative wishes to describe the intimacy of the covenant people with Jahweh.¹⁰

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank. (Exodus 24:9-11).

⁷Hook, pp. 40-41.

⁸Bernard Cooke, "Synoptic Presentation of the Eucharist as Covenant Sacrifice," Theological Studies, 21 (1960), p. 35.

⁹Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, translated by Norman Perrin (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1966), p. 235.

¹⁰Eduard F. Siegman, "The Blood of the Covenant," American Ecclesiastical Review, 136 (1957), p. 168.

The Pasch itself was viewed as more than just a celebration of past events. The Pasch also expressed a hope for the eschatological liberation of Israel, and at Christ's time this was the primary understanding. The Kingdom was to fulfill everything to which the Pasch had pointed.¹¹ The Qumran documents have shown that this covenant idea was very much alive at the beginning of the Christian Era.¹²

¹¹J. Delorme, "The Last Supper and the Pasch in the New Testament," The Eucharist in the New Testament, a Symposium (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1964), p. 40.

¹²A.R.C. Leaney, "What was the Lord's Supper," Theology, 70 (1967), p. 57.

CHAPTER V

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF BLOOD

The Passover covenant remembrance is closely tied to the important role which blood plays in that conception. Although it would not be completely accurate to separate the sacrifice from the use of sacrificial blood, the climax of animal sacrifice was not the slaughtering, but the disposal of the blood. The reason for this is the essential place blood held in the life of the animal sacrificed.¹ Similarly Taylor writes,

. . . the destruction of the victim is not the primary intention. The victim is slain in order that its life, in the form of blood, may be released, and its flesh burnt in order that it may be transformed or etherealized; and in both cases the aim is to make it possible for life to be presented as an offering to the Deity. More and more students of comparative religion, and of the Old Testament worship in particular, are insisting that the bestowal of life is the fundamental idea in sacrificial worship.²

There existed a very close conceptual relationship, almost an identity, between the blood and life. The life is in the blood, that is, the blood carries that force which makes an animal alive. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood." (Lev. 17:11). For this reason the injunction was given to avoid

¹L. Dewar, "The Biblical Use of the term 'Blood,'" Journal of Theological Studies, 4 (1953), pp. 206-207.

²Vincent Taylor, Jesus and His Sacrifice (London: MacMillan and Company, Limited, 1951), pp. 54-55.

the eating of blood. "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood" (Gen. 9:4). The blood for all practical purposes is identical with the soul (שׁוּפְרָא).³ To shed blood is to destroy the bearer of life and therefore life itself.⁴ The horror of death is even transferred to the horror of spilled blood; Abel's blood cries from the ground (Gen. 4:10), Judas' betrayal of innocent blood (Matt. 27:4), and Pilate's claim of innocence (Matt. 27:24) all show this.⁵

The Jews knew of a related distinction between the material and the immaterial. "The Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are flesh, and not Spirit" (Isaiah 31:3). However, this was not understood as an absolute dichotomy. The material was thought of as "impregnated and charged" with forces beyond this material realm. A clean person, upon contact with something unclean, also became unclean and could transfer this uncleanness to others. For instance, touching the body of an animal dead of natural causes made unclean, "he who touches its carcass shall be unclean until the evening" (Lev. 14:39). The priests take off the robes they wore into

³Bernard Cooke, "Synoptic Presentation of the Eucharist as Covenant Sacrifice," Theological Studies, 21 (1960), p. 27.

⁴Johannes Behm, "שׁוּפְרָא," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), I, 173.

⁵Paul G. Bretscher, "The Covenant of Blood," Concordia Theological Monthly, 25 (January-March 1954), pp. 7-9.

the holy places of the temple "lest they communicate holiness to the people with their garments" (Ezek. 44:19). Very clearly "the material aspect of man's experience can clearly be the medium for the transmission of those immaterial potencies of which he is aware in his day-to-day existence."⁶

Much ceremonial use is made of blood, usually with the idea of purification or consecration to the Lord. Thus on the day of Atonement blood is smeared on the horns of the great altar to atone for it (Lev. 16:18). This ritual blood was also used to purify the holy place and the tent of meeting before the sacrifice (Lev. 16:16). The cleansing of lepers included the application of blood on the ear, thumb and toe;

The priest shall take some of the blood of the guilt offering and the priest shall put it on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, and on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot (Lev. 14:14).

The consecration of Aaron and his sons for the priesthood was accomplished through similar anointing of the ear, thumb and toe (Lev. 8:23,24). Both men and inanimate objects were purified and consecrated through the anointing of blood.⁷

✓ No covenant was really complete without some outward way of declaring its bond. With the covenant there is always

⁶S. B. Frost, "Towards a Biblical Doctrine of Holy Communion," Canadian Journal of Theology, 7 (January 1961), pp. 20-22.

⁷Bretscher, pp. 11-15.

a seal, an external sign and guarantee, in which the covenant is offered. Most often this seal is sacrificial blood.⁸ In the Sinai Covenant ratification we must distinguish between that which is sprinkled on the altar and that sprinkled on the people.

And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. 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." And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words." (Exod. 24:6-8).

The first is symbolic of the people's obedience, their offering to God. The latter is dedicated blood which Jahweh has accepted. Sprinkling upon the people signifies the people now share in the blessings and powers which it represents.⁹ Others have extended this symbolism even further. The covenant which gave birth to the people of God is ratified by the ceremony of shedding blood to portray that Jahweh and his people are "blood relatives."¹⁰ This idea was easily associated with the covenant. Any group which had a common spirit or intention, like a family, was thought of as having a common soul, and, in a certain way, a common blood. Hence the

⁸Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁹Taylor, p. 137.

¹⁰Edward F. Siegman, "The Blood of the Covenant," American Ecclesiastical Review, 136 (1957), p. 168.

constitution of a brotherhood through a covenant was not only symbolized, but actually effected, through some rite of sharing blood, such as that of the Sinai covenant.¹¹

The element in the Pasch which later represented this sharing of blood was the wine. The drinking of wine was a prescribed part of the ritual of Passover and other great festivals. In fact, during the course of the meal four cups of wine were drunk. This was not the usual table beverage, for even the main meal of the day was served with water. In the Jewish tradition itself, Rabbi Judah lays down the requirement "red" wine must be used at the Passover meal. Rabbi Jeremiah calls this a "mishwah," a binding prescription.¹² This could easily be adapted symbolically for blood. In the Old Testament wine is called the blood (דֶּבַר) of the grape.¹³ In the Haggada Exod. 24:8 and Ezek. 16:6 were used to interpret the wine of the Passover as blood.

And Moses took the blood and threw it upon the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words. (Exod. 24:8).

And when I passed by you, and saw you weltering in your blood, I said to you in your blood, "Live."
(Ezek. 16:6).

¹¹Cooke, p. 27.

¹²Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, translated by Norman Perrin (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1966), pp. 50-53.

¹³A. J. Higgins, The Lord's Supper in the New Testament (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), p. 52.

Just how this interpretation was made Leaney has not specifically pointed out.¹⁴

Blood retained much of this significance even into the New Testament, and as such carried implications for both life and death. According to Cooke, Jesus' use of the term must be taken in the concrete sense referring to "his totality as a living being." Special emphasis is here placed on the living force within him. He shares his soul, his Spirit, to establish brotherhood upon community of intention--doing the will of the Father.¹⁵ Following his Father's will would lead him to death. This is where "blood" receives its greatest theological significance. The interest here is the violent action which takes it, not just the material blood of Christ. It becomes another and ever more graphic phrase for the soteriological meaning of his death.¹⁶ The early church's representation of this blood of Christ as sacrificial blood is the metaphorical garment clothing the thought of self-offering or obedience to God which Christ demonstrated in the crucifixion.¹⁶ "And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8). This is possibly alluded to already by the word, "cup." "Cup"

¹⁴A. R. C. Leaney, "What was the Lord's Supper," Theology, 70 (1967), p. 57.

¹⁵Cooke, p. 27.

¹⁶Behm, pp. 174-175.

was an accepted figure of speech for "suffering," and so it is not strange that Jesus said what he did. The covenant was initiated by the sharing of the "cup," but its effectiveness depends on Christ's drinking of that cup, his suffering and death.¹⁷

¹⁷Cooke, p. 39.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUPPER AS COVENANT

The originality of the covenant cup saying has been the object of much controversy as Chapter III already indicated.¹ Some scholars, such as Higgins,² trace this element to the covenant theology of Paul, and often an appeal is made to the fact that Paul alludes to the "mana incident" of the desert rather than the Passover.³ On the other hand, F. J. Leenhardt and others treat this as a true "pre-pauline" element and part of the inherited tradition. There are a number of factors which support the Supper as Covenant: (a) This covenant theology is an essential part of the entire New Testament, not just Paul; (b) Participation in the Lord's Supper establishes relationship; (c) The Supper was the meal of the New Israel; (d) The Supper brings the New Divine order to bear upon this New Israel; (e) The Supper symbolically creates this fellowship.

Even though *δικαθῆκη* is used infrequently in the Synoptics, yet the "mentality of the covenant is found throughout," states

¹Supra, pp. 10-17.

²A. J. Higgins, The Lord's Supper in the New Testament (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), p. 33.

³G. H. C. Macgregor, Eucharistic Origins (London: James Clark & Company, 1928), pp. 48-49.

⁴Higgins, p. 32.

Cooke.⁵ Since about half of the thirty-three occurrences of *διαθήκη* are either quotations for or allusions to Old Testament passages, the decision whether covenant theology derives from Judaism or the Christian fellowship is perhaps more difficult. Yet the little evidence we have is sufficient to conclude that the early Christian community did find itself bound together by covenant. This covenant involved a "free, creative reinterpretation of the old traditions." Significantly enough, Mendenhall sees the primary source for this conclusion in the Lord's Supper. In every account blood is expressly related to covenant, and this naturally must recall the blood of the old covenant in Exod. 24. "In the light of such covenant forms, there seems to be no reason to doubt that this act was intended as the formal rite which established a covenant relationship."⁶ This view is reinforced by the words *διδόμενον* and *εκχυννόμενον* used by the Synoptists (Luke 22:19,20; Mark 14:24; Matt. 26:28). These words are "intimately bound up with the ideas of covenant and sacrifice." The *διδόμενον* textually applies to Jesus as a vicarious sacrifice *ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν* (Luke 22:19). The *εκχυννόμενον* even more clearly has sacrificial and covenant connotations.

⁵Bernard Cooke, "Synoptic Presentation of the Eucharist as Covenant Sacrifice," Theological Studies, 21 (1960), p. 30.

⁶G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George A. Buttrick, et. al. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 722.

This recalls the Jewish sacrificial blood rites, especially in the sin offerings. These terms indicate a dual function; Christ is both the divine initiator of divine covenant and the vicarious victim and priestly mediator before the Father.⁷

The Lord's Supper very definitely carries out the covenant function of creating fellowship. The early Christian's joy at the Supper was primarily due to the conviction that he was actually eating with his Risen Lord.⁸ The Lord's Supper is a covenant meal in the first sense then, for this is Christ sharing Life with men. "Christ is the primary recipient of the new covenant," so the meal is not only remembrance but also a bestowing of that relationship he already enjoys with His Father. Christ who symbolizes this new relationship with God is present with His people, and the action which made this possible is shared.⁹ The death of Jesus is that action which brings covenant to the Messianic community and which is the action implicit in the cup saying.¹⁰

Although this paper cannot hope to present a comprehensive picture of the New Israel theology, mention must be made because it is so often referred to in this context. Paul himself may not have made the direct substitution of the

⁷Cooke, pp. 28-29.

⁸Supra, p. 11.

⁹Cooke, pp. 34-37.

¹⁰Cullmann, p. 18.

Eucharist for the Passover,

yet we believe that Paschal ideas dominate that thought of Christianity as a new Exodus, with its new torah, was constantly in Paul's mind and it is fully consonant with this that the Last Supper should be regarded by him as the inauguration of the new covenant.¹¹

Shepherd recognizes the fact that the theological meaning of the Lord's Supper as it has come down to us has been colored by the Christology of the early Church. This meaning, however, must have its roots in the intention of Jesus himself.

For Jesus, the Supper was the sign of the New Covenant, sealed in his death and resurrection, that constitutes the New Israel of God as the heir of the impending kingdom The Supper is the means whereby those who belong to Jesus join with him in that entire, sacrificial self-offering to the Father's will that alone is the way of eternal life.¹²

This intention becomes clearer in the realization the twelve disciples served as a "living symbol of the New Israel gathered around the Messias." This meal which Jesus ate with his disciples has eschatological Messianic implications. The term "Messianic" is understood here in a special sense which is largely determined by the Suffering Servant picture of Isaiah 53.¹³

¹¹W. D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London: SPCK, 1962), p. 250.

¹²M. H. Shepherd, Jr., "Lord's Supper," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George A. Buttrick, et. al. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), III, 161.

¹³J. Delorme, "The Last Supper and the Pasch in the New Testament," The Eucharist in the New Testament, a Symposium (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1964), pp. 66-67.

This covenant is also understood as a new divine order Christ brings to the people of God. Behm concludes the "blood of Christ is a guarantee of the actualization of the new divine order." Accordingly this is carried to his translation of 1 Cor. 11:25, "This cup is the new divine order in virtue of my blood." This blood serves a corresponding function to the blood of Sinai, to seal and set in motion the divine order.¹⁴ Just as the Sinai covenant followed the Exodus deliverance and Israel pledged herself to Jahweh, so the Lord's Supper was to be an "ever-renewed covenant in which the redeemed should pledge themselves in loyalty and gratitude" for this new deliverance.¹⁵ Cooke links this covenant, or new divine order, to the mission of the Suffering Servant, thereby making fraternal love a part of that order. This is supported by Luke's linking the Supper with the discourse on service (Luke 22:24-30). To join with Christ in this mission is to become a part of that Kingdom's new divine order.¹⁶

Frost makes the interesting comparison of the Lord's Supper with the Old Testament acted oracle. These thought modes which he defines, such as covenant, acted oracle, history, myth

¹⁴Johannes Behm, "αἷμα," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel, translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 174.

¹⁵Harold Henry Rowley, The Rediscovery of the Old Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), p. 302.

¹⁶Cooke, p. 37.

and ritual, are the means by which God's revelation comes to his people. The acted oracle both symbolizes and initiates a divine action; "The prophetic word was the divine word, and the utterance of it set in motion on the stage of human event the divine activity." The blood at Sinai is such an acted oracle. The blood splashed on the altar and on the people expresses and establishes the unity of God and his people. Elements within the Lord's Supper reflect the acted oracle; among others include the following: (a) The breaking of bread is an oracle of the destruction of his body; (b) The sharing of wine is the sharing of his blood to be shed and thus establishing a close bond of fellowship. The material "blood" is the means for immaterial realities, the bestowal of this covenant relationship. Matt., Mark, and Paul agree in associating the cup with the covenant.¹⁸

¹⁸S. B. Frost, "Towards a Biblical Doctrine of Holy Communion," Canadian Journal of Theology, 7 (January 1961), pp. 20-27.

CHAPTER VII

THE LORD'S SUPPER AS PASSOVER

Skene makes the Passover understanding of the Lord's Supper completely dependent on whether that Supper actually took place on the Passover evening or not.¹ Taylor would consider this an overexaggeration of the problem.

These questions are obviously of great interest and importance, but their significance can be exaggerated. Whether the Supper was the Passover Meal or not, Paschal ideas and associations must have occupied the mind of Jesus on this occasion; and this is the important fact to remember in studying both the narrative and the sayings.²

Of one thing we can be certain, Paschal ideas certainly were present in the whole context of the Supper and were integrally related to the significance of Jesus' words of comment on the action.

There is little doubt that Jesus' last meal took place in the atmosphere of the paschal feast and that, having desired this coincidence, the Master made use of it to institute his new rite. To understand the true significance we must put Jesus' words back into the setting of Jewish Pasch.³

This setting became an integral part of that Supper in the tradition of the early church. Even Macgregor who strongly

¹William F. Skene, The Lord's Supper and the Passover Ritual (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1891), p. 162.

²Vincent Taylor, Jesus and His Sacrifice (London: MacMillan and Co., Limited, 1951), p. 116.

³P. Benoit, "The Accounts of the Institution and what they imply," The Eucharist in the New Testament, a Symposium (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1964) pp. 73-74.

opposes the traditional view and favors the "Kiddush" interpretation is forced to admit that

. . . Luke himself, regarding the Supper as a Passover meal, may have understood the words as a declaration that the present meal is the last earthly Passover and a prefiguration of the Messianic banquet to come.⁴

Moreover, the Passover setting enhances the meaning of the words of institution themselves.

The meaning of the dominical words derives naturally from the Passover background. Through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit the bread becomes the instrumental sign of Christ's full, personal and sacrificial presence. . . . The cup-saying preserves the eschatological note of the Passover, and pledges the benefits of the new covenant wrought by the death of Jesus.⁵

In connection with this, it is also important to remember that the accounts as we now have them probably arose from a more primitive Aramaic form. The words were gathered into well-worn formulas which did not attempt to describe the whole event, but merely to capture and preserve its basic essentials.⁶

Even though this study emphasizes the important role of covenant, recognition must be given to the number of additional influences as well. Mendenhall, who was quoted

⁴G. H. C. Macgregor, Eucharistic Origins (London: James Clark & Company, 1928), p. 60.

⁵Norman Hook, The Eucharist in the New Testament (London: Epworth Press, 1966), pp. 104-105.

⁶J. Delorme, "The Last Supper and the Pasch in the New Testament," The Eucharist in the New Testament, a Symposium (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1964), pp. 29-30.

earlier in his support of covenant theology in the Supper,⁷ concludes the evidence points to the fact

. . . that the Eucharist was regarded as the formal act which established a lasting relationship between the community and Christ, in analogy to the Mosaic covenant, but combining with it a number of motifs from Old Testament sources, including the sacrificial animal, the Suffering Servant, and the new covenant of Jeremiah.⁸

Therefore, this study makes the following conclusions concerning the "covenant" and "blood" concepts: (a) The Passover was intimately connected with Israel's conception of herself as the people of God, and consequently, was united conceptually with covenant; (b) Blood plays an important role as the seal and guarantee of that covenant; (c) There is a complex of ideas surrounding and being incorporated into the Lord's Supper; (d) Covenant and blood concepts indicate that a Paschal understanding is appropriate for the entire context of the Lord's Supper; (e) To accept a Passover background to the Lord's Supper would not do injustice to either Passover-covenant or the Biblical presentation of that Supper. This study properly cannot come to any absolute conclusion on the Passover background question; it can only open the possibility. To say more would go beyond the force of the evidence just presented. Areas of further study which would be helpful in

⁷Supra, p. 30.

⁸G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George A. Buttrick, et. al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 722.

clarifying the present issue would include: (a) The "New Covenant" theology of Jeremiah and its possible relation to the "New Covenant" in the Lord's Supper; (b) The typology of Christ and the New Moses; (c) The Lord's Supper as "remembrance."

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