



JESUS ONE CHURCH SYMBOL: EUCHARIST



UNDERSTANDING

(for your preparation as a leader)

Page 88 - 95

DISCUSSION

(to use with your group)

Page 96 - 103

Goal: That all participants would understand how Jesus Christ fulfills all the covenants and that they reaffirm their decision to live in covenantal relationship with Jesus, particularly in the Eucharist.

Also, complete the overall goals for the study: 1) That all participants know all six covenants and 2) that all participants know their place in God's plan.

Note to the Leader: This chapter may take more than one week to complete. Please plan and prepare accordingly.



UNDERSTANDING

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS PASSAGE?

Read Luke 22:14–20; 22:39–46; 23:33–49

CONTEXT

In the Context of the Story of Salvation: The Coming Messiah

After David, the Kingdom of Israel was torn in two by civil war. The Northern Kingdom consisted of the ten tribes of Israel; the Southern Kingdom held the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Both kingdoms would eventually be conquered and taken into exile: the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians and the Southern Kingdom by the Babylonians. The ten northern tribes would never return to their homeland: They assimilated into Assyria and are known as the ten lost tribes of Israel. The Southern Kingdom, commonly known as the Jews, would eventually return from exile — but they would remain under the authority of the Babylonians, then the Persians, then the Greeks and finally the Romans.

Through it all, prophet after prophet reminds the people that God has not abandoned them. An anointed one — a messiah king — would come to restore the covenant and set them free.

Then, in the fullness of time, God sends His own beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to establish one final covenant to bring the whole world back into covenantal relationship with God.

In the Context of Our Story Today: The Passion

Luke 22:14–20; 22:39–46; 23:33–49

During Jesus' life and ministry, we see how He fulfills the promises of the Old Testament and expands God's covenant to all nations. Take some time to read the above passages from Luke's Gospel. You'll read about Jesus' establishment of a new covenant with the Eucharist during the Passover. You'll be by Jesus' side during the agony in the garden as you contemplate the suffering set before Him. You'll walk with Him as He journeys toward His death on the cross.

REVIEW

Before we explore the ways Jesus fulfills the Old Testament covenants, this is a good opportunity to test your memory of the major covenants in the story of salvation. Fill in the chart below (we've already filled in the information about the sixth covenant as an example).

	1 ST COVENANT	2 ND COVENANT	3 RD COVENANT	4 TH COVENANT	5 TH COVENANT	6 TH COVENANT
PERSON:						JESUS
FORM:						ONE CHURCH
SYMBOL: (BONUS)						

CLIMAX: COVENANTS FULFILLED

After the resurrection, Jesus meets two people along the road to Emmaus. They are discussing all they've seen over the last few days and how they "had hoped that He [Jesus] was the one to redeem Israel" (Lk 24:21). Jesus then spends the rest of their journey walking with them and explaining to them how the Christ had to suffer and die in order to fulfill the Scriptures. Let's look back at each of the five covenants in the Old Testament to understand how Jesus does this.

Adam: The first covenant with Adam is broken when he falls into the devil's temptation in the garden. Jesus, too, is tempted by the devil in a garden — but where Adam is unfaithful, Jesus shows that He is the faithful Son, obedient unto death (Lk 22:39 – 46; CCC 612). Jesus takes on Adam's covenant curses of sweat, thorns and death (Gn 3:18 – 19) when He sweats blood in the Garden of Gethsemane, is crowned with thorns by the Roman soldiers and dies on the cross at Calvary.

Noah: Through Noah, God chooses to make His covenant with one who is faithful in the midst of a corrupted world. Noah's obedience gives rise to an ark, through which his household is spared. Like Noah, Jesus offers salvation to the human family through the waters of baptism, by which we pass through the waters of death and emerge in the newness of life with Christ: "God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through the water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also...It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pt 3:20 – 21; CCC 1219).

Abraham: Like Isaac, Jesus is the "beloved Son of the Father" — but while God stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac in atonement for sins, He does not stop His own Son from being sacrificed for the sins of the world (Lk 23:33 – 49). (See Chapter 4 of the study for a chart

of other similarities.) In Jesus, the third promise to Abraham, that of worldwide blessing, is finally fulfilled. He establishes the Catholic Church (which means “universal” or “worldwide”), which opens its arms to the whole world.

Moses: With Moses, God initiates His covenant through the Passover meal the night before they are freed from slavery. Jesus also establishes the new covenant at the Passover (Lk 22:14 – 20). He is the unblemished lamb of sacrifice: the Lamb of God. Just as with the Israelites, the Passover is not just a sacrifice but also a meal, wherein one had to eat the flesh of the lamb. So too with Jesus: He offers His flesh and blood to nourish our souls in the Eucharist. Through this sacrament, we renew our participation in the new and everlasting covenant. (See CCC 1362 – 1367.)

David: Finally, Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection reveal that He is the long-awaited Davidic king promised by the covenant who establishes His royal throne upon the cross. What was meant to be a mockery is the source of our salvation: They scourge Him and robe Him in purple, they crown Him with thorns and pretend to pay homage to Him as royalty, but His enthronement is a cross of wood (Lk 23:36). Finally, they hang the sign that unintentionally reveals His Davidic kingship: “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” It is the good thief, crucified next to Him, who proclaims his own belief in Jesus’ kingship: “Jesus, remember me when you come into Your kingdom” (Lk 23:36 – 43).

What looks like God’s greatest defeat is, in fact, the greatest victory. The cross is our final freedom from the bondage of sin and death. The debt we owed in neglecting the covenant is paid by the Son, who is faithful. In Jesus, we now have the opportunity to become adopted sons and daughters within the Father’s household.

APPLICATION: ENTERING THE COVENANT

As we have seen, all the covenants reach fulfillment in Jesus Christ. But the story of salvation doesn't end there. Each of us is called to enter into a covenantal relationship with Jesus, to receive the promises of God and promise our fidelity to Him.

The Eucharist is the sign of this new and everlasting covenant: "And he took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' And likewise the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood'" (Lk 22:19 – 20). In the Eucharist, we recommit ourselves to living in a deep, personal covenant with God.

As members of the Church, we are participants in the new covenant. God has given us everything: His only Son and the promise of our every happiness. We can live as sons and daughters, accepting God's amazing promises and entering into covenantal relationship with Him, or we can refuse. The story of salvation is not a thing of the past, but rather something we are living out right now. How will we respond?

When we receive Holy Communion, we hear the words, "Body of Christ." We then say, "Amen." The word "Amen" signifies affirmation or agreement. In other words, it is a promise. As you may remember from the introduction, a covenant is an exchange of persons, wherein those who were not family become family. A covenant is sealed with an oath. By saying, "Amen," we are renewing the covenant made at our baptism, promising once again to be faithful. The next time you go to Mass, take seriously the promise you are making and strive to give yourself to Jesus completely.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, we learned how Jesus Christ fulfills all the covenants of the Old Testament. We also learned how we are called to enter into covenantal relationship with Jesus Christ within the Catholic Church, the worldwide covenantal community. In the Eucharist, we renew our pledge to be faithful: Jesus gives Himself to us completely, and we promise to give ourselves back to Him completely. The Eucharist is also the sign and symbol of this new and everlasting covenant.

Note to the leader: If any of your Bible study members have not yet received a gospel presentation, this is a good opportunity to meet with them individually and, after the completion of the study, offer them the chance to make a decision about living in a faithful covenantal relationship with God, in Jesus Christ.

The Ultimate Relationship is a helpful tool when presenting the gospel. You may also use an appropriate passage of Scripture, such as the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11 – 32.

DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR YOUR BIBLE STUDY

Luke 22:14-20; 22:39-46; 23:33-49

Reminder to the leader of the goal of this chapter: That all participants would understand how Jesus Christ fulfills all the covenants and that they reaffirm their decision to live in covenantal relationship with Jesus, particularly in the Eucharist. Also, complete the overall goals for the study: 1) That all participants know all six covenants and 2) that all participants know their place in God's plan.

OPENER:

1. Have you ever had to wait for something really amazing?

(Share aloud with your group.)

Today, we are going to do things a little differently. First, we are going to take a minute to read a few passages about Jesus' passion and death. Second, we will review the covenants of the Old Testament. Third, we will see how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament covenants with his passion, death and resurrection. Then finally, we will talk about our place in God's covenant as His sons and daughters. There is quite a bit here, so we might not complete all of it this week.

CONTEXT: THE PASSION

Read Luke 22:14 – 20.

2. What stands out to you about what Jesus says and does in this passage?

Allow the group to discuss.

3. In this passage, how does Jesus set the stage for the establishment of the new covenant?

Answer: Within the context of the Passover meal, He tells them that His body and blood, about to be sacrificed, will be the source of the new covenant.

4. In the story of salvation, with each new covenant there is an increase in scope, from Adam and Eve and a single couple to David and an entire kingdom. In Jesus Christ, the covenant extends to the whole world. This is where we get the term “Catholic”: It means “universal” or “worldwide.” The Catholic Church is the worldwide covenantal community. Does this change the way you see the Church and its mission?

Allow the group to discuss.

Read Christ’s Passion account in Luke 22:39 – 46 and Luke 23:33 – 49.

5. Now that we have read about the Last Supper, passion and death of Jesus, we are going to explore the ways Jesus fulfills the Old Testament covenants. Before we can do this, let’s see if we can remember all of the covenants: the person God made it with, the recipients of the covenant, and the symbol for each one.

Note to the leader: Hand out the Covenant Worksheet to all of your participants and take some time to fill it out. If you did not make copies in advance, fill it out together.

CLIMAX: COVENANTS FULFILLED

6. Note to the leader: Go through each covenant one by one and ask your group how Jesus fulfills that covenant from what they have learned. If your group doesn't know how He fulfills that covenant or they don't tell you everything, you can refer to the information below.

Here is brief description of how Jesus fulfills each of the previous covenants:

Adam: The first covenant with Adam is broken when he falls into the devil's temptation in the garden. Jesus, too, is tempted by the devil in a garden — but where Adam is unfaithful, Jesus shows that He is the faithful Son, obedient unto death (Lk 22:39 – 46; CCC 612). Jesus takes on Adam's covenant curses of sweat, thorns and death (Gn 3:18 – 19) when He sweats blood in the Garden of Gethsemane, is crowned with thorns by the Roman soldiers and dies on the cross at Calvary.

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7. What stood out to you as you heard how Jesus fulfilled these covenants?

Allow the group to discuss.

APPLICATION: ENTERING THE COVENANT

8. As we have seen throughout this study, the invitation to God's covenant extends to everyone, including us. Have you ever thought of yourself as being in a covenantal relationship with God? What does that look like in your life?

Allow the group to discuss. It means that we have become beloved sons and daughters of God, members of His family, the Church, inheritors of His promises and all the blessings it entails. It also means that we ought to be faithful to that covenant.

9. As you may remember from the introduction, a covenant is an exchange of persons, sealed with an oath, wherein those who were not family become family. Jesus tells us that the Eucharist is the sign of the new covenant. When we receive Holy Communion, we hear the words, "Body of Christ." We then say, "Amen." The word "amen" signifies affirmation or promise. By saying "amen," we are renewing our covenant with our Lord, promising once again to be faithful. Does this understanding of the Eucharist as a covenantal sign change the way you think about Mass?

Allow the group to discuss.

10. What can we do to receive the Eucharist more faithfully?

Allow the group to discuss.

11. We are now at the end of our study. Compare your life now to where you were at the beginning of the study. Is there anything different about the way you think or live?

Allow the group to discuss.

SUMMARY

(Share aloud with your group.)

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THE STORY OF SALVATION

COVENANT WORKSHEET

Directions: See if you can name each of the covenants in order:

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PERSON:						JESUS
FORM:						ONE CHURCH
SYMBOL: (BONUS)						

