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"ABLE MINISTERS OF THE NEW COVENANT"

--[2 COR. 3:6](#)--

ST. PAUL says, "Our sufficiency is of God: who also hath made us able ministers (servants) of the new testament (New Covenant); not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." -
[-2 Cor. 3:5,6](#).

How could St. Paul and the other apostles be servants of a New Covenant, if no such New Covenant is yet in existence? A similar question might be raised respecting our Lord's statement that his memorial cup represented the blood of the New Testament, the New Covenant. The answer to these queries is: (1) There will be no blood of or from the New Covenant after it has been completed. The blood of the New Covenant is the blood prepared in advance of the Covenant, wherewith to seal it and make it obligatory--make it a Covenant. Our Lord's words respecting the cup were uttered before he died. The cup was symbolical and pointed forward to his own death. It was offered only to his followers, and not to the world. It was shed for them, and was the basis for their reconciliation to the Father; but it was to be in due time the blood of the New Covenant--the blood with which the New Covenant would be sprinkled, sealed, made efficacious. It was offered to the Church more than eighteen centuries before the time for the sealing of the New Covenant, to grant the Church, the overcomers, the privileges of participation with Christ in his sacrifice, not only in the sense of justification, but also in the sense of sanctification, or death with him.

This St. Paul most distinctly asserts in [1 Cor. 10:16](#), saying, "The cup of blessing, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" The drinking of that cup symbolizes our fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, our common union in [R4332 : page 51] all of the afflictions that came upon him--our death with him. By the time all of the members of the Body of Christ shall have taken part in this cup, the time will have come for the application of the merit of that communion cup, that united sacrifice of the Body, with and under the Head sealing the New (Law) Covenant with Israel, and, through Israel, for the benefit of mankind. When the disciples asked if they might not sit in his throne, the one on the right hand and the other on his left, he asked, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of?" ([Mark 10:38](#).) All who would sit in the throne must drink of the cup. All who will faithfully drink of the cup shall sit in the throne as members of the Body of Christ--"the Bride, the Lamb's Wife."

Take an illustration: Suppose the Declaration of Independence or some important document were about to be signed and sealed. The document itself might be printed and while in the process of being signed might be spoken of as the covenant, agreement or declaration, although it would not be such a document, even after being printed, until duly signed and sealed. Similarly the ink might by law be specified to be of a certain kind, and the person having charge of it might speak of it as the ink used, in the sense that it was the ink designed to be used in the signing of that Covenant, when the proper time should come. Similarly the person designated to be the mediator of that covenant might be so spoken of in advance of the signing. Similarly those of his suite, who would accompany him as assistants and who would need certain preparation before they would engage in this service, might be spoken of as the ministers or servants of that Covenant, even though it had not yet been signed and really made a covenant.

Thus the Apostle speaks of himself and others as able servants of the New Covenant. He does not mean that the New Covenant is in effect, in operation, but that in view of this New Covenant which God has promised shall ultimately be signed and sealed and made effective, he and others, the entire Royal Priesthood, are servants of that Covenant, ministering, or serving its interests and fully qualified of the Lord to do so. Of

ourselves we have no righteousness, no merit, that could be made effective for the sealing of that New Covenant with Israel. But, being justified by faith in the blood of Christ, we are made able or competent to serve the interests of the New Covenant. We serve it by laying down our lives as Joint-Heirs with our Redeemer for its sealing, and subsequently putting it into operation.

Our position is that of ambassadors for God, explaining to men his mercy and his provision of the New Covenant, through which all may be blessed and recovered if they will. So many as receive our message with joy and turn from sin to follow our Lord may be invited to become members of the Body of Christ, the Body of Messiah, the Body of the Mediator, the Body of the great Prophet, the Body of the great Priest, the Body of the great King of the Millennial Age. So, then, we are ministers of the New Covenant in that we are laying down our lives in its service, in its interest, although it is not yet a Covenant, but merely a promise. We are not only laying down our lives, but seeking out fellow-members [R4332 : page 52] of the Body of the Anointed One and assisting them in the laying down of their lives, under the assurance that these better sacrifices will soon be finished and their application be made by our glorious Head, and we with him in glory.

NOT OF THE LETTER, BUT OF THE SPIRIT

Even with our dealing with the world we can serve them to some extent, as servants of the New Covenant, for we can make known to them something of its terms, which some of them may grasp by faith and others may not. We can explain to them that this New Covenant which will go into effect evidences Divine mercy and sympathy for mankind. We cannot minister to them the letter of the New Covenant, because it has not been sealed. We can merely tell them of its spirit and endeavor to show to them the import, as respects the future, that justice and mercy will be tempered together for all. If the New Covenant were sealed now, the conditions are not such as would make it a blessing, for Satan is still the Prince of this world, sin abounds, and the Kingdom which is to bring deliverance has not yet been set up. The New Covenant is a Covenant of Law and of Works made possible --the same exactly as the Law Covenant, except with a better Mediator. If, therefore, the letter of the New (Law) Covenant could be enforced now, it would be a great disadvantage to all coming under it, and, as the Apostle suggests, it would be unto death. Hence it is much better for the world that it is not sealed and operative and that we who are connected with it as prospective members of its Mediator merely explain to the opposing world the spirit of that Covenant, which can profit and enlighten and encourage only those who are feeling after God, and who have no heart rebellion against him.

Thus a believer in the Lord Jesus, justified by faith in his blood, would have the right to look forward to the Millennial Age and the blessed privileges of the New Covenant then to be inaugurated. And to the extent that he would live in accord with the conditions of that New Covenant, he would be the better prepared for the blessed privileges which will then be brought to the world. But he could not come under the letter of the New Covenant if he chose, for it has not yet been sealed. He could merely by faith come under its spirit.

But the special work of these ministers or servants of the New (Law) Covenant is to make known to such as are interested in a looking forward to the New Covenant and its blessing by faith, that God has some better thing for us-- for the called and chosen and faithful, namely, that by consecration unto death, by drinking of his "cup," we may be counted in as members of the Body of the Mediator, under the higher, the Abrahamic Covenant. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's Seed, and heirs according to the promise."--[Gal. 3:29](#).

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