

Covenant Workshop



"And I [Jehovah] will establish My covenant [to secure our relationship] between Me and you [Abraham] and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. Genesis 17:7

Now the LORD saw, and it was displeasing in His sight that there was no justice [verdict]. And He saw that there was no man, and was astonished that there was no one to intercede [mediate, make a covenant, establish a new relationship]; then His own arm brought salvation to Him; and His righteousness upheld Him. Isaiah 59:15b-16 (NAS)

But now He [Jesus, God's own arm] has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. Heb 8:6

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Purpose of This Workshop

- **To better understand God's unconditional love for us.**
- **To understand how we are to relate to God and others.**
- **To understand God's grace in all its truth so that the gospel will bear fruit. (Col. 1:5-6)**

Culture plays an important role in our understanding of scripture. For someone raised in an orphanage, never experiencing parental and sibling love, the concept of family is a nebulous or foreign concept. To a person who experienced a true family, the term "family" conjures up memories and a knowledge of a certain kind of life which is impossible to describe to someone who has never experienced a family relationship.

We have a problem today in the western world. That problem is trying to understand messages written to people who understood the words that were being used when we have no clue, sometimes, to the true meaning of the words. Often, there is no word that properly describes the middle-eastern word used and the word that is used to translate has a different meaning than what was originally meant. So our understanding of what was said not only is lacking, sometimes it is completely false.

This workshop is an attempt to explain what was meant by the word "covenant" as used in the Old and New Testament. The word "testament" itself is a word used for covenant but it does not truly mean covenant. In order to know what was truly meant by a covenant, we must know what a covenant originally was. That is the intent of this workshop but please know that doing this is like trying to explain the concept of family to a person who never knew a family. At best our knowledge is going to be very incomplete but a little knowledge is better than no knowledge.

Why is the concept of covenant so important? First of all God HAS ALWAYS chosen to deal with His children with covenants. Perhaps that was because most of the people of Biblical times dealt with each other with covenants. Treaties were established, tribes were united, and peace was obtained by warring parties. The purpose of a covenant was "to provide a binding sense of commitment to an interpersonal relationship" ¹. Since God has always intended and desired to have an interpersonal relationship with his creation, mankind, it important to realize what kind of relationship he desires with us. Second, God has intended our relationship with him and our spouses be a covenant relationship. It is impossible to know what is expected of us as we relate to God and our spouse if we do not know what God intended this covenant to be.

The information in the material has been compiled from various sources and perhaps some inspiration from the Holy Spirit. It is not guaranteed to be correct in every respect. It may be described as an attempt of the half blind to lead the blind. Hopefully, we will not fall into too many pits. Examine it carefully and hold onto only that which is good. Do not throw away that which is true.

What is a Covenant?

- Covenants were well known and understood by the people of the Middle East during earlier times.
- God always chose to deal with his people by covenants because that is the way nations and tribes or clans or families or individuals dealt with each other.
- A covenant is not a contract. Contracts deal with exchange of goods and/or services and can be broken if the other party defaults.
- A covenant can best be described as something that secures a relationship. The purpose of a covenant is to establish and/or secure a relationship.

A covenant is a binding, unbreakable agreement which secures a relationship. This agreement, which has obligations, is between two parties and based on unconditional love and sealed by blood and sacred oath that creates a relationship in which each party is required to do specific things for the other party. The parties put themselves under divine retribution, should they fail, to the point of death, and their obligations and relationship to each other can only be ended by death. A covenant is a wholehearted giving of one's life and situation to another and wholeheartedly receiving another and his or her life.²

Examples of Covenants

1. God and Noah (Genesis 9)
2. God and Abraham (Genesis 15)
3. Abimelech and Abraham (Genesis 21)
4. Abimelech and Isaac (Genesis 26)
5. Jacob and Laban (Genesis 31)
6. Jacob's treacherous sons and Hamor's family (Genesis 34)
7. God and Moses (representing Israel) (Exodus 6, 19, 24)
8. Israel's elders with the Gibeonites (Joshua 9)
9. Jonathan and David (1 Samuel 18:1-4)
10. God the Father and Jesus (Jeremiah 31:31, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:25, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Hebrews 8,9,12)

Purpose of a Covenant

The purpose of a covenant is always to secure or establish a relationship.

The Greek word for "Covenant" is "Testament" so,

- The Old Testament of the Bible is the "Old Relationship with God".
- The New Testament of the Bible is the "New Relationship with God".

Since a covenant is a "secure, unbreakable, never ending (except by death) love relationship, we can state the following:

- The Old Testament is the story of the Old secure, unbreakable, never ending love relationship between God and Israel.
- The New Testament is the story of the New secure, unbreakable, never ending love relationship between God and Christians.

Reasons for a Covenant³

1. **Protection-** A weaker party would enter into a covenant with a stronger party in order to be protected. Examples: Gibeonites and Israel, God and Noah
2. **Trust-** Because a covenant relationship was so binding and considered unbreakable (unless the covenant breaker wanted to die), two parties that in ordinary circumstances could not trust each other, could establish a position of trust through a covenant. Examples: Jacob and Laban, Abraham and Abimelech,
3. **Love-** When a party loved another and wanted to secure the relationship so that nothing could ever destroy the relationship, a covenant would be established. Examples: Jonathan and David, God and Abraham, God and mankind, man and wife.

Characteristics of a Covenant

1. **There was a prior relationship or need** – Covenants were made as a result of friendships, for protection, for trust, or for purposes that were beneficial to each other.
2. **There was a representative** - also called a mediator, or guarantor, intercessor or champion who had to be one of tribe he represented. This representative could not be someone other than a member the party he was representing. (Why did God have to come to earth in the form of Jesus?)
3. **There was an offer** – One party would approach another party and express a desire to enter into a covenant

4. **There was a ceremony and gifts were exchanged** -

Exchange of Coats- This represented a giving of all one's life including possessions to the other party.

Exchange of Belts- this was a statement by action saying, "Here is my sword. If anyone attacks you, I will attack him".

5. **There was a sacrifice** – there was always the shedding of blood when a covenant was made. The animals sacrificed were cut in half .The two representatives (mediators) would line up back to back between the halves of the sacrificed animals and walk a figure eight around both halves. They did this twice and ended up face to face. The face to face represented togetherness. They were now considered by the society of their day to be one person. Sometimes they changed their name to reflect that they were no longer the same individual person but a new person united as one with they other party. The figure eight pattern that they walked is nowadays the sign for "infinity" or "never ending". The new relationship was to last until death parted the two.

As the mediators walked between the animals, the ground was covered with blood. They walked on this "red carpet" of blood and we have today the term, "roll out the red carpet" for important people, such as these representatives.

6. **There was an oath** - An oath consisted of words binding the representative to do what he was going to say he would do. The oath was a call to God to do three things: 1. To be a witness. 2. To give both parties strength to keep the oath. 3. To watch over and insure oath was kept, even to the point of bringing death to the anyone who did not keep his oath. Once the oath was made, the covenant could not be altered. (See Gen 26:28; 31:53; Josh 9:15; 2 Kings 11:4, Luke 1:73). There is recorded in the Old Testament accounts of people being killed or destroyed for not keeping the oath (Jeremiah 34:17-20, 2 Samuel 21:1-14).

7. **There was a promise or blessing** - These stated the obligations of the parties or promises made and were often written down and read in order to remember.

8. **There was a seal (also known as a sign)** - This was a mark left on the body that showed a covenant had been made. Often it was the scar left when the wrist was cut and ashes rubbed on the wound to cause scarring. The actual word that is translated “covenant” is the Hebrew word, *berith*, which means “cut till the blood flows”. The seal was also known as “the sign” of the covenant. The old covenant seal was circumcision and only done to males. The sign of the covenant with Noah was the rainbow. The seal of the new covenant is _____ of the _____ (Romans 2:29).

9. **There was a new identity**- Often the names of covenant makers would be changed to take on the name of the other party, since each party to a covenant belonged to the other and was considered a part of and united with the other person (ie “blood brothers”). Covenant makers called each other “friends”. The term “friend” was the highest honor one could pay to a person because it implied there was a covenant relationship with that person. Abraham’s name was changed from Abram to Abraham (2 Chron 20:7) and he was called a “friend of God”. At the last supper, Jesus called the disciples “friends” instead of servants (John 15:15). When people made a covenant, they were considered to be “one” with each other and members of the two tribes were considered to be “one” tribe. (See 1 Cor 6:17, Eph 2:11-19,

10. **There was a meal** - A meal was shared after the ceremony of the covenant celebrating a life together. As bread was eaten and wine drank, this symbolized a life together and a partaking of one another

11. **There was a monument or memorial** - A memorial was set up at the place the covenant was made. This may be a mound of stones or a planted tree. Often times the name of the place would be changed or the place would be named to reflect the covenant. Sometimes the memorial would be a periodic observance or feast specifically to remember the covenant. What is the memorial for the New Covenant? (See 1 Corinthians 11:25)

12. There was a new relationship, a *hesed* relationship- The result of a covenant always results in a new relationship between the parties which no English word can be substituted for the Hebrew word *hesed*. This word can perhaps be understood by substituting “mercy”, “loyalty”, “covenant love”, “unfailing love”, “steadfast love”, “goodness”, “warm generosity”, “strength”, and “loving-kindness”. From this day on, when you are reading the Bible and you see the term, “everlasting love”, realize that this is translated from the word *hesed*, or covenant love. Remember also covenant love is unending and unconditional and that is exactly the way God loves us.

Effects of a Covenant

1. The covenant conditions were irrevocable (unchangeable) except by death (Joshua 9:6-20)
2. The people of the two parties or families or tribes became one people
3. To become a covenant member after a covenant had been established, any one born into the family or tribe of the covenant was a member. In the case of the Abrahamic covenant, circumcision of males were required. In the case of the New Covenant mankind has with God, circumcision of the heart is required.
4. Everything owned by the two parties or family or tribe became common property.
5. In order to receive benefits from someone who did not know a person was a member of a covenant, the person asking for something would simply say, “I ask in the name of (the mediator of the covenant)”.
6. People who belonged to a covenant were considered to have the character and skill and attributes of their representative who made the covenant.

God's Plan of Salvation

God created man in His own image to rule over the world but Satan stole that rule and destroyed the relationship God had with man. God had a plan to win the kingdom back. Since the kingdom was lost by a man, a man would have to win the Kingdom back.

God said that out of woman would come one who would "bruise the head" of the enemy who tempted the woman and mankind fell into sin. The one Who came was God Himself in the form of God's Son, Jesus.

Gen 3:14-15

*LORD God said to the serpent,
" Because you have done this,
Cursed are you more than all cattle,
And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you will go,
And dust you will eat
All the days of your life;*

*15 And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her seed;
He shall bruise you on the head,
And you shall bruise him on the heel."*

God destroyed the wicked earth but made a covenant with Noah because he only was righteous and walked with God and was saved. His family was saved because of him. No reference is made to them being righteous but since God made a covenant with Noah, He considered Noah's family as righteous.

Gen 9:11-17

I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth." 12 God said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; 13 I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth. 14 "It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will be seen in the cloud, 15 and I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 "When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth." 17 And God said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth."

God made a covenant with Abraham when he was called “Abram” and about 85 years old. There was a ceremony but Abram did not participate- he fell asleep. God actually made a covenant with Himself. He was represented by the smoking oven and flaming torch that passed between the cut halves of the sacrificed animals. At that time, God promised that Abram would have heirs and that his descendants would possess the land.

Gen 15:1-16:1

After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." 2 Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir." 4 Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir." 5 And He took him outside and said, "Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, " So shall your descendants be." 6 Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. 7 And He said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it." 8 He said, "O Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?" 9 So He said to him, " Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. 11 The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. 16 "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." 17 It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, " To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim 21 and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite."

God told Abraham about 14 years later that He would apply or establish the covenant with Abraham and his descendants, that it would be an everlasting covenant, and that all the land promised would be the descendants and that the covenant would be an EVERLASTING covenant. God gave Abram a new identity by changing his name and God instated the sign or seal of circumcision.

Gen 17:1-14

Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.

2 "I will establish My covenant between Me and you, And I will multiply you exceedingly."

3 Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, And you will be the father of a multitude of nations. 5 "No longer shall your name be called Abram, But your name shall be Abraham; For I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.

6 "I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. 7 "I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 " I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."

9 God said further to Abraham, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10 " This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 "And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 "And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants. 13 "A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 "But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

Abraham wanted the everlasting covenant to be through Ishmael but God had another plan. He would make His everlasting covenant with the descendants of Issac who had not yet been born.

Gen 17:18-22

And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before You!" 19 But God said, "No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. 20 "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the

father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. 21 "But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year."

Just before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah He said that He had chosen Abraham and his children to keep the way of the Lord and that the world would be blessed through Abraham (this was to be Jesus coming as a Savior and descendant of Abraham)

Gen 18:17-19

The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, 18 since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed? 19 "For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."

In keeping with His promise, God made a covenant with Israel at Mt. Sinai in which Israel was required to keep the law and ordinances given by God. This was not the eternal covenant that God had promised Abraham. God knew that Israel would not be able to do what was required to be righteous because they did not have the "heart" to do so.

Ex 6:2-9

*2 God spoke further to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD; 3 and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them. 4 "I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they sojourned. 5 "Furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. 6 "Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ' I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7'Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8'I will bring you to the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession; I am the LORD.'" 9 So Moses spoke thus to the sons of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses on account of their despondency and cruel bondage.
NASU*

Ex 19:1-9

a In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain. 3 Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to

him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4' You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. 5'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

7 So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him. 8 All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. 9 The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever." Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

Ex 24:3-8

3 Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, " All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!" 4 Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. 6 Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 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!" 8 So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Moses also describes the events of the Covenant at Mount Sinai in Deuteronomy. Notice a key statement here by God. He implies that they may not have the "heart" to keep the commandments, which later turns out to be true.

Deut 5:22-33

22 "These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain from the midst of the fire, of the cloud and of the thick gloom, with a great voice, and He added no more. He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me. 23 "And when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. 24 "You said, 'Behold, the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. 25 'Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any longer, then we will die. 26 'For who is there of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 'Go near and hear all that the Lord

our God says; then speak to us all that the Lord our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do it.'

28 "The Lord heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the Lord said to me, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken. 29 'Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever! 30 'Go, say to them, "Return to your tents." 31 'But as for you, stand here by Me, that I may speak to you all the commandments and the statutes and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe them in the land which I give them to possess.' 32 "So you shall observe to do just as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right or to the left. 33 "You shall walk in all the way which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you will possess. NASU

Because God knew Israel did not have the heart to keep the covenant as they swore to do, God gave Moses the pattern for the Tabernacle and instructions of the many different sacrifices they were to perform to atone for the sins God knew they would commit. When Moses came down the mountain, he had more than just the commandments written on stone. He had something that would prevent God from killing everyone when they sinned- the sacrificial system of bulls and goats as well as the tabernacle where they were to do this. God truly loved His creation known as man and wanted to keep a relationship with them.

The description of the tabernacle and instructions on the type and method of sacrifices can be found in Exodus chapter 25 through 30.

Israel did not keep the covenant but God is faithful and he always keeps His promises. God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah that he would still make His chosen people to be righteous example to the world that all the would know Him. This time He would not rely on the flesh. He would give them a new spirit, a new heart (mind) and He would forgive all their sins. It was to be a new covenant, not like the old covenant. God's desire has always been to have a people for himself, that would represent Him and be like Him.

Jer 31:31-37

31 " Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make anew covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. 33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, " I will put My law

within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

35 Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name: 36 " If this fixed order departs From before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also will cease From being a nation before Me forever." 37 Thus says the LORD, " If the heavens above can be measured And the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel For all that they have done," declares the LORD.

Ezek 36:22-36

"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went. 23 "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight. 24 "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. 25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. 28 "You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God. 29 "Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you. 30 "I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations. 31 "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations. 32 "I am not doing this for your sake," declares the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!"

33'Thus says the Lord GOD, "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt. 34 "The desolate land will be cultivated instead of being a desolation in the sight of everyone who passes by. 35 "They will say, 'This desolate land has become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, desolate and ruined cities are fortified and inhabited.' 36 "Then the nations that are left round about you will know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted that which was desolate; I, the LORD, have spoken and will do it."

The problem God had in making a new covenant was that there was not a man to be found on earth that could mediate and keep the new covenant. Every man that was ever born could not withstand the temptations of the evil ruler of the world, Satan. The new covenant was to be an eternal covenant, but since Abraham had died and Moses had died and the people then sinned, God would get a person from the race of man that would withstand the devils temptations and who would be qualified to mediate a new covenant. To do this, God would have to become man and do it Himself. Because the mediator of a covenant had to be a member of the family or tribe, God would become a man, Immanuel, which means "God with us".

Isa 59:16-21

*And was astonished that there was no one to intercede;
Then His own arm brought salvation to Him,
And His righteousness upheld Him.*

*17 He put on righteousness like a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
And He put on garments of vengeance for clothing
And wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle.*

*18 According to their deeds, so He will repay,
Wrath to His adversaries, recompense to His enemies;
To the coastlands He will make recompense.*

*19 So they will fear the name of the LORD from the west
And His glory from the rising of the sun,
For He will come like a rushing stream
Which the wind of the LORD drives.*

*20 "A Redeemer will come to Zion,
And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob," declares the LORD.*

21 "As for Me, this is My covenant with them," says the LORD: "My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your offspring, nor from the mouth of your offspring's offspring," says the LORD, "from now and forever."

Isa 63:7-9

*I shall make mention of the lovingkindnesses of the LORD, the praises of the LORD,
According to all that the LORD has granted us,
And the great goodness toward the house of Israel,
Which He has granted them according to His compassion
And according to the abundance of His lovingkindnesses.*

*8 For He said, "Surely, they are My people,
Sons who will not deal falsely."*

So He became their Savior.

*9 In all their affliction He was afflicted,
And the angel of His presence saved them;
In His love and in His mercy He redeemed them*

So in spite of man's sins and rebellion toward God, God in the form of His Son, came to earth as a member of the human race (Son of man), in order to be the mediator of a new covenant, a covenant that God had promised when He spoke with Abraham 2000 years before. Jesus, the physical representation of the invisible God (Col 1:15), not only was the mediator of a covenant that allows us into the family of God- He was the sacrifice, the Lamb, that paid for all our sins. When He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit, who came to dwell in us and not only provide us with a covenant seal- He transforms our hearts that we can all be sons of the Living God and serve Him and we now have eternal life.

Luke 22:14-21

When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. 15 And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And when He had taken some bread and 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." 20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood."

Heb 9:13-16

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

What is the eternal inheritance? Eternal life? What is eternal life? Eternal life is knowing the only true God and Jesus Whom God sent.

John 17:3

"And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. (NAS)

How do we know God and Jesus? We know Them by having a relationship with Them. This relationship has been brought about by the New Covenant.

**THE PURPOSE OF COVENANT IS TO ESTABLISH AND SECURE A
RELATIONSHIP.**

“The first and most basic thing we have to understand is that the new covenant is not made with us as individuals. It is a covenant made by God the Father with God the Son. The Father guarantees the divine side of the covenant. The Son guarantees the human side, having taken our humanity as us and for us. It becomes ours individually as we believe on the Lord Jesus and are joined to Him. The covenant is out of our hands and beyond our ability to break; it is guaranteed by the Triune God and therefore is unconditional and unbreakable ⁴ “

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Covenant Study Question Lesson 1

1. What is a covenant?
2. How does a covenant differ from a contract or an agreement?
3. Who is expected to deal with a person who does not do what he promises after he makes a covenant?
4. Who does one swear to when he takes the covenant oath?
5. Could a covenant be changed once it was made?
6. Read Joshua 9:3-21. Why did the Israelites not harm the people of Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim?
7. Read Genesis 17:1-8. What did God promise Abraham?
8. What did God promise his descendants?
9. Challenge- How do Gentiles become part of Abraham's family? See Ephesians 2:11-17.

What are the 12 characteristics of a covenant?

| | |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

10. What did the sacrifice represent?
11. What did the exchange of belts with sword and the exchange of coats signify?
12. Read Genesis 15:1-16:1. What did God tell Abraham in verse 1 that was similar to the exchange of swords and belts?
13. Abraham asked God for proof of His promise in verse 8? What did Abraham ask for and what did God say?

14. Read Romans 4:3, Gal 3:6 and James 2:23. When do you think Abraham believed God?
15. What was Abraham called in James 2:23?
16. What does the term “friend” signify has changed in the relationship between two parties in a covenant relationship?
17. What did Jesus call His disciples in John 15:12?
18. Challenge - At what point in Jesus life did this take place?
19. What do you think the name change signified when a covenant was made?
20. What are the requirements of a mediator (also called an intercessor)?
21. What do you think the mediator was to expected to do?
22. In Isaiah 59:16, what did God discover and what did He say He would do about it?
23. What did God promise in Jer 31:31-37.
24. What did he promise in regard to - His law?
25. What did He promise in regard to our knowledge of Him?
26. What did He promise in regard to our sin?
27. Read Luke 14:21. What did Jesus say He was making for us?
28. Read Hebrews 9:15. Who is the mediator of the new covenant?
29. Who is God’s “own arm” of Isaiah 59:16-17?
30. What physical thing was done so that people would know a covenant had been made?
31. What was the sign of the Old Covenant? (Genesis 17:14)?
32. How could the people of Abraham break the covenant?
33. What is the sign or seal of the New Covenant? (Romans 2:29, 2 Cor 1:22, Eph 1:13, 4:20)

Covenant Study Questions – Lesson 2

A covenant is a binding, unbreakable obligation between two parties based on unconditional love and sealed by blood and sacred oath that creates a relationship in which each party is required to do specific things for the other party. The parties put themselves under divine retribution, should they fail, to the point of death, and their obligations and relationship to each other can only be ended by death. A covenant is a wholehearted giving of one's life and situation to another and wholeheartedly receiving another and his or her life. 1

Review the definition of a covenant as defined above. Use your own wedding ceremony and vows or the sample wedding ceremony attached to answer the following questions.

What words in the ceremony or vows indicate that this is a binding, unbreakable obligation between two parties?

What words indicate that this obligation is based on unconditional love?

What announcement or vows indicate that the oaths are sacred oaths?

What words indicate that each party is required to do specific things for the other?

What words (or scripture) hint at divine retribution or a warning against breaking this covenant?

What words or scripture indicate that the two people, bride and groom, male and female, are changed into one person? Whose words are these?

What are the specific obligations promised?

What words indicate that these obligations can only be ended by death?

What words indicate that this covenant is a wholehearted giving of one's life and situation?

What words indicate that this covenant is a wholehearted receiving of the other's life and situation.

To whom are vows spoken in a wedding ceremony and who is understood to be the witness and enforcer? What words indicate that God is the witness and enforcer?

In traditional Middle Eastern covenants, the mediators would pass between the cut halves of an animal or animals. What symbolism, if any of this can you see in a traditional wedding ceremony?

(Challenge) What was the purpose of cutting an animal in two and walking between the halves"? (Hint- See Jeremiah 34:17-18)

In a wedding ceremony, who are the people making the covenant?

Study Genesis 15:10-21. In Genesis 15:17, was Abraham a mediator, (one who made promises and walked between the sacrifice)? Who or what were the mediators and who is responsible for keeping the covenant?

(Review) Who are the two mediators of the New Covenant?

Who is responsible for keeping the covenant we have in Christ?

Personal Questions Relating to Marriage (You do not have to share these answers)

What are some of the good properties you brought into the new relationship you have with your spouse?

What are some of the bad properties you brought into the marriage?

What are some good and bad properties your spouse brought into the relationship?

What are some of the properties of this new creation of one (man and wife) were brought by your spouse into this new relationship and were not previously had by you?

What are some properties brought solely by you and not your spouse?

Do you think it is important that you and your spouse be alike? Why or why not?

What do you think the terms “for better or worse” mean?

What evidence do you see (based on requirements for deed conveyances) in North Carolina that a married couple is seen as one person?

Discuss with your spouse and explain what it means to be “one”.

Traditional Wedding Vows

Minister:

Dearly Beloved, we have gathered here, before God to witness the joining in holy matrimony of (Groom) and (Bride). This is a solemn occasion not to be taken lightly. Jesus said in Mark 10:6-9 "... at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

(Groom) will you take (Bride) to be your lawful wife, will you love her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health and forsaking all others keep only unto her so long as you both shall live. Response: I will.

(Bride), will you take (Groom) to be your lawful husband, will you love him, honor and keep him in sickness and in health and forsaking all others keep only unto him so long as you both shall live. Response: I will

Who gives this woman to be wedded to this man?

Presenting of Rings and Vows

(Groom and Bride step forward sometimes through a trellis or up to altar)

I, (Name of Groom), take you, (Name of Bride), to be my lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health as long as we both shall live.

I, (Name of Bride) take you, (Name of Groom), to be my lawful wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health while we both shall live.

(Groom and Bride may share communion, sometimes entwining arms to drink from the cup)

Minister: I now pronounce you man and wife.

Covenant Study Questions Lesson 3

Review the attached “How Covenants are Established” by M.E. Arbaugh.

1. Were covenants of old limited to the participants or did they include the members of the family?
2. Read 1 Samuel 8:1-5 and 2 Samuel 9. What blessing to a family member do you find that was a result of an ancestor’s covenant (specifically Jonathan)?
3. Read Genesis Joshua 9 with 2 Samuel 21:1-9. What consequence or curse do you see the descendants of the covenant maker having to bear because an ancestor (Saul) broke the covenant?
4. What are some of the blessings you see that are coming down from your ancestors?
5. What are some of the curses you see coming down from your ancestors? (Remember always that in Christ, curses can be broken)
6.
 - a. What are some of the blessings in your life that you want your descendants to have?
 - b. What are some things you can do to insure this? You may want to read Deuteronomy 10:12-16, Deuteronomy 28, Exodus 34 6-7.
7. How can you explain that though God’s love covenant is forever, the blessings seem conditional?
8. How do the following terms relate to a covenant according to “How Covenants Are Established”?

Stick out like a sore thumb
Roll out the red carpet
Drinking wine with entwined arms
Earrings (See also Deuteronomy 15:17)

9. What are the three reasons covenants were made?
10. Why do we need a covenant with God?
11. Why did God make a covenant with us?
12. Why did you make a covenant with your spouse (if you are married)? If you are not married, what would be a reason to get married?

13. What are the four methods of cutting covenant described in the attachment, “How Covenants Are Established”?
14. Which of these methods did God use in making a covenant with Abraham?
15. Which of these methods did God use in making a covenant with us?
16. Which method did you use when you married your spouse (if you are married)?
17. What did the bread and the wine signify at the covenant meal?
18. What do you think the bread and the wine signify at the Lord’s Supper?
19. Read 1 Corinthians 11:17-32. There is a warning here. What is it and why do you think we should be warned.

God's Plan for Your Spiritual Health

Teaching And Research By: M. E. Arbaugh (from the website <http://www.peace4u.org>)

HOW COVENANTS ARE ESTABLISHED

"But now Jesus has obtained a more excellent ministry, by which he is the mediator of a BETTER COVENANT, which was established upon better promises." Hebrews 8:6
In order to understand this scripture, we must have knowledge of what a covenant is. We must also understand what the previous covenant was, before we can know we have a better one.

The Hebrew word translated in the Old Testament as covenant is *Berith*, it means to cut until blood flows. The Greek word translated in the New Testament as covenant, is *Diatheke*. *Diatheke* means the disposition of property, as in last will and testament. It is an arrangement made by one person with power, which the other person may accept or reject, but cannot alter or change. The English word covenant, means contract or agreement. A legal document which can be upheld, in a court of law, in case of failure on the part of one or both parties. For us to have full understanding of what the Bible teaches concerning blood covenant, we need to combine *Berith*, *Diatheke*, and Covenant.

In ancient times, two or more nations could covenant together. Leaders and people could covenant together. Two people could enter into covenant that would also involve their families. These same things apply to our time. However, today, contracts are generally entered into for a limited time period, and are sometimes taken very lightly. This was not true in ancient times. A covenant in the ancient world was considered sacred, involved blood and was enduring, many times even unto the seventh generation. To break a covenant was to invite death and destruction into your life. The Mafia has a covenant based on the same principle. The participants become blood brothers by means of shedding blood and allowing it to mingle.

Because the Bible is a book that was written in the east and deals with eastern customs, it is sometimes difficult for the western mind to comprehend. When the word covenant is mentioned in the west, we think of a contract, a legally binding agreement. But the eastern people of ancient days thought of blood. A blood covenant was a serious thing. The participants sealed the agreement with a pledge to honor it, even if it required their lives to do so.

Our western minds don't want to see blood, especially our own. If you want that contract signed in blood, you can forget it.....it's our signatures or nothing. In our day, the blood has become ink and we look for the loop holes. But in Bible times a blood covenant was called a covenant of strong (Ahab) friendship. *Berith*, (to cut until blood flows) was the most sacred thing a person could enter into.

Many books on anthropology and archeology mention forms of blood covenants that were practiced in ancient civilizations. Some of the remnants of those covenants are still hanging around. Rings in ears were marks of covenants. By Bible times a ring in the ear became the sign of a servant who choose to stay in the master's house after he or she had been offered freedom.

The remark "stands out like a sore thumb" came from the days when two covenant partners cut their thumbs in order to mingle their blood; and then rubbed ashes in the wounds in order to make a permanent mark of the covenant.

Rolling out the red carpet for VIP's (very important people) is reminiscent of walking in a field of blood.

A wedding ring symbolizes a covenant. The entwined arms of the Bridal couple, drinking wine, are symbols of making blood covenant, recalling a time when arms were cut and placed together for the mingling of life, while drinking wine.

There were three basic reasons for entering into a blood covenant.

Reason number one for entering into a blood covenant is:

The weak made alliance with the strong, so the strong would protect them. These agreements were entered for mutual benefit. A farming tribe might enter blood covenant with a warrior tribe. The farmers would provide food in exchange for protection from robbers, thieves and enemy tribes.

In the ninth chapter of Joshua, the story of the men of Gibeon is related. The men of Gibeon had heard the Israelites would take the land and destroy all of the inhabitants. So, they devised a plan for survival. Dressed in old, worn garments, with moldy bread and aged wine skins in hand, the Gibeonites went to the Israelites. They said, "We are from a far country, our clothing was new, our bread was hot and fresh when we left home. We come to make a covenant with you. Let us live among you and we shall be your servants." Even after their deception was uncovered, Joshua honored the covenant, let them live and protected them. In return they served Israel as hewers of wood and drawers of water. Joshua 9.

Reason number two for entering into a blood covenant is:

To establish a position of trust. A business arrangement became stable under a blood covenant, for what belonged to one, belonged to the other. This eliminated cheating. This position of trust could be established even when people did not like each other. If a blood covenant was entered into, each partner agreed to protect the other's interest with their own life.

Jacob and Esau were twin brothers. Esau was entitled by birth order to receive the inheritance of the first born but was tricked out of his inheritance by Jacob. As a result Jacob had to flee from his homeland. He went to his Uncle Laban's home in Padan-aram. There he met Rachel, Laban's younger daughter, and fell in love. He agreed to work for Laban seven years in exchange for Rachel. At the end of seven years, Laban tricked Jacob, who had tricked Esau. (Bread cast on the water, does return to you.) Instead of receiving Rachel for his bride, Jacob was given Leah her older sister. Then Laban told him that he must work seven more years for Rachel.

Jacob spent nearly twenty years working for Laban and during that time Laban deceived Jacob concerning his wages ten times. This is not a fellow you could trust. Finally, Jacob has had enough. While Laban attends a feast, he takes his two wives, children, livestock and heads for home. Three days later Laban hears of the matter, gathers his men and rides after them. It is possible he intended to do Jacob harm, but God spoke to him in a dream and said be careful how you deal with Jacob.

As a result, two non-trust worthy fellows entered into a covenant, (Genesis 31:34-35) which established a position of trust. As father in-law and son-in-law they were able to deceive one another. As blood brothers they could no longer harm each other. Even though there was no friendship and no natural trust the covenant was powerful enough to bind them together. Genesis chapters 27-31

Reason number three for entering into a blood covenant is love.

We need to define love. We are not talking, I love apple pie, as in our current usage of the word love. We are talking Hased (Hebrew) and agape (Greek) love. These words mean a love that sacrifices itself for the benefit of the object loved. This is the kind of love that is found in John 3:16.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This agape love is also the one mentioned in Ephesians chapter five where husbands are told to love their wives. It is an abounding love that will lay down it's life for the benefit of the one who is loved.

David and Jonathan were friends who entered into a covenant, each agreed to defend the other even at the cost of their own lives. It was just after David killed the giant that he and Jonathan met. Jonathan was the son of King Saul and was present when Saul commended David on a job well done. The Bible tells us there was an instant bonding of the two young men. So much so they made a covenant with each other. They became blood brothers. Jonathan gave David his robe, his weapons, and his belt. 1 Samuel 18:4.

Though it doesn't say so, it is assumed David reciprocates with his cloak, his weapons, and his belt. At the time of the covenant, David was a welcome guest in Saul's household. Later, David became very popular with the people and jealousy entered the picture. After the people sang the praises of David during a parade, Saul had a jealous fit and tried to kill David with a javelin. When that failed, he sent David to command troops in a war against the Philistines. He thought perhaps the Philistines would kill David for him. No matter how Saul schemed, David not only survived, he was victorious and became more popular. After several plots had failed, Saul told all his servants and Jonathan that David must be killed. Jonathan at great peril to his own life, told David and then argued with his father. Because of his covenant he risked his own life in order to save the life of his covenant partner.

There were four methods of cutting covenant.

1. Cut palms of hands and mingle blood. A hand shake, once meant your bond, then it became a check for weapons, and now in our time it is a greeting.
2. Wrists were cut and rubbed together so the blood would mingle and the life of each would be combined.
3. Cuts were made and blood placed in wine then the wine was to be drunk. For God's people, this was expressly forbidden. It was a perversion of the blood covenant established by God.
4. Animals were slain as a substitute for the lives of the ones involved in cutting the covenant. This method of substitution was the one established by God. Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you on the altar to make an atonement for you: for it is the blood that makes atonement for you." The Bible says "the life is in the blood." To the eastern mind that means, when I give you my blood I give you all my life represents. Lives become mingled. What is your life? It consists of time, money, family, job, possessions, heirs (those who have not yet been born, your seed), your name (which gives the right to assets and debts) and your protection. If you

enter into a blood covenant then your covenant partner's credit and debts belong to you and yours belong to the covenant partner. It is a mingling of lives. Life drastically changes from the moment you enter into a blood covenant. In the ancient world, when two parties wanted to enter into a blood covenant it was never entered into lightly. The first step was to carefully discuss the terms, the animals, the representatives and the site and come to an agreement on them. What each party was to be responsible for was very carefully decided on. The representative had to be someone who was able to represent well. The animals were to be of the best, no rejects. The site must be neutral. This is where the statement about meeting on common ground came from. It became common because of the agreement.

With terms, site, representatives and animals in hand, the families or tribes came together. The representatives met in clear view of everyone and exchanged garments. This garment was usually a cloak, we would call it a coat. Often a person's coat will tell something about him (police, fireman, chef, doctor, etc.). This meant I give you my authority. All that I am now belongs to you. David gave Jonathan his shepherd's coat, Jonathan gave David his princely one.

The next item exchanged was the weapon belt. Meaning my strength is now your strength, your enemies are now my enemies. David had a shepherd's crook and a sling shot. Jonathan had armor, shield, sword and a bow. The farmer might give his hoe and rake, the warrior, his spear and sword.

In some lands, gifts were exchanged. When Stanley (of the famous, Dr. Livingston, I presume) went to Africa he frequently became involved in blood covenants. On one occasion, Stanley was asked by the Chieftain, of a tribe, to give him his goat. Since Stanley had a delicate stomach and relied heavily on goats milk for his diet, he was loathe to part with the goat. He suggested other exchange items, but was refused. Finally he agreed to give his goat and the Chieftain in return, gave Stanley his very large, finely crafted, distinctive spear. Stanley was disappointed at the exchange but later found this chief was well known and feared, through out the land. Where ever Stanley went, even the most war like tribes gave him safe passage, when they saw the spear.

Now the animals are slain and cut down the back bone, divided in half. They are placed with the backbones facing each other leaving a walk way between. It is literally a walk way of blood. The two representatives begin to walk a figure eight around the animal halves, not just once, but twice. The second time around, they meet in the middle. Standing there in the midst of the blood, they speak the terms of the covenant out loud and swear that just as this animal had given it's life, they also would be willing to die to protect each other. The figure eight being the symbol for infinity, this was a never ending covenant.

Next, the cursings are spoken. Great evil would be visited upon any who broke the blood covenant. In the case of a farmer and a warrior covenant, they might say, I promise to defend you with my life, you must keep those baskets of fruit and vegetables coming. If you do not, ring worm of the nose will overtake you, your cattle will die, your children will be stillborn, etc. Wrists were cut. Still standing in the blood, their own blood dripping down their arms, they press them together, so their lives are mingled. Ashes are rubbed into the cuts, to make permanent scars as reminders of the covenant. Names are exchanged, each person adding the name of the other person, to his own. They now had the power to use each other's names. Names unlocked credit and loosed purse strings. Each one was now able to say, put it on my blood brothers account.

They had a covenant meal. Universally a covenant meal has been bread and wine. This meant, my blood and my flesh back this covenant. A pile of stones was placed for a memorial. In places where trees were available, a tree was planted, a tree stood for continuing life and served for a reminder to future generations.

What does all this have to do with us? Insert your name in the following blanks.

The book of Hebrews says that we have a covenant with God, one that has been ratified by the blood of Jesus. One day God offered that covenant to _____, and we walked (God and I) between and around the slain lamb. In the old covenant the mark of the covenant was circumcision. In the new covenant it is circumcision of the heart. The sword of the spirit cut my heart and while standing in the blood of the lamb, God and I became one. His life flowed into mine. I don't know what He rubbed into the cut to make a permanent scar, but I know it is there. Like Saint Paul, I know that I carry the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body, for His praise is in my mouth

We exchanged names, God now says, "I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and _____." He gave me the name of Jesus and all it stands for. He wants me to use it. God gained all my assets and my debts. How many assets did I have? ...Zero. How many debts did I have? So many, they would never have been paid. How many debts does God have?zero. How many assets does God have? All the glories of heaven. The earth and the fullness thereof, the cattle on a thousand hills. His assets are love, joy, peace, health, life and blessing with all good things. Glory, Glory, Glory, they are mine.

We exchanged garments. He got my self righteous rags, I got His robe of righteousness. He got my garment of heaviness, I got His garment of Praise. We exchanged weapon belts, He got my sling shot, I got His whole armor. I have to protect God, don't need to. God has to protect me, now that's a project.

There was a tree planted at Calvary. A memorial for all generations of the blood covenant between God and man. A covenant which "Whosoever will" may become a part of. God and I, we have shared in the covenant meal. When I eat the bread and drink the wine with other believers, I express my loyalty to Him and to them. When I partake of the flesh and the blood, I recall that if I am strong, then I must bear the burdens of the weak. I must not criticize, I must assume responsibilities toward the weak.

The preceding article by M E Arbaugh (from the website <http://www.peace4u.org>)

Covenant Between Israel and Gibeonites

Joshua 9:1-27

1 Now it came about when all the kings who were beyond the Jordan, in the hill country and in the lowland and on all the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, heard of it, 2 that they gathered themselves together with one accord to fight with Joshua and with Israel. 3 When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, 4 they also acted craftily and set out as envoys, and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended, 5 and worn-out and patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry {and} had become crumbled. 6 And they went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us." 7 And the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you are living within our land; how then shall we make a covenant with you?" 8 But they said to Joshua, "We are your servants." Then Joshua said to them, "Who are you, and where do you come from?" 9 And they said to him, "Your servants have come from a very far country because of the fame of the LORD your God; for we have heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt, 10 and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was at Ashtaroth. 11 "So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants; now then, make a covenant with us."' 12 "This our bread {was} warm {when} we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; but now behold, it is dry and has become crumbled. 13 "And these wineskins which we filled were new, and behold, they are torn; and these our clothes and our sandals are worn out because of the very long journey." 14 So the men {of Israel} took some of their provisions, and did not ask for the counsel of the LORD. 15 And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore {an oath} to them. 16 And it came about at the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were neighbors and that they were living within their land. 17 Then the sons of Israel set out and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities {were} Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim. 18 And the sons of Israel did not strike them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD the God of Israel. And the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders. 19 But all the leaders said to the whole congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them. 20 "This we will do to them, even let them live, lest wrath be upon us for the oath which we swore to them." 21 And the leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for the whole congregation, just as the leaders had spoken to them. 22 Then Joshua called for them and spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you are living within our land? 3 "Now therefore, you are cursed,

and you shall never cease being slaves, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God." 24 So they answered Joshua and said, "Because it was certainly told your servants that the LORD your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you; therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. 25 "And now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us." 26 Thus he did to them, and delivered them from the hands of the sons of Israel, and they did not kill them. 27 But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place which He would choose. (NAS)

2 Sam 21:1-14

1 Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David sought the presence of the LORD. And the LORD said, "It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to death." 2 So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them (now the Gibeonites were not of the sons of Israel but of the remnant of the Amorites, and the sons of Israel made a covenant with them, but Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal for the sons of Israel and Judah). 3 Thus David said to the Gibeonites, "What should I do for you? And how can I make atonement that you may bless the inheritance of the LORD?" 4 Then the Gibeonites said to him, "We have no {concern} of silver or gold with Saul or his house, nor is it for us to put any man to death in Israel." And he said, "I will do for you whatever you say." 5 So they said to the king, "The man who consumed us, and who planned to exterminate us from remaining within any border of Israel, 6 let seven men from his sons be given to us, and we will hang them before the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD. "And the king said," I will give {them.}" 7 But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the oath of the LORD which was between them, between David and Saul's son Jonathan. 8 So the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, Armoni and Mephibosheth whom she had born to Saul, and the five sons of Merab the daughter of Saul, whom she had born to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite. 9 Then he gave them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the mountain before the LORD, so that the seven of them fell together; and they were put to death in the first days of harvest at the beginning of barley harvest. 10 And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until it rained on them from the sky; and she allowed neither the birds of the sky to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night. 11 When it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done, 12 then David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from the men of Jabesh-gilead, who had stolen them from the open square of Bethshan, where the Philistines had hanged them on the day the Philistines struck down Saul in Gilboa. 13 And he brought up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from there, and they gathered the bones of those who had been hanged. 14 And they buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zela, in the grave of Kish his father; thus they did all that the king commanded, and after that God was moved by entreaty for the land. (NAS)

Covenant Between David and Jonathan

1 Sam 18:1-4

1 Now it came about when he had finished speaking to Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and **Jonathan loved him as himself.**

2 And Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house.

3 Then **Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.** 4 And **Jonathan stripped himself of the robe** that was on him and **gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt.** (NAS)

[Move ahead several years later. Jonathan is dead but David remembers the covenant]

2 Sam 9:1-13

1 Then David said, "Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" 2 Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David; and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "{I am} your servant." 3 And the king said, "Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet." 4 So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar." 5 Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar. 6 And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and prostrated himself. And David said, "Mephibosheth." And he said, "Here is your servant!" 7 And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly." 8 Again he prostrated himself and said, "What is your servant, that you should regard a dead dog like me?" 9 Then the king called Saul's servant Ziba, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. 10 "And you and your sons and your servants shall cultivate the land for him, and you shall bring in {the produce} so that your master's grandson may have food; nevertheless Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall eat at my table regularly." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. 11 Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant so your servant will do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table as one of the king's sons. 12 And Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Mica. And all who lived in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth. 13 So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate at the king's table regularly. Now he was lame in both feet. (NAS)

Covenant Between Jacob and Laban

Gen 31:11-55

11 "Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am.' 12 "And he said, 'Lift up, now, your eyes and see {that} all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. 13 'I am the God {of} Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.' " 14 And Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Do we still have any portion or inheritance in our father's house? 15 "Are we not reckoned by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and has also entirely consumed our purchase price. 16 "Surely all the wealth which God has taken away from our father belongs to us and our children; now then, do whatever God has said to you." 17 Then Jacob arose and put his children and his wives upon camels; 18 and he drove away all his livestock and all his property which he had gathered, his acquired livestock which he had gathered in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac. 19 When Laban had gone to shear his flock, then Rachel stole the household idols that were her father's. 20 And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean, by not telling him that he was fleeing. 21 So he fled with all that he had; and he arose and crossed the {Euphrates} River, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead. 22 When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, 23 then he took his kinsmen with him, and pursued him {a distance of} seven days' journey; and he overtook him in the hill country of Gilead. 24 And God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night, and said to him, "Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad." 25 And Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen camped in the hill country of Gilead. 26 Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword? 27 "Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with joy and with songs, with timbrel and with lyre; 28 and did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly. 29 "It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to speak either good or bad to Jacob.' 30 "And now you have indeed gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house; {but} why did you steal my gods?" 31 Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Lest you would take your daughters from me by force.' 32 "The one with whom you find your gods shall not live; in the presence of our kinsmen point out what is yours among my belongings and take {it} for yourself." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. 33 So Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tent of the two maids, but he did not find {them.} Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. 34 Now Rachel had taken the household idols and put them in the camel's saddle, and she sat on them. And Laban felt through all the tent, but did not find {them.} 35 And she said to her father, "Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is upon me." So he searched, but did not find the household idols.

36 Then Jacob became angry and contended with Laban; and Jacob answered and said to Laban, "What is my transgression? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me? 37 "Though you have felt through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods? Set {it} here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two. 38 "These twenty years I {have been} with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten the rams of your flocks. 39 "That which was torn {of beasts} I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself. You required it of my hand {whether} stolen by day or stolen by night. 40 "{Thus} I was: by day the heat consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes. 41 "These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you changed my wages ten times. 42 "If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had not been for me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the toil of my hands, so He rendered judgment last night." 43 Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters, and the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne? 44" So now come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me." 45 Then Jacob took a stone and set it up {as} a pillar. 46 And Jacob said to his kinsmen, "Gather stones." So they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there by the heap. 47 Now Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. 48 And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day." Therefore it was named Galeed; 49 and Mizpah, for he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from the other. 50 "If you mistreat my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, {although} no man is with us, see, God is witness between you and me." 51 And Laban said to Jacob, "Behold this heap and behold the pillar which I have set between you and me. 52 "This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass by this heap to you for harm, and you will not pass by this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. 53 "The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." So Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. 54 Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his kinsmen to the meal; and they ate the meal and spent the night on the mountain. 55 And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place. (NAS)

Bibliography

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