

GOD'S E.R.
FREED FROM ALL THINGS

Acts 13:39 and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things

Class 2 – Basic Training for Christians - Lesson Five

“Covenant – Depths of Abiding”

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Covenants are noted throughout Scripture. In fact, the Old Testament alone mentions Covenants over 275 times! The New Testament references covenants over 30 times. Unfortunately, and especially in the United States, Covenants are not greatly understood. Therefore we need to do a little investigation into the subject of Covenants and we need to learn exactly how the Lord intends for us to have Covenants operating in our lives.

In Genesis 15 and again in Genesis 17, the Lord told Abram that He would establish Covenant with him:

Gen 15:1 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 credited 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.

God told Abram all the things He was going to do for him and his descendants. Although Abram and his wife were naturally past child bearing age, God promised them descendants. Abram gave God his faith, vs. 6, and God made the Covenant with him, promising Abram descendants and the land.

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance (#1285) tells us that Covenant is a pledge, agreement, or *alliance* with another person or with God. It is a relationship which requires something from each party. Yet, unlike a contract or other basic agreement, a Covenant with God requires a *total* exchange.

In Biblical times, when men enter covenant with other men, they would do several things. If it was a covenant to be binding for all generations, they would sacrifice an animal and lay the pieces out as stated in Gen 15. They would walk between the pieces of the blood sacrifice, representing their covenant in blood, stating their commitment with the other person. They would exchange their robes, their belts, swords, and even their money bags. The robe represented their personality and their associations. Their belt, which held their sword, represented protection and strength. Their money bag said they were sharing every part of their livelihood and sustenance. They also exchanged names – the individuals' identities would be exchanged as well!

In Genesis 15:9, when God told Abram to gather the animals for sacrifice, Abram knew that *God* was about to cut **blood covenant** with him. A blood covenant that would never be broken! Abram realizes that he will have a connection with God that will never fail! It would be for him and his seed forever!

Gen 15:17 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.

Abram did not walk between the pieces of the sacrifice, but God Himself, in the flaming Torch of His presence, passed between the bloody pieces. Therefore, God gave Abram Himself: His character, His protection, His strength. He gave him the promise of a seed. He gave him land – sustenance and stability.

Now God appeared to Abram when he was 99 years old. God promises Abram He will establish (set up, secure) covenant with him and multiply his seed. He even changes his name:

Gen 17 1 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 will make 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.

So here God promised Abraham a land of rest for generations to come. Abraham and Sarah were past the time of child bearing, but God wanted them to see eternally, not naturally. Abraham set his faith and agreed with God - and when men agree with God, God has to deliver!

Romans 4:20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God,

JESUS IS THE MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT

The Old Testament types and teachings were all for the purpose of showing us Jesus. When we look at what God established in the Old Testament covenants, we see that every aspect was leading us to the knowledge of Christ.

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Strong's Concordance states that a Mediator is: one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant ; a medium of communication, arbitrator

Jesus, as our Mediator, stands in between us and the Father. Here is a comparison of some of the aspects and provisions of the Old Testament Covenants with what the Scripture says about Jesus as Mediator of the New Covenant:

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| Blood sacrifice of an animal | - | Jesus' sacrifice of Himself and shedding of His blood (John 1:29) |
| Walk between the pieces | - | Jesus is the Mediator, the go-between, between us and God |
| Exchange of the robe | - | He has given us His robe of righteousness (Isa 61:10) |
| Exchange of the Belt | - | We are given His belt of Truth (Eph 6:14) |
| Exchange of Swords | - | The Sword of the Spirit which is the (Living) Word of God (Eph 6:17) |
| Exchange of money bags | - | Jesus said he will supply all our need (Phil 4:19) |
| Surrender our identity | - | He gave us His Name; we become His children: <i>Christian</i> (I Pet 4:16) |

ADDITIONAL, AND MORE EXCELLENT, PROMISES OF THE NEW COVENANT

Hebrews 8:6 tells us the New Covenant is better than the old because it contains better promises. Promises which were never before offered and therefore unique to the New Covenant.

1. Change of Nature – The Law Within Us

Israel didn't have the heart or nature to obey God. The old covenant contained no provision for internal motivation to obey God. In the New Covenant, God promises to put His laws into our minds and write them on our hearts,

Hebrews 8:10 "FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

This means, when we become born again, that at the core of who we are, we are learning, and even yearning, to do the will of the Father.

King David wrote, "I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is in my heart" (Psalm 40:8). The Lord said of David that he was "a man after His own heart" (1 Sam 13:14), because of David's attitude of submission and honor to the Lord in all circumstances.

Through the New Covenant which is in Christ Jesus, He imparts to us the Holy Spirit. He is the one that writes the law of God on our hearts and minds by His indwelling presence. Delighting in God's law is not a normal human (fleshly) response,

Romans 8:7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,

The New Covenant promises the power to obey God. How? Through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit,

Romans 8:8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

As we walk with God in Covenant with Him through the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, our minds become renewed. We now begin an intimate relationship with Him as we walk according to the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Philippians 2:13, NLT For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him.

This change of nature results in an intimate relationship with God!

2. Forgiveness of Sins

Sin is what separated man from God. See what Isaiah says about our condition of sin:

Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

In order to walk in Covenant with the Living God, we must have our sins removed. However, under the old covenant, the blood of bulls and goats was shed for an atonement, but that blood could never *take away* sins (Hebrews 10:4).

Matthew 26:27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

By the sacrifice of the spotless Lamb of God and the shedding of His blood, forgiveness of sin became the focus of the New Covenant.

Hebrews 8:12 "FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE." 13 When He said, "A New Covenant," He has made the first obsolete.

The old covenant was made at Sinai when Israel accepted its terms. The New Covenant is made at baptism when we accept Christ's sacrifice and commit ourselves completely to God and His will.

3. Eternal Inheritance – Eternal Life

We may receive the promise of eternal inheritance, eternal life, by entering the New Covenant through the blood of Jesus,

Hebrews 9:11-15 NIV When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation. 12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God! 15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a New Covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance-

-now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

Eternal *inheritance* means we are in a relationship with the one true God! Jesus, by His shed blood, has bridged the gap in our relationship with the Father that was caused by our sin,

John 17:3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Now that we are in right standing with God through Jesus, the mediator of the New Covenant, we enjoy relationship with Him here, and relationship with Him hereafter, throughout eternity!

Walking in the New Covenant is a heart issue between you and God. You cannot have an intimate relationship without having your heart in it. Therefore, salvation is not fire insurance! It is total transformation in God by becoming one in Him – in your thoughts, motives and deeds.

Gal 3:26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Walking in Covenant with Christ:

1. Understand that you have access to the Father continuously by the Blood of Jesus!
2. Agree with God – “Yes Lord” is our best posture before the Lord!
3. Humble yourself! – You cannot possibly know everything at once, so trust Him!
4. Walk in the Spirit - by walking with God in prayer. Receive Jesus as your total salvation.
He did the Blood walk for you!

The Spirit of God has been given to us in our hearts, always abiding with us:

2 Cor 1:21 Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, 22 who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge

Through Jesus and the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit is ever present with you to lead and guide you! The devil just hopes you don't know all the power that is behind you! The devil doesn't read your thoughts, *he knows your thoughts by your actions and words*. Get your words right! Act like you are God's child, not like you belong to someone else!

I John 5:14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. **15** And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

Next week we will study “Christianity 101” – How to Set Order to Your Life So You can Live Close to the Father's Heart!