

## TWO COVENANTS

In our Word walk we have been looking at abiding in the Vine, relating to Jesus as the Vine and seeing ourselves from the perspective of fruit-bearing branches. Now we are going to look at our relationship with God from the perspective of Covenant. Many wonderful men and women of God have written books going into great detail on this subject, and I will not be adding to the library by producing a lengthy article on the subject. You can check out authors such as Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagin, Creflo Dollar, Frederick K C Price and EW Kenyon to name a few. We will simply be looking to the aspects of our covenant relationship with God as a New Testament believer. However, for the benefit of those readers who may not be familiar with the workings of a covenant, I will give a brief overview now and we will relate it to our New Covenant relationship in subsequent articles.

### What is a covenant?

A covenant is a formal, binding agreement between two parties to do or not to do something and is to be kept until death. Let us look at covenant procedure because then you will have a better understanding of how God's covenant with us works and the role that we play as co-laborers with God. The procedures may vary in some details among various tribes and groups, but the basic concept is the same. Remember, it takes two in agreement for a covenant to be effective.

- 1) **The two tribes decide the terms of the covenant.**
- 2) Each tribal group chooses **a representative** who will participate in the covenant ceremony and each **representative pledges loyalty to the other.**
- 3) **Coats are exchanged** by the representatives. The coat represented the strength and authority of each tribe.
- 4) **Weapon belts** are exchanged by the participants, while saying: "I shall teach you and protect you." Weapons belts symbolized:
  - Giving of strength
  - If someone is your enemy, they are my enemy.
  - I stand with you even if it means my death
- 5) **Blood sacrifice -- In ancient covenants an animal was sacrificed. It was cut in half and the two representatives walked in a figure-eight around the two animal halves.**

At the covenant site which had previously been agreed, the two tribes would gather, together with the sacrificial animals. Three or more large animals are cut in half, lengthwise, from the back of the neck down the backbone and the pieces are placed lengthwise opposite each other. The area between the pieces was called “the walkway of blood”

**6) The seal of the covenant** was made as the right hands of both participants (or some other part of the body) are cut, the right hands are bound together (so that their blood is mingled together), and raised, and swearing by the blood of both families or tribes is made, followed by the statement, "I will never leave you or forsake you, so help me God." (Note the similarity to the raised hand when swearing in for court testimony).

**A place on the hand is the most common place for the wound since this is a prominent place. In some cultures the blood was mingled with wine and both parties drank of it.**

The cut is then treated so that it won't infect, and in order that a permanent scar would remain. The scar is a symbol, token, or sign of the covenant, in the flesh. The wedding ring is a replacement (albeit removable) for the covenant scar. The circumcision was the seal of the Abrahamic covenant:

**7) Name Exchange - Tribe Jordan becomes Tribe “Jordan-Goodman” and Tribe Goodman becomes Tribe “Goodman-Jordan”. They become one.** The names of the representatives and the represented are changed or merged to reflect the new covenant relationship (To have one's name is to operate in his authority). In marriage, names of individuals often carry the evidence of past covenants (ex: James Brown-Taitt) In countries such as Spain, these covenant names become quite lengthy.

**8) Covenant Feast** - The entire households, tribes, or families come together to share a meal or feast (further making them one, because the same food becomes part of the bodies of both sides). The elders first feed one another saying, "This is my body, take, eat." (Meaning: *“I'll die and let you eat my flesh before I'll let you starve”*). Then, the elders feed each other wine representing blood (life). (Meaning: *“everything that I have is yours, even daughters, sons, food, possessions, everything”*.) Then, the rest of the families feed each other bread and wine. Thus entering the covenant relationship, they have vowed never to leave or forsake, on pain of death.

**Blood covenants have always been the strongest types of contracts among men.**

- When Adam & Eve fell, God prepared for them coverings of animal skins. This involved the shedding of the animals' blood.
- When God made His covenant with Abraham, he made the sign of this covenant

with circumcision, which involved the shedding of blood.

- When God gave the Law of Moses and the covenants contained in it, it involved the shedding of the blood of the sacrificial animals.
- Our new covenant with God through the offering of His Son Jesus could not be completed without the shedding of His blood.

The Native Americans entered into blood covenant relationships by the cutting of their wrists and mingling their blood. The reason there was so much fighting between the Indians and the settlers is because the settlers did not know and appreciate the process of covenant while the Native American people did. They were used to making tribal covenants. These covenants were broken only on pain of death. Therefore, when the settlers broke the covenant agreements, the Indians were bound by covenant to kill the settlers.

This is also why it is difficult for Westerners to understand the tribal uprisings in some African countries, because some of these tribal differences go back hundreds of years to a breach in covenant.

The strongest human covenant is the marriage of a man and woman God also ordained the marriage covenant with the shedding of blood? This is why God's way is for both men and women to remain sexually pure until the wedding day and adultery was penalized by death. (*Deut 22:13-30*) Marriage, consummated through the sexual act is a form of blood covenant and has deep spiritual significance.

Biblical covenants reflect God's sovereign declaration to establish a legal agreement between Himself and mankind.

**Man cannot function as an equal in a covenant with God; he can only accept the covenant initiated by God.** Man may break covenant and as a result open the door for satan to attack but God does not go back on the ultimate fulfillment of His covenant promises. The New Covenant, which is the covenant of the New Testament believer, operates on the foundation of love - the God-kind of love or 'agape' love that has provided a covenant of blood which God has entered into with us. He promises to give until it is too good to be true, and gives Himself and all He has to us who offer Him nothing. On God's part it is the driving passion to give out of pure love - to enter into a covenant of blood forever for mankind's benefit (John 3:16) God's motivation for His covenant with us is love. His nature of love means that He is loyal to those who are disloyal to Him. He is faithful to His word even when we are unfaithful to Him.

Giving means nothing and produces nothing unless it is received, and love, especially *covenant or agape* love, is not merely a feeling or reasoning, it demands action!

God has already given all - are you willing to receive all?

***34My covenant will I not break or profane, nor alter the thing***

*that is gone out of My lips. (Psalm 89:34 Amp.)*