



The
Blood Covenant
of
Jesus Christ

Kevin & Deborah Martin

**THE BLOOD
COVENANT
OF
JESUS CHRIST**

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CONTENTS

Forward	iv
Partakers of the Covenant	1
Understanding Covenant	3
God's Covenant With Abraham	5
Entering Covenant	10
The Covenant Meal	14
Covenant Blessings	28
Something More Wonderful	35

Forward

All Christians should know that it is by the blood of Jesus that we are cleansed from sin and reconciled to God. Some believers know that because Jesus shed His blood we are now able to enter into an intimate relationship with Him and also with God the Father. These are essential things to know. But God has much more in store for us in relation to Him. Everything that God has for us in His kingdom is available now, because of the price of redemption paid in the precious blood of Jesus. In this teaching I pray the Spirit of God enlighten your eyes to see the benefits available to us today because of the blood that Jesus shed for us. Our God's love is amazing.

PARTAKERS OF THE COVENANT

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 in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Ephesians 2:11-13

¹¹Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹²that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 3:2, 3, 5, 6

²If indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, ³how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery . . . ⁵which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: ⁶that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.

The blessings of the promises and covenants of God, which He first spoke only to Abraham and the nation of Israel, are available today to believers in every part of the world because of the cross and the blood of Christ. What most believers do not understand is that the promises of the New Covenant in the blood of Christ make tremendous resources available to us throughout our life times. Benefits that many think will only be available to us in Heaven one day are actually laid up in store for us to take advantage of today.

Notice an important point in the last verse above. We are made partakers of His promise through the Gospel. The Gospel is good news to all mankind, but its benefits only apply directly to those who are in Christ. Read it again. Christ is our Savior from sin and all its effects on our lives. To enjoy these benefits one must first receive Christ as Savior. To receive Christ as Savior requires that we believe that He rose again from the dead and confess Him as Savior.

Romans 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

Then Romans 10:13 promises that all who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Have you called on the name of Jesus, asking Him to save you? If not, do

so today. He will come into your heart and make you one of God's children at once. Then ask God to give you understanding of what you are reading.

UNDERSTANDING COVENANT

Because of what Jesus has done for us, Jewish and Gentile believers alike have all the covenant promises available today. Most do not even know about the covenant. Fewer understand what the covenant does for us. This is not blissful ignorance. The result is lack of resources, failure, discouragement and giving up on the very purposes that God created us for. Everything we need is available to us in Christ. But to most, this is all a dream or a mystery. It should not be.

Psalm 25:12-14

- ¹² **Who *is* the man that fears the LORD?
Him shall He teach in the way He chooses.**
- ¹³ **He himself shall dwell in prosperity,
And his descendants shall inherit the earth.**
- ¹⁴ **The secret of the LORD *is* with those who fear Him,
And He will show them His covenant.**

If we trust (fear) the Lord, He will teach us the way to go so that we dwell in prosperity and our descendants inherit the earth. For this to happen we need a relationship with God in which He reveals His secret and shows us His covenant. As we learn to trust (fear) Him, we find out He loves us and wants to bless us with all spiritual blessings which are in Christ.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ.

While walking in fellowship with Jesus the disciples asked why He taught the people in parables. His answer is recorded in Matthew 13:11. God has included in our salvation that we are to know the mysteries or secrets of the kingdom.

Matthew 13:11 He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.”

1 Corinthians 2:7, 9, 10, 12

⁷**But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God ordained before the ages for our glory,**

⁹**But as it is written:**

**“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,
Nor have entered into the heart of man
The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”**

¹⁰But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.

¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

God has prepared more for us than we have ever imagined. He did not intend that we would miss out on these things but enjoy them fully. To do so He gave us His Spirit, Who reveals the things that God ordained for our glory before He created the world. These things are to be freely given to us. Yet most believers have no clue.

Before we go on, we should understand what a covenant is. As simply as possible a covenant is:

- A solemn and binding pledge of loyalty between two or more parties.
- Giving your life, pledging to put your covenant partner's needs above your own.
- An endless partnership not to be broken under penalty of death.

Most covenants are conditional; meaning failure to keep the terms of the covenant would cost you something, possibly your life. These covenants are bi-partied covenants. Both parties had to live up to the terms of the covenant. Of course, covenants can have less severe terms.

In the next chapter we will look at the covenant God cut with Abraham. That covenant was an unconditional covenant. God bound Himself by the terms of this covenant, but He spoke no binding conditions upon Abraham.

Before you read much further, I suggest you ask the Holy Spirit to open your spiritual eyes and ears and give you a heart to understand the things that He has freely given.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

There are several chapters in the book of Genesis where one can read about the covenant that God cut with Abraham. The covenant seems to unfold more fully each time God talks about it to Abraham. God first offers it to Abraham in Genesis 12. Then again it is explained in chapters 15, 17 and 22. In chapter 15 we read that Abraham asked God how he would know that His promises to him would be fulfilled. God's answer was to cut the covenant with Abraham.

Genesis 15:7-12, 17, 18

⁷Then He said to him, "I *am* the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it." ⁸And he said, "Lord GOD, how shall I know that I will inherit it?" ⁹So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." ¹⁰Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. ¹¹And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹²Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him.

¹⁷And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that passed between those pieces.

¹⁸On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— "

This is one of several methods for confirming a covenant. Here three animals were killed and cut in half and the two halves were placed opposite each other and two birds were killed and placed opposite one another along a path of blood. Covenants were so solemn that blood was shed to seal the covenant. This was called cutting the covenant. The parties of the covenant were to walk between the pieces of these animals and confirm the covenant. You should notice in the account above that only God walked between the pieces of the animals, Abraham did not. The terms of this covenant were only binding upon God.

Other methods of cutting a covenant included cutting the palms of the hands and either joining the hands so that the blood was mixed, or pushing ashes into the open wounds so the hand would heal with a permanent scar. This would leave a visible sign of the covenant. When one covenant partner needed the help of the other, he simply held up his hand and the scar reminded the other of the covenant. Without question he would come to the aid of his blood brother.

This is how it is between men. Covenants are very serious. Yet God is even more honorable than men. When God swore an oath to confirm the covenant again in Genesis 22, there was no one greater than He to swear by so He swore the oath by Himself. God holds His word as more sacred than even His name (Psalm 138:2). A good friend of mine said that God was in effect saying, “If I do not keep this covenant, I will have to destroy Myself.”

God has always been faithful to the covenant. But we men have not been faithful to keep our vows to God. Still God keeps His side of this deal, even to the point of sending Christ to be the seed He promised Abraham. God promised this blessing because He knew men would fail and need a Redeemer. Now all He requires of us is faith in the finished work of Christ.

Galatians 3:16-18

¹⁶Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ. ¹⁷And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. ¹⁸For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

Galatians 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

In Christ, God has replaced the first covenant with a better covenant. This is in fact, what He was promising when He spoke of the seed. The first covenant actually had the seed in it of the better covenant.

But that seed was not Moses, Aaron, the Levitical priesthood, the nation of Israel or the establishment of the law through Moses. The law was given, not as God’s perfect will, but because of man’s rejection of God as a righteous and faithful King over them. They would not trust God to lead them directly, so God gave them Moses as mediator and He gave them the law to guide them, as they demanded. “*Moses, you speak to God for us and tell us what He says and we will obey.*” (Paraphrase of Exodus 20:18-22).

Galatians 3:19–26

¹⁹ What purpose then *does* the law *serve*? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it* was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. ²⁰ Now a mediator *does not mediate* for one *only*, but God is one.

²¹ Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. ²² But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

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

The seed is Christ. The covenant that we get in on is the covenant God cut with Abram, not the conditional blessings God had the priests declare in Deuteronomy 28. Once Abram believed God, then without any works of the law, which did not exist then, God declared Abram to be righteous before Him. God spoke the covenantal promises to Abram without any conditions. A study of Abraham's life reveals that he did many things that would have disqualified him under the Law of Moses and released curses upon him and his house. But because the covenant was not conditional upon his performance, God continued to bless Abraham as He promised. In fact, Pharaoh and later Abimelech suffered, as well as their households when they had done nothing wrong (Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18), simply because God's hand of protection was upon Abraham and Sarah according to the covenant (Genesis 12:3). Though Abraham was wrong, he was protected from his own foolishness and lack of trusting God and goods and animals and servants were given to him by these powerful men. Under the law, when we sin, we die, or we must have qualified priests make sacrifices for us to cover (atone for) our sins. Yet, even then, we remain separated from God, because the blood of bulls and goats could never make us clean before God. Only the perfect Lamb of God could shed His blood and wash away our sins once for all time, as we receive Him, by faith alone.

This is the covenant we are promised as we receive Christ as Savior. Jeremiah foretold this and Paul explained it in his letter to the Hebrews.

Jeremiah 31:31-34

³¹“Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— ³²“not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. ³³“But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴“No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his

brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

Hebrews 8:6, 7

⁶But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Media-tor of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. ⁷For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second.

Hebrews 9:12-14

¹²Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 10:19, 20

¹⁹Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.

Because we could not live up to the requirements of the Old Testament law, Jesus fulfilled it for us. He is the seed by which all men of all nations, tribes and tongues can receive the blessings promised to Abraham through faith. We will discuss these blessings in more detail later in this study. For now, consider that Christ has cut a covenant with God the Father for us. With His own blood Christ entered the Holy of Holies to cleanse our conscience from dead works so we might serve the living God. He paved the way in to the Most Holy Place for us with His blood, so that we can have the boldness to enter ourselves and have intimate personal relationship with God our Father.

Hebrews 10:21, 22

²¹And *having* a High Priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

Though this is a covenant between God the Father and God the Son, we are made partakers of it, in Christ. Jesus did not cut this covenant for His benefit. He cut it with the Father as the Son of Man, so we, as His body, could enter into it and enjoy the benefits by faith alone.

Ephesians 1:19-21

¹⁹and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, ²¹far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

Ephesians 2:6 and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,

As Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father we are in Him. In that position we receive all the promises. When we get saved, Jesus enters into us and our spirits become one with Him. So salvation is Jesus in us. But we must also understand that the precious promises of healing, deliverance and prosperity are a living reality as we enter into Jesus at the Father's right hand. So for the promises to manifest, it is us in Jesus.

2 Corinthians 1:20 For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

The amazing thing about this blood covenant is that as we enter into it by faith alone, God declares its greatest benefit to us immediately. Our sins are forgiven and we are declared in right standing with God, not by our righteousness, but He gives us the righteousness of His Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 10:3, 4 & 3:22). In Christ we can come before His throne and be received as children in the family of our Father in Heaven. In Christ we are accepted, we can sit on our Father's lap, have all our fears removed and be comforted for all we have lost.

1 John 2:12, 13

¹² I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. ¹³ . . . I write to you, little children, because you have known the Father.

This is a great covenant with great promises, all of which are guaranteed to us because Jesus paid the price in full as He shed His blood, giving His life in our place. This is the love of God for us.

ENTERING COVENANT

The Blood Covenant of Jesus Christ has only one requirement for entry by any person. As this is the foundation for walking in the promises of God today we see this one requirement in this verse which relates to the promise of the Spirit. Galatians 3:14 reveals we are to “**receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**” Jesus Himself accomplished all the covenant requirements for Him as well as for us. However, when covenants were entered into between men the covenant partners historically went through several steps. You can study each of these steps in scripture and in the accounts of other historical figures.

1. **Counting the Cost.** Before a covenant is entered into one must understand the terms of the covenant including what is required of each partner to fulfill the covenant and what will happen if one of the partners fails. Because covenants are so serious, they were not usually discussed unless the partners were just that serious.

Luke 14:28, 33

²⁸“For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish it—“

³³“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”

Before the world was made God was prepared to slay His Son for us. He counted the cost to have each of us for Himself and He chose life for us. This is the Father’s love (John 3:16).

Revelation 13:8 . . . The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Jesus knew what it would cost Him before He ever came to earth. Yet in Gethsemane He sweat drops of blood to yield His will to the will of the Father. Before He came He chose us and then again in the garden He chose to give His life for ours (Galatians 2:20).

2. **Covenant Exchanges.** Before David was king of Israel his soul was knit to the soul of King Saul’s son Jonathan. In 1 Samuel 18 they entered into a covenant with one another which cost Jonathan dearly. As they entered this covenant Jonathan gave David his princely garments. David would have given Jonathan his shepherd garments. When we enter covenant, in Jesus, we give up our cloak (excuse) of sin which Isaiah called filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

John 15:22 (KJV) “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin.”

What does God give in exchange for our cloak of sin? Through Jesus God gives us a robe of righteousness. Without His righteousness, we have none of our own to come before God. This gift of His righteousness is critical for God’s purpose to free us of sin and bring us to Himself.

**Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
My soul shall be joyful in my God;
For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
As a bridegroom decks *himself* with ornaments,
And as a bride adorns *herself* with her jewels.**

- 3. Cutting Covenant.** Cutting a covenant was accomplished in several ways in different cultures or circumstances. On page 4 you can read several ways a covenant was cut. In Genesis 15:7-18 God answers Abram’s request for assurance that God will give his seed the Promised Land. He directs Abram to prepare three animals and two birds in a typical manner for cutting a covenant. When a covenant was confirmed flesh was cut and blood flowed. Jesus is the Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world to take away the sin of the world. For our new and better covenant with God no animals could atone for our sin. It required the flesh and the blood of Jesus. In Abrams case, his flesh was not cut, the animals were slain. In our case, our flesh is not cut; Jesus was slain 2,000 years ago. Because His blood paid our debt of sin, once for all, no more sacrifices ever need to be made and no newer covenant ever needs to be cut. This one is perfect for all time.

Hebrews 10:16-22

¹⁶“This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,” ¹⁷*then He adds*, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.” ¹⁸Now where there is remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin.

¹⁹Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, ²¹and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

- 4. Covenant Signs.** In the case where the palms of the hands are cut to seal a covenant, one practice was to rub ashes into the wound so a permanent scar would appear when the hand healed. One needed to only hold up his hand to his covenant partner as a sign that he needed his help. On occasion of an attacker coming against one of the partners, he would hold up that hand to let the attacker know he had a covenant partner. An attack on one was an attack on both. This is how it is in our covenant with Christ. When Satan attacks anyone of us, all we need to do is call on Jesus and Satan knows that we know our covenant rights (James 4:7).

Jesus has covenant signs on His wrists where He was nailed to the cross. Yet in Isaiah, God promises He will be faithful to us with a sign on the palms of His hands.

Isaiah 49:15, 16

¹⁵ **“Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you.**

¹⁶ **See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; . . .**

Because our flesh has not been cut, God has provided another covenant sign for us. When we accept Christ as Savior the Holy Spirit places a seal upon us. This may be the seal of God in the forehead of believers mentioned in Revelations 9:4. In the verse below the word seal has the meaning of ownership and security as well as destination. It lets every demon and all angels know we are owned by God, secure in Him and destined for His home.

2 Corinthians 1:22 Who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

- 5. Covenant Meal.** It was customary to conclude cutting a covenant with a meal of bread and wine. There is so much that is packed into the last supper the Lord shared with His disciples the night He was betrayed. It is only fitting God included this meal of bread and wine into the events before He gave Himself up to be our sacrifice lamb, and then instructed His disciples to share this meal together often in remembrance of Him. Every time we partake of the bread and wine we are to remember this covenant.

Matthew 26:26-28

²⁶And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” ²⁷Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸“For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

We need to also note that when we become believers we are baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). When we partake of Communion it is normally to be shared with other believers. This reminds us that we are the Body of Christ and therefore covenant brothers and covenant sisters together. We may suffer tribulation in this world, but we do not suffer alone. We have Christ. We have our Father in Heaven. We have the Holy Spirit of God. And we also have each other.

Hebrews 10:24, 25

²⁴And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

How do we enter the Blood Covenant of Jesus Christ? His flesh was torn and His blood was spilled, yet we are the beneficiaries of this covenant by faith alone. Jesus did it all. All He requires of us is faith. By faith you will receive and enter into all the blessings of the covenant.

THE COVENANT MEAL

We will look at the Jewish observance of the Passover Feast. By understanding this feast, you see the foreshadowing of what Christ would do for us in the New Testament. This will give you a deeper understanding of the Lord's Supper in your life. When a believer takes the bread and wine with understanding, he steps into a revelation of all that Jesus did for him. Though we examine the Jewish Passover, this is not an encouragement to go back to Old Covenant law to find acceptance before God. That is provided by grace through faith alone in the blood of the covenant. We will conclude this teaching with a clear understanding of what observing the Covenant Meal is really about.

Jewish Feasts

Each year the Jews observed a series of "feasts" or "appointed times." These feasts were designed by God to draw His children to Him and to remind them of His love for them revealed in the miracles He had performed on their behalf. Through these celebrations, God's people were reminded of His desire to bless them with many blessings.

In the Old Testament, several Hebrew words were used which describe these feasts as:

- To dance
- An occasion of joy or gladness
- To celebrate a special day
- Rejoicing, the festive attitudes & actions of celebrating a feast
- Wild and unrestrained actions, like the behavior of a drunken person (feast of Pentecost, the apostles so overflowed with the Spirit that they appeared to be drunk)
- Festive dancing and celebrations, as of victory over enemies in battle.

Notice the repeated theme of celebration and joy. This should be even more true for the Christian. The covenant meal points forward to the day we will eat this meal with Christ in the complete manifestation of His Kingdom. But it is also a remembrance that this is a covenant meal. Covenant meals are part of the process of entering into covenant. When we eat this meal today we are to remember that we are the beneficiaries of a blood covenant between God the Father and His Son, Jesus. As we do, we are stirred in faith to appropriate those benefits today. Jesus paid a high price as the sacrifice lamb to ensure we would not have to pay the debt

we owe. Now He sits at the right hand of the Father with joy releasing those benefits to us. The covenant meal is a time of joy and celebration.

KEEPING OF THE PASSOVER FEAST

Take a brief look at the Passover Feast before we examine the covenant aspects of this meal, specifically. Every year the Jewish nation observed the Passover Feast. They remembered how God saved and freed them from the hands of their enemy. When they celebrated this feast, it reminded them of God's love, protection and provision.

Exodus 12:3–14

³ Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. ⁴ And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. ⁵ Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep or from the goats. ⁶ Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. ⁷ And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. ⁸ Then they shall eat the flesh on that night; roasted in fire, with unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. ⁹ Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. ¹⁰ You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. ¹¹ And thus you shall eat it: *with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. It *is* the LORD's Passover.

¹² 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I *am* the LORD. ¹³ Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ 'So this day shall be to you a memorial; and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast by an everlasting ordinance.

Preparing for Passover

Before Passover could be celebrated, the people were to cleanse their homes from impurity. Every Jewish woman diligently searched her home, looking on every shelf, in every drawer, and in every cabinet to find any trace of leaven. (Leaven is often used to symbolize sin and impurity.)

Though the Jewish people searched their homes for leaven, we do not. We rejoice that the unleavened pure bread of Heaven, Jesus, was broken for us to restore everything that was broken in us. Yet we examine our hearts to make sure that we are properly honoring our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ. We also need to know that no leaven of anger, unforgiveness and bitterness has found a place within us. The covenant meal is a time to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal these things. As He does a quick work within us, we simply repent, make things right and acknowledge that by the blood of Christ we are clean. It is a time to remember the covenant and all that is available to us because of what Jesus has done to draw us close to Him. It's a time to rejoice together as joint-heirs of the covenant. Come to His table and let His love flow over you as you partake of this meal. Then let that love motivate you to serve your brothers and sisters.

1 Corinthians 11:27–30

²⁷ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ³⁰ For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep.

John Sheasby points out the similarity of believers eating and drinking in an unworthy manner in the story of Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9). He ate at King David's table in an unworthy manner. How so? He thought he was not worthy to partake of the King's table because he was the lame grandson of King Saul, who had tried to kill David. He was unworthy in his mind because he was lame and because he was of Saul's lineage. If he allowed such thoughts to keep him from the table, his health might suffer from depression or poor nutrition. He did not understand that David counted him worthy to partake of everything that was his because of the covenant between him and Jonathan, Saul's son. To eat and drink in an unworthy manner is to despise yourself or the others at the table because you do not understand or appreciate the price of the blood of Christ. Jesus made covenant with His Father for our sakes. By His blood we are cleansed of all sin and counted righteous and holy as we believe in our hearts that Jesus is Lord; risen from the dead, seated at the right hand of the Father and we are seated there with Him. In Christ we are worthy to partake of the King's table. In Christ we are heirs together of the New Covenant. We are the bread, the body of Christ. The wine represents the blood of the covenant that makes us worthy. And Jesus delights in our presence at the table with Him and His Father, by the Holy Spirit.

Mephibosheth did not understand the welcome in David's heart toward him because of David's love for his father. We likewise fail to understand the welcome in God the Father's heart toward us. But God's love toward us is more significant. He did not just think of us as an after-thought. His love for us motivated everything He did to prepare the way for a redeemer, to send His own Son as the Redeemer and to ensure nothing prevented the act of redemption. God chose us before we were even born as He prepared Jesus to be the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. You are not an after-thought. You are the whole reason for all that God has done in creation and redemption.

Do not forget this is a time of rejoicing that we are partakers of the New Covenant. So if the Holy Spirit does not quickly reveal unforgiveness or dishonor, do not get stuck in introspection. Rise up and rejoice as you receive the reminders of the best covenant anyone can get in on. And you are included.

The Empty Seat

At every Passover meal before Christ, an empty seat was left for the Messiah. The night He was betrayed Jesus sat in this seat. This practice of leaving a seat empty reminded the nation of the coming Messiah who would set them free.

As we look at this empty place, we are remembering all that Christ has done for us.

- a. He paid for our sins:
Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace
- b. Healed all our diseases:
Isaiah 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.
Psalm 103:3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,
- c. Restored us to the Father:
John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."
- d. Prepared a place for us in heaven:
John 14:2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.
- e. Made us heirs of the covenant together with Him:
Romans 8:16 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.
- f. And gave us the Holy Spirit as our comforter and guide into all truth:

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

Most importantly, understand that the empty seat is not empty anymore. When we partake of the bread and the wine, the purpose is to confirm that we are now in a relationship with the Christ of the covenant. Covenants are between close trusted friends. After the Passover Jesus told His disciples He would no longer call them servants. Now He called them friends (John 15:15). He said He would share everything with them that His Father shared with Him. The covenant promises are ours now. Because the Testator has died the will and testament is in force for all the heirs. We are not only friends, but brothers and sisters of Jesus, sons and daughters of our Father in Heaven and therefore, heirs together with Christ of a testament that is in force today.

Hebrews 9:15-17

¹⁵ And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. ¹⁶ For where there *is* a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. ¹⁷ For a testament *is* in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

The covenant meal helps us remember that we are in covenant relationship, not only with Christ but with His Father. His blood ratified this covenant to bring us into covenant relationship with both of them.

Lighting of the Passover Candles

At the start of the Passover meal two candles are lit. As we light these candles, we remember who we are in Christ. The light of the world is living in us causing the darkness to be moved out of our way. It is this light in us that can bring light into the lives of others and set them free of the darkness that holds them bound.

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.

1 Peter 2:9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The Celebration of Passover

A typical Jewish Passover meal today consists of several elements, each designed to recreate the sights, sounds, emotions, and even the tastes of the original Passover night. Elements on the table at a traditional Passover meal usually include:

1. Shank bone of a lamb-represent “The Lamb that was sacrificed.”
2. Parsley- usually dipped in salt water and eaten, to recall the “salty taste of the tears” shed by the Israelite slaves.
3. A mixture of apples & cinnamon-picturing the “mortar or clay” used by the Israelites in their time of slavery.
4. Bitter herbs (usually horseradish)-bitter taste brings tears to the eyes and is, again, a reminder of the “bitterness of slavery”.
5. A roasted egg-included as a symbol of mourning.

As the Jewish nation partook of the Passover meal, they were reliving God’s miracle. They remembered the cruelty and pain their ancestors had suffered under the Egyptian rule and how God brought their deliverance. We too were held by a cruel master. The devil held us in darkness till the Lord’s light shone into our hearts. By His death and resurrection we were delivered from the enemy’s hand when we took Jesus as our own. As we celebrate this feast we remember the Passover and the sacrifice that our Savior made for us.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

After the Passover meal was over, the Jewish nation took unleavened bread and wine. This represented the redemption of the Jewish nation by the Messiah. Today we celebrate this as the Lord’s Supper.

This is what Jesus did for us.

Isaiah 53:1–12

¹ Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, *there is no beauty that we should desire Him.*

³ He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions, *He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.*

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.

⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

⁹ And they made His grave with the wicked— but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put *Him* to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

¹¹ He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong,

Because He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

The Bread of the Covenant

The unleavened bread is a picture of the body of Jesus. It is made of pure flour and water without yeast. When the dough is prepared, it is pierced and striped with a pointed tool.

The prophecy of **Isaiah 53:5** declares: **“He was pierced for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”**

Three loaves of unleavened bread were wrapped in one napkin. This symbolizes the unique unity of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

When the Jewish Nation celebrated this feast, they would hold up each piece of bread and say: Abraham for the first piece, Isaac for the second, and Jacob for the third. This speaks of a God that keeps His covenant from one generation to the next. Today when believers observe the Passover they hold up each piece of bread and say Father for the first, Son for the second, and Holy Spirit for the third. The second piece of bread which represents Jesus is broken in half. The breaking of

the bread symbolizes the tearing of His flesh in death. The broken pieces are then wrapped in a linen cloth. This speaks prophetically of the wrapping of His body in linen after the crucifixion. The wrapped bread is placed under a pillow to symbolize His burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea; a rich man's tomb. Joseph honored Jesus by placing His body in his tomb. What courage to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus' body. This man showed his love for the Lord by giving just what Jesus needed; a place of honor and rest.

Matthew 27:57–60

⁵⁷ Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. ⁵⁹ When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed.

Now after the meal the pillow is removed, picturing the stone that was removed by the angel.

Matthew 28:1, 2

¹ Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. ² And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it.

All heaven waited for the Son to fulfill the Father's great plan to bring His children home. The earth was witness to Who this was dying on the tree; Jesus the only begotten Son of God. The earth grew dark and shook with such force that the dead were released from their resting places because this was the man that had been there at earth's creation.

Matthew 27:45–54

⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*"

⁴⁷ Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that*, said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" ⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled *it* with sour wine and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

⁴⁹ The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."

⁵⁰ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

⁵¹ Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵² and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

⁵⁴ So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

And now the Son of Man was being crucified on the planet He had created. The rocks were crying out for what was taking place.

Luke 19:40 But He answered and said to them, “I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.”

The bread is unwrapped and held up for all to see. This symbolizes the resurrection of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God was the completion of God’s plan to bring man back to Him. This is a day of celebration. This is a day of victory. This is our day!

Luke 24:1–6

¹ Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³ Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee,

What a day of rejoicing that took place in heaven as the Son of God rose from the dead. What a day of rejoicing that takes place in us when we remember what our Savior did to buy our freedom.

1 Corinthians 11:27–32

²⁷ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. ³⁰ For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. ³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Before one partakes of the covenant meal, he should examine himself before the Lord. Open your heart and allow the Lord to show whether or not you are honoring your brothers and sisters in the body. If you are failing somehow, remember the grace of God to do what you cannot do is available because of this covenant with Christ who has released His Spirit to empower you. Thank Him.

The bread is broken into small pieces and passed to the body of Christ. These words are read to the people.

1 Corinthians 11:24 and when He had given thanks, He broke *it* and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”

“We thank you Lord Jesus for what you did for us. As we have taken this bread, we remember your bruised, whipped and torn body that was given freely that we might be brought back into the loving arms of our Father. God we thank you for sending your Son to pay the debt that we could never pay.”

1 Corinthians 10:16, 17

¹⁶ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

¹⁷ For we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

The Covenant Meal is referred to as communion is verse 16 above. This is about life together in the body of Christ. We may be many, but we are one in Christ. We are one bread and one body. Jesus told those who were listening to Him in John 6 that He is the bread from above and they must eat His flesh and drink His blood. We are now flesh of His flesh. We are bread with Him. Not many loaves, one loaf. This is why one loaf is used in the New Covenant meal. It is good to know the meaning of the three loaves and to observe the Passover Meal to appreciate the power of that reality. But the Covenant Meal of the New Covenant reminds us that we are all members of one body; one bread. So we partake of one loaf of bread together.

The Cup of the Covenant

On the table are four cups. One cup is placed upside down. These four cups remind the people of what God has done in their lives.

- The first cup was the cup of sanctification. We are set apart for God.
- The second cup was the cup of plagues that were not put on the Jewish nation.
- The third cup was the cup of redemption. It was turned upside down on the table. When Jesus observed the Passover Feast, He took this cup turned it over, filled it, then drank from it.
- The fourth cup was the cup of praise for who God is.

The third cup is turned over and wine is poured in. This cup is called the Cup of Redemption. Some of the wine from the redemption cup is poured into the pitcher

of wine that would be used to serve the people. These words are read to the people.

1 Corinthians 11:25, 26

²⁵ In the same manner *He* also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it*, in remembrance of Me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.

Why proclaim the Lord’s death? Because our sins are paid for, the Testator has died and now we are heirs of the covenant with Him. “Lord we thank you for your shed blood that cleanses us from all our sins. It is through the blood covenant between You and Your Son that we are one with You, Father. Because of what Your Son has done for us, the sting (fear) of death has been removed and we walk in that victory now! And we praise You that all the benefits of the covenant are ours now, as joint-heirs with Jesus.”

1 Corinthians 15:55–58

⁵⁵ “O Death, where is your sting?

O Hades, where is your victory?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:16

¹⁶ The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? . . .

The cup of the New Covenant is a cup of blessing. We are blessed to receive it and we are blessed because we receive it.

OUR COVENANT MEAL FORESHADOWED

Exodus 24:1-12

¹ Now He said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. ² “And Moses alone shall come near the LORD, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him.” ³ So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words which the LORD has said we will do.” ⁴ And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and

sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. ⁶ And Moses took half the blood and put *it* in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.” ⁸ And Moses took the blood, sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.” ⁹ Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in *its* clarity. ¹¹ But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank. ¹² Then the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them.”

This event of Exodus 24 foreshadowed the covenant meal we enjoy today. Let’s examine the details.

Verses 3 and 7: The words of the covenant were spoken to the people. God had spoken the Ten Commandments to Moses. He wrote them down in what he called the Book of the Covenant which may have included the other laws of chapters 21-23. Moses read this book to the people and they said, “**All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.**” Of course they failed because the power of sin is the law. We can succeed because of grace. It is grace that teaches us to say, “*No!*” to sin (Titus 2:11, 12) and, “*Yes*” to God.

Verses 5, 6 and 8: Blood was spilled as animals were sacrificed to the Lord. The blood was applied to the people and was called “**the blood of the covenant.**” Jesus is the Lamb of God. When Jesus held up the cup of wine in the upper room, it prefigured His blood that would be spilled that night for the sins of the world. He spoke of it in Luke 22 verse 20, “**This cup is the New Testament in My blood.**” The blood of Christ is the blood of the New Covenant.

Verses 9-11: The seventy elders went up the mountain with Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu. There they saw God on a pavement of sapphire and ate and drank. This was the covenant meal. Today when we take communion it should be like this in several ways. First, it is communion. We can see God. He sits at table with us because the blood of Christ has made us righteous and holy. We can sit with God and eat and drink with Him. No blood is spilled because it was already completely shed on Calvary, once for all time. When we partake of this meal, we can take it knowing He is with us as we receive.

Secondly, the bread and wine are reminders to us that the inheritance of the New Testament is ours now. When we get into trouble, experience sickness, financial lack, suffer loss or feel separated from God, the covenant meal reminds us that we are heirs of the Kingdom. Everything is paid for in the sacrifice of Christ. We can call upon God in complete confidence to meet every need, as heirs. And Jesus never said you need a priest to serve the bread and wine to you. Today we are all priests unto our God (Revelation 1:6). We all have access to Father God and His Son, constantly. Whenever you want to remember the covenant in a significant way, do so. Take the bread and wine alone, with your family, your friends or with the church.

The covenant meal helps believers remember and believe in the covenant promises when they forget and suffer attacks from the enemy. That's what covenants are all about. When you are attacked or suffer lack, you go to your covenant partner and remind him or her of the covenant. Then your partner rises to your aid. God is our covenant partner because we are in Christ. In Him all the covenant promises are Yes and Amen (2 Corinthians 1:20).

The Old Covenant blessings were earned and received as a reward for obedience. The New Covenant blessings are ours by inheritance. As soon as we remember who we are in Christ and relax while partaking of the covenant meal the angels of God are dispatched to minister to us. We have inherited the promised blessings of salvation.

Hebrews 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

Psalm 103:20 Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word.

Thirdly, speak like heirs of salvation. As you partake of the covenant meal declare whatever promise of the covenant you need. Declare God's word and the angels are released to respond as we speak forth God's word. Say what God says and have what God has. We are His sons and daughters.

Psalm 2:7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.'"

2 Corinthians 4:13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak.

The Apostles believed what God said to them. They spoke it, they spoke of it, they received what they spoke, and a great move of God happened.

In the next chapter we will examine the blessings of the covenant that are our by inheritance now.

COVENANT BLESSINGS

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ.

God the Father has blessed believers with every spiritual blessing we might ever need as a child of God living in this world. Those blessings are in Christ Jesus. The most important of those blessings is righteousness. Without it we cannot receive any of the other blessings. So Christ fulfilled the law for us to become righteousness for us and place His righteousness upon us.

Romans 5:18, 19

¹⁸Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift* came to all men, resulting in justification of life. ¹⁹For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Romans 3:22 (KJV) Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe. . . .

All we have to do to be declared righteous by God is to ask Jesus, Who became sin for us, to forgive our sin. However, to forgive sin, blood must be shed.

Hebrews 9:22 And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Jesus became the Lamb of God to shed His blood to pay for our sin, so He could forgive us.

John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

According to the law, a lamb had to be without spot or blemish. Jesus was without sin of His own. He took our sin upon Himself to give us His righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Here we will look at seven instances where Jesus shed His blood to redeem us from sin and give back to us everything that Satan robbed from us. Each of these seven instances He shed His blood He restored back to us a significant covenant blessing. Satan robbed us, but Christ our Redeemer shed His blood to restore to us

righteousness, willpower, honor, health, prosperity, hope and faith which empowers obedience. He also added to us His grace to receive and give forgiveness for every act of betrayal, rejection and abandonment we have ever suffered or afflicted on others. What a package deal, total deliverance from the power of Satan into the Kingdom of the Son of His love. Hallelujah!

1. Willpower. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus **sweat** great drops of **blood** in the agony of yielding His will to the will of the Father (Matthew 26:30-44). In this moment of decision Jesus obeyed the Father, thus remaining righteous before God, whereas Adam decided not to trust God's will in the Garden of Eden. In the first Garden righteousness was lost. In the second Garden righteousness was regained.

Philippians 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

Jesus also restored our will power in His obedience. In the first Garden man lost his ability to easily obey the will of God.

Romans 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how to perform what is good I do not find.*

Man can will to obey God, but he cannot perform his own will to obey God. This is what Jesus restored to us. In Christ, we can now will to obey God and then God gives us the grace to do it.

Philippians 2:13 For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His good pleasure.*

The problem for many believers is that we struggle to obey God in the power of our own flesh. Paul instructed the Galatians that in Christ, we are able to obey God's will as we are led by the Spirit of God.

Galatians 3:1, 3, 5

¹O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, .

³Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

⁵Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

Paul also addresses these issues with the Romans and makes this statement to them.

Romans 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

I like to say it this way, *“Those who are after what the flesh wants set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are after what the Spirit wants set their minds on the things of the Spirit.”* When I want to focus on the things of the Spirit I call on the Spirit of Christ and ask Him to focus my mind and my heart on the things He is doing. I am yielding my will to His will. In Christ, I am able to be obedient.

2. Honor. In the High Priest’s house Christ was **bruised**, *“Then they spat in His face and struck Him with their fists; and some slapped Him in the face” (Matthew 26:67 Amplified Version)*. In this instance the blood of Christ may not have been seen on the surface of His flesh, yet as He was struck it flowed as blood vessels broke under His skin. He was bleeding on the inside.

Isaiah 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities . . .

Jesus was shamed in the place where He should have been honored, by those He as God placed in authority, and to whose authority He yielded as the Son of Man. He redeemed us from dishonoring the human authorities God places over us on the earth (1 Peter 2:17). In Christ, we can stay in relationships where we are not treated properly, forgive and wait for God to redeem the relationship. Some relationships cannot be set right. In the case of David and King Saul, David had to flee for his life. Still he honored Saul no matter what Saul did to him and God honored David, raising him up to be King, just as He had ordained before He created David.

3. Health. At the trial before Pilate Jesus was **scourged**. It is said there are 39 classes of disease. Jesus bore 39 stripes, one for each class of disease. He bore our sickness and disease so that He could destroy the works of the devil. Christ has redeemed our health. Jesus does all things well.

John 19:1 So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged *Him*.

Isaiah 53:5b The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

Exodus 15:26 And said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His

statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you.”

These words the Lord spoke through Moses were part of the covenant God cut with the nation of Israel. They required obedience to receive the blessing. In this better covenant with Christ, His obedience on the day He was scourged paid for our failure to obey today and tomorrow. Today He is looking for faith. Do you believe He has paid what you are unable to pay for your salvation? He has also paid what you cannot pay for your healing. Such is the love of God.

4. Prosperity. Before Pilate sent Jesus to be crucified his soldiers placed **crown of thorns** on His head.

John 19:2 And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put *it* on His head, . .

Genesis 3:18, 19

¹⁸ **Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field.** ¹⁹ **In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread . . .**

Thorns and thistles are not a good sign to a farmer. They multiply and injure the ground, choke the good seed and destroy the hope of the farmer. **“In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread.”** Instead of sweat, thorns pierced the brow of Christ and blood flowed down His face. He redeemed us from poverty and restored personal and family blessings. In the New Covenant we can have a personal relationship with God in which He leads us out of personal and family curses into His divinely planned destiny for our lives.

Galatians 3:13, 14

¹³ **Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree”),** ¹⁴ **that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

5. Hope and Help. Jesus **carried the cross** on which He would be crucified to Golgotha. The wounds on His back from the scourging He received opened up and soaked the streets with His blood. As the people who loved and cared for Him looked on they saw their hope dying before them and they surely felt helpless to do anything to stop it.

John 19:17 And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called *the Place of a Skull*, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.

As the blood of Christ spilled on the streets where the people lived, He was redeeming their hope and their help. When we are weak, He is strong.

2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

⁹And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

When we need the help of God, He wants us to come boldly to His throne to receive His grace and His help in the time of our need (Hebrews 4:15, 16). Sometimes Christ Himself provides that help. Other times His help comes in the form of the body of believers.

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

6. Faith. As **Jesus was crucified** on the cross He defeated Satan and his schemes to hold us in bondage.

John 19:18 Where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.

When Adam ate of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil his unbelief and disobedience gave to Satan the authority and dominion that God had given to Adam over the earth. The blood that Jesus shed as He was crucified on the cross redeemed us from the curse of the law and restored our dominion and authority over the earth. Before Christ ascended to the right hand of the throne of God He informed the disciples and the church through all time that He had regained the authority that Adam lost in the Garden of Eden.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

In this process He has restored to us great faith. However, great faith is not abundantly evident in the body of Christ. For the most part, the members of the Lord’s church have little faith. We have tried to generate that faith ourselves. That is not what God intends. He is the source of our great faith, not we, ourselves. Remember that Jesus is the Word of God and faith comes as we hear the Word of God (Romans 10:17). As we hear Jesus, we receive faith, His faith. His faith is always great faith. His faith is the faith we can live by; the faith of the Son of God.

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Galatians 2:20 (KJV) I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

The crucifixion was Christ yielding to the demands of the law, on our behalf, to fulfill the demands of the law and end forever its claim on Him or on any of us. On the cross He set us totally free, as He, to enter fully into the life of the Kingdom of God. By faith He extends to us the full effects and benefits of His crucifixion and resurrection. The life of Jesus has been imparted into my dead corpse to resurrect me. I live, but only because of union with Christ, Who is my life. I have real life because He Who is real life lives in me.

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

7. Mercy and grace for forgiveness. The last instance of Jesus shedding His blood for our redemption occurred as the soldier **pierced His side** with a spear.

John 19:34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

Isaiah 53:3, 4

³ He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

I believe that as Jesus' side was pierced His heart was pierced. He suffered betrayal, rejection and abandonment. These were real experiences as was prophesied by Isaiah. However, Christ did not succumb to the temptation to die in depression. He suffered these experiences at the hands of men to redeem us from their power. Betrayal, rejection and abandonment happen to some of us as well. Yet in redeeming us from them, Christ redeemed us from our past. The sins of others against us and our sins of judgment and retaliation are forgiven in Christ. Jesus defeated the power of these events and gives us mercy and grace. He gives us mercy and grace for ourselves and mercy and grace for others. As we freely forgive others we enjoy the liberty of full access to our God's throne of mercy and grace. We now have the power to forgive all offenses against us and to live free

from the spirits who would use unforgiveness as a tool to torment our souls (Matthew 18:34).

Matthew 6:14, 15

¹⁴“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

The only thing that stands in the way for many is their demand that someone pay for the injustices done to them. There is no freedom for the soul who condemns others while excusing his/her own sin. God is offering us freedom in the power (grace) that Jesus has restored to us to forgive our enemies and the betrayals of our friends.

James 5:9 Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

James 2:13 For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

I urge you, use the power of God extended to you in Christ to forgive every offense. God has never betrayed us, rejected us or abandoned us. In Christ, we are accepted into an intimate relationship with Him and with God our Father. Jesus paid this price ultimately for our reconciliation with our Father in Heaven. Let's enter in and enjoy the full blessings of this covenant relationship with God.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

¹⁸Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

SOMETHING MORE WONDERFUL

Now something more wonderful is true. By this blood covenant the way into the Holy of Holies has been opened to us.

John 19:30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Matthew 27:50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.

“It is finished!” This was the last cry of Jesus. Then He gave up His Spirit. Everything was now accomplished to open the way for us to come directly to the Father and be accepted by Him as sons and daughters of the Most High God.

Matthew 27:51-54

⁵¹Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, ⁵²and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; ⁵³and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, “Truly this was the Son of God!”

The veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. This veil was the doorway to the Holy of Holies. God ripped it with His own hand to open the way for us to come in to Him. In the natural realm a material veil was rent. In the spiritual realm the veil was the flesh of Jesus. Man cut the flesh of Christ, and the veil was rent in the temple.

Hebrews 10:19, 20

¹⁹Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.

In this moment, righteous souls kept captive by Satan for centuries were set free. Do not be held captive by Satan’s lie that your sin today will cause God to condemn you. Christ paid forever, once for all time, the price for your forgiveness every time you fail. When you fail today or tomorrow come to the throne and be received by the Father. The blood covenant of Christ ensures that when you fail, there is a way in to the Father where you can find out, He still loves you, has forgiven you in Christ and is ready to receive you and help you.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

When do you need mercy? When do you need grace?

You need mercy when you fail. Sin is failure to trust and obey God. The blood covenant opens the way to your Father, when you need His mercy and His forgiveness. Come then. He welcomes you.

Then as you confess sin and receive His righteousness, He gives you the help you need to rise up and stand before Him. In these moments, as our hearts are open to Him, He gives us grace to see how to overcome. He reveals His secret and the mysteries of the covenant. And He empowers us to rest in Him, in peace and joy. In this place of mercy and grace (the mercy seat/secret place) He speaks the word by which you overcome the enemy. A word that reveals the victory of Jesus releases faith in your heart and you know you can do what God is showing you. His Word (Christ) becomes the faith by which you are able to obey and overcome.

1 John 5:3-5

³For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. ⁴For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Christ is our door to the Father.

John 10:7 Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.”

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Come to the Father!

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 in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”