

Covenants

Introduction

In an effort to enhance our understanding of Proverbs, the Old Testament in general and, for that matter, the entire Bible, the author is going to examine the concept of 'covenant.' The motivation for this is the word Jehovah or YAHWEH, the tetragrammaton, which again appears in Proverbs 3:5. And as will be seen, JHWH always speaks of the God of Covenant.

Psalm 25:14 reads, *"The Lord confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them."* And have you noticed how no matter where one stops to do a study in the Bible, whether it be Moses or Joshua, or Samuel, or David, or Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, or Isaiah, or even our Lord in His Incarnation in the New Testament, that they know something? It is almost as if they look across time and space and wink at each other. For the way that Elijah lived, prayed and depended on God has a parallel in Joshua's life. Abraham and Jeremiah seem to be almost identical in their 'faith-walk' with God. It is as if they know a secret. And the author maintains that this secret is an understanding of 'covenant.'

Therefore, if we can know that same secret, we, too, perhaps can live like these great 'lions of God.' This 'confiding' might put us in the same old boys' club as these great believers. Psalm 103:7 reads, "He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel." That is God told Moses 'why' He was doing certain things; He took Moses into His confidence, His motivation. Whereas with Israel, they only saw what God did. They did not know why He did it, they did not know where it was leading. And this is why each miracle stood alone; Manna comes from heaven, but a few days later they are complaining that they are thirsty. The people received God's blessings, but Moses knew why they were there and Moses knew why he could approach God and make requests.

And the concept of 'covenant' explains why blessings exist. The Bible, then, is a covenant book; it declares a covenant purpose. And no other religion

has such an idea: that a god, of his own free will, his own initiative, would enter into covenant with a people. Covenant, then, is not just another subject in Scripture; it is much more. Covenant is the very foundation upon which everything in Scripture is sustained. Covenant couples the Old Testament with the New Testament.

What, then, is a covenant? Covenant is a blood pact for life or death between two participants. And covenant was always made escorted by the shedding of blood and the swearing of an oath. Covenant, then, is a life and death relationship that can never be disregarded or abrogated. Never. And in the Bible, it is God that takes the initiative and makes a covenant with mankind. Thus, in Scripture covenant is a blood pact for life or for death between two parties, attended by a sacred oath, inaugurated and administered by a Sovereign God.

Since covenants had no 'escape clause,' they were never entered into haphazardly. In fact, the covenant concept prevailed over even family ties. Indeed, at the present juncture in Arabia, the maxim exists, "Blood is thicker than milk." By this is meant that even though we had the same mother, and are 'milk brothers,' the blood covenant is more vehement than this familial bond.

And this concept is foreign to Western philosophy, where we have accepted mendacity as a way of life. For no one really believes politicians or their press secretaries. In the West, individuals give their word until it hurts them, and then they break it. For the concept of covenant is not typical to rational human beings. In contrast, though, undying loyalty and absolute faithfulness is typical of God. And when covenant is abrogated, even between human parties, it is as if they have slapped God in the face. For Amos 1:9 says, "For three sins of Tyre, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath." That is God will not withhold discipline to Tyre. Why? "Because she sold whole communities of captives to Edom, disregarding a covenant of brotherhood." Tyre abrogated covenant. And in Joshua 9, the Gibeonites deceived Joshua and

entered into covenant with him. Thereafter the other tribes of Canaan attacked the Gibeonites, and the Gibeonites requested aid from Joshua. And even though he had been lied to, and had been instructed by God Himself to obliterate all the tribes of Canaan, Joshua honored his covenant. And God agreed with Joshua, and God performed a miracle to honor this counterfeit covenant – the sun stood still! Thus, regardless of the circumstances, from God’s viewpoint, covenant cannot and should not be invalidated. Covenant is immutable.

For example, suppose two nations desired to enter into covenant. Each nation would select a representative, and the representatives would meet; weapons would be exchanged, i.e., the strengths of each nation would be swapped. Cloaks would be exchanged; for the cloak was the ‘selfhood’ of each man and thus each nation. Then, covenant sacrifices were brought, two bulls. The bulls would be split down the middle, and between the halves would be a pool of blood. Then the representatives would walk through the blood and around the drawn carcasses in a figure eight (this is the provenance of the symbol for infinity). And they would finish their promenade standing in the blood, facing each other. And the statement being made was this: “this covenant is to life, and if it is broken, I will die even as this animal has died. Unto death I make my vow.” And it is fascinating to note that the Hebrew word for covenant, *BERITH*, is defined as “to cut.”

And in the Old Testament, the life of the animal is declared to be in its blood. So blood represented life in this ceremony; thus to shed blood was a judgment on life. The concept, then, was loyalty to the point of death. Only death could discharge the obligation of the covenant.

Then the treaty would be written, i.e., what each nation would do for the other. Then it would be signed by the representatives and sealed before all the witnesses. Then the representatives would be cut; in some instances the palm would be cut and the two representatives would clasp hands, intermingling their blood. And Scripture confirms this in Isaiah 49:16, “See, I (God) have engraved you on the palms of my hands.” Or, in many cases, the wrists of the representatives would be cut, and the arms (the symbol of strength) would be raised to God as the blood ran down the arm, and the oath of efficacy would be taken. Then the wrists would be brought together. And Scripture confirms this method in Isaiah 62:8, “The Lord has sworn by his right hand and by his mighty arm.” Here, then, is

God taking oath by his Omnipotence.

And it is fascinating to note that the flags of most nations of the world contain the color red. And the red is the reverberation of ancient covenants, i.e., the people of that nation have declared that they have been forged together as one nation, for life or for death.

The scars of the two representatives were the living seals of the covenant. A living reminder of a covenant to death. Then the representatives would exchange names, i.e., each nation would add to their reputation the other nation’s reputation. And this exchange of names meant “blood brothers.” The two nations were now closer than blood brothers, closer than family. And this is probably the provenance of a woman taking the name of her husband in marriage, or at least hyphenating her name.

And the covenant implied two things: lovingkindness and remembrance. All actions would be based upon lovingkindness and the covenant would always be in the forefront of each nation’s mind.

Then, the covenant meal would be celebrated. The eating was a statement of covenant. The two representatives would sit down to a meal with their hands upon the table. Each would eat bread, signifying ‘all that I am is yours,’ and each would drink from the same cup, signifying ‘I will shed my blood for you.’

And what is so significant concerning this process is that God Himself has entered into covenant with mankind from the beginning. No other religion in the world has such a marvelous article of faith and covenant.

As illustration, I Samuel 18 and 19 relate the covenant of David and Jonathan. These two men performed the aforementioned rituals. And remember, that Jonathan was the son of Saul ben Kish, who hated and despised David. Both these men, David and Jonathan, were the representatives for all their descendants, for their houses, for their tribes. They vowed never to leave, never to forsake. Jonathan later had a son, Mephibosheth, who was raised in the royal palace of Saul, whose passionate hatred of David pervaded his entire family. Then Saul and Jonathan were both killed while in battle against the Philistines. David’s lament was heart-breaking. While David cried, the family of Saul fled, taking Mephibosheth with them. For they were convinced that as soon as David became king he would murder them all. But as his nurse was

racing down the stairs, Mephibosheth was dropped, and both his legs were broken. He became a paralytic for the rest of his life. He was raised to hate David by his family. His was brainwashed against David. The entire family lived as outlaws. In the meantime David searched relentlessly for some relative of Jonathan to whom he might fulfill the covenant; for everyday David looked at the living reminder of that covenant: the scar on his wrist. Finally, David located Mephibosheth, and sent troops to secure him.

And there, as he crawled in before the King of Israel, Mephibosheth waited to be murdered. Yet miraculously, David stated that you are now a prince. You are accepted as if you were Jonathan. Why? And David pointed at the scar on his wrist. Because of the covenant made before you were born. And Mephibosheth had to make a decision. He had to change his mind about David. And he did. He changed his mind because he was accepted; he was not accepted because he changed his mind. In effect, then, he was accepted before he was born.

And here, of course, is the family of mankind portrayed; for born into mankind was the representative of God, God Himself as Man. This Man, this Christ, was our covenant representative. Mankind was accepted before being born. And Christ walked through the shed blood of Himself. And when He rose from the dead in Resurrection, this was the sign that the covenant was sealed. And most interesting, our Lord, even in His resurrection body, bears the scars on His wrists where the nails went in. And when He entered the upper room, the first thing our Lord did was show His wrists.

And like Mephibosheth, mankind is born suspicious and wary of God. If God gets us, because of our sins, we will be destroyed. But just as when David met with Mephibosheth, David was being faithful to Jonathan, so also when we meet with God, i.e., when we change our minds about God, God is faithful to His Son. For covenant has been made. And lovingkindness and remembrance are the foundation of His present actions toward mankind.

Psalm 63:3 reads, "*Because your love is better than life.*" The word for "love" here is a covenant word. It is defined as "steadfast love." And remember, that in his song, Moses said, in Exodus 15:11, "Who among all the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you – majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?" And in some strange way, we, at our present juncture in history, have lost sight of this aspect of God.

We speak the word, "Hallelujah." And this word is usually translated "praise." However, it means "to boast, to rave, to brag." And how many of us "boast" or "brag" about our God? A God that has entered into covenant with mankind. Where has the excitement about God disappeared to? We have become hypercivilized epicenes, politely acknowledging God, yet never knowing Him, or rejoicing in His covenant with us.

What kind of God would do such a thing? Answer: God is love. Thus, the God that is always there, the God that is all-powerful, the God that is all-knowing, the God that is perfect Righteousness, the God that is perfect Justice, Sovereignty, and Veracity, is Love. For the Apostle John hears in Revelation that "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah has overcome." And John turns, and rather than beholding a terrible, ferocious beast, he sees a Lamb that has been slain. Thus, God is Love.

This word, love, in today's society, is almost useless. For it is vastly overused: "I love ice-cream. I love baseball." Eighty percent of all songs are written about love. It is nothing more than a sound of appreciation anymore. For mankind discards the objects of his love capriciously.

Love, then, is the way God is. God's love reaches out and down. God's love reaches even to His enemies. God, then, is the reverse of everything that mankind would expect it to be. For He reaches out to all. To all races, to all religions, to all. Even to those that mankind would call "trash." Now be careful, the author is not saying that sin is not sin or that mankind is worthy. But Christ said "they are lost." And remember, God does not 'fall into love.' God is love; God has chosen to love because He is love; God does not just love the best and the highest, the most beautiful. For if this were so, then today we would be saved, and tomorrow we would be damned – for we might do something that would cause God to fall out of love with us.

This, then, is the God who enters into covenant. When mankind enters into covenant, mankind negotiates. When God initiates a covenant, He does not negotiate; no vote is taken, no opinion is sought. Mankind's only choice is to enter or not, to obey or not. And God enters into covenant on the basis of grace, i.e., He does it because He wants to, not because mankind asked Him to.

And the single word that describes covenant is "lovingkindness." When mankind made covenants it was strained. And this is the reason for the elaborate ritual: blood, vows, the death of animals.

Mankind begins with the covenant, the ritual, and through this life and death binding, hopes that the covenant can be fulfilled, and that lovingkindness will be a result. Whereas with God, because of His lovingkindness, He enters into the covenant. So with God the ritual of a sacred oath is that mankind might understand what is taking place. For mankind is suspicious of just His word.

Lovingkindness, then, is indicative of a love founded in a covenant. Lovingkindness is “tenacious love; a love that will not let go.” It is loyalty even when acknowledging a failure. It is the love of a mother for her child. It is a love that “pursues.” Lovingkindness is an “action word.” It is something that is done, not something that is discussed about, analyzed and dissected.

Exodus 33:18 reads, “*Then Moses said, ‘Now show me your glory.’*” And in Exodus 34:6,7, Who and What God Is was revealed to Moses: “*And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, ‘The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation.’*”

Here, then, God states unreservedly that He is “lovingkindness,” and that He punishes only those who abrogate His covenant, i.e., those who commit the sin of their fathers, which sin is self-sufficiency, or cutting themselves off from the life and love of God. In other words, mankind must fight his way through the love of God to receive punishment!

And this is why, in Psalm 63:3, the Psalmist states that he will “boast” of his God, of the “lovingkindness” of his God. Hebrews 13, verses 5 and 6, state, “...because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me.’” And the same passage from the Contemporary English Version reads: “The Lord has promised that he will not leave us or desert us. That should make you feel like saying, ‘The Lord helps me! Why should I be afraid of what people can do to me?’”

This, then, is “lovingkindness;” and this is the way God is. And this is the reason that God entered into covenant with mankind.

Covenant of Beginnings (The Edenic Covenant)

Genesis 1:26ff, “*Then God said, Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground. Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground.’*”

The word covenant, BERITH, does not occur in this particular passage; however, the passage contains all the aspects of covenant, except one, and even that one eventually appears; and Scripture, in retrospect, describes this passage as a covenant. Jeremiah 33:20 reads, “This is what the Lord says: If you can break my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time...” This verse refers back to a covenant that God made in which day became day, night became night, and the physical laws of the universe were established. Thus, this covenant provided order to the universe. Hosea 6:7 reads, “Like Adam, they have broken the covenant – they were unfaithful to me there.” Here, then, God accuses Israel of breaking covenant just as Adam did.

Thus, when Adam fell, he broke covenant with God. Thus, if this passage in Genesis chapter one is a covenant, then God has committed Himself to the wise ordering and continuation of the universe, i.e., God did not initiate Creation and then allow the subsequent sequence of events to happen haphazardly. Creation, then, was not a casual or chance event. This is not God the dilettante dabbling in His workshop.

Man, then, is not a sophisticated ape, the product of evolution. Man was made “in the image of God.” And this means that mankind has a purpose, a meaning, a reason. And part of that intent is a covenant relation with God – to demonstrate Who and What God is. For Adam did not have to seek after God; he was immediately introduced to God, a Personal Creator.

The covenant in Genesis 1 contains no blood; however, the concepts of life and death are present –

a pact of life and death. Obey and live; disobey and die. And the participants of the covenant are: God, the Creator, the originator of the covenant; and God chooses to create. And this is pellucid Omnipotence; for God required no raw materials – out from nothing something was instantaneously produced. And the other participant is man. Adam was the covenant representative of all mankind. Robert Thieme denominates this concept as “federal headship.” In other words, all the future, unborn, members of the human race were in Adam. And God makes man in His own image. There are certain aspects of man, then, that are similar to God – thus, man can understand something of God.

Man was part of the Creation, yet he was to be lord over the earth. The image of God is intelligence or self-consciousness, i.e., the ability to recognize that one exists. The image of God also contains free-will and the idea of work, or limited-creation. Thus, people, the concept of individuals, takes on a whole new meaning. And this is why mankind rages when human beings act like animals, i.e., mankind knows that human beings were made for something better. “And rage is part of compassion” in this instance.

The terms of this Covenant of Beginnings are:

- Reproduce, “be fruitful and increase in number.”
- Administrate over the earth and its inhabitants.
- Maintain a relationship with God; and according to Bishop Smith this is the Sabbath, or “rest.” And the Sabbath is “satisfaction;” that is, God observes what He has done and said, “it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31) And mankind was to “rest” in God; in other words, mankind was to be “satisfied” with, and delight in, God; and mankind was so created.

And it is interesting to note, that our Lord Jesus Christ chose to be in the tomb on the Sabbath; that is, He took the Sabbath into the tomb with Him. And by so doing, He fulfilled every Sabbath hope. Thus, the end of laboring to rest (the end of the Law), for now we just rest, and our work flows from this rest.

Then God ordained marriage. Man, then, was created to be social; and more importantly, by ordaining marriage God declared that man would never truly live until he became a lover. And not just the

love between a man and a woman, but mankind was made to share and to love in an agape-love sense; and here, too, is the image of God concept: agape-love. Thus, part of worship of God, to have it be complete and fulfilled worship of God, is love (phileo-love) for God.

Then God took Eve “from” Adam, literally, “from the side of Adam.” And most commentators interpret this to mean just the rib of Adam; however, Bishop Smith augments this idea with the following: “from the female side of Adam;” that is, from the female constituent or feminine quantum of Adams nature. And God also physically built Eve from the rib of Adam, and Robert Thieme once defined this as “right woman,” i.e., there is corresponding, fulfilling, fitting female for every male, and vice versa. And this concept is found and sustained in the term “helpmeet;” which is more correctly rendered “corresponding;” that is, “one who stands eyeball to eyeball and aids.”

And in the woman, Adam recognized one like himself, but different: ISHAH. This term provides personhood, self-hood, uniqueness and individuality to women. Females, then, are people.

Before the Fall, then, she was ISHAH, “this beautiful person,” and after the Fall she was Eve. And Eve means “mother;” the mother of all living.

And this Covenant of Beginnings, thereupon, provides a reason for marriage; for marriage says that mankind is different – made in the image of God. Thus, mankind does not just “mate” like the lower animals. Man and woman, then, don’t just produce children; they do more, much more, they celebrate love for each other, and love for God. This covenant, then, precludes homosexuality, polygamy and divorce. And our Lord, later said, “Divorce is allowed because of the hardness of your hearts; but it was not so in the beginning.”

This Covenant of Beginnings also ordained the concept of work. Animals exist. Mankind changes things; mankind is allowed to create in a finite, limited manner. And this explains the concept of change: new models of cars, poetry, books, new TV shows, symphonies, dance, operas, rock n roll, etc. These concepts speak of the “image of God.” For mankind creates through work. Work, then, when viewed from this new perspective, actually glorifies God. Adams work, of course, did not involve sweat originally, and the earth did not strive against him.

Genesis 2:16 ff. reads, “*And the Lord God commanded the man, You are free to eat from any tree*

in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." This is quite clear; this is not just a suggestion, it is a command.

What was this "tree of the knowledge of good and evil?" It was a choice. For if there is no choice, there is no free-will, i.e., mankind is innocent, and yet not a finished human being if his free-will is not intact and operative. And the concept of choice involves an alternative. The question, then, is: to eat or not? And the choice is: obey God or not? For mankind did not know what "good and evil" were, nor did they know what "death" was. And Genesis 3:6 states that the tree was "also desirable for gaining wisdom." So Satan did not declare that the tree would make Eve like him, he said, rather, that the tree would make her wise.

The choice, again, is trust God or not. Commitment to God or not? And commitment is the definition of covenant. If they had chosen correctly, it looks as if Adam and Eve would have eaten of the tree of life and would have been secured in their condition, i.e., this would have been their first and last choice, and they would have entered eternal life by stepping from the dimension of time into the dimension of eternity. But they did not.

They made a choice and entered into an understanding of evil as a system of thought: self for self, independence from God. Satan sows the seeds of suspicion about God, for the question is, in effect, "Are you sure?" And then, of course, Satan lies. And Adam and Eve distrusted God, trusted Satan, and decided to depend upon themselves. For Satan said they could, "Be as God." So mankind went from being a giver to being a grabber, a taker.

God said, "Eat it and you die." And this is only natural. If mankind walked away from self-giving love, to self-indulgent love; if mankind walked away from worshipping God, to worshipping himself, then mankind has walked away from Life Himself. This is un-life, and what is un-life? It is death. And this is not mere physical death; this is being cut-off from relations with God Himself who is Love and Life – and this is spiritual death. So mankind's body may be alive, but he is separated inside, spiritually, from God. So death here is not physical extinction, but separation. Thus, Adam was dead while he lived.

God, though, immediately instituted another covenant. Why? Because God is Love, Justice, and Righteousness. And remember, He had committed Himself by means of the Covenant of Beginnings to

arranging the universe. And God being God, that is, if God is God, then His Will, Purpose and Plan cannot be hindered by the mere Fall of mankind, which, of course, God knew ahead of time would happen. And this interposes the question: Why didn't God, knowing ahead of time that mankind would sin, make mankind not sin? Because to do so would have made mankind not human beings, but robots. Robots without free-will; and if there is no free-will, then there is no love. For love is a choice made by free-will.

The Adamic Covenant

The next covenant is the Adamic or Redemptive Covenant. Thus, all the covenants direct us toward what God willed for mankind all along, or from the beginning. For Isaiah 42:6 reads, "I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the nations." So when Christ comes, He rectifies the Fall. He takes mankind back to where he was supposed to be: for when we eat of Christ, we eat of the tree of life and enter eternal life.

And note that mankind still works, still marries, and still reproduces; but all within the context of death and cursings: for work is debilitating, marriages fail because of a paucity of agape love, and child-bearing is accompanied by great pain. In other words, mankind works for himself, not for God. Me, me! Self for self! And this is the direct result of the Fall and its consequences.

The Adamic Covenant presents the nucleus of a Savior. For when God cursed [122] the results of the broken Covenant of Beginnings, He gave the next covenant, that of redemption. First, God spoke to the serpent, then to the woman, then to the man. And this was the order of disloyalty.

The serpent was possessed by Satan, upon this most scholars are agreed. Genesis 3:14 reads, "So the Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life." And God is addressing Satan, saying, "dust you shall eat all the days of your life." Thus, Satan will always be humiliated no matter what he does.

And note that God takes the initiative in this covenant. For the glory of God has been assaulted. Satan has, as it were, declared war on God. Therefore, God not only will vindicate His glory through this covenant, but also redeem mankind. For Revelation 5:9 states, "You are worthy to take up the

scroll and to open its seals, because you...purchased men for God." God, then, is vindicating His glory and this vindication, as He willed it from the beginning, involves and includes mankind's salvation. Satan and sin have ushered discord into God's universe.

Genesis 3:15 declares that God will put "enmity between you and the woman." This, then, is enmity between Satan and mankind, which is fascinating. Thus, God is stating that Satan's present (in the Garden) allies will, in the future, become his adversaries. Satan's defeat will come from the one Satan deceived, Eve. And why is the enmity specifically related to Eve, and not Adam? Because the woman was deceived, she was beguiled. She was guilty, but she was beguiled. Adam knew precisely what he was doing. Thus, womankind is just a little less guilty than man. She will produce the Christ-child. No physical father is mentioned in this statement; and this is the first intimation of the Virgin birth. [123]

And what of the word "seed?" Is this the whole human race? No, for Cain, Eve's first child, is defined, in I John 3:12, as "of the evil one." Thus, by natural birth mankind is on the devil's side. But God places a supernatural "enmity" against Satan through regeneration or salvation. Thus, the seed are those that have faith in Christ, faith in the promise of Christ.

And "he will crush your head." The seed narrows down to One who will destroy Satan. Hebrews 2:14 states, "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil." Jesus Christ, then, in the final analysis, is the "seed of the woman." And Joshua 10:24 reads, "When they had brought these kings to Joshua, he summoned all the men of Israel and said to the army commanders who had come with him, Come here and put your feet on the necks of these kings. So they came forward and placed their feet on their necks." Thus, "crushing the head" also signifies total defeat.

The "striking of the heel" refers to the Cross, as the nail was pounded through the overlapped feet of our Lord. For only in crucifixion can the heel be so "bruised" or "struck."

Then God spoke to the woman. The blessing was that she would have children and, specifically, that one child who shall be the Deliverer. The curse is that "with pain you will give birth to children." Then Genesis 3:16 also states that, "your desire

will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." The Hebrew term for "desire" is TESHUQAH, which is also used in Gen. 4:7, and therein may be rendered "dominate" or "overcome." The question, then, is this: is this intellectual, psychological, spiritual and sexual desire? Or is it a desire to dominate her husband? Bishop Smith asserts that since the Fall, the desire of the woman is to dominate the man. However, God continues, "he will rule over you." And according to Bishop Smith, this explains the mess the world is in: woman says, "I want to rule." Man says, "You will not." Thus, marital imbalance. However, it must be noted that many scholars do not sustain this interpretation; most assert that it refers to the female longing for, or needing the man. Nevertheless, both may indeed be true: she desires her husband, but also, when the flesh commands, she desires to dominate him.

Note, too, that God placed man in control. Why? Many reasons are propounded, yet none suffice or may be confirmed. God Himself must be interrogated for the answer. But it is fascinating to note that the woman defeated man in about three minutes at the Fall; if God had not classified man as the authority, one suspects that the woman would have defeated him even more rapidly from a position of equality. And is it not fascinating, although deplorable, that in most cultures and in most nations, man not only "rules over" the woman, but denigrates her.

To the man God said, you will have adequate food, but you will have to fight the ground for it. Man will have to sweat when he works; for the first time, then, work becomes debilitating. And to "dust shall you return;" i.e., separation from God results in physical death. And it is interesting to note that this verse, Gen. 3:19, explains mankind's fear of death. For mankind, as originally created, was not to die physically. Mankind was presumably designed to pass from time to eternity in the same manner as Enoch and Elijah, without physical death. After the Fall, though, death entered. This clarifies why "that pious rage" rises up inside mankind when he views the death of his kind.

And note, that life for most people is nothing more than work, getting enough to eat, having and raising children, bearing pain, and facing death. However, Gen. 3:15 gives mankind hope; there is, then, more than just this. [124]

The Covenant with Noah

Genesis 3:21 reads, "The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them."

Here, then, is the essential aspect of all covenants: the shedding of blood. For you remember that just subsequent to their Fall, Adam and Eve made coverings for themselves of fig leaves. Then the blessings and curses took place (see lesson #11). And then, here, in verse 21, God provides them with new clothing. And the clothing is composed of animal skins. When Adam and Eve sinned, immediately thereafter, they covered themselves. Why? Because they were ashamed, they realized they were naked. Spiritual death has entered into them, and this state is accompanied by shame; the shame of what they have done before God, and the shame in the presence of another human being. Further, Bishop Smith contends that “the nakedness” referred to here is the loss of their glory, which glory was a type or form of clothing; an emanating light or effulgence, as it were. Mankind lost their glory and stood naked. Mankind, then, tried to cover themselves up, almost a means of acting as if the effulgence has not been lost.

At this point, God arrives with the covenant to Adam. Nevertheless, the Edenic Covenant was broken by mankind, and the consequences cannot be disregarded. Sin has entered the world. And the penalty for the transgression was spoken by God Himself in Genesis 2:17, “for when you eat of it you will surely die.” The race of mankind was not decimated physically, yet they have lost contact with, or been cut off from, God; but God is God, and He cannot condone sin or consort with sin. Yet He makes another covenant with Adam, and continues to have a relationship with the man and the woman. Again, though, the penalty must be invoked; but, again, mankind was not wiped out. Then who did die? For someone or something had to die; the penalty cannot be disregarded by a perfect and holy God.

Genesis 3:21 says, “The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” And this was an adequate covering. And to wear the skin of an animal, the animal must die. Thus, God Himself killed these animals. Something must die to satisfy the demands of the broken Covenant. And the skin of the animal is the announcement that blood has been shed. And the animal, of course, is a shadow-type of, an expectation of, Christ on the Cross. Thus, to be restored to fellowship with God, blood must be shed.

Thus, at this juncture Adam and Eve have the promise; the promise that the seed of the woman would crush the head of Satan. This is their gospel, their hope. They know that the Deliverer is coming

through the woman. And it is fascinating to note Genesis 4:1, which reads, “Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.” This is a very strange utterance; and this is the only recorded post-Fall articulation of Eve. Thus, this must be much more than Eve stating, “Its a boy!”

Indeed, some scholars translate this phrase as follows: “I have gotten a man, the Lord.” Or others, “I have gotten a man, even the Lord.” And the Hebrew does permit this rendering. Thus, Eve is saying, “I have given birth to the Man,” i.e., the One that was promised, the Deliverer. Eve, then, understands that the Deliverer would be the God-Man, true humanity and true deity in One Person. Eve believed the promise.

Genesis 5:29 reveals that Lamech names his son Noah, whose name means “rest.” Lamech, like Eve at the birth of Cain, believed that Noah was to be the Deliverer. Therefore, these people had faith, they believed the promise of God. So strongly did they believe that they expected the Deliverer at any moment.

Simultaneously, the pervading influence of sin accelerates mankind’s general degeneration. Compare Cain’s sin with the original sin of Adam and Eve. Cain committed murder with pre-meditation after he has been warned. God Himself warns Cain in Genesis 4:7. And after murdering his brother, he denies it. Indeed, he is defiant: “Am I my brothers keeper?” And later he asked God to place a sign upon him so that others would not murder him in turn. He was not concerned with the fact that he murdered his brother; he was afraid of being murdered himself. Adams sin, in comparison, appears slight on the surface. And this, in turn, emphasizes the intensifying character of sin.

Thus, here is the emergence of two spiritual courses within the human race: the line of Cain, which was sucked down into the vortex of sin, and the line of Seth, which still believed in the promise. And the latter line ultimately produced our Lord Jesus Christ. And the line of Cain is referred to as the “great city-builders.” The cities became cesspools of unbridled sin. Most interesting; for the line of Cain has almost no sense of sin, of wrongdoing. And music and musical instruments were utilized by this segment of mankind to celebrate, and sing of their sins. Moreover, polygamy became pervasive; and human women consorted with demons (Gen. 6:2-4).

The line of Seth were few, and nurtured the promise. And this line included Enoch, Methusaleh, Lamech and Noah. Moreover, during this period of time, evil, sin and iniquity almost swallowed up good. In the end, just prior to the Flood, there was one family that still believed in the promise from God. Genesis 6:8 reads, "But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord." Noah, then, was one of those in whom the supernatural "enmity" toward Satan was placed; for Noah was a believer and trusted in God. And Hebrews 11:7 states, "By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith." Noah had cast himself on the hope of the Deliverer. And Genesis 6:8 declares that Noah was "blameless." This means that he was "complete," or "whole;" and this word is a reference to Noah's agape-love. For it was this love that made him plenary as a human being. It is not a reference to sinless perfection.

And then the flood came. And Noah took two of each species, and seven of the clean animals into the ark. Then an ocean of water, which was in the form of a band above the earth, collapsed upon the earth, and volcanic eruptions from beneath the earth exploded. At this point, the face of the earth was totally changed by water and vast explosions; thus, present day mankind has never seen the earth that God originally created. Then the ark came to rest upon Mount Ararat. Here, Noah took the clean animals and sacrificed them. The first act of man in this new world was the shedding of blood.

Regarding the ark of Noah, the remains of which reside upon Mount Ararat – "Mount Judi near Lake Van – the ark is mentioned by Josephus who quotes Berossus and other historians; Berossus had stated that the Kurds still chipped pieces of bitumen from it for use as amulets. A recent American expedition claims to have found half-fossilized timbers there dating from about 1500 BC. And the Armenian historian, Moses of Chorene, calls this sacred site Nachidsheuan (the first place of descent). Ararat appears in an inscription of Shalmanassar I of Assyria (1272-1243 BC) as Uruatri or Uratri. Later it becomes Urartu, and refers to an independent kingdom surrounding Lake Van, known to the Hebrews of Biblical times as the Land of Ararat (2 Kings 19:37; Isaiah 37:38)." [125]

Genesis 8:21,22 read, "The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood.

And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

Note that God said He would not destroy mankind even though he thinks evil; whereas before the Flood, God said that He would destroy the earth because of the evil that men thought. Is this a contradiction? No, for when God disciplined with the Flood He was demonstrating that He, God, and evil cannot exist in harmony. After the Flood, God states that despite all the judgment, i.e., the Flood and the decimation of almost the entire human race, the heart of mankind and mankind's sin has not changed.

In other words, all the judgment and all the death that could ever be brought to bear upon mankind has not changed the way men think, i.e., mankind is unsalvageable. Thus, God's attitude toward sin was depicted in the Flood. God then demonstrates His grace: mankind cannot be salvaged through this type of judgment; therefore, God states that He will bring the Deliverer out from the human race and that this judgment will be sufficient to salvage mankind. And this, this is Love. For why else would God choose to save that which cannot be saved, which should not be saved, which does not deserve to be saved?

And the "seedtime and harvest, summer and winter" of verse 22, chapter 8, discloses and proclaims a very fascinating fact: that weather is from God. God ordained weather, summer and winter, etc., thus drought and/or abundance is directly related to God. In other words, weather is a "theological problem." [126] This is part of the covenant. Remember, the prophet Elijah, through the power of prayer, stopped all rain because of this covenant.

Genesis 9:2, furthermore, states that "the fear and dread of you will upon the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air." Thus, the animal kingdom, too, has changed because of the Fall of mankind.

Also as part of this Noahic covenant, God stated in Genesis 9:6, "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God been made." This is fascinating; for this verse provides the explanation and justification for capital punishment. And not just to deter others from murder; no, this is not mere defense. But "for in the image of God has God made man." In other words, murder is the violation of one who has been made in the image of God. Therefore, the murder of a human being is tantamount to touching God

Himself. Thus, capital punishment, too, becomes “a theological question.” [127] “To kill another human being is to touch God.” [128]

Thus, this concept, that man is created in the image of God, underlines the sacredness of human life, which is “in the image of God.”

Then in Genesis 9:12,13, God provides the seal of the covenant, the scar, as it were. He placed the rainbow in the sky. And remember, Noah and his family had never seen rain or a rainbow before the Flood. So rather than looking at the scar on His arm, God and mankind look at the rainbow which reminds them of God's promise in this covenant. God stated, then, that He would preserve the human race; and this in spite of sin and mankind's perverseness.

And Bishop Smith points out that the rainbow is reminiscent of the ancient bow and arrow. The bow was a weapon of war. And God placed in the sky His bow; i.e., God had gone to war by means of the Flood against the human race and sin. However, as the seal of the covenant, God turns the bow toward Himself. And this is a slight trace that God has now turned His wrath, the wrath of perfect Righteousness and Justice, toward Himself; and this turning would culminate in the Cross. For at the Cross, the blood of the Son of God was shed so that mankind might be saved.

Then, in Genesis 9:22, Ham sees his fathers nakedness. Here, some scholars interpret, if not the act of homosexuality, then the lust of homosexuality. And quite plainly, the lexical evidence sustains this interpretation. On the other hand, the Midrashic tradition interprets this passage not as homosexuality, but rather as the castration of Noah by Canaan or, perhaps, Ham. And interestingly, to those whose faith is non-existent, this is nothing more than a myth, told to “justify Hebrew enslavement of Canaanites.” [129] And Ham, according to Genesis 10:6, was “the father not only of Mizraim (Egypt) but of Put (Punt), the Negroes of the Somali Coast; and of Cush, the Negroes of Ethiopia, imported to Palestine as slaves. That Negroes are doomed to serve men of lighter color was a view gratefully borrowed by Christians in the Middle Ages: a severe shortage of cheap manual labor, caused by plague, made the re-institution of slavery attractive.” [130] And, it should be noted, lucrative. Such mythologizing, though, denies the interior distinctions, i.e., the inspiration by the Holy Spirit of the Scriptures; and it denies the exterior distinctions, i.e., the teleological, and cosmological

testimony, etc., of empirical and rational evidence.

When Noah awakes, he curses or blesses the entire human race; for remember, that all of mankind descended from Noah's three sons. And it should be noted that many scholars place the Hamitic curse upon all melanoderms. Bishop Smith disagrees vehemently. And indeed, he has lexical, grammatical and syntactical evidence to support him: Canaan, the youngest son of Ham, was cursed. Thus, this one particular segment of the Canaanites emulated Ham in his sexual proclivities. This would explain the subsequent edict from God that all of the land of Canaan must be destroyed. [131]

Shem is then blessed. And the blessing specifically utilizes the covenant name of God, YAHWEH. God, then, gives Himself to the Semites. And this passage forecasts the later covenants. Thus, God blesses the Semitic race(s), not the melanoderms or the leukoderms.

Then, Japheth; here are the whites, the leukoderms, the Europeans. “He (Japheth) will occupy the tents of Shem.” And to “occupy the tents” is a Hebraism for invading and conquering. But when he conquered he found the God of Shem. So even here exists the concept of evangelism, through being conquered; and this verse, 9:27, also forecasts the concept of “client nation,” or “holy nation,” and the covenant to Israel. [132] The Messiah, then, comes through Shem; and Japheth, or the white races (Gentiles), will discover the Messiah through the tents of Shem. [133]

Thus, 5000 years ago, the entire human race entered into a blood covenant with God through Noah.

The Abrahamic Covenant

Genesis 12:1ff. read, “The Lord had said to Abram, Leave your country, your people and your fathers household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” This is the beginning of the covenant with Abram.

One portion of Shem's descendants eventually moved into Ur of the Chaldees (Iraq of present day). And here, even today, still exist the remains of a temple that was dedicated to the moon god, Nanna (su-en, in Sumerian), and his wife, Nin-gal (the great lady). And Ur of the Chaldees of the ancient world was a sacred city, a city consecrated

to the worship of Nanna and Nin-gal. And all the citizens of Ur were sacred servants of the moon god.

Within this city, Terah, a descendant of Shem, lived and worked, according to tradition, as an idol-maker. Terah had three sons: Nahor, Abram, and Haran. Haran had a son called Lot before he died. Thus, Terah and his family were moon worshippers. In some manner, “the God of glory” revealed Himself to Abram in Ur of the Chaldees. At this point, God commanded Abram to leave Ur. For having discovered the Living God, Elohim, Abram had to separate himself from the moon worshippers. And Abram responded to his God.

However, Abram was commanded to leave his family and his father behind, for Terah had not believed in the revealed God. But Terah and Lot went with Abram. Terah accompanied Abram perhaps because of family ties, but more probably because of impulse. And Lot accompanied Abram because part of the promise from God included a child. But Abram was 75 and Sarai 65 at this time. Now why didn't God select a young couple in the prime of their sexuality? To demonstrate Who and What He was and is. “God specifically chose Abram and Sarai because they could not have children. And this demonstrates that helplessness is the way to faith.” [134] Thus, Abram carried Lot along to assist God in keeping His promise, i.e., Abram thought he had discovered a reasonable method to facilitate the fulfillment of the promise. For both Abram and Sarai were unable to propagate due to the sexual decline of age.

And as Abram traveled up the Fertile Crescent, Terah became lonely for his god, Nanna. For this reason, they went to the city Haran rather than Canaan. Eventually, Terah died in Haran. Then Abram went to Canaan. And Canaan was a land of idolatry and religious sexual perversions, including lesbianism, bestiality, and homosexuality. While in Canaan, both Lot and Abram were successful in business and both became wealthy. However, they argued and went separate ways.

Abram at this juncture was discouraged; for he saw no hope of the promise of a child being fulfilled. Then he has an idea: he decides to adopt one of his servants, Eliezer. At this point, God again entered. God said, in Genesis 15:4, “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.” And here the blood covenant between God and Abram is “cut.” Genesis 15:18 reads, “On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, To your descendants I give this

land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates – the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites.” Thus, Abram became the covenant representative of all the descendants that would come from him.

The other representative was God. Genesis 15:1 reads, “Do not be afraid Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” God here, then, gave Himself as the sign of the covenant. For remember, each party of the covenant would give an emblem of their strength. But God has no physical sword or physical shield to give – for God is God and does not carry or require implements. Yet He gives Himself to Abram as a shield. This is awesome, striking, and grand in its implications. This is beyond words. This is nonpareil! And remember, each representative would then walk through the blood of the animals. Here, though, God places Abram in a supernatural sleep; for Abram sees what transpires.

And God, as a great furnace of fire, moved through the pieces. Fantastic! This is God walking through the halved carcasses of the slain animals and their blood. God commands Abram to rest in Himself. For God takes the place of both representatives in the covenant. God Himself took the place of Abram! God took an oath by Himself “that in blessing I will bless you.” God, then, is the sole representative. Thus, God entered into covenant with Himself in Abram's behalf, and Abram became the inheritor of the covenant. God took the initiative, and Abram understood in faith. That is all that Abram could do – for he is resting. Abram did absolutely nothing but believe! The ramifications are extravagant, to say the least.

A question dramatically imposes itself in one's mind: Why would God do such a thing? Why? Hebrews 6:17 provides the answer: “Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged.” In other words, God performed this remarkable act to demonstrate Who He is, and how He operates: He is unconditional Love, and He functions on the basis of Grace. There is no linear logic, no worded thought that can express what this implies to mankind – it can only be acknowledged and felt.

The emotions of any believer should demand an explosive burst of fanfare at this moment; one should

stand, arms outspread, and bellow in response to Gods Love and Graciousness. This is irresistible, if one comprehends it! For here is the definitive verdict! This is our inheritance from God. And as believers in the Church Age we have an even more intimate relationship with God; for we are in Christ, and He in us! For we are the Bride of Christ. We are wedded into the very family of God. [135]

Although Abram, at this juncture, had come to that point of rest in God and response to Gods word, Abram still has much to learn about faith and the essence of a promise from YAHWEH. For when a famine descended upon Canaan, Abram hurriedly left and traveled to Egypt. He failed to trust God to provide for him in Canaan (Abram failed, but he is not a failure, for his faith is growing and God is growing Abram up.)

And as they entered Egypt, Abram notified Sarai that since she was so beautiful the King of Egypt would desire her for his own; thus, Abram advised Sarai that she was to pretend that they were brother and sister because Abram refused to risk death just because his wife was so desirable. In effect, then, Abram morally abandoned his wife. Abram has misunderstood the meaning of faith, and the meaning of the promise concerning the son he is to beget. Abram defines the word promise as God instructing him, Abram, in how to achieve the promise. Abram interpreted this as “you, Abram, must find a way to have a son.” Abram did not understand that God made the promise, therefore God must fulfill the promise. And how is up to God and Gods omnipotence.

And Sarai, too, has misunderstood the promise and its method of fulfillment. For she decides to help God. She presents Abram with a servant girl, and the servant girl, Hagar, is to bear Abrams child. At the birth of the child, the child was placed in Sarai’s lap (a type of adoption), and then Sarai presented the child to the Abram. This child, then, was to be the fulfillment of the promise from God. This was Ishmael. And Ishmael was told that he was the covenant child, until he was 13 years old.

At this juncture, Abram is 99 and Sarai is 89, and Abram has forgotten about the fulfillment of the promise, for he has the son, Ishmael. Then God entered and re-iterated the promise, but this time God stated that Sarai would bear the child. At this point, Abram started to laugh – a laugh that began deep in his belly and worked its way up to a full-blown bellowing guffaw. Have a son? Me and Sarai? Ha, ha, ha, ha! I’m 99 and she is 89,

there is no possibility. Abram thought God was crazy. And God, as it were, laughed with Abram; for He declared that Sarai that would have a child. And they were to call the child Isaac (the sound of laughter). God laughed at human helplessness and reasonable human attempts to resolve impossible obstacles. For with God, “nothing is impossible.”

At this juncture, then, Abram had arrived at the position of total helplessness. For God had allowed Abram and Sarai to try every possible method of fulfilling the promise. And then, then, when every possible avenue had been explored, and they were way too old to even think of ever having a child of their own, then God said, “Now you are ready. Now you have no one and nothing to trust in but Me.” Gods power, then, must now fulfill the promise.

Circumcision and Name Change

Now God changes Abrams name. For remember, that in the ancient covenant ritual each nation would alter its name to include the others name. Abram meant “exalted father.” Abraham meant “the father of a multitude.” And this name change was a statement of faith. For to change your name to “the father of a multitude” at age 99 is either sheer insanity, or sheer faith in the power of God to effect the name change.

And it is interesting to note that the median sound of Yahweh is “aha,” and that Abraham is formed by adding the “aha” infix, as is Sarah, being changed from Sarai by changing the suffix. And more, YAHWEH Himself became known as “the God of Abraham.” The covenant continues. [136]

Moreover, from the physical/sexual death of Abraham and Sarah came life; in other words, Abraham and Sarah had to be sexually and physically resurrected to have a child. Again, a picture of the Cross to come. YAHWEH swallowed up death through resurrected or, in this case rejuvenated, life. Just as Christ swallowed up the spiritual and physical death of mankind on the Cross and by means of resurrection.

The sign or seal of the covenant was circumcision, which is the cutting away of the foreskin of the male phallus. And at the juncture that this cutting took place, Abraham was 99 years of age. This cutting or circumcision represented not only the sexual/physical rejuvenation of Abraham, but also commemorated the establishment of a new race, the Jews. For before the cutting, Abraham was an Akkadian, through Shem. And remember, that

Abraham was the representative of all that were in him; thus every Jewish male thereafter was to be circumcised – the living scar or seal of the covenant. Thus, every time a Jewish male urinates, he is to be reminded of the covenant with God, the Grace of God, the Promises of God, and Gods power to fulfill those promises. For to Abraham, Gods promise had more power and more meaning than his own sexual impotence. In other words, Gods promise became more corporal to Abraham than the reality of his physical existence.

And it is interesting to note that circumcision was customary among many ancient peoples: for the Egyptians it was a hygienic precaution; for the Africans it represented a tribal initiation; to others it was used as a substitute for human sacrifice, an offering to the gods. [137]

The prophet Jeremiah, in Jer. 6:10, reminded the Jews of the covenant God that they had forgotten about: “To whom shall I communicate Gods word? To whom shall I give a warning that they will listen? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised. They will not listen. Behold, the word of the Lord has become a reproach to them. They have no delight in it.”

Furthermore, in Jer. 9:25, God Himself attempted to remind the Jews of the covenant: “Behold, the days are coming, decrees the Lord, that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised.” And in Deut. 10:16, “Moses said, Therefore circumcise your heart and resist no more.” And according to Ex. 12:48, no Jew could participate in the Passover Feast without having been circumcised.

“The Hebrews deemed themselves invincible, the Chosen People, by virtue of the Yahwic mark of a covenant cut in the sacred flesh of their infancy.” [138 Indeed, the location where Joshua circumcised the Jewish males in Canaan was thereafter “known as GILGIL, the Circle, in allusion to the denuded corona and circular scar of circumcision: And Yahweh said to Joshua, This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you.” [139]

Moreover, the phrase, “bridegroom of blood,” is the traditional name for every newly circumcised Jewish infant. And this phrase, CHATHAN DAMIM, has its provenance in the words spoken by Moses wife, Zipporah, in Exodus 4:25, when she called him “a bloody bridegroom,” and then abandoned him.

The Covenant Meal

Genesis 18 narrates the Covenant meal. Three men

arrived to Abraham’s tent, one of which was the Lord Himself. As the meal took place, Sarah was secreted, listening from behind the curtain to what was taking place. And remember, Sarah is about 90 now. And as the Lord declared, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son. Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already old and well advanced in years and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, After I am worn out and my master is old, will I now have this pleasure? Then the Lord said to Abraham, Why did Sarah laugh and say, Will I really have a child, now that I am old?” (Genesis 18:10-13)

And Hebrews 11:11 states, “By faith Abraham, even though he was past the age – and Sarah herself was barren – was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.” So both Abraham and Sarah came to believe in Gods promise, and Gods power. And for this to occur, i.e., the physical rejuvenation necessary for pregnancy, Sarah would have had to become young once again. And, indeed, she did. For in Genesis 20, Abraham again ventured into Egypt, Gerar to be specific, and again Abraham stated that Sarah was his sister. And because she was so beautiful, King Abimelech took her. In other words, a woman of about 95 years of age has been so restored to youth, that she is the most beautiful woman in Egypt.

Isaac, then, was born. Isaac was the first son of Abraham, and Jesus Christ was the last. And YAHWEH, God, has laughed at mankind’s helplessness.

Provisions of the Abrahamic Covenant

The Abrahamic Covenant constantly refers to “the land” and Abraham’s “descendants.” And the term for “descendants” may also be translated “seed.” Who, then, are the descendants of Abraham? All of the Semitic peoples would certainly be included in this term, including the Arabs. However, the covenant refers to a specific group; for God is selective.

Isaac had two sons: Esau and Jacob. However, Jacob is the bearer of the promise. Jacob emerges into twelve tribes, but only one of those tribes is the specific bearer of the covenant promise: Judah. The promise would come through Judah, and His name shall be Shiloh, which means the “worthy one.”

So within Israel there comes to be “a remnant.”

There is, of course, the collective Israel, those who descended from Abraham; but there are also those who are “like Abraham.” This group consists of those who have “faith” in God and the promise. The remnant are those who are the true Israel, those who have faith. They have a faith, a heart that comes from God; and true Israel also has the blood of Abraham in their veins.

Matthew 3:9 reads, “And do not think you can say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father. I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.” Here, then, John the Baptist told the collective Israel that they were not true Israel. In other words, John the Baptist said prove that you are the children of Abraham – do the works of Abraham, i.e., have faith. John 8:33ff. reads, “They answered him, We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free? Jesus replied, I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin... If you were Abraham’s children, said Jesus, then you would do the things Abraham did... You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your fathers desire.” Our Lord, then, is stating that these Jews are Israelites, they are the descendants of Abraham, but they are not really true Israel, even though the blood of Abraham flows in their veins. So a very fine distinction is being drawn.

And in Luke 19:9, our Lord made the following statement: “Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.” Thus, Christ said that Zacchaeus heart was like Abraham’s: a lifestyle of love and of salvation, and faith.

And Paul, in Romans 2:28, said, “A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a mans praise is not from men, but from God.” Paul said, then, that a real Jew is one by faith like Abraham.

Gal. 3:6ff. states, “Consider Abraham: He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness. Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.” A son of Abraham, then, has nothing to do with the blood in ones veins, but everything to do with what is in the heart.

Then, in Gal. 3:26,29 Paul is speaking to Jews and Gentiles: “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized

into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Who, then, is a descendant of Abraham? Anyone who believes in Christ. Thus, anyone who believes in Christ is an heir of the promise that God made to Abraham. Paul is insisting, then, that the covenant is for both Jew and Gentile.

Who is the seed? Gal. 3:16,17 provide the answer: “The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say and to seeds, meaning many people, but and to your seed, meaning one person, who is Christ.” Christ is the seed. And all those in Him become the descendants of Abraham. So what does that make you, the reader? If you are in Christ, a believer, then you are related directly back to Abraham, and you are true Israel or Abraham’s offspring. Not by blood, but by faith. Thus, in effect, you are on every page of the Bible. Again, not by blood, but by faith.

So all those in Christ are blessed. And the word blessing means “empowered, and successful” in body, mind, spirit and thought. Thus, when the Church Age believer is filled with the Spirit, this believer is blessed or empowered with success in every way. For “through you (Abraham) all nations of the world will be blessed.” (Gen. 12:3)

For Gal. 3:13 states plainly, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree. He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.” So your receiving of the Holy Spirit was the promise that God promised to Abraham in Genesis 12. Then, when you believe in Christ, you are an heir of the promise. Thus, you also may be “like Abraham” and walk with God, and express and receive agape love. So if you are in Christ, then you are in the real family of God, a descendant of Abraham. Again, not by blood, but by faith.

What of the “land?” When Adam fell, he ceded rulership of the earth to Satan. However, when the end comes, man will again be lord of the earth. Thus, the “land” becomes salient of what is to come. The “land” is a shadow of something to come. The receiving of the land was part of a covenant; Deut. 5:32,33, state that if the covenant was obeyed they would live long in the land. Deut. 6:3, states that if they obey God, they will live in the land. Deut. 8:19,20, state that if they fall into idolatry, they

will lose the land. Deut. 11:13-15, state that if they obey, then good weather will be theirs, if not, they will perish from the land. Thus, the land was conditioned by obedience. The land was a reflection of their hearts. They could not sin against God and stay in the land. For the land is conditional; for the land is that place where faith in God exists and persists. Thus, when the Jews became apostate, they began to lose the land; for, again, it is a "land" of faith.

And Romans 4:13 states that Abraham was to inherit the whole world. And according to Hebrews 11:10, Abraham was looking beyond the "land" to the "city that God would build." God, then, gave Abraham the "land" in a geographical sense, but Abraham saw beyond the shadow "land," the geographical land, to "the new heaven and the new earth." And remember, the "land" was given to Abraham as an "everlasting possession." This, then, would be a land in God's scope, and of God's making. Thus, Abraham finally understood God's promise. He saw the "everlasting" aspect of the promise; and he looked forward to the real land that was promised, not just the physical/geographical land of Canaan. So Abraham saw beyond the shadow land, the one made of dust and dirt, to the land that was promised. For the covenant spoke of a covenant land, a heavenly land.

The geographical/physical/shadow land of the covenant was given to Israel, according to Joshua 21:44,45; I Chronicles 18:3-8; and II Chronicles 8:7,8. Yet the real land of the promise, the heavenly land, the "everlasting" land, was that which Abraham saw in the future. And for this reason, he lived in a tent, because he "believed in the promise of God," and he believed "that what God had promised, He is able to do." Thus, those scholars that maintain that the land portion of the covenant has yet to be fulfilled are correct, as long as they comprehend that the portion that remains to be fulfilled is the "everlasting" portion. And Abraham saw this, and believed it.

The "everlasting" city or land that Abraham awaited is the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21. This Holy City is described as a "city in the clouds," [140] one that hangs above the earth. And this Holy City is that one "made by God," and it is specifically for the Jews, those that comprise the true Israel (Jews by blood and by faith). For it is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. And this is why Abraham resided in a tent while living here on earth; for Abraham knew that his permanent residence, the "everlasting" aspect of his covenant

with God, was still to come.

Abraham's inheritance of "the whole world," found in Galatians 4:13, refers to the inheritance of Abraham's seed, i.e., those who though not Jewish by blood, are Abraham's seed by faith. These, then, will inherit the "new earth" of Rev. 21:1, which reads, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away; and there was no longer any sea." [141]

The Covenant with Moses (Mosaic Covenant)

The Mosaic Covenant, or Covenant at Sinai, is also called the 'old covenant.' And this phrase will be elucidated as this lesson unfolds.

Exodus 19, verses 1-6, contain the introduction to the Mosaic Covenant. And verses 5 and 6 read, 'Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.'

After God made covenant with Abraham, He then reaffirmed the Abrahamic covenant with Isaac. Thus, Isaac himself received a covenant: the promises of the Abrahamic covenant would be fulfilled through Isaac and his descendants. And Isaac was to pass the promises down to his children. Isaac's wife, Rebecca, before her twin sons were even born, received from God a revelation that the eldest twin would not inherit the blessing, but the younger twin would be the recipient of the blessing. And so it was. Jacob had a heart for the word of God, while Esau had no interest in God or the promises. But Isaac favored Esau because Isaac enjoyed good food and Esau provided it. Then Jacob lied and cheated his father with his mother's help. And then Jacob ran, fearing retribution.

And in a valley full of stones, named Luz, God came to Jacob. This, then, was where Jacob saw the ladder ascending into heaven with angels upon it. And at the top of the ladder was the Lord God Himself, and here the Abrahamic covenant was passed on to Jacob. And in the last chapter of Genesis, the family of Jacob, approximately 70 people, entered into Egypt and received the Land of Goshen. And these 70 people comprised the future of what would become Israel; and with them they had the promises and the God of covenant.

Then Joseph, because he remembered and believed in the promise of God, refused to be buried in

Egypt. And his casket was carried for hundreds of years.

Then the Pharaoh of Egypt placed the Hebrews under slavery, for he was afraid that they were becoming too numerous. And at this point, the Hebrews remembered the God they had forgotten for so long, and cried unto Him. And God, according to the conditions of any covenant, had not forgotten them, but had constantly kept them in mind. The covenant had been in effect all along from God's point of view; God has not stopped saying, 'I will never leave you, I will never forsake you.' And this is where Moses entered history. For Moses was, in effect, a contract or covenant attorney. God sent his attorney to the Pharaoh of Egypt to declare that the Hebrews were His people, that a covenant existed. And the attorney, Moses, provided Pharaoh with a warning.

And as an attorney, Moses began his legal presentation with, 'Let my people go.' Moses was not giving a dissertation on slavery; he was citing the terms of a covenant. For 'my people' is a covenant phrase which delineates a blood covenant, i.e., a contract based upon blood that cannot be abrogated for any reason. Then followed the ten plagues, the first nine of which exhibited the patience and long-suffering of God; for nine times God allowed Pharaoh to 'harden his heart;' and then came the final plague, the judgment of the firstborn. And it should be noted that the judgment of the firstborn was forestalled only by the grace of God, for the judgment should have been immediate. Indeed, Psalm 136:10ff., calls the nine plagues 'acts of lovingkindness' from God. The act of freeing the Hebrews from oppression need not be expanded upon, but the delaying of judgment upon the Egyptian firstborn was also an 'act of lovingkindness' to the Egyptians. They were given an opportunity to change their minds, to behold and believe in the Living God. And interestingly, each of the nine plagues involved one of the 'gods' of the Egyptians. For example, the Egyptians worshipped the River Nile as a god: it was the source of life and fertility. And this explains why all the male infants were ordered to be thrown into the Nile River by the Pharaoh; it was a sacrifice to the crocodiles, which the Egyptians also worshipped as gods, in the Nile River. The Egyptians also worshipped the frogs in the River Nile. And by demonstrating patience and delaying judgment, Jehovah Elohim, the God of covenant, made it clear to the Egyptians that each of these 'gods' was false, and that He was the only true God. And by these acts, these nine

acts of 'lovingkindness,' God also demonstrated to the Egyptians that He loved them, and would allow them to change their minds and enter into a relationship with Him.

And at the conclusion of the nine plagues, the only god left was Pharaoh himself, for he believed that he was the incarnation of light. That is why Ra is the medial infix of the word Pharaoh. For Ra was the deity of light. And the Pharaoh of the Exodus was Ra-amse; and his very name spoke of his deity. And the ninth plague, the supernatural darkness that enveloped Egypt demonstrated that the last remaining god, the god of light, Raamse, was also impotent. For Raamse was impotent in the face of this darkness. Thus, the idols were dethroned.

And during this darkness, Moses told the Hebrews to take a lamb, kill it, and catch the blood in a basin. Then they were to take the weeds that grew in the cracks in the walls; it was called hyssop. They were to dip the hyssop in the blood and paint the two sides and top of the doorway with the blood. Then all the members of each family were to walk through the doorway and sit down at the table and eat of the lamb. The wall of blood was a picture of the covenant that protected them. And the meal on the other side of the door was the covenant meal, eaten once again. And as they ate they were to be dressed for a long journey. This was a statement of faith: God said they were leaving, and they believed it.

The Hebrews, at this point, became the slaves of God, which is true freedom. And at Sinai, God was to meet with them. And on Mt. Sinai, God met with Moses and tendered the next covenant. And it is important to note that this covenant does not replace the other covenants: the covenant of life, the covenant of redemption, the covenant with Noah, or the Abrahamic covenant; for all these covenants go on to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Mosaic covenant is different.

With the Mosaic covenant, God asked, shall we enter into covenant? In all the others, God came and stated what was to take place. This covenant, then, is different from the others. 'If you will obey, and if you will keep my covenant.' Here, then, is a conditional covenant for the first time. And this covenant also contained a clause that stated Israel would be a 'nation of priests,' i.e., they will represent God before the world.

And Moses presented the terms of the covenant to Israel; and they said, 'Yes. This we will do.' Then, at this point, God exhibits His 'awesomeness,' i.e.,

He shows Israel with Whom they are in relationship: thunder, lightning, and an earthquake, i.e., the Omnipotent God. And then, in chapter 20, most markedly, God spoke to all of Israel, to 3 million Jews. But the Jews refused an immediate relationship with God; they wanted a mediate relationship. For they said to Moses in Ex. 20:19, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.' In other words, they requested that Moses be their mediator.

And from then on, God spoke to Moses, and Moses spoke to the people. Then, from Exodus 21 through Exodus 24, the expansion of the ten commandments is given. Then they built an altar with twelve pillars; the altar represented God and the twelve pillars represented Israel. And offerings were made; blood was shed. And half the blood was spread on the altar, which represented God. And again the Law was read. And again, for the third time, the people said, 'Yes. This we will do.' And then the other half of the blood was sprinkled upon the pillars, which represented the people, and upon the people themselves.

A covenant had been made. 'Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the Lord. Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, 'We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey.' Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.' (Exodus 24:4-8)

And in Exodus 24:9, a group of men beheld God and ate a covenant meal in the presence of God. 'Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.' This is unprecedented!

Forty years later, this covenant was repeated to the next generation; and this repetition is called the Book of Deuteronomy, 'the second Law.' And chapter 28 provides the details of the covenant clauses,

both the blessings and the cursings.

Tragically, within six weeks of having entered into the covenant on Mt. Sinai, the Jews were dancing around a golden calf. The covenant had been broken.

Why the Covenant of Law?

First, the Mosaic Covenant was given in order to demonstrate man's guilt before God. The Law proves mankind's sinfulness before an Holy God, Who is Perfect Righteousness. And the Law challenges the inner heart of each person: has the Law been broken by thought, or by deed, or by word? The Law penetrates to mankind's guilt. And the Law provides a standard of right and wrong.

And the Law demonstrates the character of sin: God is love, agape love; and God is true and eternal life (He does not have life, He is life); and to be alive, then, is to live in agape love. And therefore, if a person is truly alive, then this person lives in agape love. And mankind was made in the image of God; thus it was God's original intention that mankind mirror His love and His life. And the glory of God is His Justice, His Righteousness, and His Lovingkindness. But 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'

Thus, sin is failure to act as the God Who is love acts; it is failure to love others with agape love. It is falling short of the glory of God. Thus, sin begins with rebellion against God's love, but is expressed in failure to utilize agape love. Sin, then, is taking for self rather than giving. Too, sin is breaking away from the life of God, from true life. And such a breaking away is unlife or death. Thus, sin is mankind choosing to operate independently from God; sin is mankind choosing un-love and un-life over love and life.

Sin is mankind choosing self for self. And once this posture is assumed, then mankind, when faced with agape love, does not understand or like God's love. Because this type of love goes against self for self, which fallen mankind has selected. Thus, God's love, to the unenlightened, is terrifying; 'It is foolishness to those who are perishing.' For this type of love is absurd to fallen mankind's previous choice of self for self. And God's type of love, agape love, or self for others, says to mankind that mankind is wrong; that self-centered self is wrong; that manipulation of others for self is wrong. Self for others, then, is the direct opposite of that which fallen mankind desires to do. It is foreign to fallen man's method of operation, and method of thinking.

Thus, when fallen mankind comes into contact with God, God seems to be contradictory to mankind. Example: God says, 'If you would live and be happy, you cannot do this and that.' Whereupon fallen mankind responds, 'Yes, but that is precisely what I wanted to do; in fact, I was just planning on doing this and that.' Another example: 'Thou shall not have any other gods before me.' This negative command, then, is a statement of God's agape love, for God so loves mankind that He tells mankind that to do otherwise is incorrect, unhealthy, against God's original intention for mankind; that to do otherwise results in misery, death, and unhappiness. Thus, the Law is a statement of God's love, and a statement of what agape love, or correct love, is not. The Law, then, defines true life, love, joy, and peace.

The Law, then, tells mankind that beyond this is death, or un-life. For if mankind truly understands unconditional or agape love, then mankind would never even desire any other gods; mankind would only desire a God Who has agape love. Or if mankind truly and correctly loves other members of mankind, then mankind would not desire to lie, or cheat, or steal. For mankind would understand that the God of agape love, because of this very love, has already provided more than all that mankind would or could gain by lying, cheating and stealing.

The Law also demonstrates that fallen mankind's religion, i.e., man by man's works attempting to gain the approbation of God, is wrong. For mankind constantly attempts to bridge the gap to God. For fallen mankind is lost and helpless and in darkness. Thus, fallen mankind looks at the Law and says, 'I can do that. Now I know what God wants; I know the rules.' And then fallen mankind attempts to keep the letter of the Law. And by so doing, fallen mankind has missed the whole thrust of the Law. For the Law is love, not just rules. For one can keep the letter of the Law and still hate and despise God and one's fellow mankind.

Thus, the Law was given for another reason: 'that sin might abound.' (Romans 7) In other words, the more fallen mankind tries to keep the letter of the Law, the worse fallen mankind discovers that he is. For fallen mankind can keep the letter of the Law, but fallen mankind cannot achieve agape or unconditional love on his own. For the Law's defect is that it cannot help you. For the Law says, 'Fulfill it or die.' The Law only condemns; the Law drives fallen mankind to helplessness. For when fallen mankind reaches the tenth commandment,

'Thou shall not covet,' fallen mankind inevitably fails. For the tenth commandment states, 'thou shall not even desire to break the other nine.' In other words, you not only do not overtly commit adultery, but you do not lust for another man's wife in your heart. For the tenth commandment totally rejects the concept of self for self. Thus, the Law is not an outward observance; the Law speaks to the inner heart, the inner self.

Thus, God gave the Law to fallen mankind to show mankind how helpless he is. Therefore, the Law was set in place to goad fallen mankind to the Abrahamic Covenant, which says, 'I rest in God; I respond to God,' and by so doing, righteousness is credited to mankind, just as it was to Abraham. God resolves fallen mankind's helplessness. The Law, then, exhibits to fallen mankind that the Cross of Christ is the only hope of salvation. Because mankind is helpless before the Law, and the Law offers no help. And at that point, God says, 'I will help. I will provide a way.'

The Law, then, is a mirror that shows mankind that he is sinful; the mirror, or the Law, was not designed to solve the problem, it was just designed to demonstrate that mankind is wrong. The Law, then, goads mankind to another solution: the offering. And this concept of 'offering' explains the animal sacrifices: that another must take fallen mankind's place. The Law, then, goads mankind to salvation.

And the feebleness of the Law, i.e., that the Law offers no help, was constantly demonstrated in the repeated failures of the Jews and Israel: mankind cannot keep the Law. And this failure explains the words of Hosea to Israel: 'there is no more lovingkindness left. You are no longer my people; I am no longer your God.' The covenant was over. And then Jeremiah stated to Judah: 'The God of covenant, who was married to you at Sinai, has written out a bill of divorce.' Thus, God said, 'Mankind cannot on his own keep this covenant. Therefore, this covenant is old.' Jeremiah, therefore, conducted the funeral of the Old Covenant. Then, graciously, God told Jeremiah that He, God, would 'cut' a new covenant: 'One that would be written on their hearts.'

Christ, then, is the end of the Law to those who believe. Believing in Christ is throwing the Law out the door; for Christ fulfilled the Law – He lived the letter of the Law and He lived agape love, self for others. And believing mankind, now, may keep the Law without appealing to the Law: for God

the Holy Spirit empowers mankind to agape love. Because mankind cannot achieve agape love on his own, i.e., by keeping the Law.

The Mosaic Law, therefore, is not the way to God. There is another way, and this way is the Cross of Christ. And this way is like that of the Abrahamic Covenant: resting in another, counting on another. Christ on the Cross stated that there is another way: and this new way achieves that which the Law demanded. [142]

‘At Sinai He tested them. He rehearsed all He had done in their behalf. He had brought them thus far on eagles’ wings. Would they, henceforth, cast themselves in obedient and dependent faith upon Him; or, would they by relying upon their own strength, their own wisdom, walk in their own righteousness and earn their way into the Promised Land? There was only one true course to follow. They should have confessed their helplessness and cast themselves wholly upon the omnipotence and the grace of God. They did nothing of the kind. With consummate spiritual blindness and offensive self-sufficiency they agreed to earn and merit their way into the Promised Land. With united voice they said: ‘All the Lord hath spoken (that is, all He required of them) we will – do.’ By that response they repudiated the grace of God, set aside the Abrahamic, unconditional covenant and placed themselves on the ground of Law. It was a fatal act.’ [143]

The Covenant with David

The Words of the Lord, conveyed through the prophet Nathan, to David as recorded in II Samuel 7:12ff., read, “When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

This is the statement of the Davidic covenant. The covenant that God made with David concerning the Kingdom of God, i.e., God’s determination to establish on earth His Kingdom.

Before the Davidic covenant is discussed, it is nec-

essary to understand the place of David in the Old Testament. For David overshadows the entire Old Testament and he penetrates into the New Testament so much so that one cannot understand the New Testament without comprehending the place of David in the unfolded purposes of God in the Old Testament.

David’s place goes back to the book of Genesis, chapter 49. In chapter 49, Jacob is dying and he called a convocation of his sons. The convocation was for the purpose of blessing and passing on the promise that was made to Abraham. And Genesis 49 records the blessings of Jacob to each of his sons.

And in Genesis 49:8-12, Jacob pronounces his blessing upon Judah. With his hands on Judah’s head, Jacob said, “Judah, your brothers will praise you; your hand will be on the neck of your enemies; your father’s sons will bow down to you. You are a lion’s cub, O Judah; you return from the prey, my son. Like a lion he crouches and lies down, like a lioness – who dares to rouse him? The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs and the obedience of the nations is his. He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes. His eyes will be darker than wine, his teeth whiter than milk.” And note, that the name Judah, in the Hebrew, means “to praise.”

Notice first, that Judah is to receive the praises of his brothers; Jacob is looking down the corridors of time; and one shall come from Judah that will call forth the praises of the earth. And then Jacob portrays Judah as a lion, in poetic and prophetic language. And who dares to disturb the lion? This lion of the Tribe of Judah will conquer, and he will bear the scepter, the royal emblem. Thus, the kings of Israel will come from the tribe of Judah. And the “ruler’s staff” refers to the king as the lawmaker of Israel. Thus, he is the purveyor of justice; and the phrase, “between his feet,” refers to all the coming generations. And this will be true until the arrival of “to whom it belongs,” or Shiloh. Thus, the tribe of Judah will be kings until the one “who is worthy of praise,” Shiloh, comes. And he will be the final and everlasting King. And to this one, all the nations will belong. And the expression implies that this one is magnetic, this is the one that the nations desire.

And this prophecy and blessing resided in the tribe of Judah. It was passed down from generation to generation of the tribe of Judah.

Moses was not a king; Joshua was not a king; and all the “judges” were not kings, they were dictators or deliverers. And then the final judge came, Samuel, the prophet. And God ruled the Jews through Samuel. But then the people came to Samuel and told him that they were weary of him, they desired a king like other nations. And Samuel attempted to dissuade them, for he said that God ruled over them.

But the people wanted to be like other nations. And it is always dangerous to want to be like everybody else. And so God allowed it: God gave them what they wanted, one of the worst judgments that God can inflict upon a people or an individual. Saul was made the king. However, Saul came from the tribe of Benjamin, not Judah. So when God said, here is a king from Benjamin, God was saying this is not my king. And Saul was popular, good-looking, tough, tall; but he had a problem with his heart: Saul was bitter, jealous, threatened.

And then, finally, God said that Saul is finished. I will provide my king. So God sent Samuel to Bethlehem to select His king. And Bethlehem was in the tribe of Judah. The house of Jesse was visited. And God rejected all Jesse’s sons. Finally, Samuel said, “Are you sure you have no other sons?” And David was brought in from the fields. So Samuel poured the anointing oil over David and anointed him as the first lion of the Tribe of Judah; Saul was the abortion.

And as soon as David became king, he performed a significant act. For remember that the throne of God was atop the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle; and here resided a light uncreated and unradiated, the Shekinah Glory, the manifestation of the Glory of God. And recall that the people had become apostate under King Saul; then the Philistines came, and the Jews called for the Ark of the Covenant, but they now viewed the Ark as nothing more than a lucky charm.

But God would not allow Himself to be used as a lucky charm, and the Philistines captured the Ark. And the Philistines carried the Ark to the Temple of Dagon, their god. But Dagon kept falling and breaking, bowing down before, as it were, the Ark of the Covenant. So the Philistines moved him to another of their cities, and all the people became ill. Finally, in frustration and despair, the Philistines returned the Ark to Israel. And the Ark, because of Saul’s apostasy, ended up in a farmhouse.

So David’s first act was to recognize God as the true King of Israel. And David returned the Ark to

Jerusalem. And at this point, David wrote Psalm 24; and the choirs of Levi sang in antistrophe as the Ark came into Israel. And the Ark was placed on Mount Zion, and there the Glory of God resided in a tent.

Then David realized that he lived in a palace and the Ark resided in a tent. Thus, he decided to build a house for the Ark; and David consulted the prophet Nathan. And Nathan said, “Do all that is in your heart.” However, Nathan was wrong, for he did not consult with God. Then Nathan returned to David and spoke the words of II Samuel 7:1-11. God said, “I do not want you to build Me a house; but I will build you a house, a dynasty. There will always be a king from the line of David; and the first of your descendants will build me a house.” Thus, the throne of David and the throne of God became linked. And one of David’s sons would rule forever and ever. And David understood the essence of this covenant with God. The Promise that was made to Adam and Eve has now narrowed down to one family, the family of David.

David’s throne on earth would be a shadow on earth of the true throne of God in heaven. And David’s throne would be forever and ever; and this can only refer to God, for only God is everlasting. Thus, this covenant speaks to the immediate descendants of David, but it also speaks of “enduring forever.” So the covenant speaks also of an everlasting throne. Thus, David’s dynasty will go on, and on, and on; but in the end, the son of David and the Son of God will be One Person, and He will sit on the throne of David forever.

II Chron. 9:8 confirms that the descendants of David were placed upon the throne of God.

David, then, was the ruler for God on earth, as was his son, Solomon.

“Praise be to the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on his throne as king to rule for the Lord your God. Because of the love of your God for Israel and his desire to uphold them forever, he has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness.” (II Chron. 9:8)

Recall the oil that was used to anoint David. Because of this oil David coined the phrase, Messiah, which means, “the anointed One,” *christos*, in the Greek. This term had never been used before; David originated the term Messiah. And then David wrote Psalm 2. For David comprehended the extravagant and extreme graciousness of this covenant; and more, David recognized the resplendent God.

And Psalm 2 states that “the One enthroned in Heaven laughs;” and at the Cross “God laughed.” And in Matthew 28, Christ said that “all authority is given to me.” This covenant, then, looks forward to the Son of God on His throne. And Revelation 5 records, “that the Lion of the Tribe of Judah has overcome.” And then John heard a trillion voices proclaim, “Worthy is the Lamb!” This, then, is Shiloh, the “worthy one,” the one “to whom praise belongs.” And in Psalm 45, David again wrote of this “worthy one.”

In the Old Testament, then, shadows exist. And this is why after Christ came, and the New Covenant became a reality, that there are no building/temples on earth. The ‘church’ in the present age is each and every individual believer; the real temple exists in each believer through the power of the Holy Spirit. And that explains why our Lord said, “The hour is coming and in fact now is that you shall worship in the Spirit.”

Thus, the physical throne of David was the shadow of the throne of God; for the throne of God is everlasting, while the actual physical throne of David would one day vanish. So the true everlasting throne of God will exist forever; the real throne of God is in heaven. However, the two thrones were so merged that they sometimes exchange names: the throne of David is called the throne of God, and the throne of God is called the throne of David. The two are one. And David comprehended this remarkable fact of God’s covenant with him.

And subsequent to David’s death, God reaffirmed the Davidic covenant with Solomon, for II Chron. 7:18 reads, “I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father when I said, ‘You shall never fail to have a man to rule over Israel.’” Now God and Solomon were linked together. Solomon’s besetting sin, however, was women; and Jerusalem soon was filled with foreign gods and their temples. And eventually, even Solomon turned from God, yet just prior to his death he returned to Yahweh, the Living God, the God of covenant.

Additionally, Solomon’s building program was so vast that he imposed more and more and more taxes on the Israelites. Subsequent to Solomon’s death, his son, Rehoboam, was approached by the people and they asked that he reduce the taxes. But Rehoboam took the advice of his peers, who said double the taxes, show them who is the king! So Rehoboam went to the people and said, my father whipped you with whips, but I will whip you

with scorpions. I will double the taxes. But the leader of the people, Jeroboam, said, NO! Enough is enough. We will secede. So ten tribes formed Israel or Samaria in the north, and two tribes, Judah and Benjamin (with a few from the tribe of Simeon), formed Judah in the south.

Jeroboam’s reaction was understandable; however, Jeroboam erred. Because Rehoboam, though a fool, was in the line of David, through whom the Messiah was to come. Additionally, the Davidic covenant was vested in the Davidic line, i.e., in Rehoboam. Furthermore, the Temple and the Ark of the Covenant were in Jerusalem, and the throne of David, which was the shadow of the throne of God, was in Jerusalem. Thus, when Jeroboam seceded, he departed from the covenant, the royal family of Judah, and the hope and promise of the Messiah. And this explains Jeroboam’s label from then on, “Jeroboam, who caused Israel to sin.” For Jeroboam removed the people from God.

Then Jeroboam instituted his own priesthood, and his own temple, and he set up golden calves in Dan; and thus began Baalism in the northern kingdom. And Rehoboam ruled over a phantom, a tragic vestige of a kingdom that had once existed.

And then the prophets came; and the prophets spoke ubiquitously concerning that which God had promised He would do with David. For example, Isaiah prophesied in the time of Uzziah the king. And after Uzziah died, first Jotham then Ahaz ruled over Judah. And Ahaz had no respect for God; yet he was of the tribe of Judah and the line of David. Thereupon, the king of Syria planned to attack Judah; and all Judah and the southern kingdom were terrified. And Ahaz began to plan for a siege of Jerusalem. And Isaiah told king Ahaz to relax, that the God of the Davidic covenant would not desert him, not because of Ahaz, but because of who and what God is, because of the covenant.

But Ahaz paid no heed. And again Isaiah spoke to Ahaz and said, “Ask a sign from God and He will answer to demonstrate His faithfulness to the covenant.” But Ahaz would not ask. Then Isaiah turned and spoke to the descendants of the house of David, ‘You are wearying me and God. Therefore, God Himself will give you a sign:’ “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (God with us).” (Isa. 7:14) That son would be the son of David, “God with us.” Thus, when God gave this sign, He stated that His purposes and the covenant would be ful-

filled. God was so with them that, literally, “God would be with them, Immanuel.” For “He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.” (Isa. 9:7)

Isaiah, then, was reiterating the Davidic covenant. And in chapter 9, Isaiah said, “A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.” And this One, “He will raise a banner (nissi; here, then, is Yahweh Nissi) for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel.”

And John the Baptist recognized our Lord as the Messiah because he had read Isaiah 11:2-3, which say, “The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him – the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord – and he will delight in the fear of the Lord.” And recall, that John beheld the Spirit of the Lord descending upon our Lord.

At almost the same time, as Isaiah prophesied in Jerusalem, the prophet Micah spoke to the rural areas in Judah. Micah said that the King of Kings would come from Bethlehem, a city so small that it was hardly included in the census. For Micah 5:2 reads, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times.”

It is interesting to note, that if all one had was the Old Testament, then confusion would reign. For the only method for fully understanding the Old Testament is to comprehend the New Testament, which is the Holy Spirit’s commentary on the Old Testament.

And at just about the same juncture in history, Israel, the northern kingdom, was twisting down into total apostasy and idolatry. And God sent Hosea to Israel; and Hosea was instructed by God to marry an infamous call-girl, and through this marriage and its infidelity, promiscuity and betrayal, Hosea was taught by God the meaning of agape love, forgiveness and faithfulness. And Hosea and his wife were a picture of God and His Bride, Israel, who was portrayed as a harlot.

Finally, God spoke through Hosea and said, “The covenant is over; the lovingkindness is gone.” Yet God remained faithful to the covenant even then; for God continued to love Israel. God said, “There will come a day that those who have left me will come again.” They, the Jews, would seek David, the final David, the Anointed One, the One who

is Worthy. And this David will be Christ Himself, God Himself.

And when did this happen? When did the Jews again seek for David? I Peter 1,2. For Peter spoke to the Jews and Gentiles who sought Christ, and Peter said that those of you who were not the people of God, you are now the people of God; for now you have lovingkindness again. You came seeking Christ and you found David.

Eventually, the northern kingdom was taken captive by Assyria. And again, in the south, in Judah, spirituality worsened. And God sent Jeremiah; and Jeremiah told Judah that God still remembered His covenant to David, and that even though the southern kingdom, too, would go into captivity, that “‘The days are coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteousness.’” (Jer. 23:5-6) And then the southern kingdom went away into captivity in Babylon.

Recall Luke 1, when the angel spoke to Mary, “‘Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.’”

This is a quotation of the Davidic covenant; and Mary was from the tribe of Judah, the line of David. And then Joseph and Mary traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem. For Mary was about 14 years old at this time; and if a Jewish girl was not married by the time she was 15, she was considered an old-maid. And a few weeks prior to this point in time, across the ocean on the Isle of Capri, the old Emperor Augustus had had a quarrel with Herod, the king of Judea. And because of this quarrel over tax revenues, each citizen in Judea was required to return to the town of their fathers to register for taxation.

Thus, with Mary almost nine months pregnant, Joseph, a descendant of David, had to return to Bethlehem. Fantastic! For if the Emperor Augustus and Herod had quarreled one week earlier or two weeks later, then Jesus would not have been born in Bethlehem. The Hand of God is fantastic! For the quarrel took place at just the right moment.

Acts 2:29ff., read, “Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, ‘The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’” Thus, when our Lord arose again, He was crowned King, and he sits now upon the throne of David, the real throne, not the shadow throne. For He is seated at the right hand of God the Father. And His Kingdom is in the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is in the believer; thus, believers are the Kingdom of God even now.

And this is why, with a loud voice, our Lord cried on the Cross, “It is finished!” The covenants are fulfilled, all of them. And what is left? Only the physical consummation. But the real Kingdom of God is now, for the Holy Spirit is now with us; Immanuel, “God with us,” is now with us through His Spirit. [144]

The New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31ff., reads, “‘The time is coming,’ declares the Lord, ‘when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,’ declares the Lord. ‘This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time,’ declares the Lord. ‘I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,’ declares the Lord. ‘For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.’”

This is the statement of the New Covenant to Israel. And always remember that when God starts something, He finishes it. When God began, the end is assured. So what God planned for mankind in the

Garden will ultimately be done. And even though mankind continually abrogated the covenants that God provided, God’s faithfulness continues unabated. And it is very important to note that Old Testament Israel is the only nation to ever have been chartered by God, and it was based upon the Sinai covenant and the Davidic covenant.

And as the book of Jeremiah opens, the northern kingdom has been taken captive by Assyria and scattered; in effect, they have disappeared because they left the God of the covenant. And the southern kingdom has been sucked down by the swirling vortex of idolatry and evil. Then God sent Jeremiah. Josiah is the king and he is trying to revive spirituality; but Jeremiah tells him that it is too late.

Jeremiah declares that Babylon, under Nebuchadnezzar, is going to take Judah captive. And it is interesting to note that Nebuchadnezzar came from the revived empire of Chaldea, where Abraham had lived when he recognized the One True God, Jehovah Elohim. Thus, God is saying, “You are going home.” So totally had the Jews broken the covenant that He was sending them back to square one. God is divorcing them and sending them back home. Thus, God sent Jeremiah, and God sent Nebuchadnezzar. And Jeremiah told the Jews that when Nebuchadnezzar arrived they were not to resist or fight; that God was on the Babylonian King’s side. The Jews accused Jeremiah of being a traitor and tossed him into jail for making this statement. And Jeremiah added that the captivity would last 70 years, and then God would start again.

But even as Jeremiah spoke the words of the Diaspora, he spoke of God’s faithfulness in Jer. 23:5ff.; for God cannot break His Word, His Oath, or His Covenant. And remember that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, as prophesied, but went back to Nazareth to reside. And the gospel of Matthew states that He would be, “He who shall be called a Nazarene.” Yet in none of the prophets can this statement be found. So what was Matthew referring to?

The word Nazareth translated from the Hebrew means “the village of the Branch.” Therefore, by the Providence of God, He who was born in Bethlehem was placed in Nazareth to be raised. And He was given the common name of Jesus. And this explains why He was known not as Jesus, but as Jesus of Nazareth. And every time this was said, it meant He was “Jesus of the Branch.” Thus His

name is forever linked with the Branch. And this in turn explains the statement of Isaiah, "That out of the root would come a sprout." Too, it explains the statement Jeremiah made in Jer. 23:5, "When I will raise up to David a righteous Branch."

Jeremiah was the sad prophet; for his success and his ministry was to conduct the funeral of Judah; for he sent them into captivity. And this is why he is called the "weeping prophet."

And since true Israel, according to Scripture, is a believer with the 'faith,' not the blood or racial characteristics, of Abraham, this New Covenant to Israel is the harbinger of the covenant to the Church. And this explains Rahab the harlot's inclusion into Israel, and Ruth the Moabitess' inclusion in true Israel; and both are included in the line of our Lord. For God makes covenant with those of 'faith.' And this New Covenant is 'new' not in its terms, but in its administration.

For the terms are the terms of all the past covenants; however, the administration of the covenant is now placed inside the people of 'faith.' It is no longer written on scrolls or on tablets. It is written on the heart. And in this New Covenant, God again takes the initiative, for He says, "I will do it." For remember that in the Sinai covenant the people said, "We will do all that God asks." God, then, is saying, "They cannot do it; they broke it."

Here, though, God says that He will supernaturally intervene with this New Covenant. This, then, is the statement that mankind may stop struggling to deserve God's favor and grace and salvation. This is the statement that mankind may now rest in God, for "It is done."

Additionally, Jeremiah 31:34 states, "No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord." This verse, according to Archbishop Smith, refers to the mediator or representative who symbolized the assembly in all the previous covenants. Some representative stood between mankind and God as the mediator.

No one except Moses knew God immediately; Israel knew God mediately, i.e., through their representative, Moses. Thus, the people of Israel had to go to their 'neighbor,' Moses, or the Tribe of Levi, who constituted the priesthood of Israel, to receive knowledge of the Lord. And the word 'know' here is the Hebrew word that defines a marriage relationship, i.e., to know intimately, as "Adam knew

his wife Eve." Thus, in this covenant each man will be married to God, and will know God intimately and immediately. And in this marriage concept is seen the harbinger of the Bride of Christ, which is found in the New Covenant to the Church.

Other scholars, however, maintain that this passage refers to the Jews, and specifically to the Jews during the Millennial Dispensation; see Jer. 31:31-34 cf. 32:36-44; Ezek. 11:16-21; 36:21-28. And this interpretation would appear, ipse dixit, [145] to sustain more homogeneity based upon the concepts of dispensations and Scriptural analysis.

The author, however, must admit that the New Covenant to Israel, the Church and the unique ministry of God the Holy Spirit to the Church, and the blood of Christ are all so closely interdependent that further research into which interpretation is correct remains vital. And the author also timidly suggests that neither interpretation may be precisely and entirely correct for the very fact that the plexus is intricate, to say the least. Furthermore, the author suspects that the New Covenant to Israel is just that, to Israel, but that it has pervasive and distinct ramifications to the Church. [146] For both 'new covenants' are founded in the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross.

But the bringing in of this New Covenant must deal with sin; and this demands the Cross. Thus, this New Covenant is the harbinger of the covenant to the Church. For the phrase 'the New Covenant' refers to the blood of Christ. And the New Covenant to Israel is totally dependent upon this blood of Christ, both as to its fulfillment and to its employment.

Ezekiel 34:11-12 read, "For this is what the Sovereign Lord says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness." And recall that "clouds and darkness" refers to two days: the day of the Cross, and the day of the Second Advent (the concept of dual fulfillment).

The prophet Ezekiel came from the priestly tribe and was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. And Daniel was already there in Babylon and being trained by Nebuchadnezzar to become one of the 'wise men' of Babylon. And Daniel was to speak directly to Nebuchadnezzar; for God's plan for Daniel included being a prisoner of war, and

leading the most powerful king of the world at that time to the Lord.

Ezekiel, however, has often been described as the strangest of the prophets. And in chapter 34 of the Book of Ezekiel, Ezekiel speaks of Israel as a flock of sheep, and he refers to their leaders, the kings of Israel, as the shepherds of the people. But according to God, the shepherds have not done what they were required to do. And Judah has been scattered; and the city of Jerusalem is almost uninhabited.

Ezekiel 34:11 and 15 declare that God Himself will be the shepherd. Then, in verses 23 and 24, God states, "I will place over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he will tend them; he will tend them and be their shepherd. I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David will be prince among them. I the Lord have spoken."

And God does not mean that David himself will be raised from the dead; rather, He is speaking of the son of David, the Son of God, the One who will come. This explains why Jesus called Himself "the Good Shepherd." He did not say, "I am a shepherd" because Ezekiel called all the shepherds "bad" in Ezekiel 34. And when God Himself came to seek and save the lost, He would be the "good shepherd," and He would be the descendant of David, the Messiah. And Jesus quoted Ezek. 34 when He said, "I am the Good Shepherd. I am come to seek and to save that which is lost." Thus, Jesus was claiming to be the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy; he was claiming to be the descendant of David.

Ezekiel 36:22 reads, "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.'" And the phrase "my holy name," refers back to Exodus 33 and 34, where Moses asked God His name; and God answered: "lovingkindness, lovingkindness, lovingkindness."

That is God said, "I am faithful to my word; I am a keeper of covenants." Thus, Ezekiel 36 is a reference to the covenant that God had made with David. And these words, as spoken by God, have a dual fulfillment: 1) the books of Ezra and Nehemiah clearly state that the Jews did return to the land under Zerubbabel; 2) the books of Joel and Revelation denote that the Son of David will rule over Israel during the millennial state and thereafter, forever.

And then in Ezek. 36:26-27, Ezekiel makes a state-

ment parallel to the one made by Jeremiah: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." Here, again, God is stating that He will place His love within mankind, and will place His Spirit within mankind. And Romans chapter 5 verse 5 says, "And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us."

Remember that Jesus said, in John 3:5, "Jesus answered (to Nicodemus), 'I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'" And Nicodemus was frustrated and confused; and Jesus asked him, "'You are Israel's teacher,' said Jesus, 'and you do not understand these things?'" In other words, Jesus was saying this is not a new idea, Nicodemus; for this was prophesied in Ezekiel and Jeremiah and, Nicodemus, being a teacher (Rabbi or scholar), should have known this.

For Ezekiel declared that when the Messiah came, the son of David, the Son of God, that He would "sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you." (Ezek. 36:25,26a) Thus, Ezekiel stated that the people of the Kingdom of God will be washed with God's water and filled with God's Spirit. Jesus said, "Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (John 3:5) Ezekiel stated that the people of the Kingdom of God, the one ruled by the son of David, would have "a new heart and a new spirit." Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

So the New Birth happened in Jesus

Ezekiel 37 relates the story of the Valley of Dry Bones. And in the valley are dead, dry bones of some vast nation. And God asked Ezekiel, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And Ezekiel answered, "O Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Then Ezekiel was instructed to preach to the dry bones. And Ezekiel preached to the bones that God would cause them to be 'born again.' And as he preached the bones remained dead. Then God instructed him to call upon the 'breath;' and the 'breath' (God the Holy Spirit) came upon them, and the bones were "born again" 'out of death.' And then God

went on to explain that the dead bones were the bones of Israel; and that the covenant had been broken and their “hope is lost.”

But God said that He would raise them up again, they would be ‘born again;’ and “I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it (kept His covenant promise), declares the Lord.” (Ezek. 37:14)

Again, remember that Christ said, “Unless a man is born again, he will not see the kingdom of God.” And Paul states that the characteristic of every person in the Kingdom of God is “resurrection.” Just as the bones in Ezekiel 37 were resurrected.

Ezekiel 37:24ff. states, “My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant...and I will put my sanctuary among them forever.” This “sanctuary” is the Temple; and this Temple is the church age believer filled with the Holy Spirit, and Christ in the believer. And, of course, in the millennium Christ will “be among them forever.” For He is the Shekinah Glory.

And recall the dream of Daniel 2; the image of different metals. And Daniel 2:44 states, “In the time of those kings (the Romans), the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever.” This, in different words, is the Davidic covenant that David received from God. And this statement, in context, was made to the nations, to Nebuchadnezzar. For the nations needed to hear that God will set up His Kingdom.

Then in Daniel 7:13ff., Daniel describes the coronation of this eternal son of David, who will rule forever. “In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days (the Eternal God the Father) and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” These same words were spoken to David; this passage speaks of David’s descendant, the One who will rule forever. And Revelation 5 quotes this verse.

When Daniel was an old, old man, God the Holy Spirit reminded him that after 70 years the Jews would return to the land. And Daniel prayed concerning guidance, and received the prophecy of Daniel 9:24, which reads, “Seventy sevens are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression (known sins of individual believers/the apostasy of Israel as a nation), to put an end to sin (unknown sins of individual believers at the First Advent/the restraint of sin in the Tribulation-Second Advent), to atone for wickedness (justification/removal of the apostasy of the nation Israel), to bring in everlasting righteousness (imputation of righteousness to believers/an everlasting nation to God), to seal up vision and prophecy (no prophecy in the church age/no prophecies concerning Israel unfulfilled after the Second Advent) and to anoint the most holy (the baptism of Christ with the Holy Spirit/the eternal temple).” [147]

In other words, God said that between you, and the coming One there will be 490 years. And at the time the Worthy One comes (Christ’s first Advent), six things will be accomplished by Him: to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophecy, to anoint a most holy place.

The Dual Fulfillment of Daniel 9:24ff.

The “Anointing of the most holy,” refers to the cutting off of Christ, i.e., the crucifixion. And this cutting off does cause sacrifices to cease; for no more sacrifices are necessary; the final sacrifice took place at the Cross. And at His Second Advent, Christ will be anointed the eternal King of the Jews, the eternal Lion of the Tribe of Judah. Additionally, at the First Advent, the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants will be “confirmed.” However, what of the 3.5 years left after the crucifixion, referred to in Daniel 9:27? Approximately 3.5 years after the Cross, Stephen stood before Israel and confronted the leaders of Israel – and they stoned him. Thus, at this point they said a final “no” as a nation to the Gospel of Christ. And in 70 AD, Jerusalem was razed to the ground. , [148] [149]

The New Covenant to the Church

The Greek word for covenant is *diatheke*, and this covenant was made by God to the Church; it is effective at the point of salvation, at the point of ‘faith.’ This new covenant has as its foundation the historic reality of, and the efficacious sacrifice of, our Lord Jesus Christ. And this historical reality

and efficacious sacrifice is so far-reaching that it demands two new covenants: one to Israel, and one to the Church.

This new covenant to the Church institutes a Royal Family, and authorizes a new Royal Priesthood. And this new covenant to the Church is for Church Age believers only and, like the Davidic covenant, is eternal in nature. Indeed, none of the previous covenants could be fulfilled without the reality of the final, real sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Scripture references to this new covenant to the Church are: Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; I Cor. 11:25; II Cor. 3:6; Hebrews 7:22, 9:15-20, 10:29, 12:24.

And in this new covenant to the Church the 'old' covenant, the Sinai covenant, is abrogated on the one hand, and finds its fulfillment on the other hand. Thus, the 'shadows' are replaced by reality. And in the reality of the Cross all of the unconditional covenants to Israel discover their basis for fulfillment; for the "Worthy One, Shiloh," has come. Thus, although there is a distinction between the New Covenant to Israel and the New Covenant to the Church, there is a connection: Christ and His resurrection, ascension and present session on the throne of David, the eternal throne.

Under this new covenant to the Church a new priesthood is established, i.e., each and every believer is his/her own priest before God. There is no longer a Levitical Priesthood required between man and God. Furthermore, under this new covenant to the Church the Law was finally and irrevocably kept, in its entirety, by our Lord in His Humanity. For He kept the letter of the Law, and He kept the 'heart' of the Law; i.e., He was Incarnate Love. For He did not "covet;" indeed, He was Living agape-love, self for others.

Hebrews 9:15 reads, "For this reason Christ (the anointed One) 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." And Hebrews 5:5ff., reads, "Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am – it is written about me in the scroll – I have come to do your will, O God.'"

The will of God, then, has always been and always will be the seeking of His lost sheep, them that He Loves with an infinite Love. [150]

Provisions of the New Covenant

Recall that the provisions of a covenant are those that each representative swore to one another. And recall that the nature of a covenant was a bond of life and death; thus, a covenant presumed commitment. Covenants, then, were not casual relationships. Each party was to die before abrogating the covenant. And for this reason, blood was shed as part of the oath.

Therefore, when God entered into a covenant, He was declaring that He would cease to be God if He reneged on the covenant. And God being God, this possibility does not exist in any way, shape or form. Unfortunately, in our modern world, many believers do not take God seriously.

Jeremiah 31:34 provides the provision upon which all the other factors of the covenant hinge: "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." This is the underlying promise of the New Covenant to Israel and to the Church. And recall that according to the Mosaic Law there was no forgiveness for sin, only condemnation. Indeed, under the Mosaic Law (the Sinai Covenant) adultery and murder could not be forgiven.

Under the Mosaic Law the perpetrator was taken outside the camp and stoned to death. This explains why David wrote Psalm 51; for David was both an adulterer and a murderer. And in Psalm 51, David said, "Sacrifice and offerings you do not desire," i.e., 'under the Mosaic Law there is no forgiveness for me (David).' Knowing this, David then appealed to the Heart of God; he bypassed the Law and placed himself upon the ground of grace and God's lovingkindness.

And recall, that to break or abrogate a covenant demanded death. This, then, meant that either the abrogating party had to die, or that a substitute had to die. And under the Mosaic Law, substitute offerings in the form of animal sacrifices were offered. Yet everyone was aware that the animal sacrifices could not really pay the penalty; the animal sacrifices were only shadows which pointed to a human sacrifice which would pay the penalty.

This understanding explains the Great Day of Atonement; on this day the High Priest sacrificed two goats. As the first goat was sacrificed, the High Priest would lean on the animal and confess all the sins of the nation for the entire year; and as the blood was shed, the participants knew that its blood carried all the sins of the abrogating parties. And then the High Priest would carry the blood

into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle the blood onto the Mercy Seat, the throne of God, which stood atop the Ark of the Covenant between the two golden Cherubim.

This blood was still only the blood of an animal; it was, then, an invoice or IOU that remained unpaid. This blood said, that we have faith and hope that one day a sacrifice will be made that will indemnify, or pay off, all the Days of Atonement. Thus, the sins were 'covered over', as it were, but they were not paid off; the invoice still remained to be paid.

But Jeremiah said, "Your sins will be remembered no more." Thus, there would be no more Days of Atonement. In other words, the invoice would be paid. In the new covenant, the Mosaic Law would end. This occurred when Christ came; for in every way he was the final, the true sacrifice. This is why Isaiah used the language of the High Priest: "The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." And the term for "laid on" is the same word that was used for the High Priest "leaning on the goat."

God the Father, as He sacrificed His Only Son, "leaned" our sins on Christ on the Cross. Thus, Christ died for all the sins that the Law could only condemn. Therefore, when our Lord died on the Cross, sin was no longer just 'covered over,' it was now 'gone.' And the resurrection of our Lord is God declaring that sin is indeed gone; the sins have been paid for.

This is why the New Testament uses the word "justified." For the word "justified" fares far beyond just simple 'forgiveness;' it declares that pardon from every sin has been granted because payment has been made. Moreover, it states that the believer is declared righteous by the Judge of the Universe. And that the believer stands before God as if he/she was Jesus Himself; for the believer now 'stands under' the Blood of Christ; thus, it is no longer a 'covering up' until the ultimate sacrifice takes place. For the ultimate sacrifice was Christ, the Son of God, God Himself in true Humanity, on the Cross.

Now then every believer in the Church Age stands before God as his/her own High Priest, and confesses his/her own sins to God and is instantly forgiven, for the sin(s) have already been paid for. Thus, we, the believers of the Church Age, are a "new creation." For we are in Christ, and He is in us; and more, His Holy Spirit is in us.

And these new covenant people can live in, and produce, the agape Love of God Himself. And this is

done by the empowering ministry of God the Holy Spirit; it is supernatural; it is not man producing agape Love in his own strength; for this is impossible. It is possible, though, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

There is now a new nation; mankind is no longer of the race of fallen mankind; now, because of the Blood of Christ, the believer is "born again" into another race, another nation. The believer is still human, but he/she is now in union with Christ, i.e., united to the agape Love of God. And that means that he/she does not try to keep the Law, because the Person who wrote the Law and kept the Law now lives inside of him or her. Thus, what the Law could never dream of, or produce, God the Holy Spirit produces in believer. This is a miracle!!

And more, we (believers) now journey far beyond the Law, for the Law said, "Thou shall not kill." Instead, agape Love says, "Die for your enemies," i.e., self for others. Thus fallen mankind has died to "self for self." The Law also said, "Thou shall not steal." Now, though, we not only do not steal, agape Love causes us to 'give' to others. The Law said, "Thou shall not hate." Now, though, we love others as God has loved us. We do not just not hate. From this, then, it is to be understood that Jesus does not just 'help' believers by adding to their own strength; rather, He is their life. He is now their power source by means of the Holy Spirit.

Jeremiah 31:34 also states, "Because they will all know me." The word "know" here means to be "united with," or to "penetrate;" the term is also used of marriage, i.e., the wedded couple "know" each other in a very personal and intimate sense, both physically and soulishly. And under the Old Covenant, recall, that the Jews settled for a second-hand knowledge of God; they asked Moses to speak to God and then relate God's words to them. But when Moses "penetrated," or came to "know" God, he discovered that God was lovingkindness.

The Old Covenant, then, had Moses and the Law standing between God and man. But the new covenant states that "each will know God for himself." For in John 17:3, Christ said, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Thus, eternal life is "knowing" God not only face to face, but behind the face. The implication, then, is that eternal life is not simply 'a quantity' or 'length' of life; it is not just that you will live forever; eternal life is a 'quality' of life. Eternal life does not begin after I die; eternal life is also that life lived

now, since I received Christ. It is a quality of life in which we “know” the Lord. For at this very moment Christ is in you, and you are in Him.

Ephesians 3:14-19, relate the wondrous prayer of the Apostle Paul for the believers in Ephesus: “And to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:19) Paul prays that they will know the ‘unknowable’ – agape Love. Thus, this love is beyond the power of man by himself to produce.

Yet this knowledge of God is not simply intellectual knowledge; i.e., “knowing” God is not just an intellectual exercise. This knowledge of God is experiential, and it manifests itself, or shows itself in one’s life. And this is why the Apostle John wrote, in I John 4:7, “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.” Thus, to “know” God inevitably makes one an agape Lover. Because to “know” God is to do acts of love; because His love is in us.

For example: when light penetrates a prism, the light, which was basically invisible before, is released into its many colors. So also, when God, Who is invisible, penetrates the believer and the believer penetrates God through knowing, then His love is released in the believer and the rainbow of the fruit of the Spirit. And now the world can see it, and know what God is like. And at this point, the believer is no longer just a mere human, he/she is indeed “born again,” i.e., a person in whom Christ lives, the love that is God. Thus, this ‘life of love’ is not for saints or mystics; it is for all believers. This is serious business; this is not make-believe, or something we hope for, or a dream; this exists; it is reality.

Remember that God said, “You are my people and I will be your God.” And this has occurred. For through Christ and in Christ, the believer is now united with God. God is your God; you are special to Him. God, in effect, winks smilingly at you when He sees you. And just like Abraham, we now rest and watch God work.

Fulfillment of the New Covenant to the Church

Ezekiel was the prophet that reminded Israel of the covenants, and of God’s promises, while they were in captivity. Ezekiel told Israel that they would return to the land, and rebuild the Temple. And subsequent to this, Ezekiel prophesied of the shep-

herd King that would reign over Israel forever.

And remember, that every time a worship place was to be built, God provided precise details – for every pin, board, and curtain in the Tabernacle spoke of Christ’s saving work. Thus, in Exodus, Moses was provided with the blueprint for the Tabernacle. And David was given the blueprint for the Temple that Solomon was to build. Likewise, Ezekiel was given a blueprint of a future Temple; and in his vision Ezekiel saw something unusual. For from out of his Temple flowed a supernatural river of life.

And of course, the captives did return to the land, and they did re-build the Temple. This temple was later embellished by Herod and our Lord taught from its gates. But the river of life still had not come. Yet in John 7:37,38, Christ made reference to Ezekiel’s prophecy: “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’” And it is interesting to note that Ezekiel, the strangest of the prophets, was the only one to speak of such “living waters.” And we know now that the “living water” was a reference to the Holy Spirit, whom was given after our Lord was glorified; it was also, though, a reference to the Temple which would reside in the New Jerusalem, the city in the clouds, in the future.

The disciples had seen our Lord’s Passion, and the subsequent glorification. They then awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. Then, during the Feast of Weeks or the Feast of Pentecost, [151] which took place 50 days after the Passover Feast, something happened. The day of the Feast was 10 days after the Ascension of our Lord in glory. On that day, 120 of the disciples were at the temple; and at approximately nine in the morning, a loud susurration was heard throughout the entire city of Jerusalem. And on Solomon’s Porch, at the temple, there appeared flames or tongues of fire. And each disciple was quickly swallowed up by the miraculous fire – and the fire sat upon them and radiated, but did not burn. The beauty of God’s love, agape Love, was made lucidly clear to each of them; and to such a degree that they began praising God as never before (perhaps as David before the Ark of the Covenant). Then a supernatural knowledge of languages and dialects was given to them. And as the pilgrims gathered in the temple – the result of feast and the roaring wind – the pilgrims heard men and women who were obviously ignorant Galileans speaking fluently in the pilgrims’ dialects.

And the pilgrims said, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?.....we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.” (Acts 2:7-8, 11)

Some of the pilgrims were afraid; others were simply bewildered; and still others said mockingly, “They are full of sweet wine.” (Acts 2:13) The Apostle Peter, however, spoke and provided an explanation; what they were beholding was the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy; the Spirit was being poured out upon all flesh. “Men of Israel, listen to these words:

Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know – this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. And God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power....This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.

Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear....Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God had made Him both Lord and Christ – this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Thus, just as the baptism of John had placed men into the medium of water, so the baptism of the Lord placed believers into relationship with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist had administered his baptism; and Jesus had ministered this baptism from His Heavenly Throne.

At this point, then, the Holy Spirit was working through the disciples just as He had worked through and empowered our Lord Jesus Christ while He walked upon the earth. Thus, they had a wisdom and a knowledge beyond their own abilities. And the result of the clarifying ministry of God the Holy Spirit on this day? The pilgrims cried out to the disciples, “Brethren, what shall we do?” And Peter commanded them: “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.” (Acts 2:38-39) [152]

They were to repent. This term means to change the mind. For the Jews had viewed Jesus of Nazareth as a blasphemer and common criminal, who claimed to be the Son of God. His resurrection, however, had sustained His claims; and God the Holy Spirit made this clear to all.

They were to be baptized. This baptism was the physical response of faith. As the believer went under the water he was saying that I am burying (drowning) my former life of ‘self for self;’ and as the believer rose from the water, he identified himself with Christ and ‘self for others’ – ‘being born again,’ as it were.

This was the promise. This was the promise made to Abraham 2000 years before: fallen mankind could be delivered and granted the Holy Spirit through the seed of Abraham. And thereupon approximately 3000 pilgrims responded to Peter’s command and became believers on the Day of Weeks.

Thus, Ezekiel’s valley of dry bones started to come together and a vast army of living (resurrected) beings started to arise.

And remember, that during our Lord’s earthly ministry He had entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and being given the scroll of the Prophet Isaiah, read: “And he opened the book, and found the place where it was written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.’” (Luke 4:18-19)

And in his words, Isaiah took one of the ancient customs of the Jews and prophesied concerning the coming Messiah. The custom was the Year of Jubilee, which occurred every fifty years; and in Luke 4:19, it is referred to in the phrase, “the favorable year of the Lord.” Jubilee was the restoration of the nation of Israel to right-minded wholesomeness. Anyone who had lost property due to poverty or indebtedness had the property returned. Slaves were given the option of freedom, and all bankruptcies were wiped from the record. It was a year of “rest” in God.

Isaiah saw the Coming One, the Messiah, as the fulfillment of every concept of the Year of Jubilee. All would be set free from the slavery of sin; all debts would be paid; and instead of one year of “rest,” the “rest” would be perpetual. All of mankind would

be restored to the wholesomeness of light, and freed from the slavery of guilt and the darkness.

And Jesus, after he had finished reading the words of Isaiah from the scroll in the temple, added in a resonant voice, "Today this Scripture had been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:21)

Isaiah had seen the root out of Jesse as being empowered by the Spirit: "And the Spirit of the Lord will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of council and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord." (Isa. 11:2) Thus, with truth, wisdom and understanding He would heal the sins, and the minds, and the bodies of the helpless and the condemned. And for this reason, "He called His miracles, works, which spoke of them as being normal marks of the kingdom being present among men." [153] In other words, there would come a time when the empowering ministry of God the Holy Spirit would be customary. And He added, "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." (Matthew 12:28)

Zephaniah, too, saw the fulfillment coming; for he wrote in Zeph. 3:14,17: "Shout for joy, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy." [154]

The Covenant Meal

Luke 22:14ff., reads, "When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them, 'I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.' After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, 'Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.' And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.'"

These verses speak of the New Covenant to the Church and, indirectly, to the New Covenant to Israel. When our Lord said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," He brought together everything that has been delineated in the last seven

lessons. In a simple meal, in the Upper Room, Christ connected all the teachings and statements of the entire Old Testament. The phrase, "This cup," brought it all together.

And as has already been discussed, the Western world does not fully understand the covenant concepts behind eating a meal with others. Indeed, all the way through the New Testament our Lord continually told stories of wedding feasts, banquets, kings who had parties. For example, when the father welcomed home the Prodigal Son they killed the fatted calf, they ate together. And it was not just because they were hungry. Thus, in the Bible eating a meal takes upon enormous importance. Because eating a meal was always connected to a covenant. And when someone sat down to eat with you, you were entering into a limited type of covenant. And all covenant rituals culminated with the covenant meal. Even today in the Middle East eating has covenant implications.

In fact, even in the Russian-Afghanistan War of the 1980's, if the Russians had realized the importance of covenant meals to the Afghanistans, the war might have been precluded if not mitigated. This demonstrates the power of eating to those who understand covenants. For when covenant meals take place, both parties are stating that they are lavishing a part of their lives and themselves to the other party.

Recall, then, that after God had made covenant with Abraham the final act of the covenant was God Himself coming across the desert in the form of man; and this man sat down and ate a meal with Abraham. Or the Sinai covenant; after the covenant had been given, received, and the blood shed, the elders of Israel along with Moses and Aaron went up on the mount and ate and drank in the presence of God. And if one does not understand the concept of covenant, these meals appear as nothing more than appendices; however, upon full comprehension these meals become an essential part of the covenant.

The covenant meal that dominates the Old Testament is the Passover Meal. The Passover Meal reaches forward as well as backward, and simultaneously, it celebrates God's love for His people, and His power in setting free Israel from Egyptian oppression. Recall that God sent Moses as His covenant attorney; and Moses, when he realized who he was, and who the God of covenant was, resigned his position as an Egyptian general and royal prince of Pharaoh's palace. He, in effect,

took up residence with the people of the covenant – the Hebrew slaves. And initially, Moses, because of his background and training, attempted to free the slaves through his own abilities and violence. But the Jews were unimpressed. So Moses left Israel and became a shepherd for 40 years; and then, just as he turned 80 years old, God told him to go back into Egypt and deliver his people.

And remember, that at this time Egypt was the greatest nation on the face of the earth; and Pharaoh was ‘the king of kings’ by earthly standards. And it says that Moses went into Egypt “riding on the back of a donkey with a staff in his hand.” Moreover, the Egyptians hated shepherds; and of course Moses reeked of sheep; additionally, Moses was probably hirsute, and the Egyptians despised body hair; indeed, they shaved their entire bodies. And to enter the court of Pharaoh implied that one was an ambassador of some foreign king; thus, Moses entered the court of Pharaoh as the ambassador of Yahweh. And there, in the middle of finely dressed princes caparisoned in silks and linens, carrying gifts of gold and incense, attempting to curry Pharaoh’s favor, stood a massive hairy 80 year old man with a staff in his hand stinking of sheep. And he said to Pharaoh, “Let my people go.” And as he looked Pharaoh in the eye, he looked at the emerald eyes of the golden snake-crown that surrounded Pharaoh’s head and sat just above Pharaoh’s nose and between his eyes. And on either side of Pharaoh stood his magicians; and they held snakes that looked like staffs; the snakes were hypnotized and perhaps demon possessed.

Then Moses tossed down his rod and it changed to a snake; but so did the staffs of the magicians. Only the snake of Yahweh devoured the magicians’ snakes. The first of Egypt’s god was defeated. And of course, as Pharaoh and the Egyptians worshipped the great mother goddess, the Nile River, as it was about to crest, Moses arrived and stretched his rod over the river, and the river turned into dead stinking blood.

Finally, Moses instructed the Jews to prepare to leave Egypt; they were to take a spotless lamb on the 10th of Abib-Nisan (March-April); they were to set the lamb aside and everyday they were to go and examine it for blemishes – it must be perfect. Then on the 14th day of the month, they were instructed to kill the lamb, catching its blood in a basin. Then take a weed called hyssop, and paint the blood onto the top and sides of the doorway. A wall of blood, just like the blood of the slain animal that the covenant representatives walked through

in a figure-eight (see lesson #10). In this case, the whole family walked through the doorway of blood; and on the other side the lamb had been prepared: not a bone was broken, and it was roasted. And every piece of the lamb had to be eaten. On either side of the lamb was unleavened bread (leaven was a picture of sin) and bitter herbs (the bitter herbs were to remind the Jews of the bitterness of slavery); and as they ate they were dressed as if for a journey; they were prepared to go (a picture of faith in God’s promise). As they ate, the entire lamb was devoured; thus, as they walked out, each family carried, as it were, one whole lamb among themselves. They were a walking lamb. They walked out because judgment fell on the lamb rather than them. But the judgment of God also fell on the firstborn of Egypt; and the wail of death covered Egypt – their gods were dead, and now their firstborn were dead. And to the Egyptians the firstborn were their future, their eternal life, their future inheritance, their ongoing life. They have lost everything. The lamb of God had conquered the snake of Egypt.

It is interesting to note that whenever God provides a symbol of Himself, it is as a lamb. In fact, 22 times in the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John portrays Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. For a lamb is dependent, and helpless; indeed, a lamb is the only animal that presents itself for death without struggling at the abattoir.

And the Bible says that as the Jews left Egypt, “there was not a feeble one among them.” This was a miracle; no disease, no handicaps, no illnesses, etc., as Israel left.

Thereafter, the Passover was celebrated once a year (they were to remember that God remembered the covenant), on the 14th of Nisan. On the tenth, separate the lamb and examine it, on the 14th bring it. And gather in your homes, eat the unleavened bread, eat the bitter herbs, eat the lamb and remember that you are who you are because of the God of covenant. Thus, the Passover Meal takes on the semblance of the ongoing meal of all the covenants – for it fits them all.

Later, though, just before Judah was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, the prophet Ezekiel had one of the most horrifying of all visions (Ezekiel 10), for in this vision the Glory of God, the Shekinah Glory, left the temple. And Ezekiel saw the Glory go to the door, it had left the center; then the Glory moved to the courtyard, and no one noticed! And then the Glory came to the edge of city, and no one noticed! And the last thing that Ezekiel

saw was the Glory going over the mountains to the east. And no one noticed! They had forsaken the covenant. God left.

And then captivity. And while in captivity, Israel repented and re-instated the Passover Feast. In captivity, the Jews took three pieces of unleavened bread and placed them in one pouch, and it would lay on the table. And at a certain time during the meal, the host would take the middle piece of bread from the bag, break it, and pass it around the table in silence. And throughout the Passover Meal, a number of times wine was drunk from cups; however, in the captivity, a certain cup of wine was added: it sat at the end of the table with an empty chair. This cup was called THE CUP. And it was there for ritual purposes only, for no one ever touched it. It was the cup that awaited the coming of David's descendant, the cup that awaited the Messiah. And when Messiah came, the last words of hope that Jeremiah had spoken would come to pass. The new covenant would be brought by the Messiah. And they would go through the entire meal, and after the meal the table would be cleared and with awe, they would take away THE CUP. Another year had passed without the Messiah. For when he comes he will take THE CUP.

And the getting of unblemished lambs became a problem. So the order went out, an entire flock of sheep was to be bred specially for the Passover every year. These lambs were born to die. And according to Hebrew law, the only flock of sheep that was allowed near a city was the Passover flock; and they were allowed only during the week before they went into the city on the 10th of Nisan.

And have you ever wondered why our Lord made such a fuss about Palm Sunday? For it appears that He precisely arranged things for a specific purpose. Well, the date was the 10th of Nisan, and as Jesus went in through the east gate of Jerusalem, the Passover flock went in through the west gate; and Jesus went into the courtyard of the temple. And just over there, also in the courtyard, in the corner were the Passover sheep. And each day thereafter, the Levites would examine them for blemish.

This was our Lord announcing Himself to the nation: your Passover Lamb is now coming in. On the right day to the right place. And every Pharisee, Sadducee, and Herodian converged on the temple to question our Lord. Why? Because the Lamb of God is being examined. And it all happened in the courtyard of the temple. And just across the

way, they Passover flock was being examined by the Levites. And no flaw was found in Him! Their mouths were shut; they left in embarrassment.

And the 14th of Nisan began at 6 PM on the 13th. Thus, on the night of what we would call the 13th, but is according to the Hebrew calendar the 14th, the Passover day, Jesus had a very special Passover. For the Passover will not be until 3 PM on the 14th; at 3 PM the knife of the Levite would flash and kill the first lamb.

And the disciples realize that something inordinate is taking place because it is the right day, but the wrong time to have a Passover Meal. So they gathered in the Upper Room. And the roast lamb was present, the three pieces of unleavened bread in the pouch, the bitter herbs, the cups of wine around the table, and THE CUP at the end of the table. And the host is our Lord.

They pass around the cups of wine; and then He took the little bag, and He took out the middle piece just as any other host would do, and He broke it; but He broke the silence that was mandatory as it was passed around. He broke the silence of the centuries, for He said, "This is my body which is broken for you." Thus, Christ said, "I am the coming One. I am the Messiah."

Thus, the Jewish people had held the Trinity in their hands for centuries: one bag, three pieces. One essence, three Persons. And the middle piece was removed: the Son, who came to earth and His body was broken. This piece of bread was designated the *aphikomen*, Greek for "the coming one." It symbolized the coming Messiah. And then, after the meal was over, and everyone is just about to leave, our Lord took THE CUP! No one was to touch that cup! The disciples must have been riveted to their seats. He took THE CUP, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." And no one had ever mentioned those words since the prophet Jeremiah in chapter 31, about 500 years before. They had waited and waited and waited.

When our Lord took THE CUP, He was saying that He was now going to make covenant between man and the Father. And He would not walk between the pieces of an animal, He would walk among the pieces of His own death, and He would represent both parties: mankind and God. Thus, just like Abraham, mankind would rest while God represented both parties. Not by the blood of an animal, but by His blood a covenant would be made.

The life that the Sinai covenant demanded would

be forfeit for the whole of mankind. God was going to pardon mankind's sins, He was going to write the law on mankind's hearts. But blood must be shed, the penalty must be paid first. So when our Lord left the Upper Room, He left as the Lamb of Passover. He was to die instead of us; and because He was man, He can, for He is one of us. But because He is God He is worth all of us. Thus, one man can die for everybody. And it was His choice to do so. On the Cross, then, our Lord died as if He were a covenant-breaker, i.e., us.

By 9 am the next morning, the lambs were in the temple courtyard; the pens were taken down. And it would take most of the morning to arrange the accouterments. And at the end of the same hill, at 9 am in the morning, Jesus was being prepared for sacrifice – He was being nailed to a cross.

And at precisely 3 PM that afternoon, Jesus cried with a loud cry, "It is finished!" And He voluntarily yielded up his spirit and died. And in the courtyard, at that same moment, 3 PM, the knife of the Levite flashed and the first Passover lamb of that year died. But they were not valid anymore because THE PASSOVER LAMB has just died. He has come!

Recall that the Romans, when they wanted to hasten the deaths of the crucified, would break the legs of the victims. For on the cross, the victim died from suffocation, they could not breathe. And the only way to breathe was to push up on the nail that was driven through the feet so as to relieve the stress on the paralyzed chest muscles. And the legs would spasm in pain, and the nerves of the foot would scream mercilessly in agony. Then, again, breakdown from sheer paroxysm and imminent suffocation. On and on, the cycle would be repeated for sometimes days.

But when they wanted you to die in a hurry, they would take out the nail from the feet, pull out the legs and break them; then there was no way to press the body up so that one could breathe. And remember that they came to our Lord to break His legs, and one soldier said to the other, "Stop. For he is dead already." And John was there. And he remembered that Scripture said, "That not a bone of him shall be broken." Not a bone of the lamb was to be broken.

And when He arose from the dead; the Living Lamb walks to His throne, but He bears on His body the scars and signs of death; but death is dead, for the Lamb Lives. So our Lord carries on His body the proof that He died, but He lives! And that means

that in the death of Jesus, death died! And because death died and judgment was fulfilled, then Christ was resurrected! Again, why?! Because death died at the Cross; spiritual death had occurred, the penalty had been paid, and now there is no longer any death; therefore, our Lord could be resurrected. And forever and ever He will be a man as well as God, for the instant He is no longer a man, then the covenant is broken.

And in Revelation, it states that the saints gathered around the throne and sang a "new song;" "Worthy is the Lamb." And it had to be a new song, for the Law is fulfilled, the covenants are fulfilled; and the new covenant is here.

And Christ said, "Do this in remembrance of me." And 'remembrance' is a covenant word; it does not mean to send one's mind back and try to catch hold of details; it doesn't mean that you sit in a morbid service and try to remember the sufferings of Jesus. It means that you hold the parting in your mind and remember the terms of the covenant.

For recall that our Lord instituted the new covenant meal; the Passover connected all the old covenants, and He fulfilled them all. The Passover is over, He said. And He took two pieces of the Passover and made them the covenant meal of the New Covenant. And He said when you sit down and do this, remember this: that I live! And we live in Him! And as the wine is drunk and the bread is eaten remember this: that your sins are remembered no more. For His law is written on our hearts and the Spirit lives with us! For us to live is Christ. And we can say, "You are my God." And the Spirit says, "You are my people."

And if we examine ourselves for guilt, we become excited. For we discover that in the new covenant we are declared the righteousness of God in Christ; the Holy Spirit lives within us; we can do all things through Christ; we are His special treasure and He is our God. And this is what we do during the covenant meal, the Eucharist; we remember and re-enact, and celebrate covenant. And we realize that when we eat the bread and drink the wine that we are not just human beings, but that Christ lives in us. He lives! And we live because He does!

And many present day Christians are afraid of the phrases, "This is my body. This is my blood." This is why they are called 'sacraments,' and a sacrament is a symbol that conveys what it symbolizes. And it cannot be explained scientifically; it is a mystery. Thus, the sacraments are somehow a means that God conveys Himself to us through

created stuff. The elements, then, are the Body of Christ, through the power of the Holy Spirit; the bread not only symbolizes the Body of Christ, but actually conveys to us what that means. (I Cor. 10:16-17)

And right now, the Ruler of the Universe, seated at the Right Hand of God is a human being, Who is God, but is a human who sits down. So the cup and the bread of the present day Eucharist declare, "Eat of my humanity that lived out the life of God." And that is what weak mankind needs – the humanity of Jesus that overcame. He did not say eat of my Person – for we cannot eat of the Son of God; nor did He say eat of my Divine Nature. He said eat of my body and my blood. Eat of my humanness that was like you and overcame and lived in agape love; thus, He is saying let my Life come into

you.

The New Covenant, through the power of the Holy Spirit, gives us the very Life and the very Love of Jesus. And the bread and the cup make it real to us just as He was a real human being, spirit encased in flesh. And He, as spirit in flesh, lived in agape love; and when we partake of the Eucharist we participate in our spirit and in our flesh, in all our senses, in the Life that was His Life, the Life that is His Life now. For He is even now, although glorified, flesh and blood. He has a body, a glorified body, but a body nevertheless.

As we eat and drink, the Holy Spirit makes it real to us, causes us to participate in, partake of, not only Him, but everything that comes with Him: the terms of the new covenant. He is no longer the coming One, He is now come!