



FEED MY SHEEP

PUBLISHED BY DR. JAMES W. BRUGGEMAN
STONE KINGDOM MINISTRIES
P. O. Box 5695
ASHEVILLE, NC 28813 U.S.A.

See my blog at www.Stone-Kingdom.net

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Our covenant exchanges with Christ *Part 10—The Covenants of the Bible*

We have been examining the rituals and ceremonies surrounding the making of covenants. As we closed last time, we learned that the word, *friend(s)*, had a much deeper meaning in Old Testament times than it does today. We have a much looser definition as to who is our friend.

In closing last time, I presented three verses as examples of the deeper meaning of friendship, as found in the Bible: Isaiah 41:8; Exodus 33:11 and Matthew 26:50. To continue, and as our final example, let us ponder what Jesus really meant when He spoke these words to His apostles immediately after the covenant meal known as the Last Supper. He said:

John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

Jesus is not only our elder brother; He is our **friend!**—in that very, very intimate meaning of the word in the Hebrew culture. As believers and followers of Jesus, as Christians, we are in covenant with Him, both individually and as His chosen nation, Israel. Do you understand what that means!? I don't think any of us, including myself, have yet grasped the fulness of what that really means. But just from what we have learned so far, we can see that it means that we are in union with Him.

We are one with Him. We identify with Him. We take off our robe and give it to Him. It is the robe of our old self. It is the robe of our self-righteousness, where perhaps we once thought that we could do enough good to be righteous. But the Bible tells us that all our so-called righteous works are as filthy rags. In other words, Jesus loves us so much that He will take our filthy, ragged robe of self-righteousness and He will put it on Himself.

You see, He become one of us. He takes our sins upon Himself. And in return, He gives us His robe. What robe is that? It is the robe of His perfect righteousness. It is that covering which the Father sees, whereby we can approach His throne, and the Father sees us covered in righteousness. Isn't that staggeringly awesome? ...what our Friend has done for us? ...as the old hymn says: What a friend we have in Jesus!

By covenant faith in Christ, we also take off our belt and give it to our covenant partner, Jesus. The belt, the symbol of strength. But in our case, our strength is really weakness. We are so frail: physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. Our bodies weaken and die. Our mental faculties grow dim with years. Our emotions often cannot be controlled. And spiritually we come into this life spiritually dead. We need the quickening of the Holy Spirit.

And so we give Jesus our belt. He bears our weaknesses. When Jesus went to the cross, He bore all the sins and all the weaknesses of every soul who has ever lived, or who ever will live. It says in...

2 Corinthians 13:4 For though he was crucified through weakness,

Do you see that? He carried all our weaknesses for us....

yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

We traded our belt for His. We gave him all our infirmities and weaknesses. He gives us all His power and strength.

2 Corinthians 12:9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in [our] weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

And then in 1 Corinthians 15, in Paul's great treatise on the feast of Tabernacles, which is resurrection, he says this in ...

1 Corinthians 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

Whose *power* is that? It is the power of Christ which raises us from the dead; it is the power of Christ in us; indeed, it is Christ in us which will cause our immortality. With His belt comes His weapons in Ephesians 6. But before we get there, as a prelude to that, consider this well-known passage also in the light of covenant-making.

2 Corinthians 10:4 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

What are the weapons that came with Jesus's belt? Let us read beginning in ...

Ephesians 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, [*There is the belt. His belt is truth.*] and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Did it ever occur to us that this passage was dealing with covenant-making? Isn't that amazing!? At this point, we have exchanged robes with Jesus Christ. We have taken His belt and His weapons in exchange for our feeble ones. The next step is the actually cutting of the covenant. We recognize that step in that Jesus was the Lamb slain for us.

In place of an animal, Jesus gave Himself *once* in history and its benefits apply to *all* who ever have or ever will live. His covenant sacrifice of Himself was once and for all. There is no need to ever repeat it. Aside from that of Jesus, human sacrifice is not only the most horrendous abomination; it is also entirely void of effect. It accomplishes nothing!

But what about a little bit of blood from us? Do we not have to give any of our blood? And the answer is no. In the Old Testament, men gave some of their blood in the ritual of circumcision, which was the sign and seal of the covenant.

In the New Testament, baptism takes its place. Since the cross, circumcision counts for nothing. Any one who thinks circumcision has any spiritual merit today is still stuck in Old Testament thinking. Instead, by water baptism, we identify with the sinless blood of Jesus, because, as it says in...

Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Do you see how we are totally identifying with Him through baptism? It is because we are *friends*, we are covenant partners with Jesus.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

When we gave Him our robe, we gave Him our *old man*, didn't we? It was our old identity, inherited from the first Adam. But now, Jesus, the last Adam took our old self and destroyed it on the cross. Now we are enabled to walk in newness of life. This is profound, brothers and sisters, when we see this in light of covenant-making.

In the days of old, men made marks on their bodies; they had scars on their wrists to give evidence to the world that they were in covenant with someone. They also exchanged names and it, too, gave evidence to the world as to with whom they were in covenant. Sometimes those physical marks were not always visible to the world, as it were, but it was also no secret that the Hebrew men were circumcised as a sign of their covenant with their God. And thus we read in...

Romans 4:11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised:

Since the cross, though, we no longer put any marks on our body as signs or seals of covenants with God. Did you notice that Abraham's circumcision is described as a seal of faith? Likewise, in the New Testament, baptism is the sign of our faith, and it is through baptism that we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

We shall not stop here to discuss Holy Spirit baptism, the "second blessing" and all that; it is not germane to our discussion at this point. (Regarding my in-depth studies on baptisms, see page 4.) The fact we are establishing here is that circumcision corresponds to baptism, that circumcision had to do with faith, and that circumcision was a seal.

In like manner, through baptism we receive the Holy Spirit, which is the seal, the authentication, the sign to the world that we are in covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ, His Son. This is verified in...

Ephesians 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, ...

13 ...in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

You see, the way God has this part of His covenants designed is that we make the exchange of garments and belts and so forth, and then Jesus does His

work on the cross. Then, while billions of people are born and die in the meantime, the ultimate fulfillment of His robe, His power, His strength in us, is not fully manifested until "the redemption of the purchased possession," which refers to our resurrection to immortality.

So that is why in this life we have only the earnest, the down payment, of the Holy Spirit. Then, that seal of the Holy Spirit upon us as covenant-partners should be, ought to be manifesting to the world by the fruits of our character. Can any one recognize that we are in covenant with Christ by the way that we act? I hope so.

Furthermore, we had the exchange of names. Christ takes my name and your name (e.g., James-Adam; John-Adam, Renee-Adam, Suzanne-Adam, etc.) He takes our names and says to the Father: "I have taken their names, their identities under the old Adamic nature and I have assimilated them into Myself. I destroyed their old identities on the cross. And now they all have My name. They are Christ-ians. They are Christians."

Of course, because we wear the name "Christian," many more people are able to see that we at least claim to be in covenant relationship with Jesus, with God manifested in the flesh. Given our new comprehension of the connection of the name with the covenant-making process, consider these five verses (I am sure we could have brought forth fifty), but just ponder these five verses now with the new eyes of covenant understanding.

Matthew 12:21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Acts 3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

Revelation 22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Allow me to make a quick comment on that last verse: This is in contrast to the “mark of the beast.” His name in their foreheads is not some visible mark or tattoo. It is figurative language meaning that His name (and all that that implies), is in our minds, hearts, souls, consciousness.

Brothers and sisters, there is so much more about our covenant relationship with Jesus and the Father that remains to be brought forth, but that much is sufficient for an introduction into some of the general principles and concepts of covenants.

I want to learn as much as our Father will reveal, and so as I sit down to prepare these studies, I usually have a plan in mind about what material I am going to cover, but during the study and writing process, the Father often shows me other amazing aspects of understanding, hitherto unknown to me, which can be brought forth for all of you, if I will only put my plan/agenda on hold for the time being.

And, as far as I know, I have never stifled those new things as the Holy Spirit brings them forth to my consciousness while I am composing these writings. So I am grateful to Father for all His revelation, because I am learning as we proceed, just as you are.

I can guarantee you that I did not know all the preceding before I sat down at my computer to prepare this writing. I praise the Lord for his unsearchable riches, and that the **mineshaft** of his Word is so deep and rich that it brings forth a **mind-shift** as we hear it. His Word does not return void.

What a magnificent work God has performed, and is performing, because of His covenants! What utterly profound significance we are finding everywhere in the Bible as we discover more of what it means to be *in covenant* with our God! Hallelujah!

(To be continued.)

An In-depth Study on Baptism

Here below are brief descriptions of the 10 lectures on CD which comprise A-106, the second of four albums in my series of 30 lectures on *The Tabernacle in the Wilderness*. (abbreviated TiW).

CD #333, 334 TiW series *The Laver: Washings, Cleansings and Baptisms, Parts 1 & 2*: The Laver was the large container of water in the Outer Court used for washing both people and things. This message be-

gins to discuss the origin and purpose for Christian baptism and how it was typified in the Tabernacle.

335, 336 TiW, Lectures 9 & 10 *The Laver: Washings, Cleansings and Baptisms, Parts 3 & 4*: Is one “saved” by water baptism? What is the proper method of baptizing: sprinkling, pouring or immersing? The Greek word *baptidzo* means to dip or immerse, so is not the answer clear? Not necessarily! This series answers these questions relying on *all* the Scriptures, from both the Old as well as the New Testament.

337, 338 TiW, Lectures 11 & 12 *Baptism and Circumcision, Parts 1 & 2*. Does NT baptism take the place of OT circumcision or just what is the relationship between the two rituals? An extensive study of circumcision commences here. Additionally, does one receive Holy Spirit baptism when one is baptized with water?

339, 340 TiW, Lectures 13 & 14: *Baptism and Circumcision, Parts 3 & 4*: Caveat to parents with younger children: delicate subject matter. More in-depth study of circumcision: seal of the covenant, castration, death and rebirth, removal of shame. “Seven women shall take hold of one man.” Being a “friend” of God is a very bloody affair.

341, 342 TiW, Lectures 15 & 16: *The Bridegroom of Blood, Parts 1 & 2*: As with previous message, again, a caveat to parents. This message launches from the concept of the Passover-circumcision connection. Moses’ wife, Zipporah, performed an emergency circumcision on their son, to stave off the wrath of God. This incident is fraught with very deep meaning for every Christian, concerning “the bridegroom of blood.” Hints of spiritual marriage.

PRICE: The above album of ten CDs includes charts and is available for \$42 + \$5 s & h = \$47. Note: The entire Tabernacle in the Wilderness series of 30 CD lectures in four albums is available at the seriously-discounted price of only \$99 and includes D-101, a one-hour DVD consisting of numerous illustrations of the various parts of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness.

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