

# Relationship, Not Individualism

The Kingdom and the Covenant, Session 11

## Bible Study

- Cutting & blood are key to covenant making
  - Key Hebrew phrase translated “make covenant” is *karath berith* (e.g., Ex 34:10; Deut 29:12; et al)
  - *karath*: to cut off, cut down, cut a covenant
  - *berith*: covenant, alliance or treaty
  - *karath berith*: literally means “to cut covenant”
- Animal sacrifice was typical
  - Symbolized surrendering their individuality
  - “Walk of death”: death to one who acts solely in self-interest, thus violating covenant
  - A covenant represents total death to independent living
- Gen 15:9-10,<sup>9</sup> “So the Lord said to him, ‘Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.’<sup>10</sup> Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half.”
  - What did Abram do that shows he knew this was a covenant sacrifice?
- Gen 15:12, 17,<sup>12</sup> “As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him....<sup>17</sup> When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking fire pot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram.”
  - According to verse 17, what did God do to ratify the covenant?
  - This was a unilateral, unconditional & eternal covenant
- When God made covenant with Israel, the leaders of Israel also walked between pieces of a sacrificed animal
  - Jer 34:18-20,<sup>18</sup> “The men who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces.<sup>19</sup> The leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests and all the people of the land who walked between the pieces of the calf,<sup>20</sup> I will hand over to their enemies who seek their lives. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth.”
- When Abram’s descendants, the Israelites, were in Egypt, what was the Passover Lamb and what did it represent?
- Just as death was required to enter the old covenant, it’s also required to enter the new covenant

- Jn 1:29 “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’”
  - “takes away” (Gk, *v, airo*): (1) lift, take up; (2) take away, carry away
  - “sin of the world” (singular “sin”): sin in general; i.e., one sacrifice covered all sin
  - What is the significance of John’s description of Jesus as the “Lamb of God”?
  - What affect did Old Testament sacrifices have on a person’s sin?
  - What affect did Jesus’ sacrifice have on a person’s sin and conscience?
  - The old covenant sacrifice was symbolic & ineffective
  - The new covenant sacrifice is the reality & completely effective
- 1 Co 5:7 “For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.”
- Rev 5:6, “Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain....”
  - Who is the Lamb and what does this verse tell us?
  - Jesus chose to have scars in his glorified body as eternal reminders of the price he paid for us!
- Jesus’ covenant sacrifice: death to self
- Our covenant sacrifice: death to self
- 2 Co 5:15, “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”
  - We have become one with God & have died to independent living
  - A covenant is a loving, enduring relationship in which each partner focuses on the other’s well-being and success, including what they deserve, need or want.
- Few Christians seem to realize that in the new covenant, we give up our independence when we accept God’s covenant offer, including salvation; so living for self is not an option

### Questions

- What kingdom responsibilities or obligations does covenant relationship impose on us?
- How must this affect our thinking?
- How does this enable us to be more effective in the kingdom?

## The Test

- Our covenant with God will test us
- How & why our covenant will test us
  - Allow us to reject individualism, be faithful to covenant relationship
  - Provide opportunity for us to grow spiritually
  - Refine or purify us
  - Prove he'll use even the enemy's evil intent to bless us
  - Reveal our true nature to us
- 1 Co 3:12-13, <sup>12</sup> "If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, <sup>13</sup> his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work."
  - "test" (Gk, v, *dokimazo*): (1) to prove quality; (2) to judge as good, genuine or worthy
- Jas 1:2-4, <sup>2</sup> "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."
  - "trials" (Gk, n, *peirasmos*): (1) examination to learn true nature; (2) temptation, trial to make one stumble
  - "test/testing" (Gk, n, *dokimion*): proof of being authentic, not fake or counterfeit
  - According to verse 3, what does having our faith tested produce?
  - According to verse 4, what is the benefit of perseverance?
  - "mature" (Gk, adj, *teleios*): (1) perfect, mature; (2) without defect or blemish
  - "complete" (Gk, adj, *holokleroi*): (1) complete in every sense, having all necessary qualities
  - What is the standard for our maturity and completeness?

## Closing

- Our covenant with God will test us, but the results will be good if we reject individualism & focus on our covenant relationship