

Evidence of the Covenant

The Kingdom and the Covenant, Session 12

Background

- Previous session: The phrase “make covenant” is from Heb *karath berith*, which literally means “cut covenant”
- One expression of that was the sacrificing of an animal in conjunction with what’s called the “walk of death”
- In many ancient & some current cultures, people cutting covenant or making covenant made an incision on themselves, usually on their wrists or palms of their hands
- The scar was very significant: it’s visible evidence they’d entered covenant relationship
- In some cultures, blood also would be sprinkled on the partners
- Ex 24:8, “This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

The New Covenant

- Jesus’ crucifixion was essential, because it made the new covenant possible
- In what ways was he cut so that he bled before his crucifixion?
- In what ways was he cut so that he bled during his crucifixion?
- Jn 20:27, “Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.’”
 - How do Jesus’ scars serve as signs of a covenant?
- Jn 7:7, “The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify that what it does is evil.”
 - According to this verse, why did people of the world hate Jesus?
- Jn 15:18-19, ¹⁸ “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”
 - Why is the world’s hatred of us as Christians evidence of our covenant with God?
- Jn 14:9(b), “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.”
 - Why is having people see Father in us evidence of the covenant?
- Mt 5:10, “Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”
 - How does the world’s hatred of us affect our status in the kingdom, according to this verse?
- 1 Pet 2:12, “Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”
 - Why are our good deeds evidence of the covenant?
- God required Abraham to be physically circumcised to enter covenant with him

- Rom 2:29, "... circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code."
 - According to this verse, how is circumcision of the heart done?
 - Does this verse refer to the human spirit, Holy Spirit, both or neither?
- Col 2:11 "In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ."
 - "sinful nature" (Gk, n, *sarx*): (1) literally, the flesh – skin & muscle tissue; (2) figuratively, a mindset focused on physical, worldly existence, on behavior compatible with the world system
 - What does it mean for us to be circumcised, to put off the flesh?
 - According to this verse, who performs this circumcision?
 - What did Jesus do that circumcises us?
 - Rom 2:29 states the Spirit does the circumcision, so does that contradict Col 2:11, which states Christ did it?
 - What was the predominant characteristic of your former sinful nature?
 - What specific steps must you take to "circumcise your heart" or "put off your flesh"?
 - How might this be considered evidence of our covenant with God?
- Jn 13:34-35, ³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
 - How is being a disciple related to covenant?
 - What's the visible evidence of covenant in this passage?
- Jn 14:20 "On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you."
 - Where do we take God, our covenant partner who is in us?
 - What do we expose him to?
 - When we sin, how does he respond?
 - Can we honestly say in covenant, "I'm not affecting anyone but myself"?

Questions

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

Conclusion

- The evidence we offer that we have entered the new covenant is to become increasingly like our elder brother Jesus and live a life that honors and pleases our heavenly Father.