

Blood Covenant - Part 5

by Bob Phillips

The sermon explores the significance of the blood covenant and its relationship to the old and new covenants, highlighting the importance of understanding the difference between law and grace.

Duration: 53:39

Scripture: Genesis 15:11-12, Genesis 17:2, Genesis 17:7, Genesis 17:14, Genesis 17:17, Colossians 1:22

Topics: "Covenant Theology", "Gods Promises"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of covenant and its importance in the relationship between God and humanity. They emphasize the seriousness of entering into a covenant with God, highlighting that it requires loyalty and obedience. The speaker references the story of Abraham and the covenant he made with God, explaining that Abraham drove away the birds of prey that came upon the carcasses, symbolizing his commitment to the covenant. However, the speaker also mentions that the people of God failed to uphold their covenant promises, leading to God releasing them from their obligations.

Transcript

This is tape number five in a series. We urge you to listen to all the tapes in the series in numerical order so that the whole teaching can be received and understood. Listening to a part of the series or to the tapes out of sequence can lead to a misunderstanding of the nature, the intent, and the importance of the series.

Titus, chapter two. Titus, chapter two. We have been discussing the relationship of covenant.

We've talked about the blood covenant the first night. Last night we talked about the heart that's necessary to enter covenant with God. Now I want you to carefully follow through the Word.

I've said this all week. I'm a teacher and so I go through a lot of scripture. I want you to see it and I want you to follow through with me as I highlight certain things because that's what the Spirit of God is impressing upon me that you see.

So I want you to go through the Word with me. Now we're talking about the covenant that God has made with Jesus and we become joint heirs in that covenant. Now tonight we're going to look at something.

I had mentioned earlier that we were going to talk about the covenant of peace. The Lord's changed that. I'll probably speak on that either tomorrow night or the next night.

But we're going to look at the relationship of law and grace, the relationship of the old covenant and the new covenant so that you can understand why God gave the new covenant and why He gave the old covenant. Are you with me? All right, now I want you to know and understand this. I'm just going to say it.

You can check it out from Hebrews chapter 8 and Hebrews chapter 9, but I'm not going to go into that tonight. But I want you to understand when God talks about the first covenant and the second covenant or the old covenant and the new covenant, you'll see clearly as you read Hebrews 8 and Hebrews 9 without any question at all that He always refers to two covenants. It's not the first covenant actually that He's talking about because the first covenant that He made was probably with Adam, as we talked about.

There was a covenant that was made with Noah and then there was a covenant that was made with Abraham. We find a covenant in the Bible made with David. We find a covenant made with Solomon.

We find several covenants all the way through, but there are only two, three major covenants that are highlighted in the Bible and really only two, and I think you'll see that tonight. The two covenants are first of all the covenant of the law and the covenant of the heart. Now those are the two covenants that are in the Bible.

There's a covenant of law and a covenant of the heart. Now what God was after when He gave the law, we're going to see tonight so that we understand. The reason I'm covering this is because so many Christians are confused about the relationship of the Old Testament and the New Testament and we're going to clearly see how those two things go together.

May I say to you before we begin that you can read the Old Testament in absolute freedom. The promises that are there apply to you because everything in that Old Testament was written for one specific purpose. Are you with me? It was written for a purpose.

We're going to see what that purpose was. God had in mind dealing with His people from the beginning the same way, with the hearts. God has always been interested in getting your hearts, not you being allegiance and dutiful of a series of regulations and a law or of performing a group of duties.

What God wants is your heart and He wants your whole heart. Are you with me? All right, now we're going to see that relationship. The covenants that are talked about in Hebrews 8 and 9, when He says the first covenant, He's talking about the Mosaic covenant.

When He says the latter covenant, He's talking about the covenant that was inaugurated and ratified by the Lord Jesus Christ. But I want you to know this. There is another covenant, the Abrahamic covenant, and God's intention for the Abrahamic covenant, Jesus fulfilled the Abrahamic covenant, we're going to see that tonight, that God has always dealt with people on the basis of the way He dealt with Abraham.

Are you hearing what I'm saying? He never really had a desire to institute the law. He always wanted to deal with people the way that He dealt with Abraham. Now, you're going to see that clearly in the Bible.

If you're having trouble with what I said, hang on, because you'll see it clearly. It's always been God's method. It's God's method today, and we're going to see what the basis of that covenant was.

All right? But I want you to see something. I want you to understand. We live in an age where we are frequently told that the old covenant, the law, operated this way.

If you obey God, you get blessed. If you disobey God, you get cursed. However, we're told that under the new covenant, there's a change, a difference.

If you obey God, you get blessed. But you don't come under a curse for disobedience if you're in the covenant. Now, I want to say this to you.

That is not true. That is not true. I'm going to show you in the Word that it's not true.

If you'll stick with me, you're going to see that. The same principle works. Now, listen to me, though.

Listen carefully, because I want you to understand where the problem is. There is a difference between the old and the new. But understand this.

God did not take obedience out of the new covenant as a requirement. God did not substitute something for obedience in the new covenant. He did not make a substitute for it.

The old Mosaic covenant did require obedience. It required it. So does it want with the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now, here is the difference. He didn't substitute something for obedience, but under the new covenant, He supplied the means for you to be obedient. Are you hearing what I'm saying? And there's a vast difference.

Because this covenant over here, we're going to see, could not impart life and it could not impart righteousness. That God did something for us over here, in that He supplied righteousness and life with what this covenant is, and He supplied all the obedience necessary on His part, plus the means for you and I to walk in His footsteps, by supplying the Holy Spirit as an indwelling power and person inside us. Are you hearing what I'm saying? All right.

Now, I want you to notice something. This is evident if we read Titus chapter 2, because obedience is a requirement of Titus chapter 2. He tells us what salvation is. Now, notice this.

We are told sometimes, and I've been hitting this hard this week, but I want to hit it hard the rest of the week too. I want you to understand what grace is. Grace is not merely unmerited favor.

Yes, everything we get from God is unmerited. I don't care what it is. It's unmerited because He's holy and we're not.

We have to be made holy by Him clothing us in covenant. But grace is not simply that theological term that means unmerited favor. That's not what it is.

Grace is a power from God that enables you to do what He has called you to do. It is a power from the Lord that enables you to walk in what He's asked you to walk in. Are you with me? Now, that changes the whole concept of grace.

Now, listen to me. Grace does not, in the New Covenant, does not say, Oh, well, you had an experience back there. Everything's okay.

You're covered by grace. You can walk the way you want to. You can do what you want to do.

That's not New Covenant grace. Look with me at Titus chapter 2 and we'll see what grace instructs us to do. Now, Titus is certainly in the New Covenant, is it not? Now, notice what we're reading.

Titus chapter 2, verse 11. For the grace of God has appeared. What did He say has appeared? The grace of God has appeared.

Now, look what that grace brought. It brought salvation. Grace appeared bringing salvation to all men.

But now, notice it doesn't stop there. Notice what that grace does. Instructing us to do what? To deny ungodliness and worldly desires.

Let me ask you a question. Does grace place a requirement of obedience on you? Well, according to that, it does, because the obedience that you must offer to God, because grace instructs you to do this, is to deny ungodliness and to deny worldly desires. Now, how many of you see that in your Bible? Now, I'm reading from the New American Standard, and if you have any question on anything that I say that's in the King James or anything that may be different, then I want you to come and ask me, not while I'm preaching, but after the service.

I want to clarify it. Now, notice. It instructs us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and grace instructs us to live sensibly.

And how does it instruct us to live? Righteously and godly, and when are we supposed to start that? It says in this present age, so he's talking about right now, is that right? Now, that's what grace does. Again, let me say it so you get it in your heart. Grace is not some sort of mystical thing that God just kind of poured over us and said, well, by grace you're saved.

Absolutely by grace you're saved. But now, let me tell you what that means. That means that you couldn't even enter the new life of salvation if God hadn't given a power to you to turn from your sins and repent and walk with Him.

Are you hearing what I'm saying? And grace also supplies the power for you to walk with God. It's all grace. You see? That's why if I've done something really good and accomplished something, you know, I don't accomplish anything for the Lord because it's from the Lord anyway.

It's grace. Are you hearing what I'm saying? He gets all the glory for it because it's grace that enabled me to do whatever He's called me to do. So it all goes back to Him.

You see? That's why there's no room for pride. There's no room for selfish ambition. There's no room for greed.

There's no room for self-recognition. There's no room for exalting man because it all goes right back to Him because if it was done in the kingdom of God, He supplied the grace and power to do it because there's nothing in your flesh that can please Him. Are you hearing what I'm saying? All right.

Now, but grace does instruct us to deny ungodliness and worldly desire. Look with me at chapter 3 of Titus. Titus chapter 3. Verse 3. He's going to describe somebody now that's operating under these operatives of grace or these principles of grace, the power of grace.

Titus chapter 3, verse 3. For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient and deceived. Now let me ask you a question. If you once were something, does that mean you're not that anymore? All right? If you once were that, then I once were single.

I'm not single anymore. I'm married. I'm not single anymore.

I can't call myself single anymore. You know, I didn't tell my wife this, but I filled out an application for something the other day and just, I'm marked single. I haven't let her see it yet, but I didn't even realize it until after I looked at it.

I used to mark him single. But my wife had only been married a little over two years. You'd think I'd know it by now, wouldn't you? But I'm not single anymore.

I once was single, but I'm not. That means I have become something. I once was something.

I'm not that anymore. So he's saying that if you are in the new covenant, you once were foolish, you once were disobedient, you once were deceived, and you once were enslaved to various lusts and pleasures. Does that mean that in the covenant of God, you're not to be enslaved anymore? That you're not to be dominated and controlled by various lusts and pleasures.

All right? Spending our life in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us. Now look at this.

Not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness. Now I'm reading this to you because I'm going to be talking about the relationship of law in the old covenant and the work of God in the Holy Spirit in the new covenant. I want you to know that I declare to you and understand clearly that you are not saved on the basis of deeds that you do.

Are you hearing what I'm saying? It very clearly says you're not saved on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness. Not one deed you do brings you into salvation except making Christ Jesus Lord of your whole life. Are you with me? And then He imparts His righteousness to you.

Okay? You're not saved on the basis of deeds which you've done in righteousness but according to His mercy by the washing of regeneration and the renewing by who? By the Holy Spirit. That's how we're saved. All right? Now, I want you to turn with me to Genesis chapter 15.

Genesis chapter 15. And we're looking at covenants. Genesis chapter 15.

By the way, when I say salvation, that's the same... You know, all salvation is included in covenant. Do you know and understand that? And so, that's what we're talking about. See, when the Bible says the Old Testament and the New Testament the word testament there is literally covenant.

Old covenant, new covenant. All right? But now, I want you to notice in Genesis chapter 15 we've got something that's going to take place in Abraham's life. At this point, he's not Abraham.

He's Abram. Now, notice what happens. Verse 1, Genesis 15.

After these things, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision saying, Do not fear, Abram. And by the way, can I just tell you that that phrase, Do not fear, as best as I can determine is the most consistently used phrase in the whole Bible. I'm not talking about the most... It's not the most... It's not the word that's used the most, but the phrase, Do not fear, in whatever form it takes is the most often used phrase that I know of in the Bible.

And so, God tells us not to fear. And so, He says, Do not fear. I, God, am a shield to you, and your reward shall be very great.

Now, God said that to Abram, but he had something on his mind, and he said in verse 2, And Abraham said, O Lord God, what wilt thou give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Since thou hast given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir. Then, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, This man will not be your heir, but one who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir. Now, I want to tell you something.

That was a staggering promise for Abraham. Did you know that? That was a... He cannot have a child, and he's been told that he can have a child. That's a staggering promise.

But I mentioned this the other night. If that wasn't enough to stagger him and set him back a little bit, God shocked him just a little bit more, because He took him outside, and He told him to look at the sky. He said, Now count the stars.

And if you can count those stars, that's how many children you're going to have. Do you think that's staggering? Do you think that'd shake you up a little bit? All right, now notice in verse 5. And He took him outside, and He said, Now look toward the heavens and count the stars. If you're able to count them, and He said to him, So shall your descendants be.

Now look at this unusual phrase. Then he believed in the Lord, and He, God, reckoned it to him as righteousness. That sort of sounds to me like something that belongs over in the New Testament, the New Covenant.

Wonder how it got over here. Now let me ask you another question. Is God granting righteousness to Abraham on the basis of deeds that He's done? Obviously not, because He hasn't done anything yet.

Are you hearing what I'm saying? But he just believed what God said, and God granted it to him as righteousness. It sort of sounds to me like that's kind of what He does to us when we come to Jesus. Well, if that's the case, then we're beginning to see that God's pattern of dealing with men has never really changed.

It was this way from the beginning. This is the way God desires to deal with His people. Are you hearing what I'm saying? Now notice what happens.

This thing was so staggering to Abraham that he asked a very important question. God said to him in verse 7, and He said to him, I'm the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess it. And he said, now here's a good question, O Lord God, how may I know that I shall possess it? Is that a good question? If you ever read something in the Word and it just seemed to stagger you and you thought, oh my, how can I possess that? How can I possibly live that? How can I attain that? How can I reach that? God gives you the same answer that He gave Abraham.

You know what He told Abraham? He said, you can know it, Abraham, by means of covenant. Now let me show you how He answered. Here's what He said.

Verse 9. So He said to him, that is, God said to Abraham, bring me a three-year-old heifer and a three-year-old female goat and a three-year-old ram and a turtle dove and a young pigeon. Then He brought all of these to him, and what did He do with them? He divided them or cut them in two. Now the Hebrew word for covenant in Hebrew is a word berith, and it simply means to cut.

And so that's what He was doing. It means to cut covenant. The word covenant means to cut.

Now you remember me describing this to you? Some of you weren't here, but you remember me describing to you how they cut covenant in the Old Testament. They would take an animal or animals, and they would cut those animals in two. They would cut them in half, and they would lay half of the pieces on one side and half of the pieces on the other side, and then they, the two that were making covenant, would then begin to walk through those pieces.

Matter of fact, you'll find you'll find that phraseology throughout the Bible. As a matter of fact, in Jeremiah, it talks about that the people of God had sworn to God that they would observe the year of Jubilee. And they said, We'll do what you say, God.

At the end of seven years, we'll release the prisoners and slaves from our debts. And God said to them, I've come to witness against you because from the time you walk through the pieces, you've not obeyed my voice. And therefore, I'm releasing you from your covenant, but I'm also releasing myself from you.

Are you hearing what I'm saying? Alright, now see, here's why that was. As you walk through the pieces, they would then make the circle, and they would come back to the middle, walking through those pieces, as a symbolic act. And they would stand in the middle, and they would recite all of the blessings of the covenant, all of the conditions of the covenant, and all of the cursings on a person if he broke covenants.

Now, are you with me? Because, you see, here's what the covenant required. The covenant required that I had to be just as loyal to my covenant partner as he was to me. Now, let's take a covenant.

See, a covenant means an agreement. If I go to the bank, and I talk to the banker, and I say, I want to borrow \$1,000 from you, and I sign a little piece of paper, and he signs that piece of paper, we've made agreement with one another, but there's some conditions that have to be fulfilled. Like, for example, if I break agreement, and don't pay him what I said I would pay him, he'll foreclose on me, and I'll be brought to judgment.

Are you with me? Likewise, if I pay him, and he doesn't fulfill his obligations, and I don't get what he promised me, I bring judgment against him, because our names are on a legal contract. Is that right? All right? He has an obligation to me. I have an obligation to him.

All right? Now, this obligation, when they stood in the middle of these pieces, here's what they would say. They would look up to heaven, and they would say, Lord, Lord God, so do unto me, as to these pieces, if I break loyalty in this covenant. In other words, if I break loyalty in this covenant, I'm worthy of death, just like these pieces were cut in two.

Are you with me? Does that sound serious? All right? Now, I want to ask you a question. I mentioned this the other night. I want to review it and ask it again.

All right. Before you raise your hand quickly and embarrass yourself, just listen to what I'm saying. How many of you would enter into a covenant like that with the Lord Jesus Christ, with God the Father? Because now here's what it says.

With a covenant like that, there's no mercy, there's no forgiveness. You must be just as loyal to God as He is to you, or you're worthy of death at the first disobedience. I've not met anybody that really would want to understand.

If they understand God's holiness, I've not met anybody that would want to enter in that covenant. So something happened. Now look what happens.

Verse 11. And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram.

And behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. Drop down to verse 17. And it came about when the sun had set that it was very dark.

And behold, there appeared... Now look at this. There appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch. And what did it do? It passed between these pieces.

On that day, the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, To your descendants, I have given this land from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river of Euphrates, and so on and so forth. Now what he did, is notice this. Abraham did not walk through the pieces, did he? No.

But somebody else walked through the pieces. We see that the person who walked through the pieces was a flaming torch and a smoking oven or furnace. Now let me just read something to you and see if you recognize who walked through those pieces on Abraham's behalf.

I don't want you to turn there, but you'll recognize it. Let me read it to you. And his head and his hair were like white, like white wool, like snow.

His eyes were like a flaming torch or a flame of fire. And his feet were burnished bronze as it had been caused to glow in an oven or a furnace. And his voice was like the sound of many waters, and in his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in its strength.

And he said, I am the living one, and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. I have the keys of death and of Hades. Now let me ask you a question.

Who walked through those pieces? Jesus Christ himself walked through those pieces. Is that what we just read? All right. Now, Abraham didn't walk through the pieces, but the Lord walked through the pieces on his behalf.

Now, that ought to settle it. Let's see what happens. Chapter 17.

Genesis chapter 17. You see, let me see that you understand this. That's why God never speaks of it being our covenant with God.

You read the Bible, you'll never find that language. You'll never find anywhere in there, we've made covenant with you, God. He always says, my covenant.

God calls it His covenant. Are you hearing what I'm saying? It's not our covenant with God. He says, my covenant.

When He talks about the people having broken covenant, He says, you have broken my covenant. When He talks about entering into covenant, He says, enter into my covenant. Because the covenant was made between God the Father and God the Son.

Now, here's what happened. I said that it was required to fulfill covenant that you be just as faithful to your covenant partners He wants to use. Well, do you think that might be why the New Testament tells us that Jesus said things like, I always do that which is pleasing to my Father.

That which I do, I do what I hear my Father say, and I do what I see my Father do. I do nothing of myself. I can do nothing on my own initiative.

Can you imagine God Himself saying that? Do you know why He said it? Do you think He's just trying to be humble? No. He had entered into a covenant with His Father. Now, here's what that means.

This walk that they made through the pieces is called a walk of death. Because in order to enter covenant with someone, you have to die to living for yourself. You no longer live for yourself.

You live for that person you've made covenant with. Alright? So, Jesus, did He live for Himself? Absolutely not. Did God the Father live for Himself? No.

He lived that the Son might be glorified. Are you hearing what I'm saying? Now, the way you and I enter into covenant is the same way Abraham did. Now, notice this.

The covenant is between God the Father and God the Son. Jesus Christ walked in total, perfect, absolute obedience to God the Father. Are you with me? You see, for that reason, you're not saved on the good deeds and the righteous deeds which you have done, but for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Father lets you enter into covenant.

Because He did not walk through those pieces on His own behalf. He walked through the pieces on behalf of Abraham. He didn't walk through those pieces on His own behalf.

He walked through those pieces on all who would follow in the steps and faith of Abraham. Are you hearing what I'm saying? All right, now, it was a walk of death. What does that mean? Well, you see, if we're taught that grace is just unmerited favor and we just have an experience and we can live any way we want to, then we could misunderstand covenants.

Because I must become a joint heir with Jesus, but now look what Abraham had to do. Look at Genesis 17, verse 1. Now, when Abraham was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I am God Almighty. Now, what did He require him to do? What does that say? Walk before me, and what was he to be? He was to be blameless.

And I will establish whose covenant? My covenant between me and you. Now, hold your finger right there, and I want you to turn with me to Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1. We're going to come right back to Genesis 17, but I want you to see this in Colossians. I want you to understand.

You see, I use a lot of Old Testament scriptures. Now, I'll tell you why I do. I believe God intends for us to use a lot of the Old Testament.

I believe we've neglected the Old Testament. Let me tell you why. The Old Testament explains the New.

Are you hearing what I'm saying? And so if I really want to find out what's taking place over here, I can find out by the explanation I get of it from the Old Covenant, the Old Testament. Are you with me? You see, because Paul did that very thing. You know how Paul got revelation on what to write? Certainly it was by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

What do you think he did? You think he went down, sat down under some kind of palm tree, and said, Lord, here I am, open my mind, I want to write a letter today. No, God took Paul into Asia for three years before anybody ever heard him speak a word. He took him there, and he learned the Scripture.

That's why he quotes the Old Testament so much. He learned what he learned by reading the Old Testament, and who did the Old Testament speak of? Jesus. As he read the Old Testament, he got revelation and light on the New Testament.

And so now, here's where we are. We can read the New, and then we can get revelation on what was taking place and what God meant back there in the Old. And we can read the Old, and we can find out how it pointed to what was coming in the New.

Are you with me? All right. Now notice this. Colossians chapter 1, verse 18.

He, Jesus, is speaking of Jesus. He is also head of the body, the church. And he is the beginning.

Now notice this very carefully. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have what place? What place? I want everybody to say it. What place? That he might come to have first place in how much? Everything.

What place does God desire to occupy? First place. May I tell you, he'll either occupy first place, or he won't occupy any place at all. All right? He comes to have first place in everything.

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fallen to dwell in him. Now, I want you to think about this in a minute, because we're going to see something. Abraham was told to walk before God.

How? Blameless. Now, may I just say to you, that's a pretty tall order. I want you to notice it.

Abraham didn't walk through the pieces. The Lord Jesus Christ walked through the pieces on his behalf. And notice what we see here.

I want you to see, what I'm trying to show to you, is how the Old Testament, the Old, the Old and the New begin to mesh together. Now watch this. For in him, verse 19, for it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fallen to dwell in him.

And through him, that is Jesus, to reconcile all things to himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross. How did he make peace? Through the blood of Jesus. Through him, I say, were the things on earth or things in heaven.

And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, which means you're not supposed to be there anymore. You were formerly engaged in evil deeds, which means you're not supposed to be engaged in them anymore. Yet he has now reconciled you in his fleshly body through death in order to present you before him how? Holy, blameless and beyond reproach.

May I say to you, that's how you walk holy. You stay in him. Now are you with me? He is the one that makes you holy.

He's the one that makes you blameless. He's the one that makes you beyond reproach because you and I both know we're not beyond reproach, not compared to a holy God. Are we? I say, are we? But God let Jesus walk through the pieces.

But now I want you to not stop there. I want you to read the next verse. What does it say? If... If... If you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you've heard.

How do you see it? See, you are holy, blameless and beyond reproach if you continue not moved away from the hope of the gospel. What's the hope of the gospel? Turn with me to 1 John 3. I've spoken it to you, but I'm saying this by way of reminder so that you see where we're coming from. 1 John 3. Let me ask you a question.

Is the hope of the gospel that we're not like we're going to be but that when we see him we shall be changed? Is that your hope? Is your hope lying in that you're going to be the way you are all of your life throughout eternity? Or is your hope in Christ Jesus? Alright, now notice this. I don't know about you, but if he's not returning, I don't feel like we've got a whole lot of hope. Alright, now notice this.

1 John 3, verse 2. Beloved, now we are children of God and it is not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that when he appears we shall be like him. Isn't that glorious? Because we shall see him just as he is.

But now I want you to notice the qualifying verse. Verse 3. And everyone, would you say everyone with me? And are there any exceptions to everyone? When he says everyone, does he mean most people? Does he mean everyone? And everyone who has this hope, if you've got the hope of being made like Christ Jesus, of seeing him, if you have this hope fixed on him, what do you do? Everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself just as he is pure. How many of you see that? So if you have the hope, that's what it means by if you continue.

If you continue in what? In the hope. You are holy, you are blameless, and you are beyond reproach because Jesus Christ made covenant with the Father, walked through the pieces on your behalf, but you have a responsibility to purify yourself and resist, deny ungodliness and worldly desires as grace and salvation instructs you to do, as he is pure, which means, I keep yielding my heart to his Lordship. Are you hearing what I'm saying? If you're not doing that, now listen to me, I won't say this in unkindness, I'll say this which might be deliberate, if you're not doing that, you don't have that hope.

If you're not, I don't care what experience you've had, I don't care what you did back there, I don't care what you've done, I've said this all week, God is not interested in where you used to be, he's interested in where you are right now. You don't have the hope of his coming, my friend, you'll stand before him, but it won't be for that hope if you are not purifying your heart before Almighty God. I don't care what position, I don't care if you're a preacher, I don't care if you're a Sunday school teacher, I don't care if you've been to church for 30 years straight and never missed once, you don't have, if you're not purifying yourself, that's in your spirit, you don't have the hope.

Now is that clear? Now let me ask you a question, did I read it in your Bible or did I just make it up? It's in the Word. Now which one counts? The Word or what we believe? The Word. Alright, turn back with me to Genesis, chapter 17.

Let's see if that's the same basis that he dealt with Abraham on. Let's see what he says. By the way, I'm just going to say this, I'm going to say Abraham when it says Abram, because let me tell you what he did.

This is part of covenant. When you make covenant with God, he identifies totally with you. What do you think Jesus was doing at his baptism? Did he have need to be baptized by John? What was John's baptism? It was a baptism for repentance.

Why did he have to? What did he have to repent of? Absolutely nothing. Then what did he do? He submitted to baptism on your behalf. You know what he was saying to you and I? Jesus Christ was saying, Look, I am totally identifying myself with you in baptism.

Whenever you enter into baptism, what are you saying? You're saying, God, I'm no longer living for myself. I am dying to live in baptism. This is the sign, God.

I'm dying to live in for myself. And I, God, am proclaiming it through this baptism. I'm dying and I'm identifying with you.

My life's no longer my own. It's identified with you. That's what baptism is.

Now listen. Here's what happens. As God sent Jesus and walked through those pieces, you make a perfect identity.

The word Yahweh was a word that was never spoken by the Hebrews. But it has in it an A-H. And when Abram made covenant with God, God took the A-H out of the middle of his name and he put it in Abraham's name and he was no longer Abram but Abraham.

And so what God was saying is, I'm taking my name, putting it in you, and I'm identifying with you. And you get a brand new name. Does this sound to you like when we read in Revelation, for example, when talking about the churches, he says, and to him overcome, I give a brand new name which no one knows.

Amen? All right. Isn't it interesting? He did the same thing to Sarah. Her name was Sarah.

S-A-R-A-I. God took the A-H, placed it in her name, and she's now Sarah. All right? So now when I say this, you see, God has so identified with you that he's not a... And that's what John meant when John said, and beloved, we are children of God.

Behold how much of a wonder it is we're children of God. And in Hebrews we're told, and he's not ashamed to call us brethren, to call us of covenants. Are you with me? Now notice this.

Verse 2, Genesis 17. He just told him to walk before him and be blameless, and I will establish my covenant between me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him.

And here's what God said to him. As for me, behold, my covenant is with you. You know what he was saying? It's sort of like Jesus saying, it is finished.

He was saying, Abraham, my covenant is established. As far as I'm concerned, it's done, it's established, it's finished. Are you with me? Now, I want you to just hold tight, because I'm going to read something to you, and then we're going to read something.

I want you to turn there, but I'm going to read something to you, and see if you agree with it. I hope you do, because I'm going to read it out of the Bible. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.

Now how many of you believe that? Then you are a descendant of Abraham. Is that what we're saying? All right. Now notice this.

If you're in Jesus, you're a descendant of Abraham. Now God said, as for me, Abraham, my covenant is established with you. Would you look with me at verse 9? Verse 9. And God said further to Abraham.

Now I know it reads differently in the King James, but you'll be able to see the essence. It's the same. God had something else to say.

Here's what he said. As for you, you shall keep my covenant. How many of you see that? Did God place upon him the responsibility of keeping the covenant? Was it him only? Or does it say, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations? How many of you see that? Now folks, I want to tell you something.

You cannot pick and choose through this Bible like it was a cafeteria. You can't take your tray along and come to Galatians 3.29 and say, I'm an heir of Abraham, according to promise, because I'm in Christ, and slat it right on past, Genesis 17, verse 9, and say, I don't have to keep the covenant. Are you hearing what I'm saying? This Bible is not a spiritual cafeteria.

It all has meaning. You eat the whole thing or nothing at all. Alright, now notice what it says.

He said, as for you, you're to keep my covenant, you and your descendants. Does that sound anything at all like what we just read in Colossians chapter 1? That you are made holy and blameless and beyond reproach by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. And nothing else will make you that way.

And he died on the cross that you might become that. And that's what you are, if you continue in the hope of the gospel. Is that what we read? Does that sound like Genesis 17? I say, does that sound like Genesis 17? Alright, now notice carefully with me.

I want you to see something. God established this and intended for his people to walk in it. God never intended that people would have to walk under the law.

It was God's intention that they would walk by this covenant. That's why, even when you're in covenant with Christ, he still calls you a descendant of Moses or Abraham. So, a descendant of Abraham.

Does God ever call you a descendant of Moses? He never intended for God's people to walk by law. This may come as a shock to you. I'm going to show you in the word, the law's not gone yet.

It's still here. It's not something passed away. Would you believe it if I show it to you in the Bible? Alright, now notice this.

Before we get there, I want you to see what a lot of people miss. I want you to see, did God just pick Abraham out? I mean, he just, somebody, God just said, ah, that looks like a good looking fellow there. I believe I'll make covenant with him.

Why was God able to make covenant with Abraham? You see, because my God's not partial. Are you understanding? He's not partial, and he doesn't just go picking people. He sees something in them.

Are you hearing what I'm saying? Now notice something. Turn with me to Genesis 22. Let's read about why God was able to make covenant with Abraham.

Genesis chapter 22. Genesis chapter 22, verse 1. Now it came about after these things that God tested Abraham. May I say to you that God tests the hearts of everything he creates.

God tested Abraham. Do you notice what he's called now? Abraham. And he said, here I am.

And he said, take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I'll tell you. And Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son, and he split wood for the burnt offering and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. On the third day, Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.

And Abraham said to his young men, stay here with the donkey and I and the lad will go yonder and we will worship and return to you. Now, isn't that a strange thing to say? Because, see, God's already told him to go sacrifice his son. Now, we get light on that when we read Hebrews chapter 11 because we find in Hebrews 11 that it says about Abraham that Abraham believed that God was able to raise him up from the dead even if he was taken.

Why? Because God had given him a promise back here and he knew Isaac was the consummation of that promise. And he believed God and that's what counted to him as righteousness. All right, now notice this.

His heart's still with God, isn't it? Let me ask you a question. You know what it says? It says, God told him in verse 2, take the only son whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering. Hebrews chapter 11, talking about Abraham, says, And God spoke to Abraham to go out to a place and Abraham obeyed, not knowing where he was going.

Is he walking in obedience to God? Does God have his whole heart? I say, does God have his whole heart? Is Abraham perfect? No, he's not. Does Abraham ever make any mistakes? He absolutely does. But I want you to notice something about Abraham.

He doesn't have it all worked out. But he is God and he always comes to the light. That's a Christian.

A Christian is not somebody who has it all worked out. He's somebody whom God has his heart and he is continually coming to the light of God because he loves God's will more than he loves living for himself. Are you hearing what I'm saying? All right, now notice this.

Let's drop on down to verse 9. Now they came to the place of which God had told them and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood and bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood. Can you imagine how difficult that must have been? And he laid him on the altar on top of the wood and Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham.

And he said, here I am. And he said, do not stretch out your hand against the lad and do nothing to him for, now notice this phrase, now I know that you fear God. Since you have not withheld your son, your only son from me we don't see what it means to fear God this week.

We don't have a message on the field at all to see what it means to fear God. But can I just say this much to you? In the time of Jesus, one of the problems was that there was no fear of God before the eyes of the people. God said, your times are like poison and there's no fear of God before your eyes.

Proverbs 16 says, Fear the Lord because the fear of the Lord causes you to depart from sin. If there's no fear of God before your eyes you will not depart from sin. Can I say it another way? If there's a doctrine of peace and safety in your hearts that allows you to feel safe and secure in your sin, lust, rebellion or to live a compromising life that looks religious while you walk in the stubbornness of your own heart still living for the world and living for yourself.

May I say to you, you do not have the fear of God before your eyes but a doctrine has captured your hearts and it's a lie before God. Notice something. It's important to have the fear of God before your eyes.

Turn with me to Psalm 36. Psalm 36, Psalm 36, verse 1. If you don't have the fear of God before your eyes you're in serious, serious trouble because here's what happens. Notice this.

Transgression speaks to who? The ungodly or the wicked. Now listen to me. What does it speak to him? It says that transgression or sin speaks to the ungodly within his heart.

Why? How can it speak to his heart so easily? Because there is no fear of God before his eyes. Is that what your Bible says? Now when there's no fear of God in your heart before your eyes then here's what happens. Sin can speak to you because you've got a doctrine telling you you're safe and secure in your denomination, in your doctrine, in wherever you are.

You're safe and secure in it and sin can speak to your heart. That's why it's so easy for people to gossip. That's supposed to be in the body of Christ.

That's why it's so easy to slander another person. That's why it's so easy for preachers to be real quick to slander one another. That's why it's real easy for people in their pew to be able to slander other people because there's no fear of God before the eyes of the people today.

And transgression can speak to the heart. Are you hearing what I'm saying? Now I'm just reading you the Bible. I'm just telling you what the Word says.

Listen, I'm saying it to you because God wants the fear of you to be in your eyes, in your heart, the fear of him to be before you because when you fear God you don't have to fear anything else. And it's not a trembling fear like where I'm saying, God, I'm afraid to approach you. I'm afraid to come to you.

That's not the fear of God because Jesus has walked through the pieces on your behalf. You don't come to God because of who you are. You come on the basis of who Jesus is.

Are you hearing what I'm saying? But the fear of God creates a trembling and hatred. Proverbs 8, 13 says, The fear of God is to hate evil. Sin, you don't have the fear of God before your eyes.

Are you listening? If you can walk in grief, if you can walk in idolatry, if you can walk in slander and gossip and criticism, you've got no fear of God before your eyes because you don't hate sin. If you can lust and do all of those things the way everybody else does it, there's no fear of God before your eyes. Are you understanding what I'm saying? And with no fear of God before your eyes, transgression can speak to your heart.

Now, I'm going to come back to that verse and we're going to see more of it later on this week, but I want to depart from it there and I want you to turn with me to Nehemiah 9 because I want you to see why God was able to make covenant with Abraham. He didn't just take him out. Isn't there a lot more freedom in

here tonight? Praise God! Nehemiah chapter 9. I want you to notice how God was able to make covenant with Abraham.

Nehemiah chapter 9. This concludes tape number 5. Please proceed to tape number 6 where this message continues.

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