

SHEKINAH MINISTRIES

GLORY AND PRESENCE OF GOD

The Covenant

The Link that Bound God to Mankind

God's desire to have fellowship with mankind drove Him to engineer a changing and yet continuous link that bound Him to us since the time He first created us until now. He constructed a covenant that demonstrates His persistence in wanting to fulfill His desire to have fellowship with mankind. The Covenant is the thread that has bound God to man from the beginning, and it has allowed us to escape annihilation, which was coming to us due to our desperately evil heart. It didn't bind man to God because it was God's covenant and not ours. God was bound by His Covenant because He knew that in order to keep the Covenant alive, He would have to have a reliable upholder of the Covenant, Himself. Down through the ages, it became necessary for God to alter, change, retire, and resurrect the covenant in order to continue to have fellowship with man. Thankfully, since God bound himself to man, there was nothing that we could do to change that. If upholding the Covenant were left only up to us, mankind's relationship with God would have been in trouble a long time ago. The Covenant was the thread that kept the garment of our relationship together.

The foundation scripture for this lesson is found in Jeremiah 31:31-33 where the Lord is telling us that He is going to make a new covenant with His people wherein His law is written on our minds and in our hearts. The purpose of this covenant is so that we will be His people, and He will be our God.

The word covenant is used 280 times in the Bible. The word in Hebrew that it is taken from is beriyth (#1285 in Strong's concordance). It means, "in the sense of cutting", connotating a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh. The etymology of this word means, "to eat bread with." In Arcadian, the word is berito, and it means to fetter, to tie, and to bind together. In Greek, the word covenant is taken from diatheke (#1242 in Strong's concordance), and it means a contract, especially a devisory will, covenant, testament.

A covenant, in general, has many characteristics. It is entered into by way of a mutual undertaking or by acquiescence to a superior force. It is entered into by way of kerath in Hebrew, which means, "to cut." The purpose of cutting, or letting of the blood, is to ratify the covenant (when cling-ons enter into a matter of honor, they cut their hand). A covenant carries far more weight than any other agreement or contract because that is the way that God designed the system to work. The blood that

is shed when the cutting is done symbolizes the very life of man. The parties involved in the covenant are laying their lifeblood on the line saying that they will carry out their end of the bargain. There must be the letting of blood in order to have a covenant. If one does not sign the contract, he is not held accountable to uphold it. Until it is signed, it is not valid. In like manner, the covenant is not in effect until the blood bears witness to the validity of the agreement. Both parties enter into the agreement, and it is beneficial to both parties. This is the incentive to enter into the agreement. One is willing to endure the cutting because he will be benefited by it. Compliance with the terms of the covenant is voluntary. No body forces the parties to comply; however, there are consequences for breaking the covenant. These consequences are spelled out in the covenant, and they always ensue when the covenant is broken. There may also be external signs that bear witness to the covenant having been made. These are witnesses of the covenant. In Genesis 9:13-17, we read that the rainbow stands as a sign of God's covenant with mankind to never again destroy mankind with water.

The Covenant that bound God to man has many characteristics and facets. In Genesis 17:6, God established a covenant with Him and Abraham and his descendents. There was an outward sign of the covenant at that time; every male child was to be circumcised as a sign of the covenant at eight days old. This was a distinguishing factor. The covenant was grafted in their flesh. Males who would not submit to the circumcision broke the covenant, and they were cut off from the people.

*Side Journey: Should people be circumcised today for salvation? It doesn't matter under the New Covenant because the circumcision that matters to God today is that of the heart and not of the flesh. In Acts 15:1 we read that some men came from Judea and taught that you couldn't be saved unless you were circumcised. This occurred under the New Covenant, and the apostles and elders came together to consider the matter. **God acknowledged (bore witness to) the Gentiles' salvation by giving them the Holy Spirit.** We are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and not by circumcision. Circumcision became void and no longer is sufficient as a sign. Now the Holy Spirit is the sign of our salvation under the New Covenant.*

The Gentiles were grafted in as Abraham's descendants for an everlasting covenant. The covenant was first specifically entered into with the house of Israel, and then, later on, we, the Gentiles, were grafted into it. In Deuteronomy 29:10, God invites the people of Israel to enter into His covenant because He wants to be their God. We read in verse 14-15 how God made His covenant with the children of Israel there and with those who were not there (those physically absent and the descendants of those there). God warns the children of Israel of the consequences of breaking the covenant in verses 19,20.

Side Journey: This covenant was the lesser covenant, can you imagine how much greater the consequences for breaking the greater covenant? The sin that breaks the Covenant is the sin of rejecting the Covenant. It is the only sin that you cannot be redeemed from. There is no covenant to restore you from breaking the Covenant. The only thing that can restore you is the shed blood of Jesus. The only way to be restored is to shed the blood of Jesus again – God will not allow that to happen. This is blaspheming the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit seals you for salvation, and when you reject salvation, you make the Holy Spirit out to be a liar. You deny the best witness you have of your salvation. Breaking the covenant does not involve leaving a certain congregation; it involves

leaving Jesus. Believers must be mature, of full-age spiritually, as stated in Hebrews 5:12 –14 in order to be qualified to commit this unpardonable sin. If you are not of full-age spiritually, and you get mad at God, you are behaving like a child who throws a temper tantrum. However, if you are of full-age spiritually, and then you reject the Lord, God will honor your decision, but you have no way back. A person like this has nothing to return to; they are so prideful that they don't even see it. Pride makes you like a blind person who is out driving a car. Some warning signs of being in danger of falling victim to pride are refusing to submit to correction and rebuke. If you continue to refuse to receive correction, you are on the path of pride. You must always agree to side in with God.

There are consequences when man breaks the Covenant. In Jeremiah 34:8-11 we read how the people changed their mind and broke the covenant. You can't do that without consequences ensuing. The king's covenant was re-establishing God's covenant to set slaves free every seven years. The king and the people made a covenant with each other before God and in His house and this prevented perpetual slavery. In Jeremiah 34:18, God reminds them of the cutting. We further read of the consequences of their breaking the Covenant.

God weaved the thread of the Covenant through various godly men at various times in history. The first stitch in the Covenant is **Adam's stitch**. We read in Genesis 1:26 how He created man in His image and gave him dominion over all the earth so that He would be their God and they would be His people. Adam reflected and showed forth the glory of God. There was no sin to be propitiated for at that time so there was no need for blood to ratify that initial thread of the covenant. He made a covenant with Adam, but Adam and his descendants were unfaithful and had to be destroyed. God wiped the earth clean of humanity with the flood, but He continued the Covenant with Noah. **Noah's stitch** can be found in Genesis 9:8. The Lord established His covenant with Noah and his descendants. We begin to realize that God is determined to have people that He could be a God to. God continued the Covenant through the **Abrahamic stitch**. In Genesis 15:1, we read that God promised to make Abram's descendants as numerous as the stars. Abram believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Abram brought God a three-year old heifer, a goat, and ram, and a turtledove and a young pigeon. Abram cut the animals in two. God told Abram what would happen to his descendants (They would be strangers in a land that was not theirs, enslaved in Egypt for 400 years. God would judge Egypt for enslaving them and Egypt would let them go. As you know, the Egyptians chased the children of Israel and were killed when God parted the Red Sea. God had a score to settle with the Ammorites with Abram's fourth generation). God sent the burning torch to pass between the pieces of animals to ratify the covenant He made with Abram. When God made a covenant with Abram in Genesis 17:1, He changed his name to Abraham, calling him the father of many nations.

The Covenant that bound God to man is His promise to man of hope and a future. It is our assurance of His continued striving for our hearts and minds and His unwavering desire to have fellowship with us. It is a lifeline thrown to us so that we can rest assured that God will never fail us. He is bound to uphold His end of the covenant. As we continue on in this teaching, we will learn what great depths the Father went to in maintaining fellowship with mankind.

God continued to weave the thread of the Covenant through various men. He continued the Covenant through Isaac (Genesis 26:1-5) and then onto Jacob. **At this point, the institution of the tithe became a part of the Covenant.** We read in Genesis 28:20-22 how Jacob replied to God. He stated that if God wanted to be His god, that if God would be with him, give him bread to eat and clothing to put on so that he return to his father's house in peace, then the Lord would be Jacob's god. He also vowed to give a tenth to God and that the pillar should be God's house. Jacob set-up the rock that he used for a pillow as a pillar and anointed it with oil. He called it the house of God, and it was symbolic of Jesus, the chief cornerstone in the house of God (Matthew 21:42). Jacob took God at His Word. He called the name of the pillar Bethel (which means house of God). The tithe became our part of the bargain; it was our part of the covenant. If we didn't pay the tithe, we broke the covenant. Abraham initiated the concept of the tithe when he gave the tenth part of the spoil to Melchizedek, The preincarnate Jesus, in Genesis 14:18-20. Abraham gave a tenth part back to God, which was from the victory that God had given them. They acknowledged that it was God who brought victory to them. Paying the tithe validates our faith in God. God questions in Malachi 3:8, "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed you?' 'In tithes and offerings.'" God's part of the Covenant was to open the windows of Heaven and pour out blessings upon them that they did not have room to receive. **If we, under the New Covenant, are going to receive all the benefits of the Covenant that they established, we must also tithe as they did.** The devil has a legal argument against the Lord blessing us financially when we don't tithe; we aren't doing our part. By not sowing into the kingdom of God with the tithe, we are automatically cursed with the curse that is upon the devil's money system. When we do tithe, we are entitled to Him being with us, Him providing us food and clothing, keeping us in the way that we are going, and bringing us back to our father's house in peace.

God continued the covenant in Exodus 19:5 through **Moses' Stitch**. He reiterated the Covenant with Moses. He stated that if the people would obey His commands and keep His covenant, they would be His special treasure. We further learn in II Samuel 7:1 about David's **Stitch** of the Covenant. God spoke of Solomon, David's son and David's descendant, Jesus, who would establish the throne of His covenant forever.

The Covenant then underwent what we call a **Transition Period** when the Old Covenant had to be redone in order to refine it to encompass all of humanity. Jeremiah 31:31 reads that God stated that He would make a new covenant with the house of Israel. He would put His law in their minds and in their hearts, rather than from the mouth of the prophet or on tablets of stone (Isaiah 55:5). Thiscovenant is the everlasting covenant. Romans 11:11-26 talks about how God grafted the Gentiles into the olive tree (the Covenant) by faith. God told the nation of Israel in Isaiah 42:5-9 that they would be a light to the Gentiles. The Covenant was opened-up to include the Gentiles; up until that time, the Covenant was extended by bloodline, and, even then, the dividing line was drawn between believing Abraham and the rest of the people.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD COVENANT

We read in Zechariah 11:4-14 an illustration of the prophetic mechanism of Jesus' death. "Because of their rebellion, they rejected it (the Covenant); therefore, let Me break it, (verse 10)" God stated. You can't have two covenants in effect at one time. God broke the Old Covenant to make the way

for the new. By their betraying Jesus and paying Judas 30 pieces of silver to do it, they sold the Prince of Glory down the river for \$180 in today's value. We read in John 19:28-30 that Jesus said, "It is finished." The Old Covenant or the Law was finished at that point. The veil that separated God from mankind was separated. To illustrate this occurrence, Mark 15:37-38 tells us that the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. This symbolized that the barrier that separated God and man was rent asunder in Jesus.

THE END OF THE OLD COVENANT AND THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW

There was a 50-day time period between covenants. The purpose of the New Covenant is for God to indwell His people. Jesus is the mediator of this New Covenant and the means whereby this is possible. Prior to the New Covenant, if you weren't of the commonwealth of Israel, you were a Gentile and alien to God (Ephesians 2:11-18). Gentiles were without Jesus and had no hope, without God in the world. Jesus broke down the wall that divided Jews and Gentiles; He broke down the middle wall between us by His blood. He made the Jews and the Gentiles one body. Under the Old Covenant, you were under the bloodline, whereby you could partake of the Covenant, by birth. Now, under the New Covenant, you are under the bloodline of Jesus, whereby you can partake of the covenant, by faith. No longer can you be a child of promise simply because you are of the seed of Abraham (Romans 9:1-13). The New Covenant hinges upon the faith of the individual. We read in Romans 10:4 that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Jesus restored what was lost in Genesis 3:14-15, which was our right to be sons of God because of the fall of Adam. Once we receive salvation from God, we read in Romans 11:29 that the gifts and calling of God is irrevocable; God will not call back the gift of salvation which he has given us.

JESUS, MEDIATOR OF THE NEW COVENANT

The blood of Jesus is the blood of the New covenant for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:26-28). In the previous covenant, the blood of animals merely atoned for the sins of the people for a time. Jesus spent three days and three nights in the belly of the earth (Matthew 12:38) in order to pay for the removal of our sins. We read in Romans 8:1-4 that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus because what the Law could not do, being limited to operating through the flesh, God did by sending Jesus in the likeness of sinful flesh. Condemnation involves being accused of a crime, being found guilty, and sentence having been passed. The sentence is death for mankind, but it has not been carried out, yet. If we are not in Christ Jesus, we are condemned to death. The Father has determined that we are guilty because we have sin by nature. God, seeing the end from the beginning, finds us guilty of the sin nature that indwells us all. The Savior, Jesus, saves us from the crimes that we have committed, are committing, and will commit in the future. *If the blood of Jesus was only applied to what has already happened, we would need more saviors for the sins in the future.* Along came Jesus, while we were on death row, and He asked to intercede on our behalf. Justice demands that blood be shed. Therefore, Jesus provided a substitute for our blood to satisfy the demands of justice, His own innocent blood. Blood that is tainted cannot balance blood that is tainted; only untainted blood can do that, and only the blood of Jesus met that qualification. No person on earth could do the job. Jesus offered His own blood for this purpose. Justice was satisfied and no longer demanded that our blood be shed. Our death sentence had been commuted.

His blood was acceptable to justice because it looked like our blood; He came in the likeness of sinful flesh. The righteous requirement of the law is death.

Side Journey: Death's grip is sin. We read in Acts 2:22-24 that Jesus could not be held by death once He was raised up by God (nor could He be captured by death before His crucifixion until he drank the cup of our iniquity). God tricked death into receiving Jesus. Jesus gave up His life, but death couldn't hold Him because there was only the illusion of sin in Him, not actually His sin, but ours. Death cannot hold you for someone else's iniquity. Death uses sin as the glue whereby he can grab and hold onto you. Death can't hold you, o Believer! Death holds onto sin that is in you, and when death comes, it grabs and takes. If there is no sin in you, it may grab you, but it cannot hold you. Life and death are ours because we are in Christ Jesus, joint heirs with Him. Because Death had to let Jesus go, God the Father accounted the life that Jesus took back to Himself in the resurrection to those who believe on Christ Jesus. David speaks as Jesus prophetically in verse 25-28; Jesus went to Hell – straight from His own mouth He stated it-but He didn't stay there.

Jesus came and fulfilled that requirement of death by having His own blood shed. The blood of bulls and goats could not remit man's sin. For Jesus, the only way to escape once He took the cup, was to submit to death. He had been reckoned in the likeness of sinful flesh at that point. Had Jesus not submitted to death, He would have been bound to that sinful flesh and died and went to Hell. Jesus walked the earth another six to ten hours after taking the cup of our iniquity. He probably noticed the separation from the Father the moment He took the cup, but it became unbearable for Him in the moment of anguish. We read in Matthew 26:36-46 that Jesus did not want to take the cup of our iniquity, if it was possible. The very hour that Jesus had been prepared for since before the foundation of the earth came, and Jesus asked the Father is if there was any other way. Had God forced Jesus to submit to death, He would rightfully have been a murderer and would be found guilty. On the contrary, Jesus willingly submitted to the will of the Father. Jesus' faith accounted sin unto Him, and He could only cry-out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" He did that because God had forsaken Him because our sin had been attributed to Him. He took our sin. He bore in His own soul the weight of our sin. We have a High Priest, Jesus, whose job it was to go into the Holy of Holies and minister unto the Lord on behalf of the people. He did this once and for all, and it was permanent. He came to be a minister of a new tabernacle that the Lord administered and not man. The earthly high priest had to go in and offer gifts and sacrifices. The great High Priest also had to do this; but His ministry was not of this earth. As a matter of fact, Jesus didn't even qualify to stand in the position of high priest on the earth because He was not of the tribe of Levi, but of the tribe of Judah. The priests on earth served as a shadow and copy of the heavenly things.

Side Journey: It is much better to live by faith and be saved through faith than to try to be made righteous through following the works of the Law. We read in Galatians 3:6-9 that Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. If you have broken the tiniest fraction of the Law, you've broken all of it. Since it is not possible to fulfill all the Law, you are guaranteed to be accursed. Those who are self-righteous attempt to fulfill the Law, but they are cursed because it is impossible to do. If you broke one of the laws, you've broken all of the laws. The purpose of the Law was not to bring righteousness, but to prove to us that we are lawless. The New Covenant took

those laws and put them on our hearts and off of the cold stones; it gave us the ability to live up to what God wants us to do. The Old Covenant told us what we couldn't do; whereas, the New Covenant proves to us what we can do. Those who are considered just are those who live by faith. As stated in Galatians 3:15, our Covenant cannot be annulled. When an agreement is annulled, it is made to seem like it never happened. However, you cannot cancel a covenant. In like manner, marriage is a covenant, and once it is entered into, it becomes permanently binding. A marriage between two believers cannot be cancelled because it is a miniature example of Christ Jesus and the church, which cannot be cancelled.

CONTRASTING THE OLD AND THE NEW

We read in Galatians 3:15 that the Seed spoken of is Christ Jesus. We read how the New Covenant has different characteristics from the Old. Along these lines, if the New Covenant was of the law, the promise was of no effect. We read in Galatians 3:19 that the purpose of the law was to add transgression. By nature we commit sin, but by law we know sin. In order for the salvation process to be undergone, we have to know that we are sinners. You don't go looking for a savior if you think you're clean and not a sinner. We transgressed, and the law was in place to impute transgression. It was to reveal to us that we were transgressors. We needed someone to bring reconciliation between God and us, Jesus. The mediator stood between man and God; mediators stand between multiple parties. If the law of the Old Covenant could have served the purpose of reconciling us to God, He would have allowed it (Galatians 3:21). In actuality, the law brought us to Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:24), since it knew more about righteousness than we did. It proved to us that we cannot be obedient to the things of God without Christ Jesus. However, once faith has come, we no longer need the law.

*Side Journey: We read in Galatians 3:26-29 how all people are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. It states that there is no difference between Jews or Greeks, males or females. **This does not mean that women should be put in a position within the church that they should not be in.** These verses pertain to salvation and receiving the promise. To go beyond that thought with this scripture is not correct; this scripture is not talking to administration within the church. Otherwise, God contradicts Himself because He has stated in other places that women are not to be in a position of authority within the church.*

WHILE JESUS WAS IN HELL PAYING THE PENALTY FOR OUR SIN

We read in I Peter 3:17 – 4:6 about what was going on while Jesus was in Hell for three days and three nights. He was preaching the gospel to the spirits imprisoned there. These were the spirits who were formerly disobedient from the time of Adam to Moses. We learn from Romans 5:12 that God did not intend for man to die, but this was the result of sin having entered the world. When Moses came, the Law came - the Ten Commandments. During the age from Adam to Moses, about 3500 years, death reigned (had dominion) over mankind. This was because sin was abounding, and death's power is sin. Death also reigned over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the sin of Adam. This is because if you were in any way associated with Adam, death reigned over you. We read in Psalm 88:10-12 some prophetic questions: "Will You work wonders for the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise You? Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave? Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction? Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your

righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" Those who died from Adam to Moses went to prison to await judgment because of the sin of Adam. When the Law came through Moses, the strength of death became the Law, which took over for sin. When the Law came, it became the mediator of death. It was designed to illustrate what was already there. All that the Law did was to simply give a name to the sin mankind was committing, identifying characteristics to it. The Law entered that sin would abound (Romans 5:20). The Law exposed all the sin that was already there which did not have a name. Sin is not imputed to you until it is put to your account; it is not detrimental to you until then. The Law makes the deposit of sin into your account. We read in I Corinthians 15:20-22 that in Adam all die. God created Adam, and Adam sinned. Death reigned over all mankind because of this. Moses came with the Law after 3500 years, and it is convicted us of the sin of Adam. Until the Law came, sin was not charged to mankind. This is why it became necessary for Jesus to preach the gospel to this group of people imprisoned so that they, too, could be charged with sin and given a way of escape. Jesus, after he died, preached the gospel to those who were in prison in Hell. Picture this: You are in prison for 3,000 years, and new prisoners come in every day. In comes another prisoner, Christ Jesus. He proclaims that He is down there that through Him, in three days, all will be saved. Jesus told them that God would raise Him up after three days and three nights. He told them about the sin of Adam, of which they were all guilty. During that time, Jesus apprised them that they would stand before the Father. They had the opportunity to escape judgment because sin had not been imputed to them until that point. It wasn't any easier for them to believe than it was for the humans on earth. They had to exercise the same faith as them on the earth. After three days and three nights, Jesus began to ascend with all those who believed on Him while He was there. He led those who believed on Him with Him. It didn't matter if you were on the earth or under the earth, living or dead. No man could, nor can, come unto the Father apart from the Son, not even those who died before He came.

Those who died from Moses to Jesus also went to prison; some went to Abraham's bosom and some to the hot part of Hell. There are three groups of mankind: those born between Adam and Moses, those born from Moses and the bringing of the Law to Christ Jesus, and the group that was born after Jesus came. Under the Law, people would make offerings for known sins that they committed, the trespass offering, and once a year, the priest made sacrifices for the sins that the people committed in ignorance during Yom Kippur. On the day of Christ Jesus' crucifixion, the sacrifice of animals ceased being accepted in Heaven as atonement for sins.

INAUGURATION OF THE NEW COVENANT: JESUS IS RESURRECTED

We read in John 20:1-31 about the resurrection of Jesus. In John 20:17, Jesus called the disciples "brethren" for the first time – right after He was resurrected. He told Mary to tell His "**brethren**" that He was ascending to His Father "**and to their**" Father, to His God "**and to their God**." We read in Acts 2:29–36 that God made Jesus Lord and Christ. He brought with Him the right to call us Brother and the right for us to call God Father. Jesus was the first one to be resurrected (not resuscitated) from the dead.

Side Journey: Could Satan have stopped Jesus from ascending into Heaven where He would complete the transaction of salvation? No, it could not have been possible. The job of our salvation was not yet done. There still remained one more transaction before the covenant could be ratified;

otherwise the death of Jesus would have been in vain. He still had to ascend to the right hand of the Father.

When was Jesus' role done? It was completed when He breathed His last and said, "It is finished." Jesus' flesh rested in hope that the Father's word is true, hoping that nothing would keep the Father from raising Him up. His fate was no longer in His own hands at that point. Jesus died in hope, leaving His fate into the Father's hands. He died with the hope that God would do what He promised to do.

ATTRIBUTES OF THE NEW COVENANT - Hebrews 8:1

Better promises. The good promises of the Old Covenant were that sickness and disease would be removed from their midst. Under the new covenant, we walk in **divine health**. Sins are no longer merely atoned for, but now **sins are forgiven**. Jesus had the authority to forgive the sins of those in close proximity to Him, but it wasn't until He was raised from the dead that He was able to forgive the sins of all humanity. Jesus had all power in the context of Luke 4:18-19. Jesus often said that the people's sins were forgiven them prior to healing them. Disease was a result of sin. In order to bring healing, He had to be able to relieve people from the sin that caused the health deficiency. **The same power that Jesus has and had to forgive sin, we have, also.** The ability to perform the works that Jesus did has been passed onto us. In fact, we can do more works than He did because there are more of us. We are His body. When we forgive the sins of others, we are appraising others of the free gift of God. We have the authority to forgive sins and thereby offer to people deliverance, liberty, and sight. When Jesus walked the earth, He appraised the people that forgiveness was at hand and therefore healing could take place. In addition, when a believer, who knows to forgive someone, is holding a grudge against someone else out of rebellion, that believer must forgive that person before they can be healed. The sins of the sinner can be forgiven by us when we proclaim the good news that his sins are forgiven in Jesus. We read in Mark 2:1 how Jesus recognized that the paralytic was in his condition due to sin, whether in his life or in his bloodline. Your sins are forgiven you is easier to say because you can't see any proof of it taking place. Whereas with healing, the healed individual must get up and walk in order to authenticate it. In John 20:21, when Jesus spoke to the disciples, he breathed on them. Jesus said that if we forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if we retain them, they are retained. It is still necessary to forgive sins today.

The good promise of the old covenant was that you wouldn't die physically this year because the high priest would offer sacrifices to atone for your sin for one more year. The good promise of the new covenant is that **we will never die**.

Jesus made the final sacrifice. After 1500 years of sacrificing, 1500 times, the people weren't any closer to God. Jesus made the sacrifice once and for all, and it was sufficient. The Shekinah glory of God emanated from a box (Hebrews 9:5) under the Old Covenant; the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest. Jesus came not with the blood of goats and calves but with His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. We learn in John 20:15 that Jesus obtained eternal redemption right after He spoke to Mary; He still was yet to take His blood and enter into the Holiest of All. Jesus told Mary to stay back because she would defile Him if she touched Him. Twelve hours later, Jesus told His disciples to handle Him. Jesus offered Himself without spot to

God (Hebrews 9:14). Jesus offered Himself in order to cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the true and living God. You cannot claim to know Jesus and still live by the Law. Hebrews 9:18 tells us that not even the first covenant was ratified without blood. Had it been possible that the blood of bulls and goats could remove our sins, Jesus would not have had to die (Hebrews 10:4). Jesus became the ultimate trespass offering. Once we are saved, we no longer have a sin nature. We cannot discount the blood of Jesus in our lives by having a sin consciousness. We sin because we wrestle with the flesh. Jesus took away the first covenant (Hebrews 10:9). Jesus has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

The sign of the New Covenant is that we believers are one (John 17:21) with each other and with God. We partake of the unity of the Body of Christ Jesus in the truth of God. We demonstrate and remind God of this unity when we partake of Communion (I Corinthians 11:24).

Side Journey: Jesus' ministry was between the terrestrial and the celestial. He brought things to bear from each realm that each did not understand. Jesus was God - celestial, made flesh - terrestrial. Humans are living examples of the communion of the celestial and the terrestrial. Anything that the disciples needed to have to get the job done as ambassadors of the Lord Jesus, we need today. The job of the apostles was to lay the foundation of the House of God. Everyone who has come afterward has built upon that foundation. The same tools necessary to lay the foundation are the same tools necessary to build the house.

This series has demonstrated the great lengths that the Father went to in order to have a relationship with mankind and possess a people that He could call His own. We are members of His Family, His people, and it has been made possible because of the Covenant.