



GARDEN
PUBLISHING CO.

www.gardenpublishingco.com



The Cross and The Covenant

The Garden Training Center, Inc.
The Apostolic School of Ministry



Copyright ©2019 by The Garden Training Center, Inc.
Published by Garden Publishing Company LLC
For more information, please visit gardenpublishingco.com

All rights reserved. No parts of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser. Under no circumstances may any part of this book be photocopied for resale.

Scripture taken from the New King James Version of the Bible ©. Used by Permission, all rights reserved.

ISBN 978-1-7333459-2-7

Cover design by Garden Publishing Co./Whitney Whitt
Interior design by Garden Publishing Co.

Printed in the United States of America.

Acknowledgments

Holy Spirit is the inspiration for the content of this book, however someone put words to it. This book was written by Kevin McSpadden.

This book is one of a series of books written and distributed by The Apostolic School of Ministry from The Garden Training Center, Inc. The series arises from the foundational teachings of the school of ministry, founded by Brandy Helton. Brandy wrote several sections that are included in each book such as “God’s Love” and the prayers included at the end of each book.

Many thanks to the team of writers of the series for their collaboration to make the series available to the public. The writers are: Lauren Caldwell, Jessica Doggett, Danetta Ferguson, Elisa Griffith, Nancy Hadley, Robin Harmon, Brandy Helton, Grant Hill, Kevin McSpadden, Robin Reynolds, and Greg Stratton. Each have sought Holy Spirit for the words He wants to speak through them. The result is a mixture of personalities and communication strategies that convey the total message in a beautiful, diverse way.

A special thanks goes to Nancy Hadley, and

Chelsey Butcher with Garden Publishing Co., for their preparation and fine tuning of the text.

Encouragement and Prayer for the Reader

Beloved of God, these teachings are written to reveal Jesus Christ and His heart of love for all who call upon His name to save them.

God has sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to save all who would believe in Him and His Word.

God desires to reveal Himself and to give us His divine nature in Christ Jesus our Lord through the power of His Holy Spirit.

God is Jealous. He wants us to encounter His presence daily and walk with Him in glory – intimate communion - today, while it is called today, and forever.

It is my prayer that this teaching would so impact the readers that all would come to know and believe JESUS, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, our Great God and Savior, and receive the PERFECT LOVE He has for us all as we grow up into Him and mature as true sons and daughters of God.

May you grow in faith and knowledge of your God and Savior and come to know the love that He has for you. I pray for you the Apostle Paul's prayer for spiritual growth:

Ephesians 3:14-21 TLB

“14-15 When I think of the wisdom and scope of his plan, I fall down on my knees and pray to the Father of all the great family of God—some of them already in heaven and some down here on earth— 16 that out of his glorious, unlimited resources he will give you the mighty inner strengthening of his Holy Spirit. 17 And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts, living within you as you trust in him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love; 18-19 and may you be able to feel and understand, as all God's children should, how long, how wide, how deep, and how high his love really is; and to experience this love for yourselves, though it is so great that you will never see the end of it or fully know or understand it. And so at last you will be filled up with God himself.

20 Now glory be to God, who by his mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of—infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes. 21 May he be given glory forever and ever through endless ages because of his master plan of salvation for the Church through Jesus Christ.”

In Christ our Lord,
Brandy Helton
A child of God

God's Love

God's love is good news! Don't believe the lie that God is distant, unapproachable, and angry!

God is love. He is the only true, eternal God. He is perfect and holy, and He is truth. God is One. He has revealed Himself in three distinct, individual, equal persons: God the Father, God the Son – Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit.

The Bible tells the story of God's perfect love. In that love, God created the first family to live on the earth with Him. Through their deep intimate relationship with the Father, Adam and Eve were meant to fulfill all that was in God's heart on Earth just like it is in Heaven, for God's glory and purposes. Adam and Eve were chosen to walk with God, clothed in His glory presence and were perfect, as He is perfect, and they lived in His beautiful garden, the secret place called Eden. He gave them His breath, life and power to have dominion over all He created and wanted them to reproduce that LIFE replenishing the earth with it, until all the earth is filled with His glory.

Genesis 1:26-28

"26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our

image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

God created His children in His likeness. He made them spirit beings, with a soul – mind, will and emotions – and placed them in a physical body. He gave His children the choice to love Him and to walk with Him in obedience to His every word. He gave the first family the power to overcome any temptation offered to them through God’s adversary, the devil, who had rebelled against the Most High God in Heaven’s glory and was cast down to the earth. The devil, Satan, brought great darkness and chaos prior to Adam and Eve’s existence.

Adam and Eve were deceived into thinking that God was not perfect in love as Satan, the adversary, tempted them to believe that God would not keep His word to them. Through their own will, Adam and Eve disobeyed the Father by eating from a tree that had the power to open their eyes to both good and evil. Through their choice of disobedience, they willfully gave their inheritance and authority over to the devil and his kingdom. Sin entered mankind, which produced death, eternal separation from a Holy God. Adam and Eve were banished from the dwelling and intima-

cy of perfection in the garden and were sent into the world as a fallen creation.

Father God knew He had to come Himself and save His family, and in His wisdom, He chose to send His Son, Jesus Christ into the world to save us and restore fallen mankind back to relationship with Him. Through His Son, He destroyed all the works of the devil and the curse of death. Hebrews 9:22 says, *“And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”* Remission means to cancel the penalty, so according to the law there must be shedding of blood to cancel the penalty for sin. The Father cancelled the penalty for the sins of His children through the shedding of the blood of His innocent, holy Son Jesus, who was the Sent One, called and chosen to die for all, so all could live.

John 3:16-21 NKJV

“16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may

be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

Jesus was conceived by God’s Holy Spirit in the womb of a young virgin named Mary. He appeared as the second Adam, in the flesh, with the choice to walk in perfect love and obedience, full of God’s Spirit, as a man to do the will of His Father.

Jesus grew up as any male child did in the flesh but He had divine fellowship with His Father and Holy Spirit. At the appointed time, He was revealed as being sent from God to save. Jesus went around doing good and healed all who were oppressed by the devil spiritually and physically. He revealed His Father’s heart and perfect love to all who believed through His teachings, grace and miraculous power.

Salvation means eternal life, healing, deliverance, protection, peace, wholeness, and forgiveness. Salvation came to all men through the cross, where the Son of God, the perfect One, was slaughtered as a lamb, bearing all sin for all times from a fallen people. Jesus bore the wrath of God against the darkness that separated God’s family from Him. Jesus was punished for our sin and died to cleanse us from the guilt, shame and condemnation sin produces. Sin separates. Love restores.

Jesus was crucified, dead and buried, spending three days and nights in the depths of Hades, the realm of the dead fallen race. Jesus took back the keys of death and hell from that old serpent the devil, Satan, and therefore, all authority was restored back to Jesus.

Great Holy Spirit breathed LIFE into Jesus and raised Him from the dead. He appeared to His disciples, those who followed Him and obeyed His teachings. He showed them that He conquered sin, death and the grave and now, had the keys of hell and death, and would give ETERNAL LIFE to ALL who chose to believe in Him. King Jesus ascended back to the Father of glory where He ever lives to make intercession for us all, and He is coming again to the earth in power to establish His Father's Kingdom on Earth.

Jesus Christ is the head and Lord over His church, those who have made Him Lord and Savior, by believing He is the Son of the Living God and God in the flesh, who finished the work the Father gave Him to do. He not only died for our sins to save and heal us, He chose to give His authority to those He called and chose to follow Him as His disciples, His family.

Jesus has commissioned His followers to do the same works that He did while He lived on the earth.

John 14:12-14

“12 Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13 And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

God loves us and desires that none should perish. He desires for His family to be with Him where He

is. These books are written to inspire all who read them and to reveal the heart of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and Holy Spirit in order that we might RECEIVE THE LOVE HE HAS FOR US and be CHANGED INTO HIS VERY LIKENESS. God desires to dwell with His family forever and ever just as He did in the beginning. How glorious it is to live in His presence and dominion, beholding His goodness, forever and ever, amen.

The book of Revelation describes the time that is coming when all things are made new according to God's heart of love:

Revelation 21:1-7

"1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also, there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he

shall be My son.”

To understand what is presented in the Bible, you must start by understanding God’s love. The good news is that God loves you!

The Heart of It

“I solemnly and joyfully promise to love you forever, no matter the cost.”

Those words would sound beautiful coming from anyone who truly meant them. Imagine, though, what it would feel like to hear that thrilling promise coming from the lips of God Himself. Imagine the glorious Creator of the universe pledging Himself fully and without reservation to you. Imagine His passion as He proclaimed His undying love to you, the one He chose before you were even born. Imagine what bliss you would feel as you were completely immersed into such powerful love.

Now consider this: this wonderful God and this limitless love are not mere figments of the imagination. In fact, it is the deep desire of God that everyone in the world would know Him as the tireless, passionate Lover of their souls. Furthermore, God has already pledged Himself in love to those who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior.

One of the most important treasures uncovered in the Bible is that God went further than making a mere pledge or promise to love His people. He used the formal, ceremonial acts of ancient cov-

enants to display His intent to love them forever, regardless of what it cost Him. The death of His Son on the cross, followed by His glorious resurrection, was God's ultimate proof that He would stop at nothing to make His love known.

How far would God go to show you His love? If you really want to know, you need to understand His covenant. You have to journey to the cross.

The Cross and The Covenant

Introduction

God really loves you.

That's a statement a lot of people take for granted. They may think it's just a trite, Sunday School cliché, but it's so much more than that. It is the truth. God loves you enough to make an unbreakable covenant with you, a promise to bless you that He will carry out forever. It is a covenant of unending love so big, we'll spend eternity learning about it and growing in it.

God is so serious about His covenant of love that He sent His own Son, Jesus, to the cross so that the power of the covenant could be fully released to those who believe: *"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God"* (1 Corinthians 1:18). It cost God dearly, yet He still went through with His covenant.

The question, however, is why would God do that? Why would God give us a covenant promise that He will not break, no matter the cost? What is a covenant promise, anyway? Is it different from a

regular promise?

The answer to the “why” is that God loves us unconditionally and wants us to be His earthly family if we would only choose to believe and obey Him. We can choose to accept God’s offer or not. If we don’t actively choose to receive God’s promise in our lifetime, He does not force us. On the other hand, if we do choose to obey God, we reap immense benefits. Read more to find out the answer to what God is offering through His covenant promises. You will be amazed at what covenant really means, both for now and for eternity.

What Is a Covenant?

If you’ve been around church much, you’ve likely heard the word “covenant” mentioned at least a few times. You may have heard God described as a “covenant-keeping God.” You’ve probably heard the terms “Old Covenant” and “New Covenant.” Each of these particular terms or references carry a very deep and special meaning that Christians should be aware of, so what exactly is a covenant?

The idea of a covenant can seem very foreign to the modern mind. We tend to better understand terms such as agreements, contracts, or even promises. We know that an agreement or contract should be taken seriously, and we know that failing to keep our word is undesirable, to say the least. That’s pretty similar to the true understanding of a covenant, but covenants go far deeper and carry much more serious consequences than any of the terms mentioned above.

Simply understood, a covenant is a joining to-

gether of two people, families, or people groups for the purpose of carrying out a specified action. According to Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, a covenant is a "compact, a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action." A covenant is meant to be binding, or permanently established. It is a sealed promise, one never intended to be broken.

For the purpose of this lesson, it may be useful to think of God's covenants as those promises God has made and solemnly bound Himself to perform. They are an expression of God's character, specifically His goodness and His neverending faithfulness. As Deuteronomy 7:9 says, "*Know therefore, that the Lord your God, He is God, the Faithful God, **who keeps His covenant** and His loving kindness to a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments*" (emphasis added).

God is faithful, and He always keeps His covenants. As this lesson will uncover, that is very good news for those who believe Him and obey.

A Brief Summary of Ancient Covenants

God truly loves to make Himself known, and oftentimes, He does so in ways that make His intentions unmistakable. God's establishment of covenants with His people is one example of how He goes to the greatest lengths to make His love clear to those who believe Him. That in mind, it is useful to understand the history of ancient covenants and to examine how they point to what Jesus did on the cross.

In ancient times, covenants would take place between two parties, typically tribes or families. The covenant was made based on differences, rather than similarities. The intent was that the strengths of one family would cover the weakness of the other, and vice versa.

With that in mind, the families entering the covenant would strategically choose representatives who embodied the characteristics of the family or tribe. If the family valued the ability to fight, for example, they would choose a skilled warrior to be their representative in the covenant. The idea was that the representative identified the family to such a degree that even outsiders associated that person with the family and its characteristics.

Once they selected representatives, the families chose a specific site and brought forth sacrificial animals. The animals were usually large animals, like bulls or goats, animals that would shed a lot of blood. The families would split these animals in half from head to tail, letting the two halves fall to the ground. The area between the halves would fill with blood.

At this point, the covenant ceremony officially began. The representatives would remove their coat or outer garment and exchange them with the other representative. They would also exchange weapons. These exchanges symbolized the joining together of the families' authority and strength, along with the pledge to fight each other's battles.

Next, the specific terms of the covenant were stat-

ed. With the terms publicly proclaimed before all witnesses, the representatives walked between the pieces of the sacrificial animals, an event known as the “walk of blood”. As they walked, they made promises and stated the penalty for breaking the covenant. After the walk of blood, the representatives cut themselves on the hand or wrist and mingled their blood together, symbolizing that the two families had become one. They rubbed substances like gunpowder into the cuts to provide a lasting scar, a memento of the covenant that the families had made. This scar would permanently remind the families of their solemn promises.

Lastly, the families would celebrate the covenant by partaking of a meal of bread and wine. Bread symbolized the body, and wine symbolized blood. This meal represented each family’s willingness to die for the other family if necessary, and they ate in remembrance of the covenant that had been made. For a deeper exploration of covenants, the ceremonies and actions involved, and how they point toward Jesus, see Kenneth Copeland’s book, Covenant Made by Blood.

After reading this description, you probably understand that a covenant is far deeper than other types of agreements. It is made for the purpose of joining together, and it carries with it a new identity. Covenants are meant to be permanent, and breaking covenants leads to severe consequences. At the same time, with a fuller understanding of covenants, it becomes so much easier to see God’s faithfulness in keeping His covenants. It also makes plain His undeniable goodness toward those who believe through what Jesus accomplished on the cross. Later in the lesson, we will

re-examine the parallels between the cross and the covenants of old. For now, though, let's dive into the covenants God has made and see His love at work as He has kept those covenants perfectly.

God's Covenant with Abraham

Abraham is famous for being the "father of the faith." Romans 4:1-3 says, "*What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'*" This verse identifies Abraham as *our father*, referring to those who have received Jesus as Lord. That means that Christians can consider Abraham their father, whether they are physically related or not. This is important to keep in mind because God revealed His heart in the covenant promises he gave to Abraham, previously known as Abram.

Genesis 12:1-3 says, "*Now the Lord had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'*" In this encounter, God promises to make Abram a great nation. He also proclaims that He will bless Abram, and not only that, but He will bless those who bless Abram and curse those who curse him. God boldly states that all the families of the earth will be blessed through Abram.

Later, Genesis 17:1-7 says, “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. 2 And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.” 3 Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: 4 “As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. 5 No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of [e]many nations. 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. 7 And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.”

Thus, it becomes very clear that God’s intent, His heart’s purpose was to bless those who would believe Him. Abram was the first of many to follow.

To summarize Genesis chapters 15-18, God Himself permanently established a covenant between Himself and Abram. Just as in the covenants of old, God and Abram exchanged names. God renamed Abram, “Abraham,” which means “father of a multitude.” Some also note that God’s addition of the “h” sound to Abram’s name could symbolize God’s breath being joined to Abram’s name. Additionally, God is still known as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God made promises, pronounced blessings and curses were pronounced, and established the scar of the covenant, the circumcision of every male child.

More importantly, God conveyed the message that He had joined Himself permanently to Abraham and his descendants with the ultimate goal of blessing them. God faithfully kept His covenant, just as He plainly stated He would, even when Abraham's descendants failed or deliberately refused to keep it, which demonstrates the amazing love and faithfulness of our Father God.

Not only did God display His character to the ancient descendants of Abraham, but He also foreshadowed the coming of His Son, Jesus, through the covenant He made. Why do you suppose God said that all the families of the earth would be blessed through Abraham? The answer, of course, is that God knew He would be sending Jesus to pay for the sins of the world, tear down the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles, and join all believers together in one family (Ephesians 2:14-17).

Furthermore, the blessings God pronounced upon Abraham and his biological descendants have now been granted to believers who are not directly descended from him. As Paul wrote, "*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us - for it is written, 'cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree' - in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*" (Galatians 3:12-14). How amazing that God would redeem even non-Jewish people from the curse of the law so that we all could receive the blessing and power of His Holy Spirit! It gets even clearer, when the chapter continues, "*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who*

were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise."

In other words, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is our God, and the same beautiful heart of blessing God poured out upon the Jewish people is now poured out on all who believe, regardless of nationality, gender, or social status. God is so good!

Please be aware of one important concept: God has kept, is keeping, and always will keep His covenant. Israel broke the first covenant God made through blatant disobedience, idolatry, and worship of other gods. Nevertheless, God remained faithful because of His covenant promises. Then, He did something even more amazing: since the people He loved did not keep their part of the covenant, He established a new, even better covenant.

The New Covenant: Jesus Christ

By the time Jesus came, the world was in desperate need of forgiveness and mercy. Almost the entire world had fallen prey to the lure of sin, idolatry, and false worship. Worse, as Hebrews 9:22 tells us, *"without shedding of blood, there is no remission [of sins]."* Faithful Jews offered sacrifices as a way to atone for sins, but these sacrifices could never truly remove the sinful heart present in all people.

The situation was dire: mankind needed for-

giveness and cleansing, which could only come by blood. The blood offered prior to the arrival of Jesus could not fully deal with the deeper heart issue of sin. Mankind desperately needed a savior.

Fortunately, God already had the answer: *“But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. 12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. 13 For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? 15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance”* (Hebrews 9:11-15).

Jesus came to the earth, lived a perfect life, and paid for the sin of mankind with His very own blood, a blood powerful enough to truly cleanse people from the heart of sin. Furthermore, Jesus established a new covenant with those who have faith in Him. In this new covenant, those who believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior receive the immense love and blessing of the Father, all paid for by the sacrifice Jesus made at the cross.

As John 3:16-17 informs us, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that*

whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” God desires for each person to be set free from spiritual bondage, healed, delivered from demonic oppression, given perfect peace, and filled with eternal life. In His love, He gave the perfect sacrifice that empowered believers to receive every one of these great blessings.

Second Corinthians 5:18-21 further adds, *“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not [d]imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

20 Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Jesus is our reconciliation to God the Father. His sacrifice has empowered all who truly believe and receive Him as Lord not only to be reconciled themselves, but to invite others to receive that same reconciliation.

So how exactly did Jesus accomplish all of these wonderful victories? It was through the new covenant, which He cut with God the Father at the cross.

The Cross: God's Covenant of Love Fully Manifested

Examining the cross carefully demonstrates that Jesus fulfilled every detail perfectly. Jesus came as God's representative to enter into covenant with people of faith. The cross was the chosen covenant site where God would make His will known for all generations. Jesus, in addition to His role as God's representative, served as the covenant sacrifice. That's why, in John 1:29, John the Baptist announces, "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!*" Jesus's flesh was cut, and His blood was shed to serve as the blood for this new covenant.

Continuing in perfect fashion, this covenant was confirmed by an oath. Psalm 110:4 contains the oath God swore concerning Jesus: The Lord has sworn And will not relent, "*You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*" That means Jesus would fulfill the will of God as our High Priest, according to the oath God made.

Hebrews 6:13-20 expands on the importance of this oath: "*For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, 'Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.'*" 15 *And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong*

consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” So you see, God swore by Himself, and it was God Himself who fulfilled the requirements of this covenant by sending His Son, Jesus. God’s undying desire to bless those who believe in Him is on full display.

Nevertheless, there is still more to this covenant. Just as the ancients exchanged their clothing and their names, Jesus made powerful exchanges with those who trust Him as Lord. He took our filthiness and sin onto Himself, and in exchange, we receive His righteousness and the armor of God described in Ephesians 6:13-18.

Not only that, but God has made us a part of His eternal family: *“14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God”* (Ephesians 3:14-19). At the cross, God joined believers to His family forever and enabled us to truly, deeply know His love.

Additionally, God proclaimed many blessings that would come to those who believe. For example, consider **Psalms 103:1-5**:

*“Bless the Lord, O my soul;
And all that is within me, bless His holy name!
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:
3 Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases,
4 Who redeems your life from destruction,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,
5 Who satisfies your mouth with good things,
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”*

Isaiah 53:4-6 adds:

*“Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
5 But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”*

The benefits to this new, God-given covenant are boundless. Just like the families and tribes of old, God joins us in our fight against our enemy, Satan. He has promised never to leave us or forsake us. He gives us the ability to partake of His very nature (2 Peter 1:2-4). There is even a permanent memento of God’s new covenant: Jesus’s body bears the scars of His crucifixion (John 20:27), which will forever serve as the physical evidence

of God's great love for us and the covenant He made with us.

Even more, Jesus's shed blood empowers believers with tremendous benefits. Consider this short list:

- Through Jesus's blood, He made peace between God and man (Colossians 1:20).
- God has granted total forgiveness for sin through the blood of Jesus (Colossians 1:14).
- Jesus overcame Satan by the power of His blood (Revelations 12:11).
- Jesus's blood cleanses our consciences so that we may serve God fully (Hebrews 9:14).
- Jesus's blood grants believers access to the very throne of God, where we may walk in His presence without guilt to obtain His mercy and help (Hebrews 10:19-22).

To top it all off, Jesus Himself became the covenant meal, which we now know as communion. Matthew 26:26-28 says, *“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” 27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is My blood of the [d]new covenant, which is shed for many for the [e]remission of sins.”*

Jesus commands us to remember the covenant He made every time we take communion. In this simple act of faith, we encounter Him intimately and remind ourselves of the vast benefits we receive because of what He accomplished on the cross. Believers do well to remember that everything listed above is now a covenant right, grant-

ed by God through His great love, and we have full access to receive and live in every single one of these benefits by faith.

Through this covenant, God manifests His love to those who believe, and then those believers are empowered to reveal that amazing love to the world. *“7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another”* (1 John 4:7-11).

Lastly, God truly does intend for this covenant, along with all these benefits and blessings, to be eternal. In order for that to happen, He has released His resurrection power to all who have received Jesus as Lord. John 11:25-26 says, *“Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.”* That means we will go on loving and living in God’s power for eternity. However, it is not just in Heaven that this resurrection power is available. Look at what God’s word promises for us in this life:

Romans 6:4

“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Fa-

ther, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Romans 7:4

“Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.”

Romans 8:10-11

“And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies [d]through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

Ephesians 2:4-6

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

Colossians 2:12-15

“In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body [h]of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of

God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the [i]handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

Through all of the blessings and benefits bestowed on us, we believers are empowered to reveal God’s love to the world as we believe in what He has done for us and put it all on display. It is all by His power, and it is all for His glory.

Conclusion

Covenants are binding agreements, meant to be eternal. In ancient days, very specific and formal ceremonies cemented the covenant into the minds of those entering into them. God used the formalities of ancient covenants to display His love and His intent to bless those people who trust in Him fully and receive Jesus as Lord. God perfectly fulfilled every aspect of the covenant process through His Son, Jesus:

- He promised with an oath.
- He fulfilled His promise.
- He provided the sacrifice, His Son, Jesus Christ.
- Jesus's sacrifice allowed believers to be joined to God, members of His family forever.
- God's covenant provides countless powerful blessings and benefits.
- God released His power so believers can both know His love and reveal it to the world.
- Believers now give God glory by living out the blessings we have received.
- Our faith works through love (Galatians 5:6).

The new covenant is forever, and we will continue to live in its power both in this life and in eternity with Jesus.

Prayer for Salvation

If you have not made Jesus Christ your personal Lord and Savior, and you desire this with all your heart, then please, join me in prayer:

“Heavenly Father, I choose to believe with all my heart, Your love for me. I believe that Jesus Christ is Your Son, the Son of God, and that He is God in the flesh. I believe that You sent Him to this earth to save me. Thank You. I believe He died on the cross for my sins and He was dead and buried three days, and then rose again from the dead and that He ascended to Heaven and is now seated at Your right hand and is returning again.

Father, please forgive me for all my sin and iniquity and I choose to forgive others who have sinned against me. I give You all my heart and choose to live with You forever. I believe I have been born again according to Your Word and that I have been transferred out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of light. I declare I am forgiven and healed! Now, I ask for Holy Spirit to fill me. Jesus, baptize me in Holy Spirit and fullness in order that I may know You intimately and serve You all my days.

Thank You, Lord, for loving me. Amen.”

Scriptures:

John 14:6

“6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Romans 10:8-13

“8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

John 3:3-7, 16-18

“3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born [a] again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that

I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

"16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

II Corinthians 5:17

"17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

I Corinthians 15:3-5

"3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve."

II Corinthians 5:21

"21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

Colossians 1:13-14

"13 He has delivered us from the power of dark-

ness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.”

Luke 11:9-13

“9 ‘So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

Acts 1:8

“8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

I Timothy 3:16

“6 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness:

*God was manifested in the flesh,
Justified in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Preached among the Gentiles,
Believed on in the world,
Received up in glory.”*

Fresh Infilling of Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

If you have been born again and filled with Holy Spirit and you desire MORE and want to encounter the Lord’s presence afresh and anew, please join me in prayer:

“Father, in the name of Jesus, I thank You for loving me and I ask according to Ephesians 1:17-19, that You would give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, Jesus, and the eyes of my understanding would be enlightened; that I may know what is the hope of His calling and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power towards us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places. Amen.

Father, according to Colossians 3:9-12, I ask in Jesus name, that I would be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that I would walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power. Amen.

I surrender and yield my life to the fullness of Holy Spirit; His power and anointing; the spirit of wisdom and revelation; counsel and might; the spirit of the fear of the Lord and knowledge according to Isaiah 11:2, in Jesus name. Amen.”

The Garden Training Center, Inc. The Apostolic School of Ministry

The Garden Apostolic Training Center is a place that fosters spiritual growth. The center provides training to equip believers in Jesus Christ for the work of the ministry and to be victorious and free in all areas of their lives through the supernatural empowerment of the Holy Spirit. For more information check out **thegardenstc.org**.

The Garden Gathering Church

The purpose of The Garden Gathering Church is to encourage believers in Jesus Christ: to fully embrace the love of God; to walk in freedom; to carry His presence and glory; and to be equipped and trained for the work of the ministry through worship, teachings, and impartation.

“It’s all about Love. When you see His eyes of Love for you, nothing else matters. That’s it. That’s all you need to know.”

-Brandy Helton

