

Rom. 14:19

So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

John 8:32 and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

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COST VERSUS VALUE

Jim Stauffer

Luke 14:28 *For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.*

Jesus uses a phrase just prior to these verses, **Luke 14:27** *Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.* This phrase means all disciples must accept the necessary sacrifices to follow Jesus. On a previous occasion in **chapter 9 of Luke**, He warned those who would follow Him there was a price to pay. They would likely be called on to serve Him instead of family. They might not be able to sustain a home of their own. His point to them is to calculate the cost of discipleship and if you are not willing to sacrifice everything it demands, choose something else.

Jesus made great and precious promises to His disciples, but He did not beg them to follow Him by promising the life would be easy. What He promised them was the ultimate result would be beyond any glory they could imagine. His disciples, He said, would, inherit the kingdom of heaven, be comforted in their mourning, inherit the earth, be filled with righteousness, obtain mercy, see God, be called the sons of God and receive the great reward of heaven (**Mt. 5**). When you contrast this result with that of

those who choose not to be His disciples the value of discipleship begins to emerge more clearly. **Matt. 25:46** *And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*

Now He admonishes those who would desire the value to seriously consider the cost in order to avoid a rash decision that would cause them to go back on their commitment. **Luke 9:62** *Jesus said to him, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."*

Let us consider a couple of well known men who did just what Jesus is demanding. Felix, the Governor or Procurator of Judea, who was given the responsibility of determining the fate of Paul, heard from Paul concerning the gospel. While it had appeal, he weighed it in comparison to his position in government and declined to accept it. **Acts 24:24** *After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. 25 And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, "Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you."* It is clear there are some who view the values of this material world superior to the promises Jesus has offered.

Consider King Agrippa who was later called to hear the appeal of Paul. **Acts 26:27** *King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." 28 And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?" 29 And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains."*

The Apostle Paul demonstrated how he, a most persecuted disciple, felt regarding the cost versus value discussion of the salvation in Christ compared

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to any suffering in His service. **2 Cor. 4:16** *So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.* When he speaks of the relationship of the children of God with suffering, he says, **Rom. 8:16** *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs —heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

As we can see from these texts, God and Christ implore us to make the right decision, but they do not sugar coat the path of discipleship. It is a calling that demands we divorce ourselves from this world and its offer for pleasure and follow in the footsteps of Christ our Lord (**1 John 2:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:21-24**).

THE BEGINNING

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." (**Genesis 1:1**)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." (**John 1:1**)

"God said, let us make man ..." (**Genesis 1:26**)

"If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature (creation)." (**2 Cor. 5:17**)

God made man, in the beginning, as a creature different from all other created beings. He was a creature of choice. He could and would make decisions according to his own disposition. He was what we call a "free moral agent." He chose to disobey God and in so doing separated himself from God. He died a spiritual death on that day. Death is a separation whether physical or spiritual. Physically: (**James 2:26**) *"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."* and spiritually: (**Isaiah 59:1**) *"Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."*

He had sinned, thus separated himself from God and there was no way he could make restitution for his sin. But God made a promise through Abraham that *"in thy seed shall all nations be blessed."* And that seed was Christ. That seed reaches back to those faithful ones in any dispensation of religious

history just as it reaches forward to us today. [see Devotion No. 2] (**Galatians 3:16**) *"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."*

So, we hear so much about being born again, and it is a Bible subject, but not a mysterious, miraculous manifestation of some sort, but an intelligent conception that man can understand. When man is born again, he is the new creation that Paul talks about. But who is this new creation, this new man? He is one who has been born again (anew) and if anyone is in Christ he is this new creature. He has been born again. Simple, isn't it? How do we get into Christ? The Spirit reveals the entrance in passages such as **Romans 6:3** and **Galatians 3:27** thus the Spirit performs His part and the water performs its part and thus we are born of the water and the Spirit --- new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Daily Devotional, Bob Craig, Taken from simplestudies.com/Carey Scott

Covenant

by Allan Turner

The concept of covenant is significant in business, social, political, and religious relations. According to Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary*, "covenant" is "1: a formal, solemn, and binding agreement: Compact 2a: a written agreement or promise usually under seal between two or more parties especially for the performance of some action." A covenant then is a binding agreement between individuals or groups of individuals. This is the meaning of the word as it was used in the case of Isaac and Abimelech (**Genesis 26:28ff.**), and Laben and Jacob (**Genesis 31:44**). The main object of such early agreements was the promotion of peace. In fact, the Scriptures refer to just such cases as "covenant[s] of peace" (**Numbers 25:12; Isaiah 54:10**). The word "covenant," as it developed, actually became equivalent to *peace*. Conversely, a "broken covenant" symbolized *war* (**I Kings 15: 19**).

Although covenants were made for mutual support and protection (**II Samuel 3:12, 13**), the fulfillment of common obligations to third parties (**II Kings 11:17**), and even in submission to a superior enemy, which obligated both parties (**I Samuel 11:1; I Kings 20:34**), it is the covenant between kings and their subjects that we wish to give special attention in this study. Duties, obligations, or services required of subjects by a sovereign were the special concern of a covenant called a "suzerainty". Understanding

this is the key to understanding the use of the word covenant in the Bible. The suzerainty addresses the relationship between God and His people.

Religion And Covenant

"Religion" literally means the bond that unites man to God. This is exactly the biblical concept. Religion is constantly represented as the observance of a covenant with God (**Deuteronomy 29:12; Jeremiah 31:1,31,33**). Those in a covenant relationship with God are described as being at peace with Him. Those who are not in a covenant relationship with God are portrayed as being at war with Him. As long as the Jews practiced true religion under the covenant made at Sinai, they were to receive the blessings of God, but if they broke it they were to be cursed (**Deuteronomy 11:28-32; 30:10,15,19**).

Breaking Covenant

Although the covenant Jehovah made with Israel was described as "perpetual" and "everlasting," we understand these adjectives to be representative of what could have been. As long as the conditions of the covenant were met, the covenant would be in force. The covenant's perpetual nature or everlastingness could only be destroyed by a breach of the covenant. Historically, the everlasting covenant Jehovah made with Israel was broken. Because we already know the integrity of God would not allow Him to violate His part of the covenant, we realize it must have been broken by Israel (**Deut. 31:16,17,20; Isa. 24:5,6**). In **Hebrews 8:7 & 8**, the Hebrew writer wrote: *"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them [God said he would make a new covenant]."* By breaking the everlasting covenant, Israel declared itself to be at war with God. The fact that He continued to honor His end of the covenant, as much as He could under the hostile conditions that existed under the violated covenant, is only indicative of His integrity. Israel rejected the sovereignty of God and had to pay the penalty for being at war with Him. The destruction of the Jewish nation was not a pretty sight, but it was a fate that nation had brought upon itself by breaking the covenant and declaring war on God.

A New Covenant

In the midst of the hostilities between Israel and God, the Lord announced His plans for a *"new covenant"* (**Jeremiah 31:31-34**). As a manifestation of His great love, this new covenant was to be an even better covenant" with *"better promises"* (**Hebrews 8:6**). To insure its success, the mediator of this covenant would be none other than the Son of God Himself. In the end, no mediator ever gave more to insure any treaty (**Romans 5:6-10**). It was through this new covenant that those of us who

were *alienated* and *enemies* could be *reconciled* to God (**Colossians 1:21-23**). But notice that even under this new covenant there were conditions that had to be met. We can continue to be reconciled by this new covenant so long as we *"continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel"* (**verse 23**). Under this new covenant, we can never fall from grace or the promised blessings of God *if* we add to our faith certain prescribed things (**II Peter 1:10**). Under this new covenant, we will continue to be cleansed by the blood of Christ *if* we continue walking in the light (**I John 1:7**). This walking in the light is conditioned upon our confessing our sins (**I John 1:9**). We must never forget the conditions of this "peace" that now exists between God and His people through the New Testament or Covenant.

A Sealed Covenant

It was, and still is, the practice of sovereigns to place their seal upon a written covenant or treaty. In addition, parties of a covenant were often required to provide something of value to prove their sincerity. This "proof" was called the *"earnest."* As we are the *"epistle[s] of Christ"* (**II Corinthians 3:3**), it should not surprise us that the Holy Spirit is given to each Christian (**cf. Acts 5:32; Galatians 4:6**) as a seal or earnest of God's willingness to carry out His part of the covenant (**Ephesians 1:13; 4:30**). Some have erroneously thought that because we are sealed it is impossible for us to be eternally lost. This is the same idea Israel had under the Old Covenant (**Isaiah 59:1-2**). They had fallen from God's grace and instead of blaming themselves, they wanted to blame God. This is exactly analogous to those who preach "once saved, always saved" today. Instead of placing the blame for "falling from grace" on themselves, they want to blame it on God. These people need to understand that although God gave His Spirit to Saul (**I Samuel 10:10**), when Saul disobeyed Him, God took His Spirit back (**I Samuel 28:15,16**).

As we walk circumspectly in this New Covenant today, let us not forget that *if* we are to continue to be at *peace* with God, then there are conditions to be met.

*There'll be no street protests in heaven
Where dwellers there will have known
The truths of our beloved Instructor
No reaping "where you have not sown".*
Grant Clothier

Gal. 6:7 *Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.*

Eph. 2:19 *So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;*

1Pet. 2:9 *But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:*

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

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Elders: Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

NEWS AND NOTES:

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR PRAYERS: J.R. DANIEL, GRANT CLOTHIER, JAN PATRICK AND LILA, THE SISTER OF ALMA BAUMGARTNER.

MARY CZIRR IS UNDER HOSPICE CARE.

DERRICK GAINES, THE SON OF JAN PATRICK IS CONTINUING TO IMPROVE AT HOME AS IS THE SISTER-IN-LAW OF WENDY TAYLOR.

OUR CURRENT STUDIES ARE: SUNDAY MORNING: THE BOOK OF ACTS - BYRON TAYLOR AND WEDNESDAY EVENING: THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION - JIM STAUFFER

SUNDAY MORNING SERMON: THE PROMISED BLESSINGS OF GOD



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10