

Joe Smith's message on
How to Enter into COVENANT with God
by
Doug Woolley
8/12/87

A "covenant" is a formal, solemn, and binding agreement. **Covenant always involves obedience** to the terms of the agreement. God was able to raise Jesus from the dead because of the everlasting "covenant" (Heb. 13:20). God has a covenant with us, but the term used in the Bible does not refer to a negotiable agreement between two EQUAL individuals. Instead, the word is DIATHKE in the original manuscripts, and it means that the terms and conditions of the agreement are made by the superior, and the inferior can only accept or reject but cannot alter or change them. God, the superior, has laid down the terms and the conditions by which us, the inferior, can either accept God's Word or reject God's Word but we cannot alter or modify or change it. Today there is a problem with men trying to change and alter the covenant to make it say something that it does not say. For example, some would want to believe that you do not have to be holy to make it into the kingdom, or that they could possibly ordain a homosexual into the priesthood, when God's Word is clear against such issues. God did not let man take a vote on the covenant or ask man what he thought about it. God can do this because He is God. God created us, therefore God owns us, therefore He has a right to our lives'. God created this world; God owns this world; therefore God has a right to say what goes on in this world. He has said in His Word that He wants to do business on earth through His people, and for them to rule and reign. He has said that it is His pleasure to give them the kingdom. This is covenant.

God established a covenant with man in the very beginning of time. God brought things into existence by His spoken Word. He created man in His own image and gave him dominion over the earth and told him to rule over the creatures. God spoke to man and breathed the word of dominion into him. Inside of us we know that we are to rule and reign on planet earth. "The Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). God placed man in a position to be obedient and productive by keeping the garden. However, God forbid Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, otherwise they would die. The way that God let the man know that He was a covenant Man and that Adam had authority is that God put Adam under authority. God gave Adam commands and expected obedience, which is always better than sacrifice.

God put man in the garden and gave him a commandment to take care of the garden. When God gave Adam this dominion mandate and authority on the face of the earth, He meant what He said. God has made a decision that on planet earth He will rule through a man. God and unclean spirit can manifest themselves only through people's bodies. Satan appeared to Eve and claimed that Adam's Daddy is a liar. He raised doubts in their mind that God had lied to them, and they just listened. Doubting God's Word, Eve then took of the fruit and ate it and gave it to Adam. Eve exalted herself above God by judging Who was telling the truth--God or Satan. When you judge, you are saying that you know more than they do about it. You do not have the right to judge whether God is telling you the truth or not. You can only accept it or reject it. Eve's pride made her and Adam sin and both transgressed the covenant. **Adam first transgressed the covenant by disobeying God in not keeping the garden**, which made it easy for him to disobey God by eating the fruit.

Because God is love and because God has a covenant with man, God now has to deal with both man and Satan with love and justice. God could not just wipe them out and start over because love never returns evil for evil. God makes another covenant with them in Genesis 3:15, saying to the serpent: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel." When God says He will "bruise" the serpent's head, he means that he will break his authority over man, and He will do it through the seed of woman, rather than through the seed of man, because man had a new god by obeying someone else. Adam has a new master now. The moment Adam sinned, he started to think of himself and was fearful and selfish and was no longer moving in the love realm. There are two races on the earth: We are naturally born into the Adam race, filled with death, sickness, and poverty. We need to be spiritually born into the Jesus race, filled with life and success--which is God's final covenant.

God established a covenant with Noah in Genesis 6:18. In verse 22, Noah did according to all that God had commanded him. Obedience is the key to covenant. God's covenant to Noah was that "While the earth remains [there will be] seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night" (Gen. 8:22).

God also finds Abraham and makes a covenant with him upon the condition that Abraham would leave his land, idols, friends, and family. Abraham heard the word of God and repented. "The Lord made a covenant with Abraham saying, 'to your **seed** I've given this land.'" (Gen. 15:18). The Holy Spirit tells us in Galatians 3:16 that this seed represents Jesus Christ. Jesus was actually cutting the covenant with God in Genesis 15:17,18. God was using Abraham's body by which he could do business on earth to cut the covenant with Jesus who was still in the spiritual world.

In God's covenant, Abraham was saying to God, "everything that I've, everything that I am, everything that I ever will be, belongs to You." God likewise says to Abraham, "everything that I have, everything that I am, everything that I ever will be, belongs to you." Abraham got the best deal. In Genesis 15:11, the animals represent the covenant. There is a giving up of life and rights when entering into covenant. Abraham drove the birds away that were flying down to eat the animals. Similarly, **we must drive away** doubt, unbelief, and worry so that it does not eat our covenant.

We have to love God with all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength (Matt. 22:38). There must be no other gods in our life. If you are trusting in anything more than God, then you have a god in your life. God will find out if you have a god in your life when he says for you to give Him that "god." If you do not know God, it's hard to trust God. We are assured that as we seek 1st the kingdom of God and His righteousness, He will take care of our food, drink, and clothing. How do you know if you are not getting a degree and getting a good job that God will take care of your food, drink, and clothing. If you are trusting in your education and job more than God, then you have a god in your life. You are saying that they are more able to supply your needs than God. When you enter into covenant you say everything belongs to God. To get "right" with God we have to give God our wife, our children, our house--everything. We can't tell God what we want to give Him and what we want to keep. That's not covenant. Everything belongs to God.

Depending upon how high you want to go in your ministry, determines how low you have to go to get there. God's going to take you down and work character into your life. God can tell the way you will act going up by the way you go down. If when going down, you get into self-pity, and murmur, and complain to God, then you would probably be prideful, arrogant, and haughty going up, thinking that your hand had done it and not the hand of God and you would want the glory and not give it to God. God is for us and not against us. He loves us. "An inheritance that comes too

quickly in the beginning will come to ruin in the end." God knows what he is doing with us. If you know covenant and God and that God is a covenant God, then you can trust God. God made a covenant with Abraham, Jesus, and did certain things for them.

Hebrews 8:7-12 says that there was a fault with the first covenant, and therefore a second covenant was needed. The fault was that the people transgressed the first covenant because it was religious--external, based on what man could do, based on rules and regulations, methods and concepts. The new covenant is internal, based on what God has done. God says "I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them upon their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Heb. 8:10).

Loyalty is the corner stone of covenant (Hos. 6:4-8). Loyalty means being true, constant, steadfast. It means that you are so committed to God and His Word that nothing will cause you to move, quit, or turn your back. NO persecution, trial, or test will cause you to move and turn your back on God. We do not have the right to quit or fail or sin when we are in covenant. You give up your rights when you come into the kingdom of God. We need to be love slaves to God, not for what we can get out of Him, but just because of Who He is--because He is worthy--He is our creator.

A partnership can terminate, but a covenant cannot terminate because it is eternal. Marriages fail because they are based on partnership rather than on covenant. Brothers and sisters split because of partnership. An everlasting covenant means--for better or worse, for rich or poor, for good or bad--we are in it together till death do us part. We will never quit on God, nor on our brothers and sisters. Jesus cut the covenant with God (Gen. 15:17-18) and His disciples (John 13:1). He loved them to the end.

God told Abraham that he would be the father of nations and would have a son. For 20 years, God withheld the promise of a child. He had to believe God for 20 years and did not grow weary in his faith, but grew stronger. When the son, Isaac, was 25 years old, God told Abraham to give up the son. God was testing his heart, and Abraham obeyed God. If Abraham was not covenant and did not know God, he could not have done it. Abraham had the first revelation of the resurrection, believing that God could raise his son from the dead. God told Abraham to hold back from slaying his son (Gen. 22:12). We know that we fear God and are in covenant with Him when we do not withhold anything from Him.

Before Jesus established the new covenant with His disciples, he wanted the "one who would betray Him" to leave. Jesus said to them, "truly, truly, I say to you, that one of you will betray Me" (John 13:21). Each one responded (in Mathew's gospel), "Lord, is it I." The natural thing to say would be, "who is it?" However, they understood covenant and wanted to know if there was any betrayal in their own heart, if there was any unsundered rights in their own heart. Even Judas looked Jesus in the eyes and asked, "Lord, is it I?" He was deceived thinking that God did not know the heart and what his motives and intents were. It's a cruel deception to think that God does not know if you have given up all your rights. The moment God exposes something wrong in your heart, you should want to get rid of it if you love God and don't want to hurt Him. Jesus was saying, "Judas, someone is going to betray Me, but it doesn't have to be you." There are going to be people who think that they are in the kingdom of God that have never cut the covenant with God and who have deception in their heart that have not surrendered all their rights, but it does not have to be you.

Judas looked like a disciple and did everything that the disciples did, but he just had one little area of selfishness and covetousness that he never got right with God. As a result, Judas betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Judas had a decision to get right with God or not. His decision was not to cut the covenant. After Satan entered Judas's heart and Judas left the room, Jesus then instituted the new covenant with His true disciples.

Jesus said, "This is the blood of a new covenant, this is my body which is going to be broken for you, this you do in remembrance of me until I come." There was a fault with the first covenant since it was external, based on rules and regulations--religious. It showed man that he could not please God by his works. All of our righteousness is as filthy rags. When you cut the covenant and say to God, "all that I am, all that I have, all that I ever will be, all that I ever will have belongs to you," then Jesus and the Father will come into your heart and dwell there. Covenant allowed Jesus to go to the cross and also to be raised from the dead. Covenant starts with giving up all you have, all your rights, and all your options. You do not have anymore options: If this way is not the way, then there is no way for you; If God is not God then there is no God for you. This is covenant.

When you cut the covenant, you move into the love realm because God is love. Love is the right way and the only way for you. The new believers continually devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings (Acts 2:42), which shows they were loyal. They were in "fellowship"--harmony and agreement--no divisions or strife. When they were "breaking bread" they were unselfish--giving to others. Acts 2:46 tells us that the early disciples met from "house to house," seeing each other more than just on a Sunday service. God wants us to have fellowship with one another and be in union and harmony, with one mind, one vision, and one goal. They cared for one another and shared their possessions (Acts 2:41-47). In other words, if I got food, you got food. If I got money, you got money. This is giving yourself one to another.

The following story changed Joe Smith's life and can do the same for us: A man had two sons and the man had been gone from home for a long while. One of the boys missed the father so much that he made a decision out of love to give his life to the father to do anything he wants to do with it. The father asked the son, "son are you sure I can do anything with you that I want?" The boy said, "yes." The father said, "O.K. First thing I'm going to do is take all your toys away from you, second thing I'm going to lock you upstairs in your room, third thing when I call you--you come running, fourth thing when you come running I'm going to feed you spinach three times a day. How's that?" The boy mumbled and regretted his decision. Obviously, this is not love. Similarly, a suggestion might come to you that if you enter into covenant with God and give up your live unconditionally, then you will be miserable after God gets through with you. However, God wants to bless us. God is for us, not against us.

Because God loves us, you can say "yes Sir" to God even before he asks you for something because He has your best interest at heart. We must come to the place where we know that we have given up all our rights and options. We must give up ourselves unconditionally when entering into covenant. We then have a right to our covenant, to all that God has promised us. In so doing, God has some rights--to take care of our food, drink, and clothing. Our business is to get the kingdom established, and His business is to provide for us. We can enjoy this covenant with God.