**BLOOD COVENANT**

I. WHAT IS A BLOOD COVENANT?

A. An agreement or contract between two people or parties which is sealed by the shedding of blood.

1. Closest, most enduring, most sacred contract known to man.
2. Forms an indissoluble tie or union.

B. Oldest covenant known to man.

1. Many scholars believe it began in the Garden of Eden.
   a. God slew animals to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve (Gen.3:21).
   b. The blood of the animals covered their sins (Heb.9:22).

And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

C. In the Bible the shedding of blood symbolizes the giving of life.

1. Does not symbolize death (Lev.17:10,14).

10And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 14 For it is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.
2. Giving of life for another is the greatest form of love (John 15:13).

D. Unlimited Covenant.
1. All assets, debts, liabilities, talents, and property are included in the covenant.
   a. Debts owned by one partner are shared by the other.
   b. Assets owned by one partner are shared by the other.

2. Most contracts today are of a limited nature.
   a. For example, a contract to paint a house would not include electrical work.

b. A blood covenant, however, is an unlimited contract affecting all areas of life.

• E. Unbreakable contract.
1. Sacred among all primitive peoples.

• 2. Blood covenant is universal and known worldwide among all peoples.

• 3. Where practiced, the claim is that it has never been broken.

   • a. Penalty for breaking blood covenant is death.
   b. Own family members will hunt down person who breaks a blood covenant.

• II. REASONS FOR ENTERING BLOOD COVENANT:
   A. Protection.
1. Weak person or tribe enters covenant with stronger for sake of protection.
   a. To attack one member of the covenant was to attack both.
b. Other members would come to their defense.

•B. For business purposes.
1. Businessmen enter blood covenant so neither takes advantage of the other.
2. Thieves sometimes entered this type of covenant to insure protection from fellow thieves (modern examples: mafia, gangs).

•C. For Love.
1. Love is the main reason for entering (cutting) covenant.
2. Jonathan and David cut covenant for love (1 Sam.18:1,4).
3. Sometimes cut between marriage partners, symbolizing an unbreakable bond.

And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

•III. WAYS OF ENTERING INTO BLOOD COVENANT:
A. Cutting palm of hand and then shaking.
1. Origin of handshake.
2. Hands were cut and then partners shook hands, mixing blood.

•B. Cutting wrists and mingling blood.

•C. Cutting wrists, mixing blood in cup of wine.
1. Each partner drank half wine/half blood mixture.
2. Unscriptural (Lev. 17:10).
3. Believed to be origin of cannibalism.
D. Substituting blood of an animal for human blood was practiced in Old Testament. God accepted the blood of animals to cover human sins.

• IV. STEPS TO ENTERING INTO BLOOD COVENANT:

A. Eight steps normally followed.

1. Exchange of garments. E.g. Jonathan & David exchanged garments (1Sam.18:3-4).

• 2. Exchange of weapons.
   a. This signified all strength and war ability were shared.
   b. We have God’s power and ability on our side.
   c. The whole armor of God is available to us.
   d. Our covenant with God gives us the right to all the protection heaven affords.

• 3. Exchange of names.
   a. Each person takes part of the other person’s name.
   b. Persons in covenant have full authority to use the name of their covenant partner (e.g. in marriage the wife takes and can legally use her husbands’ name).
   c. The name of Jesus is our covenant name.

• 4. Shedding of blood by cutting.
   a. The Hebrew word used in the Bible means "to cut where or until blood flows."
   b. Shedding of blood essential; it is the seal of the covenant.
   c. Ash or other substances are rubbed into the cut to form a visible scar. This scar becomes the mark or seal of the covenant.
   d. This marked the partner so all could see.
   e. People who cut covenant are called Covenant Heads. However, covenant was not only for heads but for all of the family and for all generations.
• 5. Splitting of animal.
   a. An animal was cut in half as part of covenant ritual.
   b. Halves were laid on the ground and the partners walked between the pieces in a figure-8 (Gen.15:9-21).

• 6. Pronouncement of blessing and cursing.
   a. Each partner would pronounce blessing and cursing on the other partner.
   b. Blessing for obedience to the rules of covenant and cursing for disobedience.
   c. Deut.28 is basically a list of blessing and cursing.

• 7. Setting up of a memorial.
   a. Partners build a memorial or do something to remind them of their covenant.
   b. Examples historically used:
      1) Large stone (Gen.31:44,45).
      2) Pile of rocks (Gen.31:46-51).
      3) Stone on which partners wrote covenant.
      4) Exchange of sheep or other animals (Gen.21:28,30).
      5) Planting trees for long life (Gen.21:31,32).
   c. Any one or combination could be used.

• 8. Eating of covenant meal.
   a. Bread and wine is a traditional covenant meal.
   b. Bread represents the body; wine represents the blood.

• B. Not necessary to complete all eight steps; any two or more are acceptable.

• V. OUR BLOOD COVENANT WITH GOD
   A. Why is it necessary that we have a blood covenant with God?
1. God made Adam ruler of this earth (Gen.1:26,28).

2. God gave man freedom of choice.
   a. Adam chose to disobey God.
   b. He gave his authority over to Satan.
   c. His spirit died at that time; he was separated from God spiritually.
   d. At the same time, the curse of poverty, sickness, and death fell on mankind.

• B. God wanted communion with man.

1. He put into action a plan to bring man back into fellowship.

2. In Abraham God found a man who would trust and obey Him.

3. God couldn’t destroy Adam and form another man from the dust of the earth.
   a. Earth and all therein belonged to Satan.
   b. God could not use the dust of earth - it no longer belonged to Him or Adam.

4. God had to bring the Second Adam (Jesus Christ) into the earth. A man caused the fall - a man had to redeem mankind (Rom.5:17,18).

   17For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

   18Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

• C. God found in Abram a man with whom he could work.

1. God begins dealing with Abram (Gen.12:1-6).

2. Abram was 75 when God first approached him.

3. God told Abram to leave home, land, and kinsman. He eventually obeyed and left.


D. God made a blood covenant with Abram, finalizing what He began in Gen.12.
1. Blood covenant between God and Abram (Gen.15:1-17). READ
   a. God says He will be Abram’s shield and exceeding great reward (v.1).
   b. Abram asks the Lord, "What will you give me?" (v.2).
   c. God tells him (v.5).
   d. Abram believed, and it was counted as righteousness (v.6).
   e. God tells what He will do for Abram (vv.7-15).

• 2. Abram asked how he could know that God could and would do this.
   a. God told Abram to "bring [Him] a heifer."
      1) This is blood covenant talk.
      2) Blood covenant was well known to Abram.
      3) Abram knew God was serious.
      4) Abram could be sure that God would keep His Word.

• b. Abram brought the animals and split them.
      1) The driving away of the birds represents the devil stealing the Word.
      2) He was waiting for the other member in the covenant to walk between the split pieces with him.
   c. Abram fell into a deep sleep (v.12). God then spoke to Abram and allowed him to see what was happening.
   d. A smoking furnace and burning lamp passed between the pieces (v.17).
      1) The smoking furnace is God the Father (Ex.19:18).
      2) The burning lamp is God the Son (Rev.21:23).
      3) Jesus took Abram’s place sealing the covenant.

• E. God could now have a relationship with mankind through the Abrahamic covenant.
  1. This covenant was the first step in bringing the Second Adam (Jesus) into the earth.
  2. People under this covenant had many benefits.
a. If they fulfilled the terms, they received blessings of health, prosperity, and long life (Deut.28:1-14).

b. Received, in part, before the crucifixion. We receive because of the crucifixion.

c. People under the Abrahamic covenant could not be born again or Spirit filled.

3. Looked toward the crucifixion, and it was counted to them as righteousness.

• F. Changing of names was a step in making a blood covenant.

1. YHWH is God’s name in Hebrew. The main part is the letter "H."
   a. God added "H" from His name to Abram, making Abraham. This means the "father of multitudes".
   b. Added "H" to make Sara into "Sarah" (Gen.17:15). Sarah means "princess".

2. God changed His name also.
   a. After making covenant with Abram, He called Himself "the God of Abraham".
   b. Later added "Isaac and Jacob" to His name (Ex.3:6).

• G. God’s Covenant with Abraham is an everlasting covenant.

1. We are Abraham’s seed and heirs (Gal.3:13,14,29).

13Christ has 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” 14that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

2. We could not be heirs of something that no longer exists.

3. The Abrahamic Covenant still in existence; it has not passed away.

4. Mosaic Law with its blood sacrifices and strict laws was done away with on the cross.

5. We are no longer under the curse of law.

6. We are heirs to the promise because of Jesus.
H. Another step in a blood covenant: shedding of both parties’ blood.

1. In Abrahamic Covenant, man’s blood was shed (Gen.17:8,11,23) when Abraham was circumcised.

2. In second and better covenant, Jesus blood was shed. Jesus poured out His blood on the cross.

3. Circumcision reminded Abraham of his covenant.
   a. When he dressed, bathed, or had relations with Sarah, he would be reminded of the covenant.
   b. Circumcision marked Abraham and his descendants as having covenant with God.

•I. Blood covenant enabled God to legally bring Second Adam to the earth.

1. Two people in covenant have possessions, talents, and abilities in common.

2. Either party could demand anything of other party and expect to receive.

3. God demanded the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen.22:2).
   a. God knew Abraham would give his all.
   b. God tested Abraham and did not find him lacking.
   c. God saw willingness of Abraham to give his all, and counted that as if he had actually sacrificed Isaac (Heb.11:17).
   d. God provided the ram for sacrifice (Gen.22:13).

4. Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son. Therefore, God as his covenant partner could do no less. God sent Jesus to die on the cross because His covenant partner, Abraham, was willing to sacrifice his son.

•VI. THE BIBLE CONSISTS OF TWO TESTAMENTS OR COVENANTS: OLD & NEW

A. Old Covenant was between God and Abraham.

B. The Law was added in Moses’ time.

1. Law is found in Exodus and is a list of do’s and don’ts.
2. Book of Leviticus - list of sacrifices and rituals for when Law was broken.
   a. By following these sacrifices and rituals, sin was covered.
   b. Blood sacrifices only covered sin, did not blot it out.
   c. Only the blood of Jesus would blot out sin.

•C. Under the Law, the blood of bulls and goats covered sins for a time.
   1. Each time people sinned, they had to make the correct sacrifice to cover it.
   2. Five types of sacrifices or offerings under Law (Lev 1-7).
      a. Burnt offering, meal offering, peace offering, trespass offering, and sin offering.
      b. These needed repeating each time sin occurred.
   3. Law, a temporary measure (Gal.3:19).

•D. God planned to send Jesus from the beginning of the world.
   1. Christ was a lamb without spot or blemish, slain before the foundation of the world (1Pet.1:19-21).
   2. God knew man would fall short but had a plan of salvation prepared.
   3. Law with rituals and sacrifices given to show man that he would always fall short.
      a. Showed man he needed God’s grace.
      b. Showed man he could not do God’s requirements by his own abilities.
      c. Pointed man to the cross and his need for a Savior.
      d. No man could fulfill all of the Law.

•VII. MAN’S NEED FOR A SAVIOR
   A. Jesus was preordained to die before the foundation of the world
      (1Pet.1:19-21).
B. God sent Jesus at the proper time to die on the cross (Gal 4:4).

• C. Man had sinned; man would have to die to reconcile mankind.
   1. Not just any man would do.
   2. The redeemer needed to be someone free from the sin nature.
   3. Only Jesus, wholly man and wholly God, would do.
      • a. If blood of a normal man were sufficient, Abraham could have sacrificed Isaac.
      b. The blood of Isaac was not sufficient.

• 4. Blood had to be shed, but blood which was free from sin.
   5. Blood of human is supplied by male seed.
      • a. Blood of Jesus was supplied by God.
      b. Jesus’ blood was free from sin nature; thus, an acceptable sacrifice.

• VIII. WE HAVE A BETTER COVENANT BECAUSE OF JESUS
   A. Better covenant with better promises (Heb.8:6).
      1. Old Covenant was not perfect (Heb 8:7).
      2. Could not reconcile man fully to God.
      3. The Law was a temporary measure to show man’s sin and his inability to fulfill God’s requirement (Gal.3:24-25).

• B. Jesus came to fulfill the Law (Matt.5:17,18).
   1. Jesus fulfilled the Law, and it has been done away with.
      a. The Law was added only until the Seed came (Gal.3:19).
      b. Jesus, the Seed, came and did away with the Law.
   2. Once Jesus shed his blood, the sacrifice of animals was unnecessary.
3. Why try to cover up what has already been wiped out?

•C. The Abrahamic covenant is still in effect.
1. The covenant God made with Abraham is an eternal one.
2. A covenant cannot be done away with until it is fulfilled.
   a. Jesus blotted out the handwriting of ordinances contrary to us.
   b. Abrahamic covenant not contrary; the Law was contrary.
   c. He took the Law out of the way and nailed it to the cross.
   d. We are free from the curse of the Law.

D. Abrahamic covenant will be completed at the Second Coming.
1. When Jesus returns, all the land promised to Abraham in Gen.15 will be restored.
2. This will fulfill all covenant promises.
3. The covenant will then be done away with.
4. We will go into the thousand year (millenial) reign of Jesus Christ.
5. Abrahamic covenant will be replaced because it will no longer be necessary.

•IX. NEW COVENANT IS ALSO A BLOOD COVENANT
A. Old Covenant sealed by blood of man, Abraham (at circumcision).
B. New Covenant sealed by blood of God, Jesus (at the cross).
C. Shedding of blood always necessary part of blood covenant
•1. New Covenant better because it was sealed by the blood of God.
2. Blood of Jesus was the only price sufficient to pay sin debt of humanity.
**D. Eight possible steps in Blood Covenant; Jesus fulfilled all eight.**

1. Jesus exchanged garments with sin (Isa.64:6; Rom.3:23).
   a. Jesus took our filthy garments of unrighteousness and gave us His clean garment of righteousness (2 Cor.5:21).
   b. Our filthy, sin-stained garments are now clean and pure.

2. We receive God’s weapons (Eph.6:13-17).
   a. We have the armor of God as one of our covenant privileges.
   b. We must do the putting on, but it is ours to use.

3. Jesus shed His blood to ratify (to approve formally; to validate) the covenant.
   a. Shedding of blood always necessary in blood covenant.
   b. Veil in temple rent when Jesus died, signifying that there was no more separation between man and God (Matt.27.51).
   c. The blood of Jesus bought back our relationship with God.
   d. The curse on mankind was lifted once and for all.
   e. Jesus was the last Passover lamb to be slain (1 Cor.5:7).

4. Blessing and cursing.
   a. Jesus was made a curse for us so that blessing could come to us (Gal.3:13).
   b. Jesus suffered all sicknesses, diseases, and torment so we don’t need to (Isa.53).
   c. He was separated from God so that we can have a relationship with Him.
   d. He went to hell so we can go to heaven.

5. Exchange of names.
   a. In blood covenant, partners have right to use other partner’s name.
   b. The name of Jesus is our covenant name.
c. We have the right to use the name of Jesus and receive our needs and desires.

6. Setting up a memorial.
   a. Jesus gave us communion, the Last Supper, as a memorial to Him.
   b. Each time we take communion, we remember His death and resurrection (**1Cor.11:25,26**).

7. Splitting of animals.
   a. Only step not fulfilled by Jesus.
   b. His blood was sufficient. The blood of animals was not needed.

8. Covenant meal.
   a. Last Supper or communion is a covenant meal.
   b. Consisted of bread and wine (traditional covenant foods).
   c. Much significance to what Jesus did.
   d. In ancient Jewish tradition a three-packet pouch filled with bread was on the Passover table.
      1) Jesus took bread from center pouch (as is tradition) and broke it.
      2) Jews thought the bread represented Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They didn’t know why "Isaac" was the one broken.
      3) The bread really signifies Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
      4) Jesus broke the center bread, thus portraying the broken body of the Son.
   e. Ancient Jewish tradition also had four cups on the Passover table: three full and one empty which was placed upside down.
      1) Full cups signify Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The empty cup is the Messiah’s.
2) Jesus took the Messiah’s cup, filled it, and drank from it (Mark 14:36).
3) By this action He was saying, "I am the Messiah."
4) The significance was very clear to His disciples.

**9. Another step** in blood covenant was to rub ash into the cut, making a scar.
   a. Circumcision marked the Jews as covenant people.
   b. Today, our seal or mark of the covenant is the Holy Spirit. (*2 Cor.1:22; Eph.1:13, 4:30*).

**E. We have a covenant with God, signed with the blood of Jesus.**

1. When Jesus cried, "It is finished," the word He used was "*tetelesti.*" This was the cry of a Roman general watching a battle from a hill. When he saw his side definitely winning, he cried this to let his troops know the battle was virtually won.

2. Many Roman soldiers were around the cross. One soldier who heard this cry said, "*Surely this was the Son of God.*" He could not understand why a man dying on a cross would shout the victory cry of a Roman general. For this he said, "*Surely this was the Son of God*" (Matt.27:54).

3. Jesus had won the battle.
   a. All that was left to do was to spend three days and nights in hell.
   b. He knew He had won.
   c. He could cry the victory because He had successfully completed His assignment.
   d. Jesus had won man back to God.