

The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation

Lesson 7: How Our Father Ratifies and Consummates His Covenant (De-Hellenizing Mental Muck)

Understanding a Covenant Ceremony

“The men who have violated My covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before Me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces” (Jeremiah 34:18).

Research into ancient customs illustrates the type of ceremony which *ratifies* a covenant. To ratify means to make it officially valid. The participants would cut an animal in two and place the halves between them as they faced each other, half on one side and half on the other. Then both men walked through the middle of the two pieces doing a figure “8,” the blood of the animal drenching their feet. The figure “8” represents infinity, signifying that the covenant was to *last forever*.



Then the two parties would exchange valued possessions as the *sign* evidencing to others that a covenant had been ratified and consummated between them. As noted in the previous lesson, with every covenant there must be a *sign* that a covenant has been consummated.

Our Father’s Covenant Ceremony

“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22b).



Picture yourself spiritually ratifying and consummating the conditions of our Father’s Covenant through the blood of His Son. Father God stands opposite you. You agree in your heart to the stipulations He requires for entering His Covenant. (We’ll discuss in detail His stipulations in a later lesson. We first want to make sure you understand the *profound significance* of accepting His offer.)

When Father God sees the genuine yearning of your heart to *want* a relational union with Him above all other things, He walks through the blood of the Sacrifice with you. And Who is the Sacrifice? Jesus. You and our Father do a figure “8” in the blood of Jesus. This *ratifies* the Covenant through the blood of the Lamb. What *consummates* the Covenant? Being sealed with the Holy Spirit.

Our Father seals you with the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing that *if you do not break the Covenant, you will receive salvation at the end of your pilgrimage on earth.*

Entering into this Covenant is no small matter! You have been adopted into our Father's family: *"Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'... So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir"* (Galatians 4:6,7). You receive the indwelling Holy Spirit as a sign that the Father has consummated the Covenant with you, as Paul reiterates:

"Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee" (2 Corinthians 1:21,22).

The indwelling presence of the Spirit guarantees our Father's faithfulness: *"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having trusted, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption"* (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). Rejoice! Our Father is for those He has marked with His seal.

Realize too that *noticeable indicators* are evident when you are sealed with the Holy Spirit. As much as the rainbow, circumcision, or David wearing Jonathan's robe are recognizable covenant signs, the Bible makes clear particular signs to reveal that our Father's Covenant has been both ratified and consummated within you. For example, when the Holy Spirit entered the earliest followers of Jesus, some prophesied while others spoke in tongues. Still others healed the sick or worked miracles (see 1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

Noticeable indicators of the Spirit's presence will be readily apparent in you if you've embraced the Father's Covenant.

As Peter proclaimed on Pentecost, the Spirit would be the gift for *all*, present and future, who embraced the Father's Covenant in Jesus:

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38,39; see also Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

- **If you've genuinely embraced the Father's Covenant and are sealed with the Holy Spirit, you WILL know it! As we asked in the previous lesson, what evidence confirms that you're truly indwelt by the Holy Spirit? Cite examples of the Spirit's power that people have seen IN YOU and THROUGH you to others.**



All Covenants Need To Be Periodically Renewed

Some time after David and Jonathan established their covenant with each other, at great personal danger Jonathan sought out David as he was hiding from King Saul at Horesh (see 1 Samuel 23:18). There the two *renewed their covenant* to confirm that the conditions under which the initial covenant had been established were still the same; nothing had changed.

Consider this example. When a husband has intercourse with his wife, they are **renewing their covenant** of marriage. Because this covenant is sacred in God's sight, the writer of Hebrews could admonish, "Marriage should be honored by all, and the **marriage bed kept pure** [undefiled], for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (13:4).

How does our Father renew His Covenant with His children?

Our Father established the "common union" of followers of Jesus with His Son (known today as *communion*) as they received the body and blood of our Lord Jesus—His means to renew our Covenant with Him. Your renewal of this Covenant with your heavenly Father shouldn't be taken lightly. Because many of the Corinthian believers were taking the body and blood without understanding the seriousness of covenant renewal, Paul warned them, "That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep [died]" (1 Corinthians 11:30).

Partaking of the body and blood of Jesus is much more than a ritual of consuming bread and wine with other followers of Christ. And it's certainly far more consequential than just a "spiritual commemoration" since Paul has already presented severe consequences regarding abuse of this privilege. Sharing spiritually in the body and blood of Christ is the precious *Covenant renewal* with our Father as we remember that which Jesus has accomplished on our behalf through His shed blood.

In covenant renewal, whether with your heavenly Father, your spouse, or a cherished friend, you are declaring that the stipulations which initially ratified the covenant are still viable and applicable. In this light, consider again Paul's warning to the Corinthians:

"Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment" (1Corinthians 11:27-31).

- **What has been your understanding of communion?**
- **Do you believe that God would allow people to be sick and others to die for profaning this covenant renewal?**
- **If you're married, what is your view of intercourse with your spouse? How would you describe this as a means of covenant renewal?**
- **If you've fornicated before marriage, do you recognize how you may be hindered from experiencing the depth of intimacy our Father ordained for the covenant of marriage?**