

# THE LORD

Dear Friends:

About this time 28 years ago I was seeking Lord about a subject of His choosing on which I could write a Master's thesis. The research became more valuable over time than the degree. At 2AM I was awakened with Psalm 25:12-14. When I opened the Bible and began to read my prayer was answered, "Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity, And his descendants shall inherit the earth. The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant."

Blood covenant is one of the most fascinating subjects in the Bible. *Ber-eeth* is the Hebrew word translated covenant and also means league or confederacy. They were very solemn occasions in which each party was giving fully of himself and getting an equally serious commitment in return.

After entering a blood covenant, a person's life was no longer considered their own. They might be called suddenly for war or to shoulder another's financial burden. Adopting covenant was a significant life-changing event, which meant you were always relationally "on call".

Both Old and New Testaments are blood covenants, which reveal our Father's nature and outline the provisions and obligations of our salvation. In my early years I gravitated toward the good promises, but as experience and theology have sharpened each other over a lifetime of ministry, faithfulness and character development have risen in stature.

Studying covenant, whether young or old, is both valuable and foundational. We'll start with the principles that are foundational and move toward those which are valuable.

My prayer is that our Father will make you to know His covenant!

Yours In Him,

Al Houghton

# WORD AT WORK

VOLUME XXIV NUMBER XII  
Blood Covenant I

## WEDNESDAY, December 1

Scripture: Hebrews 10:15-18

The story of the Bible is the story of two covenants: the Old Blood Covenant and the New Blood Covenant. Entering into a blood covenant was a life-changing experience. You would first discuss each other's assets, because you were giving away the rights to all your possessions. The covenant partner would not call for aid unless absolutely necessary as a matter of personal integrity, but you still wanted to make sure they would keep their part, they wanted to make sure you would keep yours. A covenant then was much stronger than a contract today. In our era, people break covenants daily. But in Bible days, if you broke a covenant, the penalty was death and your own family would capture and present you for execution. It was the strongest agreement two people could make. Breaking a blood covenant was unthinkable.

## THURSDAY, December 2

Scripture: Hebrews 10:15-18; Ephesians 4:22-24

The second step in entering into a blood covenant was the exchange of robes. In Middle Eastern culture the robe was representative of the nature and ability of the person. In making that exchange each person was pledging all they were and all they had to each other. Joseph was given a unique robe, a coat of many colors, representative of his prophetic future and was special in his father's eyes. Jesus had a seamless coat or robe, and it was so nice they cast lots (or gambled) for it. Entering a blood covenant meant withholding nothing for yourself! The exchange of robes signified adoption, acceptance and endowment of a new family member complete with guaranteed inheritance. The robe of righteousness signifies our family status and the Book is full of inheritance promises.

## FRIDAY, December 3

Scripture: First Samuel 18:1-4; Isaiah 59:16-19

The third area of exchange, that we have a picture of provided by Jonathan and David, is the exchange of armor. Armor is defensive. In Isaiah 59:16-19 when Jesus saw there was "no man" He put on the armor and birthed salvation and deliverance, promising that when the enemy comes in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. In covenant, you agreed to be a standard for each other and to fully commit any time another person was attacked you would rise to their defense. This was a covenantal principle that needs to be understood in our church and Christian world today. We must rise to each other's defense and act as a community. Covenant demands it.

## SATURDAY, December 4

Scripture: First Samuel 18:1-4; Genesis 14:13-16

Another thing we see exchanged in covenant is David's sword. The sword, in those days, was quite valuable because it's what you protected with at close range. It was the hand-to-hand combat weapon of choice. We notice that when Lot, in Genesis 14, was taken captive Abram immediately armed everyone in his house and went to war to win Lot's freedom. Why did he do that? Because of covenant! Jesus made it very clear that greater love has no man than this, than he lay his life down for his friend. Certainly the long history of the United States in laying the lives of our soldiers down for freedom has its essence and its core in covenant in Scripture. Its biblical. Its godly. And you can find it no where other than in the roots of a solidly Christian nation.

## SUNDAY, December 5

Scripture: First Samuel 18:1-4; Exodus 15:3; Isaiah 42:15

David and Jonathan exchanged their bows. The bow is the weapon of choice for hunting and for providing food. So they were saying in the exchanging of bows they were not only going to help each other with food, but also it was their long range weapon of choice in war. One of the things we must learn about God is that He is a man of war, especially Jesus in the book of Revelation. The generation that welcomes the return of the Lord is going to see Jesus the man of war at work in judgment. We need to understand it. It has to be part of our end-time message and it can't be unless we prepare people and let them see the covenant side of the bow.

## MONDAY, December 6

Scripture: First Samuel 18:1-4

Step number six in making a blood covenant was the exchange of belts. The belt was used to hold up your weapons, rather than your trousers. The belt was a symbol of your strength and power much like America entering into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization promising, on a national level, to defend member nations from an attack by any non-member nations. America over the years has entered a number of treaty agreements that have their essence and core founded on the principle of covenant exchange of belts. Covenantal exchange of belts obligated each party to come rapidly to the defense of the other in a time of need. Do we rapidly defend our Christian friends in the time of need? It says in Second Timothy that one of the signs of the end-time church would be covenant-breaking! We certainly don't want to find ourselves in that place!

## TUESDAY, December 7

Scripture: Genesis 15:1-11

In the seventh step you would formally make the vows of a covenant, taking animals, cutting them down the middle, dividing the parts, then each member entering covenant would walk through the parts to face each other for an oath. Each one would say, "I'm giving up all the rights of my life and I give them to you. Secondly, if I break this covenant may God cut me in half just as we have done to these animals." Covenant was a pledge not only offering everything one possessed but secondly in the breaking of it, it would cost the covenant-breaker his life. Out of that covenant each person could fully know what was theirs and what to expect of the other party. That's really what Abram is asking when he says "How shall I **know**?" And God's answer to "How shall I know?" is blood covenant. Covenant provides the foundation to **know**, in our relationship with God.

### WEDNESDAY, December 8

Scripture: Genesis 17:1-9

The eighth step would be an exchange of each other's name. Abram for the first time becomes Abraham, picking up one of the major syllables of Yahweh ("jah" [the "j" is silent] out of God's name) and God becomes known as the God of Abraham. Sarai, likewise, becomes Sarah. The same syllable being added to her name. In the New Testament we are called friends of God, just as Abram became God's friend in the changing of his name to Abraham. Even the book of Revelation says that Jesus Himself will give us a new name that no man knows except us. Covenant relationship means we take on part of His name. His name is upon us.

### THURSDAY, December 9

Scripture: Deuteronomy 28

In step number nine there would be a reading of the blessings and the curses. In reading the blessing you would read all your assets, because everything you had was made available to the other individual. Understanding blood covenant can make a big difference in our prayer life. It can point us to things we can pray for and trust God to provide. So this step outlined the judgments for breaking the covenant. Deuteronomy 28 is a perfect example of this step, because God outlines both for His people. In verses 1-14 He outlines the blessings. In verses 15-68 He outlines the curses of the judgment. The sad thing is to see all of those in the life of Israel because they walked *away* from covenant.

### FRIDAY, December 10

Scripture: Genesis 26:24-33

The tenth step of the covenant is called the memorial meal. You sit down and eat together and raise up some kind of memorial like a heap of stones, or the planting of trees, as with Jacob and Laban, and Abraham and Abimelech. You would feed each other. Your blood covenant had been proclaimed. You had created a memorial that was written down so you knew exactly what each one possessed. You could fully expect to have both peace and help in time of war. The reason we take communion is to remind us of the covenant in which we participate. All of our promises are sealed in the tenth and final step of blood covenant. Are we walking in our covenant promises? Are we giving God what He expects from us?

### SATURDAY, December 11

Scripture: Hebrews 7:8-10

In blood covenant, even if you were not yet born, you stood in the loins of your father who was cutting that covenant and upon birth you could begin enjoying the benefits. The covenant was binding to the third and fourth generation, which was common in Africa until recent times. The principle appears in Scripture, as it says God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the third and fourth generation. Because of blood covenant we can participate in the blessing, or in the curse. Thank God we live in a new covenant, based on better promises, where the blood of Jesus can be used to break the curse but no one can deny homosexual marriage begins a whole new dimension of defilement for the land demanding covenant judgment!

### SUNDAY, December 12

Scripture: Second Samuel 9

Samuel records the account of Saul and David, two men who were very opposite in nature. Saul, along with his house, was the picture of rebellion, while David loved God with all his heart and delighted to do God's will. Saul was jealous of David and his anointing and tried to kill him, but in the midst of this great trial, David and Jonathan entered into blood covenant. Later Saul and Jonathan died, but David never forgot his covenant.

He kept looking for a member of the house of Jonathan to bless. Finally he found a son named Mephibosheth, and summoned him for the blessing. He gets ready to bless him with all that was his father's but Mephibosheth can't understand it. He hasn't earned it, but the covenant was not based on *his* work, just as our covenant is not based on *ours*, but rather on what God did with Jesus. Like Mephibosheth, even though we weren't there, yet we were considered to be in His loins, and so we have the full blessing.

#### MONDAY, December 13

Scripture: Second Samuel 9

Mephibosheth had to make a decision. He had to accept or refuse the covenant made before he was ever born. He had a right to it, but he had to make the *decision* to accept what was done in his behalf or to reject it. He made the right choice and became a prince. He was in covenant with the king. He had servants for the rest of his life and he ate at the king's table. It was hard for him to understand how this could happen because he hadn't earned it. It cost him nothing but a decision to accept. And so the blessing of our covenant extends down not because of our worth, but because of the blood that was shed before we were born.

#### TUESDAY, December 14

Scripture: Second Samuel 9

Most of us would feel at home in Saul's family. At one time or another we were without God, expecting nothing. Some even thought, "If you make one mistake He will make you sick or take everything you have." But thank God, there was One born in the human race that was not like the others. His name was Jesus. He could cut a covenant for us. He was capable of entering into a covenant with God because he was God. At the last supper Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood." Not one of those men asked him a question. They all knew what he was saying. Just as Mephibosheth was in Jonathan, even though he hadn't been born when that covenant was made, so we were in Jesus when He made the covenant with God, and we are in union with the Father. He dealt with our sins by wiping them out and He remembers them no more. It is a slap in Jesus' face if we dwell on them. Thank God, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

#### WEDNESDAY, December 15

Scripture: Second Samuel 9

Every covenant of God has to be sealed, and our covenant is sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1). Most of us didn't know it; we were stuck in a place like Lo-Debar, pastureless. We ran from God but He surrounded us with His love, put His Word in our heart, and brought us into the land of milk and honey, with forgiveness and blessing and promises to make us a prince. Princes help their father rule and reign, and that is the King's will for us. Are we helping? To what extent are we covenantally accountable for what transpires in our land. We are responsible for all those we elect and what they do whether good or bad while in office. We can vote to bless the land or defile it. We will give an account!

#### THURSDAY, December 16

Scripture: Third John 2

In our covenant, God has offered foundational and fundamental provisions as a priority. David said, "I've been young and now I am old, but I have never seen the righteous forsaken or his seed begging bread." It is a legal fact and it will hold up in court. If it didn't, God would be a liar and be in violation of breach of contract. God is not a man that He should lie! All the promises are "yes" and "amen" - they cannot fail. For those feeling drawn to ministry, I can say that after thirty years of service God has been faithful. Be encouraged and step out in faith and watch God provide. God is faithful to all He calls!

## FRIDAY, December 17

Scripture: John 10:7-10

Our covenant has to be enforced because there is an enemy (satan) that comes to condemn, to disrupt, to bring strife, to steal, kill and destroy trying to keep us out of the covenant promises. Every time he brings condemnation, tell him that by the blood of Jesus every sin has been forgiven, forgotten and erased. We are not going to remember it. Communion is the celebration of blood covenant. In First Samuel 20:4 we see Prince Jonathan, the heir to the throne, saying to David (who is not the heir to the throne at this point), "Whatever you say, I will do for you." That is covenant and Jesus stands in that place before the Father right now for us. Whatever we ask within His will concerning the promises He will guarantee. He is there to be our mediator and to make intercession for us. Sometimes we have not because we **ask not!**

## SATURDAY, December 18

Scripture: Jeremiah 34:18-20

When two people entered into blood covenant it was a life changing experience. They were giving away everything they owned, including themselves. Dying to past relationships was demonstrated by cutting the animal in two as in Jeremiah 34:18-20. They would pass between the parts saying, "I die to all of my past and I am coming alive now to a new relationship with you." They would look down at the animal and say, "Do so to me, and more, if I ever break this covenant." Blood covenant carries a blessing and a curse. The reality of covenantal relational position must arise in the church. It is essential as a foundation for receiving God's promises. Faith demands a conscience purged of past failures.

## SUNDAY, December 19

Scripture: Genesis 15:12,17,18; Psalm 84:11; 91:4

One of the first things God says to Abram is "I will be a shield unto you, your shield and your exceeding great reward." We know God was promising him protection, and all the accompanying benefits. As a result of divine protection, Abram would have a divine peace of mind known to no other religious group of people in the world. In Abram's day, all men feared for their lives because of the culture with tribe after tribe rising against each other in war. Abram revealed the depth of his fear when he asked Sarah to say she was his sister. He would never have to worry because God's presence became his shield. He could go in safety and peace, knowing divine protection would grant a long full life.

## MONDAY, December 20

Scripture: Genesis 15:1-8; Psalm 84:11 and 91:4; Deuteronomy 8:18 and 33:29

God promised Abraham more than just protection; He promised him to be his reward, which means "a benefit; a compensation; a salary or a payment of contract." Because Abram entered into covenant with God there was another exciting exchange. The exchanging of robes also signified a granting of personal access which meant making available yourself and your wealth which, in God's care, was a great reward. The robe meant "Here's all I have and all I am." God promised to multiply him and bless him. This becomes the basis for an amazing verse in Deuteronomy 8:18. The power to get wealth was given in the covenant. God not only promised it to Abraham but fulfilled it in his lifetime.

## TUESDAY, December 21

Scripture: Genesis 15:7-18 and 18:17,22-33

Abram gets very bold with God and says, "How shall I **know** that I will inherit it?" And God makes a covenant with him. Before the covenant promises can come to pass, Abram's sin was dealt with even as ours must be today. Jesus has become our substitute and was probably the one who walked through the parts as a

burning lamp and a smoking furnace. Circumcision became the sign of the covenant. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away and all things have become new.” The sign of the covenant in the flesh spoke of inclusion of all future generations. The covenant becomes a legal basis of dealing with the Lord.

#### WEDNESDAY, December 22

Scripture: Genesis 22:1-5,8,14-16

The blood covenant had to be proved. Satan would eventually test it, so God comes to Abraham to prove the covenant, settling once and for all any question about the commitment of His man to fulfill his part. If Abraham fails to give all to God, then the covenant is no good and cannot be valid. Thank God Abraham didn't fail. He was willing to offer up his son, and as a result God promised that his seed would possess the gate of his enemies. His seed is you and me! The access to this promise is the same for Abram as it is for us. Are we willing to use our faith on our flesh to obey God? How far will we go? Abram went all the way to death to release fullness of life.

#### THURSDAY, December 23

Scripture: Exodus 2:23-25 and 4:22 and 5:1 and 14:13,14

One of the most exciting things about the covenant is to see God's people in the midst of bondage crying out to God for deliverance. God heard their groaning, He remembered His covenant with Abraham, and looked upon the children of Israel *with respect*. A three-fold blessing came as a result of the covenant: God heard, He remembered and He looked. Covenant promises a hearing ear. When God has respect for us, it means He will do something about our situation when we ask for intervention. God always honors His covenant.

#### FRIDAY, December 24

Scripture: Exodus 4:22 and 5:1 and 14:13,14 and 32:7-14; Numbers 14:11-16

God tells Pharaoh through Moses, “Israel is my son, even my firstborn.” God looks at us that way. Jesus is called the “firstborn”, but we are identified with Him. We are to be joint heirs with Jesus and have all the benefits. God demonstrated every possible aspect of His power in bringing His people out of bondage. When there was nothing to eat, He sent manna from heaven. When there was no water, He caused a rock to bring forth water. When the enemy came against them to try and destroy them, He opened up the Red Sea through the hands of Moses and they walked through. Every single miracle that was done was done on the basis of the covenant. You and I have a better covenant based on better promises. How much more should we see the miracle hand of God in our lives?

#### SATURDAY, December 25

### **MERRY CHRISTMAS**

Scripture: Second Chronicles 20:1-12

Many of the great deliverances in the Old Testament are a result of men who stood on their covenant with God. Here we see Jehoshaphat in a mighty battle; overwhelming odds have come against him and he goes before God, based on the covenant, asking for a demonstration of God's power and might. He finds what is written and then he quotes it to God. He reminds God of His covenant with Abraham, he reminds Him of the words that were spoken on the day the temple was dedicated, and he calls God to intervene in their behalf. He is calling for a display of God's might and power and has every right to do it because of covenant. Often times when God answered covenant releasing deliverance, a judgment on the enemy was required. How much judgment will be required for the removal of abortion in America?

## SUNDAY, December 26

Scripture: Second Chronicles 20:14-25

After Jehoshaphat called on the Lord and reminded Him of His covenant, the word of God came by prophecy declaring: “the battle is not yours, but God’s.” When God answered covenant, victory was assured. He said, “All you have to do is stand. Set yourself, know that the battle is the Lord’s; believe in the Lord and you will be established; believe His prophets and you will prosper.” They followed divine direction going forward, obeying the leadership of the Spirit and such a great victory ensued it took three days to pick up all the spoil. I believe this is a representative picture of what God is going to do in the last days through His covenant for us. It is time to set our faith asking for it. Begin to believe for it. Set yourself that you are not going to have anything less than the fullness of God’s covenant manifested in your life. In a season of favor, God moves toward us.

## MONDAY, December 27

Scripture: Isaiah 14:12-14; Genesis 16-28; Luke 4

Why do we need a covenant? We need a covenant because at a particular point in human history there was a transfer of lordship. God intended man to have dominion and authority over the earth and Adam gave it away to the devil. Through the covenant, that dominion is restored to man. So the covenant is necessary for the restoration of our authority. God wanted us to be transferred out from under the authority of darkness and into His kingdom. The covenant brings that to pass. In Genesis God initiated the law of like things, in which everything produced after its own kind, and suddenly this law was working *against* man instead of *for* him as God originally intended. The covenant was necessary to release God’s power and bring us back to the place intended in the beginning.

## TUESDAY, December 28

Scripture: Exodus 2:23-25; Luke 12:36; Isaiah 43:1-5

Four things which are very important to each one of us come as a result of the blood covenant. Number one: when we pray, God hears. That is part of our being in covenant with Him. Then He remembers His covenant. He remembers what He promised. Third: He looks upon our situation; we are the apple of His eye, the Scripture says. Number four: He knows us intimately. Intimacy in covenant relationship produces a confidence in our prayer life. We have confidence when we **know** God hears, when we **know** He remembers His covenant, when we **know** that He looks upon us continually seeing our situation, and when we **know** that He cares and desires to bless us by meeting each aspect of our need.

## WEDNESDAY, December 29

Scripture: Joshua 1:3-5

God’s part of the covenant is the giving of Himself guaranteeing His promises. When we ask for the fulfillment of a promise, He has the right to ask we give ourself to the same degree He has. In the giving of every promise is enough power to bring it to pass. Once a promise is given, the fulfilling of it for the most part depends on His timing and sometimes our qualifying. God gives Joshua a great promise. As He was with Moses, so will He be with Joshua. No one will be able to stand against him all the days of his life. After the giving of the promise, God tells Joshua what he must do to bring it to pass. God revealed His will for Joshua and now Joshua must respond.



## THURSDAY, December 30

Scripture: Joshua 1:6-9

God tells Joshua, the number one thing you need to do to bring to pass the covenant promises is meditate on the Word day and night, then speak it. We see three principles God lays out in the book of Joshua that offer personal fulfillment of divine purpose. Number one: meditate in the Word of God day and night. Meditate means to contemplate, think about, visualize an application and speak it forth. Are we meditating in the Word of God every day? As a faith project, take a promise, make a personal application, ask God for fulfillment and act like it is a done deal. Let's see what God will do.

## FRIDAY, December 31

Scripture: Joshua 6:1-10 and 10:7-14 and 7:2-12

The third step is forcefully reiterated at a city named Ai. The third step is: obey the Word. Joshua discovered the great power in operation at Jericho was not an automatic reoccurring asset. God is not obligated to perform His covenant when His people do not obey His Word. The same principle operates today. If we want consistent covenantal provision and the blessing of God in other areas, then to the best of our ability, we have to obey the counsel of God and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. All may have to do some sowing, in order to do some reaping. Use your faith on your flesh to see what God will do!

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### ITINERARY

Al Houghton

December 4

Third Day Churches Regional Gathering  
La Mesa First Assembly Of God  
8809 La Mesa Blvd  
La Mesa, CA  
Directions: [I-8 to Jackson Dr, South to La Mesa Blvd.,  
Corner of Jackson Dr and La Mesa Blvd.]  
Phone: (619)295-6382 Fax (619)295-6336  
Email: info@thirddaychurches.com  
Service: Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> 6 PM

December 17-18

Third Day Church of Visalia  
Visalia Convention Center  
Visalia, CA  
Phone: (559)625-2938  
Services: 17<sup>th</sup> 6:30 PM 18<sup>th</sup> 6:30 PM