

The Everlasting Covenant of Peace: 1

Understanding Covenant

Isaiah 54.10

This verse and others (Numbers 25.12; Ezekiel 34.25) tell us that God has made a covenant of peace.

A covenant is a **legally binding** treaty, contract or agreement between two or more parties.

Covenants were made for several reasons, including:

- If a strong tribe/nation lived next to a weaker tribe/nation there would be a danger of the weaker being attacked. The weaker would seek to make a covenant to insure their safety. The weaker is made stronger and the stronger made more stronger.
- Two businessmen entering into a partnership might make a covenant to insure that one would not take advantage over the other.
- If two people love each other and are devoted to each other, they may make a covenant for that love's sake (e.g. marriage) – David & Jonathan

First Mention of Covenant

Genesis 6.18

The first mention of covenant in the Bible is with Noah – God gave Noah instructions for the preparing of the ark because the flood was coming on the earth to destroy it. God made a covenant with Noah for his salvation.

Genesis 9.11-17

God reminds Noah about the covenant. Noah has come out of the ark, God establishes the covenant with him that He would never again destroy the earth by a flood.

- The sign of this covenant was the rainbow set in the cloud.
- The covenant God established was a perpetual covenant, an everlasting covenant.

The Blood-Covenant

Genesis 15.7-10; 17-18

The word *covenant* literally means 'to cut' and in almost all cases requires that a cut is made and blood shed.

We use the term covenant very loosely (to more fully understand what it means we have to add the word blood to it) – Abraham understood that blood had to be shed. The covenant of peace is a blood-covenant.

(vs7-10) The covenant God made with Abraham was a blood covenant. He told Abraham to bring a three year old heifer, a three year old female goat, a three year old ram, a dove and a pigeon. These were cut in two and placed opposite each other, so that the blood mingled between them

(vs17-18) In the evening, when the sun went down, a smoking oven and burning torch passed between the pieces. This was commonly called 'the walk of blood'. God passed between the pieces, He took the walk of blood and cut the terms of the covenant with Abraham.

A sign of covenant – When a covenant was cut there was a sign left on the skin, a scar. This would be visible for all to see that a person was in covenant with another.

- For Abraham the sign of the covenant was circumcision (Genesis 17.9-11), a cut in the foreskin of the flesh.
- For Noah it was the rainbow – the sign in the heavens (Genesis 9.13)
- In marriage, the sign of that covenant is the ring we wear on the finger.
- Today, the sign of a covenant is usually our signature.

Although it doesn't actually use the term covenant, the first real blood-covenant with man was made in the Garden of Eden – God clothed Adam with animal skin. The practice of blood covenants perpetuated to every generation, and now there isn't a primitive people in the world, as far as we know, that have not practised it in some form.

The 'civilized west' has done away with the blood aspect of covenants – we have embraced 'opting-out', 'get-out clauses' and annulments - thus our word cannot be guaranteed or believed, and therefore we have difficulty believing God's Word (because we do not understand, value and fully appreciate blood-covenant).

This is one of the reasons why the African and Indian peoples receive from God so readily because they understand covenant – blood covenants are part of their culture and history.

A covenant, once made, has to be honoured; there can be no breaking of the terms or annulment - the penalty of which is death. So when God promises something through His word, they believe it and receive it (because they understand covenant)

Isaiah 53.5

God's covenant of peace was ratified in blood – the blood of Jesus.

“But He *was* wounded for our transgressions, *He was* bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed”

Jesus said about his death on the cross that it would usher in the new covenant - “this is My blood of the new covenant” Matthew 26.28

Jesus death on the cross was a blood-covenant – a covenant to bring us peace (wholeness, completeness, lacking nothing).

Chastisement – (Hbrw. *musar* – to chasten, chastise (with blows), punish, instruct, discipline, rebuke). It carries the idea of a parent lovingly correcting a child in order to produce good.

Jesus was sinless and did not need chastisement, but He became sin for us and therefore endured the chastening of that sin. Jesus was chastened to procure peace for us. He took the blows so that we could be made healthy and whole (peace)

Colossians 1.20

We have peace through the blood of the cross. The death of Jesus was the cutting of the covenant of peace, blood was spilled.

The Resurrection Secures Our Peace

Romans 4.23-25; 5.1

The resurrection of Jesus secures our justification:

“Who was betrayed and put to death because of our misdeeds and was raised to secure our justification (our acquittal), [*making our account balance and absolving us from all guilt before God*]” (vs 25, Amp)

Having been justified (acquitted) we enter into the covenant of peace (v1)

Hebrews 13.20-21

God of peace who raised Jesus from the grave, will make us whole and complete (peace) – through the blood of Jesus (blood-covenant)

An Everlasting Covenant

Ezekiel 37.26

This covenant of peace did not end in the Old Testament, or die out with the apostles. It is an everlasting covenant.

Peace (shalom - wholeness, completeness, well being, happiness, prosperity, health and forgiveness – lacking nothing) is still available to us today.

Covenant is parallel or equivalent with the Hebrew words for “word”, “statute”, “precepts”, testimony” and “law”.

We have the Old and New Covenant, written down in a book (Exodus 27.4-7). When Moses wrote down the words of the covenant, he sprinkled it with blood.

Psalms 89.34

God cannot break His word. He will not break the covenant, He will not change or alter the words that have been spoken.

Isaiah says that even though the mountains and hills shall depart, even though all of hell itself is unleashed – we have a covenant of peace that is everlasting (Isaiah 54.10).

Psalms 105.8

God remembers the covenant He made forever, for all time. We have the promise that God’s word, His covenant, stands forever, it is an everlasting covenant of peace (Isaiah 40.8, 1 Peter 1.23-25)