

THE GOD OF COVENANT

“The time is coming,” declares the Lord “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah ... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people.” Jeremiah 31:31, 33.

One of the most magnificent and amazing statements of the Sovereign Lord is “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature...”Genesis 9:9. Why should such an almighty Lord, the Lord of all heavens and the Lord who calls by name every star in the universe should come down and make a covenant with a man who blooms like a flower in the morning and is gone in the evening? Why, why would God love a mortal man so much that He should give His only son as a blameless sacrifice to seal His covenant? Paul could not comprehend this greatness of the Father God and he exclaims

“Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out! ”

ROMANS 11:33

In the Garden of Eden God did not have to make a covenant or an eternal promise with the first parents because Adam and Eve were God’s own creation and they belonged to Him. But when they sinned the sin broke the wholeness of the perfect relationship between God and man for it is impossible for the Holy God to keep company with sin and the carriers of sin. A breach had come between the Creator and the created.

In spite of the irreparable breach the Lord’s heart followed the way of His prodigal one. The Lord amended the relationship with Noah and thus He made the first covenant with the fallen man and his descendants. The Lord put a rainbow in the cloud sealing this covenant. The covenant making God is so faithful to His children but the poison of sin made it impossible for man to honour his part of the promise. He drifted back to the world of sin and idolatry. Then again the eye of the Lord roamed all over this earth to choose a man with

whom he could make a covenant and once again mend a broken relationship. Many of us commonly assume that the Old Testament God is a grand old Master who always breathes fire to destroy men like straw whenever they do wrong.

How little do we know of that wonderful Father who is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and who abounds in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin? (Exodus 34:6) He is more like the old father struggling to sit at the open door and anxiously waiting for the son to return. His heart was aching for his son everyday and finally when his son returned how that old father ran! That is just a glimpse of the heart of the Father. Our Father God not only waits but goes in search of the lost man. He made a covenant with Noah who found favour in the sight of the Lord but after him his descendants turned away from the ways of the Lord hurting Him. Again the Lord searches a man to mend the lost relationship.

This time it was Abraham who whole-heartedly obeyed, loved and readily followed the God of love forsaking the land behind. The Lord said "I am God Almighty walk before me and be blameless I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers." Genesis 17:1. This covenant was sealed with circumcision and the the covenantal relationship through this one man later continued to a race from the time of Jacob alias Israel. This covenant was later recorded in the time of Moses where it was sealed with the blood of sacrificial heifer and sheep. This covenant rather than being the means of relationship with the Lord made them stray even further from the Lord of the Covenant. But the Lord had in His mind a hidden plan which will restore that perfect relationship which was destroyed by that first Adam.

The covenant which the Lord made with Abraham is a foreshadow of that Great Redemption Plan. When Abraham bound his only son to the altar in blind obedience to the word of the Lord he never knew that he is going to witness the ultimate redemption of mankind. The ram which was sacrificed in the place of Isaac was a foreshadow of Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Gene Edwards writes in his book that when the dying cry of the ram tore through the silence from that hidden altar the

recording angel dropped the pen and all Heaven stood still for they recognized the cry of the Lamb of God. It was symbolically staged in Mt.Moriah that one day Jesus Christ will climb on to that altar prepared and intended for us.

Isaac was redeemed through the lamb that was slain, and the Lamb was Jesus Christ Himself. Oh the Love of the Father! We like sheep have gone astray wounding the heart of the Creator and we went through sin and darkness stumbling all the way and we deserve all the punishment. Read Isaiah 53. But the lawful judgment on our heads is erased when our Father who created us loved us so much that He sent His only begotten Son that we may not perish but have everlasting life.

This is the new covenant that the Father has established. This is not a poor mending of the broken relationship but this covenant has cast aside all the older ones and has perfectly restored the original relationship with God. Man who is born in sin now can once again gain access to the holy God through Jesus His Son who has become our cover

For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. Hebrews9:15.

This new covenant is sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ which washes away the sins of the world. The Law is replaced by grace.

As we walk in this world as the chosen people saved by grace there are times when we feel so low and at times we doubt whether we could go on. It is so hard to be faithful to the ever faithful God whose grace we have tasted. When we feel so faithless, helpless and so unable to keep the faith let us turn our faces to the Father through our cover Jesus Christ and tell Him of our failure. Who in this world is ever worthy to carefully obey and keep his/her part of the covenant to the Lord? So today let us give our part of the covenant be it our missionary calling, our ministries, our job, our studies to the Lord and ask the Lord of the covenant to keep it safe for us.

Nehemiah, Daniel and many of the great men of God always addressed Him as 'O LORD, God of heaven the great and awesome God who keeps His covenant of love' (Nehemiah 1; 5, Daniel 9:4). When we try so hard to do things on our own many times we fail. Let us stop for a while and look to the Lord of Covenant; He will keep our faith for us if we would once again give our faithless hearts to Him. All our disappointments, losses, tears, frustrations, fears laid on the ancient altar will come back to us as precious promises just as Abraham got back his Isaac as a Son of Promise from the keeper of the Covenant of Love.