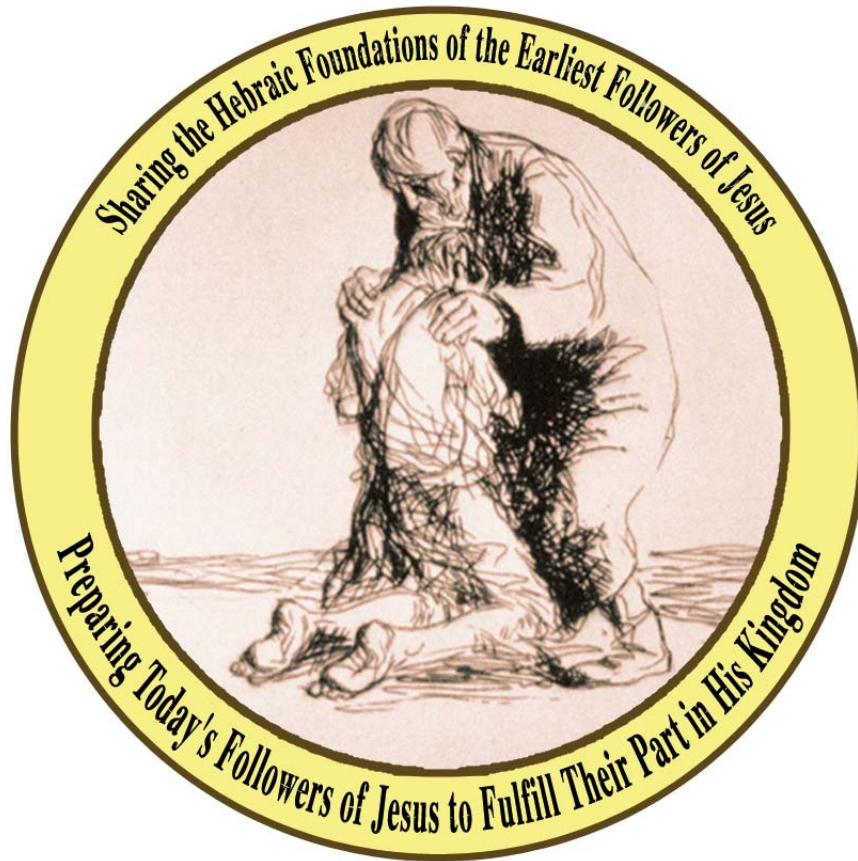


CALLED TO BE AMBASSADORS

- Sharing Our Father's Message of Reconciliation
- Declaring the Freedom That Only Jesus Can Give



Part 2. The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation

abridged version

Restoration Ministries International

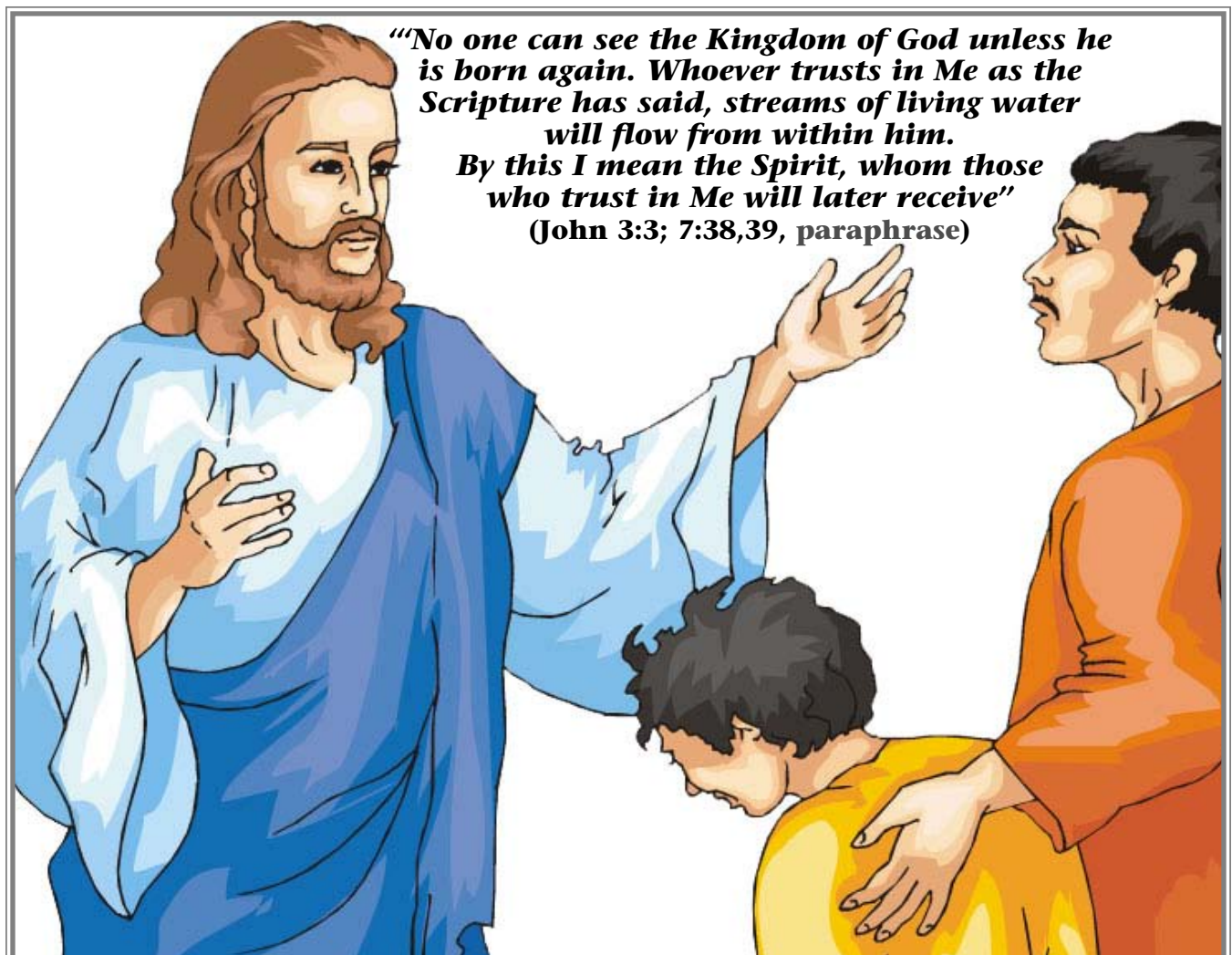
Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz
(719) 573-4911

Mikedowg@aol.com
Restorationministries.org

We've designed **Called To Be Ambassadors** for people who are unfamiliar with the way of life of the earliest followers of Jesus. It's based on the revelation and research the Father gave us during our stay in Israel. He clearly directed us to use the phrase *Hebraic Restoration* to define that which He's restoring to those who have ears to hear.

Part 2, *The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation* [abridged version] will help you to understand the basis to the Gospel which the earliest followers of Jesus embraced. The Kingdom Jesus came to establish is based on the inaugurating a new covenant that, like all covenants, is ratified in blood: *"This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you"* (Luke 22:20).

The word **"covenant"** can mean **"to come into union with"**. The Covenant our Father offers invites you to ***live in union with Him***. In embracing His Covenant your desiring to do His will, and to become more like Jesus in love and character, until the time of your salvation when your name is read aloud before the host of heaven. If this is your hearts desire, then please read on...



The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation (abridged version)

“No one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again... Whoever trusts in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this Jesus meant the Spirit, whom those who trusted in Him were later to receive” (John 3:3; 7:38,39)

Three essential premises undergird this article on the *Gospel of the Covenant*:

1. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross inaugurated a new Covenant. But, the stipulations for you to *enter* this covenant—to be *born again*—are found in the only Scriptures in existence at the time of Jesus, the *Older Testament* (the Hebrew Bible).
2. Embracing the new Covenant that is offered by our Father starts you on a pilgrimage with His Spirit that will transform you into ever-increasing Christ-likeness.
3. Remaining in Covenant union with our Lord—being found *in Christ*—when you complete your pilgrimage to your salvation at your earthly journey’s end will find you being welcomed at the Judgment Throne.

Take your time as you prayerfully go through this article. The conditions for entering the Covenant our Father offers you demand far more than your mental agreement with it. As you’ll see, *to embrace the Covenant demands everything you are and have.*

Our Father is a Covenant-giver

The first followers of Jesus were mostly Jewish, well-steeped in the significance of biblical *covenants*. Today covenants are understood dimly at best. Yet the Bible cites the word *covenant* a whopping 293 times!

God had established covenants with His people through Noah, Abraham, Moses and David. Jeremiah had prophesied that the Jews could expect yet *another covenant*, one in which the teachings of God’s way of life would be *written in their hearts* (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

Many understand covenants as some form of contract, but that idea completely misses the magnitude of what our Father has offered us in His Son. When Jesus stresses, *“This is My blood of the **covenant**, which is poured out for many”* (Mark 14:24) He is not focusing on the cup of wine. Rather, He’s directing our attention to the *goal of our Father*, that all who put their trust in the atoning blood of Jesus may live in intimate relationship with Him. The emphasis is on reconciliation in the *relationship with God*.

For instance, when a couple marries, which is more important: the ceremony, or the loving, intimate relationship which the ceremony makes possible? Of course, the ongoing relationship! Our goal in living in union with our Father by His Spirit is that our daily lives *bring glory to Him*.

The word **“covenant”** can mean *“to come into union with”*, particularly as it pertains to a marital relationship. The covenant our Father offers invites you to *live in union with Him*. Union implies oneness, and an ongoing *pilgrimage with Him* on earth until the time of your salvation when your name is read aloud before the host of heaven (Revelation 3:5).

We today can’t adequately appreciate the new Covenant offered to us through Jesus unless we have a heart-knowledge of the old covenants as the early Jewish followers did. *The sacrifice of Jesus inaugurated a new covenant, but the Gospel—the full meaning of that covenant Good News—is found in the Hebrew Bible, the Older Testament.*

God is the *initiator* of any covenant between Himself and His people. Each covenant comprises distinct parameters:

- Our Father's *stipulations* in order to accept His covenant.
- His promises of *blessing* for obedience.
- His *judgment* for breaking the covenant.

[Read Deuteronomy, chapter 28, to deepen your understanding that alongside God's promise of blessing stands His judgment for refusal to obey.]

The foundation of the Messiahship of Jesus is constructed on the initiation of a new covenant that, like all covenants, is ratified in blood: "*To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel*" (Hebrews 12:24).

This phraseology may sound strange to us in the postmodern West. But what a thundering impact Jesus' words must have had on those who first heard them: "*This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins*" (Matthew 26:28). Suddenly in that upper room that evening, it was a new ball game on earth—a new covenant was being inaugurated!

This is the Gospel proclaimed to the patriarch Abraham, foretelling that Gentiles were part of God's plan for redemption:

[Abraham] trusted in God and was faithful to Him, and that was credited to his account as righteousness. Be assured, then, that it is those who live by trusting and being faithful who are really children of Abraham. Also the Hebrew Scriptures, foreseeing that God would consider the Gentiles righteous when they live by trusting and being faithful, told the Good News to Abraham in advance by saying, "In connection with you, all the Gentiles will be blessed." So then, those who rely on trusting and being faithful are blessed along with Abraham, who trusted and was faithful (Galatians 3:6-9, JNT).

Our Father is a *Covenant-keeper* (Deuteronomy 7:9). That is, *He* doesn't break the covenants He makes with men. But to their own detriment, people *do* forsake their covenant with Him, angering a just and holy God (Joshua 23:16). As we shall see, even in the precious Covenant offered to us through Jesus, we can break it with dire consequences.

The sacrifice of Jesus inaugurated a new covenant, but the full meaning of that covenant is found in the Hebrew Bible, the Older Testament.

You may wonder why the various facets of biblical covenants are so important. Anchor for yourself that embracing the **Gospel of the Covenant** is similar to entering into marriage and *staying* married:

Our Father intended for the marriage covenant to be the *physical* representation of the *spiritual* Covenant He offers us through Jesus.

God refers to Himself in a "marital" context with His people. In the Older Testament our Father describes Himself as the "Husband" of Israel: "*For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is His name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; He is called the God of all the earth*" (Isaiah 54:5).

The followers of Jesus are His bride, and He awaits her at the wedding banquet: "*Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready*" (Revelation 19:7).

As you read, continue to remind yourself that the Covenant that leads to your salvation and the marriage covenant are intricately linked. Like marriage, our relationship with our Lord is evidenced by the *deep devotion in our hearts* and our *responsive interaction*.

A Covenant Must Be Both Ratified and Consummated

Every covenant requires *both* ratification *and* consummation to confirm that the con-

Our Father intended for the marriage covenant to be the physical representation of the spiritual Covenant He offers us through Jesus.

ditions of the covenant have been accepted by both parties. In the wedding ceremony a couple *ratifies* the intent of the marriage as they pledge from their hearts their vows, such as, “*For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.*” That’s why these are called *wedding vows*. The couple is promising that their union will be *permanent*.

Pure heart motive is crucial in order for a biblical covenant to come into existence. Consider Jonathan’s motive when he established a covenant with David: “*And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself*” (1 Samuel 18:3). Isn’t this the purity of devotion required of a prospective husband? “*In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself*” (Ephesians 5:28).

Although ratified at the ceremony, the covenant of marriage is not *consummated* until the couple shares their first intercourse. The ceremony ratifies the couple’s intent to enter into the covenant of marriage, but *consummation* is the critical part that seals the covenant. The *seal* is the sign that the covenant has been consummated. This applies to all the covenants our Father has offered mankind. Each covenant evidences a *seal of consummation*:

<u>Covenant</u>	<u>Sign of Sealed Consummation</u>
Noah	rainbow in the sky
Abraham	circumcision
Moses	sprinkling of blood
Jesus	receiving the indwelling Holy Spirit
Marriage	breaking the hymen in physical union

It’s important to recognize that our Father scrutinizes our motives before entering into a Covenant with us. The Covenant with our Father and the marriage covenant parallel

one another. Embracing the Covenant our Father offers and a marriage covenant are the two most important relationships people will ever share. Nothing should ever compete with either.

Intentional Devotion and Desire Needed To Enter Into a Covenant

Visualize our Father’s view of the Covenant He offers through His Son as you consider the covenant young David made with Jonathan, Saul’s son:

*After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became **one in spirit** with David, and he loved him as himself... And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt (1 Samuel 18:1-4).*

What a demonstration of intimate devotion! The intensity of David’s loyalty to Jonathan pours forth in David’s lament after Jonathan’s death: “*I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women*” (2 Samuel 1:26).

As we discuss how this covenant was both ratified and consummated, you’ll notice that the ceremony was not as important as the intentional yearning to enter into a covenant relationship. Don’t get hung up on form here. *The ceremonial form only ratifies and consummates the intense desire that is already present in the heart.*

David compares the love relationship in his covenant with Jonathan as greater than that found with a woman. A millennium later, Jesus voices from the Hebrew Scriptures the intense love that’s required to embrace our Father’s covenant:

*Love the Lord your God with **all** your heart and with **all** your soul and with **all** your mind (Matthew 22:37, apperceived from Deuteronomy 6:5).*

Our Father's Covenant invites you to live in union with Him. Union implies oneness, and an ongoing pilgrimage with Him on earth until the time when your name is read aloud before the host of heaven.

The intensity of *commitment* our Father requires in the "Greatest Commandment" is one of His stipulations for ratifying the Covenant in Jesus. The same *intensity of relationship*

is enjoined in Matthew 10:37: "Anyone who loves his father or mother **more than Me** is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter **more than Me** is not worthy of Me." Here Jesus affirms the surpassing devotion that's essential to the Covenant our Father offers those who follow His Son.

- **Do you intentionally and genuinely want our Father in your life through His Spirit?**
- **Do you desire and purpose with all your heart to live as our Father's child by His grace?**
- **Are you willing to forsake all other goals or values that compete with your devotion to Him?**

Understanding a Covenant Ceremony

Research into ancient customs illustrates the type of ceremony that David and Jonathan enacted to ratify and consummate their covenant. They would have cut an animal in two and placed the halves between



them as they faced each other, half on one side and half on the other. Then both men would have walked through the middle of the two pieces doing a figure "8" around each other. The blood of the animal would drench their feet. The figure "8" signifies infinity. The covenant was to *last forever*, and was ratified by the blood of the sacrifice.

They exchanged valued possessions as the *sign* evidencing to others that a covenant

had been consummated between them. As noted earlier, with every covenant there must be a sign that a covenant has been consummated. (Keep this in mind when we discuss the Covenant with our Father that's made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus.)

Sometime later, at great personal danger, Jonathan sought out David as he was hiding from 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.

When a husband has intercourse with his wife, they are **renewing their covenant**. The usual place of covenant renewal is their bed. Therefore 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).

Also, when you receive the body and blood of Jesus, you are **renewing your covenant** with our Father. Covenant renewal isn't to be taken lightly. 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).

Communion is much more than bread and wine consumption, or even spiritual commemoration. It is the precious covenant renewal with our Father, remembering that which Jesus has accomplished on our behalf until He comes back for us.

Breaking a Covenant Means Death

What wonderful promises are showered on those who embrace the Covenant our Father offers through Jesus! Thank Him again as you breathe in the joy of a right relationship with our Lord!

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of

*Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, and since we have a great Priest over the house of God, let us **draw near to God** with a sincere heart in **full assurance of faith**, having our **hearts sprinkled** to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us **hold unswervingly** to the hope we profess, for **He who promised is faithful** (Hebrews 10:19-23).*

Continuing in the same passage we find a dreadful warning to those who *break* the Covenant through intentional disobedience: “If we **deliberately keep on sinning after** we have received the knowledge of the truth, **no sacrifice for sins is left**, but only a fearful expectation of **judgment** and of **raging fire** that will consume the enemies of God” (Hebrews 10:26,27).

Entering into a covenant in ancient times was so serious that if a man broke a covenant, one of his own family members was obliged to kill him. Covenant-breakers didn't deserve to live. Each of the covenants our Father establishes does offer promises of blessing for those who keep their part of the covenant. However, covenants also contain judgment or curses for those who *break the covenant*.

The Older Testament is a great source for understanding our Father's dealings with covenant-breakers. Paul urges us to pay heed to God's relationship with Israel: “*These things happened to them as examples and were written down as **warnings for us**, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come*” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

The examples and accounts in the Hebrew Scriptures encourage us that God keeps His promises. They also warn us that *God does not change*, and that dire consequences await covenant breakers! For example, Solomon reiterated that people have an *ongoing obligation* when they enter into Covenant with their Lord: “*You **keep covenant** with Your servants and show them grace, provided they live in Your presence*

with all their heart” (1 Kings 8:23).

The Older Testament ends with Malachi pronouncing the judgment of God on those who broke marriage covenants through divorce. We today need to pay particular attention to the intensity of *our Father's regard* for the marriage covenant despite the proliferation of divorce.

Do you really hunger for Jesus? Do you want with all your heart to live as our Father's child? Are you willing to forsake all other goals or values that compete with your devotion to Him?

*The LORD is acting as the **witness** between you and the wife of your youth, because you have **broken faith** with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your **marriage covenant**. Has not the LORD **made them one** [to live in union]? In flesh and spirit **they are His**. And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring. So **guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith** with the wife of your youth. **'I hate divorce,'** says the LORD God of Israel, **'and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,'** says the LORD Almighty. So **guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith**” (Malachi 2:14-16).*

Notice our Father's distinct purpose for the marriage covenant: “*Because He was seeking godly offspring.*” He wasn't just “making them one” to have children. He intended that these children be trained to walk up-rightly in loving service to Him!

Every covenant initiated by our Father entails purposes to be fulfilled by the person who embraces the covenant with Him. In the Covenant offered to us through Jesus, His purpose is emphasized in Ephesians 2:8-10:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (see also Matthew 28:18-20).

Restoration Ministries International (restorationministries.org)

*Sharing the Hebraic Foundations of the Earliest Church
To Prepare Followers of Jesus for Their Part in His Kingdom*

Every covenant initiated by our Father entails purposes to be fulfilled by the person who embraces the covenant with Him.

In the Covenant with our Father through Jesus, the blessings as well as the warning of curses apply. We can break this covenant with terrible consequences, just as our disobedient spiritual ancestors experienced. Pay attention to the link between the covenant-breakers of Moses' time and those who insult the Holy Spirit by forsaking the Covenant with Jesus:

*Anyone who rejected the law of Moses **died without mercy** on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has **trampled the Son of God underfoot**, who has treated as an unholy thing the **blood of the covenant that sanctified him**, and who has **insulted the Spirit of grace**? For we **know Him** who said, 'It is **mine to avenge**; I will repay,' and again, 'The Lord will **judge His people**.' It is a **dreadful thing** to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:28-31).*

You *are* capable of breaking the Covenant with your Father through intentionally falling away. Our Father's part of the Covenant will never be broken, but we, as the Older Testament has shown, are not always that faithful. Consider these passages of Scripture offered by Newer Testament writers as a warning to those who break His Covenant:

***Watch out, brothers**, so that there will not be in any one of you **an evil heart lacking trust**, which could lead you to **apostatize** from the living God! Instead, keep exhorting each other **every day** [keep working out your salvation together], as long as it is called Today, so that none of you will become **hardened by the deceit** of sin. For we have become sharers in the Messiah, **provided**, however, **that we hold firmly** to the conviction we began with, right through **until the goal is reached**" (Hebrews 3:12-14, JNT).*

The writer continues his warning:

*It is **impossible** for those who have once been enlightened, who have **tasted the heavenly gift**, who have **shared in the Holy Spirit**, who have **tasted the goodness** of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they **fall away**, to be **brought back to repentance**, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace (Hebrews 6:4-6).*

Peter as well sounded the alarm about giving way to worldly compromise that causes someone to reject Jesus as Lord:

*If they have escaped the corruption of the world by **knowing** our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again **entangled** in it and **overcome**, they are **worse off at the end** than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them **not to have known the way of righteousness**, than to have **known it** and then to **turn their backs on** the sacred command that was passed on to them (2 Peter 2:20,21).*

Perhaps now you can grasp the seriousness that surrounds embracing our Father's new Covenant. He is looking for your *determination* to go on living in Covenant union with Him. This is why He calls for those who embrace His Covenant to be baptized through immersion in water: "[T]he water of immersion, which is not the removal of dirt from the body, but **one's pledge to keep a good conscience toward God**, through the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah" (1 Peter 3:21, JNT). Baptism is response of obedience that confirms your heart's intent.

When Jesus declares, "*This is My blood of the covenant*" (Mark 14:24), He is affirming that the Father's Covenant calls for entering into THE most important intimate relationship—because it involves eternal consequences. The goal is to live in *covenant relationship* with our Father, that is, to lovingly obey *our* part of the Covenant since He is so faithful to fulfill *His* part by His grace.

Our Father's Covenant Ceremony

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 His stipulations shortly. We first want to make sure you understand the profound significance of accepting His offer.)



When Father God sees the desire of your heart to *want* this relationship above all things, He walks through the blood of the Sacrifice with you. And Who is the Sacrifice? Jesus. You and your Father do a figure "8" in the blood of Jesus. This *ratifies* the Covenant through the blood of the Lamb. What *consummates* the Covenant? Our Father seals you with the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing that if you do not break the Covenant, you will receive salvation at the Judgment Throne.

This Covenant is no small matter! You no longer belong to Satan. 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).

Keep in mind that *receiving the Holy Spirit* as a sign of the consummation is vital to your ability to keeping the Covenant. Just as only by God's grace did He call you to Himself

through Jesus, only through abiding in His Spirit can you press on in your life journey toward heaven's gate.

Paul reiterates that the *seal* of the Holy Spirit consummates the Covenant: "*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 presence of the Spirit in our lives *guarantees* our Father's faithfulness to set His children apart for His purposes. "*In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, 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). Our Father is *for* those He has marked with His seal!

Noticeable signs are evident when you are indwelt by the Spirit. As much as the rainbow, circumcision, or David wearing Jonathan's robe are recognizable, the Bible makes plain the signs that reveal that our Father's Covenant has been both ratified and consummated in you. 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).

The same noticeable indicators should be readily apparent if *you* embrace the Father's Covenant. The indwelling Holy Spirit *is* the crucial sign that the Father has consummated the Covenant with you. Paul warns, "*And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ*" (Romans 8:9b). If you have become the Father's child, you WILL know it!

What Is Salvation? When Do We Experience It?

Salvation was understood by the earliest followers of Jesus to occur at the *end* of our pilgrimage on earth. For those who *endure to*

the end our Lord promises, “**He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before My Father and His angels**” (Revelation 3:5). *This is the moment of salvation!*

For your name to be in the Lamb’s Book of Life calls for two essential elements.

Justification—placing your trust in, and *continuing* to trust in, the shed blood of Jesus as payment for the penalty of your sins. You can *do nothing* to atone for your sins. Purely by grace Jesus accomplished this by atoning for your sins on the cross.

Sanctification—the lifelong purifying process of the Holy Spirit Who enables you to be conformed to the nature of Jesus. In essence, throughout your pilgrimage on earth the Holy Spirit changes you into the character and motivation of Jesus.

The pilgrimage of a Jesus follower:

- **Begins** with **Justification**—the day you’re born again, receiving the Holy Spirit because you trust in the shed blood of Jesus;
- **Continues** as a lifelong process of **Sanctification** where you become more and more Christ-like through the Spirit;
- **Culminates** ultimately in **Salvation** before the Throne as your name is proclaimed.

The true Gospel points to your pilgrimage in Christ as you *endure to the end*, the moment of salvation when you appear before the Lord (2 Timothy 2:12). To relate justification and sanctification to marriage:

Justification is the day you get married, and sanctification is living out your marriage. Marriage must be worked out together until the covenant ends when death parts you.

Justification frees us from the penalty of our sins: “*Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through Him!*” (Romans 5:9). Jesus paid the price as our substitute,

the Sinless for the sinful. Accepting the atoning work of His death alone *justifies* us before our Father and *reconciles* us to Him.

In its fullest sense, sanctification may be described as a *transformation process* worked in us through the indwelling Spirit:

Now “the Lord” in this text means the Spirit. And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So all of us, with faces unveiled, see as in a mirror the glory of the Lord; and we are being changed into His very image, from one degree of glory to the next, by the Lord, the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17,18, JNT).

This ongoing process is dependent on God as we press on in *continuing obedience* to live out that which is His purpose and will for our lives:

Therefore, my beloved friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose (Philippians 2:12,13).

Through His Spirit we are transformed into the character of Jesus, Who gives us the determination to persevere no matter the cost (Romans 5:3). This *love-driven life of obedient trust* is the continuing course for us to undertake with intentional focus until we stand before His Throne acknowledged as His.

The Older Testament: THE Source for the Gospel of Jesus

Jesus tells us that in the *Older Testament* we find the stipulations for entering the Father’s Covenant through Him. Again,

‘Whoever trusts in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this Jesus meant the Spirit, whom those who trusted in Him were later to receive” (John 7:38,39).

“Streams of living water” refer to the undeniable evidence of the Holy Spirit’s indwelling of anyone who puts his trust in Jesus. The only Scripture in existence when Jesus spoke these words was the Hebrew Bible. If you want to trust Jesus “*as the Scripture has said,*” you must study the Older Testament to discern the complete Gospel that enables you to enter the Father’s Covenant.

Years before the coming of Jesus, a number of what we call the “Hebraic stream” of rabbis taught that a person must experience a spiritual birth, a *response* to God’s call on his life. These rabbis understood the trust-filled relationship Abraham had with God. Conversion meant *rebirth*. Being “*born again*” was a shift from following the letter of the law to abiding in a *love-based relationship* with our Father.

Jesus declared, ‘I tell you the truth, no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again...

I tell you the truth, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit (John 3:3,5).

Being born again was the point at which you shifted from religious practice (or *no* practice!) and put your ***full trust and reliance*** in Jesus as your Sin-bearer, Savior and Lord. Jesus endorsed this break with religious form and practice when He told those who criticized Him about His disciples not fasting:

No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins (Mark 2:21,22).

To be “born again” was to trust in Jesus as Abraham had trusted God. Trying to trust in Jesus while relying on religious tradition only rips each apart, rendering both useless.

Our Father’s Stipulations for Ratifying and Consummating His Covenant

- ***Repentance***
- ***Love***
- ***Obedient Trust***
- ***Forceful Conviction and Determination***
- ***Forgiving Others***

Let’s review the stipulations of the Older Testament, the Source whose prophecies and promises are fulfilled in Jesus.

1. Your Salvation Pilgrimage both begins and continues with your Repentance

John the Baptist, Jesus, and Peter at Pentecost all affirmed *repentance* as the first step toward salvation. Biblical repentance always demands a *turning away from* your sin. Confessing your sins is your agreement that you have broken God’s commands, your *ownership* of a depravity you no longer want to be enslaved to.

Turning to God is your hunger for forgiveness, and for the Holy Spirit to help you live according to His will and commands. Don’t forget these two distinctives: *Turning away from* your sin ***and*** *turning to* God.

Authentic repentance that begins a life in the Spirit will result in spiritual fruit—good works empowered by the Spirit within as Paul proclaimed: “*I declared that they should repent and turn to God and do works befitting repentance*” (Acts 26:20).

Repentance grieves you that you have grieved God. You hunger for the forgiveness, cleansing, and restoration that only He can give. That grief is the “godly sorrow [that] brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret” (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Repentance and confession flow throughout the Bible as a continuing stream of reconciling truth.

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no

*deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through **my groaning** all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my **strength was sapped** as in the heat of summer. Then I **acknowledged my sin** to You and did **not cover up** my iniquity. I said, 'I will **confess my transgressions** to the Lord' — and You **forgave the guilt** of my sin. (Psalm 32:1-5).*

Unless you humbly wash in the river of repentance and forsake your sin, you can't enter the Father's Covenant. Look at the nature of a person our Father does accept:

*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a **broken and contrite heart**, O God, You will not despise... This is the one I esteem: he who is **humble and contrite in spirit**, and **trembles at My word** (Psalms 51:17; Isaiah 66:2).*

Our Father's parameters for those who want to be counted among His own are precise. *"Nevertheless, God's solid foundation **stands firm**, sealed with this inscription: 'The Lord knows **those who are His**,' and, 'Everyone who **confesses the name** of the Lord must **turn away from wickedness**'" (2 Timothy 2:19).*

To help you understand the sweeping importance of repentance, let's again use an analogy from marriage. On the morning of his wedding a groom approaches his betrothed and says, "Honey, I love you deeply, but I also have two lovers I'm having trouble giving up. Let me keep them for a while and maybe I can get rid of them later." How would she feel? Would she marry him? NO!

If you truly want to enter the Father's Covenant, then you should examine yourself to determine if *your sins* are more important to you than a Covenant relationship with your Father. Lack of repentance says to your Father, "I want what you have to offer, *but I don't intend to change or to give up anything.*" Will He enter into a Covenant with a person who refuses to give up other lovers? NO!

2. Your Salvation Pilgrimage both begins and continues with your Love

For you to embrace the Father's Covenant, He establishes the same relational requirement as He did in the Older Testament, that is, to *love Him*. The Older Testament speaks of a Father Who longs for a love relationship with His people. The foundation of this love requirement is found in Deuteronomy 6:4,5: *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. **Love the LORD your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."*

The Hebrew word for love, *ahav* (ah-hahv'), means that you are filled with devotion and delight and passion for the one you love. You long to be in union with your Father. The meaning of the Hebrew letters of *ahav* is *"a window into the Father's heart."* The second of the ten commandments declares that our Father promises to show His love to a thousand generations of those who *love Him and keep His commandments*.

Quoting from the Deuteronomy passage cited earlier, Jesus delivered the most vital commandment: *"**Love the LORD your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and **greatest commandment**. And the second [which is from Leviticus] is like it, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22:37-40).*

The Greek word for love here is *agape* (ah-gah'-pay), and its meaning is similar to the Hebrew *ahav*. Our source of *agape* love is the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 5:22, which lists the fruit of the Spirit, the first of which is *agape* love). To summarize the priority of loving God:

Everything in your Christian life—everything about knowing God and experiencing Him, everything about knowing and doing His will—depends on the quality of your love relationship with our Father and His Son, Jesus. If your love relationship is not right, nothing in your life will be right. His love compels you to obey His commands.

This wholehearted, self-sacrificing love is wonderfully manifested by those who know the Gospel found in the Hebrew Scriptures and understand the *depth of their own depravity*. For them it's easy to see God's *grace* when He accepted animal sacrifices as a substitute for Israelites on the Day of Atonement. In this light they can lovingly appreciate the *sacrifice of Jesus* on their behalf.

If you try to keep God's commands without loving Him, you'll grow proud, caught up in what you *do* for Him. Paul admonishes in I Corinthians 13 that "*without (agape) love, we are nothing.*" Living out God's commands because of your *love for Him* keeps you humbly dependent on Him, and contrite when you fail.

3. Your Salvation Pilgrimage both begins and continues with your Obedient Trust

The Hebrew word for "faith" means more than just belief; it is a *profound trust in God*. Trust is a purposeful heart response, far more than mere intellectual assent that God is real. Reliance on the Lord penetrates the very core of your being, propelling you to an obedience that starts in your heart and manifests itself in action.

Your trust demonstrates that you understand our Almighty Father's love for *you*, while your willing dependence on Him ultimately puts to death your own ambitions and plans as you yield to His. As your ongoing trust deepens and you recognize His unfailing faithfulness, an element of childlikeness takes root in you—not immaturity but absolute confidence in *His faithfulness*.

You begin your pilgrimage by trusting in the shed blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. You continue on in your faith journey by trusting in the loving care of our Father. Where trust in Him exists, His peace that surpasses understanding does as well.

Any worry, anxiety, or concern about the future indicates a *lack* of trust. That's why Peter exhorts us to cast *all* our cares on our

Lord because *He cares for us!* (1 Peter 5:7) *Habitual* failure to trust can lure you to break your part of the covenant. If you refuse to trust your sovereign and all-powerful Creator and Redeemer, you're placing yourself *above* Him. That means you're making an idol of your fears and grieving His heart: "*You shall have **no other gods before Me***" (Exodus 20:3)—yourself included.

The steadfast trust that God calls for in His children is the fabric woven throughout the Hebrew Bible and the Newer Testament because HE is worth all of our trust! As you choose to cooperate with the indwelling Holy Spirit, He empowers you to walk in reliance on our Father, not fearing your troubling circumstances or trials.

Look at some of God's promises to those who trust Him to orchestrate their life pathways:

- "*Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's **unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in Him***" (Psalm 32:10). This doesn't say that you won't face trials, but with your Lord as a shield, you can stand, and keep on standing.

- "*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in **all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight***" (Proverbs 3:5,6). It's much easier to walk along a path our Father has leveled than to stumble about in confusion and unbelief! A person who trusts our Father first seeks His will and then does it without concern about the cost of his obedience. The child who trusts forgoes looking to circumstances as confirmation of His will; rather, he presses on *despite* them.

- "*Here is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Look, I am laying in Zion a tested stone, a costly cornerstone, a firm foundation stone; he who trusts will **not rush here and there***' (Isaiah 28:16, CJB). If you are certain of His sovereignty, your heart can rest in peace. Or would you rather rush here and there trying to solve your own problems?

Hang on to this with ALL our heart: Your pilgrimage to your salvation is based on your ongoing, loving trust in the God Who loves you. This is the type of relationship Abraham was commended for having: “*Abraham kept trusting God, and it was credited to him as righteousness*” (Genesis 15:6).

4. Your Salvation Pilgrimage both begins and continues with Your Forceful Conviction and Steadfast Determination

Answering the call of your Father to trust wholeheartedly in Jesus is a *determined response* from which no earthly power can hold you back! As Jesus proclaimed, following Him is a heart issue that both upholds and fulfills the Hebrew Scriptures: “*Up to the time of John there were the Torah and the Prophets. Since then the Good News of the Kingdom of God has been proclaimed, and everyone is forcing his way into it*” (Luke 16:15,16).

This passage about unswerving conviction can best be understood by considering the walls that surround Jerusalem:

Around a military fortification such as the walls of Jerusalem, “killing zones” are established to concentrate weapon fire for maximum killing effectiveness. Those who attack the fort must first courageously battle their way through the killing zone. Because of the strong likelihood that they may be killed in the attack, these individuals have to “be dead” to everything else beforehand in order to fully focus on their objective (see John 12:25).

That kind of forceful determination was the standard in the earliest Church for those who embraced our Father’s covenant, and is captured in Matthew 13:44-46:

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of

great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

It takes tremendous certainty to give up everything you’ve got in order to embrace the Covenant your Father is offering you. *Genuine repentance, love, and your complete trust* produce the type of conviction and determination our Father enjoins.

5. Your Salvation Pilgrimage both begins and continues with You Forgiving Others

Jesus declares, “*If you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins*” (Matthew 6:15). No one can be forgiven of anything by our heavenly Father if we *do not forgive* those who have violated us.

The Apostle John warns us about unforgiveness: “*We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother*” (1 John 4:19-21).

The earliest followers of Jesus clearly understood that our Father will not consummate a relationship with an unforgiving person. Why? Because our Father refuses, in light of the *incomparable sacrifice of His own Son*, to walk through His blood with someone who refuses to forgive. To the earliest followers of Jesus, bitterness and pride were nearly synonymous. The former is a reflection of the latter, which our Father resists (James 4:6).

Unforgiveness, that is, unresolved bitterness, is the most common factor that keeps our Father from consummating the Covenant. A bitter person is like a bride on the day of her wedding who tells her groom, “Honey, I’m a prostitute and I’m going to continue my profession. I refuse to give it up. Will you still marry me?” The *spiritual adultery* that is manifested by clinging to bitterness is just as vile!

A bitter person shows no evidence of the

Holy Spirit operating as a “*stream of living water.*” Our Father doesn’t need “*streams of bitter water*” representing Him in this world. A person who clings to unforgiveness has failed to appreciate how much he or she needed to be forgiven through the shed blood of Jesus.

Your decision to forgive opens the way for the Holy Spirit to take up His residence in you. It is *He* Who heals your heart and emotions, since you can never heal yourself. Only by correctly understanding forgiveness could martyrs throughout history have responded with grace toward their persecutors. Those suffering for their trust in Jesus *have already forgiven* their tormentors. It all begins with the loving words of Jesus, repeated by Stephen, “*Father, forgive them...*”

Let’s review the biblical stipulations for you to enter into our Father’s Covenant. Your *Salvation Pilgrimage* begins and continues with your:

1. *Repentance.*
2. *Love.*
3. *Obedient Trust.*
4. *Forceful Conviction and Steadfast Determination.*
5. *Forgiving Others.*

If you’re prepared to embrace the Gospel offered to you by our Father and to enter into Covenant union with Him, then ratify the conditions of the Covenant with Him from your heart. Repeat the stipulations like a vow to Him declaring your part of the Covenant.

We encourage you to be baptized—identifying with His death on your behalf and His promise of resurrection (see Romans 6). By this you are pledging to your Father that, by His grace and with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will keep a clear conscience on your pilgrimage to salvation.

The Relationship of Two Covenants

As we’ve previously noted, our Father designed marriage to be the *physical representa-*

tion of the Covenant we have with Him. The *agape* love of a man for his wife is the same kind of *agape* love that he must have for his Lord. This is vital! Just as in marriage, it’s your *heart devotion* to want to live in Covenant with our Father that authenticates it.

As you weigh the stipulations for embracing the Covenant our Father is offering you, can you see how they apply to your own marriage covenant (if you’re married)?

1. **Can it exist without Repentance?**
2. **Can it bloom without your Love?**
3. **Can there be peace without your mutual Trust?**
4. **Can it flourish without Forceful Conviction and Steadfast Determination to make it succeed?**
5. **Can your love grow without Forgiveness?**

As with God’s design for the marriage covenant to produce godly offspring, those in Covenant union with our Father are also expected to bear fruit:

Every branch which is part of Me but fails to bear fruit, He cuts off; and every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes, so that it may bear more fruit... I am the vine and you are the branches. Those who stay united with Me, and I with them, are the ones who bear much fruit; because apart from Me you can’t do a thing... This is how My Father is glorified — in your bearing much fruit; this is how you will prove to be My disciples (John 15: 2,5,8, JNT).

In deference to His will, Jesus fulfilled His Father’s purposes. As our Father’s children, we, too, have specific, God-given purposes to carry out. He *enjoys* our dependence on Him. When are “born again” we become His child. There is no better relationship!

Streams of Living Water: The Indwelling Holy Spirit

Again, in order to consummate His Covenant with you, our Father seals you with His indwelling Holy Spirit. You’ve

become a conduit for the ongoing “streams of living water” Jesus promises. The Spirit’s indwelling is critical if you’re to press on in the pilgrimage as our Father desires.

Stop for a moment and picture this. *God now indwells you!* A union of oneness with our Father now exists. A wonderful miracle has taken place within you! The Holy Spirit has a special ministry to complete both *in you*—to help you become more like Jesus, and *through you*—so that you may fulfill your part to see the Kingdom of God expanded.

With the Holy Spirit, you have the potential to be transformed into the character of Jesus and to live an *empowered life*. This type of living threatens the very gates of hell. It is *open warfare* between you and the minions of Satan (Revelation 12:17).

Realizing that Jesus would give His people the power to carry out their Covenant responsibilities, John the Baptist announced to his listeners, “*He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire*” (Luke 3:16b).

Jesus, about to ascend to His Father, urged His disciples, “*Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit... You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*” (Acts 1:4,5,8).

That promised moment came, and it didn’t arrive unnoticed!

Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:2-4).

In response to this miraculous manifestation, the apostle Peter proclaimed the ful-

fillment of Joel’s prophecy: “*In the last days, God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams’*” (Acts 2:17).

Peter was addressing devout Jews from all over who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate at Pentecost the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. These men were thoroughly acquainted with the Hebrew Bible and its promises. Stung in their hearts, they pleaded with the apostles, “*‘Brothers, what shall we do?’*” Peter replied,

‘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).

What glorious hope and purpose for these men as they trained up their households as Abraham did, in devotion and intimacy with their Lord (see Genesis 18:19)!

It’s not as if the Holy Spirit is no longer being given to consummate the Covenant. The Lord’s promise is still in effect: YOU will receive the **gift of the Holy Spirit**. The promise is for YOU and your children and for all who are far off. Nothing in this promise has been revoked by our Father. “*The gift My Father promised, which you have heard Me speak about*” (Acts 1:4) is still being offered to all who enter into Covenant with Him.

Finally, have you ever observed streams? There is something beautifully pleasant about each one, yet no two are ever alike. They are on a pilgrimage themselves, with a starting point and an ending point. Many end up joining with other streams to become rivers before they reach the ocean.

We, too, can be streams that, when joined together through covenant union with our Father, can become mighty rivers. The Spirit’s indwelling in each of us brings this about. No programs are needed for this

living water to bring refreshment and healing to others, just walking with the Spirit.

Our Father verifies His love for us through the Holy Spirit. The Bible is not God Himself, but *His Word* for us. Both Testaments point to our Father and His salvation purposes: “...*the Holy Scriptures, which can give you the wisdom that leads to deliverance through trusting in Jesus the Messiah*” (2 Timothy 3:16,CJB). The Word presents truth to us, but only the Holy Spirit can open our hearts to believe it *as truth* and give us empowerment to live it.

As you yield your life to the Holy Spirit, He produces “...*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*” (Galatians 5:23). These qualities are necessary for you to have healthy relationships with others. They are also personal indicators that the Spirit is transforming you into the character of Jesus!

As your motives and attitudes are changed, your behaviors follow. This is our Father’s process of sanctifying us into conformity to His Son Jesus. It is a lifelong pilgrimage of *heart change* in which responsive action then follows suit out of love. Remember: *God is examining your heart as motivation for your behavior.*

Our Father gives us understanding of *His love* for us through the indwelling Holy Spirit: “*And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us*” (Romans 5:5). The Spirit’s presence in you begins a lifelong process of decisions and choices. His goal is to conform you into the image of Jesus Christ. In the midst of this alteration process, a battle rages between the Spirit and your carnal nature. Which one will rule your mind, will and emotions? Paul voiced this tension when he counseled the Galatians:

What I am saying is this: run your lives by the Spirit. Then you will not do what your old nature wants. For the old nature wants what is contrary to the Spirit, and the

Spirit wants what is contrary to the old nature. These oppose each other, so that you find yourselves unable to carry out your good intentions. But if you are led by the Spirit, then you are not in subjection to the system that results from perverting the Bible into legalism (5:16,17, JNT).

The Roman followers of Jesus, too, needed admonition to *turn away* from their sinful desires and *live in obedience* to the Spirit of Christ in them:

For those who identify with their old nature set their minds on the things of the old nature, but those who identify with the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. Having one’s mind controlled by the old nature is death, but having one’s mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace... But you, you do not identify with your old nature but with the Spirit—providing the Spirit of God is living inside you, for anyone who doesn’t have the Spirit of the Messiah doesn’t belong to him (Romans 8:5,6,9, JNT).

We recommend our book *God’s Instruments for War* (a free download) to help you identify your gift(s) of the Spirit so that you may effectively wage war against Satan. Note that you first have to *identify* your spiritual weaponry and that of your extended spiritual family, then *use* it.

To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and He gives them to each one, just as He determines (1 Corinthians 12:8-11).

Suffering, The Spirit's Agency for Change

*For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to bring you back again into fear; on the contrary, you received the **Spirit, Who makes us sons and by Whose power** we cry out 'Abba!' (that is, 'Dear Father!'). The Spirit Himself **bears witness with our own spirits** that we are children of God; and if we are children, then we are also **heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with the Messiah—provided we are suffering with Him** in order also to be glorified with Him (Romans 8:15-17, JNT).*

No one enjoys suffering. But along with our acceptance of our Father's Covenant comes affliction. It's part of our Father's plan to refine our trust. Jesus suffered. Should our Father treat His children any differently by withholding that which helps to conform us to His Son's image? *"In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for Whom and through Whom everything exists, should make the Author of their salvation **perfect through suffering**" (Hebrews 2:10).*

Why is suffering essential in our pilgrimage in Jesus? Because of all that we gain from it: *"We also **rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us"** (Romans 5:3-5).*

Hope is the lifeline that keeps us focused on the narrow gate and a heavenly welcome (Matthew 7:13,14). Satan offers us pleasure, then despair. Our Father offers us suffering, then hope—the confidence of *His love for us*.

It would be so simple if we could just bask in our Father's care here on earth and then be zapped up into heaven before any trials come our way. However, that notion does not fly scripturally, nor does it bring honor to our Father.

Peter didn't tell anguishing followers of Jesus to pray that their trials be snatched

away from them. On the contrary, he comforted them with these words:

***Rejoice in this [assurance of deliverance on the Last Day], even though for a little while you may have to experience grief in various trials. Even gold is tested for genuineness by fire. The purpose of these trials is so that your trust's genuineness which is far more valuable than perishable gold, is judged worthy of praise, glory and honor at the revealing of Jesus the Messiah** (1 Peter 1:6,7, JNT).*

The Spirit of the Lord Gives Us Freedom!

***"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"** (John 8:36).*

As the Spirit continues to sanctify your mind, will and emotions, your life grows in the freedom Jesus promises His own. *"Now the **Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit"** (2 Corinthians 3:17, 18).*

If you want to grow into increasing Christ-likeness and to fulfill His purposes for you in His Kingdom, you need to read the Book "breathed-out" by His Spirit. Ask Him for wisdom and revelation to apply it to your life. As in a marriage, knowledge of each other grows as the couple's relationship together matures. This is true of the Spirit as well. If you don't harden your heart and grieve, quench or blaspheme Him, you'll yearn to know Him more deeply. Then you'll experience what the prophet understood: *"Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD Almighty" (Zechariah 4:6).*

If you've embraced our Father's Covenant, then you have a pilgrimage ahead of you to your salvation. Remember, your journey is a *heart issue*, one of devotion and trust. What a wonderful moment when at the Judgment Throne, Jesus declares each of

us *called, chosen, and faithful!* We hope we've made you aware of what our Father has always desired from His chosen ones. And, we look forward to meeting you when Jesus introduces each of us to the hosts of heaven!

*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for **those who love Him**—but God has revealed it to us **by His Spirit**. The **Spirit searches all things**, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him?*

*In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God **except the Spirit of God**... This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in **words taught by the Spirit**, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words (1 Corinthians 2:9-11,13).*

The true Gospel is a pilgrimage, a journey to the moment of salvation when you appear before the Lord.