

Disciple of Christ Study: Lesson 4 First Covenants

Purpose of study: *Live life as a disciple of Christ and intentionally make disciples for the glory of the triune God. A disciple is a “student” or “follower” who learns, studies, and acts in accordance to the teachings of Christ, the Master.*

Lesson 4: First Covenants (Day One) *Covenant of Love*

Lesson 3, *Identity in Christ*, focused on the new self. Believers are part of God's eternal family. We are given fresh characters and personalities so that we resemble our forever family.

...to be made new in the attitude of your minds;²⁴ and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4:23-24

1. Read Ephesians 4:23-24. In Christ, you are made new in the attitude of your mind and have put on the new self, created to be like God in _____ righteousness and _____.

****See end of lesson for repeat of questions and blank spaces for you to write your answers.**

Being a new creature in Christ does not mean that we will never sin again. We still have free will and can choose to disobey God. When we fail, we agree with God that we have wronged Him and accept His forgiveness (1 John 1:9-10).

God knows we need help and wants us to seek Him in the good times as well as the bad. He is the source of our well-being; not earthly families, friends or possessions. He may give us various blessings of relationships and riches, but they are never to be substitutes for our self-worth.

A teenager from Nashville, Tennessee, was blessed to discover this truth at an early age. You may not relate to the seemingly charmed life Katie Davis lived, but hopefully you will relate to the life she chose to live for Christ. In reading a little of Katie's story, perhaps you will see that no matter where you start in life, at some point you must make a decision to identify with Christ and serve Him fully.

Katie was a popular senior in high school. She was president of her class and homecoming queen. She had a loving family, boyfriend and many friends. Also during that year, December 2006, she took a three week mission trip to Uganda to help at an orphanage.

During that time Katie lost part of her heart to a place she had never been before. She writes, "I fell in love with Uganda as soon as I arrived. After I woke up the first morning of our stay, I looked around and saw glistening bright white smiles against ebony faces; I heard happy voices,

lilting language, and gentle laughter. I saw strength and depth of character in people's eyes. I found Uganda to be a beautiful land filled with beautiful people."¹

After Katie finished high school, she returned to Uganda to teach at the orphanage. She left loving relationships, further education, pretty clothes, good food, and all manner of conveniences. This was a young woman who was not focused on self-identity but Christ-identity. Read below how she is open to God's love and showers it on others:

"I can't really explain in words the love I felt for these children or why I felt it. I think many people would have looked at them and seen only their filthy clothes, the ringworm on their heads, or the mucus that ended up in a crust around their nostrils. They would have looked around at the dormitories of the orphanage with its smooth, hard cement floor where rats and cockroaches make themselves at home and been a bit disgusted. By the grace of God, though, I didn't see these things."²

"The truth is, I saw myself in those little faces. I looked at them and felt this love that was unimaginable and knew that this is the way God sees me. The children would run to me with gifts of stones or dirt and I saw myself, filthy and broken, offering my life to the God of the universe and begging him to make it into something beautiful. I sit here in a broken world, small and dirty at His feet, and He who sits so high chooses to commune with me, to love me anyway. He blinds Himself to my sin and my filth so that He can forge a relationship with me. And this is what He did for me with these precious children. He blinded me to the filth and disease, and I saw only children hungry for love that I was eager to share with them. I adored them, not because of who I was, but because of who He is. I just sat right down on that cold, hard floor and snuggled my nose into their dirty necks and kissed their fungus-covered heads and didn't even see it. I was *in love*."³

Each day Katie began to see more and more needs of the children, not only in the orphanage, but in the village as well. This was an extremely poor area where people needed food and medical attention. She reaches out to each person, young and old alike with food, medical help and, of course, love.

Katie adopted 13 children by the time she was 22 years old! She started sponsorship programs to feed and teach hundreds of children. She brings the sick and needy into her home and teaches everyone she meets about the love of Jesus. Her identity is in the One who died for her. Therefore she lives her life loving God and loving her neighbor in Uganda.

"I do not claim to be 'doing it right.' I do claim to believe that the words of Jesus are absolutely true and apply to me, right now today. I want to give *everything*, no matter the *cost*. *No matter the cost*. Because I believe that nothing is a sacrifice in light of eternity with Christ."⁴

¹ Davis, Katie, "Kisses from Katie," Howard Books, New York, NY, 2011. p. 3.

² Ibid, pp. 6-7.

³ Ibid, p. 7.

⁴ Ibid p. 232.

Your value is in Christ. *Your* identity is in Christ. God desires for you to identify and become one with Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He loves you and wants you to live a joyful and holy life.

God has designed the covenant system as a way to help us live joyful and holy lives. It is a love pledge (oath). Although we are living under the New Covenant, it is important to review the First Covenants. God's word is designed around His conditional and unconditional promises. Let us gain knowledge of this basic design of our biblical history and how all of creation is affected.

Definition: A covenant or testament is an agreement, promise, pledge, contract or treaty made between two parties to bind them together. The two groups can be equal or unequal in power, strength or authority.

God designed the idea for covenant to communicate His spiritual and divine intentions in a way that the people could understand. He first used the form of the covenant with Adam and Eve to lovingly bind them to Himself. He created them and desired a lasting relationship grounded in holiness and affection.

Without sin in the world, Adam and Eve had clarity of thought and clearly understood what God expected of them. They were without excuse for their disobedience and sin. Biblical scholars differ on whether or not God's dealings with Adam and Eve were in fact covenants. The actual word covenant does not appear in the Bible until the time of Noah.

We are taking the position that God created the form of the covenant with Adam and Eve and used it again with Noah. After the flood, when the earth was again populated, mankind began using this kind of agreement to establish social, political and economic order.

The covenant concept was used as a basis for a wide range of interpersonal and social relationships. "Between one nation and another, a covenant was a treaty (Genesis 14:13, 31:44-55). Among individuals, a covenant expressed a pledge of friendship (1 Samuel 18:3, 20:8, 23:18) or served as a business contract. When a ruler and his subjects were the parties to a covenant, such a covenant served as a national constitution and spelled out the responsibilities of the ruler and the rules (2 Samuel 3:21, 5:3, 1 Chronicles 11:3)."⁵

God changed and worked the various kinds of covenants together for His purposes. We will look at seven major ones that God used with His people. Some covenants are conditional (restricted) upon people and some are unconditional (unrestricted). Conditional covenants are limited. Whether or not they are fulfilled may depend on human actions. Unconditional covenants are basically God's divine promises; they have no bearing on what we do or do not do.

Again, as a way of clarification: a covenant or testament is an agreement, promise, pledge, contract or treaty made between two parties to bind them together. The two groups can be equal or unequal in power, strength or authority. In the case of God's covenants with us, we are clearly

⁵ Richards, Lawrence O., *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1991. p. 194.

the inferior party. It is astonishing that God would bother to make covenants with us at all. It can only be explained in His divine character and all-powerful love for us.

From the very beginning, *if* Adam and Eve had lived according to their covenant agreement, we would have social, political and economic order. *If* people today lived according to the New Covenant, we would have social, political and economic order. However, from the time of Adam and Eve, humans have failed in their part of the agreement. Nevertheless, God in His *unfailing* love has always given mankind a way to succeed and enjoy a personal relationship with Him.

God's covenants are not secret. They are clearly described and have been meticulously (carefully) preserved in the Bible. God wants us to know, understand, follow and remind Him of the terms. Not that God needs to be reminded, He knows and remembers everything. However, God desires us to remind Him for our benefit. He wants us to know why and how He is working in our lives. It is a way for us to succeed in life and receive His promised blessings. We need to know that our blessings and the good in our lives are a direct result of our covenant God.

Seven Major Covenants

First Covenant: Edenic (Eden) Covenant

All seven covenants were begun by God. The first or creation covenant was initiated by God in the Garden of Eden. With this pre-Fall agreement, God set out His plan for man and woman. He graciously decided that we (man and woman) would be made in His image. This fact alone should make us stand up a little straighter and smile a little broader.

God expected Adam and Eve to increase in number and rule over the earth (Genesis 2:16-17). Being made in God's image, they were to live and rule for Him. They were to follow God's instructions and act in accordance with God's likeness. We were made like Him and were suppose to think and act godly.

Although we do not live in the Garden of Eden, we are still made in God's image. We are still called to live and rule this earth for Him. We are still called to follow God's instructions.

Read Genesis 2:16-17 and answer questions 2-4:

And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." Genesis 2:16-17

2. What was the one condition or stipulation that God gave Adam for "living" and "ruling" from the Garden of Eden (v. 17a)?
3. What would happen if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?
4. Are Adam and Eve physically alive today? Yes No (Circle One)

Note: It was after God commanded Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that He caused him to fall into a deep sleep. While Adam was sleeping God took one of his ribs and closed up his side with flesh. He took the rib and made Eve with it. The question for you to ponder and decide for yourself is whether or not there was blood from the man's side? This is not a do or die issue, and I do not have an answer for you. It is just something to consider in thinking and studying about blood covenants. It also brings to bear that men and women are of the same flesh and image and should work together in unity, love and holy relationship. This was and still is God's intention.

Read Genesis 3:6-7 and answer questions 5-6:

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.
Genesis 3:6-7

5. How did Adam and Eve fail to keep the condition God set for them to live forever (v. 6)?

6. What was the outcome of their failure and sin (v. 7)?

Adam and Eve disobeyed God and caused sin to enter into Eden. Their eyes were immediately opened to it. In other words, they knew they had missed the mark of holiness God had set for them. This sin darkened their place in paradise.

Their home was no longer perfect and free from trouble. They were stricken with a guilty conscience and were afraid of God; they tried to hide from Him. When we are riddled with shame, we are not comfortable or assured of being in His presence.

Sin also takes away our confidence in God. We start looking to ourselves and relying on others rather than trusting in Him. This only compounds (multiplies) our error and takes us farther from His presence and relationship. Whether in sin or not, God is the only one who can help us.

Adam and Eve had messed up and neither one of them could fix it. Adam tried blaming Eve, and Eve tried blaming the devil; nevertheless, God held them both fully responsible for their actions. They had put sin into motion and its effects were immediate.

Their relationship with God had been compromised. They had failed the one effortless condition of the Edenic Covenant: do not eat from the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. They now knew evil. They had turned from God. They did not live and rule Eden for God but instead, with willful intention, followed the devil. Adam and Eve had both failed to trust God.

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. Romans 5:12 (The one man is Adam; Adam and Eve were one in their sin against God.)

7. Read Romans 5:12. What was the result of Adam's sin for mankind?

For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.²⁰ The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:17-21

8. Read Romans 5:17-21. How can you or anyone on earth overcome death?

We are blessed to be living in New Covenant times! Jesus has conquered death on the cross. Anyone who accepts God's free gift of Jesus' sacrifice overcomes death. He or she is made righteous and given eternal life. Next, the Adamic Covenant, God's first promise of a Savior.

Lesson 4: First Covenants (Day Two) *Promise of a Savior*

Second Covenant: Adamic (Adam) Covenant

In love, God initiated another agreement. This unconditional covenant is the central theme of the Bible and brings us the awesome promise of a Savior. Even though man had failed, God would restore. Even though Adam and Eve sinned, God Himself would save them from the physical and spiritual death caused by their sin.

Definition: Enmity is a noun that means hostility and hatred between enemies.

Definition: Offspring is a noun that refers to a person's child or children. Recall that Jesus told the Pharisees: *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.* John 8:44

Read Genesis 3:14-15 answer questions 9-12:

So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life."¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Genesis 3:14-15

When God tells Satan (serpent) that he will eat dust and crawl on his belly (v. 14), He is using figurative language meaning humiliation, rejection and defeat. See Psalm 44:25, Isaiah 25:11-12 and Micah 7:17. Figurative means to represent one thing in terms of another.

9. Who made the judgment, decided the punishment, and rules all, including Satan?

10. What did God put between Eve and her offspring, and Satan and his offspring (v. 15)?

11. Who will Satan strike and try to destroy (v. 15)? (See Matthew 4:3-10 and Luke 22:3-4)

12. Who crushed Satan's head and destroyed the power of death (v. 15)? (See Hebrews 2:14-15)

Genesis 3:15 is foretelling victory over the devil. Jesus is the offspring, the seed of God that was planted in the Virgin Mary's womb approximately 4,000 years later. He paid the price for this first sin and all others by His death and resurrection. No matter how much time passes, God always fulfills His Word. Satan is defeated, but we are awaiting the final consummation (perfect ending) when creation is restored to God and the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10, 21:1-4).

This is a crucial part of understanding our covenant God. He can be trusted and relied upon. What He says, He will do. He wants you to take hold of this truth so you can remind Him of His faithfulness and goodness. God wants you to connect the dots between His character and His actions. He loves you and wants you to know Him. To know and serve God is to live a successful, victorious and abundant life!

Make no mistake about this: the old serpent, Satan, hates you. He desperately wants to destroy you. Godly offspring are believers and followers of Christ (Genesis 12:3 and Galatians 3:28-29). The devil's offspring not only include the antichrist yet to be revealed, but liars and those who do his bidding (John 8:44; Acts 13:10 and 1 John 3:8.)

You have a real enemy. You may not be able to see him but he still desires to bring you down. He will entice you with pleasure and false promises but in the end he will turn on you and eat you alive. Do not listen to him. Your sins, bad habits and addictions are not worth being in his eternal camp of damnation. Even if your salvation is not in jeopardy, think about the time spent in your bad habit that could be used for building God's kingdom and snatching souls from the fiery flames.

Perhaps you are thinking: "Yes, I want to break my bad habits and I want to serve Jesus fully but I keep failing! I still do those things that I don't want to do. I feel like I don't have the power to stop." *Be encouraged.* The covenants, specifically the New Covenant, will show you how to gain the victory that you desire.

However, if you do not want to change and do not care that you are sinning, then you are hardening your heart. If you do not repent and change, God may harden your heart to the point where you cannot turn back. Pharaoh, during the time of Moses, provides an example of this (Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:12).

Since you are in the Disciple of Christ Study, we believe that you *are* serious about Christ and excelling (being excellent) in holiness, love and power. You have a soft and pliable heart that God delights to work in and develop even more. You do not want to be an ordinary or lukewarm Christian in danger of Jesus spitting out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16).

There are consequences or penalties for sin. There is a definite relationship between cause and effect. When we disobey God something unpleasant or difficult may follow. The consequences of Eve's sin resulted in increased pains in childbearing and in Adam ruling over her. Adam's sin resulted in painful and difficult work. Both were banished from the Garden of Eden and eating from the Tree of Life.

The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. Genesis 3:21

13. Read Genesis 3:21. What do you think happened to the animal(s) that God used to make garments of skin for Adam and Eve?

God had an animal sacrificed in making His blood covenant with Adam and Eve and used the skins to cover their nakedness and their sin. Perhaps God told Adam to kill the animal and taught him the art of sacrifice. However, we do not really know. The Bible does not give us specific details. The first covenant in Eden required no blood because there was no sin, only the perfection of God's creation. Sin brings death; life is returned through the blood.

Definition: Atonement is defined as compensation for a wrong or injury. The Hebrew word translated atonement in the Bible is *kaphar* (כַּפַּר). It means to cover over, pacify, propitiate (appease) the wrath of a king (e.g. by a gift). It also means to cover over and atone for sin.

For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. Leviticus 17:11

14. Read Leviticus 17:11. How did God make an *eternal* atonement for one's life and fulfill His promise and covenant of Genesis 3:15? (See Hebrews 9:12, 15.)

Christ Jesus used His life and His blood to pay for our wrongs and sins against God, our King. The cross was the altar He used to perfectly fulfill God's promise of a Savior (Genesis 3:15). *Eternal*, endless, and everlasting are forever words. Jesus' sacrifice never ends but continually covers the lives and sins of those who trust in Him.

Lesson 4: First Covenants (Day Three) *Divine Promises*

Third Covenant: Noahic (Noah) Covenant

The Noahic Covenant was made with Noah after God had destroyed the earth with flood waters. The people had completely turned away from God. They were so evil and wicked that the LORD rendered judgment on the earth. His judgment (decision) was to destroy all mankind and start over with the one "righteous" man named Noah and his family.

Definition: The word we translate ark in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word *teba* (תֵּבָה). It means a chest or box. Ark is used in the Bible to describe the vessel built and used by Noah, the basket that carried the baby Moses on the Nile River and the holy container of the Old Covenant.

Definition: The word we translate altar in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word *mizbeah* (מִזְבֵּחַ). It means a place of sacrifice. The first mention of an altar in the Bible is the one built by Noah after leaving the ark (Genesis 8:20). Originally altars were made of elevated soil and stones.

God instructed Noah to build an ark to house his wife, three sons and three daughters-in-law. From the biblical description, it seems that the ark was a large, floating box or vessel-style structure. It was large enough to carry pairs of animals that were also to be protected from the flood waters and destruction.

God's judgment on the earth stands as a warning for us today (2 Peter 2:5; 9-10). God will again judge the earth when this world comes to an end. However, the wicked will not go into floodwaters, but into the fires of hell.

After the flood waters receded, God told Noah and everyone else to come out of the ark. Noah then built an altar to the LORD and sacrificed a burnt offering on it with some of the clean animals and birds that had been on the ark. God was pleased and accepted the blood sacrifice and revealed His covenant to Noah.

God declared to Noah, his descendants and every living creature with him an unconditional promise that He would never destroy the earth by flood waters again as long as the earth endures (Genesis 8:21-22; 9:8-13). The pledge the LORD made was not dependent on what Noah or anyone else did or did not do. In addition, God used the rainbow as a visible and meaningful symbol, sign and seal of this covenant.

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth." Genesis 9:1

15. Read Genesis 9:1. How is the Noahic covenant similar to Edenic covenant (Genesis 1:28-29)?

"Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything."⁴ "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each man, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of his fellow man."⁶ "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man." Genesis 9:3-6

16. Read Genesis 9:3-6. How is the Noahic covenant different from the Edenic covenant (Genesis 1:29; 2:16-17)?

17. Why will God demand an accounting from every man or animal who kills a human being?

Fourth Covenant: Abrahamic (Abraham) Covenant (Two Parts: A & B)

Noah's sons and daughters-in-law were fruitful and once again, people inhabited the earth. Unfortunately the people gradually began moving in their own direction and away from God. They also began making idols and serving them. Satan is behind idol worship so we know he was busy leading men and women astray (1 Corinthians 10:19-20).

Definition: Sovereignty is an adjective that defines someone as having supreme and ultimate power. A sovereign refers to a king or supreme ruler. God, as our King and sovereign, exercises His supreme power over creation. In other words, God is omnipotent, meaning all powerful.

God decided to act upon His plan to return man to Himself. Recall God's words in the Garden of Eden: the woman's offspring (ancestors) would defeat Satan. God, in His sovereignty, chose a person to carry forward the promise, and that person was Abraham. Through Abraham's offspring and his line, the Savior would be born. Through Abraham's offspring, God's blessing would again pour forth on mankind (Genesis 1:28a).

Abraham and his offspring with his wife, Sarah, would eventually become known as the Jewish people. We do not know why God chose Abraham and thus, the Jews. God could have chosen anyone, but Abraham was His choice. If Abraham had not believed and obeyed, God could have chosen someone else. His plans will never be thwarted nor will they depend on how man or woman responds.

When God called Abraham to leave his country, He made a sevenfold (seven parts) promise to him. After Abraham had left his country, God used a blood sacrifice to make His promises into a formal covenant. In terms of understanding, we are going to divide the Abrahamic Covenant into two sections: A. *The Land* and B. *The Relationship*.

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. ² "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."
Genesis 12:1-3 (Abraham's name was originally Abram and God changed it. See Genesis 17:5.)

18. Read Genesis 12:1-3. God told Abram (Abraham) to leave his country and go to another land. List the sevenfold promise that God desired to fulfill for Abram and his descendants:

Notice that four of the seven divine parts of the promise have to do with the concept of blessing: God will bless Abraham; he will be a blessing; God will bless anyone who blesses Abraham; and all peoples on the earth will be blessed through him. Thus God blesses, makes people a blessing and also makes a person a conduit (instrument) for blessing others.

Bless, in the context of the Abrahamic Covenant, means that God will bring Abraham into a deep and abiding relationship with Himself. With this relationship comes a rich and abundant life that God watches over and protects. God, the source of all blessing, will provide peace, success, prosperity, offspring and a long life.⁶ Curse is the opposite of bless.

⁶ Richards, Lawrence O., "New Encyclopedia of Bible Words," p. 130.

God used Abraham for the ultimate blessing for mankind. Through Abraham's family line (descendants), the Savior promised in the Garden of Eden was born. The Holy Spirit came upon a Jewish Virgin and the power of the Most High overshadowed her. Jesus Christ was conceived fully man and fully God (Luke 1:34-35). To all who believe and follow Him come restoration and relationship with God that was lost in the Garden.

So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. Genesis 12:4

19. Read Genesis 12:4. When God told Abram (Abraham) to leave his country and people and go to the land that God would show him, what did Abram do?

Abraham believed God (Romans 4:3;18) and in total dependence took his wife, nephew and servants on an unknown journey. He relied on God and placed his confidence in Him. Abraham received this important covenant by faith and believed the divine promise. Over and over again we will see that in all His covenants, including the New Covenant, God expects our faith and trust. He expected it from Adam and Eve and He expects it from you and me.

Read Galatians 3:6-9 and answer questions 20-24:

Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."⁷ Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham.⁸ The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you."⁹ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. Galatians 3:6-9 (Reference John 3:16)

20. The apostle Paul tells us that those who believe in Christ are children of (v. 7):

21. Whether Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, male or female, how is a person justified and returned into relationship with God?

22. Explain what "All nations will be blessed through you" (v. 8) meant at the time of the covenant?

23. Today, how are all nations blessed through *you*?

24. What do people need to have in order to be blessed along with Abraham (v.9)?

By faith in Jesus Christ, I am a child of Abraham and a child of the promise. I absolutely love this fact! The Bible contains stories of my family ancestors. The Bible has the covenant promises to me and anyone else who is faithfully following the Lord Jesus.

Often I will read and meditate on Genesis 12:1-3 and accept this covenant as my own because I am a spiritual offspring of Abraham. I know by sharing Christ with others, God is making me a blessing to the nations. Just think: we have the ability to tell people how to get back into a relationship with God and receive His mighty blessings and favor!

25. Discipleship Assignment: As a child of the promise (Abrahamic covenant), be a blessing to someone this week. Share what that meant to you and what you did to be a blessing:

A. The Land

In Abraham's time, when men made covenants, they would slaughter an animal and cut it in half. Hence, the expression to "cut a covenant." The pieces of the dead animal were separated and placed opposite each other on the ground. The men involved in the covenant would walk through the pieces and agree that if they did not keep their part of the treaty, they should end up like the dead animal. If the covenant was between tribes or nations, a representative chief or leader would walk among the animal parts.

So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon."¹⁰ Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. Genesis 15: 9-10

26. Read Genesis 15:9-10. What did Abram do with the animals he brought to God?

We do not know why the birds were not cut in half. It has been suggested that the birds were too small for dividing or that they represented the future unity of the Jewish people. Two other ideas are that the non-dividing of the birds is an emblem of the Holy Spirit, who is a Spirit of unity, and of "Christ's human spirit, which was not divisible."⁷

Read Genesis 15: 17-18 and answer questions 27-29:

When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces.¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates..." Genesis 15:17-18

27. What passed through the animal pieces (v. 17)?

28. Where did the smoking firepot come from (v. 18a)?

29. What was God promising to give to Abram's descendants (v.18b)?

We know this land that God promised (*Promised Land*) to Abraham's descendants is the country of Israel. Recall Abraham had a son Isaac, who had a son Jacob, who God renamed Israel. Jacob's (Israel) sons become the 12 tribes of Israel.

God, symbolized by the smoking firepot with a blazing torch, made this unconditional agreement with Abraham and his descendants. Abraham was asleep when God moved through the animal parts. God did not require Abraham to walk through the pieces because God would be the only one upholding this promise of land.

⁷ Bible Hub website: <http://biblehub.com/genesis/15-10.htm#>

So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left.³³ Walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.

Deuteronomy 5:32-33

30. Read Deuteronomy 5:32-33. The land was given unconditionally but in order to live, prosper and have long days in the land, what were the Israelites required to do?

Lesson 4: First Covenants (Day Four) *Divine Relationship*

B: Relationship with God

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.⁸ The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."⁹ Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come.¹⁰ This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised.¹¹ You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. Genesis 17:7-11

Read Genesis 17:7-11 and answer questions 31-33:

31. What was God's *amazing* promise about divine relationship (v. 7)?

32. What were Abraham and his descendants required to do (vs. 9-10)?

33. What is circumcision?

The rite or ceremony of circumcision involves cutting off the fold of skin covering the end of the male organ, the penis. This was to be the sign of the *blood* covenant between God and Abraham and his descendants. The blood comes from the wound caused by the incision. God instituted this symbol in the flesh when He confirmed His covenant with Abraham this third and final time.

Circumcision was a *sign* of the covenant; it was not the agreement itself. The treaty, or pact, was for Abraham and his descendants to obey and submit to God, and He would be their provider and protector; He would be their God.

God always wants the heart of His people. He gave them an outward sign but truly wanted their hearts. Jeremiah would tell the Israelites to circumcise themselves to the LORD and to circumcise their hearts (Jeremiah 4:4). In other words, make sure that your obedience and submission to God is part of your mind, your being and your essence. Make sure that God's covenant is cut and written into your heart and not just your flesh.

The *sign* of the Abrahamic covenant is no longer required. The apostle Paul taught against the requirement of circumcision (Romans 4:11; 1 Corinthians 7:18). His teaching and

understanding of this subject was confirmed, or ratified, by the Council of Jerusalem in 50 AD (Acts 15:2-35).

Read Genesis 17:21 and answer questions 34-35:

But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you (Abraham) by this time next year." Genesis 17:21

34. Who were the birth parents of Isaac?

35. With whom did God establish and continue His covenant?

Read Romans 9:8-12 and answer questions 36-38:

In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring.⁹ For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."¹⁰ Not only that, but Rebekah's children had one and the same father, our father Isaac.¹¹ Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad-- in order that God's purpose in election might stand:¹² not by works but by him who calls-- she was told, "The older will serve the younger." Romans 9:8-12

36. Isaac and Rebekah had twin boys named Esau (older) and Jacob. Which one of the two did God call to carry forth His covenant with Abraham (v. 12b)?

37. What is the reason stated in Scripture that the younger brother Jacob was elected or chosen by God (v. 11-12a)?

38. Are you Abraham's offspring and child of God (Galatians 3:6-9)? Yes No Maybe (Circle One) Explain your answer:

39a-c. Self-Awareness on our Covenant God

In order to disciple others, it is important that we continue to grow in all areas of our walk with the Lord. One way to do that is to become aware of areas that God would like us to grow in by asking and answering questions about specific spiritual areas. Self-awareness is knowing and understanding ourselves so that we can pray and cooperate with the Holy Spirit in becoming like Jesus. ****See answer sheet to record your responses to these exercises.**

Lesson 4: First Covenants (Day Five) *Covenant Continues*

Fifth Covenant: Mosaic (Moses) Covenant

Also known as the Law Covenant, the Sinaitic (Sinai) Covenant and referred to as the Book of the Covenant in Exodus 24:7.

Read Exodus 19:1-6 and answer questions 40-42:

In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt-- on the very day-- they came to the Desert of Sinai.² After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.³ Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel:⁴ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.'⁵ Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine,⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." Exodus 19:1-6

40. Three months after leaving Egypt, where did the LORD lead the Israelites (vs. 1-2)?

41. Moses went up on Mount Sinai to hear from God. What did the LORD want the house of Jacob and the people of Israel to know and understand (vs. 4-6)?

Remember, Abraham was the father of Isaac and Isaac was the father of Jacob (renamed Israel) and Jacob was the father of 12 sons who became the 12 tribes of Israel. These are the people of the covenant (treaty, pact, promise). The house of Jacob is the same as the people of Israel who are to participate in the divine promises and blessings originally given to Abraham.

42. How is verse 6 similar to what Christians are called to be under the New Covenant (1 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:5-6)?

Definitions: A priest is one authorized to perform the sacred rites of a religion, especially as a mediatory agent between humans and God. A mediator is a go-between, a person who works with both sides in an attempt for reconciliation or agreement.

"The priesthood in the *Old Testament* primarily involved sacrificing at the altar and worship in the shrine. Other functions were blessing the people (Numbers 6:22-26), determining the will of God (Exodus 28:30), and instructing the people in the law of God (Deuteronomy 31::9-12)."⁸ In addition, the Israelites were to be witnesses for the one, true, living God (Genesis 12:3; Psalm 22:27-28; Isaiah 42:6-7).

The priesthood in the *New Testament* has been given to believers. It means that Christians can "respond directly to the personal activity of God in their lives, through the Holy Spirit and through the written word of Scripture, and do not require a human priest to mediate authoritative communication with God. Christians have become a holy priesthood and can minister to one another and to the world. No longer does a professional priesthood have an exclusive channel for holy Communication. Any believer can be the channel of God's Spirit and mediate the grace of God in prayer, confession, or witness in particular situations."⁹

43. How are *you* living up to your New Testament calling into the priesthood of believers?

⁸ Butler, Trent, Editor, *Holman Bible Dictionary*, Homan Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN, 1991. p.1137.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 1137.

Moses was descended from the tribe of Levi (Jacob's son Levi). Moses was chosen by God to be the mediator of the covenant. Moses was given the honor of hearing from God and communicating to the people what God desired and how they could be in a healthy relationship with God.

At this time in history, there were different types of treaties. In this type of covenant pattern (Suzerain-vassal) God tells the people what He has done for them, what He will do for them and what they are required to do. This is a conditional contract based on how the people respond. The Mosaic or Law Covenant might be thought of as Israel's national constitution. It would form the foundation and structure for the people so they would understand their responsibilities to God as their King and to each other in their daily social, political, and economic life.

It is important to understand that the law is a good and holy concept. The Hebrew word *torah* (תּוֹרָה) means instruction, direction and law. God gave Israel kind and loving rules and regulations for their wisdom, prosperity, health and happiness. The Hebrew word translated teaching in Proverbs 3:1 below, is *torah*.

My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart,² for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.³ Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.⁴ Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Proverbs 3:1-4

44. Read Proverbs 3:1-4. What advice might you give yourself from reading and meditating on this passage?

The LORD gave clear, divine instructions to Moses for the Israelites on what it meant to obey and follow Him. The LORD also gave Moses our history beginning with creation and Adam and Eve. Moses was faithful to write down all the LORD said, and His words are recorded for us in the first five books of the Bible known as the Pentateuch. These five books are sometimes referred to as the Law.

The LORD not only renewed the Abrahamic Covenant through Moses but put into effect the Mosaic Law which included the Ten Commandments, Moral and Social Regulations and the Levitical priesthood. Moses would listen to God and teach His words to the people. Moses wrote down God's teaching and instruction for the people and future generations. To God's glory, 3,500 years later, we still have the first five books of the Bible.

We thank God for preserving His word for us through this chosen people. God made sure that He always had a remnant to faithfully protect His word from error, contamination or corruption. A remnant refers to a smaller group of faithful people who continue to obey and follow God even when the majority of the people do not. It can also mean the faithful who remain after God's divine judgment for covenant violations. From the time of Noah, God has always had a righteous remnant that will not bow the knee to anything or anyone but to Him alone.

45. Are you part of God's righteous remnant? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)

46. In the above question, if you answered no or maybe, what will you do to make sure that you are part of God's righteous remnant?

Making Disciples

In Lesson 3 you were asked to join CLI in discipling others. You were to fill out a volunteer form and prayerfully make a list of ten people of the same sex to disciple. You were to continue to pray and seek the Lord's direction for these folks and your involvement as a discipler. **Answer questions 47-53 on the answer sheets before returning them to your CLI Discipler.** Please continue to pray for the folks on your list and we will discuss contacting them in the next lesson.

Next: Lesson 5: More Love Covenants

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS Lesson 4
CLI Disciple of Christ Study: First Covenants

Return your answers to your Discipler for discussion and review. Include your own personal letter and comments with your answers. The Disciple of Christ ministry is designed to forge a close, yet professional, friendship between you and your Discipler. Letters or short notes help bridge the distance and connect hearts in Christ.

Name: _____ Number _____ Date: _____

Name of Institution: _____ Street address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

1. Read Ephesians 4:23-24. In Christ, you are made new in the attitude of your mind and have put on the new self, created to be like God in _____ righteousness and _____.

2. What was the one condition or stipulation that God gave Adam for "living" and "ruling" from the Garden of Eden (v. 17a)? _____

3. What would happen if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? _____

4. Are Adam and Eve physically alive today? Yes No (Circle One)

5. How did Adam and Eve fail to keep the condition God set for them to live forever (v. 6)?

6. What was the outcome of their failure and sin (v. 7)? _____

7. Read Romans 5:12. What was the result of Adam's sin for mankind? _____

8. Read Romans 5:17-21. How can you or anyone on earth overcome death? _____

Lesson 4: First Covenants (Day Two) *Promise of a Savior*

9. Who made the judgment, decided the punishment, and rules all, including Satan? _____

10. What did God put between Eve and her offspring, and Satan and his offspring (v. 15)? _____

11. Who did Satan strike and try to destroy (v. 15)? (See Matthew 4:3-10 and Luke 22:3-4)

12. Who crushed Satan's head and destroyed the power of death (v. 15)? (See Hebrews 2:14-15)

13. Read Genesis 3:21. What do you think happened to the animal(s) that God used to make garments of skin for Adam and Eve? _____

14. Read Leviticus 17:11. How did God make an *eternal* atonement for one's life and fulfill His promise and covenant of Genesis 3:15? (See Hebrews 9:12, 15) _____

15. Read Genesis 9:1. How is the Noahic covenant similar to Edenic covenant (Genesis 1:28-29)? _____

16. Read Genesis 9:3-6. How is the Noahic covenant different from the Edenic covenant (Genesis 1:29; 2:16-17)? _____

17. Why will God demand an accounting from every man or animal who kills a human being?

18. Read Genesis 12:1-3. God told Abram (Abraham) to leave his country and go to another land. List the sevenfold promise that God desired to fulfill for Abram and his descendants:

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | |

19. Read Genesis 12:4. When God told Abram (Abraham) to leave his country and people and go to the land that God would show him, what did Abram do?_____

20. The apostle Paul tells us that those who believe in Christ are children of (v. 7):_____

21. Whether Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, male or female, how is a person justified and returned into relationship with God?_____

22. Explain what "All nations will be blessed through you" (v. 8) meant at the time of the covenant?_____

23. Today, how are all nations blessed through *you*?_____

24. What do people need to have in order to be blessed along with Abraham (v.9)?_____

25. Discipleship Assignment: As a child of the promise (Abrahamic covenant), be a blessing to someone this week. Share what that meant to you and what you did to be a blessing:

26. Read Genesis 15:9-10. What did Abram do with the animals he brought to God?

27. What passed through the animal pieces (v. 17)?_____

28. Where did the smoking firepot come from (v. 18a)? _____

29. What was God promising to give to Abram's descendants (v.18b)? _____

30. Read Deuteronomy 5:32-33. The land was given unconditionally but in order to live, prosper and have long days in the land, what were the Israelites required to do?

Lesson 4: First Covenants (Day Four) *Divine Relationship*

31. What was God's *amazing* promise about divine relationship (v. 7)? _____

32. What were Abraham and his descendants required to do (vs. 9-10)? _____

33. What is circumcision? _____

34. Who were the birth parents of Isaac? _____

35. With whom did God establish and continue His covenant? _____

36. Isaac and Rebekah had twin boys named Esau (older) and Jacob. Which one of the two did God call to carry forth His covenant with Abraham (v. 12b)? _____

37. What is the reason stated in Scripture that the younger brother Jacob was elected or chosen by God (v. 11-12a)? _____

38. Are you Abraham's offspring and child of God (Galatians 3:6-9)? Yes No Maybe (Circle One) Explain your answer: _____

Self-Awareness on our Covenant God

39a. What has God said to you or shown you through studying these first 4 covenants:

39b. How have you grown closer to your Covenant God? _____

39c. What will you do differently after thinking deeply about God and these covenants?

Lesson 4: First Covenants (Day Five) *Covenant Continues*

40. Three months after leaving Egypt, where did the LORD lead the Israelites (vs. 1-2)? _____

41. Moses went up on Mount Sinai to hear from God. What did the LORD want the house of Jacob and the people of Israel to know and understand (vs. 4-6)? _____

42. How is verse 6 similar to what Christians are called to be under the New Covenant (1 Peter 2:9 and Revelation 1:5-6)? _____

43. How are *you* living up to your New Testament calling into the priesthood of believers?

44. Read Proverbs 3:1-4. What advice might you give yourself from reading and meditating on this passage? _____

45. Are you part of God's righteous remnant? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)

46. In the above question, if you answered no or maybe, what will you do to make sure that you are part of God's righteous remnant? _____

Making Disciples Questions:

47. Please list the people the Lord has placed on your heart to disciple: (Note: The list may be the same as the one you wrote down for your last lesson or may include changes after prayer.)

48. List any people on the list that you cannot personally meet with: _____

49. How are you planning to disciple the men or women you cannot meet with?

50. If you are planning to disciple by mail, would you or the ones you will be discipling have funds to pay for your postage back and forth to you? Yes No Maybe (Circle One)

51. Will you have access to a computer to print out the lessons? Yes No (Circle One)

52. Are you planning to disciple using CLI's studies? Yes No (Circle One)

53. If you are not planning to disciple through CLI, how are you planning to disciple those the Lord has placed on your heart? _____

Rev 6/2/2015

