**The Righteousness of God**

 In this study I want to look at the word “righteousness”. I want to see what God is talking about when he uses the term “righteous” or “righteousness”. We need to ask the question, “What does it mean to be righteousness?”

 Since the word “righteous” is a Hebrew word we need to look at it with Hebrew eyes and since it is a covenant word, we must look at the word “righteous” from a view point of covenant. When it is said of Abraham, “**Gen 15:6** And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” this was not in view of the law, which had not yet been given, but in view of covenant.

 We cannot avoid the blood covenant. Any hope that we have of salvation can only be understood inside the framework of the covenant. On what basis does a sinful man hope to approach God and find acceptance with him? What audacity puts into our heads the idea that we may pray and receive an answer? Without a solid foundation faith becomes nothing more than pathetic presumption, a faith in faith which is a leap into meaninglessness. Biblical faith is a response to something God has done. God lays the foundation, takes the initiative, and faith is but man’s response to that. There is a solid foundation on which every promise and hope of salvation lies, against every threat and warning becomes vividly real. That foundation is the blood covenant.

 So, let’s look a covenant first. What is a covenant? Who is the covenant made with? What are the terms of the covenant? How is the covenant kept? How are we partakers of the “new” covenant? The concept of covenant is almost unknown in the Western world today. The people of the scriptures lived in the atmosphere of covenants as the air they breathed. All relationships were linked in some way to covenant. The Bible contains two documents that have been unfortunately named the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word “testament” is not adequate to describe what these two documents are. The correct naming of these two documents are the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

 The Old Covenant is the covenant that was made with Israel at Mt Sinai through Moses, their covenant representative. It was the covenant of the law of the Ten Commandments, the sacrificial system of the offering up lambs, bulls, and goats to cover the sins of the people, the mark and seal of membership in the covenant was the circumcision of the male.

 The new is called new because it made all that went before it old and of no more use as a means of salvation. It wasn’t just another covenant that improved on the previous one. The word “new” means new in “kind”, that which has never been seen or even thought of before. The covenant is mediated by the Lord Jesus and established in His Blood. Membership is in being sealed by the Spirit of God, who writes the law on the heart and in the desires of men and women. He is the power of the covenant enabling those within it to live its promises.

 The English word covenant comes from the Latin ***convenire****,* which literally means “to come together or agree.” The Hebrew word is ***berith***, which literally means “to bind or to fetter, a binding obligation.” In the scriptures, it’s the ultimate expression of committed love and trust and was usually made to define, confirm, establish, or make binding a relationship that had been in the making for some time.

 We need a working definition of a covenant that we can use.

***A covenant is a binding, unbreakable obligation between two parties, based on unconditional love sealed by blood and sacred oath, that creates a relationship in which each party is bound by specific undertakings on each other’s behalf. The parties to the covenant place themselves under the penalty of divine retribution should they later attempt to avoid those undertakings. It is a relationship that can only be broken by death.***

 In the bible, we see covenants that are for the most part are unequal covenants. That is, they are made unilaterally, initiated by a person who is vastly superior in power and authority, and graciously imposed on a person of lesser power and position for one’s greater good.

 The Greek word for this covenant is ***Diatheke***, which means, an unequal covenant – a covenant where one does all the giving and the other does all the receiving.

 By having a working understanding of the ingredients that made human covenants, we can better understand the covenant that God has made with us in Jesus Christ.

**The Representative**

When a group of people prepared to enter covenant with another party, they selected a man from among themselves to represent them in the covenant making. The word “represent” means to present again, to re-present the will of another, to speak and act with authority on the part of another, to be a substitute or agent for. Knowing the needs and desires of those he represents, the representative re-presents their case, speaking as and for them to the other party of the covenant. The representative had to be of the same blood and family as those he represented. As representative, he gathered the tribe or family into himself and made the covenant as and for them. The representative is also known as the guarantor of the covenant, the one in and through whom the covenant is made and who is the guarantee that it’s terms and promises will be kept.

 This can be difficult for us in the West to understand, we think of life as beginning and ending with the individual. The Bible introduces us to a different way of thinking, in which people are “in” a representative person whose actions and achievements become the actions and achievements of the whole tribe or family. The story of David and Goliath from 1 Samuel 17 perfectly illustrates this way of thinking.

**The Covenant Oath**

 We may feel strange with the word covenant and the concepts attached to it because the word is rarely used in modern society; and even when it is used, it is confused with a contract. A contract is a vehicle whereby properties and goods are conveyed from one person to another. Contracts are negotiable by both parties and can be changed or even cancelled. In a contract, promises are made that are as good as the character of the contracting parties whose signatures seal the document, therefore they are easily broken.

 A covenant it totally different. A covenant is far above the exchange of properties and goods. A covenant is the giving of one’s whole person and life to another and the wholehearted receiving of that other person and his life. A covenant is made with an oath. AN oath is a solemn affirmation, a binding of oneself to the fulfillment of the words spoken.

**The Covenant Blessing or Promises**

 Every covenant of Old Testament times contained the promises each party made to the other and the responsibilities each took with the benefit of the other party in view. In 1 Samuel 20, in a covenant made between David and Jonathan, David swore to bless Jonathan. The word “bless” means more than just speaking well of someone. It’s a word used, again a covenant term, meaning to give the ability to accomplish.

**Gen 12:2** And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

Since man has been in a fallen state and unable of him self and no power in himself to bless any, God in his covenant, being the greater party determined in himself to accomplish all the covenant blessing in the person of Jesus Christ.

**2Co 1:20** For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

**Gal 3:14** That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

**The Covenant Sacrifice**

 At the making of a covenant, there was always the shedding of blood. An animal was slain, and its carcass split down the middle. The parties making covenant walked through the bloody path between the pieces. They proclaimed that they were entering a death and were journeying into a new life. They were dying to living for their self-interests alone and passing through that death to a new relationship of union with the other party of the covenant. They also shed their own blood, usually drawn from the right arm or hand. They would raise their bleeding right arms, calling upon God to be their witness. The combination of the bloody sacrifice and their own bloodshed combined to give a powerful statement. “I will keep this covenant even if my blood has to be shed to do so. If I break this covenant, may my blood be shed, and my dismembered body be thrown to the scavengers.”

**The Covenant Seal**

 The scars from the wounds in their arms were the seals in their bodies of the participants declaring that they were parties to the covenant. Often the names of the covenant makers were joined to make a new name announcing that they were joined as one by covenant blood.

**Eph 1:13** In whom ye also *trusted,* after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

**Covenant Friends**

 From the making of the covenant, the two parties would be described as friends. In societies where covenant making is practiced and understood there is no higher honor than to be called a person’s friend, for it announces a covenant relationship.

**2Ch 20:7** *Art* not thou our God, *who* didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?

**Covenant Meal**

 Every covenant ended in a meal that declared the covenant now valid and in effect, functioning in the lives of the parties to it. This was a very important part of covenant making. To eat with someone at any time was a kind of covenant, and it had a far greater meaning when placed at the end of the making of a covenant. The meal declared the covenant, as the two parties would eat of the same bread and drink of the same wine telling the world that they were one, partaking one of another.

**Gen 26:28** And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, *even* betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee;

**Gen 26:29** That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou *art* now the blessed of the LORD.

**Gen 26:30** And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink.

**Gen 31:44** Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.

**Gen 31:45** And Jacob took a stone, and set it up *for* a pillar.

**Gen 31:46** And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap.

**Exo 24:11** And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

**1Co 11:24** And when he had given thanks, he brake *it,* and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

**1Co 11:25** After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it,* in remembrance of me.

**The Memorial or Place of the Covenant Making**

 The place where the covenant was made was hallowed as the memorial site of the two parties becoming one. Sometimes there was a memorial set up to remind succeeding generations of what had taken place. Sometimes the name of the place would be changed to reflect the covenant that was made there. Since the covenant was made with Christ and in him and he is the mediator of the new covenant he is the memorial. We as believers are brought “in him” and set up as Peter said: **1Pe 2:5** Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

**Lovingkindness**

 To become part of a covenant was to enter into a new situation, becoming part of a relationship that is best understood as a family – not based on birth ties, but on a commitment of love freely given and bound with a sacred oath. The oath created a new kind of family bound together with an unbreakable life and death relationship. Among the Arabs to this day is the saying, “Blood is thicker than milk,” meaning that those bound by the blood of covenant are held in a stronger bond than those who have drunk of the same mother’s milk.

***Hesed*** is the Hebrew word used to describe the ongoing relationship of the parties in covenant who worked out the commitment made in covenant. ***Hesed*** is a difficult word to translate into the language of the Western world, for we are a society that knows very little of the commitment involved in being part of a covenant. Different words are used to catch aspects of the meaning of the word or try to encompass its whole meaning. It is translated as “mercy”, “goodness”, “steadfast love”, “loyal love”, “covenant love”, “lovingkindness”, or simply “kindness”.

 God in his unconditional love for us, has called us to participate in the most intimate relationship and unbreakable bond known among humans or capable of being expressed in any language. He has called us to covenant relationship with himself, to come into the circle of friendship in which God and humanity are bound together in an intimate love union in the person of Jesus Christ. This covenant is the content of the Gospel. It is called the new covenant. It consists of the everlasting oath of God, the shedding of the blood of God in the death of Jesus Christ and his resurrection and ascension to the Father. The Holy Spirit was sent to make the covenant a reality in the lives of men and women who surrender their lives to Jesus Christ.

We were created for covenant union with God. We were made in His image and in His likeness, uniquely fitted to interact with Him in love. This is the meaning of our existence; to live by the life of God.

 Now that we have a basic understanding of the ingredients of covenant and some of its terms, we can proceed to look at the term *‘righteous*” or “*righteousness*”. I want to look at the word “righteous” from some verses in the prophet Isaiah.

**Isa 55:6** Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

**Isa 55:7** Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

**Isa 55:8** For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

**Isa 55:9** For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

**Isa 55:10** For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

**Isa 55:11** So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

 In verse 8 The word “way” means road, or a path to be traveled. It means then to walk. Not only the path you travel but the steps you take upon it. It means to tread out on a pathway, to journey. You come to the pathway and put your feet on it and go from here to there, so it means to travel in a direction. It means then the course of your life. The journey then that God is on is not the same journey that we are on. He is saying his thoughts, his intention, his purposes we have never even dreamed of. His ways are not our ways the process within God that brings about new ideas have never entered your mind. My thoughts and purposes are so far beyond you that couldn’t understand them. It means if I’m ever going to know what God is up to, if I’m ever to discover the pathway God is going to tread, he will have to show me. The only truth I can know of God and his ways must be a revelation of God.

 Why did God create? A God that must create is a poor miserable God. He would be a God that isn’t complete. God that is revealed in scriptures is complete before there was a creation. The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit exist in the original family; complete needing nothing. God is love and he loves the Son completely, and the Son receives that love and loves the Father completely and the Holy Spirit is the dance of that love, infinitely complete. He is freedom. Why would he who is freedom introduce another free will into existence to mess the whole thing up. So why are we here? There was no pressure for God to create. The fact that God created is the unnecessary act of God’s love. God chose freely to create us. Why? God who is love, relationship, willed to share that love with another. So, he created us, and created us capable of knowing that we are loved and capable of receiving love and capable of returning love. He made us that way. God who is relationship chose to create us that we might be included into the relationship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is God’s path, his direction, his journey. God created in order that this limited creature might be included into God’s family by shear gift. That’s God’s way, his journey, his direction in creation. His ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts or way.

 God’s ways are not our ways is not in the sense of two people having different ideas, but his ways are totally “other than” our ways because they are out from the wisdom and love of the creator.

 This plan, this purpose, this pathway is specifically focused on and centered in the Son of God. The Father determined that this whole purpose that love determined would come to pass through the Son of God. So, the Father created through him. The Son is the center of it all. When man would fall it becomes his love responsibility to come and get us. Jesus is God that come from God to save us and restore creation. Jesus is the center of the purpose he is at the center of the path he is the way. He made us with that end in view.

 Built in to the purpose of God is that we must freely choose to be part of the family of God. Human is not fully human until he makes a choice. That I would respond to the love God has for me in Christ Jesus has got to be a free choice. But this introduces another reason why God’s ways are not our ways. We as a race freely chose the lie. God was not surprised at our choice, he allowed the serpent into the garden to tempt man. The purpose in being that the righteousness of God might be revealed of which we will discuss later on. The great lie that came was that we should be as god’s, independently of God. We were created to be joined to the family of God by grace through Jesus Christ. The lie said we could have our own family and be our own god. So, believing the lie, we set out on our own path which leads nowhere except the abyss of darkness. God is life and to choose to be out of relationship to him means death. Man revolted against God and said No. That is sin, to say know to the God love for which I was created. We rejected God’s love and man professing himself wise became a fool. All his thoughts became vain and futile, dead end after dead end. Every thought man came up with for his reason for being made no sense and every path he took was a dead end.

 We were created to be filled with the fulness of God and instead we filled ourselves with the lie. We obsessed with ourselves and adored ourselves in the mirror and said you shall be as God. No, his ways are not our ways, not only because we are creature and he is creator but because we turned our backs and rejected him who brings the purpose to fulfillment.

 He addresses in this passage the “wicked”. Wicked here means unresolved conflicts that result in sin, dead end after dead end, unresolved and out of that, all manner of sin comes. Wicked is the chaotic paths we produce because we invent our own paths because we are following no one. He addresses the “unrighteous man”. Who is this “unrighteous man”?

 Righteous is a Hebrew word. Keeping commandments is a Latin translation. The Hebrew translation “righteous” is conforming to a standard that exist between two partners in covenant. When God is “righteous” it means that God conforms to who God is. “Righteousness” means that God will always act and be like God. It means that God will always act in covenant love. He will always seek to restore covenant love. It’s God doing what love does.

 “Unrighteous” means I want nothing to do with God’s love. I want nothing to do with relationship to God. I’m going my own way! That’s “unrighteousness”. It means that I’m not conforming to the standard that God is. Man has said I’ve set up my own standard. I am my own standard and I can conform to that.

 He tells the wicked to forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts and return to the Lord. Man could not forsake his ways or return to the Lord. We enjoyed sin too much and had become the slaves of sin. Man is trapped. How can we know God’s ways and thoughts when we have rejected him and run from him and set up our own standard of righteousness? We can never know God’s path or ever know God’s intention except he reveal it. We can never search it out. This must be our beginning point. Or as Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.”

 I can’t know what God is like or what his intentions are because my standard is unrighteous. My heart is wicked. If ever I know who God is, what he is like, what his purpose and intention are, if ever my feet tread God’s path it will be because God took the initiative. But he has got a problem. The creature can’t understand God so how can God make himself understood? If ever I’m to understand him he has got to come inside human limitations and use human words and look at me with human eyes. He must hold on to me with humanity. Otherwise we won’t get it. Yet we have a double problem. We are not only humans, but we are DEAD humans in the abyss of darkness. If God is going to communicate with us he must come into our humanity, in our death, into our darkness, into this unrighteous place where the lie rules. So much so that he must join us in our sin and unrighteousness and become one with us. There in the guts of that he says, “This is who I am, this is my righteousness.” He must then join his path to our path so that our path now becomes his path and changes direction. He must bring the intention and purpose of God into our purpose and make our purpose his purpose.

 Of course, he didn’t have to do any of this, yet he always acts in conformity with who he is which is always in covenant love or “righteousness”. The creator shall come and save his creation. Life will never make sense to us until we realize Love has invaded our senseless dead-end lives. It speaks of the invasion in verse 10, “as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven”. We don’t have a clue what he is doing but he is sending his “word” and it shall accomplish his purpose. He says I am coming into your death and your darkness and joining my self to you. He came where we are, so we could be where he is. As the sheep was lost in Luke 15 the shepherd came to where the sheep was, he joined the sheep in his lostness, in the sheep’s dead end after dead end. He joined himself to the sheep, so the sheep could be joined to him, and as the sheep is joined to the shepherd, now the path of the sheep is changed, and the position of the sheep is changed, from being lost to being at rest. Luk 15:5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. There is no mention of the sheep looking to be found. The sheep was not looking for the shepherd. Why did the shepherd go after the sheep? Because he is the shepherd and that’s what the good shepherd does. The good shepherd is a “righteous” shepherd. The good shepherd did not give the lost sheep a road map or show him the path; the good shepherd is the way!

**Remember**

Exo 2:24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

 Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. The term “mercy” is a covenant term. In the Old Testament it is the word “***Hesed***” which is a calling on God to remember his covenant. So let’s look at the term “remember” because it comes right out of the New Covenant when he said your sins I will remember no more. He did not say I will forget your sins. We have seen that Jesus lived and died as our representative. He stood as us not in some pretend game but in awful, agonizing reality. We were truly there in him and he as us received pardon, justification, and resurrection. When God raised him from the dead, he declared that the penalty for sins had been paid in full. Jesus risen from the dead is Jesus no longer carrying our sins that took him to death. The instant a sinner is united to Christ, they become identified with him in his representative forgiveness. Forgiveness and all the blessings of covenant do not come to us merely through Christ but IN him. We don’t receive them only because he earned them but by our being united together with him and in him, members of his body, made one with him by the Holy Spirit.

 In instituting the covenant meal, Jesus spoke of the remission or forgiveness of sin.

Mat 26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; Mat 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Dealing with the sin question is basic to the covenant; it is the foundation upon which all the promises are based. Jesus has put away sin, and we now stand forgiven and only then are we “…blessed…with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” (Eph 1:3)

 **What is forgiveness?** We have a problem with the English word “forgiveness”; the word translated “forgiveness” in scriptures does not mean forgiveness as the word is defined today. This is Webster’s definition of forgiveness: to excuse for a fault or offense; to renounce anger or resentment against; to absolve from payment of a debt. What Jesus accomplished in the blood of the new covenant is infinitely more than what the English word “forgiveness” means. We have been more than excused for our sins. He accomplished more than giving up anger and resentment towards us and we have more than the payment for our sins.

 The word translated “forgiveness” is ***aphiemi*** and it means to send away, to dismiss, to forsake, to leave; it is the word for divorce or to put away a wife. Jesus “sent away” (***aphiemi***) the crowd. It is the word used in Matthew 27:50 to describe how the spirit of Jesus left his body: And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up (***aphiemi***) his spirit. He sent away his spirit, dismissed it away from him, with the result that his body was dead. It was a total sending away, not just a weakening.

 Another word in the same family and derived from ***aphiemi*** is***aphesis***. It is translated as liberty in the Greek Old Testament, when in the year of Jubilee all slaves were set free and sent home. (Lev 25:10)

 Jesus, quoting the prophet Isaiah, announced that in him a Jubilee without end had begun: Luk 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

 The new covenant declares that our sin has been sent away from us, banished from our presence; we have been divorced and made free from the chains that bound us, to be at liberty. Our guilt and bondage to sin have been sent away from us as surely as Jesus’ spirit left him on the cross; their power has not been weakened but is gone.

 The Greek word ***hamartia*** describes the principle and power of sin, which came into the race through the rebellion of Adam. Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. ***Hamartia*** describes the governing force behind sin, out of which all sins come. Jesus came to make us free from this force. Mat 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Joh 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

“For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission (***aphiemi***) of sins (***hamartia***).” Matthew 26:28

1Jn 1:7  But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Paul personalizes the principle of sin, likening it to a tyrant who would rule over the terrain of our mortal bodies. Forgiveness means we are free from his rule and can choose to be free from him as we truly are in Christ. Rom 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Rom 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

 Once the slaves of the tyrant, offering our bodies to him for his use, we are now the joyful slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ, presenting our bodies for him to express his life through.

Rom 6:18  Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. Rom 6:19  I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. Rom 6:22  But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

It was the joyful cry of victory that echoed through the early church. Col 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

 The Old Testament saints didn’t know this, for the blood of bulls and goats only covered their sin; it awaited the blood of Jesus to send sin away, to effectually divorce us from the power of sin.

 Isaiah described God’s forgiveness by making reference to an ancient custom called “giving the double.” Isa 40:2  Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins. In ancient times in Jerusalem, a person who was in debt with no hope of paying his creditors would write out on a parchment all of his debts and the persons he owed them to and hang it at the front of his dwelling for all to see. He waited for a generous rich man with a compassionate heart to come by. When such a man passed and saw the document hanging, he would read it and if he was financially able and had a compassionate heart, he would double the parchment over, hiding the record of debts and write on the back, “Paid in Full.” The rich benefactor would then satisfy all of the creditors; the matter was now out of the hands of the debtor, and he was a free man. Isaiah portrays Israel with her sins hanging out for all to see and the Lord, who is infinite love and compassion and also the One they were in debt to, coming and giving them the double.

 As glorious as those words were to ancient Israel, the revelation of their full meaning awaited the new covenant. We come out of guilty hiding into the light of God, declaring ourselves sinners before God, only to discover that the One we were in debt to has written across our bill in the blood of Jesus, “Paid in Full.”

 **In Remembrance of Me**

 Before we get to the word “remember” we have to go back to the covenant meal to see its full meaning. How could we “do this in remembrance of me” when I was not there 2000 years ago? I thought remembering meant thinking about and reconstructing an event in the past. How could I think about and reconstruct the events of his death and resurrection when I wasn’t there? It would be like someone saying “Do you remember that London vacation we had?” when I have never been to London. The only way I could make sense of it was to take out the word “remember” and substitute it with the word “imagine”. I would be left to imagine what his suffering and death must have been like.

 The word “remember” had a totally different meaning to people of both the Old and New Testament than it has to us in the Western world in the 21st century. In one sense, the word meant the same to them as it does to us; it meant and means “remember.” The vast difference in meaning is in how that remembering is achieved, the kind of activity that is understood to be going on when the word is used.

 “Remember” in the West describes a mental activity, a recall of an event with the mind, to think about a past event. It means to dig around in the memory to put together again that London vacation assuming you were there. If that is what the word meant to Jesus and those disciples around the table with him, then, at best, the meal was meant to be a rather strange aid to their devotional imagination. But his words could only be obeyed by those men gathered around the table, for they were the only ones there who could at a future time cast their minds back and remember.

 But to the Greek and Hebrew mind of the first century, “remember” described something totally different. First, it was not only a mental activity, a thinking about a past event, but an activity of the whole person. Second, it meant to do the past event, not merely to think about it. To remember meant to re-create the past event, bringing it into the present moment by reenacting it, employing rituals and symbols to do so. Third, to remember meant that the persons remembering totally identified with and participated in all the powers and effects of the original event. Every year the people of God in the Old Testament “remembered” their deliverance from Egypt in exactly this fashion, reenacting it in the Passover meal. Remembering could be understood as a bridge in time that effectively brought the past into the present. The emphasis was on the doing again the past event, not merely thinking about it, which explains the words of Jesus “Do this in remembrance of Me” – not merely “think this about me.”

 Remembering is never to be understood as thinking about the past. It is always an active participation in the historical reality of the past by reenacting it, and in so doing realizing the powers released in the past in such a way as to shape the present moment.

 This definition of “remember” means that at the celebration of the holy meal we do not look back at the cross and empty tomb. In this remembrance His finished work is brought forward into the present moment, even as he in his glory is here, present with us in the rite. We receive in the present moment all the effects of the covenant and rejoice in our redemption achieved, that the burden of sin and guilt has been sent away from us, and we are now justified in Christ.

 Thus we see that Jesus was saying, “Reenact this meal; do it again. In whatever moment of time you are, this moment will be present to you; you will be here at the ratification of the new covenant and immediately present to Me, the Mediator of the new covenant.”

 How can this be? All four gospel writers relate the events that took place on the night of his sufferings and death, including all that took place in the Upper Room, each with his own unique contribution. Matthew, Mark and Luke relate the institution of the meal and his command to remember him. John omits the meal but supplies us with everything he said that night as they sat around the table with Jesus with the meal before them. The first 3 gospels tell us he said that in the meal we must remember Him, but it is John who tells us how such a miracle would take place:

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

 It is the Holy Spirit that achieves the remembering of Jesus. This takes the whole matter out of the hands of the futile efforts of our minds to imagine his sufferings and death.

 It should be noted that the subject of our remembering is not only his sufferings and death. He said “…in remembrance of ME”, Me, from the Incarnation to his exaltation to the right hand of the Father.

So in the new covenant our sins are remembered no more, meaning they are never brought back into the present moment. They are removed from us. What is remembered or brought into the present moment then is the person of the new covenant, the ascended King of Kings, Jesus himself.

 **Remember No More**

 The language of the prophets as they anticipated the new covenant is extravagant; they tell us that God remembers our sin no more, that he does not bring our sins to mind. In the blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus, sin has been dealt with finally and forever. The term of the covenant says, “Remember no more,” which means sin is no longer on God’s agenda because it has been completely dealt with. Something that is remembered no more has been fully handled and dealt with and there is no more work that needs to be done.

 There is a story that Jesus told which show us what God means by the word “forgiveness.” In Matthew 18:23-25, we have the parable of the king who forgave his servants debt. A king decided it was time to settle all accounts payable. His servants were brought in one by one to pay off their debts. It’s a mystery how the servant of this story got in such huge debt. The king had the books open; the ledger told the story of his debts. In today’s money it would take 10 lifetimes to repay, assuming every penny went to the debt. Jesus was portraying a man with an impossible debt that was earning interest and getting larger by the minute and was beyond the man’s capability to pay back. The servant didn’t seem to understand the enormity of his debt. He fell down before the king and asked for more time so that he could pay back what he owed. Then the king acted in an unexpected way. He closed the ledger and the accounting department. He was no longer dealing with the servant in the light of the ledger or debts, but on another basis entirely. He moved with compassion. He freely forgave the man the entire debt; he removed the debt out of his life.

 The true meaning of the word “forgiveness” is embodied in this act of the king. The man was released from the debt so that the debt was no longer a burden. The debt would never be associated with the servant again. The king would never deal with this man from a reference to his debt. He was no longer confined, defined, or determined by his debt.

 The servant was free, but freedom for the servant had been a costly action for the king. Debts do not disappear into thin air, especially ones of this size. For the servant to be forgiven, the king had experienced an inner death; he had died to the right to expect any repayment of what was owed to him. In sending the debt away from the servant, he had to receive it in full. Moved with compassion, the king came from his accounting ledger to join the servant in his debt, assume it, and pay it off by canceling it.

 The old covenant of the law was necessary, for it was a time when men and women must face the debt to God that each one owes. But the heart of God is love, not the accounting office. He comes where we are and joins himself to us; he assumes our debt and absorbs it himself.

2Co 5:18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 2Co 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 2Co 5:20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 2Co 5:21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

 We were the enemies of God, our path was not his path, our ways was not his ways, and he came to us where we were, dead in trespasses and sins, the unrighteous man with his wicked ways. He came to where we were and achieved our reconciliation so that he is “not imputing their trespasses to them.” He is not the accountant adding figures and counting debts; he is the king moved with compassion and declaring us free from all debts.

 But our sins didn’t vanish into thin air! He achieved this for us in Christ, who came where we were in our sin and unrighteousness and became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him. The law condemns us, but he has taken our sin and there is nothing left to condemn.

 Which brings us back to the term “righteousness” and what does it mean? Rom 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets. There was a revelation of the righteousness of God. What does that mean? My righteousness is me trying to be good enough for God and remember from earlier verses we have set up our own standard because our ways are not his ways. God says forget that, all have sinned. So what is God’s righteousness? We saw earlier that it is a covenant term and it is God acting in covenant love but we could say it this way. God’s righteousness is God being right with himself, God acting absolutely right according to his own nature. So God will be absolutely right and judge sin.

 What is sin? When Adam believed the lie he became severed from God, no longer a relationship with God. He was dead in sin. Adam was alive but in the sphere of sin. So what is God going to do about this? God is love and God is Holy. God doesn’t have love he is love. God never gets angry, God never loses his temper. He is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. God’s anger never cools or never warms. God is anger against sin. We have an emotion, we get angry then happy. God isn’t like that. It’s the set of his being. It’s the way he is.

So why is God against sin? If God is holy then sin is the opposition; sin would seek to remove God, sin separates us from him. So God is good in being against sin. So what shall God do then with this man that has sinned and set himself against God? Man then comes under the curse, under the wrath of God. Satan was given to administrate the curse, he is the executioner. He who has the power of death, but he has no power independent of God, it was given to him. Satan was given the legal right to man. That is the curse and the strength of the curse gets its force from the law. 1Co 15:56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

 That’s what came out of the garden. It’s given to satan to administer the curse on man that has risen up against God. It’s only sin that gives satan any authority over man. (We have seen that we are free from this curse as mentioned earlier.)

Jesus said to the most religious people of the day that they were of their father the devil. The first thing man became aware of in this state of darkness was that he was naked. It means a lot more than not having any clothes on. There are only 2 in the garden and Eve is his wife. Is Adam really that upset that he lost his clothes? Being naked is speaking of an inner sense of shame. Shame is at the heart of nakedness. Adam knows something awful has gone wrong so he wants to hide. To be naked means someone had to be looking at you. You don’t feel naked in the shower. Naked has in it the idea someone is starring at you. Man having sinned, had the sense of someone starring at him and he felt the need to hide. He said God can see me I must hide. Man knows he’s wrong, he knows he was created to be filled with life but now he is a slave of satan. Adam knows now that if God is good then man is not good. If I’m naked, all I can think about is cover. So one thing dominates now, I’ve got to hide. So then life becomes a never ending pursuit to cover up, to hide from the shame that I feel before God. (Dead end after dead end.)

 Look at man now, self-seeking, wretch, all turned to our own way, living in unlove and darkness, the slave of satan, in sickness and decay in his body. He lives in the place where death reigns and the pain of that twists and distorts his life. He looks at himself and makes judgments about himself and the devil adds to those judgments with the law and pours on the condemnation. The man comes to church and the first thing he learns is “I’m not worthy.” The man becomes desperate for approval and only makes the mess worse. Deep down we know we were created for dignity but we don’t know where it is.

What are we going to do? What does God do? How can a man be in right standing with God?

God has a problem here, as we have seen before, God can’t just sweep sin under the rug. God is Holy, God is Just, and God is love so by his very nature he must judge sin. Seen in type and shadow in the Old Testament, God set judges in Israel. They are reflecting God who is the ultimate judge. God tells them they shall not show partiality in judgment. God says he takes no bribes and he shall judge a righteous judgment, only justice and shall in no wise justify the wicked.

I come to God and discover he is justice, he can’t be bribed and he shows no partiality and by no means does he justify the wicked. That cuts me out. I cannot come into his presence. How can God pardon us and still be true to his own justice?

 This brings us back to Romans 3:21 where there was a revelation of the righteousness of God. So God will be absolutely right and judge sin with no partiality and he can’t be bribed and he will judge a righteous judgment and in no wise justify the wicked. But God is love. He loves the most disgusting, most awful and he reaches to the bottom of the barrel and he loves. The righteousness of God says he will be right in his justice and he will be right in his love.

 But how can love and justice come together? God is absolutely right and he judges with justice and he loves the unlovable, how does he do that? How does the devil lose the people he has a legal right too? There was another law the devil didn’t know about. The only law the devil knew was that when a soul sinned it belonged to him; it was called the law of sin and death. But there was a law that rose in the heart of God from before time. It’s the law of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. It was a covenant already established in the heart of God between the Father and the Son. That covenant says that one who is worthy could take the place of the unworthy. If one could be found worthy, without sin and who loved the sinner enough to take their place (give the double), then the one could die for the other and the other would go free.

 Adam was the beginning of one race and he brought all under the curse, legally bound to the devil. Jesus, the last Adam started a new race, members of that race would be wicked people who were justified, the curse removed and every legal hold satan had would be gone as far as the east is from the west. Jesus doesn’t just come to forgive us of sins, he comes to justify, that is to cause you to be accepted, in right standing with God.

 Jesus comes where we are, yet his is righteous. The demons tremble before him, why, because he has all power, NO, he is the Holy One, He is righteous. Jesus says satan comes and has nothing in me, why, because he is righteous. Jesus stood and said to the waves and the storm, Peace, be still. Even creation obeyed him, because he was righteous. Sickness and disease departs because he is righteous. Even when he hung naked on the cross in shame, the Roman soldier said, surely this is the Son of God. There’s something about him, you couldn’t shame him, and you couldn’t insult him. You can’t insult righteousness.

 He came where we were, in our dead in sin and he took our place. He that knew no sin was made to be sin that we could be brought into the righteousness of God in Christ. He is made unto us righteousness? How did he do that?

 When Jesus left the garden of Gethsemane he goes as if he was us. Paul said I am crucified with Christ. This is part of the covenant. He is our representative. All sin was laid upon him. The full curse laid upon him. Death meets in him. The sin that is mine becomes his. That is covenant! Jesus took the full curse, full death; no one has been as dead as Jesus because he tasted death for every man. But he rises out of that death having fully paid for sin meaning your sin has been fully paid for and much more. It can be remembered no more!

 The righteousness of God has been revealed, God judged me and God loved me all at the same time in the person of Jesus Christ. He rose and he ascended and it is said that he is worthy. Why is he worthy, because he was slain. Rev 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Rev 5:12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. He who became sin is now called the “Worthy One”.

 So what does all that mean? In the eternal court of heaven where God does not justify the wicked, or take a bribe or judge with partiality, we have been justified so that God is just and the justifier to them that believe. That is the nature of covenant. God deals with man in the head or representative man which is Christ. We still may sin but the accounting department has been closed being fully dealt with in the cross of Christ.

 But I have to walk out of the prison; I must make a choice, it means I have to throw away all my bribes, as Paul says not having mine own righteousness. Php 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. If I walk out of the prison I acknowledge I belong there and bribes won’t get me out. He got me out. Then the horror, I’ve got to take off my fig leaves, I’m naked again. He’s going to look at me as he did John and Peter.

Luk 22:61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Luk 22:62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Rev 1:13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

Rev 1:14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

Rev 1:15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

 You are brought to the judgment seat of God, where sits the slain lamb. You are brought there to be known of God. The horror of knowing who I am, to know he died for me. While I was trying to cover up pretending I’m not really that bad (remember we had set up our own standard of righteousness), what I am really saying is, so why does he have to die anyway, I’m not really that bad. God says off with the fig leaves and come and admit who you are, be known of God. Let the stare of Holiness know you. Having thrown out all my bribes and all my fig leaves I’m left open and naked before him. We do as John did. Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.

 But it doesn’t end there. He doesn’t leave me naked in gulit and shame. Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: Rev 1:18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

We get up to walk in a brand new life. His life and we are clothed in his righteousness.

Rev 3:5  He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

Rev 3:18  I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

Isa 52:1 Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.  (Christ is the beautiful garment)

Isa 59:17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke.

Rom 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

Gal 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

 The Christian life may be summed as the consciousness that he lives within us, and we draw upon His infinite life in every situation. This means that as we grow in Christ and become mature, we will have an increasing sense of our own weakness that we might no longer trust in ourselves and so proportionately live from his strength.

Jesus didn’t come to help me keep the law. He will never do that, that is a wasted prayer. He himself is the new law, Christ himself is our life. We are united to him in covenant love, partakers of his divine nature. The requirement of the law now fulfilled in us. What was the requirement of the law?

LOVE!!!! God is love.

Rom 10:4 For Christ is the end (goal) of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

The question always comes, what must we do then to be saved? How can we be partakers of this covenant? What can I do?

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

The word for faith and believe are the same word in the new testament. We said earlier that faith is our response to what God has said or what God has revealed.

Paul said in Gal 2:20 that he lived by the faith of the son of God. Paul responded to and trusted that God was who he revealed himself to be. The righteousness of God found it’s full revelation in the person of Jesus Christ. All the judgment of sin met in him and at the same time all the love of God was seen in him. Christ Jesus is the righteousness of God and Paul lived by that revelation that God had revealed to him in the person of the son himself. Paul trusted that God was who he said he was. Faith!

 Without the revelation of who he is, the thought of God produces great anxiety. And no wonder, can we imagine a God who does not love us.

Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Gal 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

**I in You, You in Me**

In understanding the covenant, there are two phrases that are of supreme importance. The first is the expression “in Christ”; it is a phrase that indicates that we are vitally in and part of the historical events that took place, and it’s a phrase that indicates that by the Holy Spirit, we have actually been joined and made one with Jesus Christ so that his history has become our history. We are vitally one with him in all that he accomplished and all that he now is in the heavens.

 The second phrase that we find is “in the spirit”; it indicates the dynamic experience of the power of the spirit actually joining us to Christ and his work and making it real in our lives. What originated in eternity in the heart of God was effected in history by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and is received and experienced by the people of God through the work of the Holy Spirit. I cannot emphasize strongly enough the place of the Holy Spirit in the covenant. Apart from the Holy Spirit, there is no new covenant. The lifestyle of men and women in the new covenant is that of loving even as they are loved by God; that is an impossible goal apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

 The old covenant that Israel lived under was one of shadows, promises, and hope. The new covenant, called a “better covenant”, is founded on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and is primarily the covenant of fulfillment, of power, in which God and his people are dynamically joined as one in the work of the spirit.

 The covenant seeks for union of two parties, something that the old covenant could only point to, anticipate, and wait for. Ezekiel saw clearly that the Holy Spirit living within the believer would accomplish this union.

Eze 36:25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. Eze 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. Eze 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

 The law would no longer be a list of exterior commands but would arise from within; it is no longer “This is what you must do” but it is “This is want I want to do.” Behind all of God’s commands is one command – to love as he loves and the new covenant joins us to the love of God by the Spirit, who is the driving life force and ability to live such a life.

 All the prophets saw that the new covenant would be a covenant of the Spirit, when he would indwell God’s people; and from that presence, the heart of the law would be a natural direction the heart would go. This goes back to those verse in Isaiah when he joined us in our way to change our direction to his way, our path has now changed to his path which is love.

 Paul is adamant that I the Spirit does not dwell within us, then we are not Christians at all! The scripture is plain that no one can belong to Christ without receiving the Holy Spirit nor can we know that God is our Father and we are his sons and daughters apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

 The Spirit dynamically connects us with the covenant made in history. He is God with us to make real and vital the promises of the new covenant, He joins us to the life of the ascended Jesus and is the enabling power to live his life day by day. The Holy Spirit inducts us into the world of the new covenant called “heavenly places,” which is now our real world.

**The Dwelling of God**

 The new covenant describes a union between God and man so complete as to be paralleled to the glory of God dwelling in the tabernacle and the temple of the old covenant. The bodies of men and women have become the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word that described the entire temple area is ***hieron***, but the word for the inmost shrine of the temple, the dwelling of God’s glory in the midst of his people, called the Holy of Holies, is ***naon***. Speaking to the believers in Corinth, Paul describes each one of them as the ***naos***; the Holy of Holies filled with the Glory of God.

1Co 6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

1Co 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 1Co 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

 In all that we do, in all our relationships, we are the bearers of the divine presence. We must never think of ourselves apart from our absolute unity with the Spirit of Christ. Our covenant relationship to God hinges on the Holy Spirit’s being given to dwell within us. Jesus said that the day of the coming of the Spirit would be the day of believers coming to know union. “In that day,” the day of the Spirit’s coming, the believers would know “I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you”. There is not a more intense phrase to describe our union than “You in me, and I in you.”

Colossians 3:3 sums it up; For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

 The Christian life is the continual act of remaining in him, dwelling in him, being aware of him as our life. It is choosing to be present to him who is committed to be present with us. Faith is being present in one’s inmost self, the inner man, to God, who is love, knowing that he is the final truth and that he has spoken: 2Jn 1:2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us forever.

 The relationship of Christ the Vine and us believers, the branches, abiding in him describes the extent of the unity with Christ that we enjoy. It does away forever with the notion that he is “up there” or “over there” or that we come to a meeting of the church in order to find him. We live joined to him as the source of our life.

 This reality is very hard for us to grasp. It is much easier for us to think of him invisibly beside us. He is with us, but the weight of the New Testament simply states that he is in us and we are in him. He is in me, in you, in us, in all that we do and all that we experience. In us he acts, feels our sorrows and knows our joys.

 “For to me to live is Christ” means that the experience I am going through at this moment, what I am doing, is being experienced and done by Jesus within me.

 The Spirit calls us, nudges us with those inner longings after the knowledge of God, but we must respond by positioning ourselves where the Spirit can bring us to know him.

Hos 6:3 Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

 The word “follow” is a strong word and would better be understood as “run after with zeal and excitement.” The prophet not only urges us to pursue such knowledge but assures us that he will be found = as surely as the dawn breaks and the rains come in their season. It is significant that many of the prayers of Paul for his converts centered on this idea. He wanted them to move beyond an intellectual knowledge, a studying of a subject, a knowing about, to this knowledge of intimate experience. We can do no better than to take one of his requests and make it our life prayer:

Eph 3:19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

 The flesh has a front to stop us from accepting the gift now; it will accept but with conditions. It must have time to make itself ready with dedications, promises to be godlier and disciplined, all of which will be in place tomorrow or next week. In so doing, the flesh will have produced a cause for receiving the promises of the covenant by a process in which it is still in control, determining when we are ready and when we are worthy to receive the covenant. Religious flesh must stay in control at any cost. To confront the reality of the unconditional love of God that has given all in Christ means death to the flesh.

 The response of faith to the gift of the covenant is to surrender, now, in this moment, giving all that we know of ourselves to all that we know of him. We know very little of ourselves and even less of him, but as we surrender we shall know more.

 We go on to define ourselves by the surrender to the truth that is contained in the covenant, the flesh will always define us by our past, but faith surrendering to him defines us by the covenant gift. We call ourselves by who we are in the light of the gift of love.

1Jn 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God:

From such a posture, we shall go on to grow in grace and in the true knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

 **The Just shall live by Faith!**