

Session 2

Steps of Ancient Covenant Making

This session covers:

- Covenant making in ancient cultures
- Eight common steps of entering a covenant
- How each step of ancient covenant making applies to us today

This session corresponds to:

- Chapters 3-5 of *Understanding Your Inheritance in Christ* book
- Sessions 2 of *Understanding Your Inheritance in Christ* CDs

Covenant Making in Ancient Cultures

1. In the ancient Near East dating back to the time of Abraham, covenants were a common aspect of life and were made on a regular basis.

- Covenants were as common in ancient times as business contracts, international treaties, and legislative decisions are today. They were made between individuals, tribes, and nations, and they were entered for the purposes of protection, strength, and prosperity.
- Often, the promise of blessings would be involved, such as abundant harvests, prosperity, good health, or many children. Almost every covenant called upon one or more of the many pagan deities to witness the ceremony and to visit the participants with either blessings for obedience or curses for disobedience.
- The Mari Tablets, discovered in the 1930s in present day Syria, sheds light on what life was like during the early years of history, going back even to the time of Abraham.¹ These tablets, some twenty thousand in number, describe a wide variety of practices in the

ancient Near East. Among the many details described, one was the rite of covenant making during the days of Abraham.

- Delbert Hillers gives us insight into this covenant-making rite by documenting a covenant ceremony which involved the king of Mari. Hillers tells how a representative of the king of Mari, presiding over the covenant ceremony, refused to enter into the treaty lightly and insisted upon having a donkey sacrificed.²
- Hillers' example shows us three important points about covenants. First, it reveals how common covenants were during the time that God cut a covenant with Abraham. Second, it shows that animal sacrifices were an integral part of ancient-covenant making. And third, it reinforces how serious covenant agreements were considered in ancient times.

2. Examples from history show that covenant making was a common practice in biblical times.

- H. Clay Trumbull shares an extra-biblical account of a Near Eastern covenant that illustrates many of the common steps involved in making an ancient covenant:

In bringing this rite of the covenant of blood into new prominence, it may be well for me to tell of it as it was described to me by an intelligent native Syrian, who saw it consummated in a village at the base of the mountains of Lebanon; and then to add evidences of its wide-spread existence in the East and elsewhere, in earlier and in later times.

It was two young men, who were to enter into this covenant. They had known each other, and had been intimate [as friends], for years; but now they were to become brother-friends, in the covenant of blood. Their relatives and neighbors were called together, in the open place before the village fountain, to witness the sealing compact. The young men publicly announced their purpose, and their reasons for it. Their declarations were written down, in duplicate—one paper for each friend—and signed by themselves and by several witnesses. One of the friends took a sharp lancet, and opened a vein in the other's arm. Into the opening thus made, he inserted a quill, through which he sucked the living blood. The lancet-blade was carefully wiped on one of the duplicate covenant-papers, and then it was taken by the other friend, who made a like incision in its first user's arm and drank his blood through the quill, wiping the blade on the duplicate covenant-record. The two friends declared together: "We are brothers in a covenant made before God: who deceiveth the other, him will God deceive." Each blood-marked covenant-record was then folded carefully, to be sewed up in a small leathern case, or amulet, about an inch square; to be worn thenceforward by one of the covenant-brothers, suspended about the neck, or bound upon the arm, in token of the indissoluble relation.³

- We can also look to more modern times at the lives of the famous explorers Sir Henry Stanley and David Livingstone. John Osteen in his book, *Unraveling the Mystery of the Blood Covenant*, shares an interesting story about Stanley.⁴ The following summarizes Osteen's illustration.

Livingstone, the first great missionary to Africa, was in the African jungles so long that England, his native country, began to worry about his status. As a result, the English government sent David Stanley to find him. Stanley's search party encountered great difficulties in their travels. They were plagued by disease and starvation, and were even threatened by cannibals. At one point, the group encountered a strong, hostile African tribe near the equator.

When the tribe showed no signs of letting them pass through their land, Stanley's interpreter advised Stanley to cut a covenant with the tribe to avoid severe peril. Not knowing what else to do, Stanley agreed. First, negotiations were made between Stanley's party and the African tribe. The terms were agreed upon and the ceremony began. A representative was chosen from each group and the two representatives went through the blood-covenant rite.

After blood was drawn from the wrist of each representative, mingled together and mixed with wine, both drank the mixture. Gunpowder was then rubbed on each person where the blood had been drawn, creating a permanent mark. The pagan priest that officiated the ceremony then pronounced blessings for following the terms of the agreement and curses for violating the pact.

To seal the agreement, Stanley and the chief exchanged gifts. The chief wanted Stanley's prized possession, a goat that he had brought from England that provided milk for his weak stomach. The chief offered Stanley a spear bearing his insignia. Stanley wondered what he would do with an old spear. As he traveled throughout the darkest places in Africa in search of Livingstone, he soon found out. When other tribes with evil intent saw the chief's spear in Stanley's hand and his covenant mark, they knew that Stanley was in covenant with the most feared tribe in the land. Further, they knew that if they attacked Stanley or refused him passage, they would not only have to fight Stanley's search party, but also the African tribe in covenant with Stanley. Rather than opposing Stanley, the tribes bowed before him, allowing him to pass freely through their territories, and provided him with anything he needed. Stanley reportedly used the covenant rite at least fifty times during his travels in Africa. Stanley was mightily blessed because of covenant!

3. God chose to use a common practice of everyday life—entering into a covenant—to illustrate His commitment to His people.

- When God entered into covenant with Abraham, Moses, David, and Jesus, He drew upon many of the same practices that were common in the day in which they lived.
- Because God employed cultural practices of the day to introduce His covenants with man, it spoke volumes to the people who lived in the days when biblical covenants were formed.
- It revealed to them how *seriously* God takes His covenant invitations, how *seriously* God *expects* His people to take covenant, the *extent* of God's blessings to His people, and God's *faithfulness* toward His covenant promises.
- As we see the steps of ancient-covenant making applied in God's covenants with us, it underscores how serious God is about His covenant promises to us and it conveys the extensive blessings that God has offered us because of covenant.

Steps of Covenant Making**1. From the historical evidence, several steps of covenant making emerge as common in ancient times.**

- Ancient covenants were always very solemn and serious agreements. Animal sacrifices were almost always included. Covenants were accompanied by the promise of blessings for obedience and the warning of curses for disobedience. In pagan societies, the participants almost always invoked their false gods as witnesses to secure the agreement. Finally, a sign of the covenant would usually accompany the sealing of the agreement.
- From historical information, we see the following eight steps commonly used in ancient covenant ceremonies:
 - The Pre-Ceremony Actions
 - The Selection of the Covenant Representatives and the Cutting of the Covenant Sacrifice
 - The Exchange of Robes, Belts, and Weapons
 - The Walk unto Death
 - The Pronouncement of Blessings and Curses
 - The Seal of the Covenant Mark
 - The Exchange of Names
 - The Covenant Meal
- Not every ancient covenant included all of these steps, but many were included.
- A brief review of these eight steps will give us a basic understanding of God's covenants with man.

The important point to us is that God chose these same steps to enter into covenant with man. Thus, what each step represented to the people of Abraham's day applies to us today.

Eight Steps of Covenant Making

1. The Pre-Ceremony Actions

- *Overview*
 - In a typical ancient covenant, before the covenant was enacted, the two parties would discuss the terms, conditions, the promises of blessing, and the warning of curses related to the agreement.
 - As a part of this step, they would weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the treaty and evaluate whether it was a worthwhile opportunity. They would spend time
 - counting the cost of entering into the covenant.
 - In essence, they would assess whether the personal sacrifice demanded by the pact would return equal or greater blessings.

- *How It Applies to Us Today*
 - When God initiated a covenant with Abraham, a period of time preceded the actual covenant ceremony recorded in Genesis 15. This pre-ceremony interaction between God and Abraham is recorded in Genesis 12:1-8.
 - In this passage, God proposed the terms, conditions, and promises. Abraham's role was to count the cost and to respond in faith and obedience. Abraham had to decide if the promises of blessings were worth the sacrifice of leaving his homeland. Abraham had to choose between the security of living near his family or going to a strange, unfamiliar land in which he was an alien.
 - God required Abraham to respond to the invitation *prior* to the covenant ceremony. God told Abraham that if he would leave his country, leave his family, and go to the land that God would show him, *then* he would be blessed.
 - Abraham responded positively to the invitation, thus setting the stage for the actual covenant ceremony that took place in Genesis 15.
 - Pre-ceremony actions were also a part of establishing the New Covenant. Jesus came to earth as a man and spent the three years of His public ministry specifying the terms, conditions, and promises of the New Covenant.

- Jesus often stated, “You have heard that it was said....but I say to you” (Matt. 5:21, 27, 33, 38, 43). In doing this, Jesus was laying out the requirements of entering the New Covenant. In fact, much of Jesus’ teaching can be viewed as the stipulations for New Covenant living. Other examples of cost counting are Luke 9:23-24 and Luke 14:25-33
- Jesus has invited all men to be saved. His invitation is to enter into covenant with God through Him. We live in a day of cheap grace and seeker-sensitive churches where people say a brief prayer that declares a set of facts about Jesus. The New Covenant is much different. It is not an invitation that asks for a decision to believe, but rather an invitation that calls us to a covenant life of faith and surrender.
- The pre-ceremony actions illustrate clearly that there is a cost to entering into a covenant with God—we must totally surrender our lives to Him.

2. The Selection of the Covenant Representatives and the Cutting of the Covenant Sacrifice

- *Overview*

- In typical ancient covenants, before the ceremony began, a covenant representative was chosen on behalf of each group engaged in the pact. These representatives entered the covenant on behalf of everyone in their group. Two would actually make the covenant that would bind the entire group to the expectations of the covenant agreement.
- As the ceremony started, the representatives would take the animal sacrifice and cut it down the middle from head to tail. The two pieces of the sacrifice were laid open with the bloody side facing upward. Since the animal was usually quite large, a significant amount of blood would escape, flowing toward the center of the two pieces of the sacrifice.
- The representatives would then stand near the sacrifice.

- *How It Applies to Us Today*

- In the covenant with Abraham, the two covenant representatives were the Lord and Abraham. The Lord, taking the form of a smoking oven and a flaming torch, passed through the pieces of the covenant sacrifice (Gen. 15:17).
- Abraham was the covenant representative that God chose on behalf of mankind. Together, God and Abraham entered into a covenant for the entire human race.
- As we see the New Testament fulfillment of this step, we begin to see the majesty and greatness of the New Covenant. Jesus is the representative of the Father in the cutting of the New Covenant (Phil 2:5-8). Jesus was the One chosen by the Father to cut covenant on behalf of heaven.

- A very important distinction of the New Covenant is that Jesus is also the covenant representative on behalf of mankind (Hebrews 2:17-18). Jesus is the representative of the human race before the Father. He cut the New Covenant on our behalf.
- Jesus is also the New Covenant sacrifice (John 1:29, 1 Cor. 5:7).
- In summary, Jesus is the covenant representative for both God and man, and He is the New Covenant sacrifice.
- Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 8:6). He is the go between, representing both God and man. Jesus did it all.

In Session 3, when we will look at this step in detail, what Jesus did for us in the New Covenant will have an entirely new meaning and you will appreciate the New Covenant like never before.

3. The Exchange of Robes, Belts, and Weapons

- *Overview*
 - In many cases, the parties to the covenant would exchange robes, belts, weapons, or some other token as a symbol of their desire to no longer to live independently but as one.
 - The exchange of robes symbolizes the putting on of each other and becoming one. It says that I give you all that I have and you give me all that you are. It implies that I give you all my assets and I take all of your liabilities. It signifies a new position, new character, and new authority.
 - The belt or the girdle was part of the armor. It is what held the weapons in place and is symbolic of a man's strength. The exchange of belts is symbolic of giving your covenant partner your strengths and taking on his weaknesses.
 - Weapons are used to defeat enemies. Thus, the exchange of weapons symbolizes the responsibility and the power to defeat the other's enemies.
- *How It Applies to Us Today*
 - As God, Jesus took off His robe of glory and came to earth, clothing Himself in the likeness of humanity (Phil. 2:5-7). By so doing, He made the wonderful, royal robe of righteousness available to us. By His work on the cross, Jesus took upon Himself our robe of filthy rags, which has been defiled by our sin and independent living. He who knew no sin became sin so that

He might nail our iniquity to the cross. For further study, see these supporting Scriptures: Isa. 64:6; Luke 15:12-13; Luke 15:22; Gal. 3:27; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rev. 7:13-14.

- As we enter the New Covenant, God takes all of our weaknesses and gives us His strength for living. In covenant, even though we are weak, we have access to the strength of God (Phil 4:13; 2 Cor. 12:9-10).
- Christ defeated every enemy that has or will come against the purposes of God. In the past, He defeated the enemies of God at the cross (Col. 2:11-15). In the future, He will destroy our enemies at His second coming (2 Thess. 1:3-10). Presently, He lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25) and has given us all power over the enemy. Jesus told the disciples, "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you" (Luke 10:19).

4. The Walk Unto Death

- *Overview*

- Next, to express how seriously each party of the covenant viewed their part of the agreement, they would participate in "a walk unto death" by walking around the pieces of the sacrificed animal. Some have said that they would walk in the form of a figure eight.
- As the two representatives walked between the two pieces of the sacrifice and faced each other, they would look to heaven and say something like this: "Do so to me as has been done to this animal if I break this covenant. If I fail to keep this covenant, may I die even as this animal has died."⁵
- In this step, each representative pledged to fulfill his obligation to the covenant or die trying. After this step, there was no escape, no way out. Both parties would take a vow unto death in order to fulfill their side of the pact.

- *How It Applies to Us Today*

- There are two excellent Old Testament examples of the walk unto death. The first one is recorded in Genesis 15:17: "It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces."
- In the covenant ceremony between the Lord and Abraham, God Himself was the smoking oven and the flaming torch that passed between the pieces. In essence, God was saying to Abraham, "Let what has been done to this animal be done to Me if I do not fulfill My promise to you!"
- Remember: This covenant ceremony was in response to Abraham's question of how he would know that God would fulfill His

- promise. God gave Abraham the greatest pledge possible.
- Another Old Testament example illustrates how familiar this custom was to the people of the Old Testament era and how seriously God took it. Jeremiah 34:18 reads, "I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not fulfilled the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they cut the calf in two and *passed between its parts*."
 - In the context of this verse, God is saying to Israel that when they passed between the parts of the animal, they made a vow to keep the covenant unto death. Essentially, God is reminding His covenant people that they are breaking the vow that was pledged during the walk unto death.
 - Jesus, the sacrifice and mediator of the New Covenant, took the walk unto death as He humbly made His way up Golgotha to be crucified. Jesus had taken His vow unto death when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39). In essence, Jesus was saying, "I will cut the covenant. I will take the walk unto death. I will be the covenant sacrifice. I will be the mediator of the New Covenant."
 - As Jesus hung voluntarily upon the cross, He paid the ultimate price of death for all who would enter into covenant with God through Him.
 - New Covenant living is not just believing a set facts about Jesus. It involves much more than believing that Jesus is God, that He died on the cross, and that He rose from the dead on the third day. New Covenant living is trusting in Jesus' walk unto death for us and then taking our own walk unto death.
 - Normally, God doesn't ask us to die physically—like Jesus did—when we take our walk unto death. Rather, our walk unto death involves surrendering our hearts to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, dying to ourselves daily, and vowing to live for God.

5. The Pronouncement of Blessings and Curses

- *Overview*
 - During an ancient-covenant ceremony, while the two parties stood in the middle of the sacrifice, each would pronounce aloud the terms of the covenant.
 - They would declare the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. The blessings would often include abundant harvests, prosperity, good health, and numerous children. Curses would often include retaliation by the injured party, destruction, disease, poverty, famine, and defeat at the hands of their enemies.
 - In ancient pagan cultures, the parties to the covenant would invoke their many false deities, who had been called upon to witness the ceremony, to visit them with blessings or curses.

- *How It Applies to Us Today*
 - Deuteronomy 27-32 presents a clear Old Testament example of the covenant blessings and curses. With the nation of Israel on the threshold of possessing the Promised Land, God reminded them of the blessings for keeping the covenant and the curses for breaking it. In fact, once in the land, six of the tribes of Israel were to stand on Mt. Gerizim to declare the blessings to the people and six on Mt. Ebal to state the curses (Deut. 27:11-15).
 - After deciding at Gethsemane to die for mankind, Jesus, the mediator and representative of the New Covenant, took the walk unto death as He made His way up to be crucified. While He was on the cross, Jesus spoke seven sayings:

Jesus' Statement	New Covenant Blessing
1. Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:34).	Forgiveness of sins
2. Today, you shall be with Me in Paradise (Luke 23:43).	Eternal life
3. Woman, behold your son (John 19:26).	A new family in the Body of Christ
4. My God, My God why have you forsaken Me? (Matt. 27:46).	Redemption from the curse of sin, sickness, and death
5. I thirst (John 19:28).	Establishment of the kingdom of God ⁶
6. It is finished (John 19:30).	Grace ⁷
7. Father, I commit My spirit to you (Luke 23:46).	Blessings secured

- As Jesus made these statements, He pronounced the blessings of the New Covenant to all mankind—blessings such as forgiveness of sin, eternal life, and blessings in this life.
- As our iniquity and rebellion were placed upon Him, He also

took the curse of sin and death. Whereas the covenants of the Old Testament contained blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience, the New Covenant consists only of blessings. Through the cross, Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us (Gal. 3:13).

6. The Seal of the Covenant Mark

- *Overview*
 - In a typical ancient covenant, after the animal was sacrificed, the walk unto death completed, and the blessings and curses stated, the two parties would seal the agreement with a special sign or token.
 - This became the mark of the covenant that reminded both parties of the solemn pact that bound them together as one. If the agreement enacted was a blood covenant, then the mark would normally involve the shedding of blood by the two covenant partners.
 - A normal way that covenant partners in the pagan world would seal the covenant was to drink wine commingled with the blood from each representative. After cutting their wrist, forearm, or leg, each representative would catch a few drops of blood with a cup containing wine. They would drink this mixture as a way to finalize the covenant. Remember that Jewish Law prohibited the drinking of blood; therefore, biblical covenants were often sealed with the drinking of wine, which symbolized blood.
 - In addition to the sealing of the agreement with the drinking of wine co-mingled with blood, each covenant partner would often take a dark substance and rub it into the cut. This caused the incision to become a permanent scar. The scar would serve as a public reminder that the two were now covenant partners.
 - To summarize, there were typically two aspects to sealing the agreement with a covenant mark. The first was the commingling of blood, which indicated unity, oneness, and a common purpose. The second was taking the covenant mark, which became a permanent reminder of the agreement to everyone involved.

- *How It Applies to Us Today*
 - Genesis 17:10-13 depicts the covenant mark involved in the pact between Abraham and the Lord. God instituted circumcision as a sign of the covenant between them. The shedding of Abraham's blood in circumcision sealed the covenant. In fact, for any of Abraham's descendents to enter the covenant, they also had to be circumcised.
 - As the covenant sacrifice, Jesus shed His blood at the cross. After He rose from the dead, with the marks of the cross still present, He entered into the heavenly tabernacle, and through

His shed blood, obtained eternal redemption for mankind (Heb. 9:11-12). As the covenant representative of the New Covenant, Jesus' blood offering to the Father satisfied in full the penalty of sin. Forever, His blood is the atonement for all iniquity. Whoever calls upon Him will be forgiven all their trespasses.

- Jesus' blood became the sign of the New Covenant for us. Today, He still bears the marks of the covenant in His nail-scarred wrists, feet, and side. Whenever the Father sees a believer in Christ, He sees him sealed with the blood of Christ and heir to all the blessings of the New Covenant (See also Ps. 22:16; Zech. 12:10; John 20:27-28; Matt. 26:27-28).
- As believers in Jesus Christ, our covenant mark is a circumcised heart. This proves that we have truly entered the New Covenant and bear the mark of the blood of Jesus. Just as circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant, a circumcised heart is the sign of the New Covenant (See Rom. 2:28-29; Col 2:11-12).
- Just as drinking wine co-mingled with blood was common in covenant rituals, Jesus said that we cannot be a partaker with Him unless we drink His blood (John 6:53-56). When Jesus made this statement, there is no doubt that He was referring to the common covenant practice of drinking wine co-mingled with blood. We drink Jesus' blood by accepting His blood as the only thing that will cleanse us from sin and bring us near to God.

7. The Exchange of Names

- *Overview*

- The exchange of names was the next step in ancient-covenant making. Clay Trumbull in his book, *The Blood Covenant*, writes:

To exchange names, therefore, is to establish some participation in one another's being. Hence, as we may suppose, came the well-nigh universal Oriental practice of inter-weaving the name of one's Deity with one's name, as a symbolic evidence of one's covenant-union with the Deity. The blood-covenant, or the blood-union, idea is at the bottom of this.⁸

- The exchange of names was much more than an external symbol. It implied the exchange of personality, character, reputation, essence, and authority.
- It symbolized the two becoming one.

- *How It Applies to Us Today*

- In the Old Testament, we see this practice illustrated in the

covenant that God made with Abraham. God changed Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah (Gen. 17:5, 15). In both cases, He made the change by adding the "heth" sound. This sound is the sound of God's name "YHWH," probably pronounced Yahweh.

- The New Covenant also points to the exchange of names. Jesus used the name of the Father throughout His earthly ministry. In John 17:6, Jesus stated in His prayer to the Father, "I have manifested Your name." We also see that Jesus was given a new name that was greater and more powerful than any other name (See Phil 2:5-8; Eph. 1:20-23).
- As Christians, we have access to all of the Hebrew names of God. We can call on our covenant partner as Jehovah-Rapha, Jehovah-Jireh, or Jehovah-Sabaoth. Because of the covenant, we have access to all of the authority and power that accompanies the name of Jesus. We are promised that we can ask anything in Jesus' name, the name which is above every name.

8. The Covenant Meal

- *Overview*

- The final step in ancient-covenant making was the celebration of the covenant meal. By this point, the parties had agreed upon the covenant, the promises were made, and all of the exchanges were executed. It was now time to celebrate the pact that had been sealed.
- The covenant meal was a time of great celebration. The meal included bread and wine, which represented the body and blood of the covenant partners. Sometimes the wine was mixed with blood. At other times, the wine merely represented the blood.
- As they celebrated the meal, they made their concluding declaration to live as one. By eating the bread and drinking the wine, the covenant partners were expressing for the final time their vows to live for each other.
- From this point forward, the two parties and all whom they represented were viewed as one.

- *How It Applies to Us Today*

- In the covenant God initiated with Abraham, we see the covenant meal celebrated between God's representatives, Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 18:5-10).
- In Luke 22:14-20, Jesus said the wine of the Lord's Supper represented the blood of the New Covenant. Thus, the Lord's Supper is the New Covenant meal.
- The ultimate fulfillment of the New Covenant meal is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Jesus told the Laodicean Church, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My

voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me" (Rev. 3:20). Jesus promised the overcoming Church the great blessing of celebrating the completion of the New Covenant with an intimate meal with Him.

Summary of Blessings

1. As we progress through this class, we will see many wonderful blessings of following Christ as a New Covenant believer.

- In Session 3, we will learn of the blessings that we inherit from our position of being in Christ.
- In Session 4, we will discover that we are heirs to the blessings of Abraham.
- In Session 5, we will learn of the distinctions of the New Covenant.

2. After analyzing the steps of ancient covenant making, below is a summary of several of the blessings that belong to us in Christ.

- We are clothed in Christ's robe of righteousness.
- We have access to God's strength despite our weaknesses.
- God will wage war against our enemies, which include the world, the flesh, and the devil.
- Our sins are forgiven and we have access to eternal life because of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.
- We have access to all of the names of God in both the Old and New Testament—which means that we have access to what those names mean. For example, we can call on our covenant partner as Jehovah-Rapha, the Lord our healer or Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord our provider.
- We are sealed with our own personal mark of the covenant—a circumcised heart that assures us that we are saved and will go to heaven when we die.
- When we partake of the bread and wine during communion, we are reminding ourselves of all of the blessings that are ours through covenant.

Notes

1. As cited in "Where History Began Before History" (December, 2001), at www.far-and-near.com/journeys/mari.htm.
2. Delbert R. Hillers, *Covenant: The History of a Biblical Idea* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 40.
3. H. Clay Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant* (Kirkwood, MO: Impact Christian Books, Inc., 1998), pp. 5-6.
4. John Osteen, *Unraveling the Mystery of the Blood Covenant* (Houston, TX: John Osteen, 1987), pp. 14-18.
5. Kay Arthur, *Covenant* (Chattanooga: Precept Ministries of Reach Out, Inc., 1986), pp. L-4, P-2.

6. Jesus did not ask for something to drink just because He was thirsty. There was a much deeper meaning to His statement. I have listed three reasons why Jesus said this. First, He spoke this phrase to fulfill Scripture (Ps. 22:15). Second, He thirsted spiritually. At the point in time that Jesus asked for the vinegar (a cheap wine used by the masses), He had already taken the sin of the world upon Himself. Jesus had been separated from His heavenly Father and yearned for His relationship with the Father to be restored. Third, and the reason for the blessing listed in this book, was to proclaim the establishment of the kingdom of God upon the earth. At the Last Supper, Jesus said that He would not drink of the vine until He had come in His kingdom (Matt. 26:29).
7. When Jesus said that it is finished, He was proclaiming that all of the work of the cross had been accomplished. Because the work has been finished, as New Covenant believers, we live by grace. In other words, we live based on the power of God within us that was activated by Jesus at the cross.
8. H. Clay Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant* (Kirkwood, MO: Impact Christian Books, Inc., 1998), pp. 263-264.

Review Questions

True or False

- _____ 1. In ancient times, covenant making was an every day practice in many cultures, and for this reason, God chose to use covenant making as a way to show His commitment to His people.
- _____ 2. God has used many of the same steps of covenant making that the ancients used to introduce His covenants with man.
- _____ 3. The Mari Tablets, discovered in the 1930s in present day Syria, shed light on what life was like during the early years of history, going back even to the time of Abraham.
- _____ 4. Even though there was no spiritual implications in pagan covenants, God used the idea of covenant to interact with man.
- _____ 5. One of the steps of covenant making was the walk unto death.
- _____ 6. Another step of covenant making was the walk of life.
- _____ 7. Before entering a covenant, the ancients would weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the treaty and evaluate whether it was a worthwhile opportunity.
- _____ 8. In cutting the New Covenant, the two parties entering the covenant on behalf of mankind were Jesus and us.
- _____ 9. Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant.
- _____ 10. As we enter the New Covenant, God takes our weaknesses and gives us His strength for living.

Fill in the Blank

11. As the two representatives took the _____ unto _____ and stood between the two pieces of the sacrifice, they would say something like this: "Do so to me as has been done to this animal if I break this covenant. If I fail to keep this covenant, may I die even as this animal has died."
12. During an ancient-covenant ceremony, while the two parties stood in the middle of the sacrifice, each would pronounce aloud the terms of the covenant. They would then declare the _____ for obedience and _____ for disobedience.
13. As believers in Jesus Christ, our covenant mark is a _____ heart.

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14. Deuteronomy 27-32 presents a clear Old Testament example of the covenant _____ and _____.

15. In cutting the New Covenant, Jesus is the covenant representative for both _____ and _____, and He is the New Covenant _____.

From the list on the right, identify five steps of covenant making.

- _____ 16.
- _____ 17.
- _____ 18.
- _____ 19.
- _____ 20.

Possible Matches for 16-20

- a. Selecting a covenant representative and cutting the covenant sacrifice.
- b. Placing the harvest sacrifice upon the altar.
- c. The wedding ceremony as it relates to a marriage covenant
- d. The pronouncement of blessings and curses
- e. The walk unto death
- f. The drinking of blood
- g. The exchange of names
- h. The covenant meal
- i. The announcement of the covenant on the mountaintop