

# Covenant Relationship

*HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE*

This sermon is not just for those who have not made the decision to be baptized, but for those of us who have made that decision. This decision is as important as to whom you will marry. Both of those decisions are covenant decisions and not just in and out. They both change the rest of your life, your responsibilities, and what you spend your time doing. And although there is sacrifice required for both, there are also rewards for both. Let's look at God's covenant relationship with Abraham and how one committed to that covenant.

Genesis 17:1-14 READ –

Circumcision...Abraham is called into a covenant relationship and to live blamelessly. Vs. 7 “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. Vs. 8 I will give to you and to your descendants after you, **the land** of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Vs. 14 But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant. With this we see that disobedience excludes one from the covenant.

Old Testament circumcision under the Law became obsolete with Jesus. Galatians 5:2-4 Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. <sup>3</sup>And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. <sup>4</sup>You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

The new covenant is through faith and obedience, as we see in Abraham, and the New Testament. Hebrews 11:8-10 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup>By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; <sup>10</sup>for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. <sup>13</sup>All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance. <sup>39-40</sup>And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, <sup>40</sup>because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.

Galatians 3:22-29 states that the promise is given to those who believe (and belief leads to obedience). All who were **baptized into Christ have clothed themselves with Christ. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise. One must be clothed with Christ through baptism in order to be an heir and receive what is promised.** So we could say, according to this verse, that if we are not baptized, we have broken the covenant.

Romans 2:28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. <sup>29</sup>But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.

We see again that in the New Testament and after Jesus' resurrection, Jews and Gentiles are all able to come under the covenant made with Abraham, but not by physical circumcision. But why would anyone want to be in this covenant with God? It is because of the reward promised to Abraham, it inherit the earth. And we see through the New Testament that this tied to being resurrected if we are "in Christ".

# Newness of Life

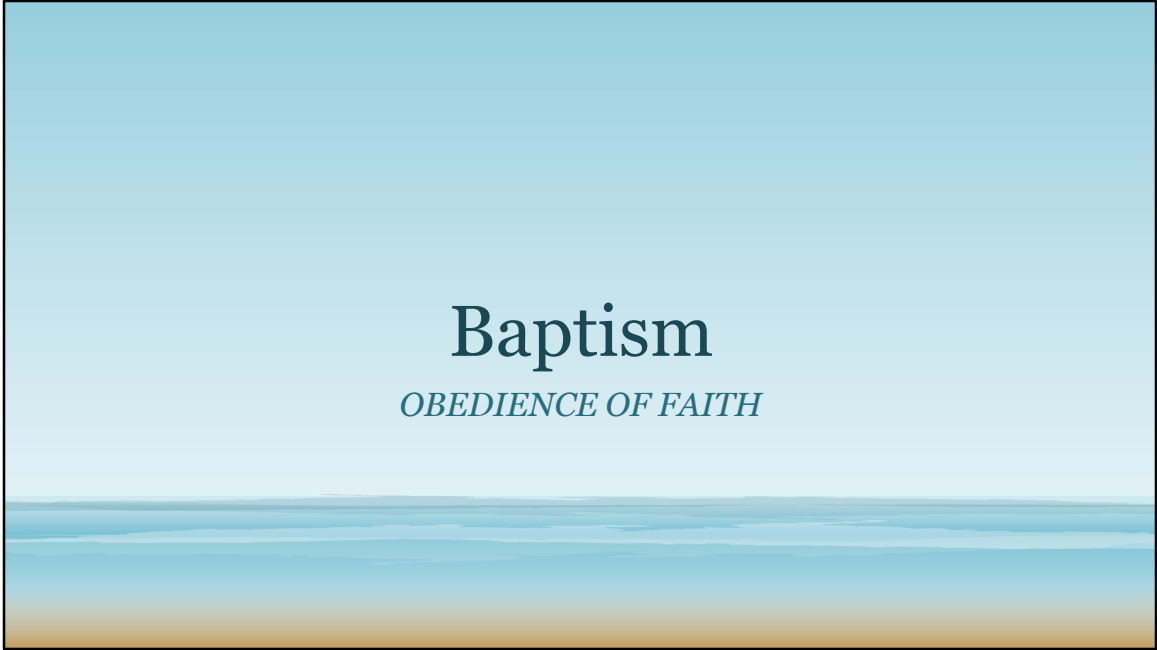
*MADE COMPLETE*

Romans 6:4-5 explains that we have **been buried with Jesus through baptism** into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness of his resurrection*.

We are promised a new life now and the assured hope to be resurrected when Jesus returns. As long as we are walking in this newness of life, this is a fact, we do not have to doubt! (When I was talking to one Baptist at the fair last year about OSAS, he questioned me. “So, every time a person sins they are out? We’d be going in and out of covenant all the time.” Well, that’s silly. God knew Abraham and his descendants would sin. That is why He established sacrifices back then. And as we see, the new circumcision is of the HEART. If we would continually choose to not walk blamelessly before God or to thumb our nose at Him, then we would break the covenant, not every time we slip up.

Colossians 2:11-12 tells us that in him you have been made complete, and he is the head over all rule and authority; and in him you were also circumcised with a **circumcision** made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been **buried with him in baptism**, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Again, circumcision and baptism are connected to the covenant. But also notice for those of you who have been baptized, you have been made complete in Jesus. You are a new creation capable and able to walk beside him.



Baptism, like circumcision, in and of themselves, do no save. It is the act of obedience!

1 Corinthians 10:1-2 gives an example of obedience saving people. Just as the Israelites passed through the sea and were baptized, this obedience saved them from Pharaoh. They could have followed Moses all the way up to the sea, but if they did not obey cross through, they would have been destroyed, no matter how much they loved God.

Now just because the Israelites crossed through the sea on their way to the Promised land, we know that many died because of their rebellion and disobedience, and didn't make it into the Promised Land. We must continue to walk in obedience, even after being baptized. Just as Romans 6 says, we are to walk in newness of life, and we CAN do this if we chose daily to do so, with the help of God' spirit that is in us.



So then, those  
who had received  
his word were  
baptized

*For the promise is for you  
and your children and for  
all who are far off...*

Acts 2 is an amazing discourse! One chapter sums it all up! It Jesus is a man, God worked through him, Jesus was crucified, God raised him up. David (and all people) are dead and in their graves. David was promised that one of his descendants would sit on his throne forever. David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah. God Jesus was exalted by God and received the holy spirit from God. Jesus, not David ascended into heaven. Messiah is at God's right hand waiting for the time his enemies would be a footstool (and God's kingdom rule would cover the earth).

Let's read some in Acts 2:

22-24 Jesus the Nazarene, **a man** attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which **God performed through Him** in your midst, just as you yourselves know— this man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.

25-28 For David says of Him,  
‘I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE;  
FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.  
26 ‘THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED;  
MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE;  
27 BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES,  
NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.  
28 ‘YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE;  
YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.’

29-36 Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup> And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SEAT *one* OF HIS DESCENDANTS ON HIS THRONE, <sup>31</sup> he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that HE WAS NEITHER ABANDONED TO HADES, NOR DID His flesh SUFFER DECAY. <sup>32</sup> This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. <sup>33</sup> Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. <sup>34</sup> For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says:

‘THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD,  
“SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND,

<sup>35</sup> UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET.”

<sup>36</sup> Therefore let all the house of Israel **know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ**—this Jesus whom you crucified.”

37-42 Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” <sup>38</sup> Peter *said* to them, “**Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

<sup>39</sup> **For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.**” <sup>40</sup> And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation!” <sup>41</sup> **So then, those who had received his word were baptized;** and that day there were added about three thousand souls. <sup>42</sup> They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

It said, when they “received his word”... In Acts 8:12 it clearly states what that word is, “when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the **kingdom of God** and the **name of Jesus Christ**, they were being baptized, men and women alike.”

We must chain the Bible together. We can never just take one verse.

People must understand the kingdom of God and who Jesus is, then they can be baptized. But this isn't the end. We must keep growing and maturing. How have you been growing in knowledge and faith lately?



## Book of Acts - Baptism

- Hear & believe good news of kingdom and Jesus, respond with baptism (8:12)
- Baptism still ordered after receiving holy spirit (10:44-48)
- Belief precedes & leads to baptism (16:14-15)
- Re-baptized when heard & received the truth about Jesus (19:1-10)
- Some heard and became hardened & disobedient (19:9)

**Throughout the book of Acts, which is the record of the early church, we see people hearing the message and then responding with water baptism. It was the “rite of passage” into the church.**

Acts 10:44-48 tells us that while Peter was still speaking these words, the holy spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the holy spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the holy spirit just as we *did*, can he?” **And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.** - Even when God’s spirit was manifested in the new converts by speaking in unknown tongues, they were still ordered to be baptized in water!

Acts 16:14-15 tells that **the response to what is heard leads to the action of baptism** (which means, baptism must have been a part of the message they heard!). When a heart is opened to respond to the Good news of the kingdom and of Jesus, this then leads to baptism. Verses 16:31-33 shows us the same response when the jailer believed. **...immediately he was baptized.** People need to hear about Jesus and hear what Jesus spoke about, the kingdom of God. They must accept Jesus as the Messiah, Jews, Gentiles and professing Christians alike. It is not sufficient to just “believe in Jesus”, whatever that means in the evangelical world. Belief in Jesus means knowing who he really is, God’s chosen Messiah, a man, son of God, and not God, and one must believe in what he taught to the point of obeying what he said and living it out.

Acts 19:1-10 asks, “Did you receive the holy spirit when you believed?” And they *said* to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a holy spirit.” And he said, “Into what then were you baptized?” And they said, “Into John’s baptism.” Paul said, “John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.” **When they heard this, they were baptized** in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the holy spirit came on them, and they *began* speaking with tongues and prophesying.

Even though it is a decision each must make on his own, this is a good reference to the question if one should be re-baptized once they hear and receive the truth about Jesus. Once these people heard and received the truth, they were re-baptized into Jesus’ name. Understanding truth was essential to the commitment.

Verse 9 also tells us that when some heard Paul’s message they were becoming hardened and disobedient, they did not receive the truth or obey. Unfortunately, this is still happening today.

In Acts 22:16 Ananias asked Paul, “Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.” I ask some of you the same question, why do you delay?

**Throughout the book of Acts, which is the record of the early church, we see people hearing the message and then responding with water baptism.**

In 1 Corinthians 1:17 Paul said that he was not sent to baptize, but to preach. Yet if we read this in context, we understand why he said this, and when we read the whole of Scripture, we see that preaching included the message of baptism. Some sow and some reap. Some do the evangelism and preach and

others baptize. Paul was a preacher, and a very good one.

Acts 8:36-39 tells us about Philip and the eunuch. “They went along the road and they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they **both went down into the water**, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they **came up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.” This all happened after Pentecost and was the result of the believers doing the job they were given and empowered by holy spirit to do.

# Anointed & Sealed

FOR THE DAY OF REDEMPTION

2 Cor 1:21-22 says, Now He who **establishes** us with you in Christ and **anointed** us is God, <sup>22</sup> who also **sealed** us and gave us the spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

The pledge, or covenanted promise, is for the future. Ephesians 4:30 says, “Do not grieve the holy spirit of God, by which you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

Ephesian 1:13-14 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> which is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God’s own* possession, to the praise of His glory.

Ephesians 2:4-10 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), <sup>6</sup> and raised us up

with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> **so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.** <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. <sup>10</sup> For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

So, if you are not baptized, that is something to seriously think about, are you are willing to make that covenant commitment. And if you have been baptized, what good works are you walking in that God has prepared for you?