

Am I in Covenant? (Part 3)

Happy Sabbath to everyone.

This week we are concluding our topic that addresses the question, “Am I in Covenant?” This study, this series, comes at a significant time, as next week we are going into our observation of the Feast of Tabernacles for this year, and for those who are interested in meeting with us for daily studies during that time, the forum has a link to our schedule here:

<http://www.faithofjesus.to/forum/viewtopic.php?f=2&t=1827&p=2875&sid=4d35620b3d708d4513e1c02896b6833c#p2875>

To review what we have covered so far, two weeks ago I began by explaining that with the vast diversity of religious organizations, groups, messages and messengers out there, a seeker of truth must have his spiritual eyes wide open in order to avoid being deceived. The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come,” and it is only where both these voices call in unison that the truth may be found.

Those who claim to have the Spirit, but are separate from the united, visible Bride of Christ on earth are not to be trusted, while those who claim to be “in the Church,” but cannot speak according to the Spirit about the Gospel Message, testifying to victory over sin by the indwelling presence of the Father and Son are likewise deceivers, and self-deceived as well.

It is in the Covenant of Salvation that Yahweh works through His people on earth, and without the Covenant He does not work at all. Some may have pieces of the truth, and “talk a good game,” as the expression goes, but a little truth may be found in even the most widely-straying Churches, and the most false of Bible teachers. Salvation, however, comes only through accepting Yahshua as our Savior, and then going on past the “milk” of the Good News unto perfection of character.

Perfection of character cannot be attained without receiving the gift of Yahweh to us, which include – for this specific purpose – the Law and its Sabbath commandment (Psa 19:7), the Church (Eph 4:12), and the Covenant (Heb 10:16). Entry into that Covenant, into the Church, and into harmony with the Law, is accomplished through three steps: Repentance, Faith, and Baptism. Without these three steps, and without entering into all three spiritual institutions, the sinner cannot be redeemed. The blessings obtained from unity with these are critical to Yahshua’s message to us, and our properly receiving His sacrifice on our behalf.

The Law and the Sabbath, we have discussed many times before. The Church and membership therein, we have spoken of this as well. However, what we are discussing now is the Covenant, which makes the keeping of the Law meaningful, and membership in the Bride effectual in perfecting the soul.

Truly, many will keep the Law and not be saved. Some may have been baptized members of the Church, and yet they will be lost. What is needed is that blood-bond between us and the Father through the Son, and this is what the “Covenant” really is, of which Yahshua is the Mediator. (Heb 8:6, 12:24)

We have been examining how to identify the Covenant of Yah, and thereby how to identify the messengers of that Covenant, making them true servants of the Almighty. We may, based on the Word’s teachings, identify five necessary elements.

In the first week, we saw that the Covenant requires a “Foundation,” and all of Yah’s acts are founded in Love, for Yah is Love. Thus, the foundation of His covenant with us is the Law, which is called the Law of Love, because “love is the fulfilling of the Law.” (Rom 13:10) All of the commandments may be “briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’” (Rom 13:9)

Also in that first week we saw that upon the foundation of the Law, Yah has given to us “Promises” as the second necessary element of His covenant with His people. Entire books worth of studies may be written just on this element alone. The promises of Yah are our comfort, our strength and our hope. Instead of examining the nature of these promises in depth, for the purposes of this study, we merely look at them in context; that is, the promises of Yah are only truly effective for those who are within His Covenant. Yah loves all, even the wickedest of sinners, and will cause His good rain to fall on all... but those who are sealed to Him through His Son, these are they who can consistently claim the benevolence of our Father at all times, in all circumstances, and thus be in perfect Sabbath rest. When we of the Covenant are blessed, it is not merely coincidence; it is not merely a gesture from our Father to draw us closer. It is the deliberate, conscious providence of our Father in Heaven, because in such a relationship our benefits coincide with His sure purpose. The first two key features of the Divine Covenant are its Foundation, and its Promises.

Last week, we saw two more elements. The first of these, and the third element, is the set of Conditions. Conditions establish the nature of the agreement, and outline how the Covenant is to be maintained. The conditions ensure that the promises are fulfilled to a particular people, and indicate if, how and when these promises (which are always kept by the Father) are taken from one group and given to another. This element is important, because it allows us to understand what is so mysterious to others: that all the promises and prophecies we receive through inspiration are conditional on the faithfulness of those whom Yah calls His own People; and if they should corporately fall short, the prophecies cannot be worked out as originally revealed. Instead, they are given to others – but every time this happens, the witness of the Scriptures becomes more difficult to understand, and the Word less obviously accurate to the world. Yet in the 144,000, every prediction is fulfilled, every promise is made manifest, so that none shall be able to deny the goodness of our Creator in the day when all secrets are revealed.

The fourth element we looked at is the Token. This is, perhaps, the least understood of the five elements, and we spent a fair amount of time examining it. The Token, briefly defined, is a visible symbol of the Covenant's existence. It may be the blood of sacrifices, a stone covered with oil, or (in the case of Israel) the rite of circumcision. This most enduring token was designed to, among other things, keep the Israelites separate from the world and its pagan fertility rituals, to maintain the bloodline of the Chosen Ones pure, both genetically and spiritually, for the sake of all mankind, and for those individuals who were tempted to stray from the religion of Yahweh in favor of the more carnal alternatives.

Circumcision has come down to us in this generation as those physical elements of our faith: baptism, our observance of New Moons (which, while not a commandment, is a distinctive, identifying practice of the Bride), the name that Yah has given to us (Creation Seventh Day Adventist), and our increasingly unique position on Protestant principles. In fact, an example, I gave to illustrate the importance of tokens was to show from Pioneer writings that Adventists – because of their unique relationship with Yahweh – cannot begin a civil procedure in association with governmental powers. The “very keeping of the Sabbath,” which the Bible directly identifies as an “owth” (Heb), a “token” of the Faith of Yahweh, (Exo 31:13) forbids it. By doing so despite these doctrines – I pointed out – the mainstream SDA Church had done something worse than ignoring the inspired counsel of Ellen G. White. They had done something worse than denying the beliefs and practices of its founding members, and betraying the clear statement of the New Testament that Christians “dare” not take brethren to court. (1 Cor 6:1)

What they have in fact done is discard their token, the visible sign of their relationship with the Divine, and in so doing revealed themselves as a fallen Church. They have, spiritually speaking, “uncircumcised” themselves, making themselves an un-chosen people. This is yet another witness to the (traditional, and correct) SDA position that a Church who chooses the arm of the law as its protector “un-churches” itself, as well as the CSDA position that the Trademark Law is the modern age's Mark of The Beast. A formerly Protestant Church, in conjunction with civil government, using that government's power to persecute and imprison commandment-keeping Christians... this IS the very test of the Christians' discernment and Spirit, which separates those on Yahweh's Left Hand from those on His Right.

It is the Third Angel that leads us as a people.

Thus far we have come in our study, and speaking of “another witness,” this brings us right up to the fifth, final element of a Biblical Covenant; that is:

5) Witnesses

We have a very good study about the importance of Witnesses to Church Membership in the book *A Sure Covenant*. In fact, the fourth chapter of that work is called, “The Signature of The Witnesses,” and while I will not try to replicate its contents here, I will strongly suggest that any who are unfamiliar with this book, and that chapter, give it a read. If you have read it before, remind yourself of what it says, because just as the Token “proves” the Covenant exists, the Witnesses validate it before the universe.

Essentially, witnesses are necessary for the production of every valid contract. This is not merely a human convention, but we know that it is written, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” (2Cor 13:1) In marriages, we have witnesses, as in every legal transaction – that is, every transaction according to the law, whether that law is human or holy. In the Book of Jeremiah, the prophet purchased land in Jerusalem from his relative as a sign of Yahshua buying back the earth that was lost in Adam’s transgression. Of that we read, “And I bought the field of Haname’el my uncle's son that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money, even seventeen shekels of silver. And I subscribed the evidence, and sealed it, and took witnesses, and weighed him the money in the balances.

“So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open, and I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseiah, in the sight of Hanameel mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed the book of the purchase, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison.” (Jer 32:9 - 12)

As *A Sure Covenant* goes on to explain, this transaction is symbolic of the Plan of Salvation. The witnesses are the ones who can “testify” in court to the fact that the contract was created, and agreed-upon in good faith. In The Great Controversy, there are two witnesses to the sacrifice of Yahshua, the redemption of mankind, and the vindication of the Almighty’s character.

The first witness is Yahshua Himself. His evidence is that which is “sealed according to the law and custom,” for He (who was “born under the Law”) said, when He completed His earthly work, “It is finished.” His work is finished, sealed, and bears witness, an eternal testimony in blood that Yahweh was in Him, “reconciling the world unto Himself.” (2 Cor 5:19)

The second witness, the “open” witness, is we ourselves. “And Joshua said unto the people, ‘Ye are witnesses against yourselves that ye have chosen you Yahweh, to serve Him.’ And they said, ‘We are witnesses.’” (Josh 24:22)

Paul says, “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men. Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.” (2Cor 3:2, 3)

Yahshua's witness is sealed – first, because it is “finished,” and second because it is enclosed in Heaven's Sanctuary, waiting to be revealed in the last day. But until then the testimony of salvation, the testimony of redemption, is “clearly seen” by those things which do appear; that is, by our testimony, and our actions. Without our testimony, what does it matter that Yah has made a covenant with a few people? How does it redeem the world, the universe, if He chooses to take a handful to Heaven?

But no, those few must testify, they must say, “Yahweh has a covenant with mankind, and we are its witnesses! Our lives, made by Him free of sin, are the evidences of life everlasting!”

But brethren, consider: if the witnesses do not agree, how shall any know that the Covenant exists? For this to work, there must be a real, visible, unity among those who can be proven to be messengers of the Most High. There must be a visible Covenant, a visible membership in the Bride of Christ Yahshua.

Yahshua said, “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.” (John 17:23) What does this say? If the saints are in unity, “made perfect in one,” then the world will know that the Father loved them, and sent the Son to redeem them. But what, then, if those who claim to be Christ's are NOT made perfect in one? Then the world is left in ignorance and darkness... and those who refused or neglected the call to unity are not recipients of this blessing.

At the trial of Christ, the witnesses against Him could not be found to agree; therefore, nothing valid could be established against Him. If that was the case for those who witnessed against Him, how shall it be for those who claim to be witnessing FOR Him? What kind of witness do those who are separate from the Covenant give?

Those who call themselves “Christians” in this generation cannot agree. Their witness cannot establish truth. Is there a Trinity? What day, if any, is the Sabbath of the Lord? Is there true salvation from sin, or do we transgress until death or the return of the Son? Do we keep the holy days and the New Moon in the New Testament? Is there an everlasting hell? Satan has triumphed fully over this world, and Christians do not agree on any – any single – doctrine in the Bible. It is ultimate chaos, ultimate Babylon. But the Second Angel, in preparing the way for the Third, says, “Away with this. Babylon is fallen.”

If we believe this, then we will come into agreement on the truth, as revealed by the Word. We will come out of confusion and chaos. We will come into unity, one with another, and into harmony with Yahweh and His will. We will stand united, in Covenant, and altogether “One” in spirit and purpose. Those who cannot come into unity with us – because they are earthly in nature, or because they have been made to believe a lie – will not be (cannot be) the witnesses that tell the world of Yah's love. Because they lack this necessary fifth element, they reveal that they are not in Covenant with Him. Those who ARE in the Covenant will, by their very

character, be witnesses of the truth as it is in Yahshua. This is the nature of the fifth and final element. This is what brings the Love of Yahweh to the lost and dying world.

So here we stand, comprehending the five elements of a Biblical Covenant. It must have a foundation, promises, conditions, tokens, and witnesses. The lack of any of these indicates an imperfection, a flaw... and if such a flaw exists within an individual claiming to represent the Father, let the reader beware.

If they are merely untaught in such things, they will be willing, eager, to learn. But if pride wells up when the truth is revealed to them, then you will know the truth of their doctrine.

When John says “test the spirits,” he is telling us to validate their apostleship, to determine who has been sent by Yahweh, and who has been sent by another. As I mentioned in an earlier week, apostleship must be according to the Covenant, or it is nothing. The apostle must be in covenant with Yah, standing on the foundation, claiming the promises, fulfilling the conditions, manifesting the tokens, and calling upon the testimony of witnesses (being found a true witness himself). Only thus could the apostles have been chosen by Yahshua, bound to Him, and then sent into the world.

In demonstrating this, I will use, not the New Testament, which would be quite obvious, but the Old, to show that this is no new thing that Yahshua devised anew, but an element of Yah’s religion from the beginning. Consider this passage: “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, ‘Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.’ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then said I, ‘Here am I; send me.’” (Isa 6:1, 6 – 8)

Brethren, look at the calling of Yahshua’s disciples in the New Testament, and see that it was also done this way hundreds of years later. Yahshua approached the individual, and revealed Himself. Then, He did something to make them pure. In Yahshua’s case, He had them baptized, breathed His Spirit on them, and said to them – in words very similar to what the seraph used – “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” (John 15:3, and see also John 20:22, 23)

But consider the pastors, the preachers, the teachers, that have gone out into the world. What have they taught of these matters? What have the schools of theology taught them of Yah? What have their solitary studies revealed of the truth of this agreement, this marriage, to our Father in Heaven? By the authority of the Word, we can see, and we can testify, that they have no priesthood, because have neither the Bride nor Her wedding garment. “These sought their register among those that were reckoned by [spiritual] genealogy, but they were not found; therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood.” (Ezra 2:62, Neh7:64) Through them

the call to Heaven cannot be given, through them the Spirit and the Bride cannot say, "Come," because they will lack one, and therefore know not the other.

Now, we need not make lists of the names of false teachers, and rail against them as some do. I've been on mailing lists sent out by Adventists both in the General Conference Church and in independent ministries, publishing names and acts of various officials they believe to be corrupt... and they may well be, but the messenger is no closer to Heaven for it. What WE need to do is to know genuine conversion, to know true religion, the true "tie that binds" us to the heart of the Father and Son. We need to ask of ourselves, "Am I in Covenant? Am I among the Redeemed?" If we have understood the matter placed before us for the past three weeks, we may then go on into the upcoming Feast of Tabernacles refreshed, knowing for ourselves who we are, who the true messengers of Yahweh the Almighty are, and who the many counterfeits are. We become, let it be known, the "very elect" whom our Father will not allow to be deceived.

We are equipped to know the Bride, and to be secure that we have become a part of Her, for the Bridegroom comes quickly, and He comes to finish this great Romance between one Man and one Woman, so that They may truly live in joy forever more. We are invited to that happy ending, we are blessed to invite others; therefore, let us be called by Faith, bound by Covenant, and then sent forth in Love to be about our Father's business.

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