

The Twelve Steps to Covenant Law I

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God is a God Who is a covenant God. A covenant is a special irrevocable agreement between you and God. There are unconditional covenants, which God makes. There are conditional covenants, which generally apply to us. We'll look at those in a little bit here. Let's first of all come to Psalm 25 and through covenant, God then establishes relationship between Himself and the people He's in covenant with. And we'll see even a little later on that there's a covenant that He made with the whole earth and everything in it.

Let's see something that's important concerning a covenant. Psalm 25:14: "The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." That's what has to happen, because covenants are revealed from God to man, for a relationship with man (as we will see) beginning with Adam and Eve, and then Abraham, and then David, and come down to the New Testament Church. Then we will see, when we get through the eleven steps, then we'll look at the one for eternity, that there are even the elements of a covenant in Rev. 21 and 22.

What we have to do is understand the elements or the *twelve steps of covenant law*. Now let's come back the other way to Genesis, the first chapter. Here we want to see how God established a pattern to show what He was going to do. God always makes a proposal first and that's the first one.

1. The Proposal

Now the proposal does not have everything included in it. That's what's important to understand. We will see that in all the covenants. So first of all, we're going to go through the proposal of the different covenants here.

Let's come to Genesis 1:26, and here's the creation of man. Now some people think that these were pre-Adamic beings here, and Adam was created later. But what this is, this is a summary of the creation of Adam and Eve and their purpose, and Gen. 2 contains the details of how He did it—because why? What does the Bible say about Adam? *The first man Adam*. Now if he's the first man—Adam—then there can't be a prototype pre-man man. Besides, God is not like us that He has to make a prototype first. We do to figure out how things work.

Genesis 1:26: "And God said, 'Let Us... [And we know from John 17 that's Christ and the Father.] ...make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion... [Now here

is the proposal.] ...let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that crawls upon the earth.'.... [We know that's true, because we can look back and see in retrospect that's exactly what has happened.] ...And God created man in His *own* image, in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female" (vs 26-27).

Now it's very interesting. Just come over here to Genesis 5:1. We'll see something else. This is why when you study the Bible, as we've covered, you have to go Scripture here and Scripture there, and put it all together. "This *is* the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them, and He called **their** name Adam... [Isn't that interesting?] ...in the day when they were created" (vs 1-2). So that also shows the coming together as one flesh.

Now then He gives a few more instructions. Let's come back here to Genesis 1:29, and let's continue on here: "And God said, 'Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree upon which *is the* fruit of a tree bearing seed—to you they shall be for food. And to every animal of the earth and to every fowl of heaven and to all the living creatures that crawl upon the earth, every green plant *is given* for food.' And it was so" (vs 29-30). People say, 'Oh, we were all vegetarians at first.' Possible, but this does not exclude eating animals. It doesn't say that is the only food you're going to have.

Now let's come down here and we will see. This then, you could say, from vs 26-30, this is the *general proposal*, and there always is a general proposal. Let's see a general proposal here, we'll get into some of the other things a little later, because there has to then be agreement, there has to be other things that come along with it.

Let's come here to Genesis 6:11, and let's see the *general proposal to Noah*: "Now the earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt—for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth. And God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. And, behold, I will destroy them *with* the earth.... [I imagine Noah was saying, 'Lord (in his own mind), how're You going to do this?'—because Noah was also a righteous man and perfect in his generations. That's

interesting, because in his generations or genealogy shows that he didn't have any corrupt genes in him. There's a reason that He [God] had to kill all the animals, and birds, and things like that—probably all corrupt.] (So here's God's proposition to him): ...Make an ark of cypress timbers. You shall make rooms in the ark, and you shall pitch it inside and outside with pitch. And this *is* the way you shall make it.... [So He detailed how he's going to make it.] ...The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it shall be fifty cubits and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window in the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above... [That is, it goes up above the top of the ark by one cubit.] ...and you shall set the door of the ark in the side of it. You shall make it with lower, second and third stories. And behold, I, even I am bringing a flood of waters upon the earth in order to destroy all flesh—in which *is* the breath of life—from under heaven. Everything which *is* upon the earth shall die. But I will establish My covenant with you.'...." (vs 14-18). He still didn't tell him what the covenant was at this point, because He didn't establish the covenant (as we will see) until after the Flood.

So then we find here the thing to do when we find out what the proposal is. We'll see this is true. Verse 22: "Noah did so, according to all that God commanded him, so he did." So here's the lesson: in the beginning with the covenant, beginning with the *proposal of the covenant*, and we will see that's just like it is when we come in contact with God, and God is calling us and we begin to understand things. We have to act upon the knowledge that we know. So he did all according to that He said.

What we are going to do is go through and see the elements of the proposal first, and then we'll come back and fill in the other things later. So let's come over here to Genesis 12, and let's look at Abram and, notice, here's the proposal. He didn't tell him anything of what He was going to do in detail. He just gave him a proposal. It'd be kind of like coming up to someone and say, 'How you'd like to make a lot of money?' That is legally. *They say, 'Yeah.'* 'Do you agree to do this?' *Yes!* Then we do thus and such, and thus and such, and thus and such.

So here's the beginning of God's dealing with Abraham, which His proposal. Genesis 12:1: "And The LORD said to Abram, 'Get out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house into a land that I will show you.... [Notice, he didn't say, 'Lord, where is that?'] ...And I will make *of* you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing. And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.'.... [Then he acted

upon the proposal just like Noah did.] ...Then Abram departed, even as the LORD had spoken to him" (vs 1-4). Very interesting—isn't it?

Let's come over here to Exodus 19. Now we've covered this a time or two in the past, but *this is the proposal of the covenant* that God gave to ancient Israel when they got to Mount Sinai. Now it's quite a proposal. It's very short. Notice, in the proposal there are few, if any, details. The details come later, and the reason being is: God wants to know what the person is going to do with whom He's making the covenant. Because if they're not willing to accept the proposal and do as God has said, then everything ceases.

Exodus 19:3: "And Moses went up to God... [That's after they got to the wilderness of Sinai.] ...and the LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel, "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you unto Myself.... [Now here's the proposal—very short, very simple, very straightforward]: ...Now therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a Holy nation." These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel'" (vs 3-6). So Moses went down and he did it. He spoke it to them, and they said, 'Yes, we accept the proposal.' Then we'll see what the agreement is a little later.

Now let's come to the Church. Let's come to the New Testament. Let's see what the proposal of the covenant is—very simple, John 3:14. And again there are some things in understanding here where now we're going to see, in this proposal, actually a conditional statement. First of all, I want to read this in the *King James Version*, because the *King James* does not accurately reflect the Greek, so what we have then, we end up with an assumed misunderstanding, because of the way that it is translated.

John 3:14 (*KJV*): "And even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. That whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.... [Now what does *should* mean? *Should* means *it's definite*—right? That's very close to *shall*, not quite as strong as *shall*, but *should*.] ...For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him, **should not** perish but may have everlasting life" (vs 14-16).

Now let's read it in the *Faithful Version*. Let's see the difference, and as a matter of fact, Gary Staszick has been studying Greek now for a couple of years, and he actually wrote part of his

dissertation on John 3:16 as the result of what his professor told him, and the professor instructed him correctly as to what the Greek means.

So let's read it here. John 3:14: "And even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, in the same way it is ordained that the Son of man be lifted up. So that everyone who believes in Him **may** not perish... [*Conditional*, and that's the way it is in the Greek. The verb form is called the *subjunctive*. And the subjunctive is the same as an *if* clause or a *may* clause. *May* indicates what? *Permission*, it's *possible*—and what else? *It's not for sure*—that's correct. Another one? *That it leaves open conditions to be attached*—correct? So the proposal is not the covenant. The proposal is the proposal, but people have to accept the proposal and act upon it.] ...but **may** have everlasting life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him **may** not perish... [Subjunctive again.] ...but **may** have everlasting [eternal] life" (vs 14-16).

Now we'll look at some of the conditions a little later on, but if you read it from the *King James*, you believe in Jesus, you've got it made, you've got eternal life. That is a great problem with Protestantism. That's how they handle it. 'Do you believe in the Lord Jesus?' Got them all scared to death. *Yes!* 'You're saved.' *Not quite so!*

Let's come back here to Revelation 21, and we'll just take a preview of what the New Covenant for eternity is going to entail. Again, the proposal does not give the details. Revelation 21:3: "'And I heard a great voice from heaven say, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men; and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people; and God Himself shall be with them *and be* their God.... [That's the *proposal*. It's going to be different than being in the flesh.] ...And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and *there* shall not be any more death, or sorrow, or crying; neither shall *there* be any more pain, because the former things have passed away'" (vs 3-4). Does this tell us anything of what we're going to do? *No*, as a matter of fact, we don't get very much about what we're going to do for all eternity. We get some information about what we will do when we're resurrected and rule with Christ.

Now let's come back to Genesis and we'll go through this again. So that is number one, the first thing that there is with the covenant is *the proposal*.

2. The Agreement

Do you agree? And the agreement also has attached to it: *obedience*. So let's come back here to Genesis 2:7: "Then the LORD God formed man of *the* dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils

the breath of life; and man became a living being. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life also was in the middle of the garden, and the tree of *the* knowledge of good and evil" (vs 7-9).

Now here's what God did with Adam, v 15: "And the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree in the garden, but you shall not eat of the tree of *the* knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat of it in dying you shall surely die'" (vs 15-17). And so *there is the agreement*. There's also a penalty.

Now we begin to learn with the covenant, there are penalties. Then we see then that He made Eve, brought her to him, and so forth. He was to dress and keep the garden, he was to guard it, etc. *He agreed*.

Now we have the same thing here with Abraham. Let's come to Genesis 15 this time. And notice in each case there's agreement, there's obedience, those all follow. Now here's a little more of the *proposal* that God gave to Abraham. Remember, He said, 'Leave your father's house and leave your country and go into the land that I tell you of, and I will bless you and make a great nation of you,' etc. He hadn't had any children, and so God told him—because Abraham wanted to go ahead and say; 'Well, look, I'm getting old here, so Eliezer of Damascus is the one who can be my heir, I can legally do it.' And God said, 'No, it won't be that, it will be one that will come out of their loins shall be your heir' (Gen. 15:4 paraphrased).

Verse 5: "And He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them' And He said to him, 'So shall your seed be.'... [Now here's the *agreement with belief*.] ...And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (vs 5-6). Now we'll cover some of the other aspects of it a little later.

Exodus 19:7—here we have the *proposal*, then we have the agreement—same thing. "And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him.... [Which were just a very few.] ...And all the people answered together and said, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do.' And Moses returned the words of the people to the LORD" (vs 7-8). Now remember, this is before the Ten Commandments are given. And remember, when the details came (as we will see), they had

some trouble with it. So there is the acceptance of the agreement. That does not seal the covenant yet. That comes at a later time.

Let's come to the Church. Let's see what the *agreement* is here. We'll look at a couple Scriptures concerning this. Let's come to Mark 1. Christ comes and He is preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. And let's see what everyone has to agree to. It requires something to be done now. Mark 1:14: "Now after the imprisonment of John, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, 'The time has been fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is near at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel'" (vs 14-15). Now people have to agree to that. It has to be something that they have to follow up on the agreement.

Let's come to Luke 13. Let's see what God says concerning repentance that is absolutely mandatory. So you have to believe the Words of God (we'll see a later) in the proposal of the covenant. You have to act upon it, now how then do you start receiving eternal life? ***Repentance is the first thing, believe the Gospel and repent.***

Let's pick it up Luke 13:1: "Now at the same time, there were present some who were telling Him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Do you suppose that these Galileans were sinners above all Galileans, because they suffered such things? No, I tell you; but if you do not repent, you shall all likewise perish'" (vs 1-3). So ***repentance then is the next step of the agreement.*** God gives the *proposal*—now what? Just like with Noah. Noah was told to build an ark, he accepted that, *proposal*—what did he have to do? *He had to build the ark.* So now we have the *proposal*: If you believe in Jesus, 'because God so loved the world, you ***may*** have eternal life.' So here's part of the condition, not all of it. These are just the beginning proposal conditions.

Verse 4: "'Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, do you suppose that these were debtors above all men who dwelt in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but if you do not repent, you shall all likewise perish'" (vs 4-5).

Now let's come to Acts 2 and let's see the one where it talks about repentance, and then it tells us about something else we need to do, which we will find a little later on. So this kind of combines the second step with the third step, right here. Acts 2:37 [transcriber's correction]: "Now after hearing *this*... [About the death and resurrection of Christ.] ...they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall

receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (vs 37-38). So there's something else that comes along the way, too—right? *Yes!* So, you see, how covenants are structured and built. And it's interesting that God doesn't tell us all the details at first, because He wants to know:

- What are we going to do?
- How are we going to accept this?

So there has to be the agreement.

Now let's look at another instance of being agreed, which also covers some of this. Let's come to the book of Amos. Now in a covenant you are in a special relationship between you and God, and if it's a covenant between other people, between you and the people. Now we'll cover some of that a little later.

So here's the principle—Amos 3:1: "Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying... [And He made a covenant with them—right? We'll go back and we'll examine that covenant a little bit more in detail here in just a little bit.] ...'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you *for* all your iniquities.... [Because we will see, that was part of the agreement. That was part of the covenant. So here's the principle:] ...***Can two walk together unless they be agreed?***'" (vs 1-3). ***The answer is: no, you can't!*** So the question becomes: Do you agree with God? Now, too many people want God to agree with them, but God is not a man to agree in that way to a man, because if that were the case, then the person would become God.

Now let's look at something else which is involved and that's called, ***counting the cost.*** So here's the *proposal*, then the beginning of the *agreement*: This is what you need to do. Then you have to *count the cost.*

3. **Count the Cost**

Let's go back to Adam and Eve and what we are going to find out is that they did not *count the cost*—Genesis 3. Now God gave them the whole earth, He told them He would bless them. Now then have you counted the cost, so that if difficult things happen, your word is going to be true? You see, that's why a marriage covenant is the way that it is. And how does a marriage covenant start out? ***Much the same way as God does.*** 'Will you marry me?' *Yes.* Then the marriage ceremony takes place. Then you've got all the rest of your life to live with everything that comes. There are going to be troubles and difficulties, and ups and downs. But, you see, a covenant is unto death. That's what a covenant is. That's what the agreement is for. So,

yes, there're going to be things that are going to be difficult that will come along. That's why *you have to count the cost*.

Now Adam and Eve did not count the cost. Genesis 3:1: "Now the serpent was more cunning than any creature of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Is it true that God has said, "You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?"' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may freely eat the fruit of the trees of the garden, But of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has *indeed* said, "You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die"' (vs 1-3).

Now here's the point: if someone comes along with a counter argument to what you have agreed to do, there's going to be a penalty. It's just like if you buy a car, and you agree to pay so much a month. If you don't make the payment, they're going to come and repossess the car, and they will come and get it. If you ever watch on, I think it is National Geographic, they have a series on repo-men. And they stay up all night looking for these cars, and they make sure that they get them. They will even trap them into getting the car and they won't suspect what is happening.

There was this one case where they had a very expensive limo and the guy hadn't made any payments in about six months. They had been looking and looking and looking for this limo. Couldn't find it. Of course, they would get a big fee to find it, because those limos are very expensive. So what they did, they had a female friend of theirs pretend to be a bride, have all the entourage to go with it, and she called up the limo company to take them down for the wedding. The place where she lived was down a little hill, a cul-de-sac, and the house was right there where she lived. So what they did, everything worked out, all the arrangements were made. The driver came out with the limo, went on down, turned around, and backed up, got out of the limo to get them into the limo, and take them to the wedding party. But in the meantime while his back was turned and he was walking up to the front door, there were two trucks. One was a tow truck which was coming down the hill. The other one was a truck that they used to block the road at the top. So the fellow was up there talking to the girl, was supposed to be for the wedding thing, and all the other girls were with him, and all of a sudden the repo man comes up and puts his hand on his shoulder and says, 'We're repossessing the limo.' *Now you can't do that.* He says, 'Call your boss.' So he called the boss and the boss got all angry.

They broke the agreement, didn't make the payment. So there is always a penalty! Here's what we're finding in *counting the cost*: you have to

assess the penalty that's going to come if you break it. That's very important to understand.

So Adam and Eve didn't properly assess it. They did not count the cost. So they ate of the fruit. Verse 4: "The serpent said to the woman, 'In dying... [Now that's interesting, because this is the way it is in the Greek. In dying—he's admitting they're going to die.] ...you shall not surely die!.... [In other words, 'the death is really not something you need to be worried about, because you're still going to live.] ...For God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, deciding good and evil'" (vs 4-5). That's the correct translation. They weren't like God in any other way, except they were deciding for themselves what was good and what was evil. So then you know the rest of the story, they took the fruit and ate it.

Then we'll cover the other things that are there. So Adam and Eve, as we'll find out, *did not count the cost*. They could have said, 'No way, we're not going to eat of that tree. Look at what God blessed us with, look at what He's promised us, and He's given us the whole earth to rule over. We're just starting here in the Garden of Eden. And we're going to have lots of children, and we're going to fill the earth with people. No, get out of here!' They didn't do that.

Let's come to Noah. Noah did according as he was supposed to. He built the ark, God carried out what He said He would do. They all got in the ark with everything that was there. They entered in (Gen. 6). God shut them in, and then the Flood started. But it didn't start for seven days, but it came. So he counted the cost. 'Hey, I don't want to be destroyed. I'm getting in the ark. I built it. God gave me the instructions, He sent the animals, I've counted the cost, I'm going to do it.' So there's agreement, counting the cost together.

Now let's come to Genesis 15 and let's see about Abraham. Let's carry this a little bit further. So what I want you to do is see all the elements involved in it:

- proposal
- agreement
- counting the cost

—here Abraham believed in God. That was counted to him for righteousness. So then he asked God, after He told him that he would inherit it, Genesis 15:8: "And He said to him, 'Lord God, by what shall I know that I shall inherit it?'" So then God went on and told him about the sacrifice. And we'll talk the sacrifice a little bit later. So Abraham had all the things that should be done: *the proposal, the agreement, the counting the cost*, and we'll see a little later there's more counting the cost as well.

Now let's see what happened here in Genesis 17:1 where God gave a few more details to it: "And when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I *am* the Almighty God! Walk before Me and **be perfect**... [another condition] ...And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.' And Abram fell on his face. And God talked with him, saying, 'As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations'" (vs 1-4). Then He adds more to it. He tells him some more of the details. Then he has the token of the covenant, which was circumcision. And he [Abraham] followed through and did that.

(go to the next track)

Let's come and see what God told Israel. Exodus 19 again. So now the people are going to be confronted by God when He comes down on Mount Sinai. He told them, 'Don't come and touch the mountain, don't go near it.' And He gave them plenty of warning, so they heeded the counting the cost here. We'll see a little later, there's more counting the cost when it comes to the finality of the covenant. But we're just going to cover this part here first.

Exodus 19:15: "And he [Moses] said to the people, 'Be ready for the third day. Do not approach a woman.' And it came to pass on the third day in the morning that there *were* thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain. And the sound of the trumpet was exceedingly loud so that all the people in the camp trembled.... [Now this was a good cause to really count the cost.] ...And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God. And they stood at the base of the mountain. And Mount Sinai was smoking, all of it because the LORD came down upon it in fire. And the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And when the sound of the trumpet sounded long, and became very strong, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. And the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up" (vs 15-20).

So then He warns them again, because this is going to be a signal event, which we'll see a little later. We'll come back here again. "And the LORD said to Moses, 'Go down. Command the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. And let the priests also, who come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.' And Moses said to the LORD, 'The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You commanded us saying, "Set bounds [boundaries] around the mountain, and sanctify it."'

And the LORD said to him, 'Away! Get you down, and *only* you shall come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break forth upon them.' And Moses went down to the people, and spoke to them" (vs 21-25). So here they *counted the cost* this time. It was convincing! Much more convincing than other places.

Let's come to Luke 14 and here is the chapter on counting the cost. Now this is quite different than back there to listen to the words of God as He spoke the Ten Commandments. And we will see later about the words, and commitment, and belief, and all of that. But here we come to Luke 14 and many people were following Jesus and many of them really wanted to come along with Him because it was all exciting with all the healing and all the preaching, and all the people, and everything.

Luke 14:25: "And great multitudes were going with Him; and He turned and said to them... ['Now if you want to follow Me, you gotta count the cost.' **He didn't say that**, but we'll see what the cost is. So he wants you to know that this is not a circus event, he wants you to know that this is not a publicity stunt, he wants you to know this is not jumping on the bandwagon type of thing. No, He said]: ...'If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple'" (vs 25-26). Now that means to love God more than them. Now, that's a pretty heavy cost. A lot of people when they come to this turn and go the other way.

Then He also says: "'And whoever does not carry his [own] cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple... [It means you can't be a follower or believer in Jesus. That's why there's so much 'Christianity' out here, which is just like the world, because it is of the world, with the name 'Christian' attached to it.] ...for which one of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and **count the cost**... [You've got to figure it all out.] ...whether he has *sufficient* for its completion... [It's always this way. Whenever you get into some kind of building project, it always costs more. So you've got to have the money from some place to do it.] ...lest perhaps, after he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, saying, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish"?' (vs 27-30).

Now when we were up in Idaho and we drove around to visit the brethren, Delores would go with me on some of these long trips. I remember one house we came across and I don't recall if it was someone we were going to visit or not, but here, he dug the foundation for the basement, cemented it all in for the basement, had that all ready to go, then he

wasn't able to finish it. So he put a roof on top of the basement and had stairs going down into it. It had been there for years. It's just like here: everyone who went by said, 'I wonder when Zeke is going to finish his house over here, or not.'

Here's another one: "Or what king, when he goes out to engage another king in war, does not first sit down *and* take counsel, whether he will be able with ten thousand to meet him who is coming against him with twenty thousand?... [Notice here the enemy. You have to count the cost against the enemy. And Adam and Eve did not do that. ***They let the enemy in to take advantage.***] ...But if not, while his *enemy* is still far off, he sends ambassadors and desires the *terms* for peace. In the same way also, each one of you who does not forsake all that he possesses cannot be My disciple'" (vs 31-33). That doesn't mean you have to give up everything you have, but ***you have to count everything that you have as nothing compared to God.*** So there's counting the cost.

4. Words of the Covenant, Commitment and Belief

What happened with Adam and Eve? Well, the words of the covenant were enacted—weren't they? They were expelled from the Garden—weren't they? They did not have access to the Tree of Life, their nature was changed, and so was the environment. That's the consequences of it. Because if you don't believe God, you don't have the commitment; you don't believe the Words of God, then the penalty is going to come. Noah believed God! Let's start with Noah. God told him what He was going to do, destroy all life. He would begin it again with him on the other side.

Genesis 6:22: "Noah did so, according to all that God commanded him, so he did." He found grace in the sight of God:

- he believed Him
- he acted upon it
- he made the commitment
- he did it

So then God gave him more instructions. Now here's the key: After you have the proposal and the agreement, and the counting of the cost, then you have *more words, more details* that come along to tell you more about what is going to happen and what God expects. So you've got:

- counting the cost
- commitment and belief
- the words

So here are the ***words***—Genesis 7:1: "And the LORD said to Noah, 'You and all your house shall come into the ark; for you, I have seen righteous before Me in this generation.... [here are the

details]: ...You shall take with you every clean animal by sevens, the male and female. And take two of the animals that *are* not clean, the male and female'" (vs 1-2). Of course, you know, this tells you about clean and unclean meats—doesn't it? Which tells you that they were eating clean meats. Noah, being righteous, was only eating clean meats. The sinners were probably eating everything.

I saw on the Travel Channel this fellow that goes around and eats all of these weird, oddball things. He went to Vietnam again and he had iguana. They went out, hunted iguana, guy climbed up in a tree, shook the tree, the iguana came down, they got it, and they were all happy. 'Oh, this is going to be really good.' And the stuff that they had! They had iguana, they had also fresh little baby birds that they deep fried and everything was crunchy when you ate it. Then they had silkworms, all nicely deep-fried and they were really crunchy and delicious. That's not as bad as the one when he made his first trip to Vietnam, and he went into a restaurant and what they specialized in was serpents. What they would do is bring out the live snake in a basket, and bring it out and let you look at it. You select the snake that you want. The custom was, when you selected the snake that you want, they killed it right in front of your eyes, and cut out the heart and you ate it while it was still beating. I'm glad I had an empty stomach. Fondue snake, dipped in cheese, that's wonderful.

There was a movie years ago called, *Mondo Coni*. I think some of these things are even worse. Then it also showed where he went to Africa and he went to a tribe where they drank blood and he drank blood. They put a stick down in the bottle where they had captured the blood and they were drinking out it, and there was some coagulated blood that stuck on the end of the stick. And that was a special treat for the little children. They gobbled it up like children would eat chocolate in a civilized society.

So they knew [in Noah's day] the laws of clean and unclean meat. Same way with the birds. "Also take of the fowls of the air by sevens, the male and the female, to keep *their* kind alive upon the face of all the earth; for in seven more days, I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will destroy from off the face of the earth every living thing that I have made.' And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him" (vs 3-5).

Those are the words, you have to have *belief* and then we can add to that *obedience*. So we can have

- commitment
- belief
- words

- obedience

Now let's look at Israel. Let's come back here to Exodus 20 again. And here's how God started it out with the children of Israel. Now you see, it's the same way with a lot of people. The words to have everlasting life sounds really good. To have the blessing of God sounds really good. So when God proposed to them that 'you're going to be a Holy nation to Me above all the people of the earth,' they said, 'Great, okay, we'll do whatever God says.' Now then when you tell God, 'Yes, I will,' it may not be exactly as you figured. Exodus 20 is very clear. He spoke the Ten Commandments. We all know them, we've memorized them. And if you haven't memorized them, then you ought to. When God was done, all the people clapped hands and said, 'Yes, Lord, what else would you have us do?' *No, that's not what happened!*

Exodus 20:18: "And all the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking. And when the people saw, they trembled and stood afar off." *They did not want to make a personal commitment to God.* This is the beginning of the hearing of the words of the covenant. *They didn't want to make the commitment. They didn't know whether they believed God or not,* because it was not what they expected. And always remember that. There are going to be things that'll come up that you do not expect, but ***that doesn't change the covenant.***

So the people stood far off. Verse 19: "And they said to Moses, 'You speak with us... [For we'll listen to a man.] ...and we will hear. But let not God speak with us, lest we die.' And Moses said to the people, 'Do not fear, for God has come to prove you... [Does God test all of us? *Of course!*] ...and so that His fear may be before your faces, so that you may not sin'.... [That would be a good thing—right? *Yes!*] ...And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was. And the LORD said to Moses, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, "You have seen that I have talked with you from the heavens.... [Now then here comes *more words* and *more details*, because they said, 'Yes, all that the Lord has said, we will do.' Now comes *more details*, just like with us. When we repent, commit, believe, and are baptized, then we find out that there is more that we need to do.] ...You shall not make with Me gods of silver, nor shall you make gods of gold for yourselves'" (vs 19-23). What was the first thing they did when Moses didn't come off the mountain? Make gods of gold—right? *Yes!*

"You shall make an altar of earth to Me, and shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In all places where I record My name I will come to you,

and I will bless you. And if you will make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of cut stone; for if you life up your tool upon it, you have defiled it.... [Because what happens when people start doing that? *They start adding all kinds of things to it.* God didn't want it.] ...And you shall not go up by steps to My altar that your nakedness be not exposed upon it" (vs 24-26).

Then we have Exodus 21, 22, 23, of all the laws that God gave. These are the judgments or the statutes that God gave. Has to do with slaves. Has to do with murder. Has to do with causing a premature birth because there's fighting. Has to do with losing an eye or a tooth or a foot or being burned or wounded. They would go to the judge and it wasn't if you lose an eye, you come here and we gouge out your eye. No, you go to the judge and the judge makes a decision: What is that eye worth? Then they are to receive compensation. That's even the same today. They lay a price for missing limbs, and so forth.

Now we find in Exodus 21:22, that if there's a miscarriage, then according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him, he shall pay as the judges determined. That's what it is. God is not into gouging out eyes and cutting off hands, and so forth. But capital sin of life for life, you give life for life.

Exodus 22:1 talks about stealing. Let's just read a couple of these here: "If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox... [Good deterrent, wouldn't you think? No jails. Don't put them in jail, you make restitution.] ...and four sheep for a sheep. If a thief is found breaking in, and is struck so that he dies, no blood *shall be* shed for him.... [Yet in today's world, if you shoot someone coming into your house to steal and rob and plunder, and maybe kill you, you can be arrested.] ...If the sun is risen upon him *and he lives, there shall be* blood *shed* for him. He shall make full restitution. If he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft" (vs 1-3).

Now that's what you call indentured recompense. You pay them back. See, God's way is no prisons. You either compensate them for the injury. If you committed murder, you give your life. Anything less than that, you give as the judges determine. If you steal, you pay back. Just think how quickly you would stop all car theft if you would say, 'Five for a Cadillac.' You steal a Cadillac, high priced car, or a Lincoln, Lexus—they say they're cheap now—Mercedes Benz, BMW, five for one or you're sold and you work for whatever you work for, and you pay back. Just to show us the exact opposite of what's happening America, in California if a woman comes and has a baby here, it becomes an American citizen and she gets welfare \$500 a

month for the baby. If she has two, it's around \$900. God's way would be, ship them back. But no, just like ancient Israel, they didn't want to hear. So you can read the rest of it. It also has to do with ox goring, what to do with that. Has to do with a case of a trespass, what if an animal comes in and destroys your crop, whatever that may be. What if your donkey or horse runs away, or your cow runs away. Then if it comes to someone else, his neighbor is to keep it. If it's stolen from him while you're renting an ox:

Let's pick it up here v 10. Let's see how fair God is. "If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, or an ox, or a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies, or is hurt, or driven away, no one seeing, An oath of the LORD shall be between them both, that he has not put his hand to his neighbor's goods. And the owner of it shall accept it, and he shall not make it good. And if it is stolen from him, he shall make full restitution to the owner of it.... [In other words, if you're watching someone's property, and it's stolen, and you haven't been watching it, you're going to pay the full amount. That'll solve a lot of problems.] ...If it is torn in pieces, let him bring it for witness, *and* he shall not make good that which was torn. And if a man borrows it from his neighbor, and it is hurt, or dies, and the owner of it *is* not with it, he shall surely make full restitution. If the owner of it *is* with it, he shall not make restitution. If it was hired, it came for its hire" (vs 10-15).

Verse 16: "And if a man lures a virgin who is not promised, and lies with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.... [They didn't have shotguns there, so this is not a shotgun wedding, but this is a sword and spear-enforced wedding, with this exception:] ...If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.... [And probably child support.] ...You shall not allow a sorceress to live. Anyone lying with an animal shall surely be put to death" (vs 16-19). See how you solve all the perversion problems? There would be no such thing as a 'gay' community, *if they followed God's way*. Just think how few homosexuals there would be around.

Verse 20: "Anyone sacrificing to a god, except it is unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed. You shall neither vex a stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry. And My wrath shall burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your sons fatherless" (vs 20-24). Now you see, those are righteous laws. This keeps everything in perspective—doesn't it?

"If you lend money... [Now this is contrary to the banking system today.] ...to one of My people who *is* poor among you, you shall not be to him as a money-lender, neither shall you lay upon him interest. If you at all take your neighbor's clothing as a pledge, you shall deliver it to him by the time the sun goes down; for that *is* his covering only, it is his clothing for skin. In what shall he sleep? And it will be, when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I *am* gracious. You shall not revile God's *judges*... [Now it says 'God' in the *King James*, but of course you're not to revile God. This is God's *judges*.] ...nor curse the ruler of your people" (vs 25-28).

Then Exodus 23:1 doesn't want you gossiping, no false reports. Just think how this would be executed against the government-media today, the Obama media. "You shall not raise a false report.... [Oh, Huffington would go out of business, too—wouldn't she?] ...Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness." Anita Hill against Clarence Thomas. And also prosecutors, they prosecute and put people away because they need so many convictions a year. A lot of people get put away that shouldn't be there. A lot of people that should be there are not put there.

Now notice, v 2: "You shall not follow a multitude to do evil... [In other words, whatever the people want, if it's evil, you don't follow them to do it.] ...Neither shall you testify in a cause in order to side with many so as to pervert *judgment*.... [If you just had these laws, read them, they are great laws. If the country had them in the letter of the law, because all sovereign countries—which Israel was a sovereign country at that time—God gave (as we'll see a little later) with the covenant that He established with Noah after the Flood, God gave the death penalty-execution to men to carry out. And here are the guidelines to do it right here.] ...Neither shall you be partial to a poor man in his cause" (vs 2-3). So you don't distribute the wealth around.

Now notice, here's what God requires. He requires you to be honest and forthright in everything. "If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray... [You shall claim it as yours, because he's your enemy. *No!*] ...you shall surely bring it back to him again.... [And he'll probably make friends with you—right?] ...If you see the donkey of him who hates you lying under his burden, and would hold back from helping him, you shall surely help him. You shall not pervert the judgment due to your poor in his cause. Keep far from a false matter... [Today's media's out of business already, and Congress is out of business already.] ...and do not kill the innocent and righteous... [Who are the most innocent that they are killing? *Babies in abortion*.] ...for I will not justify the wicked. And you shall take no bribe, for the

bribe blinds the wise and perverts the words of the righteous” (vs 4-8). Just think if they posted that in every office of every senator, every representative, every one who is running any executive department at all, and put that in the President’s office, the Vice-President’s office, the Secretary of Treasury, etc.

Let’s come to the New Testament and let’s look and see ***the words, commitment and belief***. Let’s come first of all to John 12. This is why we have the Gospels, and this is why we have all of the Epistles that God inspired to be, so we know what we are to do. But here’s some of the *words of the covenant* that you are to believe.

John 12:37: “Although He had done so many miracles in their presence, they did not believe in Him... [miracles convince no one] ...So that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled who said, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?... [So there you’re dealing with ***belief***.] ...And to whom has the arm of *the* Lord been revealed?’ For this *very* reason they could not believe because again Isaiah said, ‘He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts so that they would not see with *their* eyes and understand with *their* hearts, and be converted, and I would heal them’” (vs 37-40). So a lot of people want to have God on their side, but the truth is if you’re not on God’s side, you don’t make the commitment, you don’t believe His words, it’s not going to happen. The reverse is going to happen.

Verse 41: “Isaiah said these things when he saw His glory and spoke concerning Him. But even so, many among the rulers believed in Him; but because of the Pharisees... [politics] ...they did not confess *Him*, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.... [So here’s what Jesus said, so that we all know. This is part of ***the words***, to which we need to ***believe and commit***.] ...Then Jesus called out and said, ‘The one who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him Who sent Me. And the one who sees Me sees Him Who sent Me. I have come *as* a light into the world so that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness. But if anyone hears My words and does not believe... [as we saw here, does not make a commitment] ...I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world’” (vs 41-47).

Now here’s the key, v 48. This is part of the ***words of the covenant***, so that we ***know*** that we must ***make the commitment*** after ***counting the cost*** and we ***must believe***. “‘The one who rejects Me and does not receive My words has one who judges him; the word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken from Myself; but the Father, Who sent Me, gave Me commandment Himself, what I should say and what

I should speak. And I know that His commandment is eternal life. Therefore, whatever I speak, I speak exactly as the Father has told Me’” (vs 48-50). That’s pretty powerful. If you don’t believe the *words of Christ*, and if you don’t make a *commitment* to it, and you don’t *obey* Him, you’re not dealing with another man who is filled with the law of sin and death like all of us, and you’re having a bargain or something like that. You’re dealing with God! God Who cannot lie. God Who is going to give us eternal life. We ***may*** have eternal life.

The *words of the covenant*. Just like God gave all the words of the covenant and the laws that we had a summary of, and read a little bit of in Exo. 21-23. Here you’ve got the same thing. This is why on the Passover night we cover John 14, 15, 16, and 17. ***These are the words of the covenant***, right here. We’re not going to go through it. It’s not the Passover time, so we’re not going to get involved in it.

But these are the words. ***God makes the covenant!*** Here’s what we are to live by. God made sure it was written down. We’ve got it in black and white. This is greater than making a contract. If you go sign a contract to buy something or purchase something, this is it. ***This is for eternal life or eternal death***. Next time we’ll see some other things concerning some more of the twelve steps of covenant law.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 25:14
- 2) Genesis 1:26-27
- 3) Genesis 5:1-2
- 4) Genesis 1:29-30
- 5) Genesis 6:11-18, 22
- 6) Genesis 12:1-4
- 7) Exodus 19:3-6
- 8) John 3:14-16
- 9) Revelation 21:3-4
- 10) Genesis 2:7-9, 15-17
- 11) Genesis 15:5-6
- 12) Exodus 19:7-8
- 13) Mark 1:14-15
- 14) Luke 13:1-5
- 15) Acts 2:37-38
- 16) Amos 3:1-3
- 17) Genesis 3:1-5
- 18) Genesis 15:8
- 19) Genesis 17:1-4
- 20) Exodus 19:15-25
- 21) Luke 14:25-33
- 22) Genesis 6:22
- 23) Genesis 7:1-5
- 24) Exodus 20:18-26
- 25) Exodus 22:1-3, 10-28
- 26) Exodus 23:1-8
- 27) John 12:37-50

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 21, 22
- Genesis 2
- John 17
- Genesis 15:4; 6
- Exodus 21:22

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