

## Blood Covenant Truths: Lesson 3 –Blood Covenant Ceremony

This lesson provides an understanding of blood covenants that has been lost to our modern cultures. Satan has been able to use man's pursuit of knowledge to remove the realities of covenant from our societies. Regaining an understanding of blood covenant and the ceremony of cutting the covenant will provide deep and meaningful insights into the love of God and the depth of His commitment to His children.

The first two Blood Covenant Truths lessons identified why God needed Blood Covenant to free man from Satan's power. This lesson presents the historical understanding of what is involved in making a Blood Covenant. Much of this information has been lost to 'modern man', so we will be covering this material to educate you in this topic. The Bible is written assuming that the readers have an understanding of covenant. Accordingly, once this understanding is gained, the scriptures open up with new revelations and meanings. The depth of God's love and mercy towards man becomes evident. This in turn produces a deeper love for Him and appreciation of His goodness to us.

The first Blood Covenant ceremony recorded in detail in the Bible is in Genesis 15, when God cut covenant with Abraham and Jesus (this will be covered in detail in the next lesson). At this stage, please read Genesis 15 and write out **Genesis 15:8** \_\_\_\_\_

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In years past blood covenants were cut when two people or groups of people (tribes) decided that it was advantageous for them to join together in a bond that was stronger than family. To do this, they would make covenant with each other. Historical examples of this were seen (and appear in many modern movies) in the marriages made between the Kings/Princes and Queens/Princesses of nations. These marriages were arranged to strengthen the two nations in order to improve the security, prosperity and peace of both.

This original root of these alliances and marriages was a blood covenant. The covenant was made with great pomp and ceremony and even in modern society some of the elements of the ceremony are still present. At its origin, the blood covenant ceremony was a celebration of joining together that typically involved 10 specific activities. To explain the ceremony we will use a hypothetical example. As you read through this section, you will start to see many parallels with our lives; in marriages, contracts, and most importantly in the panorama of the Bible and what God and Jesus did to redeem mankind. Obviously, this panorama is what we will look at in more detail in lessons 4 thru 7 of Blood Covenant Truths.

Now to our example. Let's assume there are two tribes living in close proximity to each other and one tribe are warriors (known for their hunting skills) and the other are farmers (known for their green fingers). In relating together the leaders of these tribes decide it would be mutually beneficial for them to join together by covenant. Each party would bring their separate skills to the union and the result would be a stronger, more beneficial living environment. The hunters would provide meat and protection and the farmers the vegetables and staple foods. Having decided to proceed with the union, the covenant ceremony would be planned and performed. Let's look at each of the ten steps involved. Subsequent lessons will look at how these steps were involved in Covenants between God and man that enables God to deliver man from slavery to Satan.

1. **Representative.** In performing a blood covenant ceremony, the first essential step was to choose a representative for the tribe. The requirement was for the representative to be one that embodied the

nature of the tribe. In our example this would be the most skillful warrior/hunter and the finest farmer. They would be “Prime Specimens” of men, the ones who everyone in the tribe looks up to. These men would usually be the sons of the chiefs; the next in line for being the head.

2. **Location.** The tribes would then decide on the location for the ceremony. This would be a public place that has plenty of room for all members of both tribes to watch and witness the ceremony. For our example this would probably be in an open area that slopes down to a central spot, like a stream valley. This would allow the tribal members to array themselves on the valley sides and observe the ceremony in the valley bottom. In our example, the farming tribe would gather on one side of the valley and the hunter tribe on the other. Their leaders would be close to the central spot where the covenant will be cut. Selected tribesmen would be assisting in the preparations and a trusted member of each tribe would be there to assist the representatives as needed. The arrival of the people, leaders and representatives would be done with great pomp and ceremony. It is a grand and momentous occasion that doesn't happen very often, but when it does, it changes the lives of the participants and the course of their futures.
3. **Sacrifice the Animals.** This is the first part of the actual ceremonial event. All the witnesses have gathered at the chosen location and the representatives are present in their finest regalia. At this point the animals to be sacrificed are brought to the central area where the covenant is to be cut. As with any sacrifice, these animals are spotless, without any blemishes; they are perfect specimens. When all is in place, the animals are placed in a line and killed, with their blood being spilled on the ground. Then their carcasses are divided through the middle from head to tail and the two halves are laid across from each other, mirror imaged with a space between them. This process results in a path of blood being created between the pieces of the animals that is wide enough for the representatives to walk through. The stage is now set for the cutting of the covenant.
4. **Walk of Blood.** The two representatives now take their positions standing back-to-back in the middle of the slain animals. Then they perform the walk of blood. This involves them walking out to the end of the path of slain animals, turning right and passing down the outside of the animals on opposite sides from each other. When they reach the end they turn back into the path between the animals and walk in the path of blood until they stand face-to-face within an arm's reach of each other. They have completed the walk of blood and since “life is in the blood”, it symbolizes that they have walked into a new life. The ceremony now shifts to solidifying their new state.
5. **Exchange of Belts.** The two representatives now proceed to remove their belts and exchange them. This exchange indicates that they are providing each other with their strength and power. The belt is what carried the tools of their trade. For the warrior, it carried their sword or knife and supported their bow and arrows. For the farmer, it would be the hand tools used for farming. Tool belts are a normal part of most tradesmen's equipment today. The symbolism of this exchange is that they are joining their strength together; sharing their skills and power.
6. **Exchange of Coats.** The next action is to exchange their coats. The coat is what designates their authority. Today, this is seen in the military where the rank of the person is shown by their epaulets or insignia that is attached to the coat. This exchange indicates that they are providing each other with their authority and responsibilities. New Covenant Principle number 5 is Dominion. You can see that by exchanging the symbols of their power and authority, they are joining their dominion together, thereby increasing it for both tribes.
7. **Terms of Covenant.** The next part of the ceremony is the reading of the terms of the covenant. These would normally have been negotiated before the ceremony and include both the benefits the parties would get, along with the punishment if either party failed to fulfill the obligations of the covenant. In our example the warrior would read out what the farmer was expected to do as his role in the new relationship. This would

include the expectations of provision of food and home. The farmer would agree to this and then read out his expectations of the warriors. This would include provision of meat and protection from enemies. Each party would then read out the punishments associated with the covenant. This usually included swearing to kill the covenant maker and all his family; that is how serious a blood covenant was. In modern day contracts we see the reflection of a blood covenant in that the terms include what is expected and what the punishment or fine is if the expectations are not fulfilled. In marriage the vows made to each other are to love, support and cherish each other until death. The curse part is not usually mentioned although it is held in civil law in terms of how to separate the estate, custody of children and so on. In the Bible the terms of the covenant are called the Blessing and the Curse.

8. **Cutting of Flesh and Mixing of Blood.** Having read and agreed to the terms, the representatives then proceed to make this a permanent covenant by cutting themselves, typically on the thumb or hand, and then joining the bleeding hands together. This mixing of blood is the seal of the covenant. They would then rub something into the wound (clay, gunpowder, medicinal herbs) to ensure that it left a visible scar. That way anyone who saw the scar would know that the bearer was a covenant person. Today, this is seen in the wedding bands that the couples wear. In modern contracts, this is now seen in a signature – nothing like the gravity of a blood covenant, but it does show the legally binding commitment made by the signatories. In blood covenant terms, the mixing of blood produced a bond that is stronger than the family bond.
9. **Exchange of Names.** Having completed the mixing of blood, the representative now exchanged names. This signified that they were no longer two individuals or two tribes, but must be seen as one individual or one tribe. The farmers took on the name of the warrior tribe and vice versa. The result was a joint identity, with each sharing the rights and privileges of the other. Again, marriage is the prime example of the remnant of blood covenant in our society. The two become one and their names become one.
10. **Covenant Meal.** Having performed the ‘cutting of the covenant’ ceremony the final step in the ceremony is the covenant meal. The parties proceed to share a celebration meal. Usually a lavish affair with an abundance of food and drink, music, dancing, speeches and laughter. This is seen today in the wedding reception – a memorable event to celebrate the new union. The warriors would have provided large quantities of meat and the farmers an abundance of produce. These would be shared by all tribal members and a major celebration had. The event could go on for an extended period as it was a major change in the course of the lives of both tribes.

Interestingly, while the details of a blood covenant have been lost to Western culture, there are still a number of terms used in colloquial English that have their origins in this ceremony. Examples include: “blood is thicker than water” which comes from the reality that the bond between ‘blood brothers’ (result of a blood covenant) is more powerful and binding than being born from the same mother (born of water). “Sticks out like a sore thumb” comes from the scar on the thumb that resulted from cutting a blood covenant – something that is obvious to all observers.

Now that you have an understanding of what is involved in cutting a Blood Covenant and an insight into the significance of the ceremonial steps, let’s return to our studies on how God set up and used blood covenant to redeem mankind. At the end of Lesson 2 of NC Truths we looked at God’s covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:11-17) and the real significance of the rainbow for us. Now let’s look at how that covenant came about.

Read Genesis 8:15-22. What was the first thing Noah did after he left the ark? \_\_\_\_\_

How did the offering affect God? \_\_\_\_\_

In Genesis 9:1, what blessing did God reiterate? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Genesis 9:2-5. What food did God add to man's diet? \_\_\_\_\_

What part of the flesh was man not permitted to eat? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

Now read Genesis 11:1-9. Man wanted to build a tower (v4) that would make them independent of God. God states in verse 6 that because of a single language man could do anything he desired and imagined. This is known today as the power of agreement. Read Matthew 18:18-20. Given these concepts, why do you think God confused the language of man? \_\_\_\_\_

In order to establish a blood covenant with man God needed one man who would simply do whatever God asked. The Bible record shows that this man was Abraham. We will find in Genesis 15 that Abram knew exactly what a blood covenant was. So he must have learned it from his forefathers. So let's do some quick math on Abraham's ancestry. From Genesis 11:10-24, how many years after the flood was Shem's son Arphaxad born? \_\_\_\_\_, Now insert the ages of the following fathers when their sons were born: Arphaxad \_\_\_\_ Salah \_\_\_\_ Eber \_\_\_\_ Peleg \_\_\_\_ Reu \_\_\_\_ Serug \_\_\_\_ Nahor \_\_\_\_ Terah \_\_\_\_ Abraham. The sum of these years is? \_\_\_\_\_. This is the number of years after the flood that Abraham was born. Noah lived 350 years after the flood (Genesis 9:28), so how old was Abram when Noah died \_\_\_\_\_. So it's possible that Noah taught Abram about blood covenant.

Now we get to where God starts preparing Abram for the covenant God needed. Read Genesis 11:27 to 12:3. Here is the well known instruction from God to Abram to leave his family and go to the land God had for him. Write out Genesis 12:2-3 \_\_\_\_\_

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In what way did God intend to bless all the families of the earth through Abram? \_\_\_\_\_

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Chapters 12-14 cover the period of Abram's journey to 'the promised land' and key events in this ten year period. It includes his trip to Egypt, his separation from Lot and then his role in delivering Lot and all the people of Sodom. Now read Genesis 14:16-20 and answer the following questions.

What did Melchizedek bring and share with Abram? \_\_\_\_\_

What blood covenant step would this be? \_\_\_\_\_

What else did Melchizedek give to Abram? \_\_\_\_\_

What was Abram's response to receiving this covenant blessing? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is this significant? \_\_\_\_\_

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