

THE BLOOD COVENANT, PART 1
THE BOND IN BLOOD
Genesis 15:1-21

To establish a covenant with humanity, God placed a death sentence on himself.

What Is a Covenant?

The word “covenant” is used over 300 times in Bible.
The primary Hebrew word for “covenant” is *berit*.
To “make a covenant” is literally “to *cut* a covenant”
It was a social arrangement of convenience or necessity.
Covenant = a bond in blood; the establishment of a binding, legal relationship with no exit clause.
Hesed = mercy, kindness, loving-kindness, covenant love, covenant loyalty
Covenant partners die to their rights to independent living, becoming functionally one in the process.

The Concept of Representation

Covenants had “representative heads.”
Cf. David and Goliath
“Whatever happens to our representative head happens to us.”
My descendants—even if they’re not yet born—are “in” me.

The Public Ceremony

Selection of Representatives	Exchange of Vows and Blood
Exchange of Outer Garments	Exchange of Places between Sacrificial Blood
Exchange of Weapons	Exchange of Firstborn Sons
Exchange of Token Possessions	Exchange of Bread and Wine
Exchange of Names	Cf. A Marriage

The Shock of the Bible

God himself has entered into covenant with the human race!
God has “married” his people; he has sworn on covenant oath to keep his word, even upon pain of death.
It all starts with a man by the name of “Abram.”
God promises that one day someone will come through Abram’s line who will bless the whole world (Genesis 12:3).
God helps those who are helpless themselves! (cf. Genesis 15:1, 6)
It is in response to Abram’s questions about God’s faithfulness that God reveals himself to him in a blood covenant.
God loves his creation so much that he enters into covenant with us just to demonstrate that his Word is reliable.
Abraham’s new name was the declaration that God would keep his covenant. (Genesis 17:5)
Abraham’s circumcision was the covenant mark in flesh. (Genesis 17:10)
Abraham ate a covenant meal with the Lord. (Genesis 18:1-8)

The Bigger Shock of the Bible

God takes Abraham’s place and walks between the pieces of the animal. (Gen 15:17-18 [v. 12 = Abram is sleeping])
God places a death sentence on his own head should the covenant ever be broken.
The heartbreak of the Old Testament is that Israel kept breaking covenants with God. Must God die?
Jesus, God’s Son, didn’t just walk *between* the bloody pieces of covenant, he *became* the bloody pieces of covenant.
Galatians 3:13a (Jesus suffers the curse of broken covenant); Galatians 3:28-29 (“you are Abraham’s seed and heirs”).
“In Christ” (e.g., 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1; Romans 6:3-6)
There are New Covenant exchanges for the people of God...
The people of God never go through life alone.