

• LESSON 11 (March 12) •

The God Who Raises Us to Walk in Newness of Life

We spent significant time in our last lesson in The Letter to the Hebrews learning about the God of peace who has established an eternal covenant (Heb 13:20-21). Remember especially what we learned in Hebrews 9:11-14:

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an **eternal redemption**. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

The points being made are profound and of eternal significance:

1. An eternal covenant has been made available to mankind by the God of peace.
2. The blood of God's own Son was shed in order to make reconciliation with God possible.
3. By means of this blood, an eternal redemption has been secured for those who are sanctified.
4. Just as the blood of animals sanctified for the purification of the flesh under the old covenant, the blood of Christ sanctifies under this new and better covenant, purifying our consciences from dead works in order that we might serve the God of peace.

The next logical question in our efforts to understand what this God of promises and covenants has accomplished and what he desires of us is "How?" *How* do we come in contact with the blood of Jesus Christ? Romans 6:1-11 is extremely helpful in answering that question.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

- ❖ To whom is Paul writing and what have they come to enjoy in relation to God—the same God whose glory they had fallen short of (Rom 3:23) in the past?

- ❖ What had they done in order to enjoy this blessing?
- ❖ How did what these believers had done relate to what Christ Jesus had done?
- ❖ “So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” Meditate on Romans 6:11. What does it mean? How does it relate to the idea of a covenant?

Colossians 2 connects even more “covenant dots” for us.

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. **In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands**, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him. (Col 2:6-15)

- ❖ What purpose had circumcision previously played in the plan of the God of covenants?
- ❖ What is this “circumcision made without hands”? What must I do to experience it?
- ❖ **Bottom line:** how does baptism relate to entering into a covenant relationship with God?