

Sonship
The Covenant of Sonship vs. The Covenant of Law

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God frames the creation of man with a covenant of sonship and in the fullness of time He pays the price that He has sworn to pay before the foundations of the world; He pays that price at Calvary. On the day of Pentecost He sends his Holy Spirit who brings men into sonship—Spirit to spirit. And so **Romans 8**, at **verse 14**, specifically tells us how He accomplishes this eternal purpose known before the foundations of the world. In this specific language it is stated, in **Romans 8**, at **verse 14**, He says, **“Because those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.”** And then **15** says, **“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”** (Inserted – **Romans 8:14-17**)

So we become a son when the Spirit of His Son comes in and fellowships with our spirits. Eternal purpose—planned in the mind of God before He created man—that eternal purpose is now fulfilled when one is born again of the Spirit. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit because there is a law that is operative at this point. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus sets us free from the law of sin and death. (Inserted – actual verse—**“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.”** – **Romans 8:1,2**)

Now what I’d like to do is backtrack on our journey and look at something that has come in to steal the reality of our sonship. Come, if you would please, to the book of **Exodus**, the **19th chapter**. We have seen how God began

to attach the promise of sonship to a race, fathered by this man Abraham. At the same time we see how God begins to define the nature of sonship through this Old Testament priest known as Melchizedek. Melchizedek and Abraham then are bound together. One speaks of the status of sons and the other speaks of the character of sons. The status of sons is spoken to through the person of Abraham. The character of sons is spoken to through reference to Melchizedek. In the fleshly lineage then, man becomes inheritors of the promise through Abraham—Abraham is the one to whom God attaches this promise. And one becomes identified as a son of God, not so much by relationship in that sense to Abraham, but by identification with Melchizedek. In short, the character of a son of God is identified with the person of Melchizedek. The promise of sonship is identified with the person of Abraham.

Now as God begins the process of attaching this promise that He has made to mankind, He begins with Abraham and He takes Abraham for a walk under the night sky and He tells him to look up. As Abraham begins to look up into the fathomless reaches of the universe above his head—spreading out, literally, in all directions—God tells Abraham that as numerous as the stars of the heavens are, so will be his generations in number. And then he tells him that in his seed—in Abraham’s descendents—God would fulfill this promise that He made to himself of creating from the human race, a race of sons. So, “In thy seed,” God says to Abraham, “All the nations of the earth will be blessed.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.” – Genesis 26:4**)

Abraham’s descendents in the flesh are the Jews and they are in Egypt for a period of close to 400 years. They are being brought out of Egypt and God brings them to Mt. Sinai and here is where we meet up with them: **Exodus**, the **19th chapter**. In **Exodus 19**, God brings Moses up to the mountain and God says this to Moses: **verse 3**, **“Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, ‘This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”** (Inserted – **Exodus 19:3-6**)

Now God brings Moses up to the mountain and tells him what his intentions are for the people assembled at the mountain that day. God tells him, “Go and say to them, ‘If you will obey me fully and if you will keep my covenant, then out of all the nations, although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and

a holy nation.” But ask yourself this question: Is this what they ended up having, under the law? Did they become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation? Of course not. They had—instead of an entire nation of priests—there was only one tribe who were the priests: the tribe of Levi. The rest of them were not priests under the Mosaic covenant. So, they didn’t end up with that, that God promised them.

But before we get into that, look at this again. God says, “If you obey me fully and keep my covenant...” What covenant? This is **Exodus 19**. The covenant that is recorded—the Old Testament—is **Exodus 20**. But God says, “If you will keep my covenant.” What covenant? Someone may say, “Well, wait... forbear. God is speaking in anticipation of a covenant He is about to create. He knows that and whether they know it or not, God is about to create a covenant so He is saying to them, ‘If you will keep the covenant I am *about* to create.’” Nonsense... that’s not true, and it’s not true for two reasons. The first is: the covenant that they are promised is not the covenant of Moses, specifically because God promised them this: “If you will obey me fully and keep my covenant, of all the nations you will be my treasured possession, though the whole earth is mine, you will be for me” (this is the covenant God offered them) “You will be to me a kingdom of priests” (that’s a royal priesthood) “and a holy nation.”

Now that’s the new covenant, that’s the covenant that we have in the New Testament. You could hear Peter saying, “For you are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” – I Peter 2:9**) That’s not the covenant that they end up with. How do you know that? Well because 1) there is only one tribe of twelve that is comprised of priests—that’s the tribe of Levi. God’s says, “You will be a kingdom of priests...” That the whole lot of them would be first a kingdom, then they would be priests—all of them. Were they not already a kingdom? No, they were not a kingdom; they were slaves. They were the descendants of Abraham, recently set free from Egyptian slavery. They were standing there at Mt. Sinai, newly escaped from slavery.

So the first observation relative to the point that the promised covenant here was not what they ended up with was the fact that they were all supposed to be priests. The second thing is that they were supposed to be “a holy nation.” And nothing like that ended up being the case. Hear the words of the Lord to the prophet Isaiah in **Isaiah, chapter 1**. God says, “Hear O heavens! Listen, O earth! For I have raised up a people and they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his owner and the donkey knows his master’s crib but my people do not consider. Ah, sinful nation,”—that’s quite different from a holy nation—“Sinful nation, and a people laden with iniquity.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: ‘I reared**

children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.' Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him." – Isaiah 1:2-4)

And he says, "There is no soundness in them from the tops of their heads to the souls of their feet, only wounds and welts and running sores, because I have beaten them in correction and I have beaten them consistently and I've beaten them recently so that the wounds have not been healed." (Inserted – actual verse—"**Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness—only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil.**" – Isaiah 1:5,6)

Then in **verse 18**, the famous verse, " 'Come now, and let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow, though they be red like crimson, they will be as wool.'" (Inserted – actual verse—"**'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.'**" – Isaiah 1:18) And then God says, " 'If you are willing and obedient, you will eat of the fat of the land, but if you continue to be disobedient, you will be devoured by the sword because the mouth of the Lord has spoken it.'" (Inserted – actual verse—"**'If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.'** For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." – Isaiah 1:19,20)

My point is that Israel was not then, and is not now, a holy nation. In the **6th chapter** of the book of **Isaiah**, in the famous verse, "**Here am I. Send me!**" we do not remember that the thing for which God was seeking someone—when He says, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"—was He was seeking someone that He might send to pronounce a curse over Israel because Israel had consistently rejected the invitation of God to repent. In **chapter 6**, when God sends out Isaiah, He says, " 'Go and say to this people: 'Seeing, you do not see; And hearing, you do not hear. Neither do you understand because you have hardened your hearts and dulled your ears.'" (Inserted – actual verse—"**Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!' He said, 'Go and tell this people: 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.'**" – Isaiah 6:8-10)

The question is: how long did this curse remain? Well we know that in Jesus' day, that curse was still in operation because in **Matthew, the 13th chapter**, Jesus rehearses—as the explanation for the fact that He spoke to the multitudes in parables, when He spoke to His disciples plainly—He said that the reason is that this people, “‘Though seeing, they do not see; hearing, they do not hear. Neither do they understand.’” (Inserted – actual verse—**“This is why I speak to them in parables: ‘Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.’” – Matthew 13:13,14)**)

The curse continued up through and including the time of Jesus—that curse by which they are said not to be a holy nation but instead a sinful nation and a people laden with iniquity—that curse continues to this day and it will continue until the time of Jacob's trouble when the Jews repent of turning away from God ever so long ago. (Inserted – **Jeremiah 30**) Then God will redeem the nation to himself. So the point is: they were not a royal priesthood; they were not a holy nation. But the second aspect to this is that there was an existing covenant, including that covenant being served by priests. Look at **verse 22**, of the same **Exodus 19**, “‘**Even the priests, who approach the Lord, must consecrate themselves, or the Lord will break out against them.**’” And then **verse 24**, “**The Lord replied, ‘Go down and bring Aaron up with you. But the priests and the people must not force their way through to come up to the Lord, or he will break out against them.’”**

So God says, “If you will keep my covenant,”—which is an existing covenant, and complete with priests—what covenant then was in existence and why were there priests? We'll come to that in just a moment. According to Moses in the book of **Deuteronomy, the 5th chapter**, we know what happened between the invitation that God issued to the Jews to come up, and the Law. (Inserted – actual verse—**“When you heard the voice out of the darkness, while the mountain was ablaze with fire, all the leading men of your tribes and your elders came to me. And you said, ‘The Lord our God has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him. But now, why should we die? This great fire will consume us, and we will die if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any longer. For what mortal man has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived? Go near and listen to all that the Lord our God says. Then tell us whatever the Lord our God tells you. We will listen and obey.’” – Deuteronomy 5: 23-27)**)

God intended to bring them up into His presence because it is the presence of the Lord that changes men into sons of God. In the book of **II Corinthians, the 3rd chapter**, we are told that the ministration of death, written and

engraved in stones, though glorious as it was, was a fading glory to be surpassed by the ministration of righteousness. Then, analogizing to the ministration of condemnation, to the Ten Commandments and the Law, God says again, through the Apostle Paul, “The ministration of righteousness supercedes that, in glory.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? If the ministry that condemns men is glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! – II Corinthians 3:7-9)** I’ll come to that in a moment.

The intention of God was to bring them up into his presence because where the presence of the Lord is, there is liberty and we, who with unveiled faces, behold the Lord’s glory, are transformed from glory to glory. (Inserted – actual verse—**“But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” – II Corinthians 3:16-18)** Now the point is that God wanted them—after initially barring how far they could come—God wanted, then, to sequentially (in sequence) to come down upon the mountain and then gradually bring them up into his presence. It would have been in his presence that they would have been transformed from slavery into sonship.

Moses tells us what happens in **Deuteronomy, chapter 5**. Since it was the presence of God that would have changed their status and made them into sons, it is important that you see what happened and why they ended up with the Law. **Deuteronomy 5** says, **“Moses summoned all Israel and said: Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. It was not with our fathers that the Lord made this covenant, but with us, with all of us who are alive here today. The Lord spoke to you face to face out of the fire on the mountain. (At that time I stood between the Lord and you to declare to you the word of the Lord, because you were afraid of the fire and did not go up the mountain.)”** (Inserted – **Deuteronomy 5:1-5a)**

They ended up not being vested in the original offer that God gave to them because as a condition that would cause that offer to vest, and for them to become the sons of God, they would have to go up into the presence of God—a fact that Moses said that they did not do—because it is the presence of God that would have transformed them into this level of glory. Their failure to go into the presence of God is what, in fact, resulted in them being given something other than the original gift. They were then not given the covenant of sonship; they were given a

covenant of Law. Now, here is what the Law did. When they turned away from God, God had already sworn on oath to himself that He would make Abraham's seed the beneficiaries, initially, of this covenant—the covenant of sonship. They rejected that offer and so God continued to look for a people who would receive this offer.

The fact that they did not want this offer did not mean that God abandoned the whole plan to have sons. He simply moved it over to a different expression because God had already sworn on oath to himself that of this creation that He had made, He would have sons. So when that offer failed because the people to whom it was offered did not accept the offer, God positioned himself to fulfill his promise with himself, but to do that beginning right where the people were. So He gave them the Law. The Law had certain particulars to it. God promised that by the Law, He would make them into a nation—not a holy nation, just a nation—that God would give them protection against their enemies (first He would make them into a nation, then He would protect them as a nation) then He would protect their economy. And finally, He would give them health—He would protect them in their health, in exchange for which they would agree to abide by the terms of the Law because when the Law worked its way through, it would produce the seed, and God would have spiritual sons through this seed of God, through Abraham.

It is important that you note that the covenant that God had with Abraham—He had with himself and made Abraham the beneficiary—Moses said that that's not the same covenant that God enacted. Moses said, "It's not with our fathers that God made this covenant, but with us, us who are alive here today." (Inserted – **Deuteronomy 5:3**) Now what I want to do is to continue this discussion to show you the difference between what God offered to Abraham and then to the Jews on Mt. Sinai, and what they ended up with. God offered the Jews these four conditions: "I'll make you a nation. I will protect you as a nation. I will protect your economy and I will protect your health in exchange for which you will obey the Laws I am about to give you."

Now in doing so, God became the party of the first part and the Jews became the party of the second part. You can readily see what would happen: that God would keep his part of the bargain and the Jews would not. Now, when God would keep his part of the bargain, He would confer a benefit to the Jews, which they would be entitled to only if they kept their part. The fact that it was predictable that God would keep his part and the Jews would not keep their part would mean that, under the law, you would have a benefit received without the price being paid. That makes you a debtor if you receive any benefit for which you have not paid, but you have a duty to pay, then you become a debtor under the Law.

We will look at the matter of how being a debtor under the Law makes you a slave and keeps you from being a son

when we come back to the next broadcast. But for now, let's look at the four things God gave: 1) In the laws, God established property law, contracts, torts, family law and the like. He made them a nation, like He said, and He kept their enemies from them. Then He protected their crops and their herds and He also protected their health. God was faithful like He said, but this was the Jews' bargain and it did not produce sons. Continue to study with me as we look at the contrast between sonship and the Law. I'm Sam Soleyn, God bless you and I'll see you again.

Scripture References:

Romans 8:14-17

Romans 8:1,2

Genesis 26:4

Exodus 19:3-6

I Peter 2:9

Isaiah 1:2-4

Isaiah 1:5,6

Isaiah 1:18-20

Isaiah 6:8-10

Matthew 13:13,14

Jeremiah 30

Exodus 19:22,24

Deuteronomy 5:23-27

II Corinthians 3:7-9

II Corinthians 3:16-18

Deuteronomy 5:1-5a