

Sonship The Confidence of Sonship

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Sam Soleyn
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Once you understand that there was a pre-existing covenant—before the worlds were framed, pursuant to which God created man—once you understand that, you begin now to see the unfolding of the purpose of God pursuant to that covenant. When you see that we have become the sons of God, then the promise that is in this covenant is the basis upon which we relate to God. He allows us to relate to Him on the basis of what He has already said and done for us. It's not, the Scriptures tell us, “by works of righteous which we have done, but according to His own mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior,” – Titus 3:4-6)**)

So, the whole matter of the confidence that we have in our Father is based not so much upon our ability to quote Scripture to God but the underlying truth that He swore on oath to himself and He intends to keep His promise. And this oath—which is the foundation of the first covenant, the covenant that God made with himself—this oath yields a promise. You see God intended to create sons. Not because suddenly humans were created and now God has to figure out what to do with them. God had promised himself that He would have sons, and paid the price for that before He created man.

Since that is the case, then the promise is a promise that has nothing to do with us or particularly our ability to perform—in terms of that promise—because if there are terms to be fulfilled it's not a promise. *He gave us a promise: He told us He would make us into sons.* He gave us that promise. Since it is a promise, there is nothing for us to do except to allow the process to take place in us. But beyond the process is the guarantee of the result

and the guarantee of everything that goes with it. So you can be confident that what God has promised, He will do. It is that structure of understanding that allows us, by faith, to be at peace and to enter God's rest.

The rest—or the repose, or the quiet confidence—of the sons of God is one of the greatest legacies attenuated to this promise. God wants us to understand that He means for us to rely upon this promise. And what comes up then is the comparison between the subsequent covenant that was enacted in Mt. Sinai, that even though the Jews kept it—in some measures they did—it did not allow them, nor did it entitle them to enter the rest—the confident repose, the knowing reality—of what the promise, and the substance of the promise of the first covenant, was. You see the first covenant was not the covenant at Mt. Sinai. It was when they failed to accept that promise of the first covenant—the covenant God made with himself before the foundations of the world—it was because they failed to enter that rest, that God gave them the law.

The law from Mt. Sinai was a most interesting gift from God to the people. Now keep in mind, it was not the original intent of God. The original intent of God is clearly delineated in the promise that He gave them as they came to Mt. Sinai, and in an earlier discussion we had this full setting forth of the matter. When they came to Mt. Sinai, according to **Exodus 19**, God's promise to them was that they would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation... that was the promise. Because, to be a son of God, you are a son of the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords, so your place in time is that of a royal person (being a son of a king... indeed, a son of *the* King) and, as such, your ministry is priestly.

You are called to display the glory, the grandeur, the compassion, the mercy of God your Father, because your own nature as a son, has been changed to reflect the nature of God. And just as God in His ministry to man serves man compassion and mercy, kindness and goodness, so you, as a son of God, serve humanity these reflections of God's nature being born in you because you also are of God. So your work is priestly. You serve the interest of God, and of Christ, as you reflect His glory among mankind. This is the high estate to which every son of God is called and that was indeed the promise of Mt. Sinai in **Exodus 19, verses 3-6**, where God said, "Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Inserted – actual verse—"**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.'**" - Exodus 19:3-6)

But we have this very, very interesting—and in some ways troubling—reference in the book of **Hebrews** to the fact that although the Israelites had received the 10 commandments and the 631 laws that constituted the Mosaic law—or the Torah—from Mt. Sinai, and they kept the law most of the time. For example, they routinely kept the Sabbath. Whoever did not keep the Sabbath was stoned to death, so people routinely kept the Sabbath. And the point is: even to this day, in the state of Israel, the Jews observe the Sabbath. Now, even secular Jews observe the Sabbath because it is a matter of custom. They may have lost track of why, and they may not attribute to God any particular purpose for keeping the Sabbath, but they keep the Sabbath.

If you visit Israel today, on the Sabbath there are no Israelis working. If you are staying in a Jewish hotel, when the Sabbath comes the staff changes. All of the Arabs who are that staff come in and work the hotels. The Jews go home. They return the following day. The elevators do not go up but certain floors, the buses do not run. It becomes the time when the Arabs run the country on the Sabbath day. So the Jews historically kept the Sabbath, and yet this passage said, in **Hebrews** the **4th chapter**, at **verse 3**, “**Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said, ‘So I declared on oath in my anger, ‘They shall never enter my rest.’**”

Now is this saying that because the Jews didn’t keep the Sabbath they didn’t enter God’s rest? No. My point is that they kept the Sabbath then and they even keep the Sabbath now but they do not enter God’s rest. Well what then is God’s rest if it isn’t the keeping of the Sabbath day? Entering God’s rest was to fully embrace the promise that attenuated the first covenant, which is the covenant that God made with himself. The covenant from Sinai was secondary to the covenant before and that’s the passage—I just want to remind you of it—the passage from **Galatians, verse 17 of chapter 3**, which says, “**What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, (the Torah, introduced 430 years after God had promised Abraham that in his seed He would bless the nations of the earth) does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.**”

So even though the children of Israel were given the law of the Sabbath, the law of the Sabbath was never intended to be God’s gift to them. It was what resulted after they failed to enter God’s rest. Now, what was the law of the Sabbath? What was that about? Well, when God brought the Jews to Mt. Sinai and offered them the covenant that was already ongoing—His covenant with himself—they said basically, “No... no thank you.” Because to enter into that covenant they had to go up into the presence of God, because you see, it is the presence of God that does away with sin. It is the presence of God that transforms the human being; it is never the keeping of the law.

This is what Paul said in the book of **II Corinthians**, the **3rd chapter**, he said, “If the ministration of death written

and engraved in stones was glorious so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look upon the face of Moses, fading as the glory of it was, how much more does the ministration of righteousness be even more glorious? If the ministration that brought condemnation was glory, the ministration of the Spirit, being even more glorious, brings life.” And then he explains in the same passage that we who, with unveiled faces, behold the Lord’s glory are being transformed from glory to glory. (Inserted – actual verse—**“Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letter 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! For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!**

Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 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 3:7-18)

With unveiled faces—that is face to face in the presence of God—the transformation of the saint occurs. It’s God’s presence that changes us. Now with that being so, we are able to take up the promises of sonship. But because the Jews would not go into the presence of God, God then ended up giving them the law. Now why was the law given to them? You must understand—the Jews understood this—that Satan is the accuser of the brethren. The terms in the Hebrew, “HaSatan”, makes him the prosecuting attorney.

When the Jews could not come into the promise of Abraham God gave them a law based upon the fact that their enemy would accuse them. What God did was He took the sting away from the prosecutor. We know from the book of **Job** that Satan brought an accusation against Job and requested the destruction of Job himself. It is normal for Satan to require the death—the annihilation—of those whom he opposes. After all the Scriptures tell us that Satan goes about as a “roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” (Inserted – actual verse—**“Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” – I Peter 5:8)**

Furthermore, the Scriptures refer to Satan as “the accuser of the brethren”. (Inserted – actual verse—“**Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: ‘Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.’” – Revelation 12:10**) He’s a “roaring lion”; he comes “to rob, to steal, to kill and destroy.” (Inserted – actual verse—“**The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.**” – John 10:10)

In his role as the prosecutor, HaSatan intended to find the Jews guilty, and also to request their annihilation as the result of being found guilty. What God did was to trump him. You see when God gave the law, the prosecutor had a law by which to judge the conduct of the Jews. But God didn’t just give the law; God set the punishments associated with the infractions of the law. Now when you do that, you take from the prosecutor the right to be both the prosecutor and the executioner. By doing that, God who knew that the Hebrews would fail to keep the law... and if their failure would result in condemnation by the law and furthermore, if their failure—resulting in condemnation—exposed them to the harsh penalty of annihilation then there would be no race of people out of whom the Seed for the redemption of mankind—the Lord Jesus Christ—would come.

So God trumped Satan by first acknowledging his role as the prosecutor, giving him a law by which he could legally assess and judge the character and the actions of the Israelites, but He denied him the right of affixing the punishment, because the law determined crime and punishment, offense and sanction. By doing so God used the law to pre-empt the issue of punishment. So when the prosecutor, when Ha-sataan could find them guilty under the law, he was limited in terms of what he might ask for the punishment, and by this then, God cleverly, brilliantly saved the Jews from annihilation.

The law, it might be said, saved the Israelites from annihilation until the Seed should come—that Seed being Christ. Here it plainly says that in Scripture. This is again from **Galatians, verse 19**, it says, “**What, then, was the purpose of the law?** This is **Galatians 3:19**. “**What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come.**” Added because of transgression, that is: God knew that their sins would expose them to the wrath of the prosecutor, to HaSatan because historically, he had always requested *that* punishment for *any* infraction.

For example, in the book of **Job** where his role is first clearly presented to us we see that the enemy asks God to destroy Job. He says, “Touch him, destroy his goods and so on and he [Job] will curse you.” (Inserted – actual verse—“**Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed**

the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” – Job 1:10,11)

God, knowing what Satan’s intention was, described the meets and bounds of Satan’s activities relative to Job and therefore Satan was free to torment Job but not to kill him. But, in the days of Israel being in Egypt, the intention of the enemy, when the deliverer was to be born is *not* unclear. He wanted the annihilation of Moses and pursued that through the annihilation of all the children. Similarly, when Jesus was born the same event occurred. Controlling the Romans, Satan wanted to see the destruction of the Messiah by the destruction of the children. But all of this is perfectly consistent with his role.

He is the accuser, but he also is the devourer. He comes “to rob, to steal, to kill and to destroy”, and he goes about as “a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” That’s his intention; it’s perfectly consistent. So the law was added because of transgression. It was anticipated that Israel, by reason of their transgression—and once the intention of God was clear, that He intended to present the Messiah through Abraham’s lineage—that the enemy would seek every means by which to destroy the Jews. So God added the law from Mt. Sinai because of the transgression of the Jews... *until* the Seed should come. So the purpose of the law was to preserve a people who, in turn, would be useful for the bringing forth of the Messiah because it was through Abraham’s seed—the Jews being that nation preserving the lineage of Abraham—through whom Jesus would come. That was pretty apparent. So the law—brilliantly—saved Israel from annihilation.

But the law was never intended to be the source of righteousness, nor was the law intended to be the circumference of the relationship between God and His people and therefore, in the book of **Hebrews**, the writer comments that, “they did not enter God’s rest even though they kept the law”, at least in relationship to the Sabbath. So “rest” here is not “taking a day off”, as in the case of the Sabbath, but fully relying on the promises that God had made... so fully reliant in fact, that the promises that God made would become the very foundation of what we believe is true and real.

So then it says, **“For if Joshua had given them rest,”** this is verse 8 of **Hebrews 4**, **“God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.”** (Inserted – **Hebrews 4:8-11**) And then it goes on, right after that to say that God established a high priest in the order of Melchizedek, **“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son**

of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses...” (Inserted – **Hebrews 4:14,15a**) Jesus is described to us then as the sum and substance of the administrator of the grace of God resident within the new covenant. As sons of God therefore, the promise of God’s covenant with himself, to make us into sons is the foundation of *all* of our well-being, and the Sabbath rest spoken of here is not a “day off”, but a state-of-being and a way of life that fully testifies to our belief that the promises that result from the covenant God made with himself are reliable to this very day. I’m Sam Soleyn. God bless you.

Scripture References:

Titus 3:4-6

Exodus 19:3-6

Hebrews 4:3

Galatians 3:17

II Corinthians 3:7-18

I Peter 5:8

Revelation 12:10

John 10:10

Galatians 3:19

Job 1:10,11

Hebrews 4:8-11

Hebrews 4:14,15a