

Accessing God's Promises of Healing, Peace and Provision



GOD

SNEAK
PEEK

SAMPLE ONLY

THE
COVENANT
AND THE
CONTRADICTION

Kenneth Copeland
and Greg Stephens

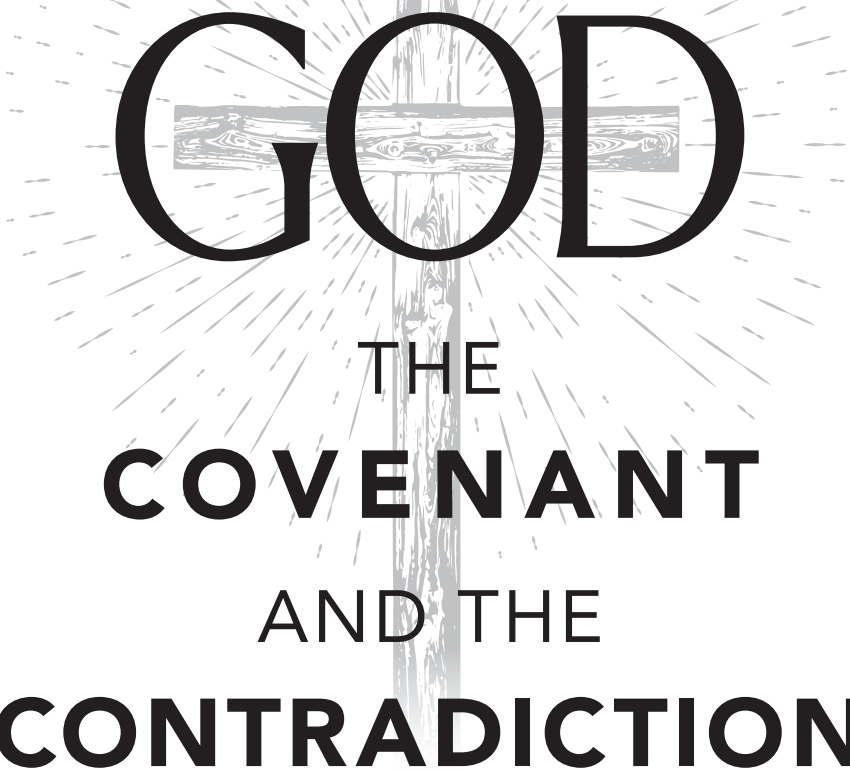
**A BLOOD-BACKED
AGREEMENT
IS THE MOST
POWERFUL DOCUMENT
KNOWN TO MANKIND.**

**NATIVE PEOPLE HAVE
ALWAYS KNOWN THIS.**

**IT IS SO ANCIENT,
THEY STILL PRACTICE IT
IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER.**

**THE HOLY BIBLE
IS A BOOK OF
BLOOD COVENANTS
RATIFIED IN THE
SINLESS BLOOD OF JESUS.**

—KENNETH COPELAND



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KENNETH COPELAND
PUBLICATIONS

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God, the Covenant, and the Contradiction

Accessing God's Promises of Healing, Peace and Provision

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DEDICATION

FROM KENNETH...

First, to my wife, Gloria Jean Copeland. On the thirteenth of April 1962, I entered into marriage covenant with her. Her selfless, precious, unconditional love changed my life forever! Her goodness and sweetness to me softened my heart to the place where, on the second day of November 1962, I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

Second, to Kenneth E. Hagin. The title of the book was inspired by the title of a message he preached that changed our lives forever: *God, a Covenant, and a Contradiction*.

FROM GREG...

First, I must recognize my mother and father (now in heaven), who, when I was a child, always included me in their late-night discussions with guest ministers visiting our home. This fostered a passion in me to discover truth.

Second, to my spiritual fathers, all of whom have directly imparted divine and natural wisdom in different seasons of my life—for which I am humbled and grateful. Thank you, Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth W. Hagin and Kenneth E Hagin. Thank you, Rabbi Joel, for our at-times “fierce discussions,” which caused the Word to make sense in a new way as we reasoned together.

Third, to my wife Michelle, who “saw potential” in me and has never wavered in her support.

And finally, to the Greatest Rabbi, the One who is the Covenant Personified, of whom I am Your grateful disciple... Jesus (Yeshua), my Savior.

**...YOU LIVED IN THIS WORLD
WITHOUT GOD
AND WITHOUT HOPE.**

**BUT NOW YOU
HAVE BEEN UNITED
WITH CHRIST JESUS.**

**ONCE YOU WERE
FAR AWAY FROM GOD,**

**BUT NOW YOU HAVE BEEN
BROUGHT NEAR TO HIM
THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.**

EPHESIANS 2:12-13,
New Living Translation

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A NOTE TO THE READER

Throughout this book, you will notice several unconventional upper and lowercase words. These are the result of instruction over the years Brother Copeland has received from The LORD. Words consistently in all capital letters include *BLESS* in any form (*BLESSING*, *THE BLESSING*, *BLESSED*). Also capitalized are *The LORD*, *The WORD*, *God's WORD*, *His WORD*.

Other uppercase words include *Friend*, as in “Friend of God.” It is a covenant term also capitalized in the *King James* and *New King James Versions* of the Bible, specifically in James 2:23. *Covenant* is also capitalized where it refers to the nature of God's absolute holy and eternal Covenant with His people.

Finally, *satan* is lowercased throughout the book and in anything Brother Copeland writes. He refuses to capitalize the name, first, because in Hebrew it merely means “an adversary” and is not the actual name given to that fallen being. Second, in awful combat in the pit of hell, Jesus paralyzed and completely brought him to nought, taking from him the keys of hell and death (Colossians 2:15; Revelation 1:18).

INTRODUCTION

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and *strangers from the covenants of promise*, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 2:11-13

LET THE RIVERS OF REVELATION RISE

King Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, once said, “All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again” (Ecclesiastes 1:7). Rivers of truth flow through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Yet, for all the knowledge Solomon had obtained, none of it could help him resolve how a holy God could have a relationship with broken men and women in a broken world. Since the beginning of time as we know it, mankind has made whole religions in an effort to restore what was lost back in the Garden of Eden—relationship with God.

Is there a God-given way back to that place Adam and Eve once had? Yes! Knowledge of God’s covenants open a whole new dimension of understanding of the breadth, length, depth and height of His Love for you. The magnitude of His promises and

2 GOD, THE COVENANT, AND THE CONTRADICTION

scope of partnership with Him in the earth can become an exciting adventure as the truth of who He really is and what He has done for you begins to change your thinking about yourself and your relationship with Him.

Understanding covenant will increase your faith and stir in you a boldness like you've never known before. You'll find that you cannot but reach out with confidence to receive all your heavenly Father has planned for your life (Jeremiah 1:5, 29:11; Psalm 139:15). The fear that once dogged your every step will melt away as the confidence in your Blood Covenant Partner, Jesus, begins to flood your being.

Overdue bills and living paycheck to paycheck will be a thing of the past as the Architect of your Covenant agreement has made a way of abundance for you. Maybe it's sickness you can't seem to shake. Not anymore, as you determine to remain in the presence of your Covenant Healer, who has paid the price for your complete healing...spirit, soul, and body, financially and spiritually (Exodus 23:26; Isaiah 53:4-5; 1 Peter 2:24).

As we start down the path of studying these individual covenants, you will begin to see how you will never have to work another day in your life trying to earn your Father's favor, work your way into His good graces, or be good enough to earn His great Love and mercy toward you. He loves you with an everlasting Love (Jeremiah 31:3), and you can reach that place Adam and Eve once had—a place of grace, glory, BLESSING and covenant FRIENDSHIP with God.

PART 1

WHEN
COVENANT
PROMISES
WERE
MADE



THE
FIRST STEPS
TO
UNDERSTANDING
COVENANT

CHAPTER ONE

THE FIRST STEPS TO UNDERSTANDING COVENANT

“**H**ow will I know when I’m in love?”

I don’t remember exactly how old I was when I asked my mother this all-too-important question, but I remember her answer to this day: “You’ll know,” she said, “you’ll know.”

At first, I didn’t know what to make of her answer. I mean, what kind of answer is “You’ll know”? But years later when I met Gloria Jean Neece, LORD, did I know!

The first time I laid eyes on her was the first weekend of October 1961. Texas Christian University was playing the University of Arkansas in the Southwest Conference Championship in Little Rock, and I was flying co-pilot on a charter plane headed there. An extra seat was available on the plane so, with my boss’ permission, I invited my dad to come along. He worked for National Old Line Insurance Company in Little Rock. He was quite successful. When he asked for access to the company’s fifth-floor penthouse suite, they easily agreed.

That evening, I was invited to an after-game party at a country club. Now, this was before Jesus, mind you, so I went. It was there that I met Gloria’s father, Wallace (Babe) Neece. The first thing he

said to me was, “My daughter is the best-looking girl in the state of Arkansas.”

I said, “Is that right?”

“That’s right,” he said.

A little while later, he came back and said it again.

“Oh, you don’t believe me, do you? My daughter is the best-looking girl in the state of Arkansas.”

Then he asked, “Where are you staying? I’m going to prove it to you.”

I told him we were staying in the penthouse of the National Old Line Insurance Company, and explained that access to the elevator was on the outside of the building.

“I know where that is,” he said.

The next morning, when that elevator opened, I said, “Man, he wasn’t kidding! That’s the best-looking girl I’ve ever seen.”

After being introduced by her father, and after everyone had met my dad, I invited Gloria out onto the balcony.

“Would you like to see the city of Little Rock this morning?” I asked.

“I’d like that,” she said.

She and I went out onto the balcony overlooking the city. We talked like we’d known each other for years. The moment she put her arm around me and patted me on the back, I was gone!

I *knew*, just like my mother said I would.

I had never heard the term “root of bitterness.” However, instantly all of the bitterness and hardheartedness and anger that I had lived with for so long left me.

For several weeks, I couldn’t think of anything or anyone else but the “prettiest girl in Arkansas.”

During that time, my boss had taken over the airport Fixed Based Operation in a town forty miles from where Gloria lived. When he asked me to go there, I was all about it. I had her number, and I couldn’t wait to call her.

We had our first date at a restaurant called The Rocket Room, which was in a hotel in downtown Camden. They had a Wurlitzer “One More Time” jukebox and a little dance floor. I couldn’t take my eyes off Gloria. She had such class! We ate supper and just talked about music and the big songs of the day.

Although I could sing, I couldn’t dance—and I swore I’d never dance and sing to a woman at the same time. But that was all before I met Gloria. When that jukebox started playing Johnny Mathis singing “Misty,” I completely forgot what I’d sworn never to do. I couldn’t pass up the opportunity, so I asked Gloria, “Would you like to dance?”

I don’t know what I did to Gloria’s toes, but I attempted to dance—and sing...

*Look at me/
I’m as helpless as a kitten up a tree...
Never knowing my right foot from my left/
My hat from my glove/
I’m too misty, and too much in love.¹*

I have no remembrance of the drive home. But when we got back to Gloria’s house, I walked her up the front walk and onto the porch. Then, right out of the blue I said, “Gloria, will you marry me?”

Her response shocked me.

“OK,” she said.

Then she turned and went inside the house, leaving me out on the porch...*stunned!*

I didn’t find out until later that right after she shut the door, she thought, *What have I done? I don’t even know this guy. Oh well, I’ll get out of it later.*

At the time of this writing, we have been married sixty-one years, and she’s not out of it yet.

Little did I know, and little did Gloria know, that God was preparing a covenant. He knew what He had planned. At the time I was

¹ “Misty,” written by Erroll Garner and Johnny Burke, 1954.

flying airplanes as a commercial pilot, and I planned to stay in that line of work. But God had something else in mind.

THE BEST DECISIONS I'VE EVER MADE

On April 13, 1962, six months after our first date, Gloria and I entered into a covenant agreement that would change our lives forever. The moment I looked intently into Gloria Jean Neece's beautiful blue eyes and said, 'I do,' life for me only got better. That's because on that day I chose to commit to love, and I chose to do it at all costs. And I can say this: It was absolutely the second-best decision I ever made.

From that day I have loved her more than my own life.

The first-best decision I ever made also came in the form of a covenant. It was when I received Jesus as my Savior and LORD. Gloria had already received Him as her LORD a week earlier but hadn't told me about it. After being married for six months, we both made that decision one week apart from each other, with neither of us knowing the other had made the decision. But oh, when we found out! We were two young newlyweds who, having fallen in love and gotten married, then fell in love and got married all over again. Only this time to Jesus.

That's when life started really getting good, as we say in Texas.

Quite simply, that is what covenant is all about. It's what covenant is designed to do. That's why it exists. Covenant was established by God to take us up to a better place through relationship with Him and with others.

Covenant is just that simple, yet it's also profound and life-changing—which is why I want to teach you everything Greg and I have learned about it, and everything Gloria and I have learned about it from each other over the years.

In our sixty-one years of being married, we've learned a lot! Yet we've made it through all our years together without having an argument, without fussing, or in any way allowing the devil to get between us. Of course, that's more because of Gloria than because of

me. She absolutely refused to argue. One day, after abruptly walking out of the room, she said to me: “I started to get mad, but I decided I wouldn’t.” Then she came over and hugged me and that was it. I call that pretty good for sixty-one years.

Something else I call good is how our little family has blossomed over the years. What started out as just Gloria and me and Jesus now includes children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Add in the Covenant Partners who’ve joined us during the fifty-six years Gloria and I have been ministering together—and we’ve become quite a bunch!

We’ve grown into a great big Covenant family, which from the start is exactly what God had in mind.

GOD’S DREAM COME TRUE

Family has always been precious to God. Long before the beginning of time, He fell in love with the idea of having one of His own. He loved the thought of being surrounded by sons and daughters made in His own likeness. His heart yearned for a family of people He could love and BLESS.

All the magnificent splendor of creation we see around us today came out of that divine desire. God made it all for one purpose only—to BLESS His family. He created the earth and everything in it for *us!* We were in His heart and mind long before we ever showed up on the planet. His dream before the foundation of the world was to prosper you and me and all the rest of His family in every way imaginable as we spend eternity building our lives and world together with Him.

If you know the story of Creation, then you know that God’s dream first sprang to life with Adam and Eve, the great-great-grandparents of us all. You also know that things didn’t go well for them, nor for God pretty much from the beginning. In the Garden of Eden Adam committed high treason. He bowed his knee to the devil, a spiritual outlaw and thief who at one time had been an archangel created by God. When Adam surrendered his authority

to him, the devil became the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4). As a result, from then on, many times throughout the course of history, God would be faced with situations that threatened to destroy His dream forever.

So, in His endless wisdom and foresight, God put into motion the truth and power of blood-backed agreement—or COVENANT! You could say that covenant became God’s way of holding on to His family for dear life.

The word *covenant* comes from the Latin phrase that means “a coming together.” In a general sense, it’s simply an agreement between two or more people or parties. It brings those parties into relationship through a formal commitment made binding by arrangement, a testament or will, or a legal contract.

In the Bible, whenever a covenant is made between God and man, it’s always God who initiates it. In each case, He sets the conditions and standards of the agreement. He determines how the people with whom He is making covenant gain access to the benefits of the arrangement.

If that makes God sound controlling, like He’s trying to back people into a corner by setting all the demands, it’s because HE IS! God has done and is doing everything He possibly can to squeeze every one of us as tightly as He can into a place of BLESSING—once and for all. It’s the reason He wants you in Covenant with Him.

His motive has always been relationship. He desires more than anything to be in constant fellowship with you and shower you with His goodness. When you enter into Covenant agreement with Him, as Gloria and I did fresh into our marriage, you are obligating yourself by Faith to a relationship with Him. You’re binding yourself to Almighty God. Once you make that connection and commitment, He can release His purpose and desire for you, your life, and all creation, through the promises and BLESSINGS of the Covenant.

DO YOU SPEAK COVENANT?

One problem we as believers have today however is we don't have a covenant mindset. We live in a world that's lost touch with the value and significance of covenant. A world where it's often said that covenants (or "contracts") are made to be broken. A world that has little to no clue about what it means to be in a covenant relationship—whether those relationships are with spouses, family, business partners, or with God.

Because of this, the concept of covenant as God has revealed it for us throughout Scripture often escapes us. We don't listen to the Bible with covenant ears. We hear Bible stories at church, but without understanding the covenant context we can find it difficult to apply them to our lives.

The remedy, of course, is for us to renew our minds so that we do start thinking about covenant like God does. Granted, for us Americans, that will require some study. But I promise you, it will be worth the effort. Understanding covenant will make a world of difference in your life and take you to places in God you never imagined!

It certainly took Sir Henry Morton Stanley to some unimaginable places. If you've read about him, you may remember his story. A nineteenth century Welsh-American explorer and journalist, Stanley was sent to Africa by the *New York Herald* newspaper to find the famous Dr. David Livingstone. Livingstone, a Scottish physician, missionary, explorer, and overall hero to the British public, had been missing about six years.

Stanley's search for Dr. Livingstone soon turned treacherous. He lost nearly all his 100-plus-member expedition team to desertion and disease. He also encountered hostile African tribes that further slowed his efforts. Desperate, Stanley finally heeded the advice of his young African interpreter—to consider entering a *covenant* with the chieftain of one particularly powerful, warring tribe.

At first, Stanley was hesitant to commit to some foreign idea of a peace treaty or agreement. He felt vulnerable and uncertain about how it would play out. He almost called the whole thing off

when he found out that this “covenant rite” would require him and the chief to drink some of each other’s blood. The very thought was revolting.

Stanley’s attitude changed though when his interpreter explained to him the covenant benefits. “Everything the chieftain has will be yours if you need it!” he said.²

At that, Stanley agreed to start the “covenant” process, and negotiations between the two parties began.

First, the tribal chief wanted to know what Stanley’s motives for the agreement were. What was he hoping to get out of their arrangement?

Next, the chief began asking Stanley about his resources and ability to keep his end of the agreement. The chief was old and experienced and not about to cut a blood covenant with just anyone. He wanted to know if Stanley was someone he could trust; someone who had significant benefits to offer him in return.

Finally, it came down to the moment of exchanging gifts—an important step in covenant-making. Stanley was confident that with all the precious trinkets, bales of cotton cloth, and other valuable items he and his men brought on their expedition, the chief surely would be impressed with something they had. And he was. He set his eyes on Stanley’s little, white goat.

The goat was one of Stanley’s most prized possessions. He suffered from poor health at the time and the goat produced milk that seemed to help him. The thought of parting with it was particularly challenging. Yet, of all his possessions, it was the only thing the chief would accept as a gift. So, Stanley finally agreed and handed over the goat.

What did he receive in exchange?

The chief gave Stanley a spear, seven feet long and wound with copper wire. The reason it was that long was that chief was nearly that tall. (He was probably Watutsi.) The fact that he was such a big man was one reason he was chief.

Stanley’s first thought was that he had been cheated by the old

2 E.W. Kenyon, *The Blood Covenant* (New Kensington, Penn: Whitaker House, 2019) p. 21.

chief. *This* was what his (obviously naïve) interpreter had meant by *everything the chieftain has will be yours if you need it?*

Stanley's problem at that moment, much like ours today, was he didn't speak *covenant*. So, initially the true value and significance of the chief's spear eluded him. It didn't take Stanley long however to figure out the spear's covenant meaning. When he took to the trail and reentered the bush, he found he held in his hand a scepter of power. He had in his possession something that gave him the authority and brought him respect equal to that of a king.

From that day on, in the eyes of all the people he encountered, *he* was now seven feet tall and wrapped in royalty. Everywhere he went the people acknowledged it by bowing to him.

Why?

When they saw the spear, they understood that he had a covenant with someone far more powerful. He had the backing of a king.

That revelation of the value of covenant changed Stanley's destiny. A revelation of our Covenant BOOK—The holy Bible—will change ours too.

JESUS WAS ALWAYS THE PLAN

God is the King of the universe. Through Covenant, He puts in our hand His scepter of power. He backs us and says to us, "Everything I have is yours." He gives us the right to exercise His authority and BLESSES us with the same BLESSING He originally gave to Adam. (See Genesis 1:28.)

God's perfect plan for mankind was for that original BLESSING to continue uninterrupted. His perfect will would have been for Adam to never sin and to be an eternal man. But because He knew in advance that Adam would fall, God's plan for mankind's redemption was already in place.

From before the foundation of the world, Jesus was that Plan.

All the covenants we will study in this book point to Him. He's there in what God said after Adam and Eve broke relationship with

their Creator. He's the One God was talking about when He told the devil that Eve's Seed "shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15). All through the Old Covenant, every Old Testament sacrifice represented Jesus.

Like many believers, you may have thought of the Old Testament and the New Testament as two separate Covenants. But as you're about to discover, the two are *very* connected. As it's been said: The Old Covenant is the New *concealed*, while the New Covenant is the Old *revealed*.

Even in the life of Jesus, we see both of those Covenants. As Professor Stephens will show you in the following pages, during His earthly ministry, one moment Jesus would step out and advance the cause of the New Covenant. The next moment He would reach back to fulfill a remaining detail of the Old Covenant. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets:" He told His followers, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17).

What you're about to read in the following pages will help you better understand what that means. You'll get a clear picture, as we walk together through all the covenants in the Bible, of how intricately this string of agreements forged by God with mankind over thousands of years are intertwined. You'll get a deeper revelation of these covenants, what they mean to your relationship with God, and how they impact our world.

STEP ONE OF THE THREE-STEP PROCESS

Before we dig into the covenants themselves, though, there are some basics you need to know. Getting them established in your thinking is important. They'll help make the seeming complexity of the covenant process and elements make sense.

The process of entering into a covenant always involves three steps. To God, three is a significant number. Throughout Scripture, He often works with groupings of *three*, a number that conveys *completeness*. The Bible tells us for example:

- There are three members of the Godhead—God the *Father*, God the *Son* (Jesus), and God the *Holy Spirit*—which makes the Trinity.
- There are three facets of God’s existence throughout time—God who *was*, who *is*, and who *is to come* (Revelation 1:4).
- God created us to be triune beings made up of *spirit*, *soul* and *body*.

This pattern of threes emerges repeatedly in all God-initiated covenants because it’s a reflection of His divine nature. It also signifies the fact that all three Persons of the Godhead are actively involved in His covenants. Each member of the Trinity plays a unique part in the process of fulfilling the Father’s plan to redeem mankind and restore us back to Himself.

The first step in the covenant process is the *calling* to covenant. God, the Father, takes this step by graciously inviting us to join ourselves to Him. Then, He in turn can join Himself to us, bringing all of who He is and all of what He has into our lives.

Nehemiah 9 tells us it was God who *chose* Abraham. It wasn’t Abraham who initiated their covenant relationship. God approached him first. He brought Abraham up from his homeland, and gave him a new identity. He even promised to give him all the land as far as his eyes could see (verses 7-8), an offer seemingly too good to be true.

God has essentially done the same for us as believers today. He has called us just as He called Abraham and made us an astounding offer. He’s offered us the opportunity to enter into a relationship with Him for all eternity. He’s promised to BLESS us and assured us, as Romans 8:28 says, that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are *the called* according to *his purpose*.”

Do you see it? As believers we are “the called”! That means God has already taken the first step in the process of establishing Covenant with us. He has extended to us a personal invitation to join ourselves to Him.

STEP TWO: ENTERING COVENANT

The second step in establishing a covenant is the actual *entering* into the covenant. This is where the terms of the covenant are agreed upon by both parties, and the agreement is executed or acted upon. In Hebrews 11:8 and 9, we see Abraham taking this step. We see that “by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.”

Imagine how much trust it took for Abraham to say yes to God’s call without knowing where that call would take him. Imagine how much Faith it took for him to leave everything behind without having any idea of exactly what lay ahead.

That’s like what Gloria did when she said yes to marrying me. Talk about an offer that seemed too good to be true! My lightning-fast mind figured out quickly that I was getting the better end of that deal. So, I did everything I could to get her to the altar before she could change her mind.

It took a lot of trust for her to marry me. She had to be willing to leave what was familiar to her and step out into a territory she was destined to inherit which, at the time, was nothing more than all my debts. I know for a fact she was in the dark about where her destiny with me was going to take her, because I didn’t have a clue myself. Yet, even so, she headed out with me into the great unknown.

She started a new life with me based only on a *promise*—a promise I made to her in our wedding vows the day we were married. She took the second step in the covenant process, committed to love and joined herself to me.

That’s what Abraham did. When he acted on God’s promise in Faith, he entered into covenant. He accepted God’s invitation and joined himself to Him.

Hundreds of years later when God gave the people of Israel the opportunity to enter into a covenant relationship with Him, He

added to this second step. He required the Israelites to agree *verbally* with His covenant conditions. He had them declare out loud together all the BLESSINGS and the curses of the Law. Like the reading and signing of a contractual agreement, this formalized their agreement to *enter* covenant with Him (Deuteronomy 27-30:19).

“But Brother Copeland,” you might say, “How does what Abraham and the people of Israel did in the Old Testament apply to us today? God hasn’t called us to go to a physical place called the Promised Land or asked us to declare out loud all the requirements of the Old Covenant Law. So, how do we take the second step of entering into Covenant with God?”

We do it by believing on God’s Son, Jesus, the *second* Person of the Trinity, and receiving Him by Faith as our Savior and LORD!

As Jesus declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me,” (John 14:6). In other words, He told us, “The only way you can enter into Covenant with the Father is through Me. Yes, He has called and invited you, but I’m your way in!”

Jesus did for us what we couldn’t. He did what mankind had tried and failed to do for thousands of years. By living a sinless life and perfectly keeping God’s law, He fulfilled all God’s Covenant requirements. Then He became the ultimate Covenant sacrifice, paid the price for the sin of all mankind forever, and shed His blood to ratify a second Covenant, a New Covenant.

The New Covenant cannot be broken. It is between the eternal, Almighty God, and the resurrected, glorified man, Jesus Christ—and we get in on it by Faith in Him. One of the articles of this precious Covenant is recorded in 1 John 1:9: It says that when we sin, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

That means we can’t mess up this Covenant! As The BOOK says, “Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and today, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8). Because He is always the same, so is His Covenant with God, therefore ours is, too.

STEP THREE: KEEPING COVENANT

The third and final step of the covenant process is *keeping* or *maintaining* the agreement. A covenant relationship, like any relationship—whether it’s in a marriage, in parenting, business or simply a friendship—requires maintenance. Relationships need nurturing. For them to remain healthy and vital, you can’t just forget about them. You must remember and attend to them.

Jesus spoke about this to His disciples just before He left them to go to the cross. During their last Passover meal together, He took the bread, “and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Corinthians 11:24-25).

When Jesus instructed His disciples to do this “in remembrance of Me,” He was pointing back to what their Hebrew forefathers had done for thousands of years. When they ate the Passover meal, they remembered how God had delivered them from the bondage of Egypt (Exodus 13:3; Deuteronomy 4:9). This *remembering* kept their minds focused on their covenant with Him.

This is why Jesus established under the New Covenant what we today call “Communion.” By telling us to eat and drink the Covenant meal, He provided us with a simple action step we can take to remind us that we’re in Covenant with God through Him. He gave us a powerful way to release our Faith in that Covenant. A way to nurture our connection with Him and keep it not only intact but healthy, active, strong, thriving—alive!

Right after that last Covenant meal Jesus shared with His disciples, He also told them about another way He was going to help them remember and maintain their connection with Him. He was going to send them the *third* member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, to help with this third Covenant step. He said:

If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he

may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.... he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:15-17, 26).

Notice a major role of the Holy Spirit is to help us *remember* our Covenant and keep our relationship with our heavenly Father dynamic. He also helps us by empowering us to be faithful to the conditions of the Covenant agreement and to obtain its benefits. But as we will see, under the New Covenant, this doesn't involve following an overwhelming list of rules and regulations, as was required under the First Covenant.

No, as born-again believers, our focus is to be on the One who went before us and fulfilled for us the terms of the Covenant. We take step three by giving attention to Jesus, to His Love for us, and to our place in Him. And we do that with the ever-present help—and continual prompting—of the Holy Spirit.

IF IT LOOKS LIKE A WEDDING...

In fifty-six years of ministry, I cannot tell you how many times I have officiated at weddings. There have been many. But I can recall and tell you precisely what I said to each of those couples in each of those ceremonies. I told them about *covenant*—and I have always done so in great detail—because that's what marriage is about. From start to finish, marriage is covenant through and through—even in ceremony.

This is why most all marriage ceremonies contain three major covenant elements. Like the three covenant steps we just discussed, each one is revealed in the Bible. And each one in its own way reflects a major aspect of our ultimate union with Jesus Christ—our Savior, LORD, and soon-coming King.

First, most traditional wedding vows exchanged at the altar begin with the words: "I promise." God-initiated covenants begin the

same way. Each of the Biblical covenants we're about to study starts with a *promise*. The promise is made by God the Father—the first Person of the Godhead—when He initially lays out the conditions, standards, and BLESSINGS of the agreement.

Second, there is the *cutting* of the covenant. In weddings, this cutting is signified by the bride and groom proceeding down the center aisle with her family sitting on one side and his on the other. This symbolizes the fact that two families are being joined here. Two families are coming together in covenant and becoming one (Genesis 2:23).

When God cut Covenant with us, the same thing happened. Two became one. Only in the cutting of God's Covenant, Covenant Blood was shed. Jesus—the second Person of the Godhead—stepped in as the living sacrifice on our behalf and joined us to God.

Third, there is the *seal* of the covenant. In weddings, the marriage covenant is sealed first with the exchanging of rings and then a kiss at the altar near the end of the ceremony. Our Covenant with God is sealed by the Holy Spirit—the third Person of the Godhead. His presence in us is the seal or guarantee of our Covenant with Him.

Now that you know the three steps of the covenant process and three elements involved in it, there's one more thing you'll need to remember: *the covenant contradiction*. In marriage, the covenant contradiction is the thing that threatens to take the happy out of the couple's happily ever after. In our Covenant with God, a Covenant contradiction is any natural obstacle that makes it appear impossible for God's promise to come to pass in our life.

It's circumstances that rise up in front of us that tell us there's no way that what God said about us in His BLESSING could ever happen. It's the thoughts we have to contend with when after we read in the Bible that by Jesus' stripes we're healed, the doctor diagnoses us with some "incurable" condition. Or when, despite God's prosperity promises, we're facing a towering stack of unpaid bills.

You know the arguments you can have in your head in such situations. *Yeah, I know what the Bible says but it'll never work! I'm too far gone. My situation is too bad. I'm too old...too young...too short...too tall.* On and on the fight can go.

How do we win that fight? How do we overcome such Covenant contradictions?

By doing what Abraham did.

God told him and his wife they would have a child. He was 100 years old and his wife was 90. *How can we ever have a child?* they wondered. They couldn't. Yet they did.

How? Romans 4:16-21 provides the answer.

Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Abraham never tried to reconcile the covenant contradiction. He just took Almighty God at His WORD and considered the blood covenant agreement he had with Him. That blood covenant made the contradiction make sense. It instilled such confidence in Abraham that years later, after his son Isaac was born, when God asked Abraham to sacrifice him, he raised the knife.

Why? Because he was fully persuaded that if that boy died, God would raise him from the dead. As The BOOK says, "by faith" Abraham "received him alive in a figure" (Hebrews 11:19).

As we study covenant in Scripture, we will see covenant contradictions arise time and again. We'll see that as soon as God reaches out to extend an opportunity for a covenant relationship with

someone, along will come a natural obstacle. A contradiction will arise to try to keep God's promise from coming to pass.

But thank God, covenant men and women throughout time have refused the contradiction and pressed through in Faith to the end-result, to THE BLESSING promised by God. And we can too! We can renew our minds to the way God thinks, to what He says, and to what He wants us to do and get rid of every contradictory thought that comes into our minds. By coming to an understanding of covenant we too can become fully persuaded that God has provided a full and complete redemption for us. He has restored us back to relationship with Him, reinstated our BLESSING—and what He promised He is able also to perform!

GO DEEPER

WITH KENNETH & GREG

THE GREATEST WEDDING CELEBRATION

And it shall come to pass, when The LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, that thou shalt put *THE BLESSING* upon mount Gerizim, and the *curse* upon mount Ebal” (Deuteronomy 11:29).

Throughout history there have been many royal, well-attended weddings. None however compare to the wedding celebrated on two mountains in Israel’s Promised Land more than 3,000 years ago. At that wedding, with as many as two million people not just in attendance but *participating*, the entire nation of Israel made a fresh commitment to their holy union with Almighty God.

The *solemn covenant renewal ceremony* unfolded in accordance with the instructions God had given them through Moses. Moses had told them that after they crossed the Jordan River into Canaan they were to gather between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerazim. There, in the hearing of all the people, the priests were to read the entire Law out loud, declaring the curse from one and the BLESSING from the other.

The Israelites, once they arrived at the appointed place, did exactly as God had commanded. In preparation for the ceremony they built an altar of unhewn stones on Mount Ebal, covered them with plaster and wrote on them all the words of God—the Law (Deuteronomy 23:5-6, 1 Peter 2:5, Joshua 8:32). Then, everyone

assembled at the base of the two mountains. Representatives from six of Israel's twelve tribes gathered on Mount Gerizim, while representatives from the other six tribes gathered on Mount Ebal (Deuteronomy 27:12-13).

Once all the people were in place—men, women, children, priests and leaders—the ceremony began. From Mount Ebal, the Levites declared with a loud voice to all the people of Israel, “*Cursed* is the man who makes a graven or molten image, an abomination to The LORD...”

In response, all the people said, *Amen*.

“Cursed is he who dishonors his father or his mother,” the priests continued.

Again, in response, all the people said, Amen (Deuteronomy 27:15, *Amplified Bible, Classic Edition*).

After the priests finished reading the “curses” recorded in the Law, from Mount Gerizim the Levites loudly declared the BLESSINGS. Continuing down the list of BLESSINGS until all of them had been read, they began:

If you will listen diligently to the voice of The LORD your God, being watchful to do all His commandments which I command you this day, The LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these BLESSINGS shall come upon you and overtake you if you heed the voice of The LORD your God (Deuteronomy 28:1-2, *Amplified Bible, Classic Edition*).

As in any wedding-vow renewal ceremony, those powerful words—etched in stone and given by Almighty God—were covenant declarations. They separated Israel from all other nations, established them as God's people, and set them on the strong foundation of their Blood-covenant relationship with Him.

Having recently crossed into the Promised Land, the Israelites needed that strong foundation. Many battles lay ahead. So did many opportunities to be deceived into participating in the evil practices of the Canaanites. For them to fully possess the Land the Israelites

would have to drive out all its ungodly inhabitants. If they didn't, God had warned them long ago, "Those which ye let remain of them shall be *pricks in your eyes*, and *thorns in your sides*, and shall *vex you* in the land wherein ye dwell" (Numbers 33:55).

In His wisdom God knew the Israelites could never conquer Canaan without the power of His Blood-covenant WORD. For them to be victorious they would have to keep the words of that covenant in their ears, their mouths and their hearts. They would have to put their hope and trust in God's powerful presence (Joshua 1:8). Their success going forward depended on it.

So, at the outset, through this covenant-vow renewal ceremony, God assured them of His Love and commitment to them. He also reminded them of His Blood-covenant Friendship with them. With this reminder resounding in their ears, the people sealed this holy event with Blood-covenant sacrifices. On the altar they had built, they offered clean animals and burnt peace offerings to God.

Then, they all celebrated by enjoying a great covenant feast together, rejoicing before The LORD.

A CLEAR CHOICE

After hearing all the curses read, as well as the BLESSINGS, why would the Israelites rejoice? Because God was not cursing them. He wasn't threatening them or holding anything over their heads. His Blood covenant with Israel was for the purpose of sheltering and protecting them *from* the curse, so they could walk in THE BLESSING.

By presenting both THE BLESSING and the curse to them, He was giving them a clear choice. Although His desire was for them to choose to walk in THE BLESSING, He left the decision up to them. As He put it in Deuteronomy 30:19-20:

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you *life and death*, *BLESSING and cursing*: therefore *choose life*, that both thou and thy seed may

live: That thou mayest love The LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for *he is thy life*, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which The LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

God was all for His people living the BLESSED life to its fullest. He did everything He could to make it possible for them to do so. But the choice was still theirs, just as the choice was Adam and Eve's, and as the choice is ours, today.

It's true: even as New Covenant believers, the degree of God's BLESSING we experience in our lives depends on the choices we make. To walk in the fullness of THE BLESSING that belongs to us through Christ Jesus we too must remember we've been separated unto Him. We too must constantly keep His Blood-Covenant WORD in our ears, our eyes, and our mouths and remember that He has said to us much as He did to the Israelites:

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith The LORD, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith The LORD Almighty (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).

God's WORD has been, and always will be, the transforming, consecrating, Blood-Covenant connection that separates His people from all others. That's why, today, we still have to hear it and hear it and hear it, and constantly renew our minds to it (Romans 10:17). To enjoy all the BLESSINGS that are ours, we have to choose life by choosing The WORD.

About the Author

Kenneth Copeland is co-founder and president of Kenneth Copeland Ministries in Fort Worth, Texas, and best-selling author of books that include *Honor—Walking in Honesty, Truth and Integrity*, and *THE BLESSING of The LORD Makes Rich and He Adds No Sorrow With It*.

Since 1967, Kenneth has been a minister of the gospel of Christ and teacher of God's Word. He is also the artist on award-winning albums such as his Grammy-nominated *Only the Redeemed, In His Presence, He Is Jehovah, Just a Closer Walk* and *Big Band Gospel*. He also co-stars as the character Wichita Slim in the children's adventure videos *The Gunslinger, Covenant Rider* and the movie *The Treasure of Eagle Mountain*, and as Daniel Lyon in the *Commander Kellie and the Superkids™* videos *Armor of Light* and *Judgment: The Trial of Commander Kellie*. Kenneth also co-stars as a Hispanic godfather in the 2009 and 2016 movies *The Rally* and *The Rally 2: Breaking the Curse*.

With the help of offices and staff in the United States, Canada, England, Australia, South Africa, Ukraine and Latin America, Kenneth is fulfilling his vision to boldly preach the uncompromised Word of God from the top of the world to the bottom and all the way around the middle. His ministry reaches millions of people worldwide through daily and Sunday TV broadcasts, magazines, teaching audios and videos, conventions and campaigns, and the World Wide Web.

Learn more about Kenneth Copeland Ministries
by visiting our website at **kcm.org**

About the Author

Pastor, author, Bible college professor, radio and television personality, Greg Stephens holds a Doctor of Ministry in Theology degree and is known for his extensive knowledge of Jewish culture and God's covenants with His people. He is a certified expert in biblical Hebrew, and has hosted many groups traveling to Israel.

Greg is a U.S. Air Force veteran of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and was a first responder to the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, for which he received numerous awards for his meritorious service. He has also been a television producer and director, working on a variety of television programs, and has won four Telly Awards for outstanding broadcasting and journalistic achievement.

A graduate of Rhema Bible Training College in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Greg later became a teacher there and traveled with Kenneth E. Hagin for many years before pastoring his own church in La Mesa, California. He is a third-generation pastor who is passionate about helping reveal the living Jesus to wounded and hurting people. He is currently an instructor at Kenneth Copeland Bible College in Fort Worth, Texas; a host of Victory Channel's *VICTORY News* program; and is a regular guest on the *Believer's Voice of Victory* broadcast with Kenneth Copeland.

Greg and Michelle Stephens live in the Fort Worth area and are the parents of three adult children: Madison, Matthew and Mitchell.

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