

## Covenant and Righteousness

My thoughts have been all over the map the last couple of weeks. It has been hard to sit down and follow a single trail. I thought I understood covenant but have since learned there is so much more to it that I need to grasp. As a western culture, we do not have the eastern Biblical perspective of covenant.

I thought this newsletter would be on the covenant of the body. That is where everything was heading until Susan brought up a crucial point from a CD she had heard. It was the story of Lot.

Now I must urge you not to dismiss this newsletter as one of no consequence. It is the basis of our very salvation and the rule by which we must live.

Now, I must say that the story of Lot has always bothered me. Here is a man who was handed wealth and blessing because of Abraham. I am not too sure what his motives were for leaving his homeland with Abraham, but if the Hebrew legends are true, things were pretty hot in Ur for the Terah family. I suspect Lot thought it was a much better bet to leave with Abram and Terah than stay in Ur.

Add to this the fact that Lot greedily chose the best for himself thinking, again, that there was more to gain on the well-watered plains of Sodom and Gomorrah than to stay with Abram. Now a man of substantial wealth, he seemed to rise quickly in the eyes of the community. For one thing, his honorable uncle Abram rescued him and all the Sodom peoples with all their captured goods from the four kings of north. It was quite a miracle that Abram and his 318 servants routed and overcame the four kings that had just defeated five kings and all the cities of the plain, plundering them as they returned north.

Lot returned to Sodom a local hero, again the fame coming from Abram's faithfulness and blessing. Add to the fact that Abram did not take anything from the loot of the Sodomites, this just increased the favor and new esteem Lot must have enjoyed.

Lot moved to a fine house in the city with his wife and children. He sat at the gate which was the custom of judges and officers (Deuteronomy 16:18) He enjoyed a position of prominence in the city of Sodom so everyone in the city seemed to know where he lived.

By the end of the story of Lot, the angels were dragging them out of that doomed city. His sons-in-law and their wives did not heed the warning, deciding to stay in the Sodom. His wife looked back and became a pillar of salt. His two daughters got him drunk in a cave feeling this was the only possibility of continuing the family line...they produced sons from their father.

His story is not one that inspires one to heights of spirituality. And yet, Peter has a different view of Lot than the one I had. I have not been a fan of Lot, regardless, I must reconsider my view and understand why Peter saw Lot as righteous.

2 Peter 2:6-8 And he condemned the cities of Sodom and Amora, reducing them to ashes and ruin, as a warning to those in the future who would live ungodly lives; but he rescued Lot, a righteous man who was distressed by the debauchery of those unprincipled people; for the wicked deeds which that righteous man saw and heard, as he lived among them, tormented his righteous heart day after day.

Isaiah 58:6-12 Here is the sort of fast I want - releasing those unjustly bound, untying the thongs of the yoke, letting the oppressed go free, breaking every yoke, sharing your food with the hungry, taking the homeless poor into your house, clothing the naked when you see them, fulfilling your duty to your kinsmen! Then your light will burst forth like the morning, your new skin will quickly grow over your wound; your righteousness will precede you, and ADONAI's glory will follow you. Then you will call, and ADONAI will answer; you will cry, and he will say, "Here I am." If you will remove the yoke from among you, stop false accusation and slander, generously offer food to the hungry and meet the needs of the person in trouble; then your light will rise in the darkness, and your gloom become like noon. ADONAI will always guide you; he will satisfy your needs in the desert, he will renew the strength in your limbs; so that you will be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails. You will rebuild the ancient ruins, raise foundations from ages past, and be called "Repairer of broken walls, Restorer of streets to live in."

Regardless of his otherwise questionable behavior, and yes, I can understand why he succumbed to excessive wine after losing his wife, all but 2 of his daughters, his home, position and all his worldly belongings...but Lot did keep the fast of the Lord. He was not indebted to those angels that he thought were just men. He owed them nothing. He could just as easily have turned away from the gate as he saw them approach. Or he could have turned them over to the mob when they banged on his door. It is a terrible story we, in the west, cannot fathom. How could Lot have offered his two virgin daughters to the crowd, in order to keep safe the strangers that he had only just met?

We have to look at this a little deeper.

Lot, a man of questionable virtues, maintained what the pre-flood people did not. Not only did he extend hospitality to strangers, bringing them under his roof, but he protected them at the cost of his own family. He instinctively adhered to the ancient law of hospitality, a custom the ancient world still follows. Apparently all except those in the plain cities of the Sodom and Gomorrah.

These rules were simple.

1. Farmers were to allow wayfarers to eat the wheat and corn of the field as they passed through the field. (Deuteronomy 23:25)
2. Guests were anointed with oil, sometimes mixed with spices, a practice that still exists in some oriental quarters. (Psalm 23:5)
3. When a guest is received into the home they are greeted with a bow, saying, "My heart, my voice, my brain are all at your service." (Acts 10:25; Genesis 18:2, 3; 23:7, 12; Matthew 18:26; Revelation 19:10)
4. After a meal has been prepared it was common for a man to call out 3 times from a high spot in the neighborhood, inviting men to come and partake of the meal because guests were believed to be sent by God. (Job 31:17; Genesis 18:2-7)
5. The first thing offered to a guest who has been received is water. This is the simplest way to pledge friendship with the person. (Genesis 24:17, 18; Mark 9:41)
6. When entering a home, the host says, "Peace be on you," which is answered by the guest saying, "And on you, peace." (Luke 10:5, 6)
7. When a guest prepares to depart, it was customary for the host to beg him to stay for one more meal or one more day. (Judges 19:5-10; Genesis 26:31; Genesis 18:16)

8. Among tent-dwellers, guests were given the first section of tent near the entrance which also serves as the dining room. This is where Abraham entertained the angels/ guests when Sarah overheard him in the adjoining woman's apartment. (Genesis 18:1-10)
9. Accordingly an enemy can be received as a guest, and under this relationship, even though an enemy, they are completely safe and treated as a friend. Amongst the tent-dwellers the rule stands that an enemy who has "once dismounted and touched the rope of a single tent," is safe.
10. In ancient days, two friends would take a tile or stone, divide it in half, and write his name on one of the two pieces. They would exchange the pieces guaranteeing hospitality to the friend, even from one generation to the next, handed down like a covenant or contract from father to son. (Revelation 2:17)
11. There is an ancient proverb that says, "Every stranger is an invited guest." The custom was to sit in the doorway of their tent in order to be on the watch for strangers, or potential guests (Genesis 18:1) "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2; Romans 12:13)
12. Guests in Holy Land homes expect to be kissed as they enter. (Luke 7:45) In Israel they place their right hand on their friend's left shoulder and kiss his right cheek, and then reversing the action, place their left hand on his right shoulder, and kiss his left cheek. Jacob kissed his father (Genesis 27:27) Esau kissed Jacob (Genesis 33:4) Joseph kissed his brothers (Genesis 45:15) Jacob kissed the sons of Joseph (Genesis 48:10) Aaron kissed Moses (Exodus 4:27) Moses kissed Jethro (Exodus 18:7) David and Jonathan exchanged a kiss (I Samuel 20:41) The Father kissed the Prodigal (Luke 15:20) The elders of Miletus kissed Paul (Acts 20:37)
13. Grain was left for the poor and the stranger (Leviticus 23:22; Ruth 2)
14. The guest was made lord of the house. This is the spirit of the hospitality. A host will greet his guest by saying, "This is your house." When the guest requests a favor, in granting it the host will respond, "You do me honor." The host was considered to be a servant, and the guest was lord. Thus Lot spoke of himself and his guests: "Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house" (Genesis 19:2)
15. Among ancient nations it is considered a terrible sin indeed for anybody who has accepted hospitality from a host to turn against him by committing an evil deed. The prophet Obadiah refers to this sin: "The men that were at peace with thee have deceived thee . . . They that eat thy bread have laid a wound under thee" (Obadiah 7). The Psalmist David speaks of this terrible evil, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm 41:9; John 13:18)
16. Privacy is not expected by the guest and the guest would think he was being ill-treated if he were left alone at any time. He sleeps with his clothes on so that when he falls to sleep, some of the family sons will sleep alongside him to provide companionship.
17. When a host accepts a guest into his home he thereby agrees to whatever cost may be incurred to defend his guest from possible enemies during the time of his visit. An American missionary was entertained by a governor. The host took a piece of roast mutton and handed it to the missionary, saying as he did so, "By that act I have pledged you every drop of my blood, that while you are in my territory no evil shall come to you. For that space of time we are brothers." The Psalmist felt utterly secure, though he had enemies close by him, when he knew that GOD was his host. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies" (Psalm 23:5).
18. Upon entering a house, a guest takes off his footwear before entering a room. A necessary custom when sitting on a rug, or divan, to maintain a cleaner living area. Sitting crouched down with their feet beneath them, shoes would not only soil the couch and clothes, but would also make a very uncomfortable seat. The idea of defilement from the shoes led to the custom of removing the footwear when entering sacred places. (Exodus 3:5).

19. Among ancient people, when a covenant of friendship has been once broken, it may be renewed by those involved once again eating together. After His resurrection, JESUS ate at least three times with His various disciples. This was no doubt done in order to renew the covenant, which had been broken by their disloyalty to Him during the days of His passion (Luke 24:30, 41-43; John 21:12, 13). When Jacob and Laban were in strained relationship they restored their friendship by eating together, as well as entering into an oath (Genesis 31:53, 54).
20. The sharing of food in the East is a very special act of hospitality. It is a way of making a covenant of peace and fidelity. When Abimelech wanted a permanent covenant with Isaac, the confirmation of that covenant came when Isaac "made them a feast, and they did eat and drink" (Genesis 26:30). When it is said, "There is bread and salt between us" it is the same as saying, "We are bound together by a solemn covenant." They think that the covenant of "bread and salt" must not be entered into until the attitude of the host is known regarding the mission of the guest. Thus Abraham's servant, Eleazer, refused to eat at the table of Laban, until first he made known his mission of seeking a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:33). When the Gibeonites sought a covenant of friendship with Israel in the days of Joshua, it was said that the Israelites "took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD" (Joshua 9:14). Once having entered into this covenant, Israel was bound to keep it.
21. After bowing, greeting, and kissing, the Eastern guest is offered water for washing his feet. When Jesus and his disciples were gathered together, the Saviour took the place of the servant, by washing the feet of His disciples, who themselves had disdained for such a humble task. (John 13:4, 5). Paul gave as a recommendation of a widow: "If she has washed the saints' feet" (I Timothy 5:10). This custom was also seen in Genesis 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24; 1 Samuel 25:41, etc.

That's 21 rules...19 of them apply to the host and 2 to the guest. 19 is the number of faith and 2 is the number of the church, the woman, the Elect.

There are many examples of people in the Bible protecting guests because they were under their roof. Pharaoh to Abraham (Genesis 12:16) Melchizedek to Abraham (Genesis 14:18) Abraham to the angels (Genesis 18:1-8) Lot to the angels (Genesis 19:1-11) Abimelech to Abraham (Genesis 20:14, 15) Sons of Heth to Abraham (Genesis 23:6, 11) Laban to Abraham's servant (Genesis 24:31) Isaac to Abimelech (Genesis 26:30) Joseph to his brothers (Genesis 43:31-34) Jethro to Moses (Exodus 2:20) Rahab to the spies (Joshua 2:1-16) The widow of Zarephath to Elijah (1 Kings 17:10-24) The Shunammite woman to Elisha (2 Kings 4:8) Elisha to the Syrian spies (2 Kings 6:22) Job to the strangers (Job 31:32) Martha to Jesus (Luke 10:38; John 12:1, 2) Lydia to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:15) Phoebe to Paul (Romans 16:2)

Jewish laws respecting strangers are found in Leviticus 19:33, 34; the poor in Leviticus 23:14, Deuteronomy 15:7; concerning redemption in Leviticus 25:23. In the law compassion to strangers is constantly enforced by the words "for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Leviticus 19:34)

It was before the law was ever written that Abraham entertained the angels of Genesis 18:1 and Lot protected them in Genesis 19:1. Their understanding of God's covenant of hospitality was in exact agreement with the precepts of the law given at Mt. Sinai generations later. The story of the Good Samaritan found in Luke 10:25-37 exemplifies this rule of contact. The apostles urged the Church to "follow after hospitality" in Romans 12:13, 1 Timothy 5:10, Hebrews 13:2, 1 Peter 4:9, Titus 1:8 and 1 Timothy 3:2.

Hospitality was a duty granted by the host who himself may, at any time, find himself dependent on the hospitality of another. Hospitality was seen as the right of the guest. The traveler is literally master of the house during his stay; his host will perform any menial service while not even sitting in his presence without express request. All that the host possesses is at the disposal of the guest. The host is duty bound to defend his guest against all comers and to lay aside any personal hatred or preference. An example of this is the true story of a boy who may not recover from injuries received at the hand of a stranger. The stranger sought refuge at the home of the boy's uncle. Although the father intended to seek revenge against the culprit, he was stayed as long as he was a guest in the home of the uncle. The boy recovered and forgiveness was secured but in the heat of the moment the man would not have been safe outside the protection of the host. Genesis 18:1-8, it was considered a privilege and honor to entertain guests.

If a village did not provide a community guest room, the guest would be entertained in a local home. And since most houses had just a single room that served as sleeping quarters, dining room and reception room, the guest would be given the room while most of the family slept on the roof in the summer. A guest does not simply check into the village guest room, he must be invited. (Judges 19:15-21; I Samuel 9:26; II Kings 4:10)

1 Peter 4:9 Extend hospitality one to another willingly.

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

Romans 12:13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

Titus 1:8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

This law of hospitality has been lost in our culture of tight schedules, private lives, and distrust of strangers. And yet, this is not an acceptable excuse. We just need to look at the story of Noah to see how God feels about ignoring, or breaking the law of hospitality.

Genesis 6:5-7 ADONAI saw that the people on earth were very wicked, that all the imaginings of their hearts were always of evil only. ADONAI regretted that he had made humankind on the earth; it grieved his heart. ADONAI said, "I will wipe out humankind, whom I have created, from the whole earth; and not only human beings, but animals, creeping things and birds in the air; for I regret that I ever made them."

Luke 17:26-32 Also, at the time of the Son of Man, it will be just as it was at the time of Noah. People ate and drank, and men and women married, right up until the day Noah entered the ark; then the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, as it was in the time of Lot -- people ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and built; but the day Lot left S'dom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. That is how it will be on the day the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, if someone is on the roof with his belongings in his house, he must not go down to take them away. Similarly, if someone is in the field, he must not turn back -- remember Lot's wife!

The people in the time of the flood were the same as the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. They had

utterly broken the law of hospitality, save Noah and Lot. They alone obeyed this law and it was accounted to them as righteousness. And for their righteousness they were rewarded with rescue. Noah spent 120 years building the ark, and Lot had to run to the hills to be saved. Please note, they had to take action to partake of that salvation of freedom which saved their lives. They were not whisked away in a rapture continuing life as usual, while those around them perished. And Lot's wife did not fare well in her escape. She didn't really want to leave (obey) and in her hesitation she turned into a pillar of salt.

By looking back, she broke the covenant. It was as if the Lord was returning to her all the salt of covenant that had been between them during the times she had obeyed the law with other guests. It was a sign of the broken covenant since bread and salt were the ingredients of a covenant.

But let's look at this a little deeper. Where did these people of ancient times, and indeed modern eastern and oriental cultures, learn this law?

Adam and Eve were strangers in the Garden of Eden. They were not the natural inhabitants since they were created after the Garden was created. In fact, they were created after even the birds, animals and fish.

Genesis 1:28-30 God blessed them: God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air and every living creature that crawls on the earth." Then God said, "Here! Throughout the whole earth I am giving you as food every seed-bearing plant and every tree with seed-bearing fruit. And to every wild animal, bird in the air and creature crawling on the earth, in which there is a living soul, I am giving as food every kind of green plant." And that is how it was.

God not only made them Lord of the house He had made for them, His Garden, He broke bread with them by giving them an abundance of food. At the very moment these words were spoken, God entered into covenant with them as His honored guests. It was at that very moment that He committed His life to them, to protect them from all their enemies with His own life...the life of His Son. He gave us dominion over His house – over the animals, over the earth. The wealth of the earth and everything in or on it...ours.

Adam and Eve were strangers in the land and they learned the law of hospitality right from the Lord Himself and passed that law onto their children. And even though Adam and Eve sinned and would have to live with the consequences of that sin, the Lord reiterated the covenant with them when He promised them a Savior in Genesis 3:15.

This covenant was for everyone, all mankind.

There are 8 covenants in the Bible.

1. The Edenic covenant: Genesis 1:28-30
  - a. For all mankind
  - b. Conditional
  - c. The seal of covenant was a meal – the food of the Garden
2. The Adamic covenant: Genesis 3:16-19
  - a. Made with all mankind
  - b. Added the promise of a Savior
  - c. Unconditional

- d. The seal of covenant was the blood of animals
3. The Noahic covenant: Genesis 9:1-18
    - a. All mankind
    - b. Added the principle of human government to curb sin
    - c. Unconditional
    - d. The seal of covenant was the rainbow
  4. The Abrahamic covenant: Genesis 12:1-3, 6-7, 13:14-17, 15, 17:1-14, 22:15-18, 50:24-26; Exodus 2:24, 6:2-8; Psalm 105:8-11; Luke 1:67-75; Hebrews 6:13-18
    - a. First mention specifying a nation (Abraham was first to be called Hebrew)
    - b. Abraham's name would be great
    - c. Abraham's progeny would be numerous and a great nation
    - d. The entire world would be blessed because of Abraham
    - e. Guarantees Israel an everlasting entity as a nation and an everlasting possession of land
    - f. Unconditional
    - g. The seal of covenant was circumcision
  5. The Mosaic covenant: Deuteronomy 11, 19:4-6, 19:8, 20:1-31:18
    - a. For the Israelites
    - b. Added 613 specific commands
    - c. Conditional
    - d. The seal of the covenant was the Sabbath
  6. The Palestinian covenant: Deuteronomy 30:1-10
    - a. For the Israelites
    - b. Added the specific land – Palestine
    - c. Provision given for the return of all Jews to Israel
    - d. Restoration of the land to Israel
    - e. Restoration of the love of the Jews towards God
    - f. Conditional and Unconditional
  7. The Davidic covenant: 2 Samuel 7:4-16, 23:5; 1 Chronicles 7:18, 21:7 17:3-15; Psalm 89:3-4; Jeremiah 33:19-26; Luke 1:31-33; Acts 2:30; Isaiah 9:7; Matthew 24:30
    - a. For the Israelites
    - b. David's house would endure forever
    - c. David's kingdom would never permanently pass away
    - d. David's throne or ruling authority would never permanently pass away
    - e. Unconditional
    - f. Guarantees Israel with an everlasting throne, everlasting King and everlasting kingdom
  8. The New covenant: Jeremiah 31:27-40, 50:4-5; Isaiah 53, 61:8; 59:20-21; Ezekiel 34:25-30, 37:21-28; Hebrews 13:20, 8:6
    - a. For the Israelites
    - b. Added to the covenants above between God and Israel
    - c. This covenant was an eternal, everlasting covenant
    - d. It was established before the foundations of the world
    - e. Unconditional
    - f. Provisions of the New Covenant are:
      - i. Regeneration and the giving of a new heart
      - ii. Forgiveness of sin (Jeremiah 31:34; Ezekiel 36:26)
      - iii. Indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel 36:27)
      - iv. Universal knowledge of YHWH among the people of Israel (Jeremiah 31:34)

- v. That Israel would obey God and have a right attitude toward Him forever (Jeremiah 32:39-40; Ezekiel 36:27; 37:23-24)
- vi. National blessings to the people of Israel
  - 1. His Spirit would not depart from them (Isaiah 59:21)
  - 2. They would have a great reputation because of special blessings (Isaiah 61:8-9)
  - 3. They would have a unique relationship with YHWH (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:28)
  - 4. That God would do them good (Jeremiah 32:40-42)
  - 5. That wild beasts would be eliminated from their land (Ezekiel 34:25, 28)
  - 6. That Israel would enjoy complete security in their land (Ezekiel 34:25-28)
  - 7. They would not be threatened or insulted by other nations (Ezekiel 34:28-29)
  - 8. That great abundance of food would eliminate famine (Exodus 34:27, 29; 36:29-30)
  - 9. Their land would be compared to the Garden of Eden (Ezekiel 34:29)
  - 10. That rainfall would be perfectly controlled (Ezekiel 34:29; 36:34-35)
  - 11. Israel's cities would be rebuilt and inhabited (Ezekiel 36:33)
  - 12. The nation would enjoy a population explosion (Ezekiel 36:37-38; 37:26)
  - 13. That there would be complete unity in the land (Ezekiel 37:21-22)
  - 14. That they would live in their own land forever (Ezekiel 37:25)
  - 15. That once again, as in the past, God Himself would have His sanctuary in their midst and dwell with them in the midst of their nation forever (Ezekiel 37:26-28)
  - 16. That God would never again turn away from His people (Jeremiah 32:40)
  - 17. Unconditional (Ezekiel 36:21-22, 36:36)
- vii. How does the Church fit into the New Covenant?
  - 1. The Church partakes of communion (1 Corinthians 11:23-30; 10:21) which, when it was established by the Lord, was to be a sign of the New Covenant (1 Corinthians 11:25; Luke 22:20)
  - 2. Believers are grafted into the vine of Israel (Romans 11)
  - 3. Believers who make up the Church partake of the spiritual blessings which God promised as part of the New Covenant:
    - a. We are regenerated (Titus 3:5)
    - b. We have been forgiven of all our sin (Ephesians 1:7; 4:32; Colossians 1:14; 1 John 2:12)
    - c. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)
    - d. We have received the new nature giving us a new favorable attitude toward God consisting of the Law of God written on our hearts (Romans 7:22; 2 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Peter 1:4)
      - i. The New Covenant is superior to any of the old covenants for three reasons:
        - 1. It provides a better priesthood. Christ (Leviticus 16:6; Hebrews 7:26-28)
        - 2. It provides a better sacrifice. (Hebrews 9:11-14)
        - 3. It provides a better foundation. (Hebrews 8:6)

Jesus, as a Jewish man on the earth, lived under these covenants. The New covenant had not yet been put in place through the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Himself. Like every other Jew, He came under the Mosaic covenant as well as the Edenic covenant.

As we know, Jesus fulfilled the laws perfectly. He did not come to dismiss the law as many would prefer. He came to refine the law (thinking about a woman lustfully is the same as committing adultery, etc.). He fulfilled all the prophecies concerning His first coming. But what is more pertinent is what He fulfilled according to the first covenant.

He fulfilled the law of hospitality according to its most intricate detail.

Again, let's look at the detail.

- Farmers were to allow wayfarers to eat the wheat and corn of the field as they passed through the field.
  - God gave mankind all the bounty of the Garden of Eden
  - He set before Adam and Eve a bountiful table of provision
- Guests were anointed with oil
  - God anoints us with oil to sanctify
  - God anoints us with the Spirit of the Lord
- Bowing between guests and host
  - Jesus became a man, bowing Himself to our level
- After a meal has been prepared it was common for a man to call out inviting men to come and partake of the meal
  - Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for they will be filled
  - Jesus is the bread of life and the Living Water
  - Jesus broke the bread and handed it to His disciples
- The host offered a guest water which is the simplest way to pledge friendship with the person
  - Jesus is the Living Water
  - Jesus passed the cup of wine to His disciples
  - Jesus turned the water into wine
- The host says, "Peace be on you," when entering a home
  - Jesus sent the disciples out in peace, breathing on them the Holy Spirit
- When a guest prepares to depart, the host implores him to stay
  - The Lord woos us our whole lives to get right with Him, to return to Him
  - He strives with mankind until the day they die and even then, He went to Sheol to testify to those already dead
- Guests were given the first section of tent within the entrance
  - Believers inherit the Kingdom as sons
  - He gave Adam and Eve His best – His beloved Garden of Eden
- An enemy can be received as a guest and be completely safe and treated as a friend
  - Lucifer was face to face with God when challenged about Job
  - Jesus gave the demons what they wanted when they left the demoniac of Gadarenes
- Two friends would take a stone, divide it in half, and write his name on one of the two pieces. They would exchange them and these would guarantee hospitality to a real friend
  - We are given a stone with a new name

- They would sit in the entrance way of their tent in order to be on the watch for strangers/ guests
  - His eye is even on the sparrow
  - He knows the number of hairs on our head
  - His eye is upon us always for we are the apple of His eye
- Guests expect to be kissed as they enter their host's home
  - God kissed Adam breathing life into him
- Grain was left for the poor and the stranger
  - He rains on the righteous and the wicked
- The guest was made lord of the house
  - Believers inherit the Kingdom as sons of God
  - He made Adam lord of the earth
- The guest would think he was being ill-treated if he were left alone at any time
  - The Holy Spirit is with us all the time from the Day of Pentecost
- A host is in agreement at any cost to defend his guest from possible enemies
  - God gave the life of His Son to save mankind
- A covenant of friendship may be renewed by those involved by once again eating together
  - The Lord laid out a buffet for Adam and Eve in the Garden
  - The Lord ate with Abraham
  - The Lord ate with the disciples
  - We partake of Communion
- The sharing of food is a way of making a covenant of peace and fidelity
  - The Lord ate with Abraham
  - Jesus ate the Lord's Supper with His disciples
  - We are to continue this practice
- After bowing, greeting, and kissing, the guest is offered water for washing his feet
  - Jesus washed the feet of the disciples

We are guests in the House of the Lord. Everything is His. He has invited us into His house. And He is saying, "Mi casa es su casa!" (My house is your house!)

This absolutely blows my mind. The entire concept is something foreign to us. But add this to the covenants, and it is beyond our comprehension.

We are living in God's house. Yes, the earth was originally the Garden of Eden, the Garden of God. And He placed us in the best seat in the house – the Garden of Provision – and entered into covenant with us by laying before us a banquet table of provision and food. And we, our ancestors Adam and Eve, took the generosity of the host and did Him evil, and we have continued to do Him evil throughout our generations.

God's sacrifice was better than the fatted calf held in reserve for the coming of the King, He sacrificed His own Son and poured His blood out at the entrance way to His house...not in Heaven where many Christians consider our ultimate home. But the blood was poured out on the earth, the lintel of the earth, the entrance of the earth where we live, where we were placed to stay.

And we can step across that entrance way, across the blood of Jesus, and enter the Garden of Eden and the Eden experience. And what does that Eden experience hold for us? Complete provision.

Did you know the 10 commandments have every Hebrew letter in them except for the letter “tet” which stands for the serpent. Another promise. If you keep the 10 commandments the serpent will never come near you. He is so marvelous.

1. His Spirit will not depart from us (Isaiah 59:21)
2. We will have a great reputation because of special blessings (Isaiah 61:8-9)
3. We will have a unique relationship with YHWH (Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:28)
4. That God will do us good (Jeremiah 32:40-42)
5. That wild beasts will be eliminated from our land (Ezekiel 34:25, 28)
6. That we will enjoy complete security in their land (Ezekiel 34:25-28)
7. We will not be threatened or insulted by other nations (Ezekiel 34:28-29)
8. That great abundance of food will eliminate famine (Exodus 34:27, 29; 36:29-30)
9. Our land will be compared to the Garden of Eden (Ezekiel 34:29)
10. That rainfall will be perfectly controlled (Ezekiel 34:29; 36:34-35)
11. Our cities will be rebuilt and inhabited (Ezekiel 36:33)
12. Our nation will enjoy a population explosion (Ezekiel 36:37-38; 37:26)
13. That there will be complete unity in the land (Ezekiel 37:21-22)
14. That we will live in our own land forever (Ezekiel 37:25)
15. That once again, as in the past, God Himself will have His sanctuary in our midst and dwell with us in the midst of our nation forever (Ezekiel 37:26-28)
16. That God would never again turn away from His people (Jeremiah 32:40)
17. And this is an unconditional covenant (Ezekiel 36:21-22, 36:36)
18. Remission of sins (Matthew 26:28)
19. We will be healed (Isaiah 54:4-5)
20. To remove us from the earth-cursed system and poverty
21. To bring us into a better covenant (Hebrews 8:6)
22. Change of nature, internalization of the Law of God (Hebrews 8:7-8; Romans 8:3)
23. Eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:11-15)

Praise God that He is a God of covenant and we are in covenant with Him in His house.

God bless you  
Jessica and Susan