

OVERCOMING

FEAR

Understanding God's Covenant of Grace

By Timothy R. Jennings, M.D.

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About Timothy R. Jennings, M.D.

Dr. Jennings is a board-certified psychiatrist and Distinguished Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, founder and president of Come and Reason Ministries, medical director of Honey Lake Clinic, and author of numerous books, including *The God-Shaped Brain*, *The God-Shaped Heart*, and *The Aging Brain*, which integrate brain science with biblical principles to bring healing for the mind.

INTRODUCTION

Fear is one of sin's greatest weapons.

It infects our hearts and minds, distorting how we see God, ourselves, others, and the events that occur in our lives. As a psychiatrist and student of Scripture, I've seen how fear enslaves—it robs people of peace, love, and trust, and, as a result, they'll do just about anything to save themselves, including exploiting and controlling others.

But the good news is that I have also seen God's remedy for fear—how faith in Him and His design for us can part the waters that seem impossible to cross.

When I read the story of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, I don't see only a historical account; I see a divine object lesson for every human soul. Each stage of their journey—from slavery in Egypt to the Passover, the Red Sea, and beyond—reveals God's plan to free the entire species human from sin, fear, and selfishness and to restore His design of love within us.

In this magazine, I've brought together several of my thoughts on this theme to tell one continuous story of every individual's spiritual development: how God delivers us from the bondage of fear, teaches us to trust Him, seals us with His Spirit of truth and love, and unites us with Him forever through His eternal covenant of grace.

My prayer is that, as you read, you'll recognize your own journey in Israel's—and that you'll see that freedom from fear isn't about escaping the trials of life, but about learning to trust the One who walks beside you through them.

PART 1 Born Into FEAR



The Bible is a record of real people and events that God inspired to be written down for the purpose of communicating to human beings the truth about Him and the plan of salvation. As such, many of the people and events recorded in the Bible not only give us a record of what transpired, but they also serve as examples, types, or object lessons for us personally and for the overall plan of salvation.

As the apostle Paul wrote regarding the Exodus:

Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did (1 Corinthians 10:6).

One of the lessons we can learn from the Bible's written record of Exodus is God's plan to free us from sin personally, individually, and globally—when the human species is finally freed at the second coming of Christ.

Most already recognize the global object lesson application of the Exodus:

- The slaves in Egypt are a type for all humanity being enslaved by sin.
- Pharaoh, who denies God and will not submit to Him, represents Satan, the sin-slave master.
- The bondage, degradation, and abuse the people received as slaves represent the bondage, degradation, and abuse sin causes in our lives.
- Moses represents Christ, who entered the enemy's seat of power and confronted and overcame him in order to lead the people to freedom.

These lessons are powerful, meaningful, and encouraging, and they give us hope and confidence in the soon return of Jesus, who will free us permanently from sin and take us to our heavenly promised land!

What may be less obvious are the lessons for individual freedom over fear, selfishness, and sin—and how we can experience this victory on a personal basis today.

Born as Slaves

The Hebrews of the Exodus generation were born into slavery. They did nothing to indenture themselves into slavery; it was their station and condition from birth.

Likewise, the Bible teaches that we are all born in sin and conceived in iniquity (Psalm 51:5); this is our condition at birth. None of us ever chose to *become* sinners—we were born enslaved to fear and selfishness, constituted with a carnal nature inherited from Adam.

The Hebrew slaves in Egypt were incapable of freeing themselves, and we are incapable of freeing ourselves from sin.

God sent a deliverer, Moses, to confront Pharaoh in order to free the people. And,



God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands **condemned already** because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son (John 3:16–18, emphasis mine).

We are already enslaved to sin at birth. *We are not condemned because we sin; we sin because we were born infected with a fearful, self-centered, sinful nature.* Our freedom comes from Christ, so if we refuse Christ, our station, position, and heart/mind do not change and we remain enslaved to sin; thus, *we remain condemned by this terminal sin condition because we have refused the healing, the transformation, the new life, the freedom*

that comes only through Christ, that comes by receiving His life via the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Imagine an HIV-infected man and woman having an HIV-infected baby—what did the baby do to get HIV? Nothing!

But despite the baby having done nothing wrong, it is still born infected, which is a metaphor for us being born in sin; the baby still has a terminal condition that

will result in symptoms, a metaphor for sins, and death (first death/sleep from HIV represents the wages of sin death, which is second death/eternal destruction that comes from sin), unless a remedy is provided. But if the child is offered free antiviral meds that will put the infection into remission (metaphor for the blood of Jesus, which is a symbol of His sinless life/spirit that we receive through faith, which replaces the



terminal life/spirit we inherit from Adam) and they refuse (upon the age of accountability) to take them, they remain condemned, not for being born with the condition, but for refusing the remedy. But if they take the free remedy, despite being born infected, they are no longer condemned to die from that condition. That is what Jesus is saying in John 3:16–18.

So, Jesus came, confronted Satan, overcame all his evil forces, purged the spirit of fear and selfishness, replacing it with the Spirit of love and trust, and opened a way for each of us to leave the slavery of sin and live a new life of freedom, a life of love and trust, by becoming our substitutionary Savior.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus took up humanity, broken and damaged by Adam's sin, and purged the infection, the spirit of fear and selfishness, and replaced that terminal life with His sinless, perfect life and, thereby, became the second Adam.

For more on how Jesus procuring the remedy actually cures this condition, see our blog "Salvation and the Cleansing of Our Spirit."

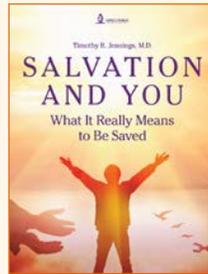
Part 1



Part 2



Or get our FREE magazine, *Salvation and You: What It Really Means to Be Saved.*



The Passover: Rite and Reality

But in our journey from the slavery of sin to a life of victory and freedom, there are often many battles to fight. The events of the Exodus serve as a powerful object lesson to encourage us in our sojourn to freedom.

The Hebrew slaves prepared to leave Egypt by celebrating the Passover, which was instituted at that time as both a memorial of their deliverance from Egyptian slavery, and also as an object lesson pointing forward to Jesus' becoming our Passover Lamb to deliver us from the slavery of sin (1 Corinthians 5:7). We will never succeed in escaping the bondage of sin without first partaking of Jesus. In other words, freedom from sin starts with taking Jesus into one's heart!

The Hebrew slaves were instructed to sacrifice a lamb or goat, symbolic of Jesus' sacrifice for us (John 1:29), to eat its flesh with bitter herbs, and to put its blood on the doorpost of their homes.

This ritual symbolizes the starting point in our deliverance from sin. Jesus is the Word made flesh (John 1:1-14). To ingest the "flesh" of Jesus means to internalize the Word, the truth of Jesus, of who God is. The truth about God will destroy the lies about Him and set us free from doubt (John 8:32) and bring us to the point where we choose to trust Him and open our heart to Him. When we open the heart in trust, we receive a new life, the life of Christ (Galatians 2:20), via the indwelling Holy Spirit, which is symbolized by the blood (the life is in the blood; see Leviticus



17:11). This is what it means to be born again; to be born of the Spirit is to surrender one's attachment to the motivational, animating, spirit of fear and to receive, identify with, cling to, and act upon the Spirit of love and trust. Jesus described this in symbol when He said,

I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him (John 6:53-56).

This is not cannibalism! It is a metaphor for internalizing into our hearts and minds the truth of God, which results in the elimination of lies and serves as the platform upon which we choose to trust. This trust opens the heart to receive His life. All of this was prefigured in the Passover celebration prior to their departure from Egypt. Just as the Jews ingested the meal prior to leaving Egypt, we must ingest the flesh (truth) and blood (life) of Jesus prior to our departure from the slavery of sin. In fact, it is the truth and life of Jesus that sets us free!

The bitter herbs symbolize the hardships and bitterness of this world of sin that enslaves us. Despite the nurturing and revitalizing strength and power received from the "flesh" of the Lamb, we are still living in the bitterness of a sinful world and struggling with the impact of what the enslavement to sin has done.

The Passover symbolizes conversion, the beginning point of our freedom. We cannot start our journey to the heavenly promised land until we are converted to Jesus Christ. The Passover represents, for the individual, how God has passed over our sinful lives, not allowing the full, natural results of sin (eternal separation from Him and subsequent death) to be realized, but instead has intervened (interceded) with grace to free us from this sin condition through Jesus, who provides us the truth (Word/flesh) and a new animating spirit/life (blood).

Once we have surrendered to Jesus in trust and have been reborn, the journey to freedom begins, and the experiences of the Hebrews during the Exodus provide additional powerful lessons that are applicable to our experience as individuals, which we will explore next.



PART 2

How Faith Parts the WATERS

Once the Hebrews left Goshen, God led them with a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day. The pillar of fire gave them light to see by and kept back the cold; the cloud sheltered them from the brutal sun and oppressive heat of the day.

When we follow Jesus, He provides light to enlighten our minds and guide us through the darkness of this world, and He also shields us from the burning heat and assaults of the enemy.

As the Hebrews followed God's leading (pillar/cloud), notice where He led them—to the Red Sea, by a route that was bordered by mountains. This resulted in a situation in which it appeared they were trapped, with Pharaoh's army bearing down upon them and no human way to escape.

This was not an accident, oversight, miscalculation, or failure on the part of God.

It was purposeful and necessary for the Hebrews to be truly free, not just bodily free, but free mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—free from their fear, guilt, shame, selfishness, and reliance on Egyptian pagan beliefs—so that they could move forward in living trust in God. God brought them to this point so they would face their own fears, doubts, and human limitations and choose to trust Him and, thereby, experience His goodness, love, and faithfulness, and, through this experience, overcome their fears in love and trust in Him.

As we trust God and start following His leading, we are often led to places in our lives where it appears we are trapped and destructive forces—emotions, circumstances, finances, relationships, divorce, child custody issues, job problems—come bearing down on us, and from a



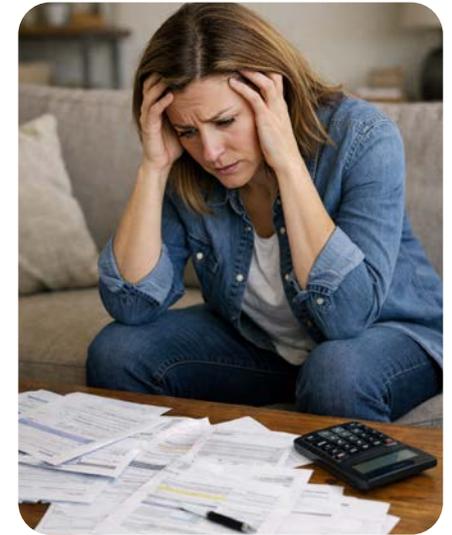
human perspective, it appears there is no escape. It is then that God longs for us to stop focusing on the threats and to turn to Him in trust, to remember He is our gracious, loving, powerful, and healing Savior who has led us to this very place. Why? So we can choose to trust Him and be freed from our own fears, doubts, and insecurities.

Stand Still and See

But notice what the Hebrews did when they saw Pharaoh's army. Are you in danger of doing the same when you face threats in your life?

As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!" (Exodus 14:10–12).

Notice the spiritual warfare being described by these events and the object lesson's application. We are born in fear and selfishness. Jesus came to free us from this terminal sin-condition and give us new hearts that love and trust.



Creator and Savior for deliverance. In other words, *Satan tempts us to run back to the things that had enslaved us in order to “feel safe.”*

But notice Moses' response:

Moses answered the people, “Do not be afraid. Stand firm [other versions, “stand still”—in other words, stop being frantic and panicking] and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still” (Exodus 14:13–14).

This is the reason God leads us to these very places, so that we have the opportunity to choose—to choose to trust Him rather than trying to save ourselves through our old, destructive, fear-based coping patterns. It is only by our choice to trust God that we heal, mature, grow, and are set free from the slavery of fear and selfishness.

Thus, in mercy and love, God always leads us to the various decision points that we need to face in our lives in order to free us from what has been enslaving us so that we will never have to deal with those old enemies again.

But we can't be freed of the old enemies if we keep choosing to run back to them as a way to try to make ourselves feel safe in the moment of our distress. We need to do as God advised: stop running back to the old ways and simply “be still,” trusting in Him, and watch Him fight for us!



The people listened to Moses—which is an object lesson for us. When we are in distress, fearful, feeling trapped, we must recognize that we are being tempted to turn back to our old enslaving choices and relationships; it is then that we must listen to Jesus, turn to Him, and follow His directions; it is then that we must be still and watch Him fight the battle and open the way for our deliverance.

Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, **coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel**. Throughout the night the **cloud brought darkness**

to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long (Exodus 14:19–20, emphasis mine).

The cloud is a symbol of Jesus, who comes between us and our enemy. He provides a protective hedge, holding back the principalities and power of darkness, sufficient for us to move forward in faith, walking through the sea of problems on dry ground.

But notice the cloud also brought darkness to one side while it brought light to the other side. This enacts a powerful truth: God is the source of light and truth, but if we reject the light and truth, if we refuse to walk in the light of truth, then we are left only with darkness.

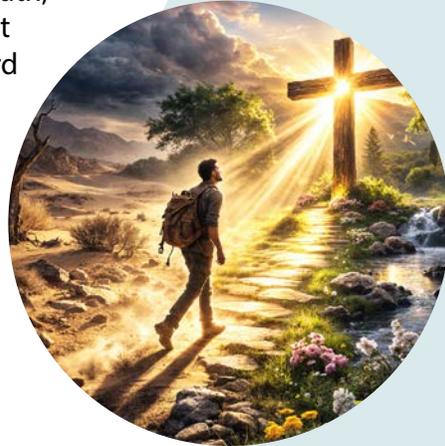
It is only by advancing, moving forward, in the light of truth that we stay in the light, that we stay on the path of truth. Even if we once had God's light/truth, if we refuse to move forward as more truth/light is revealed, then we leave the light and end up in darkness. Jesus described this process with these words: “If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matthew 6:23).

Prior to Jesus' birth, sinless life, and sacrificial death, the Jews had the truth that the Messiah was coming through the line of Judah and would be born in Bethlehem (Genesis 49:10; Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:5–6). Jesus is the fulfillment of these prophecies, the truth manifested in human history. Yet many Jews rejected this unfolding truth. And having rejected Jesus as the Messiah, when Jews cling to the old “truths” today and look for the Messiah yet to be born from their descendants in Bethlehem, they are no longer in the light; they are in darkness.

Likewise, Pharaoh, having rejected all the light that had been revealed to him prior to the Red Sea, had hardened his heart and destroyed within himself the faculties that recognize truth, so that even when in the presence of the divine source of truth, he saw only darkness. This is how it is for all those who refuse to advance in the truth, for those hardened hearts, even when in the presence of the source of truth, still see only darkness.



We must develop hearts that love truth, that keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, and that eagerly seek to advance and move forward in the light of truth as we comprehend it. When we do this after our conversion, when we do this when faced with the threats and attacks of the enemy, when we do this when our fears are rising and the temptations to run back to our old enslavements are pressing in, then we will see the light; we will see the way God opens through what seemed impossible and impassable to us.



Our freedom comes as we trust and as we move forward by choice to apply what we know is true.

Between the Waters

The lesson from Exodus continues:

But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore (Exodus 14:29–30).



They were saved by the power of God, yes, but only because they chose to trust and obey, to actually move their own selves forward onto the seabed, walking through the walls of water on each side. And this symbolizes baptism, dying to the old life, being cleansed by the Holy Spirit, and coming out of the watery grave to live new lives in a new land.

After conversion, after surrendering to Jesus and having the heart washed clean by the Holy Spirit, we must choose to move forward in truth, in action, in deed, to follow the path God opens for us.

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ (1 Corinthians 10:1–4).

And the very same waters that symbolically cleansed and purified the people drowned the armies of Egypt. As an object lesson of baptism, the apostle Peter also teaches this lesson when he describes Noah and his family being delivered through the waters that drowned the unbelievers:



In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has

gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him (1 Peter 3:20–22).

What a powerful object lesson!

The waters symbolize the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, that for all who trust God die to fear, selfishness, sin, the old carnal life, and are reborn, washed clean, and given a new heart and right spirit. The saved go through the watery grave by faith in Jesus and surrender their old lives of fear, and they live only because they receive a new life of love and trust, the life of Christ, through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

But the wicked refuse to give up their life of fear, sin, and selfishness, and thus, the very same waters that cleanse the righteous *destroy* the wicked.

This is symbolic of the final end of sin and sinners, when the fires of God's life-giving glory flow through, transform, invigorate, and revitalize the righteous, as we live forever in God's glorious presence. But the wicked, who cling to sin, find the fires of God's presence, the fires of infinite love and truth, terrible to be in because truth and love cause them to experience the truth of who they have chosen to become and the truth of what they have done to others. Their unconverted hearts can no longer deny, distort, or blame.

In the unveiled presence of God's life-giving glory, the unsaved experience full awareness of reality—and they hate it and prefer death over life in God's presence. Peter makes this connection between the waters and the final end in the fires:

First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men (2 Peter 3:3–7).



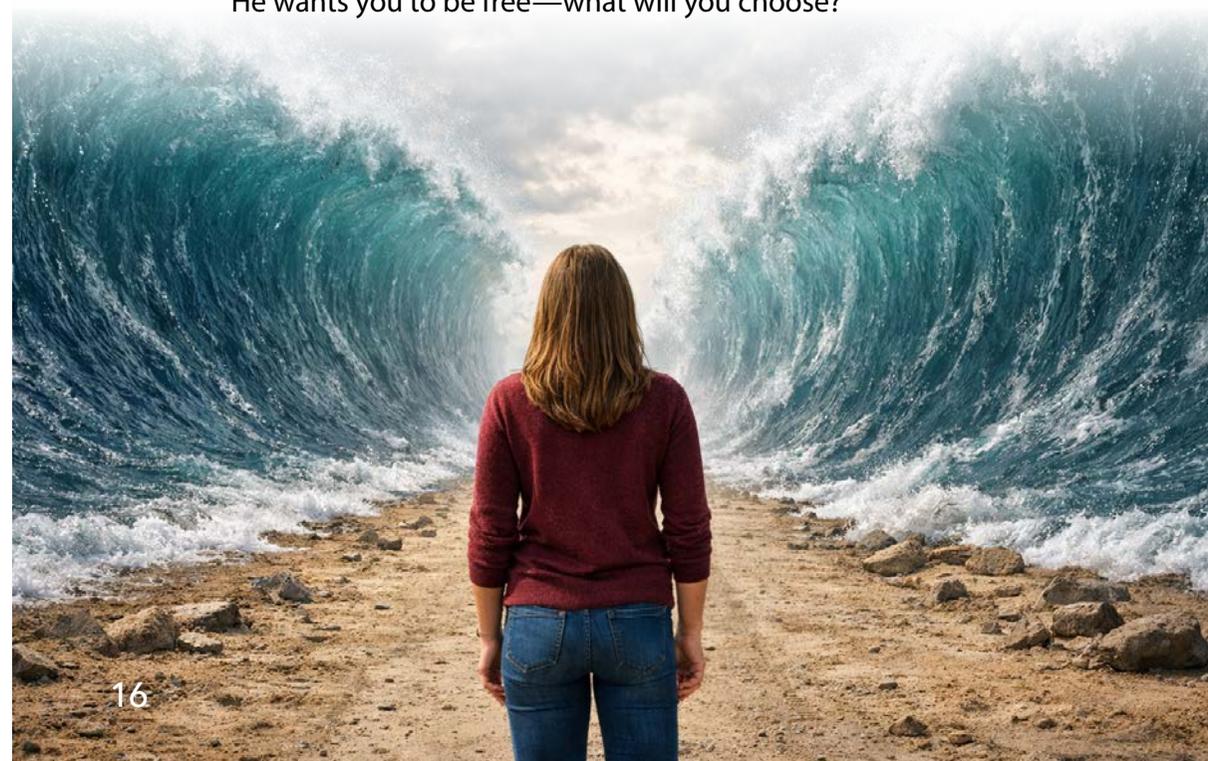
For a detailed exploration of the final end of sin and sinners and God's eternal, fiery, glorious presence, see our blog "The Truth About Hell."



As we've seen, the events of the Exodus are powerful lessons for us. God longs to set you free from everything that enslaves you. The enemy will do everything in his power to inflame your fear, your doubt, your discouragement, tempting you to turn back to your old ways, to enslave yourself all over again. It is at those moments, when you see no human way out, that you stand at the door of your greatest opportunity for deliverance and victory.

God is longing for you, encouraging you, pleading with you to stop your frantic fighting to survive, refuse to run back to your old "god," your old dysfunctional comfort measures, and simply turn to Him in trust. When you do this, when you stop running and are still in trust, get ready, for God will open the way through whatever obstacle is interfering with His calling, will, and purpose for your life, and you will walk through to a new victorious life beyond your imagining! He is only waiting for you to choose to trust Him and act upon that trust by following where He is leading.

He wants you to be free—what will you choose?



PART 3

THE SEAL OF GOD

Love That Cannot Be Shaken



Just as Israel crossed into freedom, we too must move beyond fear and into an unshakable loyalty. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, which the Bible calls the seal of God. Let's explore what that means.

Jesus sent a message through His friend John telling us that at the end of time (our day), He would send His angels to hold back the final tribulation that precedes His return until His people receive the seal of God:

After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, **having the seal of the living God**. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had been given power to harm the land and the sea: "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God" (Revelation 7:1-3, emphasis mine).

This seal is not a tattoo or some other physical mark on the body, but as Paul wrote:

- "Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set **his seal of ownership on us**, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Corinthians 1:21, 22, emphasis mine).
- "Having believed, **you were marked in him with a seal**, the promised Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 1:13, emphasis mine).
- "And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom **you were sealed** for the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30, emphasis mine).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and love (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:8).

To be sealed of God means that we have received the indwelling Holy Spirit, which, via the outworking of truth and love, cuts away from our identity, our self, our heart and mind, everything that separates us from God and solidifies us in heart and mind into unshakable loyalty to God such that nothing can cause us to choose to betray our trust in our Savior.

A simple way to say this is that being sealed means choosing to say yes to the leading of the Holy Spirit such that we become so settled, both intellectually and spiritually, into the truth and love of God that nothing can move us from it.

Jesus described this state of being when He said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37).

Being sealed by God, by the work of the Spirit of truth and love, means that our identity (individuality, self, ego, personhood) is cut away from finding self, security, meaning, value, or worth in anything before Jesus.

But what does this mean practically, and how do we experience it?



Breaking Our Attachments

The Bible teaches that when Adam sinned, he corrupted his own nature and infected himself with a spirit of fear and selfishness; ever since, every person is born infected with that same corrupting spirit of fear and selfishness (Psalm 51:5; 2 Timothy 1:7).

We come into the world fearful, insecure, needy, and dependent, and we immediately begin searching for and creating attachments to what provides us security, comfort, a sense of safety, identity, meaning, and purpose.



Our hearts want to be free from fear and doubt, free from guilt and shame. Therefore, as children, we attach, initially and appropriately, to our parents and constantly seek to get approval, validation, love, and acceptance from them, which offsets (but does not remove or replace) the spirit of fear and insecurity with which we were born.



As we grow, we seek, find, and form attachments to other things. Some attachments are considered adaptive, like friends and family, but others less so, like food (not for nutrition but as emotional comfort), substances, money, property, position, status, fame, reputation, skills and abilities, achievements, sports teams, objects, lucky charms, alma

mater, churches, nations, and organizations—such as Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, gangs, cults, and political parties.

All these attachments to our sense of self, our identity, our heart, are formed in an attempt to make us feel safe, important, valuable, needed, secure, and worthy, to give us a sense of identity, meaning, and purpose in order to offset the spirit of fear, guilt, and shame we inherited from Adam.

Threatening any of these attachments inflames fear, anxiety, and distress, which typically results in a hostile response to defend one's interests, whether physical, relational, or legal—we seek to eliminate the threat to our security. This is the cause of the never-ending divisions and conflicts throughout human history.

You see this in people with their sports teams. If their identity and sense of self are deeply tied to their team, they become quite distraught and angry when their team loses. Some people attach their hearts to their nation, career, race, denomination, family, or wealth.

The Only Source

God's plan for His people is to cut away from our hearts any source of security, identity, peace, or sense of wellbeing other than Him. We are to recognize Him not only as our only source of life, but also as the source of our identity, purpose, meaning, and security. We are to recognize that our talents, intelligence, skills, abilities, health, wealth, everything we

have, originate in Him, and that we are His stewards to carry out His purposes in the use of all He has given us. (And His purposes are always for our best good, not His need.)

But we are not His slaves; He wants us to be His understanding friends (John 15:15). He wants to lead us to the point that we sever all ties of loyalty that interfere with His calling and purpose in our lives and give our hearts and minds and, ultimately, our first priority in all things to Him, that in all actions we seek to honor Him and bring glory to Him, for it is He that we love and trust above all others.

For example, Abraham demonstrated that God was first in his heart at Mount Moriah when he was willing to sacrifice his own son.

Placing God supreme in our hearts does not free us from our duties in life, but rather, it strengthens and enables us to fulfill those duties.

Parents who prioritize God above their children will be ever more capable, focused, energized, motivated, and enabled with wisdom and strength to fulfill their godly calling to parent their children.



People who put God before their spouse in all things will be the most loving, loyal, attentive, nurturing, and healthy spouses, for they will treat their partners like Christ treats the church, and those marriages will be the place where both individuals thrive, mature, grow, and experience the deepest love and peace possible on Earth.

While we are to be in the world, we are not to be of the world; therefore, we must be ready to let go of every other support or attachment in this world rather than betray Jesus to hold onto what we have.

If called like Lot to leave or flee our home, our community, our family, our wealth, are we ready to follow that call, or would that be too



For a deeper dive into this event, see our blog "Why Did God Tell Abraham to Kill Isaac?"



threatening, too terrifying, and would we choose to die clutching onto our earthly possessions?

If called like the rich young ruler to sell all we have and give it to the poor and follow Jesus, could we do it, or would our sense of worth, our security, our meaning and identity, be overwhelmed, and it would be too terrifying and fearful to do so, so we cling to our money and lose our soul?

If we like Abraham or those in Matthew 10:34–38 are called to cut ties with family members and send them away, can we do it, or do we find that such an act would hurt us too much, and we would choose to hold on to them instead of Jesus?

If we are called like the apostles to leave our employment to serve the Lord, are we able to do it, or do we cling to our earthly income to feel safe and secure, only to lose eternal security?

If we are called like Moses to leave a position of power and authority, a place of societal leadership, are we able to do so, or does such a demotion, a humiliation, a loss of status terrify and frighten us, causing us so much turmoil that we refuse the calling, cling to position and power, and lose salvation?

If we are called like Paul to follow Jesus at the cost of being rejected by the church of our upbringing, are we able to do so, or would the rejection by our own church be so frightening that we would refuse to follow our Savior, preferring the security of denominational membership?

If we are in leadership of a church or one of its institutions and are called, like Caiaphas two thousand years ago, to make a choice between following Jesus or protecting the assets of the institution, are we able to follow Jesus, or would our sense of security be so tied to the organization that we, like Caiaphas, would say, “You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish” (John 11:50).

We are to become like Job, who, despite losing every earthly attachment, still trusted God. The only way we can do this is if we place God first in our hearts now.



We must love Him above all others and form identities, our sense of self, our purpose, our reason for living, upon the truth of who He is and who we are to Him—His precious son or daughter that He loves so much He sent His one and only Son to save us. When we place God first in all things and are settled into the truth of who He is both intellectually and spiritually, mind and heart, then we are sealed by God and nothing, no temptation, no lie, no threat, no loss, will shake us from it.

And because God wants this for us, He allows events to unfold in our lives that put us in a position where we must choose what we value most, who we trust most—God or something else.

Choosing Trust Over Earthly Attachments and Fear

When you experience anything that causes you to feel fear, insecurity, or threatened, go to Jesus and ask Him to help you identify the source. Pray like David for God to search your heart and to cut away any attachments that have formed in your life that are interfering with your connection to Him. Choose to surrender all to Jesus, to trust Him with everything, to recognize Him not only as Savior but also as your Creator (and Recreator) and Sustainer, and embrace your relationship with Him as His loving, trusting, and trustworthy steward and friend—for He has promised, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’ So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’” (Hebrews 13:5, 6).



PART 4

TWO COVENANTS UPON TWO LAWS

One Eternal, One Temporary



Those who are sealed by love, those who have turned

fear aside so that the loss of any earthly attachment will not shake them from their loyalty, do so in fulfillment of God's covenant—but which covenant, and why does it matter?

God said to the Israelites after the Exodus:

You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep **My covenant**, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:4–6 NKJV, emphasis mine).



A covenant is an agreement or arrangement between two parties. But in this passage, God doesn't say "our covenant," but "My covenant," yet He calls for the people to obey His covenant.

What is this covenant, arrangement, or agreement that God calls people to obey?

Is the covenant at Sinai the same one or a different one from the covenant with Adam, Noah, and Abraham? Is it the same one or a different one from the covenant given to all humanity through Jesus—what Jeremiah and Hebrews call the new covenant?

Is there one covenant or are there two covenants—is there an old covenant and a new covenant? Are they different names for the same covenant, or are they different in some way? Are the old and new covenants connected but different?

There are two covenants based upon two laws, two promises, two lands, and two starting and ending points. One covenant is universal and eternal and is based on God's eternal design law and eternal promise; the other covenant is provisional and temporary and is based on a provisional, temporary arrangement of the law and a temporary regional promise.

People mix these two covenants, laws, and promises up all the time, and it causes untold confusion and misunderstanding.

The Universal Covenant

God's eternal, universal covenant is His covenant of grace to save sinners from sin, a promise He made in Eden (Genesis 3:15). It is the fulfillment of His plan that has been in existence from the foundation of the world. This is the covenant, agreement, arrangement *made amongst the Godhead* before Earth was created, and which was, as recorded in Genesis, communicated and offered to Adam, the head of the human race, before any children were born.

This universal covenant is the agreement between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that Jesus would become human, taking up humanity damaged by sin, suffer the full weight of sin, in harmony with God's eternal design laws and justice, and as our sinless substitute, in harmony with the laws of life, destroy the infection of fear and selfishness, the cause of death, and, through His sinless human life and sacrificial death, purge the spirit of fear and selfishness from humanity and restore the spirit of love and trust, bringing back holiness, perfection, sinlessness, a righteous and holy spirit of life, into humanity and become the redeemer, the second Adam, the new head of humanity, the connecting link between mankind and God.

This is the agreement the Godhead made, and it was this covenant, the covenant of grace, that was communicated to Adam and Eve as recorded in Genesis 3:15: The seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head.



This *eternal* covenant, made among the members of the *eternal* Godhead, is based upon God's *eternal* law—His design law, the laws that reality and life are built to exist and operate upon. Mankind, the species created in Eden, could be saved only by Jesus becoming a human, someone who is a part of this species, who shares the life breathed into Adam, and who eradicates the terminal spirit of fear and selfishness and restores in humanity a spirit of love and trust.

This had to be done in harmony with God's law and justice—meaning in harmony with reality, the laws that God built life to operate upon, and thereby restore humanity to unity, at-one-ment, with God.

In order to do this, Jesus had to become a real human being. And He became a real human being by partaking of the life/spirit/breath of life breathed into Adam, a life corrupted with fear and selfishness by Adam and passed down to all of us. Jesus partook of this life through His human mother, Mary, and thus became a real human being, part of this human family.

But the Father to His humanity was the Holy Spirit, so He was born as a real human being but one who had a sinless life, a pure spirit of perfect love and trust. In His humanity, He could experience temptation in all points just like us, but He chose to live only by the life of love and trust and, thus, was without sin (Hebrews 4:15).

In order to complete the covenant, the agreement made among the Godhead, Jesus, in His humanity, had to suffer the full weight of God's justice, which is God doing what is right or just in harmony with His law. This means that God would not artificially interfere, would not change, abridge, modify, or abrogate His law, but would sustain the operation of His law to the full extent and result of His law.

This means the impact of sin was fully experienced by Jesus, our human substitute. That means He experienced the full weight of what sin does without any intervention by His Father, without the Father blunting it, anesthetizing it, reducing it, or removing it.

And sin tempted Jesus—He was tempted with pain, fear, and the spirit of fear and selfishness to act to save Himself. The spirit of fear and selfishness, with its terror, dread, guilt, and shame, tempted Jesus to believe



the lie that His separation from the Father would be eternal (even though Jesus knew better and had already told His disciples multiple times that He would die and rise again). The Father did not remove the burden, but when Jesus fell down dying in Gethsemane, the Father instead sent an angel to strengthen Christ's humanity so that He could complete Their covenant, mission, agreement.

The spirit of fear inherited from Adam tormented Jesus, and at the cross, He died when the Father *separated* from Him, because sin severs the connection with God, the source of life. The Father sustained His design law, the law of liberty, and left Jesus free to reap what Jesus chose—and Jesus chose to be our Savior, our human substitute, to complete the covenant of grace He had established with His Father.

At the cross, Jesus killed, purged, eliminated, destroyed the spirit of fear and selfishness from the humanity He had inherited through Mary and rose in a purified, sinless humanity animated only by the sinless spirit He inherited from the Holy Spirit.

Jesus covenanted, agreed, arranged with His Father and the Spirit to take up humanity terminal in sin and cure it, perfect it, redeem it, and restore it to God's sinless family.



This is God's covenant of grace, which is the eternal covenant and the outworking of God's design laws for life being sustained by God and lived out by Jesus.

This covenant is universal in its application. The species human was saved, put right with God, justified with God, in the person of Jesus Christ, and every human sinner, because of Jesus, is offered free healing, free salvation, free restoration, free exchange of their terminal sinful life for Jesus' sinless life. Simultaneously, God's covenant, completed by Christ, secures the sinless universe in loyalty.

God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to **reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven**, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross (Colossians 1:19–20, emphasis mine).

This is the universal, eternal covenant that extends to the unfallen beings as it demonstrates the truth of God's character, His unchangeable design laws, and confirms them in their loyalty.

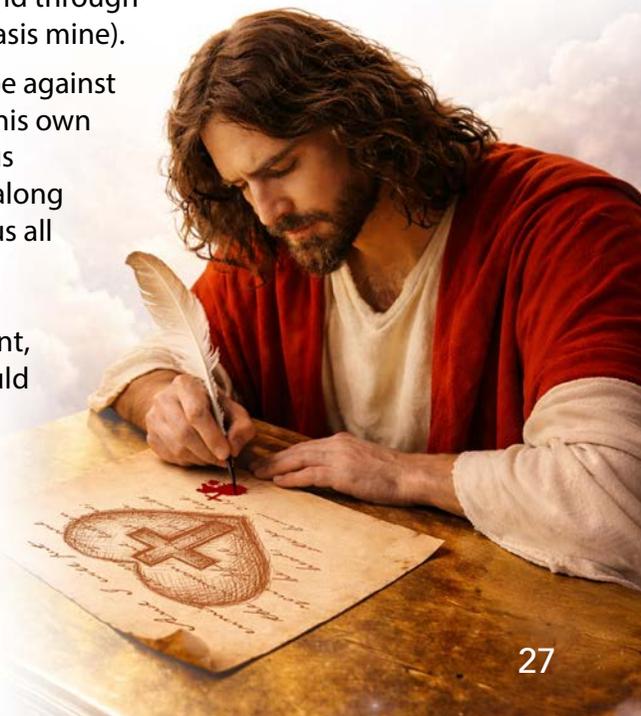
- Peter describes this eternal covenant by saying, "He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake" (1 Peter 1:20).
- Revelation references it also: "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (13:8 NKJV).

We see this eternal agreement throughout Scripture:

- "And now the Sovereign LORD [Father] has sent me [Son], with his Spirit [Holy Spirit]. This is what the LORD says—your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 48:16, 17).
- "Here is my [Father] servant [Son], whom I [Father] uphold, my [Father] chosen one [Son] in whom I [Father] delight; I [Father] will put my Spirit [Holy Spirit] on him [Son], and he [Son] will bring justice to the nations" (Isaiah 42:1).
- "For **God so loved** the world that **he gave** his one and only **Son**, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For **God did not send his Son** into the world **to condemn** the world, but **to save** the world through him" (John 3:16, 17, emphasis mine).
- "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (Romans 8:31).

It was the Father's agreement, will, arrangement, that Jesus would be our Savior, our substitute, to take upon Himself the sin-condition for the purpose of eliminating it and restoring humanity to sinless perfection and eternal life. Jesus is, as

27 John the Baptist said, "the



Lamb of God, who **takes away the sin** of the world!" (John 1:29, emphasis mine). This is the Father's will—to destroy sin and save sinners. This is the eternal covenant of grace that was repeated to Noah when God saved the human family from eternal destruction by keeping open the avenue for the fulfillment of the Genesis 3:15 promise.

It is the covenant communicated to Abraham in the promise: "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (Genesis 22:18 NKJV).

That "seed" is Jesus, the promised "seed" of Genesis 3:15.

And this universal promise was repeated to Isaac and Jacob:

- To Isaac: "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 26:4 NKJV).
- To Jacob: "In you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 28:14 NKJV).

This eternal covenant is based upon God's eternal design law, the laws that life and the operations of reality are built upon, and it is universal in its application.

The Temporary Covenant

But God also made a separate provisional, regional, and temporary covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants, and that was the agreement or **mission covenant** that they would be the protectors of the written Word of God, the repository of the object lesson teaching tools, and most importantly, the branch of the human family through whom the Messiah would come for the completion of the global eternal agreement (covenant).

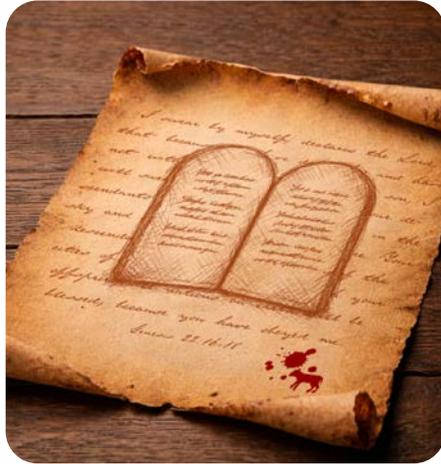
In other words, God made a temporary, **mission-focused** covenant/agreement with the Jews for the purpose of fulfilling His **eternal global covenant/agreement**.

This temporary, provisional, regional covenant was the covenant for the Jews to possess the land of Palestine. And it included the temporary imposed laws, ordinances, rituals, ceremonies, and the *added* and



temporary arrangement of the eternal design law in the form of the Ten Commandments, written for the need of sinful humans.

All of these laws were added for the purpose of establishing an organization in a sinful world, composed of sinful, unconverted people, with sufficient externally imposed structure to maintain organizational integrity long enough for the fulfillment of the global eternal covenant that would actually resolve and remove sin—meaning until Jesus was born and completed the eternal covenant of grace made among the Godhead and communicated to humanity in Eden.



God's promise for the local/regional fulfillment to Abraham's biological descendants included the temporary promise of a local parcel of land:

The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land" (Genesis 12:7).

This is the regional promise for the genetic descendants to occupy Canaan for the purpose of being the branch of the human family through which the Messiah would be born.

But God also promised to Abraham that through his "seed," meaning Jesus, the universal covenant promised in Genesis 3:15 would be accomplished.

The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you" (Genesis 13:14–17).

What is being promised here is not a strip of land in the Middle East, but the entire earth (east, west, north, south—all points of the compass) will be given to the people of God; the earth will be made new, and those



who are like Abraham in character, in faith, whose hearts have been circumcised from sin, will be heirs to this promise and inherit the earth.

As Jesus said, the meek will inherit the earth, not just the Middle East.

The covenant with and promises to Abraham were dual—a local, regional one *and* a global, eternal one. These covenants had two laws, two promised lands, two applications, two purposes, two starting points, and two ending points.

The local application is the one in which Abraham's genetic descendants are the branch of the human family through whom God accomplishes the promise of Genesis 3:15 and through whom the Messiah is born. This local, regional promise to Abraham informs him that his children would inherit the land in Canaan **for the purpose** of fulfilling their mission of protecting the inspired record and being the avenue through whom Messiah would come **so that** Jesus could fulfill God's greater universal promise, the covenant of grace recorded in Genesis 3:15, and crush the serpent's head **so that** the "meek will **inherit** the earth" made new (Matthew 5:5)—the true Promised Land.

The *genetic* descendants inherited Canaan *in order* to be the avenue for Jesus, our Savior, to be born and fulfill the covenant given to the entire human family in Genesis 3:15 so that the *spiritual* descendants of Abraham—all those who have faith like Abraham—will inherit the entire planet, the earth made new. Paul confirms this:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. **If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise** (Galatians 3:26–29, emphasis mine).

The dual-fulfillment promise to Abraham had two starting points and two ending points. The starting point of the universal promise was in Eden, recorded in Genesis 3:15; the starting point of the regional promise was with Abraham when he was called out of Ur.

The ending point of the universal is when Jesus recreates the earth and the meek inherit it; the ending point of the regional promise for the genetic people was when they rejected and crucified Christ and said, "We have no king but Caesar" (John 19:15). This is confirmed by Jesus when He said, to them, "Your house is left to you desolate" (Matthew 23:38).

Jesus masterfully weaves these two covenant promises together in His prophetic description of the destruction of Jerusalem and His second coming as described in Matthew 24 and Mark 13.



The destruction of Jerusalem occurred because the regional fulfillment of the promise had ended. The genetic descendants kept the prophetic writings intact, kept open the avenue for the Messiah, and Jesus came, but they rejected Him and, therefore, there was no further purpose for a regional land to be occupied by them. The gospel must now go to the world.

It is now time for the global application, which culminates in the Second Coming and the meek inheriting the earth.



For more on the land covenant, see our blog "Israel and the Promised Land Today."



The Two Covenants Compared

GRACE

Eternal/Universal

Design law

Law written on the heart

Entire world

All humanity

Started with Adam's fall

Purpose: Eliminate sin from universe

Applies to all the universe

Never ends/completes at end of 1,000 years.

LAW

Temporary/Provisional/Regional

Imposed law

Law written on stone¹

Palestine

Jews

Started with Abraham's call

Protect Written Word/Avenue Living Word

Applies to Jewish nation in Bible times

Ended at Jesus' crucifixion/resurrection.

There is an eternal/universal covenant of God's grace, built upon God's eternal design laws, applicable to all of God's creation, with specific application to redeeming sinful humanity, but it also purifies the entire universe from sin. This covenant went into effect when Adam fell, was ratified, certified, and accomplished when Jesus died, and will be completed at the end of the 1,000 years, when sin and sinners are eliminated from the universe and all remaining intelligent beings are back in perfection and unity with God.

But in the process of God completing His eternal/universal covenant, He made a temporary/provisional covenant or agreement—not one of salvation, as that is the eternal covenant, but one of mission and purpose, and that mission was for the Jews to be the repository of the written Word, the object lesson teaching tools, and the biological branch/avenue of the human family through whom Messiah would be born.

That temporary agreement or covenant was with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and it was based on imposed laws, rituals, and



¹ This does *not* mean that Ten Commandments were done away with or are no longer binding, but that in the new covenant the complete aspect of the law of love (love for God and man), which are codified by the Ten Commandments, are no longer externally written upon stone but are internally written upon the heart (Hebrews 8:10).



ceremonies—none of which brought salvation but which brought structure and order in a sinful world for the purpose of accomplishing the mission or goals in this sinful world for the purpose of completing the eternal/global covenant, which is freely offered to all humanity.

Because the sin problem is a global problem encompassing the entire human race, God's saving covenant is also global. Thus, Paul tells us that the promise given is not restricted to the genetic descendants

of Jacob, but is for all of us: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and **heirs according to the promise**" (Galatians 3:28, 29, emphasis mine).

The great nation with many descendants promised to Abraham is to be governed by a king from the line of David; that kingdom is not a regional kingdom, but an eternal one. As the angel told the virgin Mary about her Son: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:32, 33).

The writer of Hebrews confirms all of this when he tells us that the faithful of God in Bible times—Abel, Enoch, Noah, along with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who lived "in the promised land" (Hebrews 11:9)—"did not receive the things promised" (Hebrews 11:13), that they were still "looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" (Hebrews 11:10). "All of these people" of faith "did not receive the things promised; they saw them and welcomed them from a distance. ... They were longing for a better country—a heavenly one" (vv. 13, 16).

Incredibly, the Bible tells us that *all* of these people did *not* receive the things promised! And Enoch, who was taken to heaven, is on that list! Enoch, who has already received eternal life, a glorified body, and who currently lives in heaven with Jesus, surely he has received the promise, hasn't he? Not in its complete and fullest sense. What was Abraham promised? That his descendants would inherit the earth. This promise will not be realized until Jesus comes again, all sin and sinners are eliminated, the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven, and the earth is made new to be the home of the righteous. Then the promise will be realized, and we, who have faith like Abraham, will receive our inheritance of a goodly land, a beautiful home, perfect and flawless, that God intended Adam and Eve to possess. What Jesus said is absolutely true, the meek will inherit the earth, for what God has promised, He will fulfill!

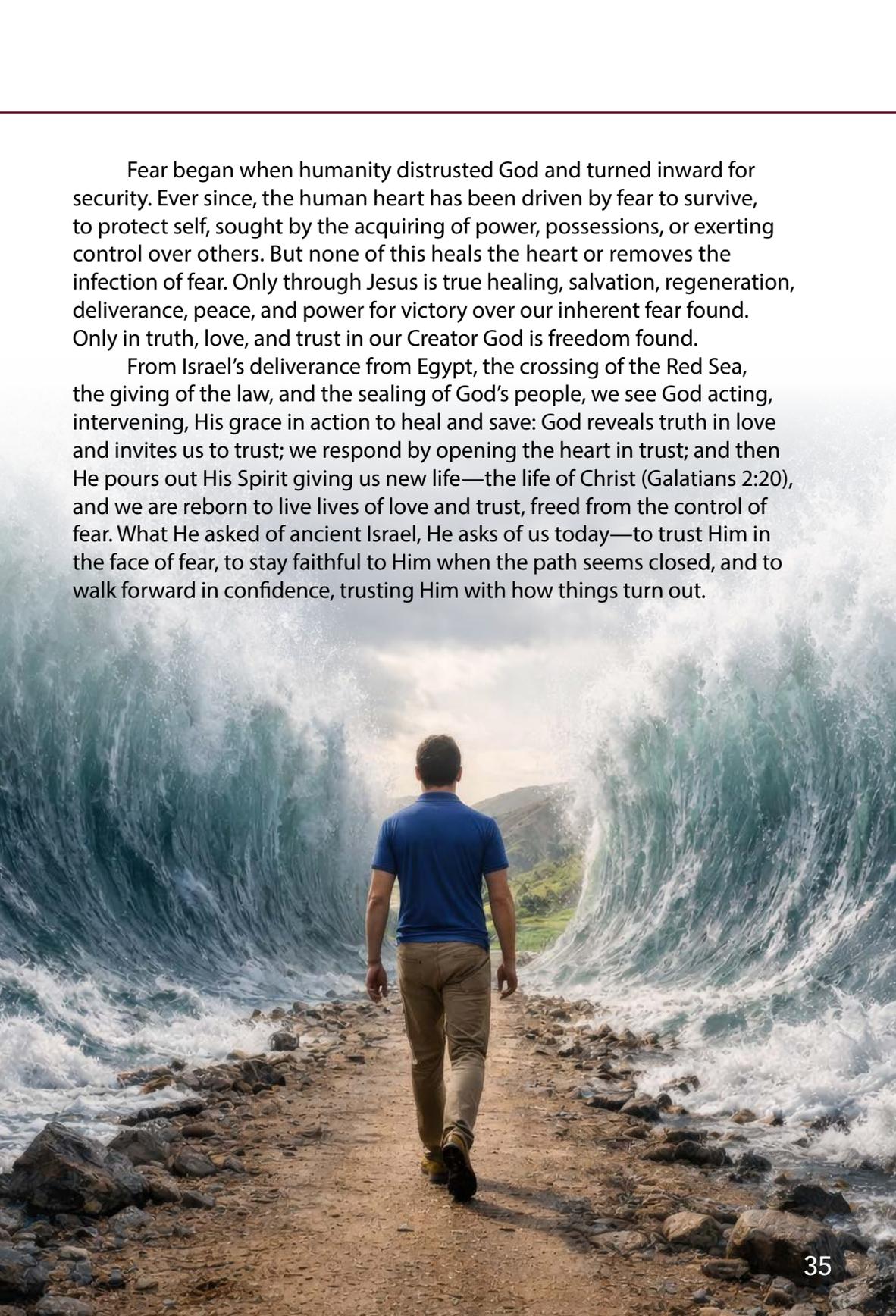
Embracing the Covenant of Grace

Throughout this magazine, we have explored how every person, because of Adam's sin, is born enslaved by fear and selfishness and completely incapable of freeing themselves. Yet, we've also seen how our Creator God of love has never abandoned His sin-sick children but provides a real remedy to free us from fear and selfishness through Jesus Christ. Our heavenly Father is calling us back into a relationship built on trust and love through an understanding of who He actually is.



Fear began when humanity distrusted God and turned inward for security. Ever since, the human heart has been driven by fear to survive, to protect self, sought by the acquiring of power, possessions, or exerting control over others. But none of this heals the heart or removes the infection of fear. Only through Jesus is true healing, salvation, regeneration, deliverance, peace, and power for victory over our inherent fear found. Only in truth, love, and trust in our Creator God is freedom found.

From Israel's deliverance from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the giving of the law, and the sealing of God's people, we see God acting, intervening, His grace in action to heal and save: God reveals truth in love and invites us to trust; we respond by opening the heart in trust; and then He pours out His Spirit giving us new life—the life of Christ (Galatians 2:20), and we are reborn to live lives of love and trust, freed from the control of fear. What He asked of ancient Israel, He asks of us today—to trust Him in the face of fear, to stay faithful to Him when the path seems closed, and to walk forward in confidence, trusting Him with how things turn out.



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Founded in 2010 by Timothy R. Jennings, M.D., Come and Reason is dedicated to helping you learn to discern, to stimulate you to think, to help hone and refine your reasoning powers, and to increase your ability to know right from wrong. We're not here to tell you what to think, but to show you how to more efficiently use your God-given reasoning power to better grow in grace and bring God closer in your personal walk with Him.



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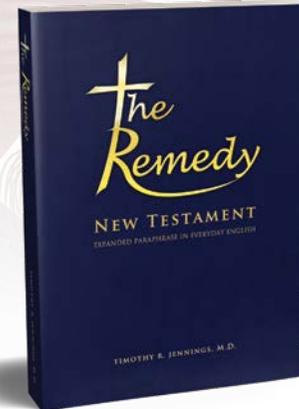
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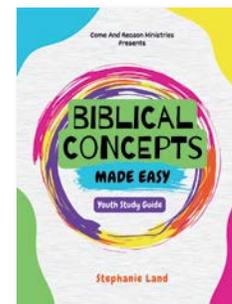
DISCOVER empowering resources

by Dr. Timothy Jennings to enrich your life
and the lives of those around you!



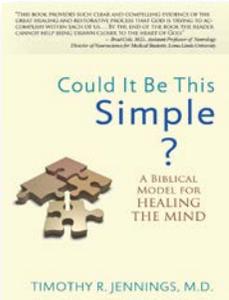
The Remedy New Testament: Expanded Paraphrase in Everyday English

An easy-to-understand New Testament paraphrase that makes the gospel of God's kingdom of love that Jesus lived and taught real and accessible. During the Dark Ages, Christian leaders replaced God's love as the central pillar of the gospel with human law, rules, judgment, and punishment, teaching that God runs His kingdom like human governments do. This fundamentally altered the church that Jesus established, resulting in things like the Inquisition, Crusades, and burning people at the stake. While most Bible translations were done by good-hearted people, having accepted this idea that God's law and government work like human law and government, they innocently translated into the text fear-inducing ideas about God that drive people away from the faith. This enlightening paraphrase by Dr. Jennings offers a clearer view of the true message of Jesus Christ based on the reality that God built His universe to operate in harmony with His nature of love. *The Remedy* will reorient your heart and mind toward God's character of love and His mission to heal and restore you and all humankind!



Biblical Concepts Made Easy

Introducing a fantastic Christian resource for parents and educators wanting to teach young people the profound lessons of God's love and goodness through a design-law perspective! Authored by Stephanie Land, this engaging 96-page activity book from Come and Reason Ministries imparts essential, life-changing principles in a way that everyone can understand. Packed with engaging activities and plenty of style, *Biblical Concepts Made Easy* seamlessly conveys the last message of God's love for humanity to prepare every heart for heaven. Say "goodbye" to your struggles in finding ways to teach these divine concepts to young minds—and "hello" to a fun, effective learning experience like you've never seen before!



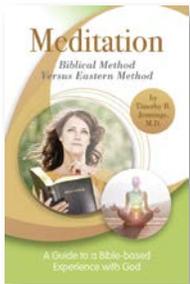
Could It Be This Simple?

Could It Be This Simple? explores the complexities of the human mind and offers insights into understanding the interplay between psychology, spirituality, and neuroscience to provide a fresh perspective on mental well-being.

Through engaging storytelling and practical advice, Dr. Jennings puts forth the idea that even simple solutions can often be the key to addressing anxiety, depression, and other mental health challenges. He emphasizes the importance of

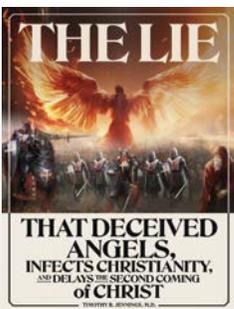
nurturing healthy relationships, maintaining a positive mindset, and cultivating a sense of purpose in living a fulfilling life.

This book is a valuable resource for anyone looking to gain a deeper understanding of mental health and practical strategies for improving their overall well-being. Dr. Jennings' compassionate approach makes *Could It Be This Simple?* a must-read for those seeking a fresh perspective on mental health and personal growth.



Meditation: Biblical Method vs. Eastern Method

Does meditation matter in your experience and understanding of God? Yes—it does! In this brief but practical guide, Dr. Jennings teaches you to discern the differences between biblical and Eastern meditation, the divergent practices, and their impact on brain function and your heart and mind.



The Lie Magazine

As you look at the world today, do you long for the coming of Christ? Have you seen the rise in corruption and abuse and wondered, “*What is Jesus waiting for?*” Have you heard sermons suggesting one reason or another yet been left unsatisfied? Then we invite you to read our newest magazine, *The Lie That Deceived Angels, Infects Christianity, and Delays the Second Coming of Christ.*

We are persuaded that one single lie persists within all branches of Christianity that is obstructing the gospel

from being presented in its purest light and doing its final work. The latter rain is soon to be poured out, the entire world is settling into one of two camps, and Jesus is preparing His people. Now is the time to throw off the last lie and present God in His true glory!

Many of these resources are available for free at comeandreason.com. Stop by today!



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Doesn't it seem like the whole world is going off the rails? Are you feeling down or anxious about your place, wondering how you can practice God's design principles for life amid all this confusion, chaos, and contradictory information?

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