



ART OF SUPPLICATION III

CONFERENCE

28TH FEBRUARY-1ST MARCH 2023

MAUN LODGE

BERITH I

PROPOSITION

The act of God shedding the blood of His Son on the cross in order to spare sinful mankind is what we call a "Covenant". God enacted an indissoluble covenant which gives us the ground to petition Him without fear or shame. We are forever redeemed and accepted in this new Covenant through His beloved Son.

Introduction

In this session, we will look at the concept of Covenant as it affects the ministry of prayer. What gives us confidence when we pray is the fact that God's promises are yes and amen. This is so because God has bound Himself by covenant to save, deliver, rescue, and heal those who call on Him by faith—especially those who have believed in the same of His Son.

A covenant is an agreement or arrangement between parties. The word covenant or compact can be used between individuals or between tribes or nations. In Hebrew, the word Berith is used to mean covenant. It is derived from the root which means "to cut", and hence a covenant is a "cutting", with reference to the cutting or dividing of animals into two parts, and the contracting parties passing between them. The corresponding word in the Septuagint is diatheke. The word is also used with reference to God's revelation of Himself in the way of promise or favour to men: examples include Noah, Abraham, Levi, David, and to Rechab. It was never cut without a sacrifice—an acceptable sacrifice ensured the immutability of the promise. In this context, Christ was the perfect sacrifice, which means that God's covenant with us is indissoluble.

In African religions, a sacrifice is to maintain or restore the right relationship of human beings to the sacred order. Generally, the purpose of a sacrifice in Africa is revealed in its name. Here are a few examples:

1. **Propitiatory sacrifice**—This sacrifice is often prescribed by a diviner. The Yoruba call it Ebö ètùtù. In this sacrifice, the offering belongs entirely to the deity; the sacrifice is never shared but burnt or buried. It is performed during a crisis like an epidemic, famine, drought, or serious illness. This sacrifice is also made when

a worshipper violates a prohibition. For example, among the Akans, if a man indulges in sexual intercourse in the bush, Asase Yaa, the Earth goddess, has to be propitiated. Among the Mendes of Sierra Leone, sexual intercourse in the bush is also regarded as a violation of Maa-nsoo, the Earth goddess. On such occasions, sacrifice should be offered at the sacred groves to propitiate the Earth's mother and ancestors.

2. **Preventive sacrifice**—This sacrifice is prescribed as a precautionary measure to prevent danger or disaster. For example, when a particular community learns that an epidemic is raging in a nearby village, it may offer this sacrifice to prevent the scourge from entering the village. Among the Yoruba, the preventive sacrifice is known as Ogunkoja, "that which wards off attacks." Among the Akans, palm nuts, raw meat, and raw food are often placed at the entrance of the town or village to ward off evil spirits. Among the Yoruba, the animal victim that is slain and offered to the deity may be buried or exposed at the entrance to the town, village, or house.

3. **Substitutionary sacrifice**—The substitutionary sacrifice has an element of propitiation and prevention. It is offered in place of the person who might have suffered some kind of misfortune. It may also be offered to avert danger or misfortune that might befall someone. Among the Yoruba, usually, a sheep is used as a substitute for a human being. The sheep is rubbed against the body of the offeror to transfer the illness or misfortune to the sheep. It is believed that the destiny of the offeror is exchanged, hence the name Ebo Irapada (Redemption or Exchange Sacrifice). Among the Mendes, a fowl is sometimes offered as a substitute. The leg of the chicken is broken, accompanied by words such as "We have observed this man; we see big trouble coming on him, but now as we break the leg of this chicken (he breaks one of its legs), may it, now disabled, carry his trouble; and may the trouble return and fall on anyone who was going to cause it."

4. **Thanksgiving Sacrifice**—Generally, Africans love to express gratitude. The

Yoruba articulate thanks to divinities and espouse communion with fellow human beings by engaging in ebö öpü ati idàpò. This type of sacrifice is usually accompanied by feasting, in which the worshippers and the divinities concerned share a communal meal.

5. **Votive sacrifice-** The votive sacrifice is also a thanksgiving sacrifice to express appreciation to a deity and also to fulfil vows. It is a common practice among some Africans, particularly the Yoruba, the Mendes, the Akans, and the Anlo, for devotees of some divinities to go before their divinities to pour out their minds and to promise that if their needs are met, they will give specified offerings in turn. This sacrifice is known as Ebo Eje among the Yoruba; the Akans call it aboade (Twi), and it is known as dzadodo among the Anlos.
6. **Foundation Sacrifice-Foundation** sacrifice is offered at the beginning of projects such as the foundation of a house, the starting of a business, or the site of a new land for cultivation. In several societies in Africa, before houses

are built or villages are founded, sacrifices are made to the gods. Among the Akans, before a building is put up, a sacrifice of appeasement is made to the Asase Yaa (Earth goddess). This sacrifice is meant to prevent evil spirits from entering the place.

7. **The** above are examples of mankind's quest for the knowledge of God and the need for His mercy. People everywhere are aware of the reality of sin, evil, transgression, and wickedness-however, their insistence on their understanding of salvation and redemption is what prevents them from embracing the gospel. Instead, they try to substitute the gospel with their own invented methods of redemption. Because their beliefs are devoid of truth, they become vulnerable to manipulation and deception. As long as they resist the truth they will forever live under the dominion of sin and Satan. Likewise, false religion will keep on spreading. But for those who have seen the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses them from all unrighteousness and ensures that they live in fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

MAIN TEXT

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better covenant, which has been legally enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for a second one. But finding fault with His people, He says: Look, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not like the covenant that I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by their hands to lead them out of the land of Egypt. I disregarded them, says the Lord, because they did not continue in My covenant. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people. And each person will not teach his fellow citizen, and each his brother, saying, "Know the Lord," because they will all know Me, from the least to the greatest of them. For I will be merciful to their wrongdoing, and I will never again remember their sins. By saying, a new covenant, He has declared that the first is old. And what is old and ageing is about to disappear."

Hebrews 8:6-13; HCSB

“But the Messiah has appeared, high priest of the good things that have come. In the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands (that is, not of this creation), He entered the most holy place once for all, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a young cow, sprinkling those who are defiled, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of the Messiah, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God? Therefore, He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance because a death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. Where a will exists, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will is valid only when people die, since it is never in force while the one who made it is living. That is why even the first covenant was inaugurated with blood. For when every command had been proclaimed by Moses to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, along with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll itself and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant that God has commanded for you. In the same way, he sprinkled the tabernacle and all the articles of worship with blood. According to the law, almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness. Therefore, it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves to be purified with better sacrifices than these. For the Messiah did not enter a sanctuary made with hands (only a model of the true one) but into heaven itself so that He might now appear in the presence of God for us. He did not do this to offer Himself many times, as the high priest enters the sanctuary yearly with the blood of another. Otherwise, He would have had to suffer many times since the foundation of the world. But now He has appeared one time, at the end of the ages, for the removal of sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And just as it is appointed for people to die once – and after this, judgment – so also the Messiah, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for Him.”

9:11-28; HCSB

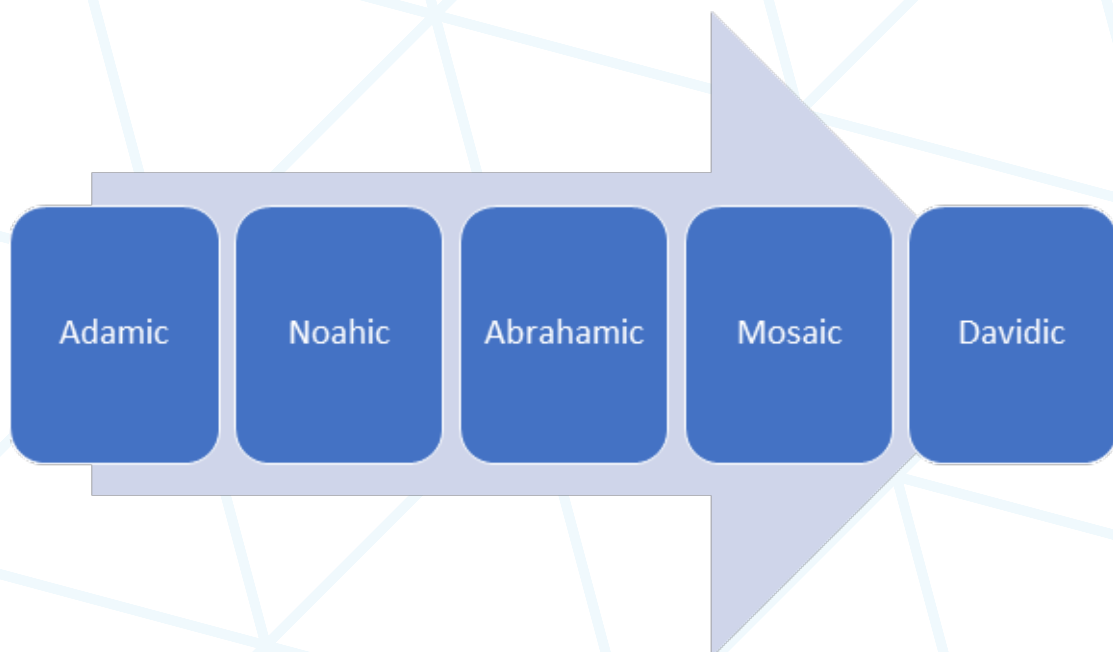
The Messianic Covenant is the perfection of all previous promises and arrangements between God and man.

Before the foundation of the world, God put in motion a plan to redeem mankind from the oppression of Satan (Ephesians 1:3-10; Revelation 1:4-6). This plan entailed transferring the guilt of mankind to His only begotten Son-Jesus Christ. Why Jesus? Mankind could not walk steadfastly before the Lord by themselves. Even in the presence of the law, they still failed to honour God. As a result, Satan usurped the domain of mankind and turned the world into a sin factory. By polluting the genes of the first man to ever exist Satan gained a foothold in human nature and used them to dishonour and rebel against God (John 8:42-47; Ephesians 2:1-5). Realizing the complexity of sin human beings attempted to find ways to reconnect with Elohim and to live free from the fear of judgement. However, none of the proposed solutions has ever worked effectively. Religions around the world are battling with rapid changes in the world and the ever-increasing levels of immorality and evil. All types of religions are failing to adequately address the root causes of sin in society. God foreknew this and prepared in advance to totally remove the sin of the world. His perfect plan centred on Jesus Christ. Through Jesus' blood, the world was to be redeemed from the enslavement of sin and liberated for God. The first time this plan was revealed was in the garden of Eden prior to the banishment of our ancestors. Mankind in general has been looking forward to emancipation from spiritual slavery since then (Genesis 3:15, 20-21).

God has at different periods reiterated His first promise through different covenants some of which were particular (to individuals, families, or nations) and some universal in scope. The Adamic covenant was universal in that it was a promise of victory over Satan by one born of a woman. This covenant found its full expression and fulfilment in Christ (the last Adam). Second, came the Noahic Covenant which was God's pledge to spare the planet from the consequences of sin. After suffering the judgement of the flood, God promised never again to destroy planet Earth and its inhabitants by a flood.

Third, God revealed Himself to Abraham and promised him the occupation of Canaan land and a posterity of faithful servants of Yahweh. This Covenant had two aspects to it: the preservation of Israel as custodians of God's revelation and the ingrafting of Gentiles into God's Covenant through the seed of Isaac (Abrahamic Covenant). Fourth, God enacted the Mosaic Covenant at Mount Sinai by issuing the Ten Commandments. This is the Covenant that remained in place until the resurrection of Christ. A subset of this Covenant is called the "Palestinian Covenant". This pledge specifically seeks to protect God's promise of prosperity to Israel as they remain faithful to God in the land of their progenitor (Abraham). Finally, there is the Davidic Covenant. God promised to raise a Messiah from the line of David who will rule forever. Matthew's account of the gospel aims to prove that Jesus was the promised son of David-the Messiah. John connects Christ to earlier prophecies of the coming son of David including the Psalms (Genesis 49:8-12; Numbers 24:17-19; Psalm 16:10-11; Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1-9; Micah 5:2-5; Revelation 5:4-9).

The Messianic Covenant is the embodiment of God's revelation of His love for mankind. It leaves no room for prejudice, injustice, inequality, and discrimination.



This Covenant stands for God's total love and knowledge of His children. Meaning that God cannot deny His own. Since He purchased us by His own blood, we are His children (John 1:12). Unlike some earthly parents, God is happy to welcome us into His family the moment we obey the gospel and confess our sins in repentance. In addition, God cannot reject His own. Since He redeemed us by the blood of His Son-He has placed a high value on us. We have been accepted because of His beloved Son. He has enacted a better Covenant based on better promises. He has promised never to forsake us nor leave us but to remain with us until the end of the age. In spite of our moral failures, He loves us perfectly. This leads us to the third declaration-that He cannot neglect us. He who is faithful and just is always ready to minister to us without variations.

Conclusion

As it relates to the Art of Supplication; understanding God's Covenant gives us a solid ground to present our petitions. Since God's Covenant with us is indissoluble, we can make requests unto Him without feeling condemned. Our Covenant Keeping God is able to fulfil His promises and meet our urgent and pressing needs. God is dependable and generous. He hears the cry of our souls clearly and moves to save us timely. By petitioning Him, we are able to access His divine resources.