

Pt 3-Covenant: Exchange of Armor

PREVIOUS
STUDY

NEXT STUDY

OUR COVENANT DEFENDER

Andrew Murray wrote that

Covenant was above all to give man a hold upon God as the Covenant-keeping God, to link him to God Himself in expectation and hope, to bring him to make God Himself Alone the portion and the strength of His soul. ([The Two Covenants](#))

Have you been persecuted, maligned, slandered, or otherwise unjustly treated? Are you bitter and/or unforgiving as a result of such unjust treatment? Then the truth about **Jesus as our Covenant Partner and Protector** may be just the truth you need to hear. Jesus declared that "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free...(and) if therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." (Jn 8:32, 36). The truth about your New Covenant position and partner can indeed set you free. Years ago I taught this truth to one of the young men I was discipling and it supernaturally liberated him from longstanding unforgiveness and bitterness and he is today actively involved in a disciple making ministry. So if you struggle with sin in this area, dare to ask your Covenant Keeping God to enlighten the eyes of your heart (cp Eph 1:18-note) to understand the truth concerning His role as your Covenant Defender so that this truth might set you free to be free indeed!

GLOBAL REMNANTS OF TRUTH ABOUT COVENANT

Even as virtually all cultures possess remnants of truth about the global **flood**, so too various aspects of truth about **covenant** permeate virtually all cultures ([see examples below](#)). Here is an interesting example that I read in the Global Prayer Digest (Sept 23, 1994)...

FROM GLOBAL PRAYER DIGEST SEPT 23, 1994: "Force the impious foreigners of our midst!" Screaming & cursing, the unruly mob of wild Tibetans, stormed the home of William Christie, missionary of the Christian and Missionary Alliance on the Kansu-Tibetan border. Walking to the gate of the Pao Ngan mission station, Christie faced the crowd. He learned that they represented twelve Tibetan clans in the area, whose crops and grazing land had recently been ruined by drought. Their lamas (priests) hated the missionaries and, as a way to drive them out, blamed them for the devastating lack of rain. As superintendent of the mission, Christie had to face the situation head-on. A gifted linguist, he was an expert in both Chinese and Tibetan and tried to reason with the mob. At the same time he ordered his servant, in Chinese, to run to the Chinese fort for help. Without turning his attention from the Tibetans, he spoke in English to the missionaries, urging them to pray and prepare to defend themselves. Suddenly he recognized in the crowd a Tibetan man who had once invited him into his home when he was traveling. Christie remembered the Tibetan Law that said that by accepting his hospitality, William could count on that man to be his **friend for life**. Thereafter **he must assist him in time of need**. Christie identified himself to his friend (Recall that in the Bible "*friend*" is a covenant term) and claimed his help, thus averting a crisis which might have claimed the lives of all the missionaries on that station. No wonder he became known and respected as "The Apostle to Tibet."

Remember however that as you study the concept of covenant, be careful to stand firm on the Word of God and not the interesting extra-biblical examples.

Recall that **covenant** is the most solemn, binding, intimate, inviolable contract known in the Bible and in the world in general ("covenant remnants").

In the previous study, the symbolism of the **The Exchange of Robes** associated with the cutting of covenant by Jonathan with David (1Sa 18:1, 2, 3,4) was discussed with particular emphasis on the practical parallel truths that occur when one enters the New Covenant cut by Christ. This present study focuses on the symbolism of the exchange of the armor, weapons and belt and the associated New Covenant applications.

This series on covenant should give you a deeper understanding of the Word of God as you begin to view the Old and the New "**Testaments**" (another word for **covenant**) through the "lens" of the truth about covenant. And as you progress through these studies on covenant (see list above), you will begin to notice the concept of covenant in passages that don't have the actual word "covenant". For example, the essence of the New Covenant is succinctly summarized in Paul's familiar phrase "**in Christ**". How so?

Most of the Pauline uses of "in Christ" can be paraphrased as "in union with Christ". Webster's defines **union** as "an act or instance of uniting or joining two (or more) things into one as in the marriage union" (which in fact is a covenant in which two become one flesh - Ge 2:24, see Covenant of Marriage). Thus "in Christ" is simply another way of describing the believer becoming one with Christ when he or she enters the New Covenant by grace through faith. Similar reasoning could be used for the phrase "with Christ" (Ro 6:8-note) although one needs to check the context, but a number of the uses of "with Christ" describe the new life in Christ for all who have entered the New Covenant in His blood.

Another example of the "covenant motif" is found in the familiar verse Galatians 2:20...

I have been crucified **with Christ** (**When?** When Paul entered the New Covenant cut by Christ on the Cross - when He was crucified, Paul [and all believers] was crucified with Him as described in Ro 6:6-note); and it is no longer I who live (Paul relinquished his "right" to independent living), but Christ lives in me (my Covenant Partner, my source of strength to live this supernatural life - cp Col 1:27-note, Col 3:4-note "our life"); and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me ("for me" = as my Substitute - He died for me as the sinless Lamb in order to cut the New Covenant in His blood). (Gal 2:20-note)

Comment: Notice that in this passage the phrase "crucified with" is the compound verb **sustauroo** (**word study**) composed of "with" which is the Greek preposition **sun/syn**(**study**) (which speaks of a more intimate connection than the other Greek word for "with" [meta]) and the main verb **stauroo** meaning to crucify. Paul also uses the **perfect tense** which speaks of a past completed action (the moment I received Christ as Lord and Savior and entered into the New Covenant by grace through faith) with a present ongoing effect. As **F F Bruce** says "*The perfect tense emphasizes that participation in the crucified Christ has become the believer's settled way of life.*" The believer's past participation "**with Christ**" in His crucifixion (When Christ was crucified I was crucified - see Ro 6:6-note which also uses **sustauroo**) is the basis for his present life of faith "**In Christ**".

BRIEF REVIEW: EXCHANGE OF ROBES

Recall that in the previous study (Covenant The Exchange of Robes) Jonathan cut a covenant with David...

Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt. (1Sa 18:3,4)

As a result of this covenant, Jonathan, the next in line to be king of Israel, gave David his royal robe in an act which many interpret as Jonathan surrendering his right to rule. The result was that David "clothed" himself with Jonathan so to speak, so that now he was identified with him in the **oneness** of covenant (in which two lives become one - cp Ge 2:24 - see Oneness of Covenant and Oneness Notes). We see a clear parallel in our New Covenant partner Jesus Christ becoming a man so that He might be able to cut a covenant in blood with sinful men (see Heb 2:14-note, Php 2:6-8-note, Lk 22:20). As a result of Jesus' humbling Himself and becoming obedient to death on the Cross, sinners can now enter that New Covenant by grace through faith. When we enter the New Covenant, we are baptized into (identified with - see study of baptizo) and clothed with Christ (Gal 3:27) so that the Father now sees us through His Son. We have laid aside our former filthy rags (Isa 64:6) and put on Christ (Some have referred to this as the "Exchanged Life"). The exchange of our sinful robes ("clothes by Adam" - 1Co 15:22) for the perfect righteous garment of Christ ("clothes by Christ" - 1Co 1:30, 2Co 5:21) calls for a commitment to honor our Lord by putting on His robe of righteousness daily or as Paul says in Colossians...

As you therefore have received (paralambano) Christ Jesus the Lord (when you entered the New Covenant by faith), so **walk** (peripateo in the present imperative = command to make this your lifestyle, your habitual practice to conduct yourself, it's a call to walk "not in perfection but in a general direction...heavenward...homeward.") in Him (Do you see the "covenant motif"? In union with, oneness with Him!) (Col 2:6-note)

Salvation is not just about getting us from earth into heaven, but is about getting more of "heaven" into us on earth! Now that Christ is our identity (positional truth = justified = declared righteous = a one time event - see related discussion of the "Three Tenses of Salvation") the call on our lives is to live like Christ, to put off the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light, to put on Christ in our daily conduct (experiential truth - referring to our progressive sanctification or "present tense" salvation, our lifelong growth in Christlikeness) (Ro 13:12, 13, 14).

The night is almost gone (this should motivate a sense of urgency beloved! cp Jn 9:4 **Are you apathetic and indifferent or urgent and expectant?**), and the day is at hand (See Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming). Let us therefore (motivated

by the doctrine of **Imminency**) **lay aside** (put off) the deeds of darkness (even as we would discard dirty, smelly clothing). **Put on** the armor of light (Practically speaking = the deeds corresponding to those who live in the light. Light is what others see and the only way for them to see us in Christ's light is by observing our behavior - What "Gospel" are you preaching with you conduct? Light [and deeds of light] counters and exposes darkness and thus serves as "armor".). **13** Let us behave properly (walk becomingly) as in the day ("clothes by Christ"), not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy ("clothes by Adam"). **14** But (contrast - think of contrast as a "change of direction" in this case from darkness to light) **put on** (enduo) (aorist imperative = command with sense of "Do it now! Do it effectively". It's urgent!) the Lord Jesus Christ and **make no provision** (pronoia - word study) (present imperative + a negative = stop doing this, implying they were making provision) for the **flesh** in regard to its **lusts**.

Left to ourselves, we don't even have the "want to" or the desire to lay aside these old "friends" of the flesh, but as we learn to surrender to the Spirit (die to self [Mk 8:34, 35], yielding our will to His as an act of faith), He gives us the desire and the power to **work out our salvation** (See Php 2:13-note, Php 2:12-note, cp Ro 8:13-note). Now as we **walk by the Spirit** (Gal 5:16-note), and are **led by the Spirit** (not a set of "laws" - Gal 5:18-note), we will not carry out the desire of the flesh. The deeds that we carry out will be Spirit empowered and will look like those that the Lord Jesus Christ would carry out (See the fruit of the Spirit = each aspect of the fruit being perfectly pictured in Christ's life - Gal 5:22-note, Gal 5:23-note). That's what it means to **put on Christ** and live like Him. We will be showing forth Christ's "clothes" to a lost and dying world.

Wayne Barber says it this way...

You can't do any more now in your own strength than before you were saved...we must continually bow down before Him and accept His the transforming power of His grace do its work...and ultimately when people see us, they see Christ. The glory goes to Him and not to us.

Now let's look at the exchange of armor in the covenant between Jonathan and David.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXCHANGE OF ARMOR

Recall that there are two Hebrew words for covenant - **Beriyth [word study]** - a contract made by passing between pieces of cut flesh and **Karath** - Divide or cut in two, make a covenant. The phrase **make a covenant** in our English Bibles is almost always the Hebrew idiom **Karath** Beriyth which more literally can be translated "**cut a covenant**". Jeremiah records an account of King Zedekiah cutting a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to emancipate their slaves so that none of the Jews should be in bondage, a covenant they initially obeyed, but then disobeyed (Jer 34:8,9,10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17)

'And I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant (Jer 34:13, 14 - reference here is to the Mosaic Covenant - see Ex 21:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Dt 15:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18), who have not fulfilled the words of the **covenant** (Beriyth) which they **made** (karath - cut) before Me, when they **cut** (**karath**) the calf in two and **passed between its parts**--19 the officials of Judah, and the officials of Jerusalem, the court officers, and the priests, and all the people of the land, who passed between the parts of the calf--20 and I will give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. And their dead bodies shall be food for the birds of the sky and the beasts of the earth. (Jer 34:18, 19, 20)

Comment: According to the ancient Eastern manner of cutting a covenant, both covenanting parties passed through the divided pieces of the slain animal. This ritual was a symbolic picture of the fate that would befall them if they broke the covenant. In other words, by performing the covenant ritual, the two parties were in essence pledging their very lives to the fulfillment of the engagement they made. Covenant is serious business in Scripture!

Jamieson comments: Contracting parties in the "covenant" (not here the law in general, but their covenant made before God in His house to emancipate their slaves, Jer 34:8, 9) passed through the parts of the animal cut in two, implying that they prayed so to be cut in sunder (Mt 24:51; Greek, "cut in two") if they should break the covenant (Ge 15:10, 17)....The breakers of the covenant shall be cut in pieces, as the calf between whose parts they passed.

From this passage it is clear that in Scripture **covenant** is a solemn, binding, intimate, even inviolable contract. As we shall see in later studies, even death of a covenant partner does not invalidate the promises of the covenant to partner who remains alive.

Let's now look at the solemn covenant Jonathan cut with David in 1Sa 18:3, 4.

What else besides his robe did Jonathan give David as a symbol of their having cut covenant?(1Sa 18:4)

His armor, his sword and his bow and his belt.

Armor is the Hebrew word **mad** (04055) which refers first to that which is measured and then to a cloth garment. **Mad** can denote a priest's garment (Lev 6:3), a soldier's fighting garb as in the present context (1Sa 17:38; 1Sa 18:4; 2Sa 20:8) or an outer garment (1Sa 4:12; Jdg 3:16).

Expositor's Bible Commentary notes that...

Saul had earlier tried to put his tunic and armor on David, but to no avail (1Sa 17:38, 39). Jonathan now gives his own tunic and armor (including a type of belt that was often used to hold a sheathed dagger; cf. 2Sa 20:8) to David, who apparently accepts it without further ado. "David can receive from Jonathan what he cannot receive from Saul" (ibid., p. 80).

What did the exchange of armor, sword and bow in 1Sa 18:4 symbolize?

When Jonathan gave David his military accoutrements, it symbolized that as his covenant partner, Jonathan was now obligated to protect and defend David no matter the cost. In other words this ritual symbolized a clear commitment that each covenant partner would defend and avenge the other partner. It follows that whoever is one partner's enemy is the other partner's enemy. Conversely, the friend of one partner is also the friend of the other partner. It is interesting to note a remnant of this truth in the secular "proverb" "*The enemy of my enemy is my friend*." ([Wikipedia](#))

Max Anders writes that...

Israel used swords of bronze well into the time of David, since the Philistines alone knew the secret of forging swords from iron. In fact, when Jonathan gave David his sword (1 Sam. 18:4), he gave him a great gift because in all Israel only the king and his son had swords and spears of iron. (Holman Old Testament Commentary)

The Wycliffe Bible Commentary notes the record of...

the exchange of armor between Glaucus and Diomedes when they met before Troy and thus confirmed the pledge of old family friendship (Homer The Iliad VI. 230).

Why was this aspect of their covenant so significant at this particular time in David's life?

David's life was in danger. As Jehovah prospered David (1Sa 18:5, 14, 15) Saul progressively became angry (1Sa 18:8), suspicious (1Sa 18:9), fearful (1Sa 18:12) and full of dread (1Sa 18:15) toward David finally culminating in his desire to "put David to death" (1Sa 19:1)

How binding is the covenant between Jonathan and David according to 1Sa 19:1, 2, 3, 4, 5? Specifically how does the loyalty to one's covenant partner compare with family loyalty?

Jonathan reassures David he is committed to his safety and he proves it by interceding with his father King Saul which temporarily caused Saul to renege on his desire to put David to death. Clearly loyalty to one's covenant partner takes precedence over loyalty even to one's own family!

How do we see the binding nature of covenant and the putting of the interests of the covenant partner above personal and family interests in 1Sa 20:1,2,3,4,5,6,7, 9, 10, 11, 12?

Background: In 1Samuel 20 David and Jonathan work out a plan to find out whether Saul is really out to kill him. We see Jonathan honoring his commitment to David and we see how covenant is a sacred pledge to defend one another.

Jonathan commits to David "What you say I will do for you". David asked Jonathan to "deal kindly (*hesed*) with your servant" in view of the fact that he had "brought (David) into a covenant of the LORD" with him. (1Sa 20:8) Jonathan reaffirms he will tell David of any evil his father plans against him (1Sa 20:9) Jonathan invokes an oath in (1Sa 20:12NIV) "By the LORD, the God of Israel", stating that he will relate any plot by his father to kill David. Thus again we see how solemn and binding Jonathan considered their covenant.

Note that both David (1Sa 20:8) and Jonathan (1Sa 20:14, 15) appeal to the Hebrew concept of **lovingkindness** (*hesed*), the loyal steadfast love which in the OT is frequently associated with covenant.

Lovingkindness (02617)(*Hesed/Chesed/Heced* [see word study]) is the idea of faithful love in action and often in the OT refers

to God's lovingkindness expressed in His covenant relationship with Israel (His "loyal love" to His "Wife" Israel [cp Hos 2:18, 19, 20-see **note**, Is 54:5, Je 31:32] = His "loyalty to covenant"). God's **hesed** His denotes persistent and unconditional tenderness, kindness, and mercy, a relationship in which He seeks after man with love and mercy (cp God immediately seeking man Ge 3:9, who was immediately hiding Ge 3:8 trying to cover their shame Ge 3:7 - contrast God's lovingkindness manifest by spilling blood to provide skins to cover their shame! Ge 3:21). **Hesed** expresses both God's loyalty to His covenant and His love for His people along with a faithfulness to keep His promises.

How serious is Jonathan about the covenant with David (1Sa 20:13)?

Jonathan declares in essence may the LORD (Who is the Witness of their covenant) take his life if he does not protect his covenant partner David. Jonathan understood that covenant was serious and binding and that the covenant partners were obligated to defend one another even to the death. The Berkley Version translates it this way

"So may the LORD repay Jonathan and worse, if my father has set his mind to harm you, if I do not let you know so that you can leave in peace."

DOES GOD DEFEND HIS COVENANT PARTNER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

What does Ps 105:8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 ([see notes](#)) teach about God's defense of those in covenant with Him?

God Remembered His covenant (Ps 105:8)! The basis for His defense was His covenant with Abraham which is forever, everlasting (Ps 105:9, 10). Based on this God, Israel's covenant defender, "permitted no man to oppress (Hebrew = abuse of power or authority, trampling or crushing those of lower social status) and reproved kings for their sakes." (Ps 105:14)

Explanatory Note: God was in covenant with Israel and as they moved, God put a shield of protection around them to protect them from their enemies (cf Nu 21:33, 34, 35). God did not remove His shield of protection as long as Israel walked in obedience to the covenant. (cf "the blessing and the curse" in Dt 30:19 - see Dt 28:1ff, Dt 29:1ff, Dt 30:1ff) When Israel was disobedient, God lifted His shield of protection and let her enemies afflict and chastise her in order to bring her to her to confession and repentance (see Daniel's great prayer Da 9:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19- **see notes**).

Application: As believers in Jesus Christ, we are in covenant with God. How do we treat God's covenant children? Do we remember that they are also in covenant with God? Do we choose "not touch God's anointed ones" (Ps 105:15)? Or do we fight with God's Covenant partners?

Beware, because if we do, God is bound to come to the aid of His Covenant partners! Chew on that thought the next time you think about demeaning, denigrating or otherwise "touching" one of God's "**anointed** ones". 1Sa 26:6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 records the story of David taking King Saul's spear and water jug while Saul was sound asleep. Clearly David had an opportunity to kill Saul (who was seeking to kill David) but but would not touch God's **anointed**, declaring "The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD'S anointed".

Our God, Our Help in Ages Past

by Isaac Watts

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure.

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,

Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S

Let's look at another example of God defending those with whom He is in covenant...

In one of many examples of God's defense of His people with whom He was in covenant note that when the Moabites and Ammonites came against Judah, [King Jehoshaphat](#), (one of the godly kings of the Southern Division) was afraid and this prompted him to respond by seeking his **Covenant Defender**. This truth alone is worth remembering the next time we sense an impending attack, especially an attack because of our faith in Christ. Scripture records that...

Jehoshaphat was afraid and turned his attention to seek the LORD; and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah...and he said, "**O LORD, the God of our fathers** (this description appeals to the covenant Jehovah had cut with their "fathers", Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), art Thou not God in the heavens? And art Thou not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Thy hand so that no one can stand against Thee...Should evil come upon us, the sword, or judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before Thee (for Thy name is in this house) and cry to Thee in our distress, and Thou wilt hear and deliver us...O our God, wilt Thou not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on Thee." (2Chr 20:3, 4, 5,6, 7, 8, 9, 10,11, 12)

In response to the King's plea to **Jehovah**, Israel's Covenant Defender, sent an answer via His prophet Jahaziel who declared...

Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for **the battle is not yours but God's** (This is "covenant language" - the battle is not yours but your Covenant Partner's battle!)...You need not fight in this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the LORD **on your behalf**, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for **the LORD** (your Covenant Defender) **is with you**." (2Chr 20:15, 16, 17)

THOUGHT: Can you see the personal application? We are in Covenant with the living God. He is our Protector. We do not have to defend ourselves. We do not take vengeance on anyone for what they do to us. We simply put on His garment and He will our Avenger. You can mark it down. Now this does not mean we will never be harmed or never go through valleys. But God will avenge His people because as discussed below, He has an eternal perspective regarding his perfect justice and vengeance. May God's Spirit grant us grace to rest in the sufficiency of the truth that we have a Covenant Defender in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

Second Chronicles goes on to record that the Israelites sent a **choir** to meet the enemy! (Read this account in 2Chr 20:18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 -- As an aside remember that "*God inhabits the praises of His people*" Ps 22:3KJV-[note](#)). God confused their enemy so that they killed themselves! God acted just as He said He would. And He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow (He 13:8-note). His promise are yea and amen in Christ our Covenant Partner (2Cor 1:19-20KJV)! **Hallelujah!**

God defended His people and destroyed the Moabite and Ammonite armies. This is one of many Old Testament examples in which God showed Himself to be Israel's Covenant Defender and Protector.

DOES JESUS DEFEND HIS COVENANT PARTNERS?

What was [Saul](#) (later [Paul](#)) doing to the disciples and the Way in Acts 8:1, 2, 3, 9:1, 2?

Saul was...

- (1) Agreed with putting Stephen (filled with Spirit, grace, power Ac 6:3, 5, 8, 7:55) to death
- (2) Ravaging the church (Ac 8:3)
- (3) Putting Christians in prison (Ac 8:3)

(4) Breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord (Ac 9:1)

Explanatory note: The fact that Stephen was stoned to "sleep" does not mean God was not fulfilling His obligations as Stephen's Covenant Defender. As discussed below God is responsible to protect us and He does unless it serves a higher purpose for us not to be delivered. Stephen ultimately was delivered into the presence of the Lord, a far better deliverance! And only eternity will reveal the impact (the higher purpose) that Stephen's martyrdom had on the heart of Saul! (see Acts 7:58, 59, 60)

Who did Saul encounter on the road to Damascus and what is His question(Acts 9:3, 4, 5, 6, 7)?

Jesus...

And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?**" And he said, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And He said, "**I am Jesus whom you are persecuting**, but rise, and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do." And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one.

Comment: Saul encountered Jesus - notice that Saul was not seeking Jesus, but Jesus was seeking Saul! Note also that Jesus did not ask Saul "Why are you persecuting **Stephen** or the **disciples**...but **Me**"? When a person is in covenant with the living God and someone comes against that person they are also coming against that person's covenant partner, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is a God who stands to defend His covenant people who have entered into His covenant by faith.

Where was Jesus? What is the implication of the question He asked Saul?

Jesus was in heaven and yet was still Saul of persecuting Him through his persecution of **His covenant partners** who now wore **His robe** and possessed **His armor**. As the result of the exchange of identities, when Saul persecuted disciples of Jesus, He was persecuting their Covenant Partner, the Lord Jesus Christ! To persecute the members of His body, the church, is to persecute Jesus the covenant Head. And because of the New Covenant in His blood, He is obligated to defend those in covenant with Him.

Rightly did the hymnwriter **Johann H Schroder** make the plea...

Help Us, O Jesus, Thou Mighty Defender

Help us, O Jesus, Thou mighty **Defender**,
Help when the forces of evil appear;
Help us to battle and never surrender,
Help us to conquer, and drive away fear;
Satan is cunning, the prince of deceivers,
Bringing disaster to many believers.

Help us, O Jesus, in hours of temptation,
When both our faith and our courage are weak;
Teach us to look to the sign of salvation,
And near Thy cross a new armor to seek;
Then we shall conquer, if Thou wilt befriend us,
Thou wilt prevail and our faith will defend us.

Help us, O Jesus, when death shall spread terror,
And our poor eyes are too feeble to see;
Cleanse us and purge us from sin and from error;
That we may blindly in faith cling to Thee;
Help us, O Jesus, we conquer in dying,
Unto the last on Thy mercy relying.

R Kent Hughes writes that **Paul...**

now understood the spiritual **unity** between the Savior and the saints. ([Hughes, R. K. Acts: The Church Afire. Preaching the Word. Crossway Books](#))

John MacArthur concludes that...

Our Lord's words "**Why are you persecuting Me?**" reflect the inseparable link between Himself, as head of the body, and its members. No blow struck on earth goes unfelt in heaven by our sympathetic High Priest (Heb 2:18-note, Heb 4:15-note). By persecuting Christians, Saul inflicted blows directly on their Lord. ([MacArthur, J: Acts 1-12; Acts 13-28 Moody Press](#))

Stanley Toussaint comments that...

The reference to **Me** (Acts 9:4) gave Saul his first glimpse into the great doctrine of Christians being ***in Christ*** (**Ed**: See notes on the truth of "**in Christ**"). ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor](#)) (Bolding added)

Kistemaker notes that...

Saul was victimizing Christians. However, the Lord told Saul that Jesus and the church are **one**, so that when believers suffer for Christ, both Jesus and his followers endure the pain. ([Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. NT Commentary Set. Baker Book](#)) (Bolding added)

Erwin Lutzer encourages all believers to...

...not think of Christ as so far removed that He is only remotely affected by our personal pain and struggles....Our trials never escape His notice; the heavenly circuits are never overloaded...When His people hurt, Christ hurt. When they felt alienated and rejected, He felt likewise. He is "touched with the feelings of our infirmities."...

[Savonarola](#) gained fame as a preacher in Florence, predicting that a flood of judgment would come upon the city if it did not repent. He attacked the lax, corrupt citizens through fiery preaching and censorship. During the carnival in 1496 he orchestrated "the bonfire of the vanities" a ceremony where people brought their gambling artifacts, lewd books, and cosmetics to be burned. He was excommunicated for refusing to stop preaching against the pope, and later he was tried for heresy and executed. Despite the reversals he experienced, and though the truth did not triumph in his day, before his death he said, "He who believes that Christ rules above, need not fear what happens below!" (**Ed comment**: Beloved, this saint of yore understood the timeless truth of our eternal covenant relationship with Jesus!) (Lutzer, Erwin: Christ Among Other Gods)

Kay Arthur asks...

Have you ever been afraid? Were you afraid your enemies would overwhelm you? Ever been so weak, so void of strength that you couldn't go on? You have a Covenant Partner. He has cut covenant with you. That covenant causes Him to defend you against your enemies; to lend you His strength....(Your Covenant Partner Jesus in essence) says "*I am now bound to defend you from your enemies. So if anyone comes against you...because we are in covenant and covenant is the most solemn binding agreement that can be made between two parties, then I by covenant am bound to defend you from your enemies. I must come to your defense, be your protector.*" Christ...is our Covenant Partner and He is bound to defend us from our enemies.

J Vernon McGee has a pithy personal application from Acts 9:4 commenting that Christ...

may be saying the same thing to some Christians today. Although they profess to know and to love the Lord, He asks, "Why are you persecuting Me?" They would protest, I'm not persecuting You, Lord; I love You!" Then the Lord would answer, "Then why do you criticize Mr. So-and-So so severely? Why are you so opposed to those who are giving out the Word of God today? Why is it that you have become a hindrance instead of a helper?" May I say to you, we must be careful about saying we love Him and then showing our hatred to other believers. It is impossible to talk about loving the Lord while you spend your time trying to destroy the ministry of someone else. That is just blatant, bald, bold hypocrisy. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

John MacArthur makes the interesting observation that...

There is an Old Testament parallel to this truth. Zechariah told the nation of Israel, "He who touches you, touches the apple of [God's] eye (Zech 2:8). **The apple of His eye**" refers to the pupil. God was saying those who persecute Israel are poking their finger in His eye. That is precisely the same kind of relationship Christ has with the church. He is seriously irritated when anyone offends His chosen ones (cf Mt 18:6, 10). (Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World).

What does this teach about those who have entered the New Covenant with Jesus?

Two become one when they enter into covenant. If you "touch" (eg, to harm or injure) the covenant partner, you are "touching" the other partner also because of this mystical but very real identification! Based upon the solemn and binding nature of the New Covenant, Jesus is "obligated" to come to the defense of His covenant partners. Can you begin to understand some of the practical implications of being in covenant with Christ? Do you believe this truth? If you are born again, you can rest assured that Jesus is your Covenant Defender today and forever. **Hallelujah!**

Believers are in Covenant with the living God, Who is our Protector. We are not to take our vengeance beloved but leave that to our

Covenant Partner who is our Avenger. Of course, this truth does not guarantee we will never be harmed or never experience times of persecution. In fact, persecution is one of God's "**promises**"! (2Ti 3:12-note, cp Mt 10:22, 23, 24, 25, Jn 15:19, 20, 21, 17:14, Acts 14:22, Php 1:29-note). But the **oneness** of covenant guarantees that God will avenge wrongs done to us either in this life or in the future time of judgment.

GOD'S PERSPECTIVE REGARDING AVENGING AFFLICTIONS AGAINST BELIEVERS

What was the church at Thessalonica experiencing? (2Th 1:3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)

Persecutions (in the plural!), afflictions (in the plural!), suffering (present tense = continually).

BDAG defines "**persecutions**" as "a program or process designed to harass and oppress."

Afflictions is the picturesque Greek work **thlipsis** which was used in medicine of the pressure of the pulse (allowing one to count the heart beats). It is a pressing together as of grapes. It conveys the idea of being squeezed or placed under pressure or crushed beneath a weight. When, according to the ancient law of England, those who willfully refused to plead guilty, had heavy weights placed on their breasts, and were pressed and crushed to death, this was literally **thlipsis**. **Thlipsis** thus refers not to mild discomfort but to great difficulty.

Morris rightly notes that...

No one likes troubles of this kind, but they may be seen as difficulties to be overcome, as ways of opening up new possibilities. One who sees them in this light glories in them (Ibid)

Martin Luther wrote that...

Whatever virtues tribulation finds us in, it develops more fully. If anyone is carnal, weak, blind, wicked, irascible, haughty, and so forth, tribulation will make him more carnal, weak, blind, wicked and irritable. On the other hand, if one is spiritual, strong, wise, pious, gentle and humble, he will become more spiritual, powerful, wise, pious, gentle and humble.

In his letter to the suffering saints at Thessalonica Paul writes...

2 Grace to you and peace (interesting! They weren't experiencing external peace but persecutions and yet Paul asks God for peace for them in the midst of their afflictions, which practically means that such a supernatural state is possible from them! Practically, beloved, such a supernatural state is possible for you also dear beleaguered downtrodden covenant partner of the Most High God Who is the same yesterday, today and forever. May you too experience His peace that passes all human understanding even in the midst of the storms you are experiencing, all only possible by hiding in your Covenant Partner Christ Jesus. Amen) from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We ought (literally "owe a debt" - have a strong obligation to) always to give thanks to God for you, brethren, as is only fitting, because your faith is greatly enlarged, and the love of each one of you toward one another grows ever greater;

4 therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance (hupomone) and faith (pistis) in the midst of all your persecutions (diogmos) and afflictions (thlipsis) which you endure (anechomai).

5 This is a plain indication of God's righteous (dikaos) judgment so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering (pascho). (**Comment:** Their enduring the "fires" of persecution proves that their faith is genuine and thus they are "worthy" for the Kingdom. Their endurance does not merit or earn their salvation but proves it is genuine because the only way one could endure such afflictions to the end is by being supernaturally enabled.)

6 For after all it is only just for God to **repay** (antapodidomi) **with affliction** (thlipsis) those who afflict (thlibo) you,

7 and to **give relief to you who are afflicted** and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire (**Second Coming** - see Mt 24:30, 31, 13:41, 42, 25:31, see also Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming),

8 **dealing out retribution** (= vengeance - see ekdikesis) to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. (**Note** that the "definition" of one who has not entered the New Covenant and thereby into intimate communion

with Christ [this is knowing God] does not obey the Gospel. Obedience like perseverance does not save anyone, but it does "prove" or demonstrate that they are saved, because if one is truly born again from above, they are a new creature in the New Covenant and have a new indwelling impetus [the Spirit of Holiness] Who impels them toward holy living - not perfection but certainly in the general direction of heaven rather than living a life generally in the opposite direction. It is this latter group who will experience the vengeance of the Almighty, Holy God).

9 And these **will pay the penalty of eternal destruction** (olethros = not annihilation but a state of utter ruin), away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, (Note the "definition" of "hell" is separation of those created in the image of God from the presence of their Creator - this is a most painful truth regarding hell and serves as strong motivation to share Christ whenever God gives me an opportunity.)

10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled (Beloved - we will not be bored in eternity - to the contrary we will be astonished, struck with wonder and admiration! O, glorious day when we behold His glory face to face. Maranatha! Amen) at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed.

How were they responding to their adverse circumstances?

With perseverance (hupomone) and faith (pistis)

They were enduring (anekhomai) which conveys the idea of holding out in spite of persecution, threats, injury, indifference, or complaints **and not** seeking to retaliate. What must they have known that "enabled" them **not** to retaliate? Did they understand the concept of Covenant Defender? We can't say for certain but it is certainly possible given that their teacher Paul had an up close encounter with the truth that Jesus defends those who are in covenant with Him (Acts 9:5). In that case Jesus defended them by saving Saul the one who was persecuting the church!

What does God promise those who are experience persecution and affliction because they are in covenant with Jesus?

God will **repay with affliction** those who afflicted them. He will **deal out retribution**. Our persecutors will **pay the penalty** of eternal destruction!

What is our Covenant Keeping God's promise to believers who are experiencing fiery trials in this presence evil age?

God **will give relief** to all who are afflicted! Hallelujah!

Does the fact that Jesus is responsible to defend us mean that nothing bad will ever happen in our lives?

No. Obviously that is not the case as these passages clearly explain. What can be counted on is the truth that God keeps all of His covenant promises, although He does so with an **eternal perspective**. Situations may occur in which we think (or feel as if) our Covenant Partner has abandoned us, but the reality is that at that moment, we do not possess God's eternal view of our afflictions. And it may not be until His return that the repayment of affliction against us is paid in full (cp Ro 12:14-note, Ro 12:17-note, Ro 12:18, 19, 20, 21-note).

What our Covenant Partner is reminding us through Paul's letter to the Thessalonians is that there will be "**pay day, some day**". We can count on that, for God is not a man that He should lie (Nu 23:19). We need to let that living and active truth penetrate into our heart (He 4:12-note) and "renew our mind" (Ep 4:23-note), transform our thinking (Ro 12:2-note) and energize holy conduct (= a worthy walk - Ep 4:1-note). And it is this revelation of truth which will counter the lies (cp Jn 8:44, 8:32, 36), those fiery missiles (Eph 6:16-note) that Satan throws at us to create doubt and despair, shouting/whispering imprecations (invocations of evil) like *God doesn't care about you. Look at the suffering He is allowing you to experience. Where is your God now that you need Him? And you're going to trust a God like that?, etc, etc.*" Paul extinguishes these destructive fiery missiles with truth that undergirds our faith and empowers us to live as more than conquerors in and through our Covenant Defender Christ Jesus (Ro 8:37KJV-note). Glory!

THE BATTLE IS THE LORDS: DO YOU BELIEVE IT?

What do you as those who have entered the New Covenant not have to do now that you understand Jesus is your Covenant Defender?

You don't have to defend yourselves anymore. This is radical! Beloved, when you lay hold of (you believe) the divine maxim that the all knowing, all powerful, perfectly just God is your personal Covenant Defender and even better when that truth "gets hold" of you (you obey it and act upon it rather than reacting like you did when you were clothed with Adam), you will find this truth about your

Covenant Defender to be one of the keys to the "victorious Christian life." When you understand and believe and act on the truth that your defense is God's responsibility and not yours, it is liberating. You begin to live in the reality of the truth that **"the battle really is the Lord's!"** This truth is part of what Paul was referring to in Php 4:11 when he said...

When we put on our Covenant Partner's garment of righteousness, we put on His nature, His person and His character, we become a partaker of everything that He is. All that we are for all Christ is! What an incredible transaction! And what does this look like when I am living in concert with my new clothing of Christ? This equates with being filled with His Spirit (Eph 5:18-note), of walking by His Spirit (Gal 5:16-note), of walking in the Light (1Jn 1:7), of abiding in the Vine (Jn 15:5), remembering that apart from our Covenant Partner's sovereign enabling grace we can do absolutely nothing of eternal value. In short, we need to live in the light of the truth that now we no longer have the right to defend or avenge ourselves. We have surrendered our rights to our Covenant Partner (cp 1Co 6:19-note, 1Co 6:20-note), Who is also our Master (cp relationship of a slave = *doulos* to their Master = *kurios*), and He is responsible to defend us. Now we are to conduct ourselves in such a way that we protect His name.

Are you bitter at someone who has done you evil? Many Christians are bitter at others who have done evil, hurtful, sinful things to or against them. You may experienced or currently are in a marriage that is very painful and you are harboring bitterness against your covenant partner (see related study *Covenant As It Relates to Marriage*). You may be bitter toward a coworker, a mother, a father or other relative. What you need to remember is that the sinful attitude of bitterness is the very robe that Jesus Christ wore to the Cross when He became our sin (including the sin of bitterness) substitute (2Co 5:21, 1Pe 2:24-note). Now, when we stand in His robe of righteousness (1Co 1:30), having been made a partaker of His divine nature (2Pe 1:4-note), there is no place for bitterness. We are no longer to seek to defend our self but to trust our Covenant Partner. We are to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, in a way that defends our Covenant Partner's Name. As Peter puts it, those who are in the New Covenant are called to imitate the Covenant Head Who left...

an example (*hupogrammos*) for you to follow (*epakoloutheo*) **in His steps**...and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously (1Pe 2:21-note, 1Pe 2:23-note)

Comment: What divine dynamic do you see in the phrase "kept entrusting Himself to Him Who judges righteously?" Jesus knew that His Father would judge the evil doers righteously and in His perfect timing would (will) deal out retribution which is due His revilers and persecutors. And God promises to do the same thing for those in covenant with His Son! (see preceding discussion on 2Thes 1:2-10)

Wayne Barber observes...

How often in counseling does the embittered party say *"You just don't understand what they have done to me"* I want to say back to them *"But you don't realize that you are just like them. The same hatred in them that has caused you the hurt, is also in you and you want to inflict it back on them. You have forgotten that Jesus bore that ugly robe to the Cross so that now you can put on His robe of righteousness and respond like He would respond."*

A COVENANT PARTNER'S RESPONSE TO PERSECUTION

What is to be our response when we experience persecution from our enemies (Ro 12:14 - note)?

Bless ("eulogize them" - Webster says eulogize = to extol praise highly in speech or writing!) those who persecute you; **ble**ss and **curse** not.

Comment: **Bless** is the Greek word **eulogeo** [word study] from **eu** = good + **lego** = speak. **Present imperative** calls for this to be our habitual action! Literally **eulogeo** means to speak well of! How can I do this? You are probably like me, saying there is no way I can respond like this. I simply can't do it! Good! As **Major Ian Thomas** used to say (the saying below is paraphrased) in reference to living the supernatural, Christ life...

You can't!
He never said you could
but He can
And He always said He would!

To speak well of one who is an adversary (and really mean it as a genuine reflection of one's heart attitude!) is only possible filled with Christ's Spirit, and is not possible by relying on self, for the residual sinful **flesh** will always seek revenge, to "make it

right", to get 'em back!

Curse not is also in the **present imperative** which combined with a "negative" means to "stop an action that is already going on". The implication is that the saints at Rome were responding negatively to persecution. Paul says "Stop cursing them!" Live in the garment of the Christ, not the dirty rotten rags of Adam!

What else are covenant partners commanded to do (Ro 12:17-note, Ro 12:18-note)?

Never pay back evil for evil. Respect what is right. Be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge. Leave room for wrath of God -- see ([Note](#)).

Comment: *Pay back* is in the present tense and in this context conveys the sense of a command. The point is that we are continually never to seek pay back evil! Never ever is the idea! Try to accomplish this instruction in your own strength!

Why do this (Ro 12:19-note)? **Or how can you do this?**

From an intellectual (truth or knowledge) viewpoint, we can do this - Knowing that... Vengeance is God's and He will repay (See [David's OT Example](#)). From a spiritual standpoint we can only do this by yielding to Christ in us, allowing Him to give us both the desire and the power to comply. There is simply no other way. And don't be discouraged if you don't always experience "success", for this is a life long lesson of learning to lean on the Lord and His sufficient strength. (cp Php 4:11, 12-note, Php 4:13-note)

Beloved, you can be absolutely certain that God will repay those who have wounded, hurt, abused, mistreated, or even tried to destroy you. I have personally experienced His protection in a work situation where a co-worker was literally trying to destroy my reputation. I won't say what God did in this situation, but suffice to say "Vengeance was His" in the fullest measure! There are other times His defense has not been so "real time" but I remain fully convinced that the timing of His just retribution is perfect and always has a divine, even eternal, purpose.

How else should we respond to our enemies (Ro 12:20-notes)?

"Feed and **water**" them where both verbs are **present imperative** which are commands calling for this to be our continual, habitual practice! "Heap burning coals" on head. Do not be overcome by evil. Overcome evil with good

How are believers to respond to their enemies in light of the truth that Jesus is our Covenant Defender(Mt 5:44 see notes)?

Love (**present imperative** = continually) your enemies and **pray** (**present imperative** = continually) for those who persecute you.

In sum, we are to respond as Jesus would respond. How? Strengthened by His Spirit, each time you are "tempted" to take revenge, die to self. Remember that a key to living the so-called "victorious" Christian life is living in light of truth that **the battle is the Lord's**.

Comment: **Love** is the verb **agapao** which is not an emotion but a volitional (Spirit enabled) choice of our will. The root is **agape** which is the love of serving with humility, the highest kind of love, the love which is not motivated by superficial appearance, emotional attraction, or sentimental relationship. From all of the descriptions of **agape** love, it is clear that true **agape** love is a sure mark of salvation. **Agape** is unrestricted, unrestrained, and unconditional. **Agape** is a love that denies self for the benefit of the one who receives the love. **Agape** is the love which the Holy Spirit has poured out within the heart of the every New Covenant believer (Ro 5:5-note)

The following phrases summarize how we can carry out Paul's instructions regarding abstaining from revenge and practicing agape love...

**Not Naturally
But Supernaturally!**

**Stop trying.
Start dying!**

**It is Impossible
But it is Him-possible!**

**Death to self.
Dependence on the Spirit.**

Caution: ([click](#)) Since God will defend us and will repay every evil deed, we are to stand firm in this truth but **not** with the attitude that "I'll be kind to you now because I know God will get you later!" Our attitude is to be that of **Stephen** (Acts 7:60) and

of our Lord (putting "on the Lord Jesus Christ") (Lk 23:34) both of whom prayed from their murderers as they themselves were dying!

Another caution in regard to the sayings listed above - These statements **DO NOT** mean that we are to "[Let God and Let God](#)" which is a false teaching (probably originating from the [Keswick Movement](#))! And so, as an example, the phrase "**stop trying**" means stop trying to live the supernatural life in your natural strength, but in dependence on the Spirit. So does this signify you will do nothing? Does this signify you are a "passive participant" in your [progressive sanctification](#)? Of course not! Paul was very clear that while believers are **totally dependent** on the Spirit of Christ to live a supernatural life, we are also **totally responsible** to work out our salvation -- "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out** (command in the present imperative - but even obeying this necessitates the Spirit's enablement described in the next verse) your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for (strategic "term of explanation") it is God who is at work in you, both to will (desire) and to work *power) for His good pleasure. (Php 2:12-13, Php 2:13NLT+).

WHO ARE GOD'S ENEMIES?

What does Jesus say will be true of those in covenant with Him(Jn 15:18, 19, 20, 21)?

John 15:12 (Jesus speaking) This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. 13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. 14 "You are My friends, if you do what I command you....18 "If ("If" = first class condition which signifies that what follows is true) the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 If you were **of** the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not **of** the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 "But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent Me. 22 "If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 "He who hates Me hates My Father also.

Comment: "Friend" is a covenant term. To be a friend of Jesus is to do what He says. And because we are in covenant with Him, His enemies now become our enemies. The world hates us because we are not of the world (Jn 15:19). Believers are now in the world but not of the world. A boat in water is by design. Water (world in a Christian) is disaster. John 3:20 gives another reason the world hates us - the light of Christ in us (especially as we are wearing His garments and living out His life) exposes the deeds of those who do evil. For this reason they hated Jesus and they will hate His covenant partners. And the world will persecute them. (See related **notes** from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount regarding the meaning of salt and light - Mt 5:13-note, Mt 5:14, 15, 16-note).

The Greek word for "**world**" is **kosmos** which in this context describes this present evil man-centered (humanistic) world-system ruled and directed by Satan. John writes that the whole world lies in the hands of the evil one (1Jn 5:19). **Kosmos** is the **world** apart from God and opposed to Him. God called to Himself a covenant people **out** of this **world** to live distinctively different from everyone else on the face of the earth (this idea is the inherent in the root meaning of "holy" or "saint [see study]). That puts them at enmity with the world. Why? The world does not love God. It hates Jesus Christ because the world lies in darkness and in the hands of the evil one.

For completeness note that God's enemies include the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**. The whole world lies in the power of the evil one (1Jn 5:19, cp Acts 26:18, Ep 2:2-note). When Christ cut the New Covenant in His blood, He defeated all three enemies and now in covenant with him they have no power over us except the power we allow them to have. Because of the Cross, we are dead to Sin but alive to God in Christ (Ro 6:11-note), the devil is rendered powerless (Heb 2:14-note) and the evil world system is crucified to us and us to it (Gal 6:14-note). Now believers have the **power to choose** not to befriend the **world** (the flesh or the devil), which is discussed below.

What do believers have to do now?

They must "wear His robe" by being "Salt" to preserve from evil and "Light" to dispel darkness (Which causes world to hate us as explained above)

We are called out of the world to live as Christ lived. We have exchanged robes. We have put on the identity and the character of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so not surprisingly when by the power of His Spirit show forth His, the unrighteousness of the world is condemned. Believers are in the world but not of the world. We are in covenant with Christ and therefore cannot be in covenant with

the world system intractably opposed to God. His disciples are now given the high calling and privilege to be the salt of the earth, a world which is being corrupted by the lusts of deceit. And as salt we are to serve as preservatives from evil (Mt 5:13-note). We are also lights of the world (Mt 5:14, 15, 16-note), and as such are to dispel darkness and expose evil. So it is not surprising that the world hates us (cp 2Ti 3:12-note, Php 1:29-note).

THE BELIEVERS INTERACTION WITH OUR COVENANT PARTNER'S ENEMY

How are we as God's covenant partners to respond to His enemies? (1Jn 2:15, 16, 17)?

Do not love the world (stop loving the world - see explanation below) and Do not love things of the world

Do not love (agapao [word study]) (present imperative + negative = stop doing this) the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever. (1Jn 2:15-note 1Jn 2:16-note 1Jn 2:17-note)

What is it specifically that we are not to love about the world? (1Jn 2:15, 16, 17)?

Lusts of the flesh, Lusts of the eyes, Boastful pride of life.

Why else should we not love these things (1Jn 2:17-note)?

The world is passing away, even its lusts.

What does James teach about taking on God's enemies (Jas 4:4-note)?

Don't be friends with the world

You **adulteresses** (Greek word moichalis = one unfaithful to marriage vows. Figuratively as in this verse of one who is unfaithful toward God as an adulteress is unfaithful toward her husband. In the Greek OT it is used mainly of those who forsook God for idols!) Don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity against God. Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy with God. (Jas 4:4-note)

The **Amplified Version** of James 4:4 is even more direct:

You [are like] unfaithful wives [having illicit love affairs with the world and breaking your marriage vow to God]! Do you not know that being the world's friend is being God's enemy? So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes his stand as an enemy of God.

Why not be friends of the world?

We would be adulteresses and friendship with the world is hostility toward God. Because of covenant we are obligated to defend God against His enemy the world. We do that by not becoming bound to the world, not loving the world, not becoming friends of the world.

When we become friends with the world while waiting for the heavenly bridegroom to come we are acting like a **harlot**. Paul picks up on this picture of those who are in covenant with Christ, betrothed to Him as our Bridegroom and we as His bride forever, writing...

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I **betrothed** (Greek = **harmozo** = from the noun meaning "joint" and so to fitly join together) you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin." (2Cor 11:2)

The Biblical concept of **betrothal** unlike our modern idea of engagement was a much more serious matter and was essentially analogous to a **covenant**. To break that pre-nuptial covenant, a bill of divorcement was required. If impurity (any unfaithfulness was considered adultery) was found in the bride, then the bride could actually be put to death. Paul is acting like a Jewish father who is giving his daughter, the Corinthian believers (and by analogy all believers), to their bridegroom, Christ. **Betrothal** lasted for about twelve months, during which the home was to be prepared by the groom, and the wedding clothes would be prepared by the bride. In summary, as those in who are in covenant and betrothed to Jesus Christ, we should hate our Bridegroom's enemies and so keep ourselves

unstained (literally without spot or blemish...on our "bright, fine linen" wedding gowns, the new clothes we are in by virtue of our betrothal to Christ) by the world. (James 1:27-note)

Since the **world** is God's enemy, we must understand that we are understand that even though we are **in** the world we must consciously, constantly make decisions that reflect our separation from the world. Paul addressed this truth in his letter to the Corinthians writing...

Do not be bound together (present imperative + negative = stop doing this) with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer (in covenant with Christ) in common with an unbeliever (not in covenant with Christ)? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. 17 "Therefore, **COME OUT** (aorist imperative = Command to do this now! Don't delay! It's urgent!) FROM THEIR MIDST (Ed: The midst of God's enemies!) AND **BE SEPARATE** (aorist imperative) ," says the Lord. "AND **DO NOT TOUCH** (present imperative = with the negative this means "Stop touching that which is unclean!") WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty. 2Co 7:1 Therefore (term of conclusion), having these promises (**What promises?** preceding context), beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (**How important is a healthy, reverential fear of God in motivating us to continually choose for God and not for His enemy?** see also 1Pe 1:17-note). (2Cor 6:14-18, 2Co 7:1-note on 7:1)

What is the message?

When we live like Christ, empowered by His Spirit, we will feel out of step with the **world** and will continually be tempted to stand with one foot in the world and one foot in Christianity which is another way to "spell" compromise and which creates great anxiety. Such compromise reflects a divided loyalty, when in the New Covenant our loyalty is to be continually directed to our covenant partner, Jesus. We will continually be tempted to become friends (remembering "friend" is a "covenant term") with this evil **world system** so that it might be "easier" to live in the midst of their darkness and the world's ever present anti-god attitude and actions. The temptation will continually be to compromise our walk (and our witness), but, whenever that temptation comes, we are to gird our minds for action, consciously, intentionally recalling the truth that the **world** (irregardless of how soft, sensual or seductive it might sound and appear) is our Covenant Partner's mortal enemy and therefore is also our mortal enemy because of our solemn, binding covenant with Christ our **Friend**. When we **stand on truth**, we are enabled by our Covenant Partner to **stand against the lies** of the world and it's bitter enmity toward us. Jesus alluded to the danger of a divided heart teaching that...

No one (Greek word = not relatively no one but absolutely no one - no exceptions to this principle) can serve (douleuo) two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one (antechomai) and despise (kataphroneo) the other. You (absolutely) cannot serve God and mammon ("the god of materialism"). (Mt 6:24-note)

O grant that nothing in my soul
May dwell but Thy pure love alone;
O may Thy love possess me whole,
My Joy, my Treasure and my Crown
Strange flames far from my heart remove;
My every act, word, thought be love.

John Wesley

ASK YOURSELF...

**Are there some ways I have been siding with God's enemies
and therefore siding against God, my Covenant Partner?**

THE BELT: SYMBOLIC OF STRENGTH

What is the symbolism of Jonathan giving his belt to David? (1Sa 18:4)

In the ancient world the **belt** (Hebrew = hagora) **may** have been a symbol of a man's strength so that Jonathan may have been symbolically giving his "strength" to his covenant partner. While this is a somewhat speculative conclusion, this Hebrew word and its cognates are often used in a military context.

For example, the related word **chagora** is used in a military context in...

2Samuel 20:8 When they were at the large stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Now Joab was dressed in his military attire, and over it was a **belt** with a sword in its sheath fastened at his waist; and as he went forward, it fell out.

The related verb form **chagar** is used of the girding on of a sword...

And David **girded** his sword over his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested them. So David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." And David took them off. (1Sa 17:39)

Gird Thy sword on Thy thigh, O Mighty One, In Thy splendor and Thy majesty! (Ps 45:3^{[note](#)})

Baker comments on the **belt**...

was a valuable and desirable part of a soldier's military uniform (2Sa 18:11). To stain or to put the blood of battle on one's belt was to be guilty of violent bloodshed (1Ki 2:5). To put on a military belt was to prepare for war (2Ki 3:21).

Adam Clarke comments that the...

The **military belt** was the chief ornament of a soldier, and was highly prized in all ancient nations; it was also a rich present from one chieftain to another. Jonathan gave his to David, as the highest pledge of his esteem and perpetual friendship, 1Sa 18:4. And Ajax gave his to Hector, as a token of the highest respect.—Homer Il. vii., verse 305.

While one needs to be cautious in concluding too much from this aspect of the covenant ritual, we should not let that distract us from the truth of that covenant with God provides a "Partner" who is willing to give us His strength in exchange for our weakness as discussed below.

OUR COVENANT PARTNER'S STRENGTH:

(1) ISAIAH 40:31

Premise - With the omnipotent God as covenant partner, His partners have access to His inexhaustible strength.

Let us begin by looking at a famous Old Testament passage Isaiah 40:31...

Isaiah 40:27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God"? 28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. 29 He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power. 30 Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, 31 Yet those who **wait** for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

Comment: Note that in context Isaiah is addressing Israel, but the principle taught in verse 31 is applicable to all believers in Christ. The verb "**wait**" has the root meaning of twisting a strand of cord and thus the idea of binding. The OT meaning conveys the idea of waiting patiently, (and looking) expectantly, (and looking) eagerly. Isaiah is calling on Israel and believers in general to wait with steadfast endurance which ultimately is an expression of one's faith or trust in the Covenant Keeping God. This person endures patiently in confident hope that God will decisively act and in this context that He will "**gain**" strength.

"**Gain**" is Hebrew verb ([chalaph](#)) which literally means to change or to renew. In Genesis 35:2 Moses writes "change ([chalaph](#)) your garments" Using the clothing motif as we saw in the Exchange of Robes, the idea is that we are to **put off our weakness** and in exchange receive **God's strength**! The Septuagint (Lxx) translates the Hebrew verb [chalaph](#) with the Greek verb **allasso (word study)** which means to exchange one thing for another. In sum, we are to **exchange our weakness for His strength**, which is implied in Isaiah

What does Isaiah 40:31 teach about what we can expect from our Covenant Partner?

We will gain new strength. There is an exchange our strength for God's strength. (Read [Devotional](#))

See in depth notes on Isaiah 40:31

"Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired" and then explains that He "gives strength to the weary and to him who lacks might he increases power." ([Listen to the Song - Do You Not Know?](#))

What is the result of this strength exchange?

Mount up with wings like eagles (Septuagint of "mount up like eagles" = "they shall **put forth new feathers** like eagles"), run and not get tired, walk and not become weary

What is the condition we need to fulfill?

Wait for the LORD

Note: "**Wait**" is the Hebrew verb ([qavah](#)) which means to "hope for", not with the attitude of "I hope so" but with the idea of patiently looking for or eagerly expecting God to do good, which clearly translates into one's trust and confidence in His promise. This verb invites the trusting reader to look ahead eagerly with confident expectation and also calls for patience, reminding us that the fulfillment of hope lies in the future. Are you *waiting* or *wilting* under the burden you are having to bear? (See **notes**)

Asaph alludes to this same principle writing

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (Ps 78:26 [Note](#))

ANCILLARY NOTES ON ISAIAH 40:31

Warren Wiersbe has an insightful comment on Isaiah 40:31 writing that...

If we trust ourselves, we will faint and fall, but if we **wait** on the Lord by faith, we will receive strength for the journey. The word "**wait**" does not suggest that we sit around and do nothing. It means "**to hope**," to look to God for all that we need (Isaiah 26:3; 30:15). This involves meditating on His character and His promises, praying, and seeking to glorify Him.

The word "**renew**" means "**to exchange**," as **taking off old clothing and putting on new**. We exchange our weakness for His power (cf 2Cor 12:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11). As we wait before Him, God enables us to soar when there is a crisis, to run when the challenges are many, and to walk faithfully in the day-by-day demands of life. It is much harder to walk in the ordinary pressures of life than to fly like the eagle in a time of crisis.

"I can plod," said William Carey, the father of modern missions. "That is my only genius. I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything."

The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. The greatest heroes of faith are not always those who seem to be soaring; often it is they who are patiently plodding. As we **wait on the Lord**, He enables us not only to **fly higher** and **run faster**, but also to **walk longer**. Blessed are the plodders, for they eventually arrive at their destination! ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#)) (Bolding added)

Sir Humphry Davy has a beautiful description of **mounting with wings like eagles** writing that...

"I once saw a very interesting sight above the crags of Ben Nevis. Two parent eagles were teaching their offspring, two young birds, the maneuvers of flight. They began by rising from the top of the mountain in the eye of the sun. It was about mid-day, and bright for the climate. They at first made small circles, and the young birds imitated them. They paused on their wings, waiting till they had made their flight, and then took a second and larger gyration, always rising toward the sun, and enlarging their circle of flight so as to make a gradually ascending spiral. The young ones still and slowly followed, apparently flying better as they mounted; and they continued this sublime exercise, always rising till they became mere points in the air, and the young ones were lost, and afterwards their parents, to our aching sight."

CHANGING OUR STRENGTH

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."-- Isaiah 40:31 (context Is 40:28, 29, 30).

IT IS more than probable that these lines will be read by some who have lost heart. They are fainting beneath the long and arduous strain of life, and ready to give up in despair. It seems as though God had forgotten to be gracious, and in anger had shut up His tender mercies. To all such, Isaiah says: God is not tired: you think He is because you are. Wait upon the Lord, and **change** your strength.

The question is not as to altering your environment, but altering your courage, your power of endurance, your assurance of victory; then, notwithstanding every hindrance and difficulty, you will mount up on wings like eagles, you will run without being weary, you will walk without being faint.

The inevitable order. Mounting up--running--walking! We should have supposed that it should have been walking in the beginnings of religious experience; then the walk breaking into the run; and finally the runner leaping on wings into the azure, like the eagle a black speck against the blue! But experience confirms the prophetic order. Isaiah is right! We mount, we run, we walk!

Let us claim the promise--"They that wait on the Lord shall change their strength." Too often in the past we have depended on the stimulus of services, sermons, conventions which have made the embers glow again on the heart's altar. We have gone back to our homes, to our daily calling, with a new zeal and impulse that has lasted for weeks or months. Then we have found ourselves flagging again; we have run and got weary; we have walked and become faint.

To all such comes the word; if you would once more mount up and run and walk, you must **change your strength**. Time tells on us! Moods influence us! Circumstances impede us! Satan blows cold blasts on our heart-fires and cools them! Sins pile up their debris between us and God! From all these let us turn once more to Jesus and wait on Him.

"My soul, wait thou only upon the Lord,
for my expectation is from Him."

Look not back, but forward!
Not down, but up!
Not in, but out!

Never to your own heart, but keep looking to Jesus, made near and living by the grace of the Holy Spirit. So shall you change your strength, as you wait upon the Lord.

PRAYER Thou knowest, Lord, how often I am sorely let and hindered in running the race which is set before me (Heb 12:1-note). May Thy bountiful grace and mercy come to my help, that I may finish my course with joy, and receive the crown of life. AMEN

(2) 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9,10

What did Paul learn after entreating the Lord to remove the "thorn in his side" three times to no avail(2Cor 12:8, 9, 10)?
(See in depth notes)

God's grace was sufficient for his need.

2Cor 12:8 Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it (the "thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to buffet" Paul, cp Ge 50:20, Ro 8:28) might depart from me. 9 And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for (My) power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

Comment: What Paul is writing now is from the vantage point of 14 years of having experienced the sufficiency of God's grace - See [Chronology of Paul - 2Corinthians written about 58AD](#) - 14 years earlier would be circa Paul's First Missionary Journey, possibly even the time of his stoning in Iconium = Acts 14:19. What looks to us as a "thorn in our flesh" at a moment in time, quite often takes on a different "hue" over time, if we grow in grace rather than allowing ourselves to become bitter rather than "better"!

Note the "key word" in the preceding passage -- What is it? What does Paul mention repeatedly? Have you ever considered your weakness is the starting point for God's grace and strength?

How do we know Paul truly trusted ("waited for") his Covenant Partner (2Co 12:9-note, 2Co 12:10-note)?

I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. I am well content (think well of) with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties (tight situations, no escape), for Christ's sake.

Why?

When I am weak then I am strong - Paul is saying that he exchanged his weakness for Christ's strength!

This "**exchange motif**" is seen many times and in many ways in Scripture. One of the most beautiful pictures is the offer by our Covenant Partner Christ to all of us who are wearied in the work of this Christian life, tired of fighting against the intractable, seemingly overpowering enemies of the world, the flesh and the devil. To all weary workers and warriors, Jesus casts out this eternal offer...

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light. (Mt 11:28, 29, 20-note).

Comment: What can we do? How do we exchange our weariness for His strength? We must come. We must be willing to humble ourselves, to say "I can't" but "You can and you always said you would." It constitutes a conscious choice of our will. It calls for a brokenness, a giving up on our so-called natural "strength" while trying to carry on supernatural work. It calls for a yielding of our pride, a death to self, a dependence on His Spirit, a trust in His Word of promise, that Jesus will do what He says He will do for His covenant partners. **Do we really believe He will give us rest, not just physical rest, but deep soul rest?** If not let us cry out like the father with the ill son who declared **I do believe; help my unbelief.**" (Mk 9:24). And when we practice partaking of these truths in real-time situations (those "divine pop tests" God either allows or sends), we will like Paul learn the secret of contentment and find that His grace is sufficient, enough for our every need. Glory!

2Corinthians 12:9, 10 "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in your weakness." (See in depth commentary on **2Corinthians 12:9; 12:10**)

Jesus is saying to Paul and you dear covenant partner "My grace is enough for you...it will suffice in any and every weakness, insult, distress, persecution or difficulty you might encounter." Peter in [see 1 Peter 4:10-note] explains why God's grace is enough for every situation, every need, every trial, writing that it is "the manifold (variegated) grace of God." God's grace is variegated so that whatever "color" trial we are facing, God has a hue of grace perfectly matched to our need. **Jehovah Jireh: The LORD Will Provide** is His name, the God Who provides. Solomon prayed...

And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near to the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, **as each day requires.** (1Kings 8:59)

THE TWO SUFFICIENTS

Evil shall pass with the day that brought it,
As the sea is stayed by the barrier land;
When the Giver of Good shall say, "No farther,"
And bid the foeman restrain his hand;
But the grace of the Lord outstays the evil,
Outlasts the darkness, outruns the morn,
Outwatches the stars in their nightly vigil,
And the foe that returns with the day re-born,
As he left it unwearied, shall find it unworn.
--Annie Johnson Flint (click for more poems)

What is the lesson we need to learn (and re-learn)? Is it not to learn to thank God for whatever we are experiencing. He is **El Elyon: Most High God - Sovereign Over All** and whoever dwells in Him will abide in the shadow of the Almighty, El Shaddai (Psalm 91:1-note). And that knowledge is enough for any contingency.

Paul was afflicted with a thorn in the flesh (whatever that was is not important...it "pricked" him in some way and afflicted him - note

at this time he had been afflicted 14 years, most of his time in NT ministry! 2Co 12:2 - So how was Paul able to minister so powerfully for the Lord? Do you think the "thorny experience" had anything to do with it?) and he asked God to remove it (3x - cp 2Co 12:7, 8) and Jesus told him

'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' (2Co 12:9note)

We would not have known this truth if Paul had not persevered in the midst of the furnace. Praise the Lord. The Lord more uses our weakness more than our strength: our strength is often His rival; our weakness, His servant, drawing on His resources, and showing forth His glory.

**Man's extremity is God's opportunity;
Man's security is Satan's opportunity.**

God's way is not to take His children out of, but to give them strength to bear up against trial. The story of martyr Thomas Hauker (England, 1555) illustrates this principle in the hour of need. This story is entitled "I Have to Know"

"Thomas", his friend lowered his voice so as not to be heard by the guard. "I have to ask you a favor. I need to know if what the others say about the grace of God is true. Tomorrow, when they burn you at the stake, if the pain is tolerable and your mind is still at peace, lift your hands above your head. Do it right before you die. Thomas I HAVE to know." Thomas Hauker whispered to his friend, "I will." The next morning, Hauker was bound to the stake and the fire was lit. The fire burned a long time, but Hauker remained motionless. His skin was burnt to a crisp and his fingers were gone. Everyone watching supposed he was dead. Suddenly, miraculously, Hauker lifted his hands, still on fire, over his head. He reached them up to the living God & then, with great rejoicing, clapped them together three times. The people there broke into shouts of praise and applause. Hauker's friend had his answer."

Trouble and the **grace to bear it** come in the same package. **Annie Johnson Flint** (see more poems) put it this way...

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;
To added affliction He addeth His mercy,
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace. --Flint

F B Meyer in his devotional **Our Daily Homily** comments on "**When I am weak, then am I strong**" writing...

We need not discuss the nature of Paul's thorn in the flesh. It is enough that he calls it "a stake," as though he had been impaled. It must have, therefore, been very painful. It must also have been physical, because he could not have prayed thrice for the removal of a moral taint, and been refused. It came from Satan, permitted by God, as in the case of Job, to buffet his servant. It is not unlikely that he suffered from weak eyes, or some distressing form of ophthalmia; hence the eagerness of the Galatian converts to give him their eyes (see Galatians 4:15).

God does not take away our thorns, but He communicates sufficient grace. He always answers prayer, though not as we expect. Let the music of these tender words soar unto thee, poor sufferer! "My grace is sufficient even for thee." Sufficient when friends forsake, and foes pursue; sufficient to make thee strong against an infuriated crowd and a tyrannical judge; sufficient for excessive physical exertion and spiritual conflict; sufficient to enable thee to do as much work, and even more, than if health and vigour were not impaired, because the very weakness of our nature is the chosen condition under which God will manifest the strength of his.

Do not sit down before that mistaken marriage, that uncongenial business, that physical weakness, as though thy life must be a failure; but take in large reinforcements of that Divine grace which is given to the weak and to those who have no might. It is clear that Paul had reached such a condition, that it was a matter of deep congratulation to him to be deficient in much that men hold dear, and to have what most men dread. He rejoiced in all that diminished creature-might and strengthened his hold on God.

F B Meyer has the following devotional on 2Cor 12:9 entitled...

GLORYING IN INFIRMITIES!

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."-- 2Corinthians 12:9.

THE APOSTLE seems to have enjoyed wonderful revelations of God. Not once or twice, but often he beheld

things that eye hath not seen, and heard words that ear cannot receive, and God felt it was necessary for him to have a make-weight lest he should be exalted beyond measure (2Cor 12:7).

What the thorn or stake in the flesh was it is impossible to say with certainty. He may have suffered from some distressing form of ophthalmia. We infer this from the eagerness of the Galatian converts to give him their eyes (Gal 4:13, 14, 15, 16, 17), and from his dependence on an amanuensis. His pain made him very conscious of weakness, and very sensitive of infirmity, and kept him near to the majority of those to whom he ministered, who did not live on the mountain heights, but in the valleys, where demons possess and worry the afflicted. Be willing that your visions of Paradise should be transient, and turn your back on the mountain summit, where the glory shines, as our Lord did, in order to minister to souls in anguish (2Co 12:4; Mt 17:14, 15, 16, 17, 18).

On three separate occasions the Apostle besought the Lord for deliverance from his infirmity, and finally received the assurance that though the thorn could not be removed, yet sufficient grace would be given to enable him to do his life-work, and he was more than content. On the one hand, there was the buffeting of this messenger of Satan; but on the other, there were the gains of meekness, humility, and of greater grace than would have been possible if he had not needed it so sorely--and he gladly accepted an infirmity for which there were such abundant compensations.

Do not sit down baffled by your difficulties and infirmities, but run from them to claim Christ's abundant grace and strength, that at the end of life you may have done all that was set you to do, and more, because the greatness of your need made you lean more heavily on His infinite resources. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

PRAYER: Help us, O Lord, to look on the bright side of things; not on the dark cloud, but on Thy rainbow of covenant mercy; not on the stormy waters, but on the face of Jesus; not on what Thou hast taken, or withheld, but on what Thou hast left. Enable us to realise Thine all-sufficiency. AMEN.

(3) PHILIPPIANS 4:11-13

How does Paul explain the exchange of our weakness for Christ's strength in Php 4:11, 12, 13?

I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance. I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me.

Comment: (See [note on meaning of "strengthen"](#)) In short, the confidence to declare Philippians 4:13 is a learning process. Don't give up...keep on keeping on even though you stumble... seek to learn the secret... then you too can say "I can do all things...." (Php 4:11, 12-note, Php 4:13-note)

ANCILLARY NOTES ON Php 4:13

J Vernon McGee recommends some caution when interpreting "**I can do all things**" writing

When Paul says **all things**, does he literally mean *all things*? Does it mean you can go outside and jump over your house? Of course not. Paul says, "**I can do all things in Christ**"—that is, in the context of the will of Christ for your life. Whatever Christ has for you to do, He will supply the power. Whatever gift He gives you, He will give the power to exercise that gift. A gift is a manifestation of the Spirit of God in the life of the believer. As long as you function **in Christ**, you will have power...Now Paul is not saying that we can do **all things**. I can't jump like a grasshopper can jump. When I was in school I was the high jumper, but I can't jump anymore. You see, I can't do all things, but I can do **all things** which God has for me to do from the time He saved me to the time He will take me out of this world. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#)) ([Listen to Dr McGee's Thru the Bible Commentary on this verse](#))

Through Him is literally **in Him** (See related study on **In Christ** and **in Christ Jesus**), a key phrase here and in all of Paul's epistles for it speaks of the believer's New Covenant **union** and **identification** with Christ, so that even as a branch apart from a vine can bear no fruit, even so a believer apart from abiding in the "Vine" can do nothing of lasting import. It is all from Him, through Him and to Him be the glory. Amen. Because Paul had learned the secret of continually abiding in Christ, Paul justifiably felt that it was impossible for life to confront him with anything that he and the Lord could not handle, no matter how severe or how favorable!

Strengthens (1743) (**endunamoo** from **en** = in + **dunamoo** = strengthen) ([Click](#) for detailed discussion of **endunamoo**) means to enable one to do or experience something. [Robertson](#) say it means "to pour power into one" and thus "Paul had strength so long as Jesus kept putting His power into him". **Endunamoo** is in the **present tense** indicating that Christ is **continually** able to infuse or pour in the power we need for the need of the moment. If we experience a "power outage" or "power failure", it is not because of a failure in the Source but a failure to depend on the Source.

Kenneth Wuest and William Barclay both translate **endunamoo** as "**infuse**" an excellent rendering for it gives us a word picture. For example, Webster says that to **infuse** something is to cause it to be permeated with something else (in context of Php 4:13[[note](#)], this would be Christ), the infusion resulting in an alteration which is usually for the better -- this is a good picture of what happens to the believer who is constantly "infused" with Jesus! Ponder another definition of **infuse** as to introduce one thing into another so as to affect it throughout with the implication that there is a pouring in of something that gives new life or significance! Let your life be infused with your the life of your New Covenant partner Jesus! This "infusion of strength" is based upon the believer's living union and identification with Christ, our Life.

Galatians 2:20 (see commentary note) brings out the vital nature of this union for Paul declares

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Paul uses **endunamoo** commanding the Ephesian saints to

be strong (**endunamoo** = present imperative = continually be empowered via union with Christ) in the Lord and in the strength of His might." (Eph 6:10-note)

Paul used **endunamoo** repeatedly in his epistles to Timothy, initially writing

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, Who has **strengthened** me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service (1Ti 1:12).

Knowing the trials that Timothy would experience, **Paul** exhorted him

You therefore, my son, **be strong** (**endunamoo**) (present imperative = be continually empowered; passive voice = so called "divine passive" = God acting on the subject) in the grace (God's enabling power) that is in Christ Jesus." (2Ti 2:1-note)

In the last recorded writing and knowing that his death is imminent, Paul affirms the trustworthiness of the Lord's empowerment, writing to Timothy that

the Lord stood with me (Note: even though everyone else had deserted him! cp Heb 13:5, 6-note), and **strengthened** (**endunamoo**) me, in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth." (2Ti 4:17-note)

From these uses of **endunamoo** note how from from beginning to end Paul expresses his need for and dependence on the empowerment of His Lord.

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Illustration of Php 4:13 (note): **Missionary Dan Crawford** had a difficult task—following in the steps of David Livingstone, the missionary who gave his life in ministering the Word of God in Africa. Crawford didn't have the imposing personality of his famous predecessor, so at first he had trouble winning the loyalty of the tribal people. Even the people in his church back home weren't sure he could carry on the work. With God's help, however, he did a magnificent job. When he died, a well-worn copy of the New Testament was found in his pocket. A poem, evidently his own, handwritten on the inside cover, revealed the secret of his success:

I cannot do it alone!
The waves dash fast and high;
The fog comes chilling around,
And the light goes out in the sky.
But I know that we two shall win in the end—
Jesus and I.

Coward and wayward and weak,
I change with the changing sky,
Today so strong and brave,

Tomorrow too weak to fly.
But He never gives up,
So we two shall win in the end:
Jesus and I.

(Note: Some have attributed this poem to Corrie Ten Boom)

(4) 2TIMOTHY 4:16-18

What was Paul's predicament in (2Ti 4:16-note)?

At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me; may it not be counted against them.

How did Paul experience his Covenant Partner's strength (2Ti 4:17, 18-notes)?

The Lord stood with me, and strengthened me (on the inside), in order that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear and I was delivered out of the lion's mouth.

And our Covenant Partner will stand with us in our hour of trial.

What was Paul attitude toward the ability of his Covenant to protect and defend him (2Ti 4:18-note)?

The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

CAN COVENANT PARTNERS GIVE GOD THEIR "STRENGTH"?

Does Scripture describe any way in which we can give the LORD God Almighty our "strength"?

Jesus declared that the foremost commandment is... 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' 'The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30)

The audience understood what Jesus was calling for, one of the scribes remarking that

"to love God with all... the strength..." "is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." (Mark 12:33)

In sum, we can give the Lord our strength when we **love** Him **supremely**!

><> ><> ><>

The Power Of Two - In G. K. Chesterton's novel *The Man Who Was Thursday*, an undercover policeman infiltrates a lawless group that is dedicated to throwing the world into chaos. He is gripped with fear until he discovers an ally within the group.

Chesterton writes of the policeman's feelings at finding a **friend**

Through all this ordeal his root horror had been isolation, and there are no words to express the abyss between isolation and having one ally. It may be conceded to the mathematicians that four is twice two. But two is not twice one; two is two thousand times one.

When David was being pursued by the jealous and irrational King Saul, he had a friend who risked great danger to stand with him. Jonathan, Saul's own son, pledged his loyalty to David and warned him of his father's intention to kill him (1Sa 20:31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42). Later, when Saul pursued David into the wilderness, Jonathan "arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God" (1Sa 23:16).

What a wonderful gift we give by standing faithfully with a friend in need! There is incredible encouragement and power when two people are allied in life. Whose hand can you strengthen by being a friend today?—David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, help me be the kind of friend

That makes my friend secure;
So he can find new strength and hope
His trials to endure. —D. De Haan

A true friend helps you keep going when you feel like giving up.

Beautiful Garments of strength

F B Meyer has a devotional from **Our Daily Walk** (September 26) which is very apropos to the call to be strong in the Lord's strength not your own strength. Meyer writes in his devotional entitled "Beautiful Garments"...

Awake, awake; put on (literally "clothe yourself in") thy strength; put on thy beautiful garments.-- Isa 52:1.

It is high time to awake out of sleep: let us cast off the works of darkness; let us put on the armour of light.-- Ro 13:11,12-see notes Ro 13:11; 12

PUT ON strength. We have not to purchase it, or generate it by prayers and resolutions, but simply to put it on. As we awake in the early morning hour, and have to pass out into the arena of life, which has so often witnessed failure and defeat, **let us put on the strength and might of the living Christ** (**Note:** our Covenant Partner) He waits to strengthen us with all power, according to the riches of His glory. Do not simply pray to be kept and helped, but put on the whole armour of God. "The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" (Ps 27:1- [Spurgeon's note](#) - see related topic **Fear, How to Handle It**)

Put on beautiful garments. The emblem of the life of the Christian soul is that of the bridegroom or the bride decked with jewels; or a garden filled with beautiful flowers (Isa 61:10-11). We are not only to do right things, but we must do them beautifully; not only to speak the truth, but to speak it in love; not only to give to those who need our help, but to do it graciously and joyously. We must cultivate the bloom of the soul, which is made up of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, generosity. The beauty of the Lord our God must be upon us.

We cannot weave these beautiful robes, or fashion them out of our own nature, but they are all prepared for us in Christ, who is "made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption." Let us wake up out of sleep, put off the works of darkness, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the armour of Light.

PRAYER: Lord of Power and Love! I come, trusting in Thine almighty strength, and Thine infinite goodness, to beg from Thee what is wanting in myself; even that grace which shall help me such to be, and such to do, as Thou wouldst have me. I will trust Thee, in whom is everlasting strength. Be Thou my Helper, to carry me on beyond my own strength, and to make all that I think, and speak, and do, acceptable in Thy sight, through Jesus Christ. AMEN.

DEFENSE OF COVENANT PARTNERS: EXAMPLE OF THE GIBEONITES

God is the Defender of those with whom He has entered into covenant. The godly leader Joshua discovered that being a defender of one's covenant partner is serious business which is what Joshua discovered when he was duped by the men from Gibeon. His orders were to destroy the pagan, idol worshipping nations and not to cut covenant with them (Dt 7:2, Ex 23:23, 31, 32, 33), and yet he foolishly cut covenant with them and by "default" became their "**covenant defender**"! This sad saga is described below and it serves to reiterate that being in covenant with another party obligates one to be the partner's covenant defender. Covenant is solemn, binding and indissoluble!

The binding nature of being a "covenant defender": Joshua & the Men of Gibeon:

In Joshua 9 we see the principle of covenant and how covenant binds one to take on the other covenant partner's enemies. Joshua had entered Canaan which by virtue of God's promise in the Abrahamic Covenant was to be Israel's permanent possession. Joshua strategizes to take defeat the enemies occupying the land with a three-pronged attack. The people in Canaan are trembling because they have heard about the defeat of Jericho by Joshua's army (really by Joshua's God). The iniquity of the Amorites is full and the children of Israel are going in to take the land. It is right that they do so because God is judging the land of Canaan for their sins (cf Genesis 15:16). After they go in there is a group of people, the Gibeonites, who are very much afraid.

Joshua 9:3-27 records this fascinating but sad interlude in Israel's history...

When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, (4) **they also acted craftily** and set out as envoys, and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended, (5) and worn-out and patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and had become crumbled. (6) And they went to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, **make a covenant**." (cut a covenant) (7) And the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you are living within our land; how then shall we **make a covenant** with you?" (8) But they said to Joshua, "We are your servants." Then Joshua said to them, "Who are you, and where do you come from?" (9) And they said to him, "Your servants have come from a very far country (**Note: they are lying**) because of the fame of the LORD your God; for we have heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt, (10) and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was at Ashtaroth. (11) So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants; now then, **make a covenant** with us. (12) "This our bread was warm when we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; but now behold, it is dry and has become crumbled. (**Note: they are deceptive**) (13) And these wineskins which we filled were new, and behold, they are torn; and these our clothes and our sandals are worn out because of the very long journey." (14) So the men of Israel took some of their provisions, and **did not ask for the counsel of the LORD** (**Note: The leaders acted independent of God which is the very essence of all sin. How many times would this verse be appended to our words and actions?! Not only that, but God had clearly commanded Israel not to make a covenant with any of the inhabitants of Canaan (cf Deut 7:2). Instead, they were to drive them out lest their corrupting influences cause them to stumble and worship their idolatrous gods.**) (15) And Joshua made peace with them and **make a covenant** with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation **swore an oath** to them (**Note: the common elements of covenant - peace, swearing of an oath**). (16) And it came about at the end of three days after they had **make a covenant** with them, that they heard that they were neighbors and that they were living within their land.

(17) Then the sons of Israel set out and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon and Chephirah and Beeroth and Kiriath-jearim. (18) And the sons of Israel **did not strike** them because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD the God of Israel (**Note: the solemn, binding nature of covenant, even cut under such questionable circumstances.**) (18) And the whole congregation grumbled against the leaders. (19) But all the leaders said to the whole congregation, "**We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we cannot touch them.** (Note: in fact Israel was now the "covenant defender" of the Gibeonites!) (20) "This we will do to them, even let them live, lest wrath be upon us for the oath which we swore to them." (**Note: The leaders understood the binding nature of their covenant and knew that they dare not break it lest God bring retribution against them.**)

(21) And the leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became hewers of wood and drawers of water for the whole congregation, just as the leaders had spoken to them. (22) Then Joshua called for them and spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you are living within our land? (23) "Now therefore, you are cursed, and you shall never cease being slaves, both hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God." (24) So they answered Joshua and said, "Because it was certainly told your servants that the LORD your God had commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land (**Note: this is "remnant" of covenant, for the unconditional promise of the land of Canaan was given initially to Abraham not Moses**), and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land before you; therefore we feared greatly for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. (25) "And now behold, we are in your hands; do as it seems good and right in your sight to do to us." (26) Thus he did to them, and delivered them from the hands of the sons of Israel, and they did not kill them. (**Note: because of the covenant**) (27) But Joshua made them that day hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place which He would choose.

As we have noted, remnants of truth about covenant were known throughout the peoples of the earth. The Gibeonites knew about **covenant** though they did not know the Covenant Keeping God. And yet even though they were pagans, they knew that covenant was a **solemn, binding agreement**. They knew that if they duped the leaders of Israel into **cutting a covenant** that Israel would be bound to protect them as their covenant partner and would not be able to destroy them as God had decreed.

Did Joshua fulfill his promise to be the covenant defender of Gibeon? When the Gibeonites were attacked by Adoni-zedek the Amorite king of Jerusalem along with 9 other kings, the men of Gibeon appealed to the solemn covenant with Israel, [Joshua 10](#) recording that...

"the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon, gathered together and went up, they with all their armies, and camped by Gibeon and fought against it. Then the men of Gibeon sent word to Joshua to the camp at Gilgal, saying, "Do not abandon your servants (**Note: here they appeal to the binding covenant with Israel that she would be their defender and their enemies would be Israel's enemies**); come up to us quickly and save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites that live in the hill country have assembled against us." So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him and all the valiant warriors. And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have given them into your hands; not one of them shall stand before you." So Joshua came upon them suddenly by marching all night from Gilgal. And the LORD confounded them before Israel, and He slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and pursued them by the way of the ascent of Beth-horon, and struck them as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it came about as they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beth-horon, that the LORD threw large stones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died; there were more who died from the hailstones than those whom the sons of Israel killed with the sword. Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, And O moon in the valley of Aijalon." So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies (**Note: Gibeon's enemies were now Israel's enemies**). Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky, and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day. And there was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel."

Joshua remained true to his covenant vow and experienced a supernatural victory (brought about by Jehovah Israel's Covenant Defender!), relieving the besieged city, pursuing the attackers down the ascent of Beth-horon and winning decisively.

How serious and long-lasting was Israel's covenant with Gibeon?

Saul appears to have broken this covenant, and in a fit of enthusiasm or patriotism to have killed some of the Gibeonites and devised a general massacre of the rest. Israel would reap the consequences of Saul's failure to keep covenant with Gibeon, the consequences of which would include a 3 year famine in Israel and the death of 7 of Saul's descendants at the hands of the Gibeonites. God is serious about keeping covenant. This tragic story is recorded in [2 Samuel 21:1-6](#) where we read as follows...

Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David sought the presence of the LORD. And the LORD said, "It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to death." (**Note: God used the famine to bring Saul's disobedience the attention of David. Note carefully that Saul's sin was "personal" but it was not "private" in the sense that the consequences had broad ranging effects. The same principle applies to our personal sins. Saul must have known that Joshua had promised the Gibeonites immunity from the extermination decreed for the other inhabitants of Canaan but in his unbiblical "zeal" he broke the covenant**) So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them (now the Gibeonites were not of the sons of Israel but of the remnant of the Amorites, and the sons of Israel [make a covenant](#) with them, but **Saul had sought to kill them in his zeal** for the sons of Israel and Judah). Thus David said to the Gibeonites, "What should I do for you? And how can I make atonement that you may bless the inheritance of the LORD?" (**David asked the Gibeonites what they would accept as settlement for the injustice**) Then the Gibeonites said to him, "We have no concern of silver or gold with Saul or his house, nor is it for us to put any man to death in Israel." And he said, "I will do for you whatever you say." So they said to the king, "The man who consumed us, and who planned to exterminate us from remaining within any border of Israel, let seven men from his sons be given to us, and we will hang them before the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD." And the king said, "I will give them."

When David tried to arrange matters with them they stood upon their ancient **covenant** rights, claiming life for life, which is in keeping with the solemn nature of covenant when it is broken by one of the parties. The Gibeonites would accept no "blood money" but instead demanded blood from the family of the slayer of their people. And so seven men of Saul's descendants were given over to the Gibeonites, who hung them "before Jehovah"—as a kind of sacrifice—in Gibeah, Saul's own town! God is serious about keeping covenant!

A three years' famine in the days of David was attributed to God's anger at the crime of Saul in slaying the Gibeonites. He did this "in his zeal for Israel and Judah" who may have fretted at the inconvenience of having the Gibeonites among them. The latter

believed that Saul's desire was to destroy them utterly. This demand David could not resist, and handed over to them seven sons of Saul (2 Sa 21:1 ff).

NOT TAKING REVENGE DAVID'S EXAMPLE

David's Example of not taking his own revenge but leaving room for the wrath of God.

David understood the principle of covenant. David was pursued by Saul who wanted to kill him because of the favor David had attained with the people of Israel as a result of his victories over the Philistines. Saul was filled with anger directed against David and had twice tried to pin David by throwing his spear at him.

1Samuel 26:6-11 records the story in which David took Saul's spear and water jug while Saul slept. He had opportunity to kill him, but would not touch God's anointed.

(**Context:** Saul came down to the wilderness of Ziph when informed by the Ziphites David in hiding. David however had sent out spies and knew that Saul was coming for him.) **1Samuel 26:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11** David then arose and came to the place where Saul had camped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army; and Saul was lying in the circle of the camp, and the people were camped around him. Then David answered and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, saying,

"Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?"

And Abishai said,

"I will go down with you."

So David and Abishai came to the people by night, and behold, Saul lay sleeping inside the circle of the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground at his head; and Abner and the people were lying around him. Then Abishai said to David,

"Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand; now therefore, please let me strike him with the spear to the ground with one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time." (**Note:** Abishai is presenting David the seemingly logical view. "Take your revenge. It's clearly the Lord's will. Why else would you have been able to walk into his camp undisturbed and unnoticed". This is the natural man's view and it does seem quite logical. After all David could have justified his actions reasoning that God had already appointed him to be king and this must be the time the Lord had orchestrated for him to take his throne. But David is not a "natural" man.)

But David said to Abishai,

Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD'S anointed and be without guilt?"

David also said,

As the LORD lives, surely the LORD will strike him, or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down into battle and perish. The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD'S anointed; but now please take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go.

David understood and respected covenant. He knew that the promises of God that he would one day reign as king were Yea and Amen. He knew that if God had anointed him to be the king of Israel, then he would be the king of Israel. David also knew he had a mighty Covenant Defender in whom he would place his very life. For example when he fled from his own son Absalom David acknowledged...

Thou, O LORD, art a **shield** about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head. (Psalm 3:3 -[note](#))

In **Psalm 18** David acknowledges God as His **Covenant Defender**...

1 (For the choir director. A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD, who) (spoke to the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD) (delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And) (he said,) "I love Thee, O LORD, **my** strength." (**Note:** The "Exchange" of strength - David calls Jehovah his strength) ([note](#)) 2 The LORD is my Rock and my Fortress and my Deliverer, My God, my Rock, in Whom I take refuge; My Shield and the Horn of my salvation, my Stronghold. ([note](#)) 3 I call upon the LORD, who is

worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies... [\(note\)](#)

6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears.... [\(note\)](#)

16 He sent from on high, He took me; He drew me out of many waters. [\(note\)](#) 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. [\(note\)](#) 18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my Stay. [\(note\)](#) 19 He brought me forth also into a broad place. He rescued me, because He delighted in me. [\(note\)](#)

In short David sought his Covenant Partner's will above his own will and his own personal ambition. David had presented himself to Jehovah as a living sacrifice (cp Ro 12:1, Ro 6:12, 13) and put the surrender of his rights into practice by choosing to respect what was right in the sight of all men and as much as was possible in him to be at peace with Saul, ever refusing to take his own revenge, instead choosing to leave room for the righteous wrath of his Covenant Keeping God Who promised "Vengeance is Mine. I will repay." The result of David's surrender to and dependence upon God to be his defender and protector was that David's conscience was clear. What a godly example David provides for us to imitate (cp He 6:11, 12-note) enabled by God's Spirit (cp Ep 3:14-note) and His grace (1Co 15:10-note).

"REMNANTS" OF COVENANT

Clay Trumbull in his book [The Blood Covenant](#) has a section subtitled "The Bond of Covenant" in which he describes the obligations of covenant partners in oriental countries...

Blood-covenanting and bracelet-binding seem—as already shown—to be intertwined in the languages of the Oriental progenitors of the race. There are, likewise, indications of this intertwining in the customs of peoples, East and West. For example, in India, where blood-shedding is peculiarly objectionable, the gift and acceptance of a bracelet is an ancient covenant-tie, seemingly akin to blood-brotherhood. Of this custom, an Indian authority says :

"Amongst the rajput races of India the women adopt a brother by the gift of a bracelet. The intrinsic value of such pledges is never looked to, nor is it necessary that it should be costly, though it varies with the means and rank of the donor, and may be of flock silk and spangles, or of gold chains and gems. The acceptance of the pledge is by the 'katchli,' or corset, of simple silk or satin, or gold brocade and pearls. Colonel Tod was the Rakhi-bund Bhai [the Bracelet-bound Brother] of the three queens of Oodipur, Bundi, and Kotch; as also of Chund-Bai, the maiden sister of the Rana, and of many ladies of the chieftains of rank. Though the bracelet may be sent by maidens, it is only on occasions of urgent necessity and danger. The adopted brother may hazard his life in his adopted sister's cause, and yet never receive a mite in reward; for he cannot even see the fair object, who, as brother of her adoption, has constituted him her **defender**." ('Cited from "Tod's Travels, Journal Indian Archipelago, Vol. V., No. 12," in Balfour's Cyc4 of India, s. v., "Brother.)

"The...'Bracelet-bound Brother' feels himself called upon to espouse the cause of the lady from whom he has received the gift, and to **defend her against all her enemies**, whenever she shall demand his assistance.

"Thus, the Great Mogul, Hoomayoon, father of the yet more celebrated Akbar, was in his early life **bound**, and afterwards loyally recognized his **binding**, as "the sworn knight of one of the princesses of Rajasthan, who, according to the custom of her country, secured the sword of the prince in her service by the gift of a bracelet."

When he had a throne of his own to care for, this princess, Kurnivati, being besieged at Cheetore, sent to Hoomayoon, then prosecuting a vigorous campaign in Bengal and he, as in duty bound, "instantly obeyed the summons" and although he was not in season to rescue her, he "evinced his fidelity by avenging the fall of the city." ([Read the Online account in The Blood Covenant](#)) (Bolding added)

In another description of a "**remnant**" of covenant in an ancient culture, Trumbull writes that...

Yet again, this **covenant of blood-friendship** is found in different parts of Borneo. In the days of Mr. Ellis, the Rev. W. Medhurst, a missionary of the London Missionary Society, in Java, described it, in reporting a visit

made to the Dayaks of Borneo, by one of his assistants, together with a missionary of the Rhenish Missionary Society.'

Telling of the kindly greeting given to these visitors at a place called Golong, he says that the natives wished...

to establish a fraternal agreement with the missionaries, on condition that the latter should teach them the ways of God. The travelers replied, that if the Dayaks became the disciples of Christ, they would be constituted the brethren of Christ without any formal compact. The Dayaks, however, insisted that the travelers should enter into a compact [with them], according to the custom of the country, by means of blood. The missionaries were startled at this, thinking, that the Dayaks meant to murder them, and committed themselves to their Heavenly Father, praying that, whether living or dying, they might lie at the feet of their Saviour. It appears, however, that it is the custom of the Dayaks, when they enter into a covenant, to draw a little blood from the arms of the covenanting parties, and, having mixed it with water, each to drink, in this way, the blood of the other.

"Mr. Barenstein [one of the missionaries] having consented [for both] to the ceremony, they all took off their coats, and two officers came forward with small knives, to take a little **blood** out of the arm of each of them [the two missionaries and two Dayak chiefs]. **This being mixed together in four glasses of water, they drank**, severally, each from the glass of the other; after which they **joined hands** and **kissed**. The people then came forward, and made obeisance (bowed) to the missionaries, as the friends of the Dayak King, crying out with loud voices, 'Let us be **friends** and **brethren forever**; and may God help the Dayaks to obtain the knowledge of God from the missionaries!' The two chiefs then said, 'Brethren, **be not afraid to dwell with us**; for **we will do you no harm**; and **if others wish to hurt you, we will defend you with our life's blood**, and **die ourselves ere you be slain**. **God be witness**, and this **whole assembly be witness, that this is true**!' Whereupon the whole company shouted, Balaak! or "Good!" "Be it so." "

Yet another method of observing this rite, is re-ported from among the Kayans of Borneo—quite a different people from the Dayaks. Its description is from the narrative of Mr. Spenser St. John, as follows:

Singauding [a Kayan chief] sent on board to request me to become his brother, by going through the sacred custom of imbibing each other's blood. I say imbibing, because it is either mixed with water and drunk, or else is placed within a native cigar, and drawn in with the smoke. I agreed to do so, and the following day was fixed for the ceremony. It is called Rorbiang by the Kayans; Bersabibah, by the Borneans [the Dayaks]. I landed with our party of Malays, and after a preliminary talk, to allow the population to assemble, the affair commenced. . . . Stripping my left arm, Kum Lia took a small piece of wood, shaped like a knife-blade, and, slightly piercing the skin, brought blood to the surface; this he carefully scraped off. Then one of my Malays drew blood in the same way from Singauding; and, a small cigarette being produced, the blood on the wooden blade was spread on the tobacco. A chief then arose, and, walking to an open place, looked forth upon the river, and invoked their god and all the spirits of good and evil to be witness of this tie of brotherhood. The cigarette [blood-stained] was then lighted, and each of us took several puffs [receiving each other's blood by inhalation], and the ceremony was over.

This is a **new method of smoking the "pipe of peace"**—or, the cigarette of inter-union! Borneo, indeed, furnishes many illustrations of primitive customs, both social and religious. ([Read the Online account in The Blood Covenant](#)) (Bolding and color added)

THE BLOOD COVENANT

by H Clay Trumbull

1893

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