

Focus on Baptism

*A Peace Treaty with God
by John Hendee*



Chapel Bellavista

*A chapel with a beautiful view...
a church with a beautiful vision.*

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The Need for Peace

This is not a statement of the value God places on people

Attributes of People

Short of the Ideal

"As it is written: 'There is no one righteous, not even one ...' For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

- Romans 3:10, 23

Consequence:

*"For the wages of sin is **death**."*

- Romans 6:23

Having Broken the Law

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second one is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

- Matthew 22:36-39

Consequence:

*"**Cursed** is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."*

- Galatians 3:10

Spiritually Dead

*"For this son of mine was **dead** and is alive again; he was lost and is found."*

- Luke 15:24

Consequence:

"The truth is, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit."

- John 3:5

Attributes of God

Perfect & Holy

"For the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name."

- Luke 1:49

Lawgiver

"There is only one Lawgiver and Judge."

- James 4:12

Source of Life

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life."

- John 14:6

We cannot get across this chasm on our own.
It is similar to swimmers trying to get to Hawaii from Los Angeles.
Some may be better than others, but ultimately all would fail.

The Cost of Peace

A picture of the worth or value of people to God

“For he longs for all to be saved and to understand this truth; that God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Christ Jesus, himself man, is between them to bring them together, by giving his life for all mankind.” - 1 Timothy 2:4,6

• **Short of the Ideal**
Death!

*“The law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us ... **God destroyed sin’s control over us** by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.”*
- Romans 8:3

• **Perfect & Holy**

• **Having Broken the Law**
Curse!

*“**Christ redeemed us from the curse** of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’” (as Jesus was hung on a wooden cross)*
- Galatians 3:13

• **Lawgiver**

• **Spiritually Dead**
No Entrance!

*“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, **made us alive** with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions - it is by grace that you have been saved.”*
- Ephesians 2:4, 5

• **Source of Life**

*“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ **died for the ungodly.**”*
- Romans 5:6

Mercy = Not getting
what you deserve

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”
- Ephesians 2:13

Grace = Getting
what you do not

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”
- Romans 8:1

deserve

The Offer of Peace

Peace with God comes through entering a Covenant with Him

What is a Covenant?

A COVENANT = agreement, treaty, will, testament

A COVENANT has at least three parts to it:

Parties = whom the covenant is between: God and people.

Terms = what people agree to do for God in entering the agreement.

Promises = what God promises to do for people in entering the agreement.

Contracts –vs– Covenants

You sign a contract to advance your own best interest.

Unlike a contract, a covenant is a peace treaty entered into by two parties as each agrees to advance the best interest of the other party.

The Bible is a record of the covenants God has offered to people to advance their best interest.

A covenant between God and Noah:

“But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark - you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you.”

- Genesis 6:18

A Covenant between God and Abraham:

“Then the LORD told Abram, “Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s house, and go to the land that I will show you. I will cause you to become the father of a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and I will make you a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. All the families of the earth will be blessed through you.”

- Genesis 12:1-3

A Covenant between God and King David:

“And now the LORD declares that he will build a house for you—a dynasty of kings! For when you die, I will raise up one of your descendants, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son.”

- 2 Samuel 7:11-14

The prophecy of the Covenant with Christ:

“The day will come,” says the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,” says the LORD.

“But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day,” says the LORD. “I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their family, saying, ‘You should know the LORD.’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will already know me,” says the LORD. “And I will forgive their wickedness and will never again remember their sins.”

- Jeremiah 31:31-34

Peace with God today is obtained through a Covenant relationship - the New Covenant.

“But our High Priest (Jesus) has been given a ministry that is far superior to the ministry of those who serve under the old laws, for he is the one who guarantees for us a better covenant with God, based on better promises.”

- Hebrews 8:6

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

- Matthew 26:28

What is the New Covenant?

Parties: God and anyone who gets “into” Christ. It is offered to those of all races, economic groups, and nationalities.

Promises: What does God do to advance my best interest? What does He promise?

Some of God's Promises

- Forgiveness of our sins, Acts 2:38
- Eternal life, John 3:16
- Life to the full, John 10:10
- To have the fruit of the Spirit grow in our lives, Galatians 5:22-23. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If you could see yourself after ten years of growth, you would like it!
- The Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38
- A ministry for God, Ephesians 4:11, 12
- To be with us to the end, Matthew 28:20
- To work in all that happens in our lives to help us become more like Jesus, Romans 8:28; Philippians 1:6
- Power to live for Him, Ephesians 1:19, 20
- Wisdom and truth, James 1:5; John 17:17
- To meet all our “needs,” Philippians 4:19
- To be a part of His church, Ephesians 1:22, 23
- Reward for faithfulness, Galatians 6:7-9
- Renewal, refreshment, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
- Persecution, 2 Timothy 3:12

“He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

- Matthew 5:45

He doesn't promise material prosperity, health, job security, or to be free from suffering and problems.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

- John 16:33

Terms: How can I advance God's best interest? What am I promising? The Bible identifies five purposes for our lives that advance God's best interest.

W Worship Living a life that puts God first. By living a lifestyle pleasing to God, you worship Him.

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” - Romans 12:1-2

F Fellowship Living a life in relationship with other believers, loving and encouraging one another.

“Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” - Romans 12:9-13

D Discipleship Living a life that follows in the footsteps of Jesus.

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son ...” Rom. 8:29

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” - Philippians 2:5

M Ministry Living a life that does good to others in the name of Christ.

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” - Galatians 6:10

E Evangelism Living a life that helps others come into a relationship with the Lord.

“And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.” - 2 Corinthians 5:19-20

The Acceptance of Peace

How to enter the covenant.

FAITH – Saying “Yes” to God with my Mind.

Entering this relationship with God begins with faith (confidence).

Everybody has confidence in something for meaning and purpose in life.		
Money	Clothes	One's self
A job/career	A vehicle	_____
A relationship	An ability	_____

God calls people to put their faith in Him.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

- Hebrews 11:6

“This Good News (Gospel) tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.”

- Romans 1:17

“But now God has shown us a different way to heaven - not by being “good enough” and “trying to keep his laws,” but by a new way though not new, really, for the Scriptures told about it long ago. Now God says he will accept and acquit us - declare us “not guilty” - if we trust Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we can all be saved in this same way, by coming to Christ, no matter who we are or what we have been like.”

- Romans 3:21, 22

Faith is a matter of believing the facts about who Jesus claimed to be and the significance of His death, burial and resurrection.

But simply believing the facts about an historical event doesn't have much significance unless one has some sort of heart-felt commitment to it. It's one thing to say, “Yes I believe that.” But it is another thing to say, “I believe these facts and it has meaning and significance to me!”

If I have faith, my heart will crave God's will to be done in my life and I'm going to do what He wants me to do.

REPENTANCE – Saying “Yes” to God with my Heart

The Bible identifies repentance as a response to one’s faith.

This is one of those religious words that a lot of people have a wrong idea about. They might think of a guy standing on a street corner yelling at people, “Repent or go to hell!”

Repent = making a U - Turn.

= turning from having rejected Jesus as Lord to **submission** to His authority and Lordship.

Repentance involves making a promise to God; it is a statement of intent. It’s like saying, “I do,” in a wedding.

One who repents is not saying, “Lord, as of this moment, I will never let you down, hurt you, fail you, or disappoint you.”

Rather, he or she is saying, “Lord, as of this moment, I will do my best to advance your best interest. It is my intent to love, please, and serve you, to see that your wishes, wants, and commands are fulfilled.”

The importance of **repentance** as a response to one’s faith is made clear by a sermon the Apostle Peter preached that is recorded in Acts Chapter 2.

Acts 2:14 - This is the beginning of Peter’s sermon on the Day of Pentecost (a Jewish holiday) in Jerusalem to a large gathering of Jews. The church was established this day.

Acts 2:36 - Peter’s Conclusion

“Therefore, let all Israel be assured of this, God made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Acts 2:37 - The People’s Response

These words of Peter’s moved them deeply, and they said to him and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Their asking the question reveals that they BELIEVED the message. They asked what their response should be. They knew they had to do more than just mentally agree about Jesus!

Acts 2:38 - Peter’s Answer

“Repent” and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven.”

It has been said that everyone has a “God-shaped void” in their life. It’s common for people to try to fill this void by pursuing earthly things like relationships, wealth, prestige/significance, etc. Repenting, that is, turning your life over to God is the only way that void will be fulfilled.

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”

- Acts 3:19

CONFESSION – Saying “Yes” to God with my Mouth

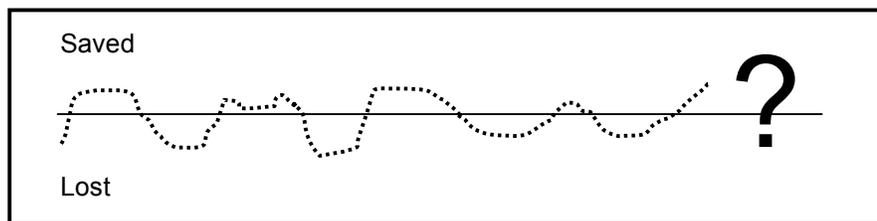
“Confession” is another confusing religious term. In this context it means to acknowledge or proclaim.”

“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.” - Matthew 10:32, 33

“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.” - Romans 10:9, 10

Don’t confuse this with what the Bible says about confessing your sins to God.

Many people have a mistaken idea about God’s forgiveness. They have a concept of “lined religion.”



God asks us to confess our sins.

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”
- 1 John 1:9

Confess means that we agree with God that what we did was sin. Why do we need to do this? To keep the lines open for love and growth in our relationship with Him.

Adam and Eve hid from God when they sinned. Trying to hide from God achieves Satan’s goals. Separated from God we are weak. God wants us close to Him.

It is also good to have a supportive group of loving Christian friends to help you with your spiritual growth in this area.

“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results.”

- James 5:16

We don’t need to repeatedly ask for forgiveness if we are in Christ. To ask continually for forgiveness reveals that we don’t fully understand God’s gift and our covenant relationship with Him. A Christian lives in a continual state of forgiveness. A Christian is not perfect in all their ways, but is forgiven because of their covenant relationship with God.

We do need to confess our sins repeatedly, always planning to change our ways to God’s ways.

The point is there is a difference between **confessing our sins** and asking **God’s forgiveness**.

BAPTISM – Saying “Yes” to God with my Body.

Jesus’ example – He was baptized:

“Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John didn’t want to baptize him. ‘I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,’ he said, ‘so why are you coming to me?’ But Jesus said, ‘It must be done, because we must do everything that is right.’ So then John baptized him.”

- Matthew 3:13-15

Jesus’ last words – He told His disciples:

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”

- Matthew 28:18-20

- It is an action I do that acts as a witness of the promise I’ve made to God.

“... and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God.”

- 1 Peter 3:21

We live in a paper and pencil society. We witness a promise by signing a legal document. In Jesus’ day most people were illiterate and would witness legal issues with an action. For example, the word *pledge* in the verse above is the same word that was used when two businessmen would enter into a deal. The seller made a proposition and the buyer considered it. If he accepted it, he stood and said, “I *pledge* that I am going to live according to the terms of this agreement.” This was done before witnesses, and that pledge finalized the agreement and made it binding.

Baptism is like signing your name on the dotted line of the covenant. No one can say “Yes” to God for me; it is a personal decision I make. That is why we practice what is called “believers baptism.”

- It represents my identification with Jesus in His death, burial and resurrection; guaranteeing my own resurrection.

“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

- Romans 6:3-5

This is why we practice baptism by immersion. In Koiné Greek, the word *baptize* means “to dip, plunge, or immerse.” Historically, the early church practiced only immersion.

“Then the officer commanded the chariot to stop. Both Philip and the officer went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.”

- Acts 8:38

- It is my union with Christ.

“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.”

- Galatians 3:27

- It is also my union with His Spirit. In baptism, we give ourselves to Him, and He gives himself to us through His Spirit.

“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

- Acts 2:38

- It assures me of the cleansing forgiveness of my sins.

“And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on His name.”

- Acts 22:16 Also see Acts 2:38 and 1 Peter 3:21

Marriage and Christianity

A comparison of covenant relationships.

“And now you are ‘married’ so to speak, to the one who rose from the dead.” - Romans 7:4, TLB

	Covenant of Marriage	Covenant with Christ
Entering the Covenant	<p>This relationship begins with a special type of love that says, “I’ve found the one I’ve been looking for.”</p> <p>This love responds by ...</p>	<p>This relationship begins with a faith that says, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”</p> <p>This faith responds by ...</p>
	<p>Deciding to submit myself to the other’s best interest</p> <p>“You first”</p>	<p>Deciding to submit myself to Jesus’ best interest; repentance.</p> <p>“You first”</p>
	<p>Telling others of the decision made.</p>	<p>Telling others of the decision made; public confession.</p>
	<p>Wedding Ceremony</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Giving of an oath of allegiance * An end and a beginning * Leaving a single life for a shared life. 	<p>Baptism is to the covenant of Christ what the wedding is to the covenant of marriage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Giving of an oath of allegiance * An end and a beginning * Leaving a “self” life for a shared life.
Keeping	<p>Now, you can’t just sit back and do nothing! You need to get to know your mate better and better. The depth and quality of your relationship will be determined by the amount of effort exerted at this point.</p>	<p>Now, you can’t just sit back and do nothing! You need to get to know God better and better. The depth and quality of your relationship will be determined by the amount of effort exerted at this point.</p>

Our being at peace with God depends on our entering the New Covenant with Christ.

Final Question:

What is the next step you need to take in your relationship with God?