

# FIVE SMOOTH STONES

*“Smooth Stone Number Two: A Culturally Engaged and Influential Church”*

Rediscovering the Covenant: The Prophetic Message of the Priestly Ministry

*(Deuteronomy 29; Ephesians 1)*

We are (as Paul says to the Ephesians in chapter 6) to put on the BELT of TRUTH, the BREASTPLATE of RIGHTEOUSNESS, SURE FOOTING provided by the GOSPEL of PEACE, the SHIELD of FAITH, the HELMET of SALVATION and the SWORD of the SPIRIT. Why? Paul goes on to say in the latter part of Ephesians 6, verse 19,

*“ ... that words may be given to me in opening my mouth boldly to proclaim the MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL.” (Ephesians 6:19)*

## **Berean Mentality**

*(Acts 17:10-15)*

*The’ brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds. Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.”*

They were More Noble - They were Willing to Receive God’s Word.

They were Examiners - They Compared What they Heard to the OT Scriptures.

The were Protectors - They Guarded Paul's Safety.

The were Fruitful - They continued to grow in their faith.

## REDISCOVERY OF THE COVENANT!

Reminder of what Moses told the people. First of all, notice verse 9. It says.

*"Therefore keep the words of this covenant and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do."*

*(Deuteronomy 29:9)*

*"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like." (James 1:22-24)*

And then, back to Deuteronomy 29, Verse 10 says,

*"You are standing today, all of you, before the Lord your God ... (vs 10)*

Now to verse 12,

*" ... so that you may enter into the sworn covenant of the Lord your God, which the Lord your God is making with you today, 13 that He may establish (affirm) you today as His people, and that He may be your God, as He promised you, and as He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." (Deuteronomy 29:12-13)*

He was giving them an IDENTITY that coincided with His INTENTIONS.

And He goes on in verse 14 to say ...

*"It is not with you alone that I am making this sworn covenant, 15 but with whoever is standing here with us today before the Lord our God, **and with whoever is not here with us today.**" (Vs 14)*

## ❖ A Covenant People of God will Embrace

- The Key Concepts of the Covenant

It really is important for you to embrace ...

- A Transcendent View of God

Understand that God is sovereign and above all things.

- An Authority Based on Representation

A covenant people will not seize authority but will live in such obedience that God's authority flows organically into and through our lives.

- A Society Based on Ethics

Christian ethic is guided by God's revelation in Scripture above other systems of thought as it seeks to love God and love neighbor in every moral and ethical issue.

- A System of Sanctions Based on an Oath

God has put a system of sanctions in place because He is just!

The covenant people of God also embrace ...

- A System of Continuity Based on Something Other than Blood

The issues of generational transference of biblical faith in and devotion to God will only materialize as the local church embraces and obeys God's mandate.

*"Give ear, O my people, to my teaching; incline your ears to the words of my mouth! 2 I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old, 3 things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us. 4 We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might and the wonders that he has done. 5 He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, 6 that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, 7 so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." (Psalms 78:1-7)*

## ❖ A Covenant People of God will Engage

How Can We Be an Effective and Influential Church in the 21st Century?

God's Intentions and Our Identity!

The Covenantal framework in Scripture is a way for us to understand **God's intentions**. For example, there is what is called the ...

- Covenant of Redemption

The Covenant of Redemption is an agreement made before the foundation of the world between God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:3-14 says,

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."*

- Covenant of Works

Then there is the **Covenant of Works**, which God enjoined upon Adam in the Garden, solemnly promising him eternal life if he passed the probationary test in the Garden of Eden.

- Covenant of Grace

The Covenant of Grace, which God first entered into with Adam immediately after the Fall, when he promised to send a Seed of the woman, who would defeat the tempting serpent (Gen. 3:15).

Each covenant seen in Scripture has several observable characteristics.

- Parties (or the people involved),
- Promises (or blessings),
- Conditions (or requirements),
- Penalties (or consequences for violating the covenant), and
- Sacraments (or signs of the covenant).

In the **Covenant of Grace**, God promises a champion to fulfill the broken Covenant of Works as a federal representative of his people, so as to provide life eternal.