

The Trial & Triumph of Faith

SERMON 7

By **Rev. Samuel Rutherford**

SON of David; "O Lord, thou Son of David!" In this compellation, consider why Christ is called the Son of David, never the son of Adam, never the son of Abraham. It is true he is called frequently the Son of man; but never when any prayeth to him: and he is reckoned, in his genealogy, David's son. Abraham's son, the Son of Adam; but the Son of David is his ordinary style, when prayers are directed to him in the days of his flesh. The reasons are 1st. Christ had a special relation to Abraham, being his seed; but more special to David, because the covenant was in a special manner established with David, as a king, and the first king in whose hand the Church, the feeding thereof as God's own flock, was, as God's deposit and pawn laid down. The Lord established the Covenant of Grace with David, and his son Solomon, who was to build him an house; and promised to him an eternal kingdom, and grace, and perseverance in grace, and that by a sure covenant, "the sure mercies of David." (Isa. 55:3; 2 Sam. 7:8-16; 1 Chron. 22:9,10; 2 Sam. 23:5.) "Yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, for [this is] all my salvation and all my desire." "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant." (Psalm 89:3,4.) "Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." (verses 21-37.) Gabriel the angel speaketh the same to Zacharias. (Luke 1:32,33; so, 5:68,69; Acts 13:34-37; and 2:30.) Now, it was necessary, that Christ the Messiah should lineally descend of a king: Abraham was not a king; Adam was not formally a king by covenant, as David was. 2nd, Christ changeth names with David, as he never did with any man. Christ is never called Abraham; but, "David my servant shall be a prince among them." (Ezek. 34:23,24.) "They shall seek the Lord their God, and David their king." (Hos. 3:5.) 3rd, David entered to a typical throne against the heart of Jew and Gentile, (Psalm 2:1,2,) and so did Christ, (Acts 4:25,26;) and did feed the people of God in the midst of many enemies; (Psalm 110:1,2;) and so did Christ. (Acts 2:34-36.) Not so Abraham; he was a befriended man in a strange land.

That which I aim at is this: By the received divinity of the Jews, and of the Gentiles who knew God, Christ was a King by the covenant of grace, and the special party of the new covenant, as was David. This may be made more evident, if we enquire a little in the covenant: (1.) What it is. (2.) Who be the parties. (3.) What promises. (4.) What conditions. (5.) What properties. (6.) Some uses, with all brevity.

The covenant is here a joint and mutual bargain between two, according to which, they promise freely such and such things each to other: hence God and man made up a solemn bargain in Christ. (2.) They both consent. Christ forced not his spouse to marry against her will, nor was God forced to make a covenant. Love and grace was that which led Christ's hand at the pen, in signing the covenant with his blood. (3.) As a cluster of stars maketh a constellation, a body of branches a tree, so a mass of promises concurrereth in this covenant. Wherever Christ is, clusters of divine promises grow out of him, as the motes, rays, and beams from the sun, and a family (as it were), and a society of branches out of a tree. (4.) There is here giving and receiving. Christ offereth and giveth such and such favours; we receive all by believing, except the grace of faith, which cannot be received by faith, but by free favour and grace, without us, in God. Grace, first and last, was all our happiness. If there had not been a Saviour (to borrow that expression), made all of grace, grace itself, we could never have had dealing with God.

2. The parties of the covenant are God and man. Oh, how sweet! that such a potter, and such a former of all things, should come in terms of bargaining with such clay, as is guilty before him! Now, the parties here, on the one part, is GOD; on the other, the Mediator, Christ, and the children that the Lord gave him. Observe, (1.) In the covenant of nature and works, God and his friend Adam were parties contracting; and in the second covenant, God, and his fellow, Christ, and all his, are parties. A covenant of peace cannot be between an enemy and an enemy, as they are such; those who were enemies, must lay down wrath, ere they can enter into covenant. Contraries, as contraries, cannot be united. God being the sole author of this covenant, did lay aside enmity first. Love must first send out love, as fire must cast out heat. It is true, this covenant is made with sinners, (as God made the covenant of nature with Adam, yet righteous,) but an union covenant-wise could never have been, except God had in a manner bowed to us, and grace proved out of measure gracious.

Christ is the party here; so, Christ hath a sevenfold relation. (1.) As he is more than a creature, he is the Covenant itself. (2.) As he dealeth between the parties, he is the Messenger of the covenant. (3.) As he saw and heard, and testifieth all, he is the Witness of the covenant. (4.) As he undertaketh for the parties at variance, he is the Surety of the covenant. (5.) As he standeth between the contrary parties, he is the Mediator of the covenant. (6.) As he signeth the covenant, and closeth all the articles, he is the Testator of the covenant. (7.) As he is a side, or the half of the covenant, he is the Party contracting in the covenant.

For the first: "I gave thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." (Isa. 42:6.) "I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people." (Isa. 49:8.) Christ, God and man, is all the covenant: (1.) Because he is given to fulfill the covenant on both sides. (2.) He is the covenant in the abstract; he is very peace and reconciliation itself, "And this man shall be the peace, when the

Assyrian shall come into our land.” (Mic. 5:5.) As fire is hot for itself, and all things hot for it, and by participation, so thou art in so far in covenant with Christ, as thou hast any thing of Christ. Want Christ, and want peace and the covenant.

2. “The Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger or Angel of the covenant, whom ye delight in.” (Mal. 3:2.) Christ travelleth with tidings between the parties. (1.) He reporteth of God to us, “That it is his Father’s will that we be saved.” (John 6:39.) (2.) Christ reporteth of himself, for it setteth Christ to be a broker for Christ; and Wisdom to cry in the streets, Who will have me? (Prov. 1:20-22; and 9:1-5.) It became the Lord Jesus to praise himself, “I am that Bread of life: I am the Light of the world;” (John 6:48; and 8:12.) “I am the door.” (10:9.) And “I am the good Shepherd.” (verse 11.) (3.) He praiseth his Father, “My Father is the good husbandman.” (John 15.) (4.) He suiteth us in marriage, and commendeth his Father, and our father-in-law. You marry me, dear souls; Oh, but my Father is a great person: “In my Father’s house are many dwelling-places.” (John 14:2.) (5.) He commendeth us to the Father: a messenger making peace will do all this, “They have received thy words, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.” (John 17:18.) “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.” (verse 25.) Ministers cannot speak of Christ and his Father, as he can do himself. Oh, come! hear Christ speak of Christ, and of his Father, and of heaven, for he saw all. O sweet believer! Christ giveth thee a good report in heaven; the Father and the Son are speaking of thee behind backs. A good report in heaven is of much esteem; Christ spake more good of thee than thou art all worth. He telleth over again Ephraim’s prayers behind his back. (Jer. 30:18.) Oh, woe to thee! Christ is telling black tidings of thee in heaven: Such a man will not believe in me; he hateth me, and my cause and my people. Christ cannot lie of any man.

3. Christ is an eye-witness of the covenant, and heard and saw all. The whole covenant was a bloody act, acted upon his person, “Behold I have given him for a witness to the people.” (Isa. 55:4.) “The faithful Witness,” (Rev. 1:5,) “The Amen, the faithful and true Witness.” (3:14.) The covenant saith, (1.) “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost;” (Luke 19:10). Amen, saith Christ, I can witness that to be true. (2.) Christ died and rose again, for sinners. Amen, saith the Witness, “I was dead, and behold I live for evermore. Amen.” (Rev. 1:18.) Christ putteth his seal to that: “This is a true and faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to die for sinners.” I can swear that is true, saith Christ. (3.) The world shall have an end, (saith the covenant,) and time shall be no more. “By him who liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and earth,” saith this angel witness, (Rev. 10:6,) that is most true; “Time shall be no more.” It is a controversy to the world, if eternity be coming. Christ endeth the controversy with an oath. (4.) Christ shall judge the world, and all shall bow to me: This Amen of God saith, that is true, “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me.” (Rom. 14:11.) The covenant of works had a promise: but because it was, (1.) Conditional; (2.) To be broken and done away; it had no oath of God, as

this hath. O doubting soul! thou sayest that thy salvation is not sure. Why? And it is a sworn article of the covenant; thou hast Christ's great oath on it. Alas! God loveth not me. Hast thou the Son? Thou hast a true testimony it is not so; and "A faithful witness will not lie." (Prov. 14:5.) Christ has cause to remember that thou art saved; he beareth the marks of it in his body. Atheist! thou sayest, Who knoweth there is a heaven and a hell? Why, the witness of the covenant saith, I was in both, and saw both.

4. "Christ is the surety of the better covenant;" (Heb. 7:22;) and in this, the Father is surety for Christ. If he undertake for David and Hezekiah, (Psalm 119:122; Isa. 38:14,) far more for his own Son. God hath given his word for Christ that he shall do the work, "Behold my righteous servant shall deal prudently;" (Isa. 52:13,) and "Behold the Lord God will help me." (Isa. 50:9:) And again, the Son is surety to the Father, and the great undertaker, that God shall fulfill his part of the covenant; that the Father shall give a kingdom to his flock, (Luke 12:32; John 6:37-39). (1.) Christ, as surety for us, hath paid a ransom for us; (2.) Giveth a new heart to his fellow-confederates; (3.) And is engaged "to lose none of them," (John 17:12,) "but raise them up at the last day." (John 6:39.) If we could surrender ourselves to Christ's undertaking, and get once a word that he is become good to the Father for us, all were well. Woe to him who is that loose man, as he has not Christ under an act and bond of surety, that he shall keep him to the day of God! We make loose bargains in the behalf of our souls.

5. As Christ standeth between the two parties, he is the great Lord Mediator of the new covenant, (Heb. 12:24). (1.) Substantially. Our text calleth him, Lord, the Son of David. By condition of nature, he hath something of God, as being true God, and something of man, as sharing with us. Hence is he mediator by office, and layeth his hands on both parties, as a day's-man doth: (Job 9:33). In which, he hath a threefold relation: (1.) Of a friend to both; he hath God's heart for man, to be gracious, and satisfy mercy; and a man's heart for God to satisfy justice. (2.) Of a reconciler, to make two one; to bring down God to a treaty of peace; to take him off law, and high demands of law, which sought personal satisfaction of us; and in his body, to bring us up to God by a ransom paid, and by giving us faith, to draw near to his Father. So he may say, Sister and spouse, come up now to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God; and Father; come down to my brethren, my kindred, and flesh. (3.) He is a common servant to both: God's servant, in a hard piece of service as ever was, "Behold my servant," (Isa. 52:13; 42:1,) and "My righteous servant:" (Isa. 53:11:) Yea, and our servant, "He came not to be served, but to serve, and give his life a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28.) Alas! both parties did smite him: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." (Isa. 53:10.) "God spared not his own Son," (Rom. 8:32;) and the other party, his own, smote him: "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, (say they,) and seize on the inheritance." (Matt. 21:38.) This was cold encouragement to sweet Jesus. If it had been referred to us, for shame, we could not have asked God to be a suffering Mediator for us. There is more love in Christ, than angels and men could fathom in their conceptions.

6. The covenant is the testament of our dead friend, Jesus; he died to confirm the testament. (Heb. 9:16,17.) Every blood could not seal the covenant. Christ's blood, as dying, sealed the everlasting covenant. (Heb. 13:20.) It both expiated the sins of the covenanters, and also, brought back the great Shepherd of the sheep from death: for, Christ having once paid blood, and died, it was free to the surety to come out of prison, when he had paid the sum.

7. The seventh relation of Christ maketh way to the parties. And here, Christ cometh under a double consideration; one as God; so he is one with the Father and Spirit, and the Lord and the author of the covenant. (2.) As Mediator; and so, he is on our side of the covenant. Then is the covenant made with Christ, and all his heirs and assignees, principally with Christ, and with Abraham's nature in him; but personally, with believers. [1.] The Scripture saith so, "The promise (or covenant), is made to Abraham and to his seed: he saith not, And to seeds, as of many, but as of one: And to thy seed, which is Christ. (Gal. 3:16.) I grant, Beza, Piscator, and many, expound Christ, for mystical Christ; for, (say they,) it cannot be meant of Christ personally, for so it should fight with the scope of Paul, who proveth the promise of life eternal to be made to all believers. [2.] It should [otherwise] follow, that life eternal is given to Christ only. But, with leave, this is not sure; for the truth is, the promise is neither made to Christ's person singly considered, nor to Christ mystical: for, {1.} The promise is made to Christ, in whom the covenant was confirmed. (verse 17.) {2.} In whom the nations were blessed. (verse 14.) {3.} In whom we "receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (verse 14.) Who was "made a curse for us." (verse 13.) Now, not any of these can agree with Christ mystical. Christ mystical did not confirm the covenant, nor give the Spirit, nor was he made a curse; but Christ mediator, is he to whom the promises are made, and in him, to all his heirs and kindred, not simply in his person, but as a public person and Mediator.

1. Because the Scripture saith, "to Abraham, and to his seed;" that is, Christ, was the covenant made; and these words of the covenant, "He shall cry to me, Thou art my Father, my God," (Psalm 89:26,) are expounded. And again, "I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son;" (Heb. 1:5,) and, "Go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, to my God, and to your God." (John 20:17.) So, Christ the heir of all things, and the second heirs under him, are all but one confederate family.

2. The covenant made with David and his seed, and the fathers, is fulfilled to Christ and his seed. "As concerning that, he raised him up from the dead, no more to see corruption, he said, on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David." (Acts 13:34,35.)

3. As the covenant of nature and works was made with Adam and all his, and there were not two covenants; so here, the better covenant coming in place of

the former, is made with the second Adam and his children. (Rom. 5:18,19; 1 Cor.15,20,etc.)

4. All that serveth to make a covenant are here; [1.] God demandeth of his Son, that he lay down his life; and for his labour he promiseth, "that he shall see his seed, and God shall give him many children," (Isa. 53:10.) [2.] The Son consenteth to lay down his life, and saith, "Here am I to do thy will; thou hast given me a body." This is the formality of a covenant, when Christ consenteth to the condition. Now, this covenant was manifested in time, between the Father and the Son, but it was transacted from eternity. This is comfortable, that the Father and Christ transacted a bargain from eternity, concerning thee, by name. There was communing between the Father and Son, concerning thy heaven: Father, what shall be given to thy justice, to ransom such a one, John, Anna, etc.? And Christ, from eternity, did bind for such a person, that he shall believe in time. The redemption of sinners is not a work of yesterday, or a business of chance; it was well advised, and in infinite wisdom contrived: therefore put not Christ to be challenged of his engagement, by refusing the Gospel. When thou believest, thou makest Christ's word good; he that believeth not, maketh God a liar, though in another sense; and for aught he knoweth, even in this, that he frustrateth Christ's undertaking in the covenant. Men believe the Gospel to be a cunningly devised fable. (2 Pet. 1:16.) The Father and Christ are both in this business; heaven, hell, justice, mercy, souls, and deep wisdom, are all in this rare piece: and yet, men think more of a farm and an ox, (Luke 14:18,19,) and of a pin in the state, or a straw, or of the bones of a crazy livelihood, or a house.

3. Touching the promises, (1.) There is no good thing, but it is ours by free promise, and not by simple donation only. This covenant turns over heaven, earth, sea, land, bread, garments, sleep, the world, life, death, into free grace; yea, it maketh sin and crosses, golden sins, and crosses by accident, through the acts of supernatural providence towards us, (1 Cor. 3:21; Rom. 8:28,) working on, and, about our sins. (2.) All good cometh to us now, not immediately, but through the hands of a free Redeemer; and though he be a man who redeemed us, yet because he is God, there is more of God, and heaven, and free love, in all our good things, than if we received them immediately from God; as ravens have their food from God, without a mediator, and devils have their being only by creature-right, not by covenant-right.

Now, for the promises; they flow from God to us, but all along they fall first on Christ. They are of two sorts, 1st. Some only given to Christ, not to us; as the name above all names to be adored, and set at the right hand of God, is properly promised to Christ. Angels share not with him in this chair. (Phil. 2:9,10; Heb. 1:5,13.) There is promised to Christ, 'a seed, a willing people, the ends of the earth for his inheritance.' (Isa. 53:10; Psalm 110:2; and 2:8,9.) Christ's locks and his hair are bushy and thick, (Cant. 5:11). He is not bald, nor grey-haired; but he hath "a seed like the stars for multitude, that no man can number;" (Rev. 7:9;) but all those hairs grow out of a head of gold, and his offspring of children is as

numerous as the dew of the morning dawning, (Psalm 110:3; Micah. 5:7,) though the devil's locks be more numerous. But it is woeful, that Christ and his children, standing upon Mount Sion, being a huge army, and a pleasant sight, yet thou art none of that numerous house. All round about thee are graced of him, and thou livest and diest in the house; but lay not in the womb of the morning, and shall not abide in the house with the sons.

But there be other promises which go along with Christ and his seed; and these of two sorts, general and special. General, the mother-promise, "I will be your God," is made both to Christ, "He shall cry to me, Thou art my Father, my God;" (Psalm 89:26,) and to us, "I will be your God." (John 20:17; Psalm 22:1.) How sweet is it, that Christ, having God to his Father by eternal birth-right, would take a new covenant-right to God for our cause! Oh! what an honour it is to be within the covenant with the first Heir!

Question. But why are all the promises enclosed in this one, "I will be your God"?

Answer. 1. Because, as Christ hath covenant-right to the promises by this mother-right, that God is his God by covenant, so we first must have God under the relation of a God made ours in a covenant, a Father, a Husband; and then, by law, all his are ours.

2. Christ God is more than grace, pardon, holiness—than created glory, as the husband is more excellent than his marriage-robe, bracelets, rings; and we are to lay our love and faith principally upon the Father and the Son, more than all created graces. The well and fountain of life is of more excellency than the streams; and the tree of life, than the apples of the tree of life. Christ himself, the objective happiness, is far above a created and formal beatitude, which issueth from him, as the whole is more excellent than the part, the cause than the effect.

Special promises are made first to Christ, and then by proportion to us; and they are these,—(1.) God promiseth to grace his Son above his fellows, that he may die and suffer, and merit to us grace answerable to this,—"A new heart, and a new spirit," (Jer. 32:39; Ezek. 36:26,27.) "For out of his fullness we receive, and grace for grace," (John 1:16.) (2.) Justification is promised to Christ, not personal, as if he needed a pardon for sin, but of his cause. There is a cautionary, or surety-righteousness, due to the surety, when he hath paid the debts of the broken man, and cometh out of prison free by law: so he came out of the grave for our righteousness, but having first the righteousness of his cause, in his own person. "He is near that justifieth me," saith Christ; "who shall contend with me?" (Isa. 50:8.) "Justified in the Spirit." (1 Tim. 3:16.) So have we justification of our persons, and remission in his blood, (Eph. 1:7;) and that by covenant, (Jer. 31:32,33). (3.) Victory and dominion are promised to Christ, (Psalm 110:1,2; Psalm 89:21, etc.). He must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet; (1 Cor. 15:25,) and victory over all our enemies is promised to us, (John 16:33, and 14:30; Rom. 6:14,15; Gal. 3:13; Col. 2:14,15.) (4.) The kingdom and glory is

sought by Christ, (John 17:5,) from his Father; then he had a word of promise from his Father for it, (Phil. 2:9,10,) and we have that also. (Luke 12:32; John 17:24; John 14:1-3.) (5.) Christ had a word of promise, when he went down to the grave, as some favourite by law goeth to prison, but hath in his bosom from his prince, a bill of grace, that within three days he shall come out, to enjoy all his wonted honours and court, (Psalm 16:10,11:) so have we the like, (John 11:26, and 6:38,39.)

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