

Kenyon, E. W.The Blood Covenant

6. The Origin of the Blood Covenant

This chapter argues that the Lord's Table grows out of the oldest human covenant: the blood covenant. It traces the covenant back to Eden and points to its practice among tribes worldwide as evidence of a God-given origin. It then explains why men cut the covenant, how they do it, and how unbreakably sacred it is.

Key takeaways

- The blood covenant is the oldest known covenant, likely begun when God covenanted with Adam in Eden.
- Nearly every primitive people practices some form of it — proof it came from God, not just heathen custom.
- Explorers like Stanley and Livingstone witnessed it; understood rightly, it opens the door to preaching Christ.
- Men cut the covenant for three reasons: protection (weak tribe with strong), fair partnership, or deep love (like David and Jonathan).
- The method: exchange gifts, mingle blood in a cup of wine, and drink — becoming blood brothers for life.

- The covenant is held perfectly sacred and is never broken; to break it means death, and it binds descendants for generations.

Passages worth keeping

“The whole redemptive plan swings about the two covenants.”

Frames why this ancient practice matters for understanding salvation.

“It is a perpetual covenant, indissoluble, a covenant that cannot be annulled.”

Captures the unbreakable sacredness that points to God's covenant with us.

How it connects

The exchange of gifts, mingled blood, and shared cup foreshadow the Old and New Covenants — and the cup of the Lord's Table, where Christ's blood binds believers to God.