



Truth For These Times



41. THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

The Bible is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. We can also refer to them as the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. A *covenant is simply: an agreement*. The covenants God's people have entered into with Him are not between equals, but instead God has set out the conditions, and believers have agreed to abide by them.

The New Covenant is a covenant of grace – unmerited favour. It introduces Christ to the sinner as his only hope as a transgressor of the law. Through the New Covenant, which is also referred to as the Everlasting Covenant, the way is open for the forgiveness of sin and the assurance of paradise.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. BUT THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL after those days, says the LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAW IN THEIR MINDS, AND WRITE IT ON THEIR HEARTS; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

So here is the basis of the New Covenant. God's law is no longer written on tables of stone, but on the fleshy tables of the heart or mind. Some have felt that to be under the New Covenant places them under no obligation to keep God's law. This is certainly false reasoning. For here in this text we can see that rather than abolishing the law, God promises to write the law on the heart in order that we might have the power to keep it. To keep the law in our own strength is an impossibility. Our only hope of obedience to God's will is to depend upon His strength. This power over sin He has promised to all those who trust in Him.

Romans 8:6,7 For to be carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because THE CARNAL MIND *is* enmity against God; for IT IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE LAW OF GOD, nor indeed can be.

Only a spiritual mind can comprehend God's law, and only a spiritual life – one under the control of the Holy Spirit, can keep it. Under the New Covenant the mind is renewed and can discern between good and evil. Why? – Because God's law is written on the heart.

THE OLD COVENANT

The Old Covenant was an agreement God made with Israel to demonstrate to them their weakness and their entire dependence upon Christ for power to keep God's law. They promised to obey, and meant it, but discovered that



The new covenant writes God's law on our hearts.

obedience was impossible in human weakness. They needed a power outside of humanity to live a life of victory. When the sinner believes that the blood of Christ covers his or her sins; accepts Christ's righteousness in place of his own; and God's law is written on the heart; he has the power provided by the New Covenant.

Soon after God had led Israel out of Egyptian bondage, he gave them a new revelation of His law on Mt. Sinai, when He proclaimed the 10 commandments. The Israelites were a proud, self-reliant people who did not realise their spiritual poverty. By their experience of failure they were to learn a lesson that was to benefit all future generations – the lesson, that without Christ we can do nothing.

Exodus 19:5-8 “ ‘Now therefore, **IF YOU WILL INDEED OBEY MY VOICE AND KEEP MY COVENANT**, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. Then all the people answered together and said, “**ALL THAT THE LORD HAS SPOKEN WE WILL DO.**” So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.



Ten Commandments written on stone.

The covenant or agreement was that Israel keep the law of God. God's part of the covenant was good and perfectly reliable. The people's part was to obey, but they could not, even though they had promised sincerely to do so. “All that the Lord has spoken we will do” they replied. This was the weakness of the agreement. They promised what they had no strength to perform.

Hebrews 8:6-8 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also **MEDIATOR OF A BETTER COVENANT**, which was established on better promises. For if that first *covenant* had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because **FINDING FAULT WITH THEM**, He says: “Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I **WILL MAKE A NEW COVENANT** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”

Here is stated clearly that the fault of the broken covenant was with the people – not with God. But He promises a better covenant – a new covenant.

Exodus 24:3,7,8 So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “**ALL THE WORDS WHICH THE LORD HAS SAID WE WILL DO.**” Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, “**ALL THAT THE LORD HAS SAID WE WILL DO, AND BE OBEDIENT.**” And Moses took the blood, sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.”

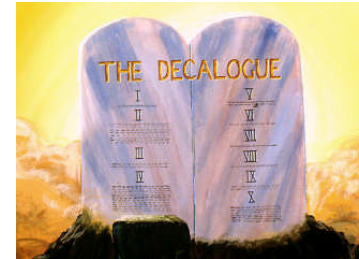


Mt. Sinai.

Three days later God spoke His law in the hearing of the people, and again they repeated the promise and the covenant was written in a book. The blood of an ox ratified the covenant agreement. Before Moses could finish his audience with God and come down from Mt.

Sinai, those people who had made such solemn promises were bowing down to a molten calf and worshipping it.

Exodus 32:7,8 And the LORD said to Moses, “Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. **THEY HAVE MADE THEMSELVES A MOLDED CALF**, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’ ”



We do not obtain righteousness by trying to keep the law.

What was wrong? The people just could not fulfil their part of the agreement. The fault was with them. They were carnally minded, not subject to a spiritual, holy law. They were seeking to establish their own righteousness by their own efforts. In trying to clothe themselves with right doing, they instead found themselves covered with the filthy rags of sin.

The Old Covenant was a covenant of works which Christ, the only Mediator of righteousness had been excluded.

Romans 9:30-32 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, even the **RIGHTEOUSNESS** of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, has not attained to the law of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. Why? **BECAUSE *THEY DID NOT SEEK IT BY FAITH, BUT AS IT WERE, BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW.*** For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

Righteousness cannot be attained by obedience to the law. Even if a person was perfect from this moment onward, he or she still would not be righteous, because he or she has broken the law many times in the past and this would forever prevent them from being righteous, unless their previous sins were forgiven. Righteousness is possible only through Jesus Christ. When we have faith in His righteousness, then we become righteous. His blood covers our past sins and through His strength we can live victoriously in the future. If, because of human weakness, we fall into sin, we can plead the merits of His shed blood and we will find forgiveness. Because of our trust in Him, not our works, we will be accepted by God just as if we had never sinned.

A MISCONCEPTION OF THE OLD COVENANT



Grace gives us righteousness to keep the law because we can't without it.

Some believe that the Old Covenant was the moral law, or the Ten Commandments, and that when the new covenant was ratified, the law was annulled or set aside. But the Old Covenant was not the 10 commandment law. Instead, it was an agreement made between God and the people. True, the commandments were the basis of the covenant but they were not the covenant. The law was only the subject.

The Old Covenant was faulty, but the law of the Lord is perfect. Psalm 19:7.

Romans 7:12 **THEREFORE THE LAW IS HOLY, AND THE COMMANDMENT HOLY AND JUST AND GOOD.**

Hebrews 8:13 In that He says, “A new *covenant*,” He has made the first obsolete. Now **WHAT IS BECOMING OBSOLETE AND GROWING OLD IS READY TO VANISH AWAY.**

No person should fall into error in thinking that the New Covenant affected the validity of the moral law, or lessened any obligation to keep it. Instead, the New Covenant establishes the law forever.

Romans 3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

The teaching of the New Testament is not that the law is abolished, but that we should uphold it and keep it. We are not saved because we keep the law; but because we are saved, we will willingly obey God and keep His commandments – motivated by love. Jesus said “If you love me, keep My commandments”. John 14:15.

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

Hebrews 13:20,21 Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

The New Covenant and the Everlasting Covenant are the same. No person living in Old Testament times was saved by virtue of the Old Covenant. Salvation was dependent upon the New Covenant which was really in effect before the foundation of the world. “The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world”. Rev 13:8.



The New Covenant had always existed, both before and after the cross.

The promises were sure, but the New Covenant was not actually ratified until Jesus shed His blood on Calvary. It is called New because it was sealed at a later time – sealed by the blood of Christ. It is called the Everlasting Covenant because it was planned before the foundation of the world in case humanity should ever fall into sin. The plan of salvation was in the mind of God before humanity ever sinned. God determined to save us at all costs. He would not be taken unawares. He would be ready for the terrible emergency. To save us there was only one way – God would have to pay the penalty for our sins. This was only possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 4:13 **I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME.**

This can be the victory cry of the Christian. Jesus paid the price for our sins by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant.

Romans 8:3,4 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the **RIGHTEOUS REQUIREMENT OF THE LAW MIGHT BE FULFILLED IN US WHO DO NOT WALK ACCORDING TO THE FLESH BUT ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT.**

How did God effect that which the law could not do? He sent His Son into the world in the flesh who lived in perfect obedience to the law. Thus, He demonstrated His ability to bring human flesh into full conformity with God's law. Now He offers to change the heart from stone to flesh and write His law upon it.

2 Corinthians 3:3 Clearly *you are* an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, NOT ON TABLETS OF STONE BUT ON TABLETS OF FLESH, *THAT IS*, OF THE HEART.



I can do all things through Christ.

What a glorious provision. We do not need to depend upon our own feeble efforts, but upon His sufficiency. When we enter into the new Covenant relationship, Christ writes upon the heart the same law that was written on tables of stone. The standard of God's moral government never changes. He declares Himself to be the same yesterday, today, and forever, and His law to be eternal. The condition of entrance in to the New Covenant relationship with Christ is a willingness to have His law written upon the heart which will be acted out in our daily life through the power of the indwelling Christ. Success or failure depends upon the power within us. If the power is our own, we fail. If it is Christ's, we are victorious.

Ephesians 2:8-10 FOR BY GRACE YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, NOT OF WORKS, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Those who are under the Everlasting Covenant will receive the promises. Their sins are forgiven, their prayers are heard, they have Christ's righteousness, they will be raised to life eternal, they will live in the Promised Land – Paradise, and Christ will dwell with them forever. The covenant of promise was given to Adam and Eve, to Abraham and to the children of Israel as it was taught through the sacrificial services. All men and women throughout history find salvation only by the New or Everlasting Covenant. Only Christ's blood can atone for sin.



The power to live the Christian life comes from God, not us. It is the same power that made the world.

Some who have tried to live the Christian life have become discouraged through repeated failures. Perhaps the discouragement is because they are trying to do the same as those under the Old Covenant. In their own strength they are sure to fail. Dear friend, when you realize your utter helplessness outside of Christ and place your trust in Him, then you will find victory. He stands at the door of the heart and knocks. When you let Him in, you will experience joy. There will be music in your soul as He writes His law upon your heart. Then instead of despair and despondency you will exclaim:

1 Corinthians 15:57

BUT THANKS *BE* TO GOD, WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

In Summary –

THE COVENANTS

1. A covenant is an AGREEMENT.
2. The NEW COVENANT and the EVERLASTING COVENANT are the same.
3. The NEW COVENANT is the sinner's willingness to have God's law written on the heart or mind. Jer 31:31-34 and Heb 8:7-10.
4. The OLD COVENANT agreement demonstrated the weakness of human strength without God.
5. Obedience to God's law is only possible when man depends upon Christ's righteousness through faith.
6. The OLD COVENANT was not the 10 Commandment law, but an agreement on the part of Israel to keep the law.
7. The NEW Covenant is called the EVERLASTING COVENANT because it was planned before the creation of our planet. Rev 13:8.
8. The EVERLASTING COVENANT was not ratified until the blood of Jesus was shed at Calvary.
9. The same law written on tables of stone (the 10 commandments) is the basis of the agreement of the NEW COVENANT, but now they are written on the heart.
10. The blood of sacrifices pointed forward to Christ's sacrifice, but only the blood of Christ can atone for sin.

Review Sheet – The Everlasting Covenant

ASSIGNMENT: Read the Bible study carefully before answering the following questions.

1. What is a covenant?
Answer: _____

2. Under the New or Everlasting Covenant, where does God place His law? Jeremiah 31:31-34
But this is _____ I will put _____
_____.

3. Can the carnal mind obey God's law? Romans 8:6,7
The carnal mind is emnity against God; _____
_____.

4. Did the children of Israel intend to keep Gods law? Exodus 19:5-8
All that _____.

5. Who's fault was it for the failure of Israel to keep their part of the agreement? Hebrews 8:6-8
Because finding _____.

6. Explain your understanding of the Old Covenant.
Answer: _____

7. How did the Israelites seek righteousness? Romans 9:30-32
Why cannot righteousness be attained this way?
Answer _____

8. Because a Christian is not saved by the works of the law, does this mean he is not obligated to keep the law? Romans 3:31
Do we then make void the law _____? _____!
_____.

9. How was the New or Everlasting Covenant ratified? Hebrews 13:20,21
Answer: _____

10. How is the righteousness of the law fulfilled in the Christian? Romans 8:3,4
That the righteous requirement of the law _____
_____.

11. Where are the 10 commandments (origianlly written on tables of stone) written today for the Christian? 2 Corinthians 3:3
Not on tablets of stone, _____,
_____.

12. Through who only can we find victory in the Christian life? 1 Corinthians 15:57
But thanks be to God, _____
_____.

Have you accepted the conditions of the New Covenant? YES _____ NO _____