



BIBLICAL FOOTPRINT 1 — The Everlasting Covenant

We believe that long before creation occurred, as we understand it, an everlasting covenant was made in heaven between the members of the Godhead. Their purpose was to protect and proclaim the law and character of God while simultaneously making provision for a part of His creation that in their foreknowledge they knew would fail.

A covenant is a contract between two or more parties based upon mutual promises. Another word for covenant is testament. Prior to the flood, Noah found grace in the eyes of our Heavenly Father. God indicated that He would establish His covenant with Noah. **Genesis 6:18.** Noah did as God said; **Genesis 6:22; 7:5; 13-16;** and after the waters of the flood were abated, and Noah was able to leave the ark, He offered sacrifices honoring the covenant God had made with Him. **Genesis 8:20-22.** Noah was obedient to the covenant. **In Ezekiel,** he is mentioned as being righteous (having the character of God) along with Daniel and Job. **Ezekiel 14:14.**

It is not by accident that God chose the rainbow as a token of that covenant. You see, that rainbow is significant, far beyond the promise of God that He would not destroy the earth by water again. “A rainbow encircles the throne of God, but the carnal eye will see little significance in the fact. To the one from whose eyes the veil has dropped, there is an infinite depth of meaning in the rainbow about the angel's head (**Revelation 10:1**), **and the appearance of the bow in our own heavens is, to the spiritual soul, a reminder of the everlasting covenant made in heaven.** The divine historian gives the story of the rainbow as it appears in our heavens.” **S.N. Haskell, “Story of the Seer of Patmos,” pg. 181-182**

Then, there was the covenant with Abraham. This covenant was the “new covenant” in essence and predates the “old covenant” that did not occur until Sinai. It began in **Genesis 12:1-3**. The key verse for this covenant, and in relation to the everlasting covenant, was that “Abraham believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness.” **Genesis 15:6**. That means that Abraham acted in faith, believing what the LORD told him was true and would come to pass, even though he didn’t see how or when it would happen and would be obedient to what the LORD said. In that same chapter, Abraham inquired of the Lord how he would know. God told him to take several animals and set up a major sacrifice wherein God pledged His very life to the fulfillment of the covenant, ending in **verse 18**, where God said, “In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.”

However, Abraham got a little impatient and decided he would take matters into his own hands and help God out in fulfilling the covenant. Thus, he had a child by way of his wife, Sarai’s handmaid, Hagar. **Genesis 16**. Thirteen years later, God came to Abraham and renewed the covenant. **Genesis 17**. Here, God showed Abraham that Sarah would bear a son because the covenant that God made with Abraham was to be passed on to his son of promise. **Genesis 17:15-21**. And this covenant also had a token, that being circumcision, which was a sign in the flesh as to what was to occur in the heart. **Romans 4:11**. And Abraham was known of God for God said, “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment, that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken unto him.” **Genesis 18:19**. Abraham was declared righteous, like Noah, a friend of God, **James 2:23**, developing the character of God over the course of his lifetime, and being used of God to bring to pass the ratification of the everlasting covenant.

As was promised, this covenant passed on to Isaac. In **Genesis 26:3-5**, we read the following: “... I will be with thee, and will bless thee, for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries and perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven and will give unto thy seed all these countries, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because **that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.**”

What was the blessing promised? What does this have to do with the everlasting covenant? The blessing which all nations of the earth were to receive was none other than Jesus, the Eternal Son of God. The answer to the second question requires us to go back into time before Adam and Eve were created.

See the scene in heaven. God the Father on His throne, His Son, and the Holy Spirit gathered there with Him in a holy convocation. All else was excluded, including Lucifer, the covering cherub. Discussion takes place between them regarding the oneness and unity in purpose as to what was yet to take place, the creation of earth and man. (Lucifer was not yet thrown out of heaven. His exclusion from this had much to do with his fall.) **In that discussion, Jesus covenanted with the Father and the Holy Spirit, to be the “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” Revelation 13:8; that through Him, man would be redeemed if he should sin.** This was necessary because in order to sin, God’s law had to be broken. That would call into question His character which is fully reflected in His Law. Once that occurred, the sinner must be given the opportunity to be restored to what he had fallen from. As part of the restoration, he will be given the power and knowledge necessary not to fall again, but to be obedient to the law and prophets, thus acquiring and vindicating God’s character. **This process begins at salvation through faith, is developed through sanctification, and completed in glorification. That covenant was ratified the day Christ died. It has always been available (look at Noah and Abraham) but until the day Christ died it was not ratified.**

Satan knew the reality of this. It was his purpose to see to it that the ratification of this covenant never happened. He desired above all else to find a flaw in God’s law/character and prove to the universe that he was right and God was wrong. Therefore, God used other tokens of this covenant as listed above, to show that His character could be formed in men, that they could be transformed and restored to His image and likeness, and to bring to pass ratification of the everlasting covenant; that if Adam fell, provision was already made made to restore man to what he had lost through sin, which is provided in the person of Jesus Christ and Him alone. See **Revelation 13:8; 1Peter 1:20.**

It is important to note that the covenant for redemption could not be an everlasting covenant if any being was involved which was not eternal. This is why Lucifer was not invited. He was and is a created being, although he fancies himself to be much more.

“Back in eternity, God and Christ covenanted for the redemption of the race, if man should sin after his creation, and so separate from his Maker, and the bow about the throne was made the token of the covenant. Ever since, it has had its place about the throne, and it became an eternal token of the redemption of man. Angels and beings of unfallen worlds behold the rainbow, and bow in reverence to the One on the throne. But the human eye cannot look into heaven, so when the Lord saved

Noah and his family from the flood, He placed this same sign in the clouds of earth as a token of redemption. Like a little piece of heaven transported to the earth the bow is a reminder to man that God has toward him constant thoughts of peace and thoughts of righteousness. But the story is yet more wonderful; for God not only looks upon the bow about the throne, and is reminded of man; but He looks upon the bow in the clouds, and is drawn in heart toward earth. Every cloud that floats in the sky contains a bow. The cloud may appear dark and threatening to us; but the sun shining upon the other side forms the bow, and God looks upon it, and 'remembers the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature,' the covenant that makes 'you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.' **Hebrews 13:20, 21.** **S. N. Haskell, "The Story of the Seer of Patmos" pg. 182-183**

Now, having said all of this, you might be wondering, but what about the "old covenant"? (See page 105 for what the "old covenant actually is.) Many people mistakenly believe that the Ten Commandments are the "old covenant" and that they were done away with when the "new covenant" came into existence. That is not true. God's law, as illustrated previously, pre-existed the "old covenant," as did the "new covenant" that began with Abraham. Remember, the everlasting covenant was entered into in part to protect that Law; it is a reflection of God's character.

There are several contrasts between the "old" and "new" covenants in **Hebrews 8:6-13**. The first of these is that the "new covenant" is established on "better promises," implying that the "old covenant" had some promises that were not so good. This begs the question, "If the Ten Commandments are the "old covenant", show me where there is a bad or poor promise within the Ten Commandments? Of course, there are none. There are two blessings contained therein, and neither of them can be said to be anything but a blessing. **Therefore, on this basis alone, whatever the "old covenant" was, it was not the Ten Commandments.**

But let's not stop there. The writer of **Hebrews** goes on to say that another thing to be contrasted with the "new covenant" was that the old one was faulty; it had something wrong with it. We'll determine later what that thing was. But for the time being, once again, the question must be asked, is there something faulty or wrong with the Ten Commandments? Again, the answer is a resounding no. David asserted in **Psalm 19:7** that, "**The law of the LORD is perfect (Complete, without error, that nothing can be added to it, changed within it, or something taken away from it, to make it better, It is already as good as it can be), converting the soul.**" Paul declares in **Romans 7, verse 12**: "Wherefore

the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.” Therefore, it must be said that since there is no fault with the Ten Commandments, then they could not have been the “old covenant” in and of themselves.

Thirdly, the writer **of Hebrews** indicates that the “old covenant” was to pass away, vanish completely. **Hebrews 8:13**. Is this also true of the Ten Commandments? Some would like to think so, for in so doing, they think they can lay hold on the salvation offered by Christ with no standard, other than their own, to adhere to. But you ask any person, is it right to steal, or to kill, or to lie. The answer is no, of course not. Then it can only be said that the moral law, the Ten Commandments, have not vanished away and are as relevant in today’s society as they were centuries and millennia ago. But all one needs to do is look at the New Testament that was written after the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. Nine of the Ten Commandments are quoted therein. For example, **Ephesians 6:1-3** quotes the fifth commandment. **James** quotes the sixth and seventh commandments in **chapter two** of his book. No, the moral law has not been done away with and so cannot be the “old covenant”.

Finishing this thought, people often cite **Colossians 2:14** as their basis for asserting that the law of God, the Ten Commandments, (and by extension, God’s character) were “nailed to the cross,” and thus done away with. For those who wish to believe that, I would encourage them to look at two things in particular. The first of those is what words are used by Paul to describe what was indeed nailed to the cross. Specifically, he said, “Blotting out the handwriting **of ordinances that was against us.**” Ask any attorney, “Are ordinances and law the same thing?” They will tell you no. Ordinances are based on superior law and if said law is exceeded then the ordinance is void and without authority or effect. **Ordinances are rules of conduct that clarify and define a higher law that might be general in nature.** So, for example, God says, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Okay, what does that mean or include? The ordinance would say what **Leviticus 19** says regarding sexual conduct with specificity and resulting consequence if one is so engaged.

The other thing to take note of is the phrase “that was against us.” You see, In **Deuteronomy 31:26**, Moses took the book of the law that he had written (remember, **God wrote the Ten Commandments with His Own Fingers—Exodus 31:18**), the law regarding sacrifices, ceremonies, and civil law; this book he hung on the side of the Ark of the Testimony; hung there as “a witness against thee” (Israel, professed followers of God). Therefore, the only “ordinance” that Paul could have been referring to was the law of Moses, not the law of God, and this verse has no bearing on the Ten Commandments whatsoever. Such doctrine is of Satan and his reason will be exposed shortly. Paul affirms himself in **Ephesians**

2:15 where he says, “Having **abolished** in His flesh the enmity, **even the law of commandments contained in ordinances**; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” And in conjunction with this, Paul makes it abundantly clear in very plain language, that faith does not make void the law (of God). Rather, we establish it by faith. **Romans 3:31**.

So what was the “old covenant”? It was an agreement entered into between the children of Israel and God with Moses as the mediator, a promise by the children of Israel to do as God instructed them with the entire law, based on the moral law. The promise was no good because it was made by human beings relying on their own strength to do something they nor any other individual can do. Therein also laid the fault, in that when they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do.” **Exodus 19:7, 8**. Notice how there is no question in their mind that they can do what God said. There is no plea for divine assistance. And was it ever kept the way it was meant to be? Putting it bluntly, A. T. Jones stated, “The ‘old covenant’, the covenant from Sinai, is summed up in the word ‘SELF.’ The ‘new covenant’, the everlasting covenant, is summed up in the word ‘CHRIST.’ (*Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, July 31, 1900). You know the answer. Israel, as a nation, time and again departed from the holy precepts and followed after other gods. Thus, there was no way for the people to fulfill their end of the covenant. It had to be replaced with the better covenant, one that would honor God’s law and thus, His character.

So now, we come to the crux of the matter before us. First, let us review, in the other direction, the three things we contrasted earlier. **We’ll start with better promises. In this case, God makes the promises and those promises make successful obedience through His strength alone possible with our unconditional, unreserved surrender of our lives to Him. We can do nothing of ourselves. It is God that works in us to both will and do of His good pleasure. Philippians 2:13. One can find no fault in God, for He is eternal, unchanging, as is His character, which is what the law of God, the Ten Commandments is a reflection of. Thus, it cannot be abolished.**

So, it can only be said that the “new covenant” (the writing of God’s character upon the heart) is indeed the result of the Everlasting Covenant that was entered into between the members of the Godhead in eternity past being ratified at the cross, which was solely an act of love.

“The Father’s heart yearned over His Son; His love knew no variableness, neither shadow of turning. God looked upon His Son as the faithful servant of the everlasting covenant, and approved of the work He accomplished by His life of humiliation, toil, and suffering. He heard His

expiring cry at the cross, as He went to the very depth of humiliation, and with His last breath exclaimed, 'It is finished.' God was pledged to raise His Son, in whom He was well pleased, to the very highest exaltation as the Redeemer of humanity, and to give Him a name above every name. As a servant on the earth, His life had been one of toil and faithfulness; as sacrifice, He had died a death of shame and suffering, to make expiation for the human family, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” **Ellen G. White, Signs of the Times, June 27, 1895.**

Let's look at this quote.

“Father and Son have clasped their hands, **and are mutually pledged to fulfill the terms of the everlasting covenant, to give fallen man another chance.** Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, ‘cried out with a loud voice, *It is finished.*’ The work that Thou gavest Me is accomplished. Thus He gave His dying testimony to men and angels that the work He came to earth to do was to save a perishing world by His death. When Christ spoke these words, He addressed His Father. **Christ was not alone in making this great sacrifice. It was the fulfillment of the covenant made between the Father and the Son before the foundation of the earth was laid. With clasped hands they entered into the solemn pledge that Christ would become the substitute and surety for the human race if they were overcome by Satan's sophistry. The compact was now being fully consummated. The climax was reached. Christ had the consciousness that He had fulfilled to the letter the pledge He had made. In death He was more than conqueror. The redemption price has been paid. His right hand and His glorious holy arm have gotten Him the victory.**” **Ellen G. White, Manuscript Release, Vol. 12, No. 999, pg. 408.**

In accomplishing this act, He not only brought salvation to man, but fulfilled His burden in protecting and proclaiming the law/character of God to both fallen man and the universe in waiting.

Jesus Himself is the Everlasting Covenant, and it is extended to each of us who exercise the gift of faith and believe and are converted. As part of salvation, Jesus Christ offers a new covenant to man; the law or character of God written on our hearts and minds. **Hebrews 8:10.** The regeneration process is initiated by the Holy Spirit, and the indwelling Spirit empowers us to have the law lived out in our lives by the faith of Jesus willingly, gladly, joyfully, because we will delight in the law of God. **Psalm 40:8. By cooperating with the Holy Spirit, by the**

unreserved surrender of our lives allowing God to live in us, we grow into God's character. By beholding, we become.

But that is not the end of the story. There is one final and important detail yet to be discussed. The rule of law tells us that once a covenant is ratified by death, sealed with blood, it cannot be changed. Thus, when Christ died the cruel death on the cross, He ratified the covenant as it existed at that point in time, including its basis, the law of God. See **Hebrews 9:16, 17; Galatians 3:15**. It was to begin to operate the moment He died the eternal death that all sinners face.

Therefore, the law of God, in its entirety, is what is written on the hearts of those who are truly converted. That law never could, and never has been changed. This includes, most especially, the 4th commandment, the Sabbath. In the end, the question that will be the test of every person both in and out of the church will be, who do you worship? The Three Angels' Messages say we are to worship God and give Him glory. Can this be done on any other day besides the Sabbath? Of course it can and should be done in terms of personal time with God through prayer, Bible Study and devotions. **But corporate worship is another story altogether. And if our corporate worship is not on God's terms, I can assure you that neither is the personal time because it is all based on the wrong premise.**

You see, every act, every thought, every word should be directed at worshipping God. That is the purpose of our lives. That is why unconditional, unreserved surrender is a prerequisite for Christ to live His life in us and through us. If we cannot honor God and His law by recognizing the Sabbath, in all of its fullness and blessings accorded thereto, how can we claim to honor Him, worship Him, obey Him, or form His character within us, when we cannot even do that one thing? No, my friend, it is not possible. That is what Satan wants. He has deceived many through this lie guised in some truth. But God tells us that it has to be 100% truth or there is no truth in it. **Isaiah 8:20**. Through the everlasting covenant, God has made provision for us to be restored to His image and likeness. But He wants our all. If we are not willing to give Him all, He doesn't want any part of us, because His character and His law cannot be upheld with any less than all. But through Christ, we can have the victory over Satan and the devices that he uses to keep us from receiving the benefit of the everlasting covenant of God. That is our goal and desire for each person today.

For any additional information on this subject, see ***Bible Readings for the Home Circle, 1914 Edition.***