

The Two Covenants, II

History of the Covenants

A. The Edenic Covenant—Covenant of Grace

1. **Gen 3:15**--God established the covenant of grace back in the garden of Eden, after Adam and Eve sinned.

As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other provisional and temporary, so there are two **covenants**. The **covenant** of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall, there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. To all men this **covenant** offered pardon, and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ. It also promised them eternal life on condition of fidelity to God's law. Thus the patriarchs received the hope of salvation. **PP 370**.

B. The Abrahamic Covenant

2. **Gen 22:15-18**--The Edenic covenant of grace and forgiveness through faith in Christ was renewed to Abraham and the patriarchs.

This same **covenant** was renewed to Abraham in the promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Genesis 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ. So Abraham understood it, and he trusted in Christ for the forgiveness of sins. It was this faith that was accounted unto him for righteousness. **PP 370**.

C. The New Covenant

3. The Abrahamic covenant is called the "second" or "new" covenant because it was ratified by the blood of Christ and the blood of Christ was shed after the blood of the animal sacrifices that foreshadowed it had been shed;

Though this covenant was made with Adam and renewed to Abraham, it could not be ratified until the death of Christ. It had existed by the promise of God since the first intimation of redemption had been given; it had been accepted by faith; yet when ratified by Christ, it is called a **new** covenant. **PP 370**.

D. The Everlasting Covenant

4. The covenant of grace made in Eden and renewed to Abraham and his descendants is also called the everlasting covenant because it existed in the mind of God from all eternity.

The **covenant** of grace is not a new truth, for it existed in the mind of God from all eternity. This is why it is called the everlasting **covenant**. **FLB 77**.

The Israelites Placed Under the Old Covenant Through the 70 Elders

5. Four hundred years later, God made a special covenant with the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai, called the Old Covenant **Exo 19:1-8; Exo 24:1-9;**

Another compact—called in Scripture the “old” covenant—was formed between God and Israel at Sinai, and was then ratified by the blood of a sacrifice. **The Abrahamic covenant was ratified by the blood of Christ, and it is called the “second,” or “new,” covenant, because the blood by which it was sealed was shed after the blood of the first covenant.** That the **new covenant was valid in the days of Abraham** is evident from the fact that it was then confirmed both by the promise and by the oath of God—the “two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.” Hebrews 6:18. **PP 371**

6. The question is, why did God make another covenant with the Israelites when in fact, the Abrahamic covenant was already in place and was valid even in the days of Moses?

ANSWER: The Israelites were not ready for the covenant of grace which required the faith and obedience from the heart:

But if the Abrahamic covenant contained the promise of redemption, why was **another covenant formed at Sinai**? In their bondage the people had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant. In delivering them from Egypt, God sought to reveal to them His power and His mercy, that they might be led to love and trust Him. He brought them down to the Red Sea—where, pursued by the Egyptians, escape seemed impossible—**that they might realize their utter helplessness, their need of divine aid; and then He wrought deliverance for them.** Thus they were filled with love and gratitude to God and with confidence in His power to help them. He had bound them to Himself as their deliverer from temporal bondage.

But there was a still greater truth to be impressed upon their minds. Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, **they had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God’s law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught.** **PP 371.**

. . . **The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.” Exodus 24:7.** They had witnessed the proclamation of the law in awful majesty, and had trembled with terror before the mount; and yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Now by faith and love they were bound to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin. **Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant.** **PP 371-372.**

7. Notice again what was said of the Israelites in the statement above:
 - a. they had no true conception of the holiness of God
 - b. they had no true perception of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts

- c. they thought that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law
- d. felt that they were able to establish their own righteousness by their own effort

8. The salient points of the Old covenant of works:

- i. The people promised 3 times to keep the terms of the covenant through their own effort three times; (**Exo 19:8; Exo 24:3, 7**);
- ii. God does not promise to great things for the people like He promised Abraham when He entered into a covenant with him (**Exo 19:5**)
- iii. Brought fear and trembling (**Exo 20:18-19**)
- iv. Covenant made with Israel through the 70 elders (**Exo 24:1, 9**)
- v. This covenant ratified by the blood of animals (**Exo 24:5-8**)
- vi. This covenant was not based on grace but on human effort;
- vii. this covenant excluded the possibility of forgiveness (**Exo 23:20-23**)
- viii. broken after 40 days
- ix. established by God to teach the Israelites the meaning of grace and pardon
- x. prepared the Israelites to be under the covenant of grace

9. This old covenant is what Paul referred to as the "first covenant" which was "faulty" (**Heb 8:7**), necessitating the emplacement of a second covenant (**Heb 8:9-12**):

- a. The fault lay with the people, not in the covenant itself;
 - i. **Exo 23:20-23**--The old covenant or first covenant offered no forgiveness for sin, only condemnation and death
 - ii. The old covenant was not "sinner friendly"
 - iii. The old covenant made no accommodations for shortcomings and defective service

The law of God, spoken in awful grandeur from Sinai, is the utterance of condemnation to the sinner. It is the province of the law to condemn, but there is in it no power to pardon or to redeem. It is ordained to life; those who walk in harmony with its precepts will receive the reward of obedience. But it brings bondage and death to those who remain under its condemnation. **1SM 236-237.**

The terms of the "old **covenant**" were, Obey and live: "If a man do, he shall even live in them;" but "cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. **PP 372.**

10. The "old" or "first" covenant was established for the sole purpose of:

- a. Helping them see their sinfulness,
- b. their need of pardon,
- c. that they might be brought to feel their need of the Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings.
- d. That faith and love may spring up and bind them to God as their deliverer from the bondage of sin.
- e. To prepare to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant. **PP 371-372.**

God's Dealings with Israel

11. **Exo 32:7-10**—while on the mount for 40 days, God informs Moses that the Israelites had broken the covenant and tells Moses He is about to consume His people in His wrath;
12. **Exo 32:11-13**—Moses in his role as mediator, pleads with God to spare His people on 3 grounds
 - a. The people had been delivered out of Egypt by mighty hand; why destroy them now?
 - b. The Egyptians might think God thought evil of His people and planned to destroy them in wilderness all along;
 - c. Reminded God of the promise He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to multiply their seed;
13. **Exo 32:14**—God repents of the evil which He thought to do unto His people
14. **Exo 32:25**—the extent of the sin of the Israelites
15. **Exo 32:27-28**—Moses confronts the people; three thousand men executed for their part in the worship of the golden calf
16. **Exo 32:30-32**—Moses **makes an atonement** (by promising to have his name blotted out from the book of life) in order to have the great sin of the people forgiven
17. **Exo 32:33-34; Exo 35:1-4**—God consents to let Israel continue on their way to the Promised land, but refuses to go with the people and instead declares that His angel will go with them instead
18. **Exo 33:4-6**—Israel finally understands the seriousness of their sin; they are saddened by the evil report that God refused to march with them lest they are confused along the way; the people show remorse for their sin by stripping themselves of their jewelry;
19. **Exo 33:7-9**—Moses pitches the tabernacle of the congregation outside the camp for those who sought the Lord in repentance;
20. **Exo 33:10**—God gives a token of His presence in a cloudy pillar above the tabernacle of the congregation;
21. **Exo 33:11-16**—God talks to Moses face to face; Moses pleads with God to go with His people as a token that they have found grace in the eyes of the Lord
 - a. **“My presence will go with thee**—probably a reference to the angel Gabriel, the one that stands in the presence of God (**Luke 1:19**);
 - b. Moses argues that a mere angel is no substitute for God's own presence
22. **Exo 33:17**—God finally gives in to Moses' request to go with His people
23. **Exo 33:18-23**—Moses emboldened to ask God to show him His glory

The Israelites Placed Under the Abrahamic Covenant Through Moses

24. **Exo 34:1-4**—Moses returns to the mount with new tables of stones;
25. **Exo 34:10, 27**—God makes a covenant (of grace) with the Israelites through Moses;
 - a. God established the renews the covenant of grace with Israel after Moses had appeased God's wrath through a work of unselfish intercession (**Exo 32:7-14**)
 - b. Covenant of grace renewed through Moses, no longer with the 70 elders (**Exo 34:27**)
 - c. Based on the forgiveness and renewal along with justice (**Exo 34:6-7**)

The Old Covenant and New Covenant Compared and Contrasted

Old Covenant	New Covenant
Also known as the first covenant (Heb 8:7-18; Heb 9:1)	The second covenant (Heb 8:7); Abrahamic covenant; the everlasting covenant
Had an earthly sanctuary (Heb 9:1)	Heavenly sanctuary (Heb 8:1)
Found to have fault because it made no accommodations of failures and shortcomings (Heb 8:7; Exo 23:21)	Better covenant founded on better promises
Covenant of works	Covenant of grace
Based on the Law that was written in tables of stone	Based on the Law that is written in the heart (Heb 8:10-12)
People promise to obey	Based on better promises
Ratified by the blood of bulls and goats	Ratified by the blood of Christ
Temporary (Lasted only 40-days)	Will last forever; everlasting covenant
Made with Israel through the 70 elders	Made with Israel through Moses who typified Christ, the Mediator of a better covenant based on better promises
Based on pure divine justice alone; obey and live, disobey and die	Based on justice + mercy (Exo 34:6-7)
Called old and ready to vanish away (Heb 8:13)	Everlasting covenant
Not a type of the new covenant	Typified by the covenant God made with Moses

Conclusion

26. Those who are under the old covenant:

- a. they have no true conception of the holiness of God
- b. they think that without Christ it is possible for them to keep God's law
- c. they feel that they are able to establish their own righteousness by their own effort, by just reforming their outward behavior, their diet and dress
- d. have no deep understanding of the sinfulness of their lives and manifest shallow repentance
- e. have no appreciation for the sanctuary service because the sanctuary service is useless if there is no faith and repentance; show no appreciation for the grace of God
- f. have no deep burden for perishing souls and makes no ardent intercession for others;
- g. are not prepared for the covenant of grace

27. Those who are under the new covenant are on the opposite camp:

- a. They see something of the spirituality of God's Law and the depths of their own depravity which leads them to cry out: "Lord have mercy on me, a sinner;" "O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?"
- b. They do not parade their good works; instead they cry out, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done only that which was required of us to do."

- c. They understand fully they cannot establish their own righteousness by their own effort, by just reforming their outward behavior, their diet and dress., etc.
- d. They appreciate the work of Jesus in the sanctuary and feel that His ministration is everything for them.
- e. Their passionate love for the Saviour cause them to have a deep burden for souls and are willing to die to save others.

28. Which covenant are we under?