

# *"After Those Days," A Promise Realized*

## *A Study on Romans 4:1-3*

In Romans 4, Paul is continuing to explain justification by faith and not by works. Paul uses an illustration to make this truth clearer by giving us the example of Abraham's journey from "the law of works" to "the law of faith." Let's examine his journey and see why he can be called "the father of faith of all them that believe" (Romans 4:11).

### **Romans 4:1, 2**

Romans 4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2) For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. 3) For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Chapter 4 starts out with Paul asking us a question regarding Abraham's success in attempting to fulfill God's plan for the miracle birth of the child of promise. Was Abraham able to produce a "new creature" in Christ Jesus (2Corinthians 5:17) "as pertaining to the flesh," in other words, in his human carnal nature? As we shall see as we continue in this study, he was not able, and had he been able to successfully fulfill the promise, he would have had something to boast about, but not before God, who knows "with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible."

Matthew 19:26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

As we compare these two passages below, dealing with Abraham's justification, it appears we have a contradiction.

Romans 4:2 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.

James declares that a man is "justified by works."

James 2:21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? 22) Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? 23) And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. 24) Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Paul emphatically states "that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ."

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

How are we to reckon this seeming contradiction over justification by works between Paul and James? Romans 3:27 speaks of two laws, "the law of works" and "the law of faith."

Romans 3:27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

Most have only one category for "works" in their classifications, but both laws produce "works." "The law of works" produces "works" attempted in one's own strength without faith, believing that one can produce righteousness in order to merit salvation while not accepting the free gift of righteousness (Romans 5:17).

Romans 9:31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32) Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

"The law of faith" also produces "works," "works" of "righteousness which is of faith."

Romans 9:30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

"Righteousness by faith," comes by believing that "with God, all things are possible," and by believing in the promises of God, and by being motivated by the love of God, "the law of faith" produces "works of righteousness."

2Peter 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6) For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

2Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Let's follow Abraham in his journey to the end when finally the promise was realized. For the sake of this study, let us put on our spiritual eye glasses and see the spiritual application of these verses and how they relate to us.

Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

This is spiritually understood to mean, leave Babylon where they worship pagan gods and follow me and I will lead you to the promise land, to the Heavenly Canaan.

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. 9) By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10) For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. ... 16) But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city.

Genesis 12:4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Genesis 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness.

Abraham believed God at this point. He was living up to the faith he had, but will he have faith when tested in believing that his barren wife of old age could produce seed? As we put on our spiritual eye glasses and look at our journey, what do we see? Do we understand that righteousness is imputed to us if we believe and obey? Do we live by faith as we grow "from faith to faith" in our understanding of the righteousness of God? Have we come to the place where we realize that the promises of God are realized according to our faith?

Romans 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Matthew 9:29 Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

God then made an everlasting covenant with Abraham. Notice that God speaks of Abraham's seed as though he already had seed, knowing that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26), who "calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4:17). But does Abraham at this time believe it possible? Does he have saving faith?

Genesis 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Question: Who can make an everlasting covenant? Obviously only One who lives everlastingly! This will become clearer as we journey on.

The "Everlasting Covenant" involves an "Everlasting Gospel" by the "Everlasting Father," the "Everlasting God" based on "Everlasting Love" assuring "Everlasting Life" and "Everlasting Joy" in an "Everlasting Kingdom" (instead of "Everlasting Punishment,") granting an Everlasting Inheritance based on "Everlasting Righteousness," "The Lord Our Righteousness," "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The Lord promises Abraham that he would be the father of many nations.

Genesis 17:4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. 5) Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.

Abraham has not yet come to the place where he believes that he and Sarai are able to produce the promised seed and suggests that the promises of God can be fulfilled another way.

Genesis 15:2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? 3) And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. 4) And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. 5) And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be. 6) And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness.

Righteousness was counted to Abraham because he believed the Lord. However, we find that his belief or faith had not reached the place where he implicitly trusted that God's promise would be fulfilled in him. We find that he hearkens unto his wife, Sarai, and goes about to help God fulfill this promise by going into Hagar, Sarai's handmaid, to produce the promised seed. Let's put our spiritual eye glasses on again and apply this spiritually to our journey. Do we think that by our works we can produce a "new creature," a "born again" experience, a righteousness meriting eternal life?

Genesis 16:1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. 2) And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. 3) And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. 4) And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived:

God in His mercy and forbearance, understanding that Abraham's journey is "from faith to faith," again assures Abraham that "what He had promised, He was able also to perform."

Genesis 17:15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. 16) And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

What was Abraham's reaction to God's reiterating the fact that Sarah would be a mother of nations?

Genesis 17:17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? 18) And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

Notice the condescension of our God as He patiently works with us. May our prayer be, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24).

Genesis 17:19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. 20) And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. 21) But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

Having tasted the love, mercy and forbearance of God, we find Abraham coming to a saving faith as recorded in Romans 4. Abraham had finally come to the place where he too believed that "with God all things are possible" and "that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform."

Romans 4:17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. 18) Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19) And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: 20) He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21) And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. 22) And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

In the story of Abraham offering Isaac, we have been given more proof of Abraham's saving faith. What do I mean by saving faith? In Matthew 9:29 when the Lord said, "According to your faith be it unto you," the man received his sight. There are many examples of saving faith where the recipients of healing virtue, exercised their faith and were healed. As in the physical, so in the spiritual. "We are saved by grace through faith," having faith in that grace, which is the power to save from sin. Love produces works, not works of the flesh but works of faith.

Genesis 22:2 And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

Hebrews gives an account of the huge test of Abraham's faith, in which he manifested implicit trust, believing that "God was able to raise him up."

Hebrews 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18) Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: 19) Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Why is Isaac referred to as "his only begotten son," and also as a figure? A figure of whom? Were the promises literally made to Abraham, or to One seed, that of Christ, "the only begotten" Son of God? Who only could confirm the covenant? Who only could produce a "new creature," a miracle birth, a "born again" experience? Could those functioning under "the law of works" produce a "new creature," or only those who are functioning under "the law of

faith," faith in the promises of God, who "callesh those things which be not as though they were," "And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform?"

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 17) And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 18) For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Jude 24 Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, 25) To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27) For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6) Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; 7) That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Paul in Galatians 4 gives an allegory explaining "the law of works" versus "the law of faith" which are also called the two covenants. Before referring to the story of Abraham and his two sons, he first asks a question.

Galatians 4:21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?

What are the laws that are referred to in the above verse? The term "under the law" refers to those who believe and function under "the law of works." The second law refers to the law or books of Moses which contains the story of Abraham and his two sons.

The problem the Gentiles in Galatia were experiencing was being confronted by the Jews who were trying to convince them that without "the works of the law," they could not be saved. But Paul addresses them by assuring them that as their experience began by faith, they should not change to believing that salvation comes by works.

Galatians 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2) This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3) Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Let's look at the allegory Paul gives in trying to set them straight regarding the true gospel.

Galatians 4:22 For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23) But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. 24) Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. 25) For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in

bondage with her children. 26) But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

Paul recognizes that Israel is still in bondage being under "the law of works."

Romans 9:31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. 32) Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

Romans 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. 4) For Christ is the end [goal] of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

It is the law that convinces us of sin and the need of a Saviour. The law cannot save but its purpose is to lead us to Christ who can and will save us if we believe.

If we find ourselves functioning under "the law of works" and not under "the law of faith," we will become servants, in bondage to sin as were those who thought that they could produce righteousness by works of the flesh when God made a covenant with them at Mt. Sinai.

Galatians 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

Hebrews 8:8 For finding fault with them, [their promises] He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

Paul asserts that Israel now consists of all those who are of Christ, and "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28, 29).

### **Let's look at the Bible usages of the word, "covenant:"**

The misunderstanding of the usage of the word "covenant" can lead to confusion and wrong interpretations. We must compare Scripture with Scripture and let the context determine which usage applies.

#### **Covenant can refer to:**

1. A covenant, such as an agreement between two parties, namely the counsel of peace between the Father and the Son:
2. A covenant, such as a promise by one party namely, the everlasting covenant
3. A covenant, such as the marriage relationship between Christ and Israel
4. A covenant, the ten commandments
5. A covenant can be unconditional or conditional
6. A covenant, the Old & New Testament (the only covenants differentiated by time):
7. A new covenant, namely a new relationship
8. The "New Covenant" is in fact the "Everlasting Covenant"

Let us now take a closer look at those eight usages as found in the Scriptures.

## **1. A covenant, an agreement such as between two parties, as the counsel of peace between the Father and the Son:**

Nothing takes God by surprise! Well-knowing that man would fail to represent Him to the universe, God already had a plan. Sometime in eternity past there was a counsel of peace between the Father and His Son.

Zechariah 6:13 Even He shall build the temple of the LORD; and He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

The love of the Father, no less than of the Son, is the fountain of salvation for the lost race.

John 16:26 At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: 27) For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The fact that God gave and didn't just lend His Son to us, is an assurance of the Father's love for us. It also assures us of the surety of the gospel plan to save all who would come unto Him to be saved. Sin leads to self deception which leads to self salvation, believing that somehow our works or deeds of the law can merit salvation. It is a rejection of the grace of God, the gift of righteousness and eternal life. We can have assurance in the promises of God. "Christ in you" is our hope of glory, this is righteousness by faith.

Isaiah 55:11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

## **2. A covenant, such as a promise by one party namely, the everlasting covenant:**

Who can make an everlasting covenant? Obviously, only those that live everlastingly!

The "Everlasting Covenant" involves an "Everlasting Gospel" by the "Everlasting Father," the "Everlasting God" based on "Everlasting Love" assuring "Everlasting Life" and "Everlasting Joy" in an "Everlasting Kingdom" (instead of "Everlasting Punishment"), granting an Everlasting Inheritance based on "Everlasting Righteousness," "The Lord Our Righteousness," "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

God first made His everlasting covenant promise to Adam and Eve. But man fell into Satan's masterly deceptions regarding the character of God, the nature of sin and the immutability of the law. Immediately man began experiencing the results of transgressing God's law.

When Adam failed to be a witness, representing the character of God, God made a promise to Adam and Eve of a Saviour before they left Eden, promising the remedy for sin. Notice who's making the promise.

Genesis 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: 15) And I will put enmity between thee and the

woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.

Still looking for someone to rightly represent His character, God next made His everlasting covenant promise with Noah. Again, notice whose covenant it is.

Genesis 6:18 But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

But, just like Adam, Noah also failed of being a perfect representative of God.

Genesis 9:20 And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: 21) And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent.

So again God makes an everlasting covenant this time with Abraham. Who alone can make an everlasting covenant? Only one who lives everlastingly. It is the covenant of peace between the Father and the Son.

Genesis 17:7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

We know that Abraham also failed at perfectly representing God to the universe. But God continued to make His everlasting covenant with Isaac, Jacob, and with Israel, giving to man an opportunity to be a witness of His beautiful character and government. Isaac and Jacob also failed at reproducing God's character. Will there ever be a witness of God's character that will bring salvation to those who have been deceived regarding who He is and how He deals with sin and the sinner?

When Israel found themselves in bondage to the Egyptians, God answered their cry and provided a deliverer.

Exodus 2:24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

Yet again God extended His covenant to Moses whose act of murder failed to vindicate God as a perfect witness to the watching universe.

Exodus 34:27 And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel.

Moses decided to help God fulfill His plan to deliver Israel from their enemies. Notice that just as Abraham transgressed the law of God in attempting to fulfill God's promised seed by committing adultery with Hagar, Moses also transgressed the law by committing murder in attempting to fulfill God's promise of a deliverer. Does this not teach us that "works of the flesh" or "the law of works" always backfires and brings suffering?

Exodus 2:12 And he [Moses] looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.

### **3. A covenant, such as the marriage relationship between Christ and Israel:**

The covenant that God made with the nation of Israel is found in the following passage. Notice the covenant has a condition attached to it involving whether or not Israel would obey. As we shall see, this covenant is likened to a marriage relationship between God and Israel.

Isaiah 54:5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called.

Notice that there is a conditional response to God's everlasting covenant. God's promises are unconditional. However, man's response to His promises are conditional upon their exercising their free will in committing to God's covenant.

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6) And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

#### **4. A covenant, the covenant of the ten commandments:**

As with any marriage there are vows taken to protect the relationship, and so also with the marriage vow of God with Israel. What was it that the people of Israel were to obey? It was the laws that would protect their marriage relationship, namely the ten commandments. Obedience to these laws would prove they had entered into a covenant of love implicitly trusting God's government.

Exodus 34:28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And He wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

Was the nation of Israel obedient to the protective laws of their marriage vows? No, they were not at all. What would God do now?

#### **5. A covenant can be unconditional or conditional:**

God's promises are unconditional, He never changes, but there are conditions upon which the promises of God can be realized.

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6) And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Daniel 9:4 And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep His commandments;

Notice who makes the covenant or promise that alone is able to perform it. God fulfilled His promise, He was a husband unto them, but they broke the covenant.

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: 32) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

The covenant is conditional on the part of Israel whether they obey or not.

Jeremiah 18:6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. 7) At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; 8) If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. 9) And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; 10) If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

1Kings 8:23 And he said, LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart:

Did Israel fail at representing and vindicating God's character?

Jeremiah 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

Since we see nothing but failures in man throughout history, how is it that God's covenant with man can be called an everlasting covenant seeing how a covenant is usually between two parties? It's simply because it is **God's promises** that are unconditional and everlasting. God knew that without an abiding intimate relationship with Himself, man would never be able to keep His covenant.

Isaiah 54:10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

Jeremiah 32:40 And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

Psalms 89:34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

Hebrews 6:16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. 17) Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: 18) That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

## 6. A covenant, the Old & New Testament (the only covenants differentiated by time):

Covenant and testament come from the same word in the Greek. The old covenant or the "old" testament was time related in that the sacrificial blood of bulls and goats were types & shadows of a future time period, the "new" covenant or the "new" testament referring to a new time because the sacrificial blood of types & shadows were fulfilled in the blood of Christ.

Hebrews 9:1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

The types and shadows of the sacrificial system were instituted for a time until Christ who fulfilled those types should come. The old covenant was designed to reveal the One to come who could fulfill the promise of a "new creature" in Christ Jesus. However, how beautiful that covenant was, it failed its purpose, so Christ came in the flesh to perfectly represent the Father to us, giving us an opportunity to be changed into His image.

Hebrews 9:9 Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; 10) Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. 11) But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12) Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption

for us. 13) For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14) How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

## 7. The New Covenant, A New Relationship

Why is there a need for a new covenant?

### God's original covenant with Israel:

The covenant was conditional.

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: 6) And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Israel promised they would keep the covenant.

Exodus 19:8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do.

Israel broke the covenant.

The covenant represented a relationship. Without that intimate relationship they could not fulfill their promises.

Jeremiah 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

### God's promise of a new covenant with the house of Israel:

God realizing that without that intimate relationship, Israel could not keep His covenant.

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

God promised Israel He would give them a heart to know Him, bringing them into a intimate relationship.

Jeremiah 24:7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.

Jeremiah 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Hebrews 8:11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

## The new covenant is based on better promises.

The new covenant is a better covenant established upon better promises, the promises of One that cannot lie and can do what He has promised, to write His law on our hearts and in our minds. Man without the divine connection with Christ can never keep the covenant. There would be no need of a new covenant if man had been willing to do his part of the covenant, to recognize his great need of the One who could empower him to keep the covenant.

Hebrews 8:6 But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. 7) For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. 8) For finding fault with them [Israel's promises], He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: 9) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. 10) For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: 11) And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. 12) For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. 13) In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

## What law did God promise to write in their hearts?

Jeremiah would have correctly understood the law to which God referred was the law of ten commandments. It would be the same law Israel was under, but written in a different place. It would not be written in a stony heart but in a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:25 Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. 26) A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27) And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

The new covenant promise was that God would write His laws "in their hearts" and put His spirit within them, and the result would be that they would "keep my judgments, and do them" out of love instead of an outward show of obedience in order to be saved.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

1John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.

God's covenant promise could then be realized and He could "take away their sins."

Romans 11:27 For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

## Is the new covenant for the Gentiles as well as with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah?

Some claim that Israel was under the old covenant but since Christ came, now we the Gentiles are under the new covenant and don't need to keep the law because we are under grace. Shouldn't that cause us to question why that claim can be made, seeing that the new covenant was a promise to Israel and not to the Gentiles? Are the Gentiles saved a different way than Israel?

Romans 2:28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: 29) But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

The Scriptures state that we are saved by grace. Does that include both Jew and Gentile?

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Are just those that are under the New Testament [covenant] saved by grace? The Scriptures also state that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Did it only abound after Christ?

Romans 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

Was there sin in the Old Testament times?

Romans 3:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

**What do these Scriptures mean, “after those days?”**

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Hebrews 10:16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

Is it time related or relationship related? Much confusion has developed over the misunderstanding of the phrase, “after those days.” Was God waiting for a specific time or was He waiting until man finally realizes that without God the new covenant promise of a new relationship where the law is written in our heart producing obedience through “the law of faith” could not be realized.

Functionally “After those days” does not refer to the change from the Old to New Testament, but to the time when a person comes to the conclusion that the promised new birth cannot be realized by “the law of works” but by “the law of faith.”

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Jude 24 Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

**Why the need for a new covenant?**

It is not until we that one realizes that “with men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”

Matthew 19:25 When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? 26) But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

When we have the faith of Abraham, we will be “fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.”

Romans 4:21 And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform.

The sole purpose of the new covenant is to bring us to the place where we can say with Paul:

2 Timothy 1:12 For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.

Philippians 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14) I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Because the “new covenant” or “everlasting covenant” is based on a new relationship and not time related, those who were faithful in the Old Testament era also had a “new covenant” relationship with Christ.

### **8) The “new covenant” is in fact the “everlasting covenant:”**

Notice how the parallel verses below confirm that the blood of Christ identifies the new covenant and the everlasting as one and the same covenant.

Hebrews 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Hebrew 13:20 Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

There is only One who can make an everlasting covenant to save man from sin and give him “the promise of eternal inheritance.”

Hebrews 9:15 And for this cause He is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

### **The covenant was originally with Christ, the promised seed:**

God had foreknowledge that man without realizing the need of the Divine connection could never keep the covenant and so the promise that was made to Abraham and his seed, specifically referred to Christ. It is through Christ that "all the families of the earth be blessed." Christ was the only One who could reveal the character of the Father and the immutability of the law and win man back to fidelity to God. It isn't the law that needed changing, it is man.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 17) And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. 18) For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

If the promised inheritance can be realized by the “works of the law,” then there is no need of a promise (or covenant).

Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2) And I will make of

thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3) And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Hebrews 2:16 For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on him the seed of Abraham. 17) Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18) For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.

**Finally God has a Man who has perfectly reproduced His character.**

John 17:4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

John 14:8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. 9) Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

Hebrews 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2) Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; 3) Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

Colossians 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

### **Christ is the new Adam**

**Where Adam failed, Christ was victorious!**

Romans 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come.

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

### **Christ is the new Israel:**

**Where Israel failed, Christ was victorious!**

Isaiah 42:1 Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon Him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. 2) He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. 3) A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. 4) He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law. 5) Thus saith God the LORD, He that created the heavens, and stretched

them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: 6) I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7) To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

The everlasting covenant will finally be fulfilled! It is only **in Christ** that we too can be victorious and thus vindicate God by revealing His character.

Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27) For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Romans 9:8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

2 Corinthians 1:20 For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

Matthew 24:3 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Revelation 14:12 Here is the patience [endurance] of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

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