

COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD ESSENTIAL TO LIFE EVERLASTING

GOD IS NOT in covenant relationship with the brute creation; for to them He has made no promises, although He has made a general provision for their needs. But we may understand that with all His intelligent creation He has a covenant, or agreement, to the effect that so long as they will do His will they shall possess life. Because of violation of that arrangement, the fallen angels were cast off, "reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day" (Jude 6), to receive their final punishment. When Adam and Eve were disobedient, they violated this covenant, and came under the sentence of death. "They like men [Heb. Adam], have transgressed the covenant; there have they dealt treacherously against Me." – Hos. 6:7, margin.

Because of Adam's transgression, the world is not in covenant relationship with God in any sense of the word. On the contrary, they are aliens, strangers, foreigners. (Eph. 2:11-13.) To *some extent* God brought Abraham back into covenant relationship, but *not fully* so. To the nation of Israel He made certain promises in the form of a Law Covenant, to the effect that whoever kept that Covenant would thereby demonstrate his worthiness to receive God's blessing promised to Abraham – that through him should all the families of the earth be blessed. – Gen. 12:3.

The Law Covenant was given to the Jewish nation; Moses was the mediator, for it was impossible to make the Covenant with Israel directly. Although they were unable to keep that Covenant because of inherited weaknesses of the flesh, yet it brought them a measure of blessing, as St. Paul points out. (Rom. 7:7.) While it lifted Israel above the degradation into which the Gentiles were falling,

nevertheless it did not bring the blessing for which they longed. It did not remove the death penalty – it did not give them life.

In the clear light now shining for the people of God, we see that the Law Covenant was only a type of a better Covenant to be made with Israel after the Church of Christ has been glorified; that Moses himself was only a type of a better Mediator; that the sacrifices of the Law were only types of the "better sacrifices" mentioned in Heb. 9:23, and that their priesthood was a type of the Royal Priesthood of the Gospel Age. – Heb. 7:27.

In the Scriptures, the words *covenant* and *promise* are used synonymously. The children of Israel were under the Abrahamic Covenant long before they entered into the Law Covenant. They are still under those Covenants. St. Paul says, "God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew." (Rom. 11:2.) Then he proceeds to say that after the Elect Church has been gathered from among the Gentiles, the favor of God will return to Israel; for they are still beloved for the *father's sake*. The fathers of Israel are the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Jews are, therefore, under the Abrahamic Covenant. – Rom. 11:25-28.

ISRAEL'S COVENANT RELATIONSHIP ACTUAL

An actual covenant relationship is one that is fully established – not merely suggested, or proposed, but *accomplished*. As Israel approached Mt. Sinai, God proposed to make a covenant with them. When all was in readiness, the Covenant was made through Moses as the mediator. The work of mediation was twofold; the first part was the sprinkling of the Law, representing the satisfaction of Justice; the second part was the sprinkling of the people, representing the bringing of the people into covenant relationship with God. That Covenant was then fully made, and has remained in operation ever since. – Exod. 24:3-8.

With the Israelites, God was making a covenant which was to last for centuries. It was good for only one year at a time, however. For the first year the people were in harmony with God, but at the end of that time the cancellation of sins ceased; for the blood of bulls and of goats cannot take away sin. The whole arrangement was only a type. At the end of that first year, the Day of Atonement was inaugurated, and sacrifices were made for another year. The fact that the Atonement Day sacrifices were repeated year by year shows that they were efficacious for only a year at a time, and so never really took away sin. – Heb. 10:1-4.

After the Day of Atonement, the people made various kinds of offerings. Some of these seem to typify the presentation of the worshiper himself to God, as an indication that he wished to do the will of Jehovah. Others were for sin-offerings, indicating that the worshiper realized that there had been a measure of wilfulness in his conduct. So rigid are the requirements of the Law Covenant that only one Jew, the Lord Jesus Christ, was able to keep them. This He could do because He was perfect, and the Law is the measure of a perfect man's full ability.

That the Israelites were in covenant relationship with God through Moses, the mediator of their Covenant, is demonstrated by the fact that Moses said, "He hath declared **[R5163 : page 20]** unto you His Covenant, which He commanded you to perform, even the ten commandments." (Deut. 4:13.) Therefore the Jew is bound by the Law so long as he lives. (Rom. 7:1.) Although the Law Covenant is not intended to be an everlasting arrangement with the Jew, yet the only ones who have been able to get from under it are those who have come into Christ; the remainder cannot rid themselves of it. But the days draw nigh when the Lord God will make a New Covenant with them through a new Mediator, The Christ, who will assist them to keep the Law satisfactorily and thus to be delivered from the evil features of their Covenant.

At the close of the Babylonish Captivity, the Prophet Daniel asked the Lord for an explanation of the prophecies relating to his people. The answer to his prayer is given in detail. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy." – Dan. 9:24-27.

For an elucidation of this prophecy, the reader is referred to STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES, Vol. II, Study III. All these things were to be done in those seventy weeks. Of this period of time, we find that the seventieth week was the most critical, for it was the week during which Messiah was to confirm the Covenant. In our Study III, we show that this week began October, A.D. 29 and closed October, A.D. 36 – from the beginning of our Lord's ministry until the conversion of Cornelius, the first Gentile to receive the Holy Spirit.

THE COVENANT CONFIRMED FOR ONE WEEK

During that period of seven years, God bestowed special favor upon the Jews. At the beginning of that week of years, our Lord, who was then thirty years of age, presented Himself to God as a sacrifice. This presentation was the first feature of the antitypical Atonement Day work, and corresponded to the sacrifice of the bullock in the type. Our Lord began the antitypical sacrifices; as St. Paul says, "Then said He, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God.' He taketh away the *first*, that He may establish the *second*." (Heb. 10:9.) Our Lord there began to take away the type and to establish the antitype. It was necessary not only to begin the work with the antitypical bullock, but to complete it and to take His place as the antitypical Moses, so to speak. This He did not accomplish until after His death on the cross.

Many other features of that antitypical Atonement Day work are not yet completed. It was a part of the Atonement for the High Priest to offer the Lord's goat and to take its blood into the Most Holy and to sprinkle it there. It was also a part of the Atonement Day work for him to come out and confess the sins of the people on the scape-goat, and a still further part for him to bless the people. During our Lord's ministry, He fulfilled various features of the types. At Calvary His work of sacrificing Himself was finished, and the Divine acceptance of that sacrifice was manifested.

The Prophet's statement that in the midst of the week Messiah would cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, implies that our Lord would there terminate the efficacy of the typical work for Israel as a people, and that they were rejected from Divine favor at the time that they crucified Him. A few days before His death, our Lord had said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matt. 23:38.) This rejection seems to have been symbolized when the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the *top* to the *bottom*, an indication of a breaking down, rather than of an opening up.

This rejection of the Jewish nation does not indicate the end of their Law Covenant. To the Church of Christ, who have been given the privilege of understanding the deep things of the Spirit of God, it appears that the efficacy of the typical sacrifices, which were offered year by year continually, ceased at the death of our Lord; and that since that time, as a nation they have had no Divine favor; but that the only ones who have had favor since then are those who have come out of Moses into Christ. The typical sacrifices continued until the time when Christ died, for the reason that Jesus Himself was under the Law, a part of which He fulfilled, and no feature of which can pass away until all has been fulfilled. – Matt. 5:17,18.

After our Lord's ascension, it was possible for greater work to be done than ever before. Under the Lord's blessing, thousands of Jews were gathered into the Gospel garner within comparatively a

few days. The work of our Lord was cut short nationally, but it increased the opportunity of the Jews individually. There were only five hundred Jews who believed on Jesus until after His death, when there were thousands added to the number. (1 Cor. 15:6; Acts 2:41.) During the three and a half years following our Lord's death, God did not recognize the Gentiles, for He had said that He would give seventy weeks to the Jews, and therefore He allowed no favor to go to the Gentiles until that period had expired.

After the expiration of the seventy weeks of years set apart for Israel, the Gospel began to go to the Gentiles, to gather from among them "a people for His name." (Acts 15:13-18.) During this Gospel Age, the antitypical Atonement work has been progressing. Our Lord has already offered the antitypical bullock in the sacrifice of Himself. Since Pentecost, He has been offering the antitypical goat – the Church class. This work has been in progress for more than eighteen hundred years. As soon as it shall have been finished, the blood will be taken into the Most Holy, to sprinkle the Mercy-Seat and to "make atonement for all the people," as in the type.

THE COVENANT OF SACRIFICE

The Abrahamic Covenant, as it was given to Abraham, is a complete covenant, whose provisions include all mankind; for it reads, "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:3; 28:14.) Its promise is to THE SEED: (1) Jesus; (2) The Christ, Head and Body; (3) the earthly seed through them. Its provisions extend to all who have the faith of Abraham. The promise of God was that a blessing shall come to all the families of the earth. This promise was confirmed by an oath on the part of God, so that by two immutable things – the oath and the promise of God – the heirs of the promise may be sure of its fulfilment. – Heb. 6:13-18.

The Seed of Abraham, which is to bless all the families of the earth, was intended to be a Spiritual Seed. Since Abraham and his

posterity were natural men, the only way by which they could become the Spiritual Seed was by the sacrifice of the earthly nature and the attaining to the spirit nature. The opportunity for making this sacrifice was first given to our Lord Jesus. By carrying out His covenant of sacrifice, He became the Head of the Seed which is to bring the blessing. – Psa. 50:5; 40:7-10.

During the Gospel Age, Jehovah has been selecting the members of this Spiritual Seed, that they may lay down their human life and earthly interests in order to attain to the spirit nature. The selection of this Seed has been the work of the Gospel Age. Soon the Seed will be all gathered; then the work of blessing the natural seed will begin, and through them the blessing will subsequently spread to all nations, as these shall accept the Divine favor.

The Church will always be in covenant relationship [**R5163 : page 21**] with the Father. The fact that He calls them *sons* implies that they are bound to Him. (John 1:12.) Every father is in covenant relationship with his children, and they with him. Every child has a responsibility to its father, and the father to the child. The fact that God has received the Lord Jesus and the Church as sons (Heb. 3:6) signifies that they are in covenant relationship with Him. St. Paul says, "We are the children of God; and if children, then heirs." (Rom. 8:16,17.) His statement not only *implies* that relationship, but *proves* it; for the sons have a right to the things which the father has provided for his children.

All who hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6), all whose souls long for God "as the hart pants after the water brook" (Psa. 42:1), and who, having found Him, have consecrated themselves to Him – these have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, witnessing with their spirit that they are sons of God. (Rom. 8:14-16.) As anointed sons these can discover in themselves the worthy traits of true sons – loyalty, zeal, energy, discretion, faithfulness, obedience.

There are, however, *conditions* attached to this covenant of sacrifice; there are certain requirements which *must be* fulfilled. All must become partakers of the *sufferings* of Christ, if they would participate with Him in the *glories* to follow. But the arrangements for keeping our contract are complete in Christ. Therefore if we put ourselves under His care, this covenant will be everlasting with us, and we shall have "the sure mercies of David." – Isa. 55:3.

COVENANT RELATIONSHIP TO BE RE-ESTABLISHED WITH HUMANITY

In Jer. 31:31-33, we read, "I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel and with the house of Judah...after those days." The expression, "those days," we understand to refer to Israel's "seven times" of punishment, promised by the Lord for the violation of their Law Covenant. This New Covenant is to be made with Israel alone; for God never purposed to make a covenant with the Gentiles. The New Covenant will properly be so called because it will take the place of the old Law Covenant, which God made with Israel and which [R5164 : page 21] was broken by them. After Israel shall have been fully established under their New Covenant, all other nations will be privileged to come into this relationship after the manner set forth in the Law. All the world will eventually be blessed thereby.

The New Covenant, then, is to be made with such of Abraham's descendants as are able to receive it. Since the people are not worthy to enter directly into relationship with God, that Covenant must have a Mediator. The Mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Church, His Body. The Scriptures indicate that the Mediator is nearly completed.

The Word of God distinguishes between a covenant and its mediator. A covenant does not go into operation until after it has been fully mediated. When Moses mediated the Law Covenant, he first offered sacrifices; then he took the blood of the animals and,

dividing it into two parts, sprinkled both the Book of the Law and the people. (Exod. 24:4-8; Heb. 9:19-24.) After he had done this, the Law Covenant was in force; and it will continue until superseded by its antitype, the New Covenant.

The Mediator of the New Covenant will be The Christ. For more than eighteen hundred years, our Lord has been offering the great antitypical sacrifices of Himself and His Church. As soon as He will have finished making application of the blood, He will have made satisfaction for the sins of the world. This act will correspond to the sprinkling of the Book by Moses. Divine Justice having accepted this arrangement, the Mediator will antitypically sprinkle the people; that is, he will show them how to come back into full accord with God.

The New Covenant will begin to swallow up the old Law Covenant as soon as the Kingdom is established. The Scriptures indicate that the first to receive it will be the Ancient Worthies. Raised from the dead to human perfection, they will form the nucleus of the new arrangement in the earth. Next in order will be those who have been known as Christians, but who have not been consecrated to *death*, and Jews who have been consecrated to the *Law*, but who have been *blinded*. Gradually the light will come to all who love righteousness and hate iniquity. Sprinkled from all sympathy with evil, they will make their declaration of full loyalty to God. In due time this light will spread to all kindreds and tongues and nations.

CHANGE OF HEART IN THE MILLENNIUM

The Prophet Jeremiah, speaking of the New Covenant (31:34), says, "They shall 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." The sins and iniquities of Israel will no longer be remembered against them. Christ will have appeared on their behalf and made satisfaction for their sins. They will then

be as free from original sin as the Gospel Church are. The Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ is the sufficiency for all. – I John 2:2.

The Prophet Ezekiel tells us that during the next Age the hearts of mankind will be changed. He says, "Thus saith the Lord God;...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." (Ezek. 36:22-27.) This *change of heart* is *entirely aside* from the *making of the New Covenant*. It will take a *thousand years* to remove the stoniness out of the hearts of mankind and to make them stand without a Mediator. Those who receive everlasting life must attain this condition; for all of God's creatures who would live forever must keep His Law perfectly.

During the Millennium, *God* will not recognize the people, *because of their imperfection*, their weakness; but all of their dealings will be through the Mediator, until they shall have been brought up to perfection. At the end of the thousand years, they will be delivered up to the Father, unblamable before Him. (I Cor. 15:24.) God will then receive them as sons, heirs of the *earthly blessings* which He has provided for mankind – the things given to Adam. The very moment when the merit of Christ is applied for the world is the same moment when they will be turned over to the Mediator. Then they will be in covenant relationship with God, but only *through the Mediator*, until they shall have reached human perfection and shall enter into this relationship *directly* with the Father.

The New Covenant will continue *everlastingly*; and as it is proper to say that Moses mediated the Law Covenant, so we may say that Christ will mediate the New Covenant. But it would not be proper to say that Moses *is now* the Mediator of the Law Covenant; for a covenant does not need a mediator after it has been mediated. So the New Covenant will need no Mediator after the thousand

years. But the *title* "Mediator" may belong to Christ to all eternity, just as one who has been a judge, ever after receives the title of "Judge."

At the end of the thousand years, when the Messiah [R5164 : page 22] will have accomplished His work of Restitution, He will cease to act as Mediator. But the Covenant will continue to stand; for if that *relationship* with God were to be *removed* from the people, they would have *no blessing of everlasting life*. That blessing *depends* upon *covenant relationship* with God. Under the favorable conditions of the New Covenant, *whosoever will* may have an opportunity to become the children of The Christ, the Seed of Abraham.

At the conclusion of the thousand years, the willing and the obedient receive the commendation, "Well done," and will be accepted as fit for the condition of everlasting life on the human plane. Those who prove to be unworthy of life will be destroyed in the Second Death.

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