

The Covenant from Eternity

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God made an Everlasting Covenant with Abraham to give him the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession (Gen. 17:7-8). But the eternal nature of this covenant must date long before Abraham, since Abraham never possessed the land of Canaan. In fact since Abraham never received Canaan as an everlasting possession, the assurance of receiving the Promised Land rested upon the assurance of the resurrection and everlasting life, which could only come through the Promised Seed. The Promised Seed is the hinge pin that unites the Everlasting Covenant with the Everlasting Gospel. The two terms are an Identity in mathematical language. The gospel of Jesus Christ was kept secret since the world began (Rom. 16:25) until the mystery first began to unfold in the Garden (Gen. 3:15). So likewise the Everlasting Covenant in the same manner was unfolded, as necessity required it, following Adam's fall. Moreover, Scripture reveals in Zech. 6:12-13 that a Counsel of Peace existed "between them both," namely the Father and the Son, who would "rule" and "be a Priest on the His throne." This Counsel of Peace is known as the Covenant of Peace which would never be removed in Isaiah 54:10.

Yes, God made a Covenant with Abraham and with Israel at Sinai. Moreover, He made the same covenant with mankind in Garden following Adam's transgression. It is evident that the Edenic Covenant concerning the Promised Seed was unilateral and unconditional, since it was spoken to the serpent. And since fallen man, in his natural, unregenerate state, is incapable of keeping God's covenant, God made His covenant with *the* Man, whose name is the BRANCH (Zech. 6:12). The intimacy of this Everlasting Covenant, dating back into eternity, is evident in Psalms 110 where the Father speaks to the Son, "sit at My right hand...You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizadek." The same intimacy is revealed in the dialogue between the Father and the Son in Isaiah 49, "You are My Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Here Christ is identified as Israel who would be given as light to the Gentiles and who would be salvation to the ends of the earth. Moreover, the One brought forth from the womb **would be given as a covenant**, to the people to restore the earth and bring about the inheritance (49:8). The Everlasting Covenant is solely a work of God originating between the Father and the Son. The covenant was made between the Father and the Son;

the covenant promise was given by the Father to the Son; the covenant was executed solely by the Father and the Son; and the Son, Himself, is the *covenant* given to world.

The Old and New Covenants.

In reality the essence of the covenant in both the old and new covenants is identical. In both cases the covenant is God's unilateral promise to give to mankind a Seed who would restore man and the earth to its original perfect condition. Moreover, this Promised Seed would become Heir of the world. The Covenant at Sinai in Ex. 19:5 is simply a harking back to the Covenant which God established with Abraham, whereby he would have an Heir who would form the basis of resurrection and eternal life (Ex. 6:3-4). The earthly sanctuary typology, referred to as the Old Covenant in the Book of Hebrews, simply shadows forth the truth of the gospel that was to be unveiled in due time. However, the Israel's response to the God's request to keep His covenant at Sinai gendered forth to bondage ("all that the Lord has said we will do"), since they depended in large measure on their own strength. Nevertheless, the covenant at Sinai from God's perspective was the Everlasting Covenant.

The idea of "keeping" God's covenant in both Hebrew *shamar* and Greek *tereo* conveys the meaning of "taking care of" or "cherishing" or "guarding" something carefully. Without controversy, it is evident that it is impossible for man to obey God's promise or covenant – man does not obey promises. But it is also evident that man may certainly "take care of" or "cherish" and "nurture" God's promises in His Covenant that He made between Himself and the Son. The "keeping" of God's covenant becomes possible only when we recognize the nature of God's covenant, namely, that it is entirely of God just as the gospel of grace is entirely of God. Man may break God's covenant by refusing to believe His unilateral promises, which leads to disobedience, but God can never break His covenant with mankind established from eternity (Jer. 33:20-22).

The Covenant from Eternity in Galations

The Faith of Jesus. The eternal, unilateral nature of God's covenant, and the One to whom He gave the covenant promises, and how He established the covenant are perhaps most clearly set-forth in the Book of Galations. A superficial reading of the book

masks the underlying beauty of the gospel in Galations. This beauty is uncovered when the student sees the narrative substructure that underpins chapters 1-3, which is “the faith of Jesus.” This narrative substructure has been previously documented extensively by R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus*, (Eerdmans, 2002).

For example the confusing triple redundancy in Gal. 2:16 of the “faith in Jesus Christ,” “believed in Christ,” and “faith in Christ” disappears when the text is literally translated. *“Knowing that a man is not justified from the works of the law, except through faith of Jesus Christ, even we believed in Christ Jesus, in order that we might be justified from faith of Christ, and not from the works of the law; because no flesh shall be justified from the works of the law.”* Moreover, Paul emphasizes the point in 2:17 that justification is solely a work of Christ and not of faith. Man is “justified by Christ” (the faith of Jesus Christ is the ground of man’s justification) and not as a result of man’s faith in Christ. Placing emphasis on man’s faith in Christ may frustrate the grace of God (2:21), where now the extent of man’s faith becomes his Savior rather than the faith of Jesus, which is the gospel.

The Galations received the Spirit from the hearing of faith. But the hearing of faith came from Paul’s portrayal of Christ crucified before the very eyes. The faith that the Galations heard was faith of Jesus when Paul proclaimed in His redemptive act for mankind. Just as the Galations believed when they heard of the faith of Jesus, so likewise “Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness” when he too heard the faith of Jesus and the portrayal of Christ crucified (Gal. 3:5-6). “Abraham saw My day and was glad.” Abraham saw that day through the promises of the Seed and the cross that was shadowed forth through the sacrifices including his only begotten son Isaac.

God promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed through him (Gen. 12:3), namely through his Seed (22:18). This promise was the gospel that Abraham heard. All nations, without exception, would be blessed through the Seed coming from the loins of Abraham. The gospel is all-inclusive, and moreover, this same gospel proclaims that all nations would be blessed unilaterally. A literal rendering of Galations 3:8 pinpoints the nature of this unilateral blessing to all nations. *The scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations from faith, preached the gospel to Abraham*

beforehand saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." This unilateral blessing would be accomplished not from the faith of nations, but **from the faith of Jesus** that would result in an acquittal (redemption) from the curse of the law (Gal. 3:8, 13). The Gospel that was preached to Abraham as set forth in Gal. 3:8 is proclaimed in two equivalent ways: 1) God would justify the nations from faith (faith of Jesus) and 2) In you (Abraham) all the nations would be blessed. The blessing would result from the Seed that would come from Abraham. Moreover, the all-inclusive blessing to all nations would insure that all nations would be redeemed (acquitted) from the curse of the law by virtue of the work of the Seed. But only those who respond to the faith of Jesus by believing and receiving the blessing are blessed personally along with believing Abraham (3:9).

The Recipient of the Covenant. The establishment of the Everlasting Covenant is utterly dependent upon the faith of Jesus. Abraham could receive the inheritance of the promised land of Canaan and become heir of the world, only if he became legally entitled to the promise. That legal entitlement came from his Seed to whom the covenant promise was given, and who would redeem mankind from the curse of law (Gal. 3:13-16). Here Paul equates the Covenant promise with the gospel. Although Abraham was the recipient of the covenant promise, his reception of that promise would be contingent upon the prior reception of the promise by the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16). Moreover, God Himself ratified the covenant in the eternal ages of the past when He gave the promise to His Son (3:17). Thus we read, "the Lord has sworn with a oath and will not relent, You are a Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4). Evidently, the Everlasting Covenant revolves around the Father and Son. Yes, the covenant is between the God and the human race; but more specifically it is between God and the New Head of the human race, namely the Second Adam. The fate of mankind and the inheritance would hinge upon the consummation of the Everlasting Covenant between the Father and the Son. It would depend on the willingness of Second Adam to carryout the covenant by faith alone and ultimately to become Heir of the world.

The Perpetuity of the Law. The law was given at Sinai 430 years after the promise of the inheritance was given to Abraham in order to emphasize the nature of sin, and the law would continue to serve that purpose until the coming of the Seed. This

coming of the Seed in Gal. 3:19 must be the Second Coming of Christ, since the law would continue to emphasize the nature of sin until that time. Furthermore, the Seed would not receive the promised inheritance of the new earth, and become Heir of the world, until after His Second Coming. Paul again identifies the Seed, not Abraham, as the Principal One to whom the promise was given (Gal. 3:19).

The Faith of Jesus and the Establishment of the Covenant. The Promised inheritance could be conveyed only through the righteousness of faith. “The promise that he would be heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his Seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Rom. 4:13). But there is only one who has proven to be righteous and truly faithful and that One is Christ. Therefore the promise of the inheritance must reside in and through the faith of Jesus. Yes, Christ became Heir of the world through righteousness of faith. And we may become joint heirs with him by believing this good news. The positive proof of this truth is found in Galatians 3:22. *But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise from the faith of Jesus might be given to those who believe.* It appears evident that the faith of Jesus, not our faith in Jesus, is the only means by which promised inheritance of the covenant comes to fruition. The Faith of Jesus, which is the underlying narrative of Galatians 2-3, is the gospel and is sole means by which God established the Everlasting Covenant.

Implications of the Covenant from Eternity.

The Everlasting Covenant is a unilateral agreement between the Father and Son originating in ages past. The Father gave the promise of inheritance of the world to the Son. Moreover, the Son executed the covenant through faith and He became the Author of righteousness by faith. The stark contrast between Abraham’s response to the covenant and Israel’s response to the covenant at Sinai is still evident today. Abraham caught a clear glimpse of the divine nature of the covenant and believed God that it was true, and His obedient response was accounted to him for righteousness. Failure to appreciate the divine, unilateral nature of the Everlasting Covenant led Israel to rely upon their own strength. This misapprehension of the covenant that God reiterated at Sinai transformed His Covenant into the “old covenant” of righteousness through the law, which gendered

unto bondage. The transformation of the Everlasting Covenant into a covenant of bondage has always existed. Cain's response to the covenant of Genesis 3:15 gendered unto bondage, whereas Abel's response gendered unto righteousness by faith and liberty. Even Abraham fell into the trap of the "old covenant" with Hagar, which resulted in righteousness by the works of the flesh. The sign of circumcision was to be a constant reminder to Abraham and his descendants so that they would never to fall into "old covenant" mind set. The sign of circumcision was to be a permanent seal of righteousness by faith that resulted from appreciating the divine unilateral nature of the Everlasting Covenant.

The old (first) covenant is so called because it was ratified with the blood of goats. This took place prior to the ratification of the Everlasting (New) Covenant at the cross. When properly understood, the old covenant led to salvation by grace alone through an appreciation of what those sacrifices symbolized. Such was the case with Moses, Joshua and Caleb. The old covenant, inherently, was not faulty. The misapprehension of the covenant by the people generated the faultiness. This faultiness developed with Abraham and Hagar where, in Galatians 4, she is allegorically identified as Sinai. Abraham's transient experience transformed the Everlasting Covenant, which became emasculated into a covenant of works of the flesh. This was a persistent problem throughout sacred history and is true today. The two covenants are not matters of time; the two covenants are matters dealing with the condition of the heart.