

GOD'S EVERLASTING COVENANT

We have all read, or least we have heard of, the covenant that God had instituted with the people of Israel as found in Deuteronomy 27-30. Many of us, however, have abandoned the idea of the re-establishing of the covenant that God made with the children of Israel as they were getting ready to leave the desert, just prior to them entering into the Promised Land – Israel. We have a tendency to think that it is the “Old Covenant” and that it has no meaning to the born again child of God.

We must always remember that the words that God declares are never just for one moment in time but rather, they are for ever. The Bible is very clear when it tells us that God’s Word will never fail and that it is meant to always be looked upon and adhered to. That means the whole Bible.

Unfortunately, many churches, leaders and believers at this very moment in time seemed to have forgotten that basic principle about God and His Word. We must always remember that the Bible is God’s revelation of Himself, so it deserves our most careful attention and it is always relevant to the born again child of God, even in this day and age.

This is the most practical reason for us to study, understand and live by the Word of God. We must never forget that. We should want to know, learn and choose to be guided by the Word of God because **only the Word, the entire Word, will last forever**. The Word of God tells us this in the following scriptures.

*“Your word, LORD, **is eternal**; it stands firm in the heavens.”* (Psalm 119:89)

*“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God **endures forever**.”* (Isaiah 40:8)

*“I, the Lord, **do not change**.”* (Malachi 3:6)

*“Heaven and earth will pass away, but **my words will never pass away**.”* (Matthew 24:35)

Hebrews 13:8 tells states *“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever.”* If all that Jesus is never changes but always remains, therefore, the same is then true concerning the Word that we have in our Bibles, from Genesis to Revelation. The Word of God never changes. Jesus is the Word therefore the Word is forever just as Jesus is forever because they are both one in the same.

Jesus is the Word of God. It tell us this in John 1:1, "*The Word was with God and the Word was God.*" This is clearly referring to Jesus. John goes on to say that this "Word" lived and dwelt with man as he writes in John 1:14, "*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*" The Word of God is Jesus. The Word, Jesus, always was and is full of grace. He is the absolute truth that we are to live by, even to this day.

When people tell us that the Old Testament is not for us any longer, or they tell us that most of the Gospel accounts are no longer valid for the believer to read; or that 1,2,3 John is incorrect; or that the Book of Revelation is no longer needed for the true believer; and the list goes on; we must all take a stand and say "no" to those who teach and preach such untruths. **Every word that we have in our Bible never ever perishes.** The Word of God is for us to always read and glean from to learn more and more of the truths of our God. It tells and shows us how we are to now live our lives as children of the living God.

God gave His people, the Israelis in the Old Testament and now to all true believers in Jesus today, His pure and unadulterated Word so that we can now live by His Word and be His children while we are still on this earth. Why? The reason is simple – so that we can tell and show as many people as possible the Good News of salvation and eternal life that only comes by, in and through Jesus.

However, we must remember that there is a "code of conduct" that a true believer must live by as they are living this life and as they are telling others about Jesus. This "code of conduct" is not just a reference to the child of God's lifestyle. It is more than that. It is the essence of who the child of God truly is!!!

We must grasp the understanding that believing in Jesus is not simply just believing in Him and "trying" to do the right thing, although that is fundamental. It is actually, who we now are. We must not just "try" but we must actually live out the lifestyle of a true child of God, the lifestyle of a born again believer in Jesus. That lifestyle is shown to us and expressed through the words that are in the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.

We sometimes get confused when we discuss the Old Testament. We get caught up with all the sacrifices and “rituals” that we read of in the Old Testament. I admit, that can get us a little confused. However, we must grasp the fact that we have been set free from those sacrifices.

Jesus was indeed the “final sacrifice.” Therefore, we no longer need to perform or do any of those sacrifices found in the Old Testament to enter into a right relationship with God. Jesus paid it all and He was “the final sacrifice.” That means that the sacrificial system has been totally fulfilled by Jesus on the cross. That section of the Law has been fulfilled and therefore, it has ended.

However, there is the moral or “lifestyle” section of the Law that is still very much in play for each and every true believer. That is where the Holy Spirit now comes into play. He comes and helps us to live out that lifestyle. If we notice, the Ten Commandments do not discuss any animal sacrifices but rather they are all about the moral lifestyle of a true child of God.

The Old Testament and the New Testament both tell us the two basic truths of living as a true child of God through salvation in Jesus. Yes, there is a lifestyle that we are to express and live by as born again children of God. The two basic truths of that lifestyle are these, which by the way, are found in **both** the Old and the New Testaments. They are:

- 1) To love the Lord your God with all your heart... found in Deuteronomy 6:5; 10:12; 30:6 and Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:37.
- 2) To love your neighbor (others)... found in Leviticus 19:18 and Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:39; Luke 10:37; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8.

Let’s turn to the Book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is actually a renewal of the “covenant” between Yahweh, God and Israel. As we read Deuteronomy, we see that it consists of three sections spoken by Moses to the Children of Israel (**and to true believers today**) just prior to the Children of Israel entering into the Promised Land. For the believer today, it points to and speaks to the true believer entering into that “spiritual Promised Land” known as “eternal life.”

In the first “section” (Deuteronomy 1:6-4:40) Moses exhorts the people to remember and learn from their past experiences in both Egypt and while wandering in the desert these past 40 years. In the second “section” (Deuteronomy 4:41-26:19) Moses reviewed the laws that the

people were to live by in the Promised Land. In the final “section” (Deuteronomy 27:1-30:20) Moses exhorts the people to keep the covenant that God had made. God was actually re-establishing the covenant with His people. Remember, this was the next generation. The first generation had died in the wilderness. God was reiterating His covenant now to them.

Moses called upon the people to renew their commitment to obey their part of the covenant. God would always keep His part of the covenant. The people had to make their choice: obey and experience God’s blessings or choose to disobey and experience the curses. God gave them the choice but He also gave them the two different aspects of those choices.

God will give Israel blessings in the land. He will give them fertility, and prosperity as long as Israel kept faithful to God and His teaching. That is found in Deuteronomy 28. However, God starts off in Deuteronomy 27:14-36 with the aspects that will take place if the people **do not** adhere to this “covenant” that God had made them, His people. He spells out in Deuteronomy 27 that their disobedience, if they choose to do so, will lead to curses coming upon them.

In Deuteronomy 28, God then spells out the blessings that will come upon all those that keep His covenant. Notice the comprehensive nature of the blessings that would result from living in obedience to God’s Word. It is short but powerful:

Blessed shall you be in the city;

Blessed shall you be in the country.

Blessed shall be the offspring of your body,

the produce of your ground,

the offspring of your beasts,

the increase of your herd.

Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.

Blessed shall you be when you come in;

Blessed shall you be when you go out.

However, in Deuteronomy 28:15-68, God again through Moses, declares even more curses that will come upon the people if they choose to not allow God to be their God and if they choose not to follow His ways, His commandments. Yes, God loved them and He loves us. But, the Israelis were given, just as **we are now** given, the choice to keep all His ways or not.

It is always a choice. The people's choice. Your choice...my choice. Why? Simply because God is a righteous and just God. His ways are pure and holy. He will never force His way upon us. But He is faithful to let us know what the rewards or consequences will be according to the choices we ultimately make.

We must not walk in our own ways nor in our own understanding. That will lead to death and destruction. In other words, we must not do what we want to do. We must live according to God and **His ways**. Why, because our ways have been perverted by the ways of this world through the lies and deceptions of the forces of darkness.

In Deuteronomy 29:1,2, God through Moses declares the covenant again to His people. It is important to be reminded of the fact that it was not God that needed to renew a commitment to the covenant. Rather, it was the people that needed to renew their end of the covenant. God always keeps His Word. God always keeps His promises. God always keeps His covenant. And God's covenant is forever!!! It is always there, even if we break it.

Remember, a covenant is literally a contract. In the Bible, it is an agreement between God and his people in which God promises to keep and take care of His people. They were to simply acknowledge and worship Him and allow God to be their God. We read continually in the Word that God **will be our God** and we **will be His people** – only if we allow Him to be our God. That is the basis of the covenant we have with God.

It is a covenant in which God would take care of and protect all of His people - the people back then, as well as the true believer today. We need to trust and we need to walk in God's ways. This comes down to us putting our total dependency, all of our our heart, as well as all of our actions in expressing and living out the true worship of our God.

Simple obedience is the essence of what true worship is. Jesus told us this in John 4:23,24 when He tells the woman at the well, *"But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* We now worship God with our born-again spirit. We are to worship God by living in and walking in His truth – the way God's Word tells us to live. God's Word is absolute truth. (John 17:17)

In Deuteronomy 29:13, Moses tells the people as well as us, today, *“Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.”* Yes, Moses, in God’s stead, implores the people to **“keep the words of the covenant.”** We must keep and walk in the covenant that we now have through Jesus Christ. We must keep the words of our God in their fullness. We must willingly yield ourselves to God and His Word. We have been given, through our faith in Jesus, the Holy Spirit who will help us in our journey through this life.

If we continue to read Deuteronomy 29:10-15, we find some very interesting things for us to live by even in this hour. Notice, that the leaders were listed first. Why? As leaders, they were to set the example that the people were to follow. Yes, our leaders are to help lead and guide us in this covenant with our God.

Unfortunately, many of the leadership in the Body of Christ these days are leading the people in a different direction than the true covenant with our God. If we notice that in these scriptures we see that every member of the society was represented, including children and even foreigners. Yes, the “leaders” were, and still are, called to be the examples to lead all of God’s people in the correct ways of the Lord.

Second, notice the use of the words “this day” or “today” in verses 10, 12, and 13. God, speaking through Moses did not want for the people to delay in their response. He wanted the people to make a commitment to the covenant **“today.”** There was a note of urgency in Moses’ appeal. They had more than adequate information to make an intelligent decision. The same is true for people today. The decision needs to be made and it needs to be made now – with no hesitation.

Thirdly, notice that the covenant would clearly establish them as God’s people (Deuteronomy 29:13). The covenant obligated God to the people, but it also obligated the people to God. They were to be His people. They were to depend upon Him and to live their lives according to the terms of the covenant and be His people.

Now, through Jesus, we need to simply follow in His footsteps. We are to follow after and do the works of the Kingdom. Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit to help us throughout our lives so that we can be able to live and bring others, in the power of His might, into the Kingdom.

Fourth, notice also that the covenant was to include not only those present but also those not present on that day (Deuteronomy 29:14-15). The decision of that generation who were present at the covenant renewal ceremony would have an impact on the future generations that would come. Our decision to walk with the Lord will impact our children, grandchildren and great grand children – if we choose to walk in or if we decide not to walk in all of God’s ways. You see it is not just ourselves that are impacted. Hmmm.....

If we continue to read on, Deuteronomy 30 tells us the great promises that God will bestow upon all those who believe and keep His covenant. It tells us that God will gather all those who will keep His covenant from all over the world. He will gather them and they will come into the “land” that God has prepared for His people. In the Old Testament this was a promise to the Israelis that they will enter into the “Promised Land” – the Land of Israel.

However, this was just a fore-shadow of what is really to come. It spiritually means that God will soon bring, from all over the world, all of His people, the “one new creature in Christ,” those who know and have accepted and received Jesus as their personal Savior and Lord, into the land that is truly flowing with “milk and honey.” They will come into the true “Promised Land” – the Kingdom of Heaven and then, ultimately, the “New Jerusalem.” (Revelation 21:2)

Deuteronomy 30:9,10 tells us that our God will pour onto His people blessing upon blessing. Yes, God will do all of this and much, much more. God will rejoice over us. However, God again reminds us that we must hear and **keep** His Word. We must keep our end of the covenant. We must allow the Living Word, Jesus Christ, to dwell and live within our heart, our soul, our very lives and then express that onto others.

Yes, God is indeed a mighty God. God will indeed save us, His people. He will rejoice over His people with a joyful song. And, what is most important to every true believer, is that **in that day**, we will be with our God. He will forever be our God and we will forever be His people. We will truly rest in His love forever and ever and ever!!! Amen!!!