

The Promise: God's Everlasting Covenant

#4 – “An Everlasting Covenant”

Seventh-day Adventist Adult Sabbath School Lesson

1st Quarter, 2003 (for Sabbath, January 25, 2003)

Scripture and E. G. White references from Graham Maxwell's Audio Lesson Study
(Times given are approximate and are based on the on-line version)

5:44

(Quoted from lesson Quarterly's "Memory Text" – words in brackets and missing leading "And" per lesson.)

Genesis 17:7, RSV

I [God] will establish my covenant between me and you [Abraham] and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.¹

31:31

At this time the rite of circumcision was given to Abraham as "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Romans 4:11. It was to be observed by the patriarch and his descendants as a token that they were devoted to the service of God and thus separated from idolaters, and that God accepted them as His peculiar treasure. By this rite they were pledged to fulfill, on their part, the conditions of the covenant made with Abraham. They were not to contract marriages with the heathen; for by so doing they would lose their reverence for God and His holy law; they would be tempted to engage in the sinful practices of other nations, and would be seduced into idolatry. {PP 138.1}

God conferred great honor upon Abraham. Angels of heaven walked and talked with him as friend with friend. When judgments were about to be visited upon Sodom, the fact was not hidden from him, and he became an intercessor with God for sinners. His interview with the angels presents also a beautiful example of hospitality. {PP 138.2}²

34:05

(Portions in italics quoted in lesson.)

Abraham had honored God, and the Lord honored him, taking him into His counsels, and revealing to him His purposes. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" said the Lord. "The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know." *God knew well the measure of Sodom's guilt; but He expressed Himself after the manner of men, that the justice of His dealings might be understood.* {PP 139.1}³

35:48

(Italic portion quoted in lesson, and "tables of stone" referred to.)

If man had kept the law of God, as given to Adam after his fall, preserved by Noah, and observed by Abraham, there would have been no necessity for the ordinance of circumcision. And if the descendants of Abraham had kept the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign, they would never have been seduced into idolatry, nor would it have been necessary for them to suffer a life of bondage in Egypt; they would have kept

¹ *The Revised Standard Version*. 1971. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

² White, E. G. (1890;2002). *The Story of Patriarchs and Prophets as Illustrated in the Lives of Holy Men of Old; PP; Conflict of the Ages Series, Vol. 1; Patriarchs and Prophets* (Page 138). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

³ White, E. G. (1890;2002). *The Story of Patriarchs and Prophets as Illustrated in the Lives of Holy Men of Old; PP; Conflict of the Ages Series, Vol. 1; Patriarchs and Prophets* (Page 139). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

God's law in mind, and there would have been no necessity for it to be proclaimed from Sinai or engraved upon the tables of stone. {PP 364.2}⁴

41:43

(Portions in italics quoted in lesson, others paraphrased.)

As Jesus came into the temple, He took in the whole scene. He saw the unfair transactions. He saw the distress of the poor, who thought that without shedding of blood there would be no forgiveness for their sins. He saw the outer court of His temple converted into a place of unholy traffic. The sacred enclosure had become one vast exchange. {DA 157.2}

*Christ saw that something must be done. Numerous ceremonies were enjoined upon the people without the proper instruction as to their import. The worshipers offered their sacrifices without understanding that they were typical of the only perfect Sacrifice. And among them, unrecognized and unhonored, stood the One symbolized by all their service. He had given directions in regard to the offerings. He understood their symbolical value, and He saw that they were now perverted and misunderstood. *Spiritual worship was fast disappearing.* No link bound the priests and rulers to their God. Christ's work was to establish an altogether different worship. {DA 157.3}⁵*

45:53

(Portion in italics *not* quoted in lesson.)

The sacrifice required of Abraham was not alone for his own good, nor solely for the benefit of succeeding generations; but it was also for the instruction of the sinless intelligences of heaven and of other worlds. The field of the controversy between Christ and Satan--the field on which the plan of redemption is wrought out--is the lesson book of the universe. Because Abraham had shown a lack of faith in God's promises, Satan had accused him before the angels and before God of having failed to comply with the conditions of the covenant, and as unworthy of its blessings. God desired to prove the loyalty of His servant before all heaven, to demonstrate that nothing less than perfect obedience can be accepted, and to open more fully before them the plan of salvation. {PP 154.3}

Heavenly beings were witnesses of the scene as the faith of Abraham and the submission of Isaac were tested. The trial was far more severe than that which had been brought upon Adam. Compliance with the prohibition laid upon our first parents involved no suffering, but the command to Abraham demanded the most agonizing sacrifice. All heaven beheld with wonder and admiration Abraham's unfaltering obedience. All heaven applauded his fidelity. Satan's accusations were shown to be false. God declared to His servant, "Now I know *that thou fearest God [notwithstanding Satan's charges], seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me.*" God's covenant, confirmed to Abraham by an oath before the intelligences of other worlds, testified that obedience will be rewarded. {PP 155.1}

It had been difficult even for the angels to grasp the mystery of redemption--to comprehend that the Commander of heaven, the Son of God, must die for guilty man. When the command was given to Abraham to offer up his son, the interest of all heavenly beings was enlisted. With intense earnestness they watched each step in the fulfillment of this command. When to Isaac's question, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham made answer, "God will provide Himself a lamb;" and when the father's hand

⁴White, E. G. (1890;2002). *The Story of Patriarchs and Prophets as Illustrated in the Lives of Holy Men of Old*;PP;Conflict of the Ages Series, Vol. 1;Patriarchs and Prophets (Page 364). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

⁵White, E. G. (1898;2002). *The Desire of Ages*;DA;Conflict of the Ages Series, Vol. 3;Desire of Ages (Page 157). Pacific Press Publishing Association.

was stayed as he was about to slay his son, and the ram which God had provided was offered in the place of Isaac--then light was shed upon the mystery of redemption, and even the angels understood more clearly the wonderful provision that God had made for man's salvation. {PP 155.2}⁶

53:54

(Portions in italics quoted in the lesson.)

For centuries God bore with the inhabitants of the old world. But at last guilt reached its limit. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." He came out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth, and by a flood cleansed the earth of its iniquity. {1888 569.2}

Notwithstanding this terrible lesson, men had no sooner begun to multiply once more, than rebellion and vice became widespread. Satan seemed to have taken control of the world. The time came that a change must be made, or the image of God would be wholly obliterated from the hearts of the beings He had created. All heaven watched the movements of God with intense interest. Would He once more manifest His wrath? Would He destroy the world by fire? The angels thought that the time had come to strike the blow of justice, when, lo, to their wondering vision was unveiled the plan of salvation. {1888 569.3}⁷

⁶White, E. G. (1890;2002). *The Story of Patriarchs and Prophets as Illustrated in the Lives of Holy Men of Old;PP;Conflict of the Ages Series, Vol. 1;Patriarchs and Prophets* (Page 154). Review and Herald Publishing Association.

⁷*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials;1888. 1987;2002* (Page 569). Ellen G. White Estate.