

## Sabbath School Lesson #10 – The Covenant and the Blueprint – 30 Aug-5 Sep 2025

**C**hrist desired the children of Israel to keep His covenant with Abraham, not for them to enter into another covenant as they hastily did. “And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do” (Exodus 24:3).

**Sunday: The Book and the Blood** – Read Exodus 24:1–8. What roles do the reading of the Word of God and the sprinkling of blood play in the ratification of the covenant between God and His people? “Everything the Lord has said we will do” (Exod. 24:3). How many times have you said the same thing, only to fail? What is the only solution? To answer these questions and more, we need to understand the two covenants – the “old” and the “new”.

The New Covenant is God’s one-sided promise to write His holy law on human hearts – the Old covenant is the vain promise of the people at Mt Sinai to obey perfectly. The New is ‘Believe and live’ – the Old is ‘Obey and live.’ The New says that salvation is totally by God’s grace through faith – the Old says salvation is by faith but it is also by our good works. The New Covenant is a heart-appreciation of the love (agape) which constrains to perfect heart obedience (2 Corinthians 5:14-15) – the Old is egocentric ‘trust’ motivated by hope of reward or by fear of punishment. The New Covenant is everlasting – the Old covenant is temporal. The New Covenant produces ‘under grace’ motivation – the Old is the spiritual experience of being “under the law,” or under reward/fear motivation, it “gendereth to bondage” (Galatians 4:21-24). The New Covenant says justification is entirely of grace – the Old says justification is by our obedience. The New is righteousness by a faith ‘which works’ – the Old is by our own ‘sanctified works.’ The New wants Christ to return for His honour and vindication – the Old covenant wants Christ to return for our own reward, ‘so we can go home to glory.’

What is called “new” came first before what is called “old” covenant. The “new” did not start at Sinai, it started in Eden and was already instituted when at Sinai the people entered into the “old” covenant. Abraham, way before Sinai, lived under the “new” covenant. The “new” is also called the covenant of grace. On the genesis of the “new” covenant, Ellen White tells us this: “The covenant of grace was first made with man in Eden, when after the Fall there was given a divine promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head” {PP 370.2}. “This same covenant was renewed to Abraham in the promise, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Genesis 22:18. This promise pointed to Christ” {PP 370.3}. “Though this covenant was made with Adam and renewed to Abraham, it could not be ratified until the death of Christ. It had existed by the promise of God since the first intimation of redemption had been given; it had been accepted by faith; yet when ratified by Christ, it is called a new covenant. The law of God was the basis of this covenant, which was simply an arrangement for bringing men again into harmony with the divine will, placing them where they could obey God’s law” {PP 370.4}. “That the new covenant was valid in the days of Abraham is evident from the fact that it was then confirmed both by the promise and by the oath of God — the “two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie.” Hebrews 6:18” {PP 371.1}. On the “old” covenant, Ellen White says, “Another compact — called in Scripture the “old” covenant — was formed between God and Israel at Sinai” {PP 371.1}. “The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law; and they readily entered into covenant with God. Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.” Exodus 24:7” {PP 371.4}. God never gave Israel the Old covenant, for the old covenant is the promises of the people, and the New Covenant is the promises of God. The two covenants are not matters of dispensation or time: they run side-by-side all through history since the fall of man. The two covenants are matters of heart conviction. It was possible for people living in Old Testament times to be under the New Covenant if they had true faith in Christ; it is possible for us living today to be under the Old Covenant if we do not understand the gospel that was preached to Abraham. Abraham’s descendants, coming out of Egypt 430 years later, fall into the Old Covenant when they made a promise to the Lord, “all that the Lord hath spoken we will do” (Exodus

19:8). God did not ask them to make that promise; they broke it soon afterwards. In the New Testament, Peter's promise never to deny the Lord was an Old Covenant (Mark 14:29-31).

When the Jews at Sinai volunteered to work God's works for Him, they undertook their own salvation. They ignored the history of Abraham, and God's covenant with him, to which their attention had been specially called. But God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; and so, in harmony with His covenant with Abraham, He did not cast off the people, but instead He endeavoured to teach them of Himself and His salvation, even out of their unbelief. He gave them a system of sacrifices and offerings, and a daily and yearly round of ceremonies that were exactly in keeping with the law which they had elected to keep, namely, the law of works. Of course, this sacrificial system could not save them any more than could the broken law of works out of which it grew. Any man who had understanding enough to know the nature of sin and the necessity for atonement, had sense enough to know that pardon and righteousness could never be obtained by the ceremonies connected with the tabernacle. The very offering of a sacrifice indicated that death is the wages and fruit of sin. But anyone could see that the life of a lamb, a goat, or a bullock, was not worth as much as a man's own life. None of those animals, nor all of them together, could answer for the life of a single man. Thousands of rams, or even a human sacrifice, could not atone for a single sin (Micah 6:6-7). The faithful among the people understood this well. David said, after he had committed a great sin, "Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it: Thou delightest not in burnt offering" (Psalm 51:16). And God, through the prophets, taught the people: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me?" "I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats" (Isaiah 1:11). "Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto Me" (Jeremiah 6:20). There was no virtue in them, for the law had only "a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things," and could "never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Hebrews 10:1).

It would of course have been better, nay, the very best thing, if the people of Israel had preserved the simple and strong faith of Abraham, in which case they would have had no tabernacle but the one "which the Lord pitched, and not man" (verse 2); no High Priest except Christ Himself, "made an High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek" (verse 1); no limit to the priesthood, but every one of them a priest "to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5); no law but "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ" (Romans 8:2); in short, only the reality, and not the mere shadow. But since the people did not believe, it was a wonderful exhibition of God's kindness and love and forbearance, that He gave them what must have served as a continual object lesson. The very "weakness and unprofitableness" (Hebrews 7:18) of the law of works was always apparent to every thoughtful person; and when the soul became awakened, that law whose only profit was conviction, and whose only power was death, directed them to Christ, to whom it shut them up for freedom and life. It made evident to them that in Christ, and in Him alone, they could find salvation. The truth as it is in Jesus, is the truth that sanctifies.

**Monday: Seeing God** – Read Exodus 24:9–18; what do we learn here? In the giving the law at Sinai was seen God's throne – "the throne of grace," to which we are exhorted to come boldly (Heb. 4:16). Moses and the elders saw the throne of grace. We too may come boldly to the throne of grace – that awful throne whence comes lightnings and thunderings – and find mercy there. The law makes sin to abound, "but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The cross was at Sinai, so that even there was God's throne of grace.

**Tuesday: Power to Obey** – Read Ezekiel 36:26–28. What is described herein is the only way we can be brought into a condition where we can keep God's law. We must experience a change of heart. The same process is declared in the thirty-first chapter of Jeremiah.

**Wednesday: In the Midst of His People** – Read Exodus 25:1–9. God desired to dwell in them, in their hearts, but for their unfaithfulness reduced to dwelling merely among them in temples made by hands (see Acts 7:48, Isaiah 66:1-2, 1 Kings 8:27, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

**Thursday: Filled With the Spirit of God** – Read Exodus 31:1–18. It was "the Spirit of Christ which was in them" (1 Peter 1:11). "It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ" – Ellen White {9LtMs, Lt 66, 1894, par. 18}.