

Sabbath School Today

With the 1888 Message Dynamic

The Promise God's Everlasting Covenant

Lesson 2: Covenant Primer

“Did Ellen White Reverse Herself on the Two Covenants?” It appears *on the surface* that after the turn of the century in 1903, she did. People are perplexed by statements that *apparently* give that impression. But to assume that she did reverse herself is to charge her with instability. This creates an insurmountable problem, yet some seem to be drawn that way.

We take the view that if we let her explain herself, she did not reverse her position on the covenants. Statements that appear *superficially* to be contradictory show only a change of emphasis the Holy Spirit impressed her to make, while throughout she held firmly to the Bible teaching of the two covenants.

This topic has generated decades of dispute (before our time—centuries). In our search for clarity and blessed unity, let us briefly define the terms of the Bible view as Ellen White understood it when she was shown in vision that the 1888 message view is true:

(a) The covenant God made with Abraham is the true definition of the New Covenant. The promise the

people made at Mount Sinai to do “all that the Lord hath spoken” is never defined in Scripture (or in Ellen White’s writings) as the New Covenant. There can be no amalgamation of the two; the Bible treats them as distinct. One is “bondage,” the other is “the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free” (Gal. 4:24; 6:1).

(b) When Scripture speaks of “God’s covenant” as the New Covenant, it is always *His* promise. Any promises that God makes are always “better promises” than our own (Heb. 8:6).

(c) The “faulty” promises the people made at Mount Sinai are defined as the Old Covenant “obey and live” philosophy. Never does the Bible say that God asked for any promise from Abraham. He asks us to choose to be obedient by faith, to give ourselves to Him, and to make a public profession of same by baptism. Shortly after 1888, Ellen White defined the difference between “choosing” and “promising” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 47):

“Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you. . . . What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right

action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise.”

(d) Abraham’s response to God’s New Covenant promises is defined as the only one that God wants from us: he “believed God, and it [his faith] was accounted to him for righteousness.” That was genuine faith that worked righteousness in his life.

(e) The Waggoner/Jones view of the two covenants was the principal item of objection from the opposing brethren. For many, the rejection continued until in 1907 the Pacific Press and the Review and Herald both chose to support the view of those opposed to the 1888 view, and thereafter to suppress it. This was understandable because by then Jones and Waggoner had given the brethren what they thought excuse to reject their message.

(f) Before 1888, says Ellen White, we had preached the Old Covenant so much that we had become “as dry as the hills of Gilboa.” Looked at in historical context, the 1888 message was the New Covenant in essence; and the position of the opposers was the Old Covenant in essence. Thus “1888” is what God intended should bring us into the Promised Land quickly, “the beginning” of the loud cry message and of its preparatory latter rain. But “we” made it become our Mount Sinai and Kadesh-Barnea experience.

After the 1901 General Conference did Ellen White reverse her stand on the 1888 view of the covenants,

and embrace the view of those who rejected it? We must look at the evidence. The statements that trouble some are found in *Manuscript Releases*, Vol. One, in the section entitled “The Covenants” (pp. 104-122). Readers assume superficially that this is an accurate, balanced collection of Ellen White’s statements on the subject. But it is not.

It was compiled before or about 1957 and does *not* include her most decisive statements on the covenants that she made in 1890 in her rebuke to Uriah Smith and others who wanted to reject the Waggoner view (April, 1890), and in her position expressed in *Patriarchs and Prophets* (August 1890, p. 372), that also supported Waggoner.

(1) She made this statement in 1904:

“The covenant that God made with His people at Sinai is to be our refuge and defense. The Lord said to Moses: ‘Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. . . . And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words. . . . And all the

people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do' (Exodus 19:3-8).

"This covenant is of just as much force today as it was when the Lord made it with ancient Israel" (*The Southern Watchman*, March 1, 1904; 1MR 122).

Let us read this statement carefully:

(a) What is "the covenant that God made with His people at Sinai"? It is described in the next sentence as Exodus 19:5, 6, which was a simple renewal of the New Covenant promises to Abraham.

(b) But since the people substituted their vain promise, God had to "ratify" their promise with the blood of animals. *Only in this sense did God "make" the Old Covenant with them.* If they would not humble their hearts and keep step with Him, He must humble Himself and keep step with them, because His love will not let Him abandon them.

(c) Ellen White does not say that the people's "faulty" promise "is of just as much force today." What is "of just as much force today" is God's promise.

(d) What did the Lord say to the people? [1] They were to "obey My voice," that is, *listen* to His voice reverently and willingly. (The meaning of the Hebrew verb *shamea* is translated some 760 times as "hear," 196 times as "hearken," and only 81 times as "obey" (KJV). The latter is not the root meaning of the verb, but a derivative meaning.) The word "voice" is

a giveaway for interpreting the word *shamea*. [2] They were also to “keep My covenant,” that is, to preserve and value the promise He had made to their father Abraham. (The Hebrew verb is *shamar*, which means to “cherish,” to “treasure,” and in that sense to “keep.” See its use in Genesis 2:15.)

(2) Another statement which appears *on the surface* to support a legalistic view is this:

“‘And taketh hold of My covenant’ (Isaiah 56:6). This is the covenant spoken of in the following Scripture.

“‘Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed,’—in truth, earnestness, and sincerity—‘and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: And ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

“‘And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do’ (Exodus 19:3-8).

“This is the pledge that God’s people are to make in these last days. Their acceptance with God depends on a faithful fulfillment of the terms of their agreement with Him. God included in His covenant all who will obey Him. To all who will do justice and judgement, keeping their hand from doing any evil, the promise is, ‘Even unto them will I give in Mine house and within My walls a place and a name better than of sons and or daughters. I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off’ (Isaiah 26:5)” (Letter 263, November 12, 1903; 1MR 116).

(a) A superficial reading of this passage forces Ellen White to say that God’s people today should make Old Covenant promises as ancient Israel did at Mount Sinai, in spite of all that the Bible says about the “bondage” the Old Covenant “engenders.” Further, it appears to say that God does not accept the repentant sinner until he has first demonstrated perfect obedience to His law. Seriously, does Ellen White teach this legalism?

This would contradict all that she has said about the Father accepting the human race “in Christ” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 113). If we must demonstrate a “faithful fulfillment” of our promised total obedience before we can be “accepted” of God, we are no better off than those who can never have assurance of salvation until their dying breath. Only by distorting what Ellen White said can we come to this conclusion.

She does not teach this legalism here or anywhere else.

In the same section of these statements in 1MR she pleads with us to be careful how we read her (or the Bible). The post-1901 era was especially critical: “It is dangerous now to be unable to discern the truth. Those who would minister the Word of God must be men who know His will. They must be careful lest they misunderstand the Word of God, and make mistakes which will need to be rectified” (MS 64, 1903; 1MR 109). To represent Ellen White as teaching legalism, wouldn’t that be a “mistake which will need to be rectified”? Let us look further:

(b) Again she quotes the same words of the Lord in Exodus 19:3-8—God’s New Covenant promises. But this time she inserts a clarification in her own words that indicates she saw the need to dig deeper to understand “*obey My voice.*” It’s “listen reverently.” (Note the two dashes she inserted.) She is upholding the Lord’s promises as the essence of the New Covenant; the people were to *listen*, to respond as *Abraham did*. She went out of her way this time to turn aside any tendency to understand those words in an Old Covenant sense.

(c) Unless we make her “an offender for a word,” we must understand her expression, “This is the pledge that God’s people are to make in these last days.” It’s a *heart response to God’s New Covenant*

promises that she has just quoted. By “pledge” she means a heart commitment, an exercise of “the power of choice [that] God has given to men.” God has made His New Covenant promises; she says we are now under moral obligation to respond—positively. But she is clearly not saying that our response is a “transaction,” or a “bargain,” or a mutual “agreement” we make with Him in which He considers us on equal terms with Himself. Our part in no way contributes to our salvation.

(d) A “pledge” in this sense is as far from an Old Covenant promise of the people as Mount Zion is far from Mount Sinai. We give ourselves to Him; we register our choice and make public our profession of it by baptism. “But drops of grief can ne’er repay This debt of love I owe; Here, Lord, I *give myself away*— ‘Tis all that I can do.” That committed motivation fueled by *agape* is what she means by “pledge.”

(e) We must lead children to “give themselves” to Jesus as a response to His great sacrifice for us; but we must avoid leading them to make fear-motivated promises to obey. It is impossible that Ellen White should want us to repeat ancient Israel’s sad Old Covenant history.

(3) In what way does our “acceptance with God depend on a faithful fulfillment of the terms of [our] agreement with Him”?

(a) In Ellen White's view, our "agreement with [God]" is our *heart acceptance of His promises which leads us to give ourselves to Him*. It is our heart-reconciliation with Him—"agreement" with Him. It is the same as Abraham's fervent "amen" uttered in Genesis 15:6 (the Hebrew word for believe is *amen*). When Abraham said "amen" it meant that he was in total harmony with God, "agreement with Him."

(b) Our "faithful fulfillment of the terms" of that "agreement with Him" is to keep the faith. It's our choice to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free" (Gal. 6:1). It's our continual positive response to the convictions of His Holy Spirit. God's "acceptance" of us is His public recognition of our "listening positively" to His "voice." It does not mean that our good works in any way induce the Lord to "accept" us. He already did that when He accepted His Son's sacrifice in our behalf (Eph. 1:6; *The Desire of Ages*, p. 113).

(c) When the people promised to keep God's law perfectly, their hearts were far from being in "agreement" with Him. The context shows how they were afraid of Him and were alienated from Him.

(d) Ellen White's use of the phrase "all who will obey Him" is defined in her previous paragraph: she defines obedience as a heart response "in truth, earnestness, and sincerity."

(4) Another statement that has often been misconstrued is this:

[Again Exodus 19:1-6 is quoted]. “Here are found the terms of a covenant that God desired to make with the children of Israel. If they would fulfill the pledge [commitment, choice] He asked of them, He would greatly bless them . . . if they would comply with the conditions He asked of them. They were not merely to profess to worship God, but were to obey [Hebrew, listen reverently to] His voice indeed. The wonderful love of God for the human race is here revealed. The fulfillment of the promises of this covenant involved the humiliation and death of Christ for a world perishing in sin. But for man to receive these blessings, it is necessary for him to obey the law of God. Only those who keep His commandments can enter in through the gates into the city of God. . . .

“Then He left it with them to decide whether they would comply with the conditions of God’s promises. They accepted the words of God, and said, ‘All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do.’ . . .

“The people did not fulfill their promise, and they therefore did not receive the blessings God wished to bestow upon them. By following their own impulses, they pursued a course that disqualified them for being recognized as God’s peculiar treasure. . . .

“The covenant God made at Sinai is for the Israel of God for all time. Herein is revealed God’s purpose

for us, if we will only cooperate with Him. The Lord Jesus today will gather His people as a hen gathers her chickens beneath her wings, if they will only come to Him.

“If we comply with the conditions God laid down for Israel, if we come before God in the beauty of holiness, and worship Him in Spirit and in truth, we shall receive the blessings that God promised to them” (MS 64, 1903; 1MR 104-109).

(a) There is nothing here that can be construed as contradicting Ellen White’s previous endorsements of the New Covenant. If we let her define her terms, she writes in complete harmony with herself.

(b) “The terms of the covenant” again are the heart-felt “amen” that Abraham uttered. Total obedience and endless good works flow out of that heart response. There is no encouragement of even the slightest acceptance of antinomianism. New Covenant faith only produces and enhances true obedience.

(c) What does it mean to “comply with the conditions God laid down?” The answer is clear. What God wanted from them was the same heart-response that Abraham gave.

(5) A careful perusal of the other statements in this 1MR section on the covenants reveals nothing

that can be reasonably construed as contradicting Ellen White's 1890 stand on the covenants.

The vision assuring her that the Lord had given the correct view to young Waggoner was given on March 16, 1890. She published her acceptance of his view in *Patriarchs and Prophets* on August 26 of the same year.

There are numerous other statements in this same section in 1MR that repeat her previous endorsements:

(a) The emphasis is consistently on God's promises: "God's people are justified through the administration of the 'better covenant,' through Christ's righteousness. A covenant is an agreement by which parties bind themselves and each other to the fulfillment of certain conditions" (1MR 110; 1897). She is talking about men's promises to each other, as Waggoner speaks in his *The Glad Tidings*, p. 71 (we quote these words to show how she was reflecting what Waggoner was teaching):

"The covenant and promise of God are one and the same. This is clearly seen from Galatians 3:17, where Paul asserts that to disannul the covenant would be to make void the promise. In Genesis 17 we read that God made a covenant with Abraham to give him the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. Galatians 3:18 says that God gave it to by promise.

God's covenants with men can be nothing else than promises to them. . . .

“After the Flood God made a ‘covenant’ with every beast of the earth, and with every fowl; but the beasts and the birds did not promise anything in return. . . . That which makes all the trouble is that even when men are willing to recognize the Lord at all they want to make bargains with Him. They want it to be an equal, ‘mutual’ affair—a transaction in which they can consider themselves on a par with God. But whoever deals with God must deal with Him on His own terms, that is, on a basis of fact—that we have nothing and are nothing, and He has everything and is everything and gives everything.”

(6) Did the Holy Spirit impress Ellen White to give a different emphasis after 1901?

(a) She had warned during the decade following the 1888 Conference that if the special and unique message “the Lord in His great mercy sent” at that time should be refused, Heaven would be forced to withdraw the latter rain, and the loud cry would be postponed.

(b) Until she died in 1915, she considered the full gift of the latter rain as something still future, although she had earlier recognized its beginning in the 1888 message. But when the message was “in a great degree” refused, the blessing therefore had to be withdrawn, awaiting a more sympathetic willingness

on our part to respond. (The obvious preparation step would have to be repentance.)

(c) In the post-1901 years she had to be very careful in repeating her earlier warm endorsements of the Waggoner/Jones message because both “special messengers” were then beginning to falter. She had warned that their possible failures would not in any way weaken the truth of their message; but she was now hampered in her public support of them. But today with the “special messengers” now long in their graves, it would not be wisdom for us to seek an excuse to disparage their message. That would constitute “a fatal mistake” (Letter S24, 1892).

SECOND QUARTER 2021
SABBATH SCHOOL INSIGHT #2
APRIL 10, 2021
“COVENANT PRIMER”

This week’s lesson entitled, “Covenant Primer”, allows us to step back and view the Biblical covenant teaching from a 30,000-foot view. The week at a glance at the bottom of Sunday’s lesson, asks some thoughtful questions such as “what does the word *covenant* mean?”, “what elements make up the covenant?”, “what was the covenant that God made with Noah?”, and “is the covenant just a deal, or does it have relational aspects to it?” “What is the essence of the New Covenant”. We will address these questions in this insight. Sunday begins our study with the theme, “Covenant Basics”, while Monday through Thursday, points us to specific examples of covenants including Noah, Abram, Moses/Israel, before transitioning to the New Covenant. So, we will do what we are asked to do, which is to set the stage for an in-depth study of the covenants over the next 11 weeks.

The New Testament authors choosing a word for God's covenant with humanity, used the word *diatheke* rather than the other Greek word that could have been used, *syntheke*. The word *syntheke* refers to a mutually negotiated agreement while *diatheke* is used to describe a will. The significance of this is that the term *diatheke* suggests that **the terms are defined by God**, it is **God's initiative**. In other words, it is not a business contract, it's more of a relational concept as we will read in the language of God to Moses in Exodus 6:1-8 and Jeremiah 31:33, 34, which is also echoed by Paul in Hebrews 8. We have all been involved in various types of contracts and contract negotiations over the years, from buying a home, to employment, to remodeling a home etc. and as we review these contracts in our experiences, we recognize that major aspects of contracts are assuring a good outcome for ourselves, as cheap as possible. We may assign penalties if our standards such as deadlines are not met. But in God's covenant with mankind, He commits Himself to us whole-heartedly even to death if need be. Of note, as part of this He anticipates this same whole-hearted devotion. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death." Revelation 12:11. The ASV says, "and they loved not their lives even unto death." The first point is to recognize that the divine covenants in Scripture rather than mutually negotiated, resemble a will more than a contract in that the terms are defined by God Himself. We see this clearly in the passages cited above in Exodus, Jeremiah, Hebrews and many other passages as we will observe.

All the covenants are expressions of **the everlasting covenant** which is rooted in the Godhead. "Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule on His throne; So, He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zechariah 6:13. Ellen White references this and says, "The relation between the Father and the Son, and the personality of both, are made plain in this scripture also: "Thus speaketh Jehovah of hosts, saying, Behold, the man whose name is the Branch: And He shall grow up out of His place; And He shall build the temple of Jehovah;...And He shall bear the glory, And shall sit and rule upon His throne; And He shall be a priest upon His throne; And the counsel of peace shall be between Them both." Zechariah 6:12, 13, [A. R. V. 8T 269.5. Note the capital letters in this translation. This passage is a reference to the intra-Divine consultation, the parity agreement amongst the Godhead from before time began.](#)

The SDA Bible commentary states that the phrase "counsel of peace" "describes the agreement between Father and the Son for the salvation of man." Ellen White says that "Before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Father and the Son had **united in a covenant to redeem man** if he should

be overcome by Satan. They had clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge that Christ should become the surety for the human race.” DA 834.2. Read Genesis 15: 8-17 and Daniel 9:26. We see that the everlasting covenant was a covenant of redemption for the human race. All other covenants of God including the ones discussed in this week’s lesson, will bear this theme.

Sunday’s lesson, “Covenant Basics”, points out that the Hebrew word translated as ‘covenant’ is *berith*. The term “everlasting covenant” occurs sixteen times in Scripture and all sixteen times the term “everlasting covenant” refers to the covenants made with Abraham, Israel and Moses at Sinai, David and Noah. It included at least three aspects. *It included **all** of God’s creation, (the rainbow in Genesis 9:16), it included His law, and it included the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. These three characteristics are in every one of the covenants God initiated with mankind.* Every covenant initiated by God was based on the everlasting truths of the gospel. We see this clearly in the Three Angel’s Messages which start off with the Everlasting Gospel. Every covenant then is a proclamation of this same everlasting gospel, and reflects the truths of the everlasting covenant that existed in the Godhead from before time began (2 Timothy 1:9). All the covenants God made with the individuals mentioned in this week’s lesson are one in the same but slightly different. We will address this difference later. If we review the questions we began with in the first paragraph, we have begun to develop some answers.

What does the word *covenant* mean? It is a divinely initiated will for the purpose of redemption and relationship. It was God’s whole-hearted commitment to all His creation even to death, expecting in return a response of whole-hearted commitment to Him even to death. What elements make up the covenant? We have listed the essential elements above, but we will expand a bit more. What was the covenant that God made with Noah? It is exactly the same everlasting covenant as is the one with Abram, Moses and David. Is the covenant just a deal, or does it have relational aspects to it? The greatest answer to this question is what we see in the Godhead. There are so many passages of Scripture that describe this amazing love that binds the members of the Godhead together. We see it in Proverbs 8, and throughout the Gospels. The covenants are relational.

The old and new covenants have been pitted against each other, but are they really at odds with each other. The covenant at Sinai has been portrayed as perhaps legalistic and works-based while the new is based on faith and the gospel. Let us look at these covenant examples and see how they relate to the New Covenant.

Exodus 6:2-8 “And God spoke to Moses and said to him: “*I am* the LORD.³ I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by* My name LORD I was not known to them.⁴ I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers.⁵ And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and **I have remembered My covenant.**⁶ Therefore say to the children of Israel: “*I am* the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.⁷ I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God Who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.⁸ And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you *as* a heritage: I *am* the LORD.”

Jeremiah 31:33, 34 “But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.³⁴ No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, “Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.”

Exodus 19:4-6 “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and **keep My covenant**, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine.⁶ And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

Exodus 20:1, 2 “And God spoke all these words, saying: “*I am* the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

Exodus 34:6, 7 “And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,⁷ keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.”

Hebrews 8:8-12 “Because finding fault with them, He says: “*Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD*, when I will make a new covenant with the

house of Israel and with the house of Judah—⁹ *not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.* ¹⁰ *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, “Know the LORD,” for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.* ¹² *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*

Genesis 12:1-3 “Now the LORD had said to Abram: “Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Galatians 3:8, 9 “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.”*⁹ So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.”

Two books have been a blessing to me over the years in appreciating the covenants: The Everlasting Covenant by E. J. Waggoner and In Granite or Ingrained by Skip McCarty and I recommend them to everyone reading. In Skip McCarty’s book he identifies what he terms the “DNA” of the everlasting covenant which is throughout the New covenant and the old covenant. We will look briefly at this “DNA”. The DNA of God’s covenant consists of four promises or provisions, which He made to redeem humanity from sin and restore back into His image. As we examine this DNA, we note that the DNA elements reason from effect back to cause. The first promise or provision is: “I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts” Jeremiah 31:33 and Hebrews 8:10. This is **sanctification**, the righteousness of God, a process that we cannot do for ourselves, but that God wants to fulfill in us through the working of the Holy Spirit. Promise/Provision #2: “I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Jeremiah 31:33 and Hebrews 8:10. This is the purpose of the covenant that God has initiated, **reconciliation**. “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”¹¹ And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom we have now received the reconciliation. Romans 5:10, 11. “Now all things *are* of God, Who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ,

and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19. Promise #2 then is reconciliation.

Promise #3 is one that Israel as a nation forgot and which God promised Abraham from the beginning in Genesis 12:3: “And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” This promise stated in Jeremiah 31:34 and Hebrews 8:11 says, “No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD”. An important part of the covenant blessings of God and part of the DNA is to share the good news of the gospel. “But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” Israel was to be a kingdom of priests. We are also called to proclaim the last day message, the Three Angel’s Messages of Revelation 14, the message of justification by faith and Christ our Righteousness to a world that needs to hear and respond. This message was given to this church with clarity at the 1888 General Conference session. It needs to go forward with a loud voice. We are to be a **mission** driven people. The third DNA marker is **mission**.

Lastly the fourth promise or DNA marker is found in Jeremiah 31:34 and Hebrews 8:12: “For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” “*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.*” This fourth DNA marker is **justification**.

Sanctification, reconciliation, mission and justification, these 4 DNA markers identify all of God’s covenants with His people. These 4 markers are the everlasting gospel expressed in God’s covenant of redemption. We should then expect to find them in every covenant including the old covenant as well. As we look carefully at the Old Testament passages, we see them! Exodus 20:1, 2, Exodus 34:1-7, Exodus 6:1-5, Genesis 12:3, Genesis 9:16, Leviticus 26: 11-13, Deuteronomy 30:11-16, Exodus 19:4-6, Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 53:5, 6 all speak of God’s progressive revelation of His covenant – Jesus Christ the Messiah.

Let us end with a few thoughts from Waggoner:

“The cross was at Sinai, so that even there was God’s throne of grace.” “The living stream from Christ was flowing at Sinai, even as ‘the pure river of water of life, clear as crystal’ proceeds ‘from the throne of God and of the Lamb’. The Everlasting Covenant, E.J. Waggoner p 225.

“Someone will probably think to ask, ‘How about the covenant made at Sinai? Do you mean to say that it was the same as that under which Christians live, or that it was good? Are we not told it was faulty?... Very pertinent questions, and ones that are easily answered. It is an undeniable fact that grace abounded at Sinai, -- ‘the grace of God which bringeth salvation, -- because Christ was there with all His fullness of grace and truth.’ Ibid 228

“It will be seen by comparing the terms of the new with those of the old, that the end contemplated by each is the same.” Ibid 231

As we study this topic dear to the heart of those blessed by the 1888 message may even we open our hearts to a deeper understanding of this vital message.

May God bless us all,
Lyndi Schwartz