



# God's One and Only Covenant

by Edward A. Thompson

As we study the scriptures seeking the truth and blessing of God, we must remember that before truth can shine, error must be pushed aside. For example, before Isaac could really step-up and be who he was called to be, Ishmael had to be cast out of the picture. Similarly, before the truths of prophecy can shine, we must cast aside its man-inflicted errors. In effort to this, we have cast aside dispensational theology and exposed its errors. However, we can't stop just there; we must now allow Isaac (truth and blessing) to ascend to his rightful place.

Dispensational theology (multiple covenants) sometimes still leaves us with a two-covenant mentality. We tend to think Old Testament saints were saved by Law and New Testament saints saved by the cross. I would like to attempt in this article to show that no one—neither in Old Testament nor New Testament—was ever saved by the Law but instead were all saved by God's one eternal covenant.

To begin, let's first look at what Paul had to say about the Law.

## **Galatians 2:16**

(16) Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

## **Romans 3:20**

(20) Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Paul is clearly showing that no one could ever be saved by the Law. If this were not the case, then there would be no need in it being done away, and there would have been no need for Jesus to have come to bring mankind salvation. Let's look further:

## **Galatians 3:10-11**

(10) For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

(11) But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

Paul claims the Law will only curse those under it and shall justify no one. Then the writer of Hebrews continues on in this vein and tells us that the Law can make nothing perfect.

**Hebrews 7:19**

(19) For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

So if the Law did not save people in the Old Testament, what did? The answer is they were all saved by the cross of Jesus Christ! Let's examine Hebrew 9:15 to see this:

**Hebrews 9:15**

(15) And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

This passage clearly states that by the death of Jesus, the people under the "first testament" were redeemed and now have access to the ETERNAL INHERITANCE. The only difference between them of the "first" and us of the "new" is Jesus has now obtained the resurrection and given us the Holy Ghost, which couldn't be given until Jesus' resurrection as found in John 7:38-39. Because of this, we can now be regenerated in our minds and have the Laws of God in our hearts.

The Old Testament people wanted what we have, which is the Holy Ghost. (See Hebrews 11:10) They looked forward to its outpouring with expectant hope. Today we do not have to hope for it because we can have it as a present reality. This union with God's Spirit benefits us with experiencing more of God in this present life. Yet, both the saints of the first and newer testament periods will still all go to the same eternal place and will still all experience the same eternal resurrection. How is this possible? Through the finished work of Jesus' cross through which saints of old were saved by looking forward to it, and saints after it are saved by going back to it.

In what some call "The Faith Hall of Fame," (Hebrews 11) we read of many Old Testament greats who did great acts of faith toward God, yet its 39<sup>th</sup> verse says they all died having "received not the promise."

**Hebrews 11:39**

(39) And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

Then in verse 40 it says we receive something better than they, it then goes on to say that the Old Testament saints are made perfect by us.

**Hebrews 11:40**

(40) God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

What does this mean? It means they all died in the hope that God would one day come and fulfill the promise He made to their fathers. Jesus came and fulfilled these promises by setting-up His

kingdom and by pouring-out the gift of His Holy Ghost. From these fulfillments, the faith of the Old Testament saints is ratified and confirmed, and they are now justified in God's eyes.

The Bible contains only one plan of salvation and one eternal covenant to the human race to fulfill this plan. This was the plan from the beginning of the world and before.

### **2 Timothy 1:9-10**

(9) Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,

(10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

### **Romans 16:25-26**

(25) Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

(26) But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

### **Hebrews 13:20**

(20) Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

### **1 Corinthians 2:7**

(7) But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:

So when did this covenant begin? The first promise is alluded to in Genesis 3:15, but the actual covenant was not set-up until Genesis chapter 15. In this chapter God performs the covenant ceremony based on the ancient style of sealing a covenant.

In Bible days when two men, parties or tribes would make a covenant with each other there were certain ceremonies to be performed. First the leaders would discuss and agree on the terms of the particular covenant. Then each leader, or covenant initiator would take their best animals, kill them, and divide the bodies in half. They would both do this and make two piles of the divided carcasses. Next, each leader would slit open his right hand and the two men would join hands and let their blood intermingle. Now with right hands joined they would walk through the pieces of the animals in a figure eight motion (the figure eight symbolized the infinitive flowing nature of the covenant), which would seal the covenant. After this the only thing that could void the covenant would be if one of the men or parties broke their terms of the covenant.

This is the exact way God set up the covenant of Jesus Christ with Abram. The terms were God promised Abram many descendants (Genesis 15:5), and God said He would make him "a great nation." (Genesis 12:2) The word "Nation" in the *Strong's* is H1471 "Goy," and is defined as a "foreign nation; hence a *Gentile*; also (figuratively) a *troop* of animals, or a *flight* of locusts: -

Gentile, heathen, nation, people.” This shows this covenant was to be not exclusive but inclusive to all peoples of the world. Abram then took the animals and divided them as seen in the next verse:

### **Genesis 15:9-10**

(9) And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.

(10) And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.

Then God puts Abram in a trance, Genesis 15:12, and He passes through the pieces in the form of a furnace and a lamp all by Himself.

### **Genesis 15:12**

(12) And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.

### **Genesis 15:17**

(17) And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

You might be saying, “Hold it right there! Why didn’t Abram walk through with Him?” The reason was because if part of the covenant depended on Abram, then he could mess-up and void out the covenant. However, by God taking both His and man’s place in the ceremony, He also took-on both roles thereby making it an unbreakable and immutable covenant. (See Matthew 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; 1Timothy 3:16)

God being the sole purveyor of this covenant is the focus of Hebrews 6.

### **Hebrews 6:13-18**

(13) For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself,

(14) Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

(15) And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

(16) For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

(17) Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

(18) That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

This covenant was initiated by God in Genesis 15, but it was confirmed, ratified and validated by Jesus on the cross. There are many scriptures proving Jesus confirmed the covenant, two of which are seen by comparing Daniel 9:27 with Matthew 26:28. As you read these remember that “covenant” and “testament” carry the same meaning.

**Daniel 9:27**

(27) And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

**Matthew 26:28**

(28) For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Daniel showed Jesus would make a covenant with many; and Matthew showed Jesus fulfilled this with His own blood. Paul also wrote of Jesus being the One who was to confirm this same Abrahamic covenant promise.

**Galatians 3:17**

(17) And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

**Romans 15:8**

(8) Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

When Jesus went to the cross He confirmed the same covenant that had already been made, the same way you or I would confirm a hotel reservation or flight that had previously been made. Not only did He confirm the covenant, but He also reformed it.

**Hebrews 9:10**

(10) Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

He put some amendments to the covenant: He added water baptism in Jesus' name, and He added Spirit baptism.

Galatians 3:14 concludes by telling us plainly that receiving the Holy Ghost is the total fulfillment of the covenant God made with Abraham.

**Galatians 3:14**

(14) That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

In the Old Testament they looked forward to the Holy Ghost; now, since its over 2,000 year old outpouring on the Day of Pentecost, we are still able to enjoy the fullness of God's one and only saving covenant. But whether you refer to Adam, Eve, Abel, Moses, David, the thief on the cross, Peter, Paul or someone alive today, they all share the same salvation and all share the same hope of living in eternity by the same one and only covenant—Jesus' cross.

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