

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Exodus 19 :3-8; 34 :27, 28; Deuteronomy 4 :12, 13; 5:2, 3 ; 11:8, 9

LESSON 158 Junior and Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be Justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24).

[BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

Exodus 19:1-25

¹ In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai.

² For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.

³ And 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;

⁴ Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

⁵ 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:

⁶ 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.

⁷ And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

⁸ And all the people answered together, and

[BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

[NOTES:](#)

"And 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;

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"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. 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. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD" (Exodus 19:3-8).

When Abraham offered the sacrifices, as commanded by the Lord, and made that deep consecration of his life typified by these sacrifices, recorded in Genesis 15:9-11, - **Genesis 15:9-11** 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. ¹¹ And when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away. the Lord was about to reveal to him certain future events concerning his children which seemed to forebode dark prospects. For as the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abraham, "and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him." And the Lord said unto him "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years" (Genesis 15:13). But that dark picture was brightened by a promise which, the Lord added: "And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance" (Genesis 15:14).

All these events happened, to the letter. The cruel bondage through which the Children of Israel passed in the land of Egypt, the taskmasters set over them, and the lashes laid upon their backs, is history now. Also, toward the close of those four hundred years predicted, the Lord, true to His promise, met Moses at the burning bush, and commissioned him and his brother Aaron to carry out His commands, that He might judge that nation, and lead His people out with a high and mighty hand. When Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh, and told him: "Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, 'Let my people go,' that haughty monarch replied, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice?" And from then on, all Egypt, from Pharaoh on his throne to his lowly subjects in the field, was given abundant opportunity to learn who "the LORD God of Israel" was. For by the hand of the Lord their fields were laid waste, their cattle were perishing, and finally, in every home the firstborn lay dead. But in Goshen, where the blood appeared upon their dwellings according to God's command, not one soul perished. That night, at the appointed time, on the "selfsame day," the Children of Israel hastily gathered up their goods and the jewels the Egyptians bestowed upon them, and marched out "with great substance," six hundred thousand strong besides the women and children. And there was not a feeble one among them. This was the promised seed of Abraham.

Israel an Instrument in God's Hands

A casual reading of the Bible may cause some to wonder why the Lord permitted this people — His people — to go through the cruel bondage which they endured in Egypt, seeing it was apparently not due, at this time, to any transgression on their part. But God's ways are not man's ways. And since God's dealings with the Israelites hark back to His Covenant with Abraham, whom He chose to be a blessing to "all families of the earth," He proved them in Egypt four-hundred- and- thirty years, that the Israelites might become a tried instrument, a "sharp threshing instrument," in His hands to carry out that far-reaching promise made to Abraham, that "in thee shall

said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

⁹ And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

¹⁰ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes,

¹¹ And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

¹² And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, *that ye go not* up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:

¹³ There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

¹⁴ And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.

¹⁵ And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at *your wives*.

¹⁶ And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were

all families of the earth be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). And, again, in reference to God's great promise to the nations of the earth, it is written: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, **he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel**. For the 'LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance" (Deuteronomy 32:8, 9). The Lord had chosen Israel for a great and glorious purpose. But this people found out later, as have all true servants of His, that to serve the God of Israel is not an easygoing religion.

However, there is another side to this picture of Israel's hardships and bitter trials, as was revealed by their miraculous deliverance out of the house of bondage. God came to their rescue not because they were so different from other nations, nor because He saw something good in them. "There is none good but one, that is, God." But He had mercy upon this downtrodden people because He remembered the Everlasting Covenant made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore God saw their afflictions and heard their groanings, and graciously led them by the hand out of their oppression and suffering. Also Israel had obeyed His voice, and put the blood of the lamb upon the lintels and doorposts of their dwellings, and escaped the judgment of death to the first-born which fell upon Egypt. Thus Israel came out under the blood. And this great event stands to this day as a type of justification by faith.

This memorable deliverance also became the outstanding event of Israel's history and the theme of their songs of praise to their God. In the verses quoted above, we read, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, **and brought you unto myself**" (Exodus 19:4). Thus the Lord Jehovah, the miracle-working God, took Israel as His own "peculiar treasure," and became known as the God of Israel — all because of the Covenant which He made with Abraham.

But God's fame was not limited to Israel. The story of His mercies and judgments was heralded to other nations. They knew what had befallen Egypt, and also the blessings bestowed upon Israel. They knew, too, that He was a God of power, and they feared Him and His people. The light had dawned upon them, although they continued to serve their own gods, and gave Him no allegiance, as men continue to do in these days.

Mount Sinai

The Children of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai in the third month, after many weary marches through the wilderness. But their God attended them every mile of the way, protecting and guiding them with the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. Even in the desert wastes where there were no wheat fields, often no water, no groves, and no fruits, their God sustained them in life with manna from Heaven and water out of the rock.

And now they were commanded to encamp in the plain before Sinai, for this mountain was to mark a turning point — a new dispensation — in God's dealings with Israel.

The Covenant with Israel

When Israel's camp was pitched before the Mount, the next step was for Moses to go up unto the Lord, that he might receive his instructions concerning the people over whom he was appointed. "And 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, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people**: for all the earth is mine."

Impressive words are these! Just three months had elapsed since the Most High, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had reached down from Heaven and led this suffering people out of Egyptian bondage. His mighty acts were not so soon to be forgotten. Four generations had grown up amid idolatry; but now the God of their fathers had revealed Himself, and the gods of the Egyptians had proved powerless to help that nation. And now this same God offered to enter into a Covenant with them. "To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One" (Isaiah 40:25).

This is not the same Covenant which God made with their father Abraham. The same condition is binding upon them — "if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant" — and God's purpose is still to carry out the solemn promises made to Abraham; but now, in His dealings with Israel, another stage in God's great Plan is about to be revealed through this Covenant, which He discloses to the Israelites as He did His Covenant with Abraham — step by step. At this time He attaches a most wonderful promise: "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."

God's love for Israel is manifested in nearly every word of this beautiful promise, as also in their deliverance out of Egyptian bondage: "How I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." And now, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me." These endearing terms reveal the close relationship Israel was to

thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled.

¹⁷ And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

¹⁸ And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

¹⁹ And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

²⁰ And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

²¹ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.

²² And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.

²³ And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.

²⁴ And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up,

have with their God. And, besides, He shall exalt them "above all people," and "ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." These last words foreshadow their high calling, when, as a sanctified nation, they shall minister as priests unto others. All this was to be theirs — and much more yet to be made known — on condition that they would obey His voice, and keep His Covenant. Moses declared to them these words. "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD." And thus was God's Covenant with Israel established, the further provisions of which were yet to be delivered.

This lesson is not entirely complete. Its author, Rev. Charles R. Rodman, one of our veteran ministers and teachers and author of a great portion of the lessons in the past issues of this Bible Course, worked on it and brought it to this stage of completion on a recent Tuesday afternoon, no doubt intending, if the Lord tarried, to resume work on it the next morning.

In writing this lesson, and the one entitled "God's Covenant with Abraham," Brother Rodman walked very close to God. He realized the tremendous scope of the subject material in these two lessons and prayed much about them both. He actually lived his subject until it became a part of his very being. He talked about it to all around him. He preached about it. He spoke of it in his various Bible classes. His close association with it enriched his life and ministry tremendously. He became so thrilled with it — its provisions and its benefits — that he literally walked with God during those last weeks of his life.

On that next morning, while Brother Rodman was on his way to work, God must have looked down and said, "Enough!" In much the same spirit if not exactly the same manner as one of the saints in Bible times, this man of God walked out of this world to be with God. It is comforting and encouraging to us to think that now he is talking about the Everlasting Covenant with the saints and patriarchs and praising the Lamb of God who gave His life that sinners might be redeemed.

The sermon that follows is the last one preached at Headquarters by this man of God, and was given a few days prior to his death. The sermon and Lesson No. 159 take up the subject and touch on the points belonging to this lesson which are not dealt with here.

The Everlasting Covenant

"Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

"Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people.

"Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee" (Isaiah 55: 3-5) .

There is no mistaking about whom the Prophet Isaiah is here writing. It is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

This was 700 years before Jesus was born, but all through this Old Testament abound prophecies concerning Jesus. To the Jews He was known as the coming Messiah; to us He is known as the Anointed of the Lord, the Christ.

Jesus one time said to the Jews who were about Him: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). The main theme of the Law and the prophets is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is given the perfect description of our day. "Thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel." Those are the Gentiles.

This was an opening of the door to the Gentiles, when Jesus' was born in Bethlehem, by which they might be brought into the Kingdom. That was the great Plan of God back in Old Testament days. Then He dealt only with the Jews; but the time was coming when all limits would be swept away, all bounds would be passed over, and God's grace would be carried unto all the world.

He speaks here of an Everlasting Covenant. Isaiah was not talking about the Covenant which was made with the Israelites on Mount Sinai; that was not called an Everlasting Covenant. That Covenant the Jews failed to keep, and it was done away with. But this Covenant will never be done away with; it will stand forever. That old Covenant that marked the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai was sealed with the blood of bulls and goats; but the Everlasting Covenant was sealed with the Blood of Jesus Christ. The shedding of His Blood was the means of establishing that Covenant.

God had planned that Covenant from the beginning, but there had to be a schooling that was meted out to the Israelites in their wanderings in the wilderness and also in the Promised Land, through the years. It was a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. That was the whole end. Christ was the fulfillment of the old Covenant; He was the fulfillment of the Law. He kept it to the letter; He walked according to it. Down through the annals of history, He is the only One who did. However much man may have prided himself in his morality and his goodness and his charity, he did not meet the requirements of God. But the Lord Jesus did. Even His very enemies said they could find no fault in Him. Pilate washed his hands to try to wash away his guilt of surrendering the Lord Jesus Christ.

thou, and Aaron with thee:
but let not the priests and
the people break through to
come up unto the LORD,
lest he break forth upon
them.

²⁵ So Moses went down
unto the people, and spake
unto them.

So, down through the ages, there have been those who could find no fault in Him. He stands out as a marked man of history against whom no accusations could come and stand.

We have a Covenant that God Himself established, and a great price was paid to establish it. It was that which led the Lord Jesus out to Calvary's cross and caused Him to be crucified there, that through the Blood that was shed, through His life surrendered and yielded up, a Covenant could be made — not only with the Jews but with all mankind, by which they might be reconciled to God.

That Covenant was for the purpose of bridging the gulf that was made by sin, which separated man from God. The only means by which it could be bridged was the price that Jesus paid, the Blood He shed, the offering He made, the Atonement He won by which you and I might be reconciled to God.

It means something to have reconciliation with God. We are separated from Him because of our sins, that great catalog of sin down through our lives. Every one of us, no matter from what walk of life we came, look back at that old life as a nightmare. And so it was. We were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

It is a wonderful thing that God has made provision by which man can overcome sin and be restored to Him, and, above all, can have that love planted in the heart — love toward God, love toward man. The Law of Love is the new law under the dispensation of Grace.

He was to be a Witness, a Leader, a Commander. That was a military means, we might say, by which. He would lead forth His people to fight the good fight of faith and win the victory. And having established this Covenant, the next step is considering the terms by which we may enter into that Covenant. It is not left unstated In the Word. In this same chapter we read:

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

There are the simple terms. A child four years old could understand that. It means a confessing and utter forsaking of all sin, and returning unto the Lord. And then he enters into this Covenant with the Lord, the Everlasting Covenant that will carry him through the gates of Heaven. This is the promise that is made: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2). God will hear the prayer of that man. He will no more than get the words out of his mouth before the answer will come, "Thy sins which were many are all forgiven." Blotted out! That long record that has stood against you, written down in Heaven — because God keeps books — is all blotted out, nothing of it left. All gone! And that man stands justified before the Most High God, just as though he had never committed a sin.

Some people seem to think that this matter of getting right with God is a commonplace affair, that it is just a matter of changing the mind. We thank God that it is that and a whole lot more. It means that God has wrought a miracle in your heart and life. You do not have to listen to many personal testimonies to see that. Take for example a man who has been steeped in sin and has gone the downward course, knowing nothing but the life of sin, and then set him rise to walk in newness of life, the past all gone, no more desire for sin. That is a miracle!

I am one of them, a redeemed preacher, at that. I studied theology but never knew God. I was a stranger to the covenant of promise. I will never forget that night when upon my knees I called upon Him: "God, be merciful to me a sinner." And the answer came. The work was wrought! I went out of the tent that campmeeting night and started for home; and 'oh, a new world had opened up to me! The joy of Heaven had come into my heart, peace which was like a calm after a storm. The storm was over. The peace is still there. The Lord's joy is still in my heart. That was 36 years ago. I am under the Everlasting Covenant, redeemed by the precious Blood of Jesus Christ. And there I will remain, by the grace of God, as long as I continue to walk in the light.

In another place we read: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10). That is the promise to the man who has been redeemed, that God will sustain, support, and keep him. It is a wonderful thing, the place that the Lord Jesus occupies in the life of a redeemed man.

It says in the Word that He was made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30). Jesus 'Christ becomes all in all. And we have the blessed privilege of leaning on His everlasting arm and knowing His sustaining power and upholding band.

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him : he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

"He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not

quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law" (Isaiah 42:1-4).

We are living in dark hours. When Jesus was on trial, He said to His accusers: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." And it was the hour of darkness when He prayed alone in Gethsemane. Much of that same darkness is coming upon the land today. The powers of darkness are seeking to overthrow humanity, even the children of God. But we have One who is our fortress, our strong tower, and our defense. And we are persuaded that even in these last days, when the enemy is fighting and waging his fiery darts at the child of God, He is the One who we know can bring us through.

The Word tells us that He will not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. Every man, sooner or later, is a broken reed. *The* time comes when he has reached the end of his trail, and right there the Lord Jesus is ready to step in and lift him up, bring him out of his sin and iniquity, and put victory and peace in his heart.

If there ever was a time in the history of the world when we needed it, it is today. If you are among that number, you can trust that if you will come and meet the terms of the Everlasting Covenant, He will hear your prayer and give you an answer.