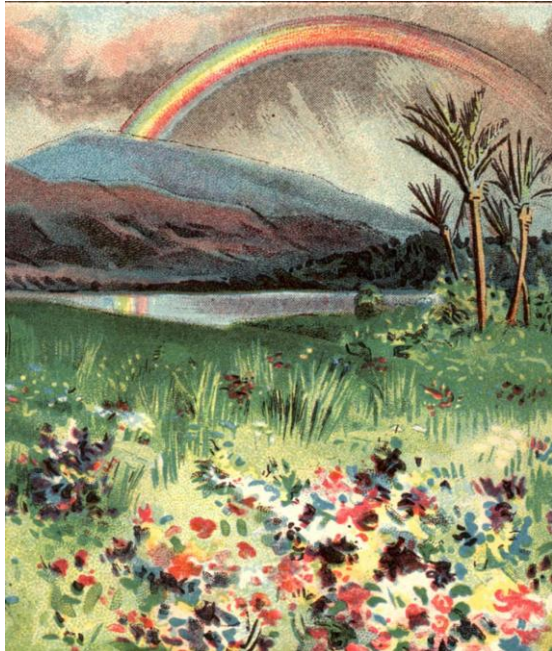


SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 3



A SUPERNATURAL COVENANT

Scripture Text: Galatians 3:6-18

God's basic program of relationship with man has never changed. It is an everlasting covenant. He has used different methods at times, but the everlasting covenant of faith runs throughout. Salvation is by faith in God's promises and not by feelings or man's own efforts.

One of the most common errors in religious thinking is to trust in one's own good works to save him. Many try to be saved by keeping a law. But the inheritance is not **of the law** but of promise. Our believing shapes our doing. Some teach that Christ's righteousness is imputed to a believer regardless of his works. This is false. If faith is not enough to change one's motives and produce good works, it is not faith. We see in **James 2:20-24** that real God-given faith is **imputed . . . for righteousness** because it produces righteousness. It opens the heart into which Christ can pour His righteousness, making the

heart right. By this, man is **made the righteousness of God** in Christ (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). A saint has *imparted* righteousness as well as *imputed* righteousness.

MEMORY VERSE: *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*

—*Genesis 17:7*

DAILY READINGS:

- Mon.—**Genesis 9:8-17** The rainbow covenant with Noah.
- Tue.—**Genesis 17:1-22** Everlasting covenant through Isaac.
- Wed.—**Psalms 105:1-15** God remembers His covenant.
- Thu.—**Exodus 24:1-8** The blood of the covenant.
- Fri.—**Romans 9:1-16** A covenant of faith and grace.

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 54:1-10 God's covenant of peace.

People of Faith Are the Children of Abraham

Galatians 3:6-9 **Abraham believed God.** Real faith is not as common as people would make it seem. To believe is to trust and obey. Abraham did, and God accounted it righteousness. Belief is what God wants most. Without belief, there cannot be obedience. Belief brings action. (See **Romans 4:13-25**.) **They which are of faith . . . are the children of Abraham.** Believing God and His promises puts one in the family with others who do so. When God told Abraham **In thee shall all nations be blessed** (**Genesis 12:3**), He referred to the **gospel** of Jesus Christ to come many centuries later, by which **the heathen** (the unsaved) would be justified (saved) **through faith** in Christ—the same way that Abraham received his blessings. This blessing is received *in* Abraham because Jesus was humanly a descendant of Abraham.

The Law Cannot Justify

Galatians 3:10-14 The Law is of **works**, of what one must do or not do. One living under it is bound by its penalties, its **curse** for disobedience. Since no one can keep it perfectly in his own strength, no soul can be made

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alive or kept alive by it. How then? **The just shall live** (or be made alive) **by faith** (**Habakkuk 2:4; Hebrews 10:38**), by believing and obeying Christ. Jesus Christ redeems from the curse of the Law. The curse of the Law is death, for **the soul that sinneth, it shall die** (**Ezekiel 18:4**). One choosing to live by the Law has only the reward that the Law can give, but one living by the promise of God receives all that the promise includes. **Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.** How? By Himself becoming **a curse for us** by hanging **on a tree** (cross)—being crucified (**Deuteronomy 21:22-23**). He died with the sins of all the world on Him, thus as the worst sinner. The Holy God stooped this low *for us* so that we might have **the blessing of Abraham . . . through Jesus Christ.** What was this blessing? **The promise of the Spirit through faith.** This is what God planned when He made the covenant with Abraham (**Genesis 12 and 17**).

Works may be our own, done in our natural, human strength. Many unsaved people live orderly lives and do good works. But faith connects one with God. That done by faith is done in the power of God. The Gospel is the power of God, not the power of man. It is supernatural power (**Romans 1:16**). If living by faith does not bring supernatural motives and works to our lives, it is not faith. Living by faith is a supernatural religion. When man builds a religion, it is only a heathen religion, not the true religion of God. True religion was never evolved or built by man. It came down from God. A supernatural religion **MUST** be a revealed religion.

The Covenant With Abraham Is Everlasting

Galatians 3:15-18 A covenant is binding. Even a man-made covenant is not to be changed or set aside. God made this covenant with **Abraham and his seed . . . which is Christ.** He **confirmed**—ratified, established, made sure—that covenant **in Christ.** That is, Christ was the confirmation, the fulfilling of it. It is by Christ's sacrifice that we have **the promise of the Spirit.** The whole covenant of faith rests upon Christ. It is **an everlasting covenant**—a supernatural covenant. (**Psalm 105:8-10**.)

Paul writes in **Hebrews 13:20-21:** **Now the God of peace . . . through the blood of the everlasting covenant** (Christ's shed blood), **Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.**

The Law was given through Moses several hundred years after this covenant was made. It was added for a time. It did not **disannul**, or set aside, the covenant of faith. The promise still stands. **If the inheritance** (the promised gift of salvation and the filling with the Holy Spirit) **be of the law**, that is, if we earn it by doing things the Law says, then it is **no more of promise.** But Abraham could not earn it by works. It was a gift God gave him **by promise.** All receive God's salvation the same way—by promise, by grace—for it is an everlasting covenant. Thank God for that! For who could ever earn it?

God's established relationship with man does not change. In the Father is no **shadow of turning** (**James 1:17**). **Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever** (**Hebrews 13:8**). God has one permanent covenant, one people, and one Spirit to live in them. The everlasting covenant reaches back to the beginning as well as forward. By faith **the worlds were framed.** **By faith Abel offered unto God . . . by which he obtained witness that he was righteous . . . By faith Enoch was translated . . . By faith Noah . . . prepared an ark . . . By faith Abraham . . . obeyed** (**Hebrews 11:3-8**). **That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith** (**Ephesians 3:17**). **But without faith it is impossible to please him** (**Hebrews 11:6**). What a marvelous gift Jesus offers us when He says, "Come!"

JUST A THOUGHT

**The only way to make the Gospel suit men
is to change men to suit the Gospel.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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