

Q4 L03 - **The Everlasting Covenant** - 2021-10-16

Shawn Brummund: Hello and welcome to another edition of the Sabbath School Study Hour. My name is Pastor Shawn Brummund, and I am privileged to be able to invite you to join us over the next hour as we continue to study this quarterly's quarter which is entitled, "Present Truth in the Book of Deuteronomy."

And so for those of you who have been joining us over the last couple of weeks, you've already started to familiarize yourself with the quarterly and, of course, most importantly, with the Bible book of Deuteronomy. And so today, we're going to be looking at Lesson number 3, which is the everlasting gospel. And yes, the everlasting gospel is found smack center in the middle of this very important and powerful Bible book. And so this is an important milestone in history. I know that you're going to be blessed as you continue to grow in the grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ and of His Word as we continue to study here in the Granite Bay Seventh-day Adventist Church right here in the metro area of Sacramento, California.

So it's always nice to have all of our different friends that are joining us online, those on the various networks that are with us here today and, of course, our local church family that is also joining us as we come together on this Sabbath to be able to worship God in a very special way, in this case both in song and in study.

And before we go into our song, though, I want to invite you to take advantage of a very special gift offer that we have for you here today. And it is entitled "Determining the Will of God," and it's actually written by our lead pastor, Pastor Doug Batchelor, who is also our teacher today as well. And so please take advantage of this free gift offer. You just have to dial into 1-866-788-3966 and just ask for Free Offer number 778, and that's available to you if you're in North America or in the different various US territories.

Now, if you're interested in a digital copy of that, as many of us are, we like to have it on our phone and read it in that format, you can just text the code "SH025" and you want to be able to text that to 40544. So please take advantage of that. Again, that's available as a digital download if you're in North America and if you're outside of North America and want a digital copy, you also have that address that's on the screen or just go to amazingfacts.org and do a search for it, and if you're persistent you will find it and be able to take advantage of that as well.

So, before we open with prayer and study, we want to invite our musicians. We thank them for leading us in song and worship even right now.

♪♪♪

♪ Hear our earnest prayer, O Lord ♪

♪ Hear our humble cry ♪

♪ Precious, loving, caring Lord ♪

♪ on whom we rely ♪

♪ Ever loving, ever living God ♪

♪ of whom no one can compare ♪

♪ all we ask is that You hear our prayer ♪
♪ Give us strength, most Holy Lord ♪
♪ Strength to meet this day ♪
♪ Lead us by Your Holy Word, guide us in Your way ♪
♪ For life is filled with winding turns ♪
♪ We have often lost our way ♪
♪ All we ask is that You lead today ♪
♪ Give us love that's true, O Lord ♪
♪ Trusting as a child ♪
♪ Love for all we see, O Lord ♪
♪ pure and undefiled ♪
♪ But to heal the hearts ♪
♪ and not turn away anyone who is in need ♪
♪ All we ask is teach us love indeed ♪
♪ Oh, oh, oh, oh ♪
♪ Take me home with You, my Lord ♪
♪ when You come again ♪
♪ Take me home in peace, my Lord ♪
♪ to life with no end ♪
♪ When I've fought the fight ♪
♪ and I've kept the faith ♪
♪ and my race on earth is won ♪
♪ oh, all we ask is that You say, "Well done" ♪
♪ Lord, please let me hear You say ♪
♪ "Well done" ♪ ♪

Shawn: I want to invite you to pray as we ask the Lord to be with us. Father in heaven, as we stop, we want to thank You so much for leading us in song, that we might be able to worship You and to remember what a precious thing it will be when You come again and we can stand before Your throne and hear those encouraging words where You tell us, "Well done." Lord, we want to pray that today's investment in the study of Your Word will truly solidify our faith and our faithfulness to You. And God in heaven, that we might be able to know that when the race is over that we have finished the race, we have fought the good fight, and we know that there's a crown laid up for us. And so God, please bless each and every one of us as we study together. Give us Your Holy Spirit. Want to pray a special blessing upon our teacher, Pastor Doug Batchelor, and that You will help to be able to understand Your Word in the way that You would have it and give us, and so we pray for Your Holy Spirit even now, in Jesus's name, amen.

Doug Batchelor: Good morning. Thank you, Pastor Shawn. Thank the young people that brought the music this morning. That was beautiful. And good to see each of you that is--that are gathered here in person at the Granite Bay Hilltop Church. Also want to welcome those, we know there are many thousands around the world that are studying with us via television programs like AFTV and 3ABN and Hope Channel.

You know, I should mention something. When we record this program, today, as Pastor Shawn mentioned, we're going to be in Lesson number 3 of Deuteronomy, our new study. Most of the world church, they're just getting to this lesson, but we record the lesson early here at Hilltop Church because we need time to edit the lesson, we add closed captioning, time to mail it to the stations so then they can broadcast it. So we're always living in the future. We're three weeks ahead.

But right about the time this program is due to air, something very exciting is happening I want to mention. We're going to be having a program here, an Evangelistic program, called "Panorama of Prophecy." And it will air on most of our partner networks, such as 3ABN, Hope Channel, and Amazing Facts Television, and AF--that's AFTV. And so we hope, if you don't know about that, go to the website. It's a great time for you to bring your friends into your church, into your home. All you've got to do is turn on one of those streaming opportunities and do some evangelism, especially in the times we're living right now. We want to be winning souls.

So we're going to be going through our full evangelistic program called "Panorama of Prophecy." Just go to the website, panoramaofprophecy.com and you can find out more information there, how you can be involved. We've got a brand new set of lessons that we've printed for this series, so we're excited about it. And I hope those here that are part of our local family, you'll be praying because we're going to have a lot of folks that are going to come from the community. I don't know, we're sending out, like, 50,000 handbills so we're hoping somebody comes. And going to be meeting some new people and sharing the good news.

All right, now to our lesson, "Present Truth in Deuteronomy," and we're--our lesson today is Lesson 3, "The Everlasting Covenant." And we have a memory verse. And the memory verse is from Genesis 17:7. You can find that either in your lesson or your Bible. I invite you to say it with me: Genesis 17:7: "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you." You notice that phrase, "Everlasting covenant."

Now, we've got a special mission to share the three angels' message. And what does that first angel have? He is sharing the everlasting gospel, right? To preach to every nation. So we've got this message about a covenant that is everlasting, and so we're going to be talking about that today in our study. In leading up to that, I just thought you might find it interesting to know, the phrase "everlasting covenant"

is found in the Bible 15 times. And, of course, you go from the beginning--I'm sorry, the end of the Bible in Revelation 14:6: "I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people."

So at what point in history did God think up the gospel? It's sort of a trick question because, does God know everything? To our knowledge, has God always known everything? Then was there ever a time when He did not know the gospel? Was there ever a time that God did not know that someday there would be a race of intelligent creatures that would rebel against Him? So if you go as far back as you can go in eternity past, then, you know, I always--I wonder, maybe you do too, it's nice to know we've got eternity in front of us, that we're going to live forever.

Some author put it that we will have lives that measure with the life of God for length. Isn't that something? To live for ever and ever and ever. But how long ago did God, like, make the first intelligent creature, the angels? We can only speculate. I mean, if God lives forever, it's hard to imagine that there were billions of years where God was just in this cosmic closet waiting to do something. But He knew at whatever that point was, I mean, the Bible says Lucifer was created. It says: "You were perfect in the day you were created until iniquity was found in you." That means Lucifer even had a beginning. The angels were created. They had a beginning.

So at whatever point in history God decided to make intelligent creatures, in order for them to love God, He knew He was going to have to give them something very dangerous, and that was true freedom. And that means that at some point, some creature might say, "After thinking it over, God, I don't love You. I love myself more." So God had to decide is love so important that I'm going to take that risk? And when He said yes, He knew that at some point there would be someone that would choose not to love Him and what would happen then was sin. And so the Lord, the Father, and the Son, they mobilized an agreement way back then.

Matter of fact, if you look in the book, "Desire of Ages," page 834, and you can write the reference down. You probably don't have the book at your fingertips. "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 clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge." Think about that. You know, sometimes, you'll make a deal with someone and they say, "Let's shake on it." At least, used to do that. I don't know, how many can remember the days where you'd say, you know, you'd shake on it and that was a deal. They didn't sign out a big covenant. But says, "God the Father and the Son clasped Their hands in a solemn pledge." They shook on it. And the pledge was that Christ should become the surety for the human race.

And so this is from the foundations of the earth. Actually, it said, "Before the foundations of the earth." You can read in Titus 1, verse 2: "In hope of eternal life, which God who cannot lie promised before time began." So when was that, "Before time began"?

Now we all live in a dimension of time and I don't want to get, you know, too much into physics and cosmic science right here but, you know, God lives outside of time. God can take us, eternity, into the future and show us something. He can take us eternally into the past and show us something. He took the apostle John forward in prophecy and He took him back to where he saw the war in heaven.

So God can appear at any time and time whenever He wants. But God had this plan. Eternal life which was in God, He promised before time began. Go to Revelation 13:8: "All who dwell on earth will worship him, whose names have not been--" and it's talking about the beast, of course. "Whose names have not been written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It's pointing all the way back. And in Genesis 17:7: "And I'll establish My covenant between Me and you and your," this is

our memory verse, "and your descendants and their generations for an everlasting covenant," is what God said to Abraham. Isaiah 24.

I'm not going to read all 15 references, but here's a few. Isaiah 24, verse 5: "The earth's-- earth also is defiled under its inhabitants because they've transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant." When God makes a covenant, He opens His mouth, He does not lie. He says, "I am the same, Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today, and forever," Hebrews 13. Malachi: "I am the Lord. I change not." God makes a promise, He does not vacillate.

So the covenant that He made to save is an everlasting covenant. Ezekiel 16:60: "Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth. I will establish an everlasting covenant with you." That's comforting. And Hebrews 13: "Now may the God of peace who brought our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will." It's part of what the covenant does, one of the promises, is to help us be obedient, doing His will, through the power of the blood in every good thing. And He said, "Make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ to whom be the glory forever and ever, amen."

So the book of Hebrews closes, which is a book all about covenants, by emphasizing the everlasting covenant that God's made with us. Now, that was all introduction. Now, we're going to get into the first section on the covenant in the gospel. If you have your Bibles, you'll want to turn to the very important passage in Genesis chapter 12. God establishes His covenant with Abraham. His name is not Abraham yet, but that's how we know him. His name was Abram. Abraham, Abba, is father or papa, Abba. Abram is talking about Father. It's a little more formal, Abraham means father of a multitude. So, Abraham was not a father of a multitude at this time. 'Course, God gave him the name "Father of Multitude" before he had any kids.

But so here we're reading in Genesis 12:1, "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Get out of your country from your family and 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. And I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.'" Notice the word "bless, bless, bless." A lot of blessing that's happening there. For one thing, you don't want to get on the wrong side of those that are under the everlasting covenant because He says, "I'll curse those who curse you." What happened to Potiphar? Joseph was blessed. He was in that covenant and when Joseph went to the house of Potiphar what did God do for Potiphar? Everything he put his hand to was blessed. I don't know what happened when Joseph moved out. Probably wasn't good because Potiphar's wife falsely accused him, but then Joseph goes to prison.

Now, can you be blessed in a prison? But it says that everything that Joseph did was blessed. And then he goes to be prime minister of Egypt. What country of all the countries in that fertile crescent was blessed during the famine? Egypt. Why? Because of Joseph. So there's a blessing that flows out from God's people to those around them. And those who persecute you, they will be cursed. And you can see that happening as well. A lot of nations that fought against God's people were decimated or destroyed. Then you go to-- God repeats the covenant. Matter of fact, we can't even repeat all the times that God repeated the covenant to Abraham. Genesis 15, verse 4: "And behold, the word of the Lord came to him saying: 'This one shall not be your heir; but one that comes from your own body will be your heir.' And then he brought him outside, said, 'Look now towards heaven, and count the stars, if you're able to number them.' He said, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed in the Lord," even though he had no children. God said, "Your descendants will be more than the sand, more than the stars." Abraham believed the Lord, even though he's old, "and God counted it to him for righteousness."

What's another word for believe? The just shall live by faith. He had faith in God, and God counted it to him for, what? Have you heard of righteousness by faith? This is exhibit A of righteousness by faith. We are declared righteous based on faith. So God says that while you appear dead and unfruitful, because you believe, I can do wonderful things for those that believe. And so God obviously did. He performed several miracles.

Now, some covenants are made and they've got a time period attached. There's an agreement and when the certain time is reached, it said all terms of the covenant are now void and null and without effect. But God's covenant is an everlasting covenant. Now, people might think, "Well, Pastor Doug, but Abraham's descendants, I mean, it-- sometimes it doesn't look like they're blessed." Well, He doesn't say they're not going to go through hard times, which they did, but it seemed like they just kept bouncing back because God has not forgot His covenant.

Matter of fact, I'm getting ahead of myself. All right, Genesis 18:17: "And the Lord said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham the thing I'm doing,'" this is when the angels were going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. "Since Abraham shall surely be great and a mighty nation, and all nations of the earth will be blessed in him?" God said, "We're friends. I'm going to bless you above all nations in the world. I'm not going to hide from you what I'm doing."

Now, if you jump to the New Testament, Paul commenting on this covenant with Abraham, in Romans 4, verse 1: "What shall we then say that Abraham, our father, has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he had something about which to boast, but not-- he's not justified by works. For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'" Now, I want to pause.

Any of you notice a little contradiction here with another verse? Was Abraham saved by faith or works? Faith. Did Abraham--no question. Absolutely was saved by faith. He believed God, God counted it to him for righteousness. Did Abraham do works? You know, when you go to James and it talks about faith and works, it says, "Was not Abraham justified when he offered his son, by works?" His works showed his faith and it even says there in Hebrews "when Abraham offered Isaac, he had faith." He did a very difficult work, but he had faith that God's promise, a great nation's coming from Isaac, even if I kill him, God is able to raise him up, in which he received him in figure. Isaac being a type of Christ that did die and was raised up and a great nation came out of Christ, like Isaac: Christians, through his death. And so Abraham showed his faith by his works. The Bible says Abraham "who kept all of My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

So Abraham is known as the father of the faithful, but he's also the father of the obedient, and so that is certainly part of the covenant. Let me go back and finish Romans here. "For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as a debt. But to him who does not work but believes on him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness."

So when we come to Christ it doesn't matter how ungodly we've been. If we believe that for Christ's sake we can be forgiven, we are justified by faith in the blood of Christ. When we are justified by faith, will there be a difference in the works? See, do we do the good works to be saved or do we do the good works because we are saved? Does a person with a loving heart do loving things to have a loving heart or do they do loving things because they have a loving heart? So when you're born again and you're a new creature and you get a new heart, you start doing different works, right? So if a person is not doing any of the loving heart works, then you have to question have they been saved by faith? Does that make sense? So people try to create a war where there really isn't a war between faith and works. It is-- clearly, it all begins with faith, but then the works follow.

Now, when we talk about the covenant that God made with Abraham, that's not the first time that you have a covenant. Did God also make a covenant with Noah? Yes. Did God make a covenant with Adam? Yes, okay-- He made a covenant about seedtime and harvest, you know, the seasons will continue. But when you read in Genesis 3:15, with Adam and Eve, God said that, "the seed of the woman would destroy the serpent's head." That's probably one of the first covenants and prophecies there in the Bible, that there would be a descendant of Eve-- of course, Abraham, Noah, they all came from Eve-- that would ultimately destroy the serpent's head. That was a prophecy about Christ. You see it repeated in Revelation when it talks about Michael doing battle with the dragon and there's a woman there. And the dragon is defeated and so, you know, all of that language is played out there in Revelation.

All right, and so we're saved by faith. It's the everlasting covenant, but the everlasting covenant does not abolish the law because the everlasting covenant is given in the context of the law. So if you read the old covenant, where do you find the old covenant? Old Testament. What chapters? Chapter 20 and then if you look in Deuteronomy chapter 4 it says, "He declared unto you His covenant, even ten commandments which He commanded you to perform," right? So let's say that's the old covenant.

Now what's the new covenant? If you look in Hebrews 8, verse 10: "'For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days,' says the Lord. 'I put my laws in their minds and write them on their heart, and I will be their God and they will be My people.'" So is the law still part of the new covenant? Yeah, it's just written in a different place. It's written in the heart. So once you got the new covenant, did the old everlasting covenant go away? Both covenants had to do with salvation by faith.

Was anybody in the Old Testament saved by works? No. Is anybody saved by works? They're all saved by faith, looking forward to the cross, and we are now saved by faith looking back at the cross, amen? All right, let's go to the section, "Covenant in Israel." Deuteronomy 9:5: "Is it not--" I'm sorry. "It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you going to possess the land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God drives them out from before you, that He might fulfill the word which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

So, God is saying, "Look, I'm not saving you because you're hyper-righteous." In fact, He said, "You are a stubborn and a stiff-necked people, but I made a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I've not forgot My covenant." There are several times in the Bible where God renews the covenant to someone that really didn't deserve it. When Solomon started to marry many wives, and the kingdom was going to be split in two, God said, "Solomon, I haven't forgot the promise I made to David so I'm not taking the kingdom away from you completely, because I made a promise that David would not lack someone to sit upon the throne. So I'm giving you Judah. The other tribes to the north, I'm taking away from you." And He said, "Because I haven't forgot the covenant that I made."

God has a good memory. In fact, the children of Israel made a promise to the Gideonites. I don't know if you remember the story? They promised that, "we will not destroy you but you need to be servants for the temple." Hundreds of years later, King Saul made war against the Gideonites and a plague, a famine, came on the land. And David prayed to the Lord, "Why is this terrible famine on the land?" And God said--this is after Saul's been dead for years. God said, "Because Saul broke the covenant that I made-- or that you made with the Gideonites and I haven't forgotten. A promise was broken." God was showing them all kinds of peace and prosperity for years, but God's saying, "Well, judgment's coming. I haven't forgot." And it wasn't until David dealt with that that the famine was over.

So God's got a long memory, and He's going to do what He says, and do not misinterpret temporary peace to think that that means God has forgotten His covenant. God said to Noah and his family, "Come in the ark," and Noah had been preaching, "Only those in the ark will be saved. A terrible storm is

coming." God brought Noah and the animals in the ark. He shut the door and they had one day of beautiful weather. The next day, beautiful weather. People outside the ark said, "Ah, it's not going to happen." They misinterpreted the mercy of God, but their doom was sealed. God had made a covenant of salvation. They did not take the covenant up on its terms and the flood did come.

God--"A thousand years with God are like a day," the Bible says. Okay, the covenant with Israel. Then look in Exodus chapter 2, verse 24: "So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them."

Now, two things here that are metaphors. God remembered. Does that mean that the Lord took some Prevagen or something and He suddenly remembered? "Oh yeah, didn't I make a covenant with Abra--" And then it says: "God looked upon." You know when it says the angels came down to look and see if the things in Sodom were as bad as the report they heard? Does God not know or is He using language that we use? God had not forgotten. This is just God's way of saying it was time to deal with something. After years of the Israelites being slaves in Egypt, God says, "I've seen their suffering, I've heard their tears and their cries and their prayers. Now, I'm going to act." Reminds us that sometimes you've got to pray for a while before you get your answer. So He said He remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Now, here's a unique verse. Leviticus 26, verse 42: "Then," He says, "as you pray to Me, then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, My covenant with Isaac, My covenant with Abraham. I will remember. And I will remember the land." Anyone notice anything interesting about the way that it's stated here? It's backwards. Almost always, God says, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." What did He just do here? He said, "Jacob, Isaac, and Abraham." And so, forward or backwards, God remembers. Psalm 89: "My covenant I will not break or alter the word that has gone out of My lips."

This was a verse that actually helped me when I was studying the Sabbath truth because I thought Sabbath was part of a covenant that God made there at Mount Sinai, part of the new covenant of putting the law in our hearts. I couldn't imagine that God would say, "I made a mistake picking the seventh day. I'll have to pick a different day." There's nothing wrong with it. Said, He's made a covenant, He does not change. "I will not break what's gone forth from My lips." I said, "I think the Sabbath must still be intact." Every covenant that God makes. Joshua 23:14. When Joshua, near the end of his life, he gathered Israel together, and he said in these beautiful words: "Behold this day, I am going the way of all the earth." When he said "this day," it could have meant "this year," but he meant the time is coming when I'm going to die. Going the way of all the earth. "And you know in your hearts-- and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed."

Joshua's reminding that God had promised to bring them into the land and that God had promised that He'd give them victory over their enemies and that He would settle them and divide the land among them, and at this point in history, Joshua said, "God has kept His promise. He keeps His covenants. Everything He promised, He has done."

Now, if you're looking for a point in earthly history when you can say, "What was the zenith of God's keeping His covenant with Abraham on earth?" The reason I say it like that is when God said to Abraham, "To you and your descendants, I give all this land, speaking of the Promised Land," did Abraham ever really enjoy that inheritance or was it occupied by enemies? He didn't really enjoy it. He didn't receive it then. When will he receive it? New Jerusalem comes down. Where does it come down? Mount of Olives. How big is it? Three hundred and seventy-five miles on each side, which means it

completely encompasses the land that God promised to give Israel. How long will Abraham have it then? Forever.

But on earth, the closest that Israel ever got to fulfilling His purpose for them was during the reign of Solomon, and the Queen of Sheba came before Solomon got led away by his wives later in his life. All nations were flowing to Israel to learn about Jehovah. They were at peace. Solomon's name means peace, related to Shalom. They were at peace, they were a glorious kingdom. God was blessing them. He was blessing their crops. He had 40 years of wonderful prosperity, and it's the closest you can see. The borders of Israel were the greatest during the time of Solomon. That's when they were the closest to the climax of everything God had promised them on earth.

But, you know, it's interesting that you can read in I think it's--might be 1 Kings chapter 11, I forget. But it says: "But Solomon loved many foreign wives." And at that point, it went down. And just before it says that, it says: "In that year, 666 talents of gold came into the kingdom." I thought, "That--is that coincidence: it mentions 666, the next chapter the kingdom takes a dive?" I thought that was interesting. Amazing fact. But the real fulfillment for-- of all the covenant, is it going to be for the literal Jews? Everyone's waiting for Israel to become another world power. They certainly are blessed right now with--for the size of the nation, they've got quite a bit of influence. But, no, the ultimate inheritance is going to be for the children of Abraham, both physical children of Abraham and spiritual children of Abraham, not in this world but in a world made new, right?

I'm not planning on moving to Israel and, you know, there have been different groups both in our church and others that were so sure that God was going to reestablish a literal kingdom and all the promises He made to Israel, they moved to Israel waiting for it to happen. Many died there, waiting for this world empire, glorious kingdom. That's going to happen after the 1000 years when the new Jerusalem comes down. Then you're going to see the ultimate fulfillment of all those things, amen? So if you go to Deuteronomy 7, let me see if I read that. Yeah, tell you what, let me go to-- go to Deuteronomy 18. God gives them a special warning. He says, "Look, you are My special people and I've made a covenant with you."

By the way, the word "covenant," it means confederacy, a league, covenant, an alliance, a pledge, a treaty, a constitution, an ordinance. The word is used 264 times in the Bible. A lot of covenants in the Bible. It's from a Hebrew word, *beriyth*, and it means covenant. That's what it means. And it is used so often in Deuteronomy, that Deuteronomy is sometimes called the book of the covenant because the word "covenant" is found so many times in the book.

So, you can read in Deuteronomy 5, verse 2: "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb." So what happened? Horeb and Mount Sinai are the same mountain. What happened there? Ten Commandments. Now, I'm reading Deuteronomy 5. Is that at the beginning or end of Moses's life? It's the end of the 40 years. So God gives them, shortly after they enter the wilderness, God gives them the Ten Commandments and establishes this new aspect of the covenant.

Now, when God gave the covenant to Abraham, does it mention the Ten Commandments in Genesis 12? No. Did they have the Ten Commandments? Yes, the Bible says: "Abraham kept My laws." Was adultery a sin in Abraham's day? How do you know that? Joseph said to Potiphar's wife, "How can I do this thing and sin against God?" And when Abraham lied about Sarah being his sister, Abimelech and the Pharaoh both chastised him, said, "Lest we take your wife and had slept with her. That would have been a sin." Was murder a sin before the time of Abraham? When Cain was conspiring against his brother, God said, "Sin lies at the door." Murder was a sin. The blood of your brother, cries-- You go through all the Ten Commandments.

Was the Sabbath established, even way before Abraham? Was it wrong to lie or to steal or to covet? Yeah, just-- so the Ten Commandments were sort of in their hearts. It was sort of just self-evident law, but the people, after all their time in Egypt, had grown so wicked, God said, "We need to codify this and write it down." At the beginning of the 40 years, He gives them the Ten Commandments shortly after they enter the wilderness. Shortly before that they entered the Promised Land, it's repeated again in Deuteronomy 5. Just in case anyone thought it had died during that-- the covenant had changed during that 40 years. Moses said, "No, it's still the same."

Matter of fact, in Deuteronomy 5, He expands on the Ten Commandments. Does not change or take away. And then you go on to the section here, "Special People." Deuteronomy 18, verse 9: "When you come into the land which the Lord your God has given you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations." Now, how does that apply to you and me today? We're not moving to the foreign mission field where they have scary practices. Or are we living in a jungle right now? If-- when you come to Christ, suddenly you're going to look around and say, "I'm surrounded by pagan nations." You know what I mean?

The customs of the lost world, it's like the Israelites when they moved into Canaan. They were surrounded by these evil practices. Moses warns them against witchcraft, sorcery, mediums, idolatry. Do we have that in our society? And so they were not to make any league with those nations or follow any of their practices. It says, "You shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations." Exodus 34:11, "Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I'm driving out from before you the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite." I always want to say, "And the termite." "And take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants."

Now, God says, "I'm making a saving covenant with you. You shall not make a covenant with the unbelievers." What does Paul say? "Do not be unequally yoked." A yoke is an agreement. Marriage would be an agreement, with unbelievers, or they'll start to change you. "You shall not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you're going, lest it be a snare in your midst." And you read in Deuteronomy 7, verse 2: "And when the Lord your God delivers them over to you and you conquer them," this is going to sound brutal, but it's what it says. "When the Lord delivers," these pagan nations, "and you conquer them and utterly destroy them, you will make no covenant with them or show them mercy." You know, some of them must have lived or it would not be a risk that they make covenants with them.

It's interesting the Bible says that God conquered the Jebusites, but Jebusites continued to live in Jerusalem up until the time of David. He had to conquer the Jebusites again to get Jerusalem. And then even after David conquered Jerusalem, there were still people that were called Jebusites that were in the land. So they had not exterminated them. And Uriah, one of David's faithful soldiers, he was a Hittite, right? But they converted.

So it's telling us their, what do you call it, their genealogy was from those nations but they had converted. It's like, Ruth was a Moabite, there you go. But she converted. So they dwelt among them. He said, "You shall utterly destroy them. Do not make a covenant with them or show them mercy. You shall not make marriages with them. You will not give your daughter to their son or take their daughter for your son, for they will turn away--" I'm missing up where I am. Hang on. "Your daughter, nor turn-- nor take their daughter for your son." Marriage always confuses me, sorry, the subject. "For they'll turn your sons from following Me and serve other gods. So the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly, but thus you shall deal with them. You shall destroy their altars, break down their sacred pillars, cut down their wooden images, burn their carved images with fire."

It's the kind of thing that King Jehoshaphat did and God blessed him for having this revival where he just cleaned house from all of the idolatry that had crept into the land. And then Deuteronomy 26:16, there are some key words here I want you to notice. "This day the Lord your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments. Therefore you shall be careful to observe them with all of your heart and with all of your soul. Today you have proclaimed that the Lord will be your God, and that you'll walk in His ways, and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will obey His voice. Also today, the Lord has proclaimed you to be His special people."

Notice, this day, today, today. So what does it say to us? Today, when it comes to the covenant? That we need to resolve, "Today, while you hear His voice, do not harden your heart," that we are going to be His people, that we enter into that covenant. A lot of people who say they're Christians know they're not completely surrendered and they say, "One of these days, I'm going to get around to it." And years go by and they haven't gotten around to dealing with those things in their life they know they need to deal with. So Moses is emphasizing, "Today, today, today," three times in that passage. And then he says, in the section under "Other Images," Deuteronomy 14:1: "You are the children of the Lord your God. You shall not cut yourselves or shave the front of your head for the dead." Notice, "For the dead." "For you're a holy people to the Lord your God, and the Lord's chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the people on the face of the earth." Leviticus 19:28: "You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead or tattoo any marks on you. I am the Lord." That's--seems some people aren't reading that verse anymore.

By the way, there is forgiveness, but God's pretty clear, your body's a temple of the Holy Spirit. It's not a billboard for your own graffiti. It be holy to the Lord. Leviticus 21:5: "They shall not make any bald places on their heads nor shall they shave the edges of their beards." Some people think, "Oh, yeah, we're not supposed to ever shave our beard," and I've had different denominations have come to me and says, "If you don't have a beard, you can't be saved," really. You'll be okay, Mike. You've got a beard, you'll be safe. And then they quote this verse. This ain't nothing to do with saying it's wrong to shave. The context was they used to do this for the dead. When their dead died, they would shave off their head, they'd cut off their beard, and they'd cut their flesh. He said, "You're not to mutilate yourself in any way for the dead, as the pagans do." And so, the Bible says before Joseph became prime minister, he shaved. So it's not a sin to shave. Anyway, just in case you ever wondered, that was free.

So God did not want them to imitate the pagan practices of the nations that surrounded them or, if they did, they were chastened. Deuteronomy 8:5: "You should know in your heart, as a man chastens his son, so the Lord chastens you." He chastened them many times, but praise God, He never forgot His covenant, amen? Because the covenant is still alive today. God has made a covenant, the blood of Jesus, to save us. God bless you, friends.

We are out of time for our study today but if you didn't hear the announcement at the beginning, we have a free gift dealing with "Determining the Will of God." And if you'd like a copy of this, it's simply call 866-Study-More where you can ask for Offer number 78-- I'm sorry, 778, and-- or you can text "SH025," text that to 40544. You can download a copy of that. God bless you. We'll look forward to reading and studying His Word together again next time.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544 or visit the web address shown on your screen and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want. And most important, to share it with others.

Diana Dixon: My name's Diana Dixon. I'm a professional truck driver, and August 4, 2011, I stopped to help in an accident.

Male: Diana Dixon also tried to help. She parked her semi, jumped out, and headed toward the pick-up. That's when she saw vehicles barreling toward her so she reacted by jumping off 475 to a road below.

Diana: Well, a pick-up had clipped a semi, and I stopped to help and I saw it in the mirror, so I walked back. A gentleman told me, he says, "Hey, you know, everything's okay. Call 911." And I looked over at the pick-up and there was a black pick-up over there and he was okay. At about that time, I don't know how far I walked, but I walked far enough and a semi hit him and it imploded. I knew it was going to hit me. I had 30 seconds to decide and I decided to jump."

Diana: [recorded phone call] Yeah, I jumped off the bridge. My back's broken.

Dispatcher: Where are you at? Diana: [recorded phone call] I don't know.

Diana: Fractured my pelvis in 24 places, 5 broken ribs, C5 neck fracture, I had a collapsed lung, I had a lacerated bladder, I was bleeding internally, I had no marks on the outside of me at all but a scrape where my arm had scraped the concrete. From the chest down, I was on fire.

I was a dispatcher for a year after the accident and I went back, finished my degree, and I went to Pittsburgh. Threw a backpack over my back, walked like all the other students. I ran a marathon and I'm - since then I've been back to truck-driving.

There was a gentleman I worked with and one day he was walking in and he walked up to my desk and I was reading my Bible. And he says, "Are you a believer?" And I said, "Yes." And he gave me some "Amazing Facts" study guides and it just--it was an eye-opening experience for me. I mean, I started reading them and I had a bunch of questions to ask him, so I got online and I got on the "Amazing Facts" web page and I just found information just that I'd never known.

I went back to work as a truck driver because that was my ministry. It was my ministry before the accident and I was driving down the road and I just needed a connection and I was flipping through and somehow I ended up on YouTube and next thing I know, "Amazing Facts," one of those things would come up there and I listened to it. I'm driving down the road, I got 11 hours of driving. So I listened to one, I listened to another one. And the more I listened to him, everything that I thought in my heart, I'd just click on to one of these YouTubes and there he was giving me the answer.

I walked in Seventh-day Adventist Church for the first time and I felt at home. I was baptized in the Seventh-day Adventist Church because I had found the truth that I just was searching for and I'd been praying about. "Amazing Facts" has been such an inspiration and important for my coming back into ministry that I want to be able to give back to anyone that I can and "Amazing Facts" is the backbone of my ministry. My name is Diana Dixon. Thank you for changing my life.

Announcer: "Amazing Facts" Changed Lives.

Female: Well, my conversion story is when I was in the Philippines, I just graduated as a nurse and afterwards I did not have any religion and one time I found myself inside a small church, Catholic church, in Manila, and before a big cross. And I was kneeling before and I could hear Jesus telling me to enter the convent, save myself and also my family. And I said, "Lord, I would like to follow You all the way."

At that point, I seemed to be happy externally, but because inside the convent we don't read the Bible, we don't study about the Word of God. We prayed the rosaries, we also at the same time studied the

lives of the saints and also our founders, and the encyclicals of the Pope and the Virgin Mary. And so I do not know the truth and I had this torture of conscience, the guilty feelings that cannot be resolved. So I would confess to the priest in the confessional box, saying, "Father, forgive me. Since my last confession was last week. Since then I have committed the following sin including the root cause: why am I falling and falling in that same sin over and over again."

And still for 21 long years, I struggle and I struggle and I struggle. I realized that I was totally empty, I was totally helpless and hopeless, and so depressed, and so desperate that I would like already to end my life. I was working for five years as dean of the University of San Agustin College of Nursing in Iloilo City, one of the islands in the Philippines. After five years I received a commission from my parents to help my sister who is being a battered woman. This is one of the reasons why I came over to United States. It is because my sister needs my help.

As I was working in the hospital in New York, my boss-- he was so gracious enough to give me an invitation to the Millennium Prophecy. As I was listening to Pastor Doug Batchelor's presentation, my heart really was beating so fast, and my mind, I'm able to grasp the truth, that this is the truth that I've been longing to hear all my life, that I have been seeking for so long. My personal relationship with Jesus, I can see Jesus as my personal Savior. He is not only the Savior of the whole world but He is my personal Savior. He was the one who delivered me mightily from the depths of sin, from the mighty clay.

Pastor Doug Batchelor has been used by the Lord in my conversion. The Amazing Facts, I owe to them. The Lord really blessed this ministry and I'm so proud I was able to attend this Millennium Prophecy. My life has never been the same. It has given me the peace, the joy, that never-- I have never tasted in my life, and now I am set free to be able to work for Him and to follow Him.