

A contract

... is an accord, “a formal agreement between two or more parties, especially one that is legally binding.”¹ History records many such agreements between nations—for example, when Germany and Japan formally surrendered to the Allies on May 7 and September 2, 1945, ending World War II. Government agencies, businesses, and individuals all employ contracts to bind agreements. And then there’s marriage, the sacred accord between two people.

In this lesson, the final one of the New Horizons Bible Correspondence Course, we will look at the contract between God and man, called ...

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

1. What does this agreement consist of, and how does it affect us practically?

In Lessons 13 and 26, we found that, back in eternity, the Father and the Son made an “everlasting covenant” that, should sin arise, Jesus would pay the penalty of death for all who would accept His sacrifice for sin. Thus, love and justice would coexist (see Psalm 85:10). When sin happened, Heaven began inviting every individual on earth to take part in that agreement.

2. What lay behind this momentous covenant?

When God created Adam and Eve, He made them similar to Himself—moral beings with the gift of *freedom* (see Lesson 5). Among other things, freedom involves a choice between good and evil. “*God is love*” (1 John 4:8, 16), and that love is the ruling principle of the universe. Yet true love can only be rendered freely. By contrast, forced service constitutes slavery and is foreign to Heaven. Thus, freedom was so valuable that God was willing to take the risk *and* pay the price to safeguard it; He paid it when on the cross. He fulfilled His covenant of grace.

¹ Funk & Wagnalls Standard Desk Dictionary, 1980. A contract is legally binding when signed by both parties.

3. When did this covenant become necessary, and why?

When Lucifer chose to rebel, he sowed seeds of evil in the minds of the angels in heaven. Since he rebelled with full knowledge of divine love, he soon became incorrigible. Yet, destroying Lucifer prematurely would generate terror in the hearts of the angels. In wisdom, the Father and the Son chose to allow time for Satan to demonstrate the true nature of evil and for Jesus to vindicate God's character by His life and sacrifice, thus immunizing the universe against evil forever. Meanwhile, man was deceived. But he *could* be rescued² if he would realize his lost state and accept Jesus' loving sacrifice.



4. What did God's plan and sacrifice to safeguard the great gift of choice mean in heaven?

- a) "It was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die."³
- b) The Son of God would have to leave His heavenly family to become one of us.
- c) In adopting human nature in its fallen condition, "Christ risked all. For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled."⁴ Had He sinned, who can estimate the consequences?
- d) God shared the plan with the holy angels; but it seemed to them "a hopeless task.... They could see no room for"⁵ God's "peculiar manifestation of ... a love born of mercy."⁶

5. What did the Son of God invest in carrying out the everlasting plan?

"Christ Jesus, who [was] in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and coming in the likeness of men. And ... as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8).

² E.G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 1898, pp. 761-762.

³ E.G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63.

⁴ E.G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 196. See also Lesson 29. As a man, Jesus was subject to human weakness.

⁵ E.G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 225.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 264.

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I Love You

6. What was the outcome of this investment?

Jesus accomplished all He set out to do. He, in His humanity no less, won an awesome victory by defeating Satan, laying the groundwork to deliver man and eradicate sin forever.

7. What are some of the important provisions and terms of the “everlasting covenant”?

- a) In Jesus, divinity and humanity were united (1 Timothy 3:16).
- b) He shed His blood⁷ to pay for our transgression of God’s law.
- c) As our great High Priest, Christ represents us before the Father. The investigative judgment, which takes place before all our guardian angels, insures justice, or “quality control.”⁸
- d) This covenant requires no money and no sacrifice by the sinner except repentance and confession made possible by faith in Jesus (Romans 12:3; Hebrews 11:6).
- e) Without its requirements being changed, the law of God can now be kept, not through man’s efforts, but through faith in, love for, and the power of Jesus.⁹
- f) God sanctifies man as he keeps holy the sacred Sabbath day (Exodus 31:13).¹⁰

⁷ Life is in the blood, Leviticus 17:11. Jesus saved man by pouring out His life when He shed His blood. Isaiah 53:12.

⁸ Daniel 7:9-10, 13; 1 Peter 4:17.

⁹ Romans 8:4; Philippians 4:13.

¹⁰ Ezekiel 20:12, 20. The Sabbath is an issue of loyalty to the Creator and Lawgiver. See Lessons 21 and 24.



- g) God's Word presents all the vital issues of life, such as:
1. What happens after death (Lesson 11).
 2. Loyalty in marriage and other human relations (Lesson 17).
 3. The sacredness of human life (Lesson 20).
 4. The destiny of the sinner (Lesson 26).

8. To take advantage of the holy provisions, what must we do? Are wishing and hoping sufficient?

"Make your call and election sure" (2 Peter 1:10). God is calling each of us to enter into this "everlasting covenant" by accepting Jesus as our Saviour from sin. Then let us cooperate with Him as He prepares us for citizenship in His everlasting kingdom.

9. How did Jesus present the value of His eternal kingdom?

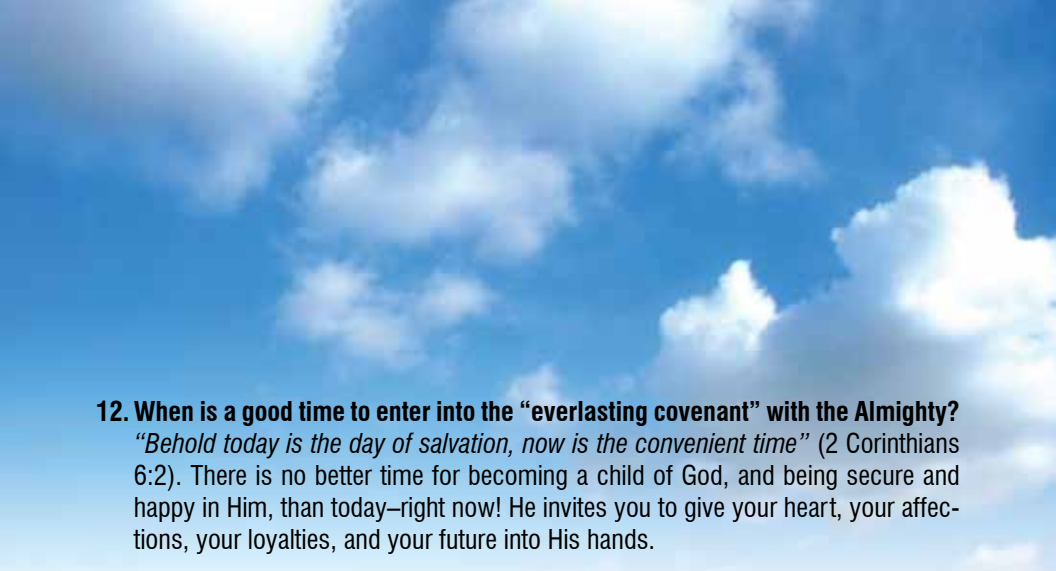
"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (Matthew 13:44). The kingdom of heaven, and all the blessings connected with it, are worth whatever investment it takes (Matthew 6:33; Romans 8:32). The field is the world. The treasure is the holy Word of God, which contains the everlasting covenant and the principles of the eternal kingdom. Everyone is invited to find the treasures of that kingdom—the truth of who God is and how He transforms sinful human beings into royal citizens!

10. In granting man the moral and intellectual capacity to *choose*, what options does God present?

In the Lord's name, Moses appealed to Israel: *"I have set before you today life and good, death and evil."* *"Therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days"* (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19-20).

11. What does choosing Jesus as our Saviour mean?

"But now, thus says the Lord, who created you...: 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name; you are Mine'" (Isaiah 43:1). We become His children, His pride and joy, and He becomes our Father, our security and happiness (verses 2-5; Psalm 16:11).




12. When is a good time to enter into the “everlasting covenant” with the Almighty?

“Behold today is the day of salvation, now is the convenient time” (2 Corinthians 6:2). There is no better time for becoming a child of God, and being secure and happy in Him, than today—right now! He invites you to give your heart, your affections, your loyalties, and your future into His hands.

13. What is on the horizon for those who give their hearts to God?

“And the years of eternity, as they roll, will bring richer and still more glorious revelations of God and of Christ. As knowledge is progressive, so will love, reverence, and happiness increase. The more men learn of God, the greater will be their admiration of His character. As Jesus opens before them the riches of redemption and the amazing achievements in the great controversy with Satan, the hearts of the ransomed thrill with more fervent devotion, and with more rapturous joy they sweep the harps of gold; and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of voices unite to swell the mighty chorus of praise....”

“The great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love.”¹¹



¹¹ E.G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 678.

In Summary ...

WHAT DOES THE EVERLASTING COVENANT ACHIEVE?

- Adam forfeited **life** through disobedience. By His sacrifice, Christ “*brought to light life and immortality through the gospel*” (2 Timothy 1:10).
- Adam lost his innocent and holy **character** through transgression. Christ rebuilds and restores human character to Adam’s original perfection (Isaiah 13:12).
- Adam lost his beautiful Eden **home** through yielding to temptation. Christ will restore the longed-for paradise, making it even more glorious than the former. God will dwell on this planet and make it the center of the universe for all eternity (Revelation 21:3)!
- Adam surrendered his **dominion** and **title** as Earth’s sovereign to Satan. At the cross, Christ won back that title by conquering Satan in the open battle that Adam had lost. Adam and all of God’s other children will be made kings and priests forever, ruling over God’s vast dominions.



REVIEW QUESTIONS



Please answer the following questions—and send them back to us so we can help you with any misunderstandings. Note that multiple-choice questions may have more than one correct answer. *Circle the letters of all correct answers. T/F stands for “true or false.”*

1. **Complete the sentence: “A contract is _____**
_____.”

2. **The “eternal covenant” is an agreement between ...**

- a) God and the governors of the many worlds throughout the universe.
- b) France, Germany, and Great Britain.
- c) God the Father and God the Son.
- d) God and the inhabitants of this earth.

3. **God did not risk anything when He gave free the gift of choice to all His higher creatures. T/F**

4. **The “eternal covenant” affects only the inhabitants of Earth. T/F**

5. **What was the outcome of God’s investment?**

- a) Jesus accomplished all He set out to do.
- b) Satan won when he had Christ crucified.
- c) Jesus will now be able to keep Satan in quarantine forever.
- d) In His humanity, Jesus won an awesome victory.

6. **Some of the provisions of the everlasting covenant are:**

- a) God in human form shed His blood to atone for man’s sin.
- b) The guardian angels will serve as witnesses in the investigative judgment.
- c) Man has to confess his sins to priests to obtain forgiveness.
- d) Man is enabled to keep the law without lowering its standards.

7. **God gave man the moral and intellectual capacity to choose between ...**

- a) good and evil.
- b) life and death.
- c) joy and peace.



8. The best time to enter into the covenant with God is ...

- a) when the Holy Spirit convicts us to do so.
- b) when my spouse is ready to join me.
- c) now.
- d) when we have become spiritual.

9. "As knowledge is progressive, so will _____, _____, and _____ increase."

SOME FINAL QUESTIONS

As you studied this course, have the powerful truths of God's word stimulated your thinking? Has the infinite love of God, revealed through His Son Jesus Christ, moved your heart and produced a desire to be His son or daughter? Have you decided to do something about the opportunities and challenges Jesus offers you? Please let us know how we can assist you further.

1) Would you like someone to discuss your next horizon with you?

- Yes No At a later, agreed-upon date

2) Are you interested in preparing for baptism and membership in God's church?

- Yes No

3) Would you like help in acquiring a Bible, one or more books by Ellen G. White, or other Bible study tools?

- Yes No

4) Do you have any questions? Is there anything else we can do to help you progress spiritually? _____

To receive your Certificate of Completion for the New Horizons Bible Correspondence Course, include your name and address on the lines below. Then cut along the dotted line on the right and fold, insert into an envelope, and mail this answer sheet to the address below.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State _____

Zip Code _____ Country _____