

Doctrine of the Word "*Eternal*"

1. Old Testament promises were considered to be "*eternal*", or "*everlasting*", but only for the duration of time God decreed to deal with Israel. The vantage point of time teaches this more clearly.
2. In 2 Chronicles 7:16 God promised to live in the Temple built by Solomon forever. However, in 586 BC the Temple was destroyed. It was rebuilt by Herod the Great, and destroyed again in AD 70.
3. In certain passages of the Old Testament such as Exodus 40:15 and Numbers 25:13, it is declared that the house of Aaron would constitute an everlasting priesthood. The book of Hebrews makes it clear that the Aaronic priesthood came to an end with the ministry of Christ.
4. In Genesis 13:15, and again in Genesis 17:8, the promise is made that the land of Canaan would be for Abraham and his seed an everlasting possession.
5. The challenge comes to understand why such promises would be made.
6. There is a sense in which every eternal or everlasting promise does not end, but goes through various forms. For example, the Law, the Sabbath, circumcision, the kingdom, the priesthood, and the land, pass from the temporal, to the eternal, in a spiritual sense.
7. Is not the Law of God still written on the hearts of all that believe in Christ? Does not the New Testament Church observe a Christian Sabbath on Sunday? Has God not wrought a circumcision of the heart? Is the Church not a kingdom and a royal priesthood sure to possess the land of promise in heaven? Has Christ not fulfilled all the promises made to national Israel and become their Deliverer (Luke 1:30-33, 76, 77; 2:25,30)? Is Jesus not the One through whom the Abrahamic covenant was to have its main fulfillment (Gal. 3:16)? It can be argued that the original realities themselves do remain, but in new forms.
8. The development of the original promises continue from
 - their inception until the first advent of Christ,
 - from that advent until the Second Coming, and
 - from the Second Coming into the eternal state which will have no end.