AMBASSADOR COLLEGE **Bible** LESSON 18

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

The Two Covenants Concern YOUR ETERNAL LIFE!

NEARLY everyone has been taught that the old covenant was the ten commandment law—that the new covenant contains only grace and promises, but no law.

Hence, runs the argument, since the old covenant has been abolished God's law has also been abolished.

This teaching would lead you to believe that the law of God was harsh, cruel, and enslaving —that the FAULT of the old covenant was with the law. And since *God* gave the law, the FAULT must have been His!

Later, according to this common teaching, Jesus came with a new covenant which had no law, only promises and liberty to do what you please.

Certainly there is something terribly wrong with this concept!

Why Misunderstood

"Old Testament," "New Testament"—do these words *mean* anything to you?

You have probably heard these two terms often during your lifetime. But confess it—as far as *your* life is concerned, they have meant scarcely a thing, have they?

Yet the Bible, the very revelation of God to man, is composed of two great parts—which *un*inspired editors have labeled the "Old Testament" and the "New Testament." And under these two headings *all* the rest of the Bible is written. Almost everyone knows that.

But few understand that these two divisions have great significance! God has permitted them to be the two *great divisions* of His book, the Bible! The very Book which reveals His will to man.

The ministers of this world do not understand the *real* meaning God intends these two parts to convey. This is the reason *you* probably have not understood them. These "ministers" cannot tell you what they themselves do not know!

But God's Book, the Bible, *can* reveal the true meaning and importance of these two divisions to *you*. They are not difficult to understand. And there is *nothing* more important in your life than that you do understand them *fully*. Your salvation is closely linked with how well you understand them.

The "Old Testament" and *The "New Testament"* represent the very essence of the plan whereby God is fashioning from man, His supreme creation—very Sons of God to be *born* into His own Family!

Man Created Incomplete

Yes, God has created man as the clay image of Himself, from the *dust* of the ground. God has promised man, through Abraham, eternal inheritance of this earth *provided* that man will *truly repent* of his former evil ways—completely *surrender his own will* to the will of God, and have *faith* in the cleansing blood of Christ. Then God will place His own Holy Spirit within man making him *able* to live by the eternal, royal law of love.

We know from our previous studies that God gave man this supreme spiritual law from the beginning. It has existed from Adam. God personally instructed the first man in it. It was

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His desire that man live in accordance with it from the beginning.

But God DID NOT, at the time of Adam, FINISH HIS CREATION of man! God only created Adam PHYSICALLY COMPLETE at that time. But He did *not*, at that time, carry out the second step in His creation of man. God did NOT complete man SPIRITUALLY. Man will be God's supreme creation only *after* He has *finished* creating him spiritually.

What was it that God did *not* do at the time of Adam? What is needed to *complete* man spiritually?

Let's understand!

God did *not* place within man the loving *spiritual* attitude that He has—the "holy spiritual *attitude*" characteristic of His *HOLY SPIRIT*. This holy Spiritual *nature* would make it *natural* for man to keep the spiritual *law* of love perfectly.

But the loving and gracious God has promised that He will *share* His very own divine nature with us. He has *promised* to *beget* us with His *own* spiritual nature!

"God *is* Love"—that is, His very *nature* is *loving!* (I John 4:8.)

We are actually to be *partakers* of His divine *nature*—"whereby are given unto us exceeding *great* and *precious* promises: that by these ye might BE *PARTAKERS* of the *DIVINE NATURE*" (II Peter 1:4). *Think of that!!*

How marvellous!

We may now be begotten of the Spirit of the Father and when we are later "*born again*"—then we will be *completely* composed of spirit—the *HOLY* SPIRIT OF GOD. We will then be God—members of the *God* Family—*composed* of God's *spiritual* substance by a new—our second—birth.

GOD IS LOVE (I John 4:8). WE ALSO WILL BE LOVE. We will then be the very *personification* of love. We will then *live* love—live by the royal law of love perfectly forever!

Then all our heartaches, sorrows and tears will be over. It is God Himself who is fashioning us unto good works (Ephesians 2:10).

But fashioning us unto good works is NOT EASY.

Two thousand years after the time of Adam God said, "O that there were such a heart [such a *nature*] in them that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always that it might be well with them" (Deut. 5:29).

Notice that a *change* must take place in man's *attitude* before the Father will beget him with God's very own *nature* of love.

"The carnal mind [the mind with which we are born] is *enmity* against God" (Romans 8:7). The carnal mind *hates* God's law. "It is not subject to the law of God. . . ." The carnal mind with which we are born *refuses* to keep God's LAW. This is the *reason* that man does not keep the royal law of love. His fleshly *human* nature REBELS against it. But the Scripture goes even further!! Notice the words "*neither indeed can be*" at the end of this sentence. The *carnal* mind of man is not subject to God's Supreme law, "neither indeed can be."

Do you understand?

It is only by a *miracle* that man can *ever* hope to be able to keep God's law perfectly!

Paul recognized the working of the carnal nature of his mind. He said "We know that the law is *spiritual:* but I am *carnal* . . . for that which I *do* I allow not: for what I would, *that do I not;* but *what I hate,* that *do I*" (Romans 7:14, 15). Finally, Paul cried out, "O *wretched* man that I am! who shall *deliver* me from the body of this death!" (Verse 24.) Paul knew that it would take a *miracle*—direct *from God Himself*—to *change* his human *nature* so he could keep the law of God. Paul knew that he was "*wretched*" following the law of his *carnal nature.* And then Paul, in exultation, *answered* his *own* question, "Who shall *deliver me?*" with the words, "I thank God *through* Jesus Christ our Lord." Paul knew that the *miracle* of *changing* his carnal human nature so he could perfectly keep the spiritual law would be accomplished *by* the Father *through Christ,* our Saviour.

Many argue that God did away with His law, so that man could *naturally*—by his *present carnal nature*—do "good." But God did no such thing! Paul knew that *of himself* he could *never* change his own *nature.*

God's Holy Spirit Needed

Man must *long* for this change *with all his heart.* He must come to the point of being willing to sacrifice *everything* if only this change will be *granted* him. He must come to the point where, like Christ, he will say to the Father, "NOT AS I WILL, BUT AS THOU WILT" (Mat. 26:39.)

Both wills—*God's* will and *man's* will—*cannot*

exist together. *One must surrender!*

We must *surrender* ourselves to God. Surrender ourselves to having His far *better* nature put within us—a *loving* nature.

Man must be brought to the point where he can see he must *voluntarily surrender his own will* so that God can *complete* His creation by placing within man His very own Holy Spirit. Then man will *naturally* live completely the royal law of God—the royal law of love.

When man is "born again" at the resurrection, it will be *natural* for him to live by his *spiritual* nature. Just as he now lives carnally because of his human nature.

Then the creation of man will be *complete!* Man will be a *finished* creation. Then he will *have* all that he has longed for and *never* really enjoyed—happiness, contentment, peace—for he will be living completely within the law of love, and *love* brings all these things and *more!*

But the carnal mind, with which we are born, is enmity towards God. It *rebels* at the thought of allowing itself to be crushed out! Each of us has to have it *proved* that our human mind cannot bring us the lasting happiness we seek.

It must be *demonstrated* to man that it is *impossible* for man, *of himself*, to keep the royal law of love.

But God already *has* given the people of this world *proof* of the *absolute necessity* of His *miraculous* divine intervention within their lives in order that they may keep His law!!

That was the very purpose of the "Old Testament"—the "Old *Covenant*"—God made with the children of Israel which they, of themselves, were *unable* to keep!

God did *not* miraculously intervene to *change their human nature* at that time so they would keep His law.

Never has God done away with His great spiritual law, the royal law of love. It is *good.* The law stands fast *forever!* It is the *people* who have been *weak.*

We are now about ready for the actual lesson. But first read this instruction!

Final Instruction

This lesson is intended to direct you to the Bible. Here is the method of study.

Have you your Bible in front of you? If not, don't read another word until you get your Bible—or Bibles, if you have more than one translation. Have a good dictionary, a Concordance if you have one, and your note paper, all placed in front of you on a desk or table.

Remember—you are to open your Bible to *every* passage. Never say to yourself, "Oh, I think I know what the Lesson is referring to"—and then pass over the Scripture. You need to "*keep your nose in the Bible,*" so to speak. You must read and re-read and think out each passage you read. Meditate on it in your leisure time in the following twenty-four hours, and in your time of prayer—before you forget it. Make it a part of you! Don't forget, this is a *Bible Study* Course—not just a study of Lessons we send you.

Here is how to make effective notes: Write down neatly on your paper the subject of the lesson and underscore it. Next write down the lesson number. Then as you come to each question section, write down its title, and underneath, number each question as you come to it. For each question write down the answer from your Bible, together with any pertinent ideas that come to your mind.

Be sure also to write out the scripture which answers each question. Writing down your material—the answers, and the words of each Bible passage, and any comments you wish to make as you go along—will help you in *reviewing* and remembering.

This lesson, like all others, is extremely important to you. Have you prayed that God will give you understanding of this lesson? If not, go now to a private place, kneel down, and ask Him for the understanding and wisdom so that you may properly grasp and *apply* the material in this lesson you are about to study!

And now for the lesson itself!

LESSON 18

Difference Between a Covenant and a Testament

1. What is a covenant?

Consult your dictionary, noticing in particular whether there are two (or more) parties involved, and if each agrees to do (or refrain from) something. Is it an *agreement?* Death of one of the parties is *not* mentioned as a part of a *covenant*, is it?

Comment: A covenant is an *agreement.* Death of one or the other parties does *not* enter into the terms of a covenant.

2. Did God make a *covenant* with Abraham? Gen. 12:1-3, 7.

COMMENT: In verse one we see that God did make an agreement with Abraham. "Get thee out of thy country" was the requirement Abraham had to fulfill as his part of the covenant. *If* Abraham would obey, then God, in turn, bound Himself to make of Abraham's seed—Abraham's descendants—a great nation. Gen. 12:2. No *death* had to take place to make this *covenant*

binding. It was a *covenant*—an agreement—pure and simple: "You do this and I will do that."

3. Now what is a *testament?* Again consult your dictionary.

COMMENT: We find that a *testament* is a *will*—it declares a person's *will* as to the disposal of his *possessions* after his *death.* So, note that a *death is involved* in a *will,* but *not* in a *covenant.* Christ left, at His death, a will—a *testament*—in which all people may be beneficiaries or heirs of His possession. For it was to *one* seed—*not* many seeds—but the one seed—*Christ*—to whom this earth was given as a reward (Gen. 12:7; Gal. 3:16).

Christ was the only one who ever obeyed the Law perfectly and could claim the earth as a reward. So it was He who could, and did, leave a *testament* or *will* at His death so that we may receive, through Him, eternal inheritance of the earth (Heb. 9:15, 16). (Review in the Lesson entitled "Is Heaven Promised to Those Saved?" page 7, sections "How Christ Made Our Inheritance Possible," and "What You Must Do." These show how we may become Abraham's heirs through Christ.)

God's Covenant with Ancient Israel

1. God promised to make of Abraham's offspring a great nation (Gen. 12:1, 2). God also covenanted with Abraham that if his offspring were obedient, they could have the land of Canaan (Palestine) for an everlasting possession (Gen. 17:8). What was the name of one of Abraham's sons? Gen. 21:2-4.

2. Was the name of Isaac's son *Jacob* changed to *Israel?* Gen. 32:28. Did Israel have many sons? I Chron. 2:1, 2. Then were not these called the *children of Israel?* Same verse.

COMMENT: Jacob, that is, Israel, and his twelve sons and their families journeyed down into Egypt and *there* God multiplied them and made of them a *great nation,* just as He had promised He would do (Gen. 46:1-3; 47:27). They became the "nation of Israel." The Egyptians, among whom they had sought refuge from famine, gradually became their captors and the Israelites became their slaves. By a miracle God made a pathway through the Red Sea so that the Israelites were able to escape from their captors. (Ex. 14:21-31).

3. Did God, after leading the Israelites out of Egypt (the land typical of sin and evil) and starting them toward the "Promised Land" of Palestine, bring them to Mount Sinai? Ex. 19:1, 3, 11. Did God there offer to make a *covenant* with them? Verses 3, 6.

4. Did God, *through Moses,* tell the people of Israel what their part of this *agreement* must be? Ex. 19:5. Did He say that they would have to be *obedient?* Same verse. And if they would thus keep their part of this *covenant* what did He promise them they would be? Last part of verse 5 and all of verse 6.

COMMENT: This covenant proposed by God to the Israelites is the most well-known covenant before the time of Christ. Its terms and conditions extend from Exodus 19:1 through Exodus 24:8. The first half of the Bible has *wrongly* been named "The Old *Testament*" because it contains this vital old *covenant.*

We now know that a *testament* or *will* has to do with the *death* of one of the parties for fulfillment. But death of the contracting parties was not called for to make this *covenant* binding. This covenant or agreement just called on the Israelites to obey God—and if and when they did, God would bless them. So the first part of the Bible should more properly have been called *the Old Covenant.*

When the Bible was translated into Latin shortly after Christ's death, the Latins used the word *Testamentum* which, in *Latin,* means either a covenant *or* a testament. Later, the Bible was translated into English, and the Latin word *Testamentum* was *unfortunately* continued as the English word *Testament*—which in *English* can mean only *one* thing—a *will.* And that is why the part of the Bible containing the Old Covenant is *not* titled *Old Covenant* as it should properly be today.

5. Did the ancient Israelites like the conditional promise God made to them that they would be a "peculiar treasure" to Him, and be "above all people"? Ex. 19:5.

COMMENT: They desired to be God's "kingdom of priests" and "a holy nation." But *they never received this promise.* Instead, we find it will be fulfilled in the Millennium to the *saints* who will have been *begotten* of the *Holy Spirit*—with the *power* and *nature* with which they *can* keep the law and be born into the Kingdom. (Review in Lesson 5, titled "Re-education to God's Way in the MILLENNIUM," on page 4, its section titled "Duties of the Saints.")

The *Holy Spirit* of *power* was not made available to the *world* in Old Covenant times.

Israel Thought They Could Keep the Covenant

1. *Were the people of that time* so certain of their *own ability* to do all God would require that they immediately promised Moses that all the Lord had spoken they would do? Ex. 19:8.

2. God had just finished informing the Israelites, through one of their own number, Moses, what He would require of the people, in a broad sense. And they readily affirmed

that they would do *their part* of this covenant. Were they just as certain of themselves when God *Himself* spoke to them the Law they were to keep? Let us examine.

3. Did God inform Moses that He Himself would come down to the people after three days? Ex. 19:11. Did God at this time inform them that they would have to keep the ten commandments in order to fulfill His covenant? Note Ex. 20:1 especially. Read also verses 2 through 17. Read of the same event in Deut. 5:4-22. And did God, with His own finger, write these commandments on tables of stone for the people at that time? Ex. 31:18.

4. After God had spoken the ten commandments which they were to obey as a part of this covenant, did He instruct Moses to set before the people the various civil judgments and statutes, as a part of this same Old Covenant, which they must also promise to follow? Exodus chapters 21 through 23. Skim *rapidly* over these three chapters to get the *general* trend.

COMMENT: The eternal spiritual law, the royal law of love *which is composed of the ten commandments*, was here repeated to the Israelites, just as God had revealed it from the beginning. The ten commandments comprised a *distinct part* of the Old Covenant which God made with Israel at that time. Then, in Exodus chapters 21 through 23, God revealed to Moses the various *applications* of the ten commandments by civil judgments and statutes which were another part of, and included in, the Old Covenant to which the people must agree.

5. Were the people any less certain of being able to fulfill *by their own power* all the laws revealed to them, when they heard God's own voice giving them?—did they agree to this covenant and ratify it with blood? Ex. 24:7, 8.

COMMENT: The Old-Covenant Israelites had no promise of the Holy Spirit to dwell within them and give them the *power* and the very *nature of God* to *help* them keep the law. They did not *realize* THEIR LACK OF POWER when they agreed to the terms of the Old Covenant. THEY NEEDED HELP!

AND PEOPLE TODAY NEED HELP! But people today do not realize this fact *either!*

The *Holy Spirit* of *power* is *now* available! It is time that the world *wake up* to this fact!!

Notice how God began to *wake up the world to this fact!*

The "Ministration of Death"

1. Among the judgments in the Old Covenant, was there one that called for an "eye for an eye," and a "tooth for a tooth," and a "life for a life"? Ex. 21:23, 24.

2. If a man took another's life, his own life was required in return, by this judgment. So, if the judge required the killer's *life*, then the judge was *administering* a penalty of *death*, was he not? And isn't this a *ministration of death?* Same verse. Notice that the New Testament calls this same set of judgments by the term "ministration of death." II Cor. 3:6-8.

3. Does the Bible say the "ministration of death" was glorious? II Cor. 3:7. *Why* was the "ministration of death" glorious? See comment.

COMMENT: The principles of the *ten commandments* formed the basis of these civil statutes and judgments. The violation of the principles of the ten commandments was punished by the Old Covenant authorities *only insofar* as they were later *repeated* in the *civil statutes and judgments.* Such things as murder, kidnapping and adultery were punishable by *death.*

Evildoers were thus made to *realize fully* that they had *transgressed* the law of God. *They were made to realize how woefully they had failed to measure up to the keeping of the law.* THEIR OWN WEAKNESS WAS IMPRESSED UPON THEM!

Israel sinned constantly, and was constantly reminded of it! Their history is a *lesson* to *us*, today, to make us also *realize* our weakness and the need of *divine* help in overcoming our *natures* (I Cor. 10:11). *This* is why that ministration of death was *glorious.* It accomplished a *glorious* objective.

Old Covenant Israel did not have the Holy Spirit—the loving spiritual nature of God—with which they could keep the law of God in its *spiritual* intent. All they could possibly do was to *try*, with their *own* power, to keep the law in the *letter.*

Had they been able to keep the law in the letter perfectly, God would have fulfilled His part of the Old Covenant and given them all the *material* promises of this *material* covenant. But they would never have gained eternal life by keeping *this* covenant, for "the *letter killeth*" (II Cor. 3:6). That is, in keeping this Old Covenant even in complete perfection in the *letter*, one would still ultimately die. There was *absolutely* NO PROMISE IN THE OLD COVENANT OF ETERNAL LIFE.

The Israelites, *of themselves*, could gain neither the material promises nor eternal life. They were *weak!* However, notice now the next words of II Cor. 3:6—"but the *Spirit* giveth *life*"!! It is the Spirit—the *Holy Spirit* of God—that will give "life"—*eternal* life!

The "ministration of death" was a *temporary* administration—it existed only "till the seed [Christ] should come" who would promise the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual law of love which is summarized

in the ten commandments is eternal. It exists forever. But the temporary set of physical laws administering the death penalty were *different*. They had a *different purpose*. They were revealed *separately*. For the ten commandments were written on two hewn *tables* of stone (Ex. 31:18). But the laws requiring the "ministration of death" were written in unhewn stones—*whole* stones (II Cor. 3:7). Moses commanded that these great stones be plastered and that the ministration of death be written upon them, along with the other civil laws.

4. It is interesting to know that God ordained the "eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, and life for a life" ministration of death principle as a judgment long before He re-stated it to the Israelites at Mount Sinai as a part of their covenant. What did Cain do to his brother Abel before the flood? Gen. 4:8. And after Cain did this, what did God do to Cain? Gen. 4:15.

5. Did violence increase so tremendously *before* the flood that man was about to destroy himself from the face of the earth? Gen. 6:11, 13. Then wasn't it just *after* the flood that God ordained for the human family the "ministration of death" principle? Gen. 9:5, 6.

COMMENT: Whoever sheds the lifeblood of another human being, *his own* lifeblood is required in return. God ordained a "ministration of death" just after the flood for *all mankind* for the same reasons He later made it a part of His covenant with Israel—so that their failure to measure up to the keeping of the law may be impressed upon *all*.

Remember that "the *fear* of God is the beginning of wisdom" (Psa. 111:10). We must first learn to fear and reverence our Creator and the laws He has revealed to us. We must learn to sincerely yearn for the *ability* to follow His royal law *perfectly*. Then He will *beget* us with the *power* of His own spiritual nature.

A Marriage Covenant

Many have asked: "Why didn't Jesus Christ ever marry?" The fact is He did marry! Your Bible says so! It even names His wife. It tells us when and where and why He married!

Surprising? Yes! But it has been in your Bible all these years! It has *directly* to do with the two covenants!

Let's understand.

Jesus Christ is the Father's Spokesman—the Word of the God Family. Remember Jesus is the LORD of the Old Testament—the One Who did the speaking at Creation. God the Father planned the Universe. Jesus—before His human birth—spoke and it was done by the power of the Spirit of God.

Jesus — the Word — created everything. He created man and He created woman. And He established the marriage relationship (Gen. 2:21-25).

Many years later this same Jesus Christ—who ordained marriage in the beginning—*was Himself married!*

Here is what happened!

1. Was it Jesus Christ, the LORD, Who spoke the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai? Ex. 20:1. It could not have been the Father who spoke these words, could it? Didn't Jesus say no man had ever heard the voice of God the Father? John 5:37.

COMMENT: At Mount Sinai, when the Ten Commandments were given, they were given by Jesus Christ. Israel entered into the Old Covenant with Jesus Christ before His human birth.

2. Did the LORD Jesus Christ consider this Old Covenant between Himself and Israel a *marriage agreement?* Ezek. 16:8. Read also Jer. 31:32. Note the word *husband*. Notice the "I do" agreement made by the "wife" Israel—to her Husband, Christ. Ex. 19:8 and Ex. 24:7.

COMMENT: Now you see that the covenant was not just the ten commandments, but also *a marriage agreement* between the Lord of the Old Covenant and the nation—the ancient church—of Israel. The people of Israel *accepted* the terms that God gave them. They bound themselves by the Old Covenant to refrain from any adulterous or whorish relations with the false "gods" of other nations—and to remain chaste and acceptable to their own husband—Christ (Ex. 34:12-17).

3. In the space of only nine short months after Israel had agreed to the Covenant, the people had failed so badly to live by the law that the LORD, as her "husband," found it necessary to correct His "wife." What did He say?—did He first remind Israel of the Covenant they had agreed to keep? Lev. 26:1-3.

4. Then did He point out the *blessings* that the people of Israel, His wife, could have *if* they were to live by the law? Read Lev. 26:1-13. But if they did not obey, what did He warn would happen to them? Read verses 14 thru 39.

COMMENT: Notice also in Jeremiah 3:14 the LORD commands Israel, His wife: "Turn, O backsliding children . . . for I AM MARRIED UNTO YOU!"

There you have it. Jesus was married to the nation Israel—and the marriage was called the Old Covenant!

Whom Did Israel Marry?

Some ministers claim Israel was married to the Law! NOT SO! Individuals don't marry a code of laws—individuals marry other individuals! But every marriage is based on law—or else it would not be LEGAL!

One such minister *hates* God's law! In one breath he is forced to admit the law is "holy,"

"just" and "good." Yet in the next he calls it a "prison house," a "slave driver" demanding *death!*

1. What does your Bible say demands the death penalty? Is is the law—or is it SIN? Rom. 6:23. Who is responsible for sin?—the law, or the *sinner?* Gal. 6:7-8, Rom. 6:16.

COMMENT: The sinner is *responsible.* He earns the wages of sin—death! Those who hate God's law would have you think the law is *impossible* to keep! This spirit of anti-Christ would make Jesus a law-breaker! It denies that Christ kept the law perfectly when He came in human flesh! If this false notion were true—you have NO SAVIOUR!

2. How does the Apostle Paul clarify the marriage relationship? Rom. 7:1-4. Is Paul explaining the law in regard to a marriage contract? Verses 1-2.

3. How are a husband and wife bound—isn't it *by the law?* Verse 2. When is a marriage contract dissolved — at the death of one of the parties? Same verse.

COMMENT: Notice: the wife is not bound *to the law*—but she is bound *to her husband "by the law"!* Only the death of her husband can dissolve the marriage contract which is governed by law. The law doesn't stop when the husband dies, but the marriage covenant is dissolved which was based upon the law.

Jesus Christ made a marriage covenant—the Old Covenant—with ancient Israel at Sinai. The contract was based upon and governed by the terms and conditions of God's law. When Christ —the "husband"—died at Golgotha, His marriage contract with ancient Israel was dissolved, but the law upon which it was based continues!

Jesus didn't do away with God's law at the cross—our sins, the breaking of God's perfect law, *did away with Him!* He accepted the death penalty of sin FOR US. OUR SINS DEMANDED HIS PERFECT LIFE!

4. Doesn't Paul say that by Christ's sacrifice in our stead we are reckoned as dead, and therefore free now to marry? Verse 4. Who will converted Christians marry?—Jesus Christ who is now resurrected? Same verse.

COMMENT: The same one who was "husband" to physical Israel under the Old Covenant will be "HUSBAND" to spiritual Israel (God's true Church "born again" at the resurrection) under the terms of the New Covenant. Both covenants are marriage agreements—both are governed by the same terms and conditions—God's spiritual law!

Rigmarole of Rituals Added

1. The Israelites, being *without* the Spirit of God, were constantly rebelling — sinning — against God, their husband, and the law He had given them. Read Ezek. 20:13. What did God do, because of this rebellion, to *impress* upon them the weakness of their own inherent nature in respect to keeping the law?—did He not *add* yet other *new, temporary* statutes? Lev. 1:1-9.

COMMENT: Notice that these new statutes *could have been unnecessary.* The Israelites brought these upon themselves because of their *dis*obedience. These rituals were added for a lesson *after* they began to act *disobediently.*

When a husband and wife perform their "vows" of marriage, the wife promises to *obey* her husband. But the *specific* things she is to obey are not mentioned at the time of marriage. At that time she promises to have the *attitude* of obedience. As problems come up in their married life, the husband tells the wife other things she must do.

The same is true of the marriage of God to Israel. God, the husband, *added* these new temporary statutes in accordance with the terms of the original Old Marriage Covenant agreement *after* ancient Israel had begun to transgress. And she, as a wife, was bound by her marriage "vow" to obey them as a wife is to obey her husband.

But ancient Israel was not faithful to her part of the marriage contract! They turned from worshipping God, and followed the customs of the heathen—serving other gods. They broke their part of the marriage covenant by committing spiritual "adultery."

2. What did all these *new,* temporary statutes, which were commanded after the Israelites began to break the Covenant they had made with God, command them to do? Skim briefly over chapters 1, 2, 3 of Leviticus just to get the *general trend* of thought.

COMMENT: God wrote the ten commandments on two tables of *stone.* God had Moses write in a *book,* at that time, His civil statutes and judgments. The civil statutes did *not,* at first, contain this RIGMAROLE OF LAWS OF BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES. They were *added later*—nine months later—as a *separate part* of the civil statutes because the Israelites had begun to transgress. The keeping of these laws *REQUIRED MUCH LABORIOUS WORK,* as can be seen by these three chapters. That's why it came to be known as "The law of *works*" in the New Testament times.

Man's Human Weakness Impressed Upon Him

1. Doesn't Jer. 7:22, 23 also verify the fact that this rigmarole of sacrificial laws was added *after* the Israelites had begun to transgress? Doesn't Gal. 3:19 also prove this?

2. Then what was the *purpose* of this rigmarole of hard work of making burnt offerings,

performing various washings, and making various other sacrifices? Gal. 3:24. Was it a *schoolmaster?* Same verse. And for what purpose? Same verse.

COMMENT: Remember that the law that is being spoken of *here* is the law that was *added* (Gal. 3:19). It was the burdensome *sacrificial* law that God had Moses *add after* the Israelites were beginning to show they could *not* keep even the *letter* of the law. How *weak* they *proved* to be!

Each time an Israelite transgressed the law his sin had to be acknowledged with *burdensome* added work. Yet, even this work could not forgive the sin, but served only to remind them of the penalty for sin—death. Paul refers to this added labor, in Gal. 2:16, as "works." The Greek word for "works" is *ergon.* It means hard physical labor. This consisted of a rigmarole of sin offerings, washings, and other laborious and time-consuming rituals so they would *realize* their *inherent weakness* and inability to do what the law required.

Each time an Israelite transgressed the law and his sin had to be atoned for by burdensome work, it impressed into his mind that he had *failed* to keep the law. It acted as a "schoolmaster" to teach, to impress this upon him.

The sacrifices pointed forward to the time when Christ would come to offer Himself for the sins of the world. The various washings pictured the work of the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit makes it possible for all to have the *power* of God within them so they can keep the spiritual law, the ten commandments.

The old sacrificial laws, contained among the other statutes God had Moses write, are no longer to be fulfilled by man. Instead, Christ has become our sacrificial Lamb (John 1:29).

But the great spiritual law of God, *the royal law of love*—as given to Adam and Eve, with its ten points, and later repeated and amplified at Mount Sinai—stands fast forever.

We need *help* to keep it!

Remember this! If Old-Covenant Israel had received the very *nature* of God—the *nature* of love (I John 4:8)—they would naturally have kept these laws because God's commandments merely *reveal* to man how His nature of love works! *But* nowhere in the Old Covenant can you find where the Holy Spirit, the very Spirit or *nature* of God, was promised these people.

God asked the Old-Covenant Israelites to keep the law—the ten Spiritual commandments He gave them—*in the letter.* He required no more than the fulfilling the law in the *letter* to receive the material promises of the Old Covenant.

This Old Covenant—commonly misnamed the Old Testament—contained only MATERIAL PROMISES, promises of material blessings of wealth, health, crops and such if they would obey God.

This Covenant was NATIONAL—to Israel only—no other nations were promised these blessings.

It was TEMPORAL—there was *no* promise of *eternal* life if they obeyed God. The Old Covenant, then, was *national, material,* and *temporal.*

3. Were the material benefits of this material Old Covenant offered by God to many succeeding generations of Israel? Deut 7:9.

4. But to a new generation, 40 years later, was God *still finding it necessary* to point out the blessings for being obedient to the law, with Him as "husband"? Deut. 28:1-14. And finding it necessary *to warn* of what would happen if they did not? Verses 15-68. Scan and summarize.

5. Were other nations (the Gentiles) to rule over Israel if they broke their part of this covenant? Lev. 26:14, 17.

Israel Removed

1. Was Israel able to keep the Old Covenant, or were the Israelites scattered among the Gentiles as a punishment for not keeping the Old Covenant? Ezek. 20:23, 24. And Ezek. 11:16.

2. *How long* did God give the people of Israel in which *to learn* to keep His law without His Holy Spirit, before He scattered them?

COMMENT: Here we see people who were given every incentive to live by the law. For almost a *thousand years* they were given this chance. THEY FAILED!

Theirs is a LESSON TO ALL PEOPLE. God intended it so.

They were *no* different than people are today. We also need HELP!! And we need it BADLY.

(Subject to be concluded in Lesson 19.)

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