



# THE TWO COVENANTS

*As the Bible presents two laws, one changeless and eternal, the other subject to change and temporary, so there are two covenants. The word covenant meaning: an agreement or promise between two or more parties for the performance of some action.*

## **1. When and where was the first covenant made between God and man?**

**Genesis 3:15:** "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

*After Adam and Eve sinned they were given a divine promise that one of Eve's descendants (Christ) should destroy sin and the serpent (Satan – Revelation 12:9). To all men this covenant offered pardon and the assisting grace of God for future obedience through faith in Christ.*

**Revelation 12:9** "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

## **2. To whom was this covenant renewed centuries later?**

**Genesis 17:1-2, 7:** "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. . . . And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

**Genesis 22:18:** "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

**Galatians 3:16:** "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

# LESSON 13

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*Though this covenant was made with Adam and renewed to Abraham, it could not be confirmed until the death of Christ. It had existed by promise and had been accepted by faith; yet when made a reality by the sacrifice of Jesus, it is called a "new covenant", because the blood (Christ's) by which it was sealed was shed after the blood (animal sacrifices) of the "first" covenant. The ten commandments were the basis of this covenant (Genesis 26:5), which was simply an arrangement for bringing men again into harmony with the divine will, placing them where they could obey God's law.*

**Genesis 26:5** "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."

### **3. Another agreement was formed between God and Israel at Mount Sinai which is referred to in Scripture as part of the "old" covenant (Hebrews 8:13). What was the old covenant that God made with the children of Israel and what would be the result if faithfully observed?**

**Hebrews 8:13:** "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

**Deuteronomy 26:17-18:** "Thou hast avouched (confessed) the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice: and the Lord hath avouched (acknowledged) thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments."

**Exodus 19:5-6:** "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. . . ."

### **4. What was the basis of the old covenant and where was it written?**

**Deuteronomy 4:13:** "And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone."

#### **[Further Study]**

#### **Exodus 20:3-17**

**3** Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

**4** Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

**5** Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

**6** And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

**7** Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

**8** Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

**9** Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

**10** But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

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**11** For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

**12** Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

**13** Thou shalt not kill.

**14** Thou shalt not commit adultery.

**15** Thou shalt not steal.

**16** Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

**17** Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

### **5. How was this proposed covenant received by the people and how was it confirmed or made binding?**

**Exodus 19:7-8:** "And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord."

**Exodus 24:3, 7-8:** "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said will we do. . . . And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

#### **[Further Study]**

**Hebrews 9:19-24** "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:"

### **6. How long was it before the covenant was broken?**

**Exodus 24:18:** "And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights."

**Exodus 32:7-8:** "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."

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### **Why were the Israelites unable to keep their part of the bargain in agreeing to obey God's commandments?**

**Exodus 24:7:** "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient."

*The book referred to in this verse had to do with directions relating to the duty of the people to God, to one another, and to the stranger, and were only the principles of the ten commandments amplified and given in a specific manner, that none should err. They were designed to guard the sacredness of the ten precepts engraved on tables of stone.*

**Romans 10:3:** "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

#### **[Further Study]**

**John 15:4-5** "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing."

**Matthew 26:41** "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

*The people did not realize the sinfulness of their own hearts, and that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God's law. Feeling they were able to establish their own righteousness they readily entered into covenant with God. Only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down and worshipped a graven image. They could not hope for the favor of God through a covenant which they had broken; and now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of a Saviour revealed in the Abrahamic covenant and shadowed forth in the sacrificial offerings. Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the "new covenant".*

*It must be remembered that the law had not in itself the power to save, but on the contrary could only condemn.*

**Romans 8:3** "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:"

**Galatians 3:24** "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

### **8. How was the new covenant that God promised to make with Israel different from the old?**

**Jeremiah 31:31-33:** "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put

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my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

### [Further Study]

**2 Corinthians 3:3** "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

**Hebrews 8:7-10** "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:"

*The new covenant was also based upon the ten commandments. It not only involves heart obedience by divine power instead of human power, but also the sacrifice of Christ and His shed blood instead of animal sacrifices.*

**9. As used in the Bible the terms covenant and testament are synonymous; the old covenant/testament looking forward to the life, death, resurrection, and high priestly ministry of Jesus; and the new covenant/testament being the fulfillment of the old.**

### **How was the new covenant/testament confirmed?**

**Matthew 26:26-28:** "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

### [Further Study]

**Hebrews 9:12-15** "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

**10. Under the conditions and promises of the new covenant, is it possible for all Christians to obey the ten commandments?**

**Psalms 40:8:** "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

**Jude 24:** "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

**Philippians 4:13:** "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

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### [Further Study]

**Matthew 5:48** "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

**1 Corinthians 10:13** "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

**Galatians 2:20** "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

**Philippians 2:13** "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

**Hebrews 13:20-21** "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

*The new covenant succeeds where the old fails because it is fulfilled, not in our own human strength, but in the power of faith in the indwelling Christ.*

"The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth 'the fruits of the Spirit'. Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked...."

"God's work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power, to meet the wants of men in different ages. Beginning with the first gospel promise, and coming down through the patriarchal and Jewish ages, and even to the present time, there has been a gradual unfolding of the purposes of God in the plan of redemption. The Saviour typified in the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law is the very same that is revealed in the gospel. The clouds that enveloped His divine form have rolled back; the mists and shades have disappeared; and Jesus, the world's Redeemer, stands revealed. He who proclaimed the law from Sinai, and delivered to Moses the precepts of the ritual law, is the same that spoke the Sermon on the Mount, the great principles of love to God, which He set forth as the foundation of the law and the prophets, are only a reiteration of what He had spoken through Moses to the Hebrew people: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' Deuteronomy 6:4-5. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' Leviticus 19:18. The teacher is the same in both dispensations. God's claims are the same. The principles of His government are the same. For all proceed from Him 'with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' James 1:17."

***Patriarchs and Prophets, pages 372, 373.***