

LESSON 18  
(1959, 1965, 1967)

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE  
BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Marriage Is a "Covenant"

About Our Cover ...

The bride and groom pictured on our cover are entering into a marriage "covenant". When a husband and wife perform their marriage "vows", the wife PROMISES to love and obey her husband; and the husband AGREES to provide for, protect and love his obedient wife. These are the terms or conditions of a marriage covenant. And that's exactly what the Old Covenant was -- a MARRIAGE AGREEMENT! This study reveals who the "marriage" partners were, the terms or conditions agreed upon, and the VITAL LESSONS the Old Covenant teaches us today.

THE OLD COVENANT -- CHRIST'S FIRST MARRIAGE

NEARLY everyone has been taught that the Old Covenant was the ten commandment law, and that the New Covenant contains only grace and promises -- but certainly 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 WHATEVER 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 as far as YOUR life is concerned, they haven't meant very much to you, have they?

Yet the Bible, the very revelation of God to man, is composed of two great parts -- which uninspired editors have labeled the "Old Testament" and the "New Testament." And under these two headings ALL the books of the Bible are contained. 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, DOES 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 in man His supreme creation -- very Sons of God to be BORN into His own Family!

#### Man Created Incomplete

God created man in the clay image of Himself, from the DUST of the ground.

But God DID NOT, at the time of Adam, FINISH HIS CREATION of man! God only created Adam PHYSICALLY COMPLETE at that time. 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 SPIRITUAL creation only AFTER He has FINISHED creating him spiritually into the very CHARACTER "IMAGE" of God.

Exactly what was lacking in 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 ATTITUDE characteristic of His HOLY SPIRIT. God's Holy Spirit imparts the SPIRITUAL love and power man needs to develop God's character and fulfill His royal, SPIRITUAL law of love -- the Ten Commandments.

But our loving and gracious God has promised that He will begin to SHARE His very own divine nature with us. He has PROMISED to do this by BEGETTING US with His Holy Spirit -- PROVIDED that we will TRULY REPENT of disobeying His laws, completely SURRENDER OUR OWN WILLS to the will of God, have FAITH in the cleansing blood of Christ and are baptized. Then God will place His Holy Spirit of LOVE and POWER within us, thus making it possible for us to BEGIN living by the eternal, royal law of love and BEGIN DEVELOPING the very CHARACTER of God!

"God IS Love" -- that is, His very NATURE IS LOVING! (I John 4:8.)

We are actually to PARTAKE FULLY of His divine NATURE at the resurrection -- "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 Gods -- members of the God Kingdom -- COMPOSED of God's SPIRITUAL substance and nature by a new (our second) birth.

Yes, "GOD IS LOVE" (I John 4:8). At the resurrection 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! (I John 3:9.) Then all our heartaches, sorrows and tears will be over.

God is now fashioning His spirit-begotten children unto "good works" in preparation for that glorious event (Eph. 2:10).

But fashioning us unto good works is NOT EASY!

## Our Nature Must Be Changed

Two thousand years after the time of Adam, God made this statement concerning His people Israel, and all mankind: "O that there were such an 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 God says carnal man, of himself, does not have the ability -- the character -- to obey Him. WHY?

"The carnal mind [the mind with which we are born] is ENMITY against God [it HATES God's law] for it is not subject to the law of God ... " (Rom. 8:7).

The carnal mind with which we are born REFUSES to keep God's LAW. This is the REASON why man does not keep the royal law of love. His HUMAN nature REBELS against it. But the Scripture goes even further!! Notice the words "NEITHER INDEED CAN BE" at the end of this same verse.

It is utterly IMPOSSIBLE for the CARNAL mind of man, of itself, to be subject to God's Supreme SPIRITUAL law of love!

Do you understand?

It is only by the MIRACLE OF SPIRITUAL BEGETTAL that one can BEGIN to keep God's law! But even then we still have to FIGHT against the evil pulls of our carnal natures.

The apostle Paul, who was begotten by God's Holy Spirit, recognized the continual evil pulls of his carnal nature. 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" (Rom. 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 COMPLETELY CHANGE his human NATURE so he could keep the law of God PERFECTLY! Paul knew that he was "WRETCHED" in his present carnal state. And then Paul, in exultation, ANSWERED his OWN question, "Who shall DELIVER ME?" with the words, "I thank God THROUGH Jesus Christ our Lord" (verse 25).

Paul knew that the MIRACLE of COMPLETELY CHANGING his carnal human nature so he could keep the spiritual law perfectly would be accomplished BY the Father's Spirit THROUGH CHRIST, our Savior, at the resurrection.

But 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!

We know from our previous lesson that God gave man His supreme spiritual law from the beginning. It has existed from Adam. God personally instructed the first man and woman in His law. And it was His desire that man live in accordance with it from the beginning.

But it takes God's Holy Spirit to obey His spiritual law! Paul knew that. And PAUL KNEW IT TOOK THE POWER OF GOD'S SPIRIT TO COMPLETELY CHANGE MAN'S NATURE!

## God's Holy Spirit Needed

Man must LONG for this complete change WITH ALL HIS HEART. He must come to the point of being willing to sacrifice EVERYTHING if only this change would BEGIN to take place within 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).

MAN'S WILL MUST SURRENDER TOTALLY AND UNCONDITIONALLY TO

GOD'S WILL!

Man must SURRENDER himself to God so he can receive the LOVING NATURE of His Holy Spirit.

Man must be brought to the point where he can see he must VOLUNTARILY SURRENDER HIS OWN WILL SO that God can begin to COMPLETE man's spiritual creation by placing His Holy Spirit within him. Then man will have the SPIRITUAL EQUIPMENT to be able to begin living by the royal law of God -- the royal law of LOVE.

And when man is "born again" at the resurrection, it will be perfectly NATURAL for him to live by his new SPIRITUAL nature -- just as it is NATURAL for unconverted people today to follow the dictates of their carnal natures.

THEN the creation of man will be COMPLETE! Man will be God's FINISHED SPIRITUAL creation. Then he will HAVE all that he has longed for -- true 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 carnal, unspiritual mind, with its human nature, cannot bring us the lasting happiness we seek.

It must be DEMONSTRATED to man that it is IMPOSSIBLE for him, 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 so they can begin to keep His law and receive His blessings!!

THAT was the very purpose of the "Old COVENANT" God made with the children of Israel -- which they did NOT keep!

God did NOT promise to give them His Holy Spirit of love and power at that time so they could keep His laws.

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, and therefore unable to keep God's Ten Commandments!

We are now about ready for the actual lesson.

But first read the following instructions.

#### Before You Begin

This lesson is intended to direct you to the BIBLE -- to help you learn the truth of God's Word. Here is the method of study.

Is your Bible in front of you? If not, get your Bible -- or Bibles, if you have more than one translation -- BEFORE YOU CONTINUE WITH THIS LESSON! Have a good dictionary, a concordance if you own one, and your notepaper 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 reread and think out each passage. MEDITATE on the new knowledge you will learn during your leisure time, especially within the following twenty-four hours, and in your time of prayer -- so you WON'T FORGET IT! Make God's Word a PART OF YOU! Don't forget that this is a BIBLE study course -- not just a study of the lessons we send you.

Here is how to make effective notes: Write down neatly on

your paper the title of the lesson and underscore it. Next write down the lesson number. Then as you come to each question section, write down its heading. Then, 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 to WRITE OUT the scripture which answers each question. Writing down every word of each Bible passage, and any comments you wish to make as you go along, will help you in REVIEWING and remembering later on.

This lesson, like all others, is extremely important to you. Have you PRAYED to God for understanding? If not, go now to a private place, kneel down, and ask Him for spiritual UNDERSTANDING and wisdom. Ask God to HELP YOU GRASP and APPLY the knowledge this lesson will reveal to you in the Bible!

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 requirement 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 become beneficiaries or heirs of His possessions. For it was to the ONE seed -- CHRIST -- to whom this earth was given as an inheritance (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:16-19).

Christ was the only One who ever obeyed God's Law perfectly and could claim the earth as an inheritance. So it was He who could, and did, leave a TESTAMENT or WILL at His death so that we may also receive, through Him, eternal inheritance of the earth (Heb. 9:15-16).

Review in Lesson 13, pages 12 and 13, the sections "How Christ Made Our Inheritance Possible," and "What We Must Do." These show how we may become Abraham's heirs through Christ.

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 PHOTO CAPTION: MOUNT SINAI -- Behind this Bedouin boy and his camel is the "Plain of the Law," and the rugged peaks of Mount Sinai. It was before this mountain that the Israelites gathered to receive God's Ten Commandments.

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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 he and his offspring would be obedient, they would have the land of Canaan (Palestine) for an EVERLASTING possession (Gen. 17:8-9). What was the name of one of Abraham's sons? Gen. 21:2-4.

2. Was one of Isaac's sons named JACOB? Gen. 27:22. Was his name changed to ISRAEL? Gen. 32:28. Did Israel have many sons? I Chron. 2:1, 2. Were these therefore the CHILDREN OF ISRAEL? Same verses.

COMMENT: Israel (Jacob) and his twelve sons and their families journeyed down into Egypt. THERE God multiplied them and made of them a GREAT NATION, just as He had promised (Gen. 46:1-3; 47:27). They became the "nation of Israel."

The Egyptians, among whom the original family of Israel had sought refuge from famine, gradually became their captors and the Israelites became their slaves for several hundred years. By many miracles of God they were finally set free, and God made them a pathway through the Red Sea so that they could escape the Egyptians who suddenly pursued them (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 become? 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 part of the Bible has, in reality, been misnamed "The Old TESTAMENT." Notice why this is a misnomer.

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. Here is how this error came about.

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 THE OLD COVENANT as it should properly be called today.

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PHOTO CAPTION: GOD SPEAKS! -- Roaring, ear-splitting thunder echoed and re-echoed between the quaking mountains as God spoke His Law.

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PHOTO CAPTION: MOSES WITH TEN COMMANDMENTS -- Moses' face

radiated light from being in God's glorious presence when he received the Law.

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5. Did God make the conditional promise that Israel would be a "peculiar treasure" to Him, and be "above all people"? Ex. 19:5. And that they would be a "kingdom of priests" and a "holy nation"? Verse 6. Aren't these very desirable promises?

COMMENT: The ancient Israelites desired to be God's "kingdom of priests" and "a holy nation." But THEY NEVER RECEIVED THESE PROMISES because they did not obey God! Instead, we find that these promises will be fulfilled in the Millennium in the SAINTS who will have been born of the HOLY SPIRIT into God's Kingdom -- with the POWER and NATURE by which they will keep the law PERFECTLY. (Review in Lesson 5, page 4, the section titled "Resurrected Saints Rule With Christ.")

God simply did not make the HOLY SPIRIT of POWER and LOVE available to the WORLD in Old Covenant times! (John 7:38-39.)

#### Israel Thought They Could Keep the Covenant

1. WERE THE ISRAELITES so certain of their OWN ABILITY to do all God required of them, that they immediately promised Moses that all the Eternal had spoken they would do? Ex. 19:8.

COMMENT: God had just finished informing the Israelites, through 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.

2. Did God inform Moses that He Himself would come down to the people on the third day? Ex. 19:11. Did God at this time inform them that they would have to keep the Ten Commandments in order to fulfill THEIR PART of 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? Deut. 5:22 and Ex. 31:18.

3. After God had spoken the Ten Commandments which they were to obey as a DISTINCT part of this covenant, did He instruct Moses to set before the people the various civil statutes and judgments as another DISTINCT PART of this same "Old Covenant," which they also had 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 because 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 in the form of civil statutes and judgments which were to be another distinct part of, and included in, the Old Covenant which the people had agreed to obey. God had Moses write these civil statutes and judgments in a book called the "Book of the Covenant" (Ex. 24:4, 7).

4. Were the people any less certain of being able to fulfill, BY THEIR OWN POWER, all the laws revealed by God? -- did they agree to this covenant? Ex. 24:3, 7. Was it ratified, or sealed -- made binding -- with blood? Verse 8.

COMMENT: The Old-Covenant Israelites had no promise of receiving the Holy Spirit -- the very POWER and NATURE OF GOD which would have enabled them to keep the law. They did not

REALIZE THEIR LACK OF THIS POWER when they agreed to the terms of the Old Covenant. THEY NEEDED HELP, BUT DIDN'T REALIZE IT!

AND PEOPLE TODAY DESPERATELY NEED HELP! But they don't realize this fact EITHER!

The HOLY SPIRIT of POWER IS NOW available! It is time that the world WAKE UP to this truth!

Notice how God began to impress this fact upon THE WORLD.

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 PHOTO CAPTION: Blessings for Obedience: God promised the Israelites abundant, material blessings if they kept their part of His covenant by OBEYING God's laws!  
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#### The "Ministration of Death"

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

COMMENT: The judgment in verse 23 was especially designed to protect pregnant women (verse 22). A man who had caused the death of a pregnant woman had to pay for it with his own life. So if the judge required the killer's LIFE, then the judge was ADMINISTERING a penalty of DEATH, wasn't he? And isn't this therefore a MINISTRATION OF DEATH? Of course it is!

2. What was the penalty for a person who had committed a murder? Ex. 21:12. Again, the judge had ADMINISTERED DEATH. Does the New Testament call this same set of judgments the "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? I Cor. 10:11.

COMMENT: Because the principles of the TEN COMMANDMENTS formed the basis of the civil statutes and judgments, a violation of these PRINCIPLES WAS punished by Old Covenant civil authority.

The administration of death was the civil execution of punishment for violation of certain laws in the civil law code which Moses spoke to the people. Such sins as murder, kidnaping and adultery were punishable by DEATH.

Sinners 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. Thus THEIR OWN WEAKNESS WAS IMPRESSED UPON THEM AND ALL ISRAEL!

Israel sinned constantly, and was constantly reminded of it! Their history is a LESSON to us, today (I Cor. 10:11), to make us also REALIZE our weakness and need of DIVINE power in overcoming our NATURES. THIS IS why the ministration of death was GLORIOUS. It accomplished a GLORIOUS purpose.

Old Covenant Israel did not have God's Holy Spirit of love with which to keep the law of God in its SPIRITUAL intent. All they could possibly do was TRY to keep the law in the LETTER by their OWN HUMAN power.

Had the Israelites kept the law in the letter, 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 received eternal life by keeping this covenant. One would still ultimately die eternal death because there was ABSOLUTELY NO PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE IN THE OLD COVENANT! For it is only the Spirit -- the HOLY SPIRIT of God -- that will give "life" -- ETERNAL life! (II Cor. 3:6.)

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 PHOTO CAPTION: VIOLENCE BEFORE THE FLOOD -- Extreme violence became widespread before the flood. After the flood, God instituted the "ministration of death" principle as punishment for murder.  
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The "ministration of death" was a TEMPORARY administration -- it existed only "till the seed [Christ] should come" (Gal. 3:19). At this time God sent Christ to introduce a NEW ADMINISTRATION of these same laws -- THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT (II Cor. 3:6-8).

Why? Because the first administration gave only severe penalties and even DEATH for disobedience. Human judges could not impart eternal life; they could only administer death. What was needed was a new administration of the SAME LAWS -- an administration which could give pardon and eternal life to those who repented of breaking God's laws and wanted to obey.

The promise of the Holy Spirit -- the only hope of eternal life -- was given to all believers for the FIRST TIME on the Day of Pentecost, 31 A.D. (Acts 2:1,38.) Instead of administering the death penalty for sins, Christ, the apostles, and HIS MINISTERS TODAY TEACH THE PEOPLE THE WAY TO ETERNAL LIFE. Thus, Christ's ministers "ADMINISTER" LIFE to mortal man.

4. It is interesting to note that God ordained the ministration of death principle as a judgment long before He restated it to the Israelites at Mount Sinai as a part of His covenant. First, let us see whether it had been in force before the flood. What did Cain do to his brother Abel? Gen. 4:8. Did Cain have to give his life for this act of murder, or was he merely "marked" by God? Gen. 4:15.

5. Since there was NO divinely appointed administration of punishment before the flood, did violence increase so tremendously that God had to destroy most of mankind from the face of the earth? Gen. 6:11-13. Then wasn't it just AFTER the flood that God ordained the "ministration of death" principle for the human family? Gen. 9:5-6.

COMMENT: Whoever would shed the lifeblood of another human being, HIS OWN lifeblood was 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 His law may be impressed upon ALL, and that ALL would FEAR to BRAZENLY break God's laws (Deut. 19:20-21).

#### 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 that Jesus is the "LORD" of the Old Testament -- the One who did the speaking at creation. God the Father planned the universe and Jesus -- before His human birth -- spoke, and the creation was done by the power of the Spirit of God.

Jesus -- the Word -- therefore created everything (John 1:3; Col. 1:16). He made the first man and 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. 20:1-2. 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: The Ten Commandments were given at Mount Sinai by Jesus Christ. And Israel entered into a covenant with Jesus Christ before His human birth.

2. Did the LORD Jesus Christ consider this covenant between Himself and Israel a MARRIAGE CONTRACT, OR 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, in Ex. 19:8 and Ex. 24:7.

COMMENT: Now you see that the Old Covenant was TYPICAL of a marriage contract between a man and woman. It was, SYMBOLICALLY speaking, 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).

In other words, Israel agreed not to WORSHIP the false gods of the Gentiles and to be OBEDIENT to the Lord Christ!

3. In the space of at least nine short months after Israel had agreed to the covenant, the people had failed so badly to live by the conditions of the covenant that the LORD Christ, 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.

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 PHOTO CAPTION: The Penalty of Sin ... Prolonged drought renders farmland useless. Below, eye-smarting "smog" is a terrible curse suffered by many city dwellers. At right below, chart shows lung cancer death ratio among cigarette smokers.

"If you will not obey the voice of the Lord ... Cursed shall you be in the city, and the field ... The Lord will smite you with drought ... and with ulcers of which you cannot be healed" - Deut. 28:15-16, 22, 27, RSV.

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 CHART: LUNG CANCER DEATH RATES AGE RANGE 40-89

Number of Cigarettes Smoked a Day	Deaths per 100,000 man years
0	11.4
1-9	50.2
10-19	89.1
20-39	151.4
40+	205.9

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 4. Then did He point out the BLESSINGS that the congregation of Israel, His wife, could have IF they would live by the law they agreed to keep? Read Lev. 26:4-13. But if they would not

obey, what did He warn would happen to them? Read verses 14 through 39.

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

There you have it. Jesus was SYMBOLICALLY married to the congregation of Israel -- and the marriage covenant, or agreement, is known today as the "Old Covenant"!

Based on Law

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," and "good." Yet in the next he calls it a "prison house," a "slave driver" causing DEATH!

1. What, according to your Bible, brings the death penalty upon us? Is it the law -- or is it SIN? Rom. 6:23. Who is responsible for sin? -- the law, or the SINNER? Gal. 6:7-8 and 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 is 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 which was based upon the law is dissolved.

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!

Obviously Jesus didn't do away with God's law at His death. It was our sins, the breaking of God's perfect law, that DID AWAY WITH HIM! He accepted the death penalty we incurred FOR us. And so OUR SINS TOOK HIS PERFECT LIFE!

4. Doesn't Paul say that Christians are to MARRY someone? Rom. 7:4. Who will converted Christians marry? -- Jesus Christ who is now resurrected? Same verse.

COMMENT: Christ, who was "husband" to physical Israel under the Old Covenant before His death on the stake, 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! (The New Covenant will be thoroughly explained in the next lesson.)

## Rigmarole of Rituals Added Later

1. The Israelites, being WITHOUT the Spirit of God, were constantly rebelling -- sinning -- against Christ, 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 ADD TEMPORARY ritualistic laws for them to keep? Lev. 1:1-9.

COMMENT: These new laws WOULD HAVE BEEN UNNECESSARY if Israel had obeyed. The Israelites brought these upon themselves because of their disobedience to God's Ten Commandments and His statutes. These rituals were added to TEACH them 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 ritualistic laws 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 continued to be disobedient and unfaithful to her husband. She broke her part of the marriage contract! She turned from worshipping God, and followed the customs of the heathen -- serving other gods. She broke her part of the marriage covenant by committing SPIRITUAL "adultery."

2. What did all these NEW, temporary laws, which were commanded after the Israelites began to break the covenant they had made with God, command them to do? Skim rapidly over chapters 1, 2, and 3 of Leviticus just to get the GENERAL TREND of thought.

COMMENT: When God made His covenant with ancient Israel, He wrote the Ten Commandments on two tables of STONE. At that time He also had Moses write His civil statutes and judgments in a book. But this book did NOT, at first, contain the rigmarole of laws of burnt offerings, sacrifices and washings. They were ADDED LATER -- within two years -- as a SEPARATE PART of the civil statutes because the Israelites had begun to transgress God's laws.

The keeping of these ritualistic laws REQUIRED MUCH LABORIOUS WORK, as can be seen by the first three chapters of Leviticus. That's why it came to be known as "The law of WORKS" in 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 ritualistic laws was added after the Israelites had begun to transgress the Ten Commandments and various statutes God gave them at Sinai? Doesn't Gal. 3:19 also prove this?

2. Then what was the PURPOSE of all the hard work of making burnt offerings, performing various washings, and making various other sacrifices? Gal. 3:24. Was it a SCHOOLMASTER? Same verse. How was it a "schoolmaster"?

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 merely the LETTER of the law. How WEAK they PROVED to be!

Each time an Israelite transgressed the law, his sin -- if not punishable by death -- now had to be acknowledged with BURDENSOME work. Yet, even this work could not forgive the sin, but served only to REMIND them of their transgression of God's laws and the penalty for sin -- death. Paul refers to this added labor as "works" (Gal. 2:16). 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 God's other laws required.

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

The sacrifices were also a "schoolmaster" in that they pointed forward to the time when Christ would come to offer Himself once and for all time to atone for the sins of the world. The various washings pictured the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit which Christ would send to clean us up from sin. They pointed to the time when Christ would make it possible for all to have the love and POWER of God's Holy Spirit within them so they, unlike the ancient Israelites and others then and today, can keep the spiritual law of God -- the Ten Commandments.

The old sacrificial laws, which were added to the other statutes God had Moses write, are NO LONGER required to be fulfilled by man today. Instead, Christ has become our sacrificial Lamb (John 1:29) as explained above.

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 by civil statutes at Mount Sinai -- stands fast forever! (Ps. 111:7-8.)

But we desperately need God's HELP to keep it!

REMEMBER THIS! If Old-Covenant Israel had received the Holy Spirit which imparts the love needed to fulfill the law of God (Rom. 5:5; 13:10), they would have been able to keep these laws. BUT nowhere in the Old Covenant can you find where God's Holy Spirit of love and power was promised to these people.

God asked the Old-Covenant Israelites to keep the law -- the ten spiritual commandments He gave them -- ONLY IN THE LETTER. He required no more than the fulfilling of 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 such as wealth, health, crops, etc. -- 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 in the letter.

The Old Covenant, then, was NATIONAL, MATERIAL, and TEMPORAL.

3. Did God offer the material benefits of this material Old Covenant 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? Deut. 28:1-14. Did He still find it necessary to warn them of what would happen if they did not obey? Verses 15-68. Scan these verses and summarize.

5. Were other nations (the Gentiles) to rule over Israel if

they broke their part of this covenant? Lev. 26:14, 17, 33.

6. Did the House of Israel keep the Old Covenant, or were the people scattered among the Gentiles as a punishment for not keeping the Old Covenant? Ezek. 20:23, 24 and 11:16. HOW LONG did God give the people of Israel TO LEARN to keep His law without His Holy Spirit, before He scattered them?

COMMENT: These people were given every incentive to live by the law. For over SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS they were given this chance. But THEY FAILED!

Their failure is a LESSON TO ALL PEOPLE. God wants us to learn from it.

They were NO different from people today. WE ALSO DESPERATELY NEED GOD'S MIRACULOUS HELP!!

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 PHOTO CAPTION: PAGAN IDOLS -- Ancient Israel broke God's covenant. They rejected His laws and began worshipping the false gods of heathen nations around them. At left is Ta-weret, an Egyptian god. Right, is Asherath with mold found in Naharia.  
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