

THE WORD OF

TRUTH

Bible Study Course

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

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THE TWO COVENANTS

In our last three studies dealing with the Law of God, we learned that the Ten Commandments are God's law of life and harmony for all creation. We considered a number of points to verify the immutability of His Law and found that the law could not be altered or deleted without bringing about the destruction of the whole universe.

A "new covenant" replacing an "old covenant" is clearly stated in Scripture as essential to the salvation of man. Could it be that this new covenant would make us rethink the whole concept of an unchangeable law?

Knowing that man, in his own strength, cannot keep the Commandments, we may understand that some change is needed to be made in God's arrangements with the fallen race if they are to see eternal life. But why did God not get it right the first time? Why did He have to amend a "perfect" plan to save the fallen sinner?

In our study today, we shall look at the two covenants that God made with His people – why there are two covenants and the marvel of God's beautiful wisdom that makes it all a perfect plan.

1. Concerning these particular covenants God made with man, see Hebrews 8:7,13 and observe the following...

a) **How many of these covenants are mentioned in Scripture?** _____

b) **What names are given to them?** _____

c) **What is to become of each of the covenants?** _____

THE FIRST COVENANT

Here we shall see how the first covenant was set up, what the proposition was and how the people responded to it.

2. When God introduced His covenant to Moses, He presented it in a broad and general form. Summarise the conditions offered, by God, to the people of Israel.

Exodus 19:3-6, note vv. 5 and 6 _____

3. What did Moses do with the contract outline he had just received from God?

Exodus 19:7 _____

4. How did the people receive the proposition God offered to them?

Exodus 19:8 _____

Note: At this point God is testing the willingness of His people to enter into covenant with Him. If they are willing, and their response indicates that they are, God will move to the next step and detail what he expects from them that they may be received as His special, holy nation and royal priesthood. Compare 1Peter 2:9, God is offering to us, today, the same covenant benefits as described in Q.2.

Moses now conveys the reply to God, who then, in return, instructs Moses how to prepare the people to receive this close contact and special communication with their God, the Creator of all the earth. They were required to be particularly clean and maintain sexual abstinence from their wives for the three days preceding God's visit. The mountain, Sinai, was restricted to access by Moses and Aaron (the high priest), the general population were not to enter upon the confines of the mountain lest they die (Ex.19:9-15).

After Moses had completed his third conference with God on mount Sinai, he returns to the people who are assembled at the foot of the mountain and tells them not to violate the preparations made for their readiness to receive God (Ex.19:20-25).

The Covenant Defined

5. God now comes near to the people to speak to them. Describe the scene.

Exodus 20:18; Hebrews 12:21; Deuteronomy 4:12 _____

Note: An awesome scene with a display of power that filled every heart with fear (Ex.20:19-22). The darkness, mentioned as the place where God was, acted as a shroud to veil the radiant glory of God lest the people be destroyed by the sheer presence of the Almighty. Another occasion when the nearness of God was veiled in darkness, for the same reason, was at the crucifixion scene (Luke 23:44; 2Thess.2:8). Another understanding of the darkness in this case is "mystery." The people were not of a spiritual level to comprehend Jehovah. God said - He dwells in darkness, yet He dwells in light that no man can approach unto (1Kings 8:12; 1Tim.6:16). He has given to His obedient people to know the treasures of darkness, the riches of the secret places that they may know Him and be the children of the light (Isa.45:3; Matt.13:11; 1Thes.5:5).

6. What was the first set of instructions God gave to the whole congregation?

Exodus 20:1-17 _____

7. What was the name of these instructions delivered to Moses and to the people?

Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 4:13; 5:22 _____

Note: The "words of God's covenant" are referred to as the *Ten Commandments*, God then gives a record of the covenant by writing it on two tables of stone (Ex.31:18).

It should be noted that the Ten Commandments was not all that God gave to Moses and Israel at this time, He also instructed them on the course to take in civil matters. What we might refer to as the "Civil law", it involved: fair and just dealings between people, the resolution of conflicts between neighbours and instruction regarding a just penalty for crimes committed (Ex.21-23). There was a third law given from Sinai, the "Ceremonial law", a series of sacrifices and offerings designed to show the people the work of the Father and of the Son in the process of atonement and deliverance from sin (Ex.25:8,9; Ex.25-31). This subject was treated at length in lessons 13,14 and 15.

In all of these statutes given to Moses, it was the Ten Commandments that formed the foundation of the covenant between God and Israel. The Civil law itself was based on the decalogue and as such did not add to the covenant. The Ceremonial law was to *finish* at the death of the Messiah, and thus could not be considered as part of the "everlasting covenant."

8. God sent an angel to keep the people in the way of righteousness. What condition was attached to this angel that profoundly affected the salvation of the people under the covenant?

Exodus 23:20,21 _____

Note: There was NO forgiveness for transgression!!

9. Who was the "angel" that God sent to lead Israel?

1Corinthians 10:1-4 _____

Note: Jesus. See also, Acts 7:30,37,38; Deut.18:18,19; Luke 24:19.

10. Summarise the covenant -- Exodus 19:5,6; 23:20-22; Deut.4:13

a) The people were to obey God's _____

b) The covenant involved the keeping of the _____

c) If they had kept the covenant, they would have been to God His _____

d) If they had obeyed, God would _____ for them.

e) In this covenant, there was no _____ for transgression.

The Agreement Ratified

11. God wrote His covenant, the Ten Commandments, on two tables of stone. The instructions that followed this, and given to Moses, were documented another way. How?

Exodus 24:4a _____

12. Now that the full agreement was neatly documented and able to be understood, what did Moses do then?

Exodus 24:4b,5 _____

Note: The covenant was ratified with blood. Before the final sealing, there was one more thing to do...

13. After the sacrifices, what did Moses do in sealing the covenant with the people?

Exodus 24:7,8 _____

Note: The final ratifying of the covenant, required the people to acknowledge their understanding, consent and acceptance of the agreement. Following this, the covenant was then sealed by applying the blood of the sacrifice.

The Handwriting of Ordinances

Moses wrote, by his own hand, into a book, the ordinances, or laws, given to him by God (Ex.24:4,7).

14. Where was this book of handwritten ordinances kept?

Deuteronomy 31:24-26 _____

Note: "In the side of the ark" does not mean "inside of the ark", but *beside* the ark, *not in it*. So what was inside of the ark?...

15. At this time, what was placed *inside* the Ark of the Covenant?

Exodus 25:16; 31:18; Deuteronomy 10:4,5 _____

Note: The Ark (box) held the document of the Covenant, namely, the Ten Commandments. On another occasion, a piece of manna and Aaron's rod that budded were also placed into the Ark along with the decalogue (Ex.16:33,34; Num.17:10; Heb.9:4). At the time of the dedication of the sanctuary built by king Solomon, the Ark contained only the two tablets of stone written by the finger of God (1Ki.8:9).

The Scriptures do not reveal the circumstances surrounding the removal of the other two items.

Was This The First Covenant?

We have just examined in detail the "First Covenant". It has not been stated that this agreement is, in fact, the first covenant. So how do we know that it is? The Bible leaves no confusion, it is its own interpreter...

16. What expression does Paul use that would help us to understand that these events we have been studying refer to the "First Covenant" as mentioned in Q1.?

Hebrews 9:14,15,18-22 _____

Note: As the blood of Christ gave power to the "new testament" (meaning the covenant, not the New Testament of the Bible), so the blood of sacrificed animals dedicated the "first testament" (Ex.24:1-8).

Did The People Keep The Covenant?

A covenant is an agreement between two or more parties. In the covenant one party will agree to fulfil one function, while the other party agrees to fulfil some other function.

17. The covenant required obedience to the voice of God, the instructions of Whom were embodied in the Ten Commandments. How did Israel perform in the fulfilling of their part of the agreement?

Exodus 32:1-9 _____

Note: When a covenant is broken it releases both parties from the rights, responsibilities, privileges and benefits that would otherwise have existed had the parties to the covenant maintained their agreement.

Who broke the covenant -- God, or the people!?

18. What was God's attitude toward the people He was trying to save?

Exodus 34:5-10; Jeremiah 31:3 _____

Note: God is faithful, that is, He can be trusted. There was nothing wrong with God nor with His covenant, it was the people that failed and they would continue to fail given any number of restarts. So what happens now? How is God to save a people who cannot keep the laws of heaven and of life?

19. Referring to the First Covenant, God said there was a fault in the arrangement. Where did the fault lie?

Hebrews 8:7-9 _____

Note: "Finding fault with *them*" (v.8). "*Them*", as seen in v.9, is the people, not the covenant. The people were unable to keep the covenant.

THE NEW COVENANT

The first, or the old covenant, was clearly inadequate to save the fallen race, it could not produce a righteous nation, nor was there any provision for the forgiveness of sin. If the human race was to be redeemed, it would have to be done by some other arrangement.

20. What has God done that all who would desire it may attain to the divine nature and be of godly character?

2Peter 1:3,4 _____

21. What is the outline of the "New Covenant" that God now introduces?

Hebrews 8:10 _____

Note: The difference between this and the first covenant is that the first covenant relied totally on the strength of a fallen man to keep a

holy Law. With the second covenant, God imparts the strength to those who would choose to keep it by writing His Commandments into their hearts. The Law, will then be kept out of love and appreciation for what the Law means (Lessons 32 and 33).

22. What else is included in the second covenant?

Hebrews 8:12

Note: The first covenant made no allowance for the forgiveness of sin. The new covenant revealed the mercy and compassion of God, that those who should stumble along the way in their quest for righteousness, may not be confounded, but rise again with renewed strength to become stronger in obedience and overcome every cultivated and inherited tendency to sin (Job 17:9; Prov.24:16; 1John 2:14).

THE DEFICIENCY OF THE OLD COVENANT

The first covenant, which needed to be replaced, may be seen to include two parts: firstly, the concept of *keeping the Law in one's own strength*, which would be tantamount to attaining to righteousness by keeping the Law, which is righteousness by works (Philip.3:9; Gal.3:21,10,13). Secondly, the sanctuary service, with its sacrificing of animals and the mediation of the priesthood could not make anyone perfect. The sole function of this service was to prefigure the sacrifice and ministry of Christ (Heb.9:9-14).

When the new covenant was ratified at the death of Jesus, the first covenant was removed, that meant both components of that covenant no longer applied. There was no further need of the sanctuary service pointing to the Redeemer, for He had now come, and concerning the keeping of the Law, the better covenant provided for power to overcome sin and offered forgiveness for sin, it literally enabled the willing participant to actually *obey the voice of God and keep His Commandments*. The old covenant did not supply such power and the sinner would try to keep the Commandments in his own strength, which was an impossibility for him.

23. Why was the *keeping of the Law* aspect of the first covenant ineffective, thus making it necessary to bring in a *better hope*?

Hebrews 7:18,19 _____

Note: The keeping of the Law could not make anyone perfect. Christian perfection is the changing of the heart from impure thoughts to holy thoughts, not just the appearance of strict observance of the Law, though one with a holy mind will not commit unholy acts.

There are many professed Christians who seem to be doing everything right in the eyes of men, or even in their own eyes, yet they are unconverted! (Prov.21:2;14:12; Luke 16:15; Matt.23:28). Keeping the Law will not change the heart, only Jesus can cause the heart to turn away from sin, and then, He only does it on the invitation and surrender of the suppliant.

24. Why were the offerings, sacrifices and priestly ministrations of the sanctuary inadequate to save souls from sin?

Hebrews 9:9,10 _____

Note: Just as the keeping of the Law could not make anyone holy, neither could the death of animals, nor the services of the priesthood, bring about a change in character or a final atonement.

Both of these deficiencies of the first covenant were supplied in the new covenant, the life and blood of Jesus became the sacrifice for sin and His mighty power the conquering strength of the victorious Christian (Heb.9:11-14). Remember, that the deficiency was not in the Law of Commandments, but in the people's inability to keep them.

25. The priesthood, from the tribe of Levi, ministering in the sanctuary, could not bring about the character change required in conversion. Who is said to take the place of the Levitical priesthood in the new covenant?

Hebrews 7:11,12 _____

Note: *Melchisedec* is a reference to the Godly Priesthood of which

Christ partook. On earth, Jesus could not be a high priest, for He was not a descendent of the first high priest, Aaron. He was not even of the blood line of Levi, Jesus was of the tribe of Judah (Heb.8:4; Ex.28:1; Heb.7:14).

The change to the law mentioned in Hebrews 7:12, is a change in the law relating to the process of priestly ministry and atonement (v.16). With Jesus, the High Priest of the heavenly order of Melchisedec, came the change necessary for the perfection (removal of every sin from the character) of the people of God. The Old covenant gave way to the New and the repentant sinner could attain to the righteousness of Christ.

THE COVENANT SEALED BY THE BLOOD OF JESUS

The old covenant was ratified, or confirmed by the blood of animal sacrifices. As unpleasant as this may appear, it needed to be impressed upon the people that *sin' means death*, if not their own death, then their redemption from sin could only be affected by the death of God's Son.

26. The wages of sin is death. What is required to meet this penalty for sin that the repentant and contrite sinner may be forgiven?

Hebrews 9:22b _____

27. Further to the point raised in Q.26, what did Jesus say concerning His blood?

Matthew 26:28 _____

28. Almost all things are purged with blood. *What sin is not purged, or cleansed out by the blood of Jesus!?*

Hebrews 10:26,29 _____

Note: The blood of Jesus sealed the covenant and is enough to pay the penalty for the sins of *anyone* who will come to Him for

forgiveness (1John 1:7; Rom.10:13). But the blood of Jesus will not sanctify the unholy. When a person knows of their sin and of the salvation available through Jesus Christ and still refuses to receive of the redemption through His blood, then the blood of Jesus will NOT be counted as the ransom for the life of such an unrepentant sinner. That man has considered the blood of the Son of God, *shed for him*, as an unholy thing. *This is the sin God cannot forgive*. By such blasphemy he has rejected the covenant (Matt.12:31,32), for no-one will be joined to Christ while they hold to their sin (1Cor.6:15-17; Gal.2:17; Rom.8:9).

WHY HAVE THE OLD COVENANT?

No doubt God knew that the old covenant would be unworkable for the salvation of the fallen race. Why then, did He go to the trouble of establishing it in the first place? Why not, from the beginning, institute the covenant that works and achieves the objective? --- He did!?

God's objective in forming the first, or old covenant, was to show the people that they could not save themselves by their own good works. They could not keep the Law due to their sinful nature, true obedience requires the power of the righteous God working within the willing submissive heart.

A look at the history of Israel will clearly show the resistance they offered to the counsels and admonitions of their God. Without the first covenant this nation would have taken even longer to learn that they needed the power of God to overcome sin.

29. A few weeks after entering the covenant with God they determined to break it. How did God describe their attitude?

Exodus 32:9

Note: They were stiff-necked -- stubborn and resistant.

30. In spite of the pleading and warning from God, through His prophets, how did the people respond?

2Kings 17:13-15 _____

Note: Several other similar incidents may be seen in Jeremiah 17:23; Zechariah 7:12; John 8:37-48; Matthew 23:27-39; Matthew 27.

HOW WERE THE OLD TESTAMENT CHRISTIANS SAVED?

As salvation was by the second, or new covenant, how were God's people made holy and redeemed before the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary?

31. What do we notice about the covenant of salvation after the cross, as compared to the covenant of salvation before the cross?

Hebrews 8:10-12 _____

Jeremiah 31:31-34 _____

Note: While the wording of the compared covenants is close to identical, the account in Jeremiah was not the first revelation of the salvation plan, as we shall see in the next section.

32. The life of Jesus for the life of the repentant sinner and His strength in place of their weakness, is seen to have a wider application than for the people of the New Testament era alone. Who else receives the promised blessing of the eternal inheritance?

Hebrews 9:15 _____

Note: What a wonderful God of love, He thinks of everything! Our dear brothers and sisters in Christ, *before Calvary*, were covered by the same covenant of love as God's children *after the cross*.

Verse 18 states, in essence, that like the new testament, the first testament was also dedicated with blood. While the first testament was ratified by the blood of animals, the people were still under the protection of the second, or new testament. The people before the

cross looked forward to the One who would shed His blood to redeem them from their sin, while those after the cross look back to claim the same redemption.

33. The first covenant provided no power to overcome sin. Through His prophet, Ezekiel, what did God promise He would do for those who desired to renounce sin and allow Him to give them a Christ filled conversion?

Ezekiel 36:25-26 _____

Note: There is no mistaking the salvation plan of the New Testament being fully applicable in the Old Testament times. People were saved then by exactly the same process as they are today. The only thing that has changed over the time is that now we do not have to observe the sacrificial system of the sanctuary services (lesson 33, p.15-20).

THE NEW COVENANT PRECEDED THE OLD COVENANT

Strange as it may appear, the covenant we have seen to be the first, actually has been preceded by the second. God knew what it would take to save man since before the world began. When Adam and Eve first sinned God expounded to them of the coming Saviour...

34. At the time of the fall of Adam and Eve, what did God say, He would do for those who choose righteousness, in respect to the hold the Devil might have over them?

Genesis 3:15 _____

Note: To enlarge on this verse, please see lesson 33, Q37.

35. The plan described to Adam and Eve was the "second covenant". What does the Bible say about *when* this plan was put in place?

1Peter 1:18-21; Revelation 13:8 _____

36. In a few words, describe how Paul summarises God's covenant with man?

Romans 11:26,27 _____

Note: By its very terminology, the wording is seen to be that of the second covenant, the covenant laid from the foundation of the world. Only the Mighty God can remove sin from a repentant sinner.

"All Israel shall be saved", is not a reference to *national Israel*, but to *spiritual Israel*, that is, every faithful and obedient child of God from when the world began, to the last man at the second coming of Jesus (Gal.3:6-9; Rom.9:6-8).

37. When God made His covenant with Abraham, the patriarch, representing His Church, what did He say concerning His part of this solemn agreement?

Genesis 17:7 _____

Note: God agreed to be his God, with all the blessings of life, both now, in this life, and later, in His kingdom with eternal life. By definition, such a covenant would need to be an *everlasting covenant*.

38. What was Abraham's part of the covenant?

Genesis 17:9 _____

Note: "Thou shalt keep my covenant, by obeying My voice." This was the very requirement of the so called "first covenant" (Ex.23:21), except, that with this servant, as with all of God's servants, Abraham had the Law written in his heart and he willingly obeyed, even if he could not understand the reasoning. He was willing to sacrifice his most cherished earthly possession to obey God's voice (Gen.22:1-18; Job13:15).

39. What does God require of us today as *our* part of the everlasting covenant?

Psalm 50:5 _____

Psalm 51:16-19 _____

Note: The animal sacrifices mentioned here is not to say that God is looking for this kind of oblation (1Sam.15:22,23; Micah 6:6-8). It is to tell the people that their prayers, offerings and services are not accepted by God while they are not in full surrender to Him. In fact, the prayers of one who is a Christian in name only is as smoke in His nose, whereas the prayers of his faithful and obedient people are as a sweet savour to Him (Philip.4:18; Eph.5:2; Ps.141:2; Jer.6:20; Isa.1:11-23).

What sacrifice can we make that will please God and establish us with Him, that through the revelation of Himself we may know Him to the full and become partakers of His covenant? -- Namely this -- Examine our lives, prayerfully asking God to reveal our sin to us and anything we notice that we understand to be an offence to God -- REMOVE IT. If we choose to retain it, that thing becomes our idol, and we have effectively rejected the covenant (Deut.7:25,26; 2Cor.13:5).

The only way we can get the victory over our idols and our coveted treasures is to pray to God for the needed power and change of heart that we may love Him more than this world. We cannot do it in our own strength! This is why so many Christians find the way so hard, they are either trying to make the sacrifices with nothing more than their own determination, or they are trying to walk with Jesus with one foot in the world. In both cases the world will always win (1John 2:15-17; lessons 4 and 5 re victorious living).

40. After we have made the sacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart, what is included as part of a total sacrifice for Jesus and commitment to Him?

Romans 12:1 _____

41. How do we offer our bodies a *living* sacrifice acceptable to God?
Romans 6:10-13 _____

Compare: Galatians 2:20; 5:19-26 _____

Note: The claim God has on our body, is that it is His, both by creation and by redemption. Everything we do is to be a reflection of His character. Those observing God's faithful people will see their good works, their love, joy and relative good health in contrast to the adversity of those who know not God. The testimony of those, filled with the Spirit of Jesus, sends an undeniable message that God is good and worth serving; by this, God is honoured and glorified in the minds of men and before the universe (1Cor.6:19,20; 3:16,17; Matt.5:16).

REJECTING THE COVENANT

Learning of the new covenant, the covenant of salvation, we cannot but marvel at the love of God in His sacrifice for the salvation of the fallen race. In proportion to the greatness of this miracle of love, we may also wonder at the indifference of men toward such love. When men turn away from the God of life and the Law of their being to arrogantly transgress His Commandments to His face, we can only expect something must go wrong. Men suffer at their own hand, then have the audacity to say God is to blame.

42. What are the inhabitants of the earth doing that cause it to be greatly afflicted?

Isaiah 24:3-6, note v.5 _____

Note: Turning from God and holding to our sin results in the withdrawal of the blessings of the seasons. When we see how our nation has forsaken God, it may well be that we are suffering for the same reason as did the Jewish nation of old (Jer.5:23-25; Deut.28; Deut.29).

43. Israel had forsaken God for the idols of the land and suffered affliction from God as a consequence. What did they do to try to have the curse removed?

Jeremiah 14:20,21 _____

Note: The people acknowledge their sin and asked the Lord to remember His covenant to save them (compare vv.7-9).

44. How does God regard their "repenting"?

Jeremiah 14:10-12, compare Isaiah 58:4 _____

Jeremiah 15:6,7 _____

Note: God sees their doublemindedness and insincerity when they call upon Him (Jas. 1:6-8); all they desire is to be free of the curse, they have no real longing to obey the voice of God and please Him. Even though He does provide the power for all men to obey, such power will only work for the one who seeks it and applies it with an honest desire to be rid of his sin.

God is weary of their shallow repenting and has born long with their iniquity. He imposes severe discipline that they will return to Him; similarly, a loving parent will seek to correct a wayward child to avert the ruin of a life. However, if the rebellious people continue in their stubborn resistance, they will wear out the mercy of God and He will then have no option but to destroy them out of the land, a land that He is seeking to make holy. There can be no place for rebellion and transgression in Christ's eternal kingdom.

What God said to Israel of old, He is saying to spiritual Israel, to you and to me right now! *The "salvation covenant" is a covenant to save us from our sins, not with, or in our sins (Rom. 11:26,27).* The choice is -- heaven *without* our sin -- or death *with* our sin (Eze. 18:30-32).

45. If we do not listen to God when He seeks to instruct us, what can we expect when we call upon Him for help and guidance?

Zechariah 7:12,13 _____

Proverbs 1:23-33 _____

Note: It would certainly be a wonderful blessing if we could know the right way to turn when faced with a crisis, or to have the confidence that all will work out and we shall be delivered through our trials. This can be ours, the promises God made to national Israel He makes to spiritual Israel: Blessings for obedience, curses

for disobedience (Deut.11:27,28; Deut.28; Deut.29); He will even speak into our ear the course to take (Isa.30:21).

Many of us have experienced the voice of God telling us the way to go, but for some reason we have not discerned the impression in our minds as the voice of God. We seem to regard the impression as one of the options we have contemplated and pass it off as unsuitable.

Why do we not discern it as the voice of God? The reason is because we have not learned to recognise His voice. This may be compared to recognising the voice of another person, we need to hear it, associate it and acknowledge it.

In times of our relative ease when Jesus brings to our mind the working of His Law, convicting us of sin, if we should treat it with indifference, not listening to the voice, we are not developing the ability to recognise the voice of God, instead we are learning to reject it. Hence, when we seek His help in a crisis and He tells us the way to go, we believe the impressions to be our own thoughts, we cannot discern it as the voice of God and we become confused. (Isa.59:1,2; Eze.20:31,32; 1Cor.2:13,14). Being thus, under the control of Satan, we will invariably take the course that works for Satan's objective... our destruction.

The way to discern the voice of God is to always take the option that is in harmony with His Law and His Word, the Bible. Do this, and you will hear and recognise the voice behind you saying -- "this is the way, walk ye in it."

CONCLUSION

The study of the two covenants teaches us that the Old and the New Testaments have equal relevance and that the people of God before the cross were saved in exactly the same way as His people after the cross.

The everlasting covenant, God repeated to Abraham, becomes His covenant with every child of Abraham who accepts the covenant on faith. It is a covenant to remove sin from their mind and character and replace it with His own righteousness, thus preparing them for a place in His eternal kingdom.

Every reassurance God makes to His people to gather them from all over this sin ridden earth, free them from their captivity, and deliver them into their own land, is a promise, or a repeat of the covenant, to bring them, at last, into their eternal home. In this promised land there is peace, love and nothing shall hurt, for all shall dwell safely (Zech.14:9,11; What Christ's kingdom will be like is the subject of lesson 46).

God gave us the first covenant to show us that we cannot attain unto righteousness by our own works. Our inability to keep the Law in our own strength testified to the need of a covenant that would transform the mind and empower the soul that we may keep the holy Law. Hence the new covenant.

To reject the new covenant is to reject the conditions God has set down for our salvation; in doing this we step outside of His strength and His wall of protection to become subject to our own foolishness and the cruel attacks of the Destroyer. While ever we stay close to Jesus and obey His voice He will place His wall of fire around us and nothing can separate us from the love of God and His unerring counsel (Zech.2:5; Ps.34:7).

For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. Isalah 54:10