

Blood Covenant Truths: Lesson 6 – Old Covenant of Law

By now you should have a good understanding of the underlying truths of blood covenant. These enable you to better understand the rest of the events recorded in the Bible. When scripture is seen through covenant minded eyes, God is able to impart awesome revelations of His love and purposes for you. It also gives a solid foundation for rejecting the bad and living in the good. So, now that the Abrahamic and real world covenants are in place, the process of time continues as God unfolds the full plan of man’s redemption. Genesis chapters 23 through 50 record the rest of the life of Abraham and Isaac, then of Jacob and Joseph. There are lots of truths in the stories of Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, but they are not the subject of this lesson. Rather, we are moving on to the books of Exodus and Numbers to look at the children of Israel during their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land.

The focal point of this lesson is Mount Sinai where God gave Moses the 10 commandments; the law. God also gave the laws for the government of the nation, the building the tabernacle and all the associated practices. The 10 commandments are called the Old Covenant which God cut with Israel in the blood of bulls. This study looks at the events leading up to the giving of the law and the consequences of decisions made by the Israelites.

Let’s start by looking at the pivotal verses that set the stage for the giving of the law, which became the Old Covenant. Read Exodus 19:1-8 and answer the following:

Where did Israel camp? _____

How long did it take to get from Egypt to Sinai? _____

What natural phenomena did God use to lead them on this journey (see Exodus 13:21-22)? _____

What did God do when Moses went up the mountain? _____

What did God want Israel to remember? _____

To become special to Him, what did God ask the people of Israel to do? _____

What covenant was God referring to? _____

What did Moses do when he came down the mountain? _____

What was the response of the people? _____

The rabbinical teaching on the Hebrew words used in this response says that the peoples’ response was a boast that they could, by their self effort, do whatever God commanded. Their response was a key turning point in their relationship to God. Up to this point they had been living under the Abrahamic covenant which is the type of the real (new) covenant. Up to arriving at Mount Sinai God dealt with them based on their standing in this covenant. But, when they claimed that by their own abilities they could keep all God’s commandments, God was forced to lay out clearly what His commandments were. Accordingly, the 10 commandments were given and it became obvious that man could not keep them by his own performance. This ushered in the age of the old covenant where God could only bless the people when they fully kept the law. Since no one could do that, God provided the tabernacle and its sacrifices (shedding of blood) to cover their sins. This enabled Him to continue blessing the people because these sacrifices were a shadow of what Jesus would do when He came and ratified

the real world covenant in this natural world – the covenant we now know as the New Covenant. Under the old covenant, when the Israelites kept the sacrifices, God blessed them. When they stopped the sacrifices, the curse came upon them. Under the new covenant, the sacrifice of Jesus means that the fullness of the blessing of God is there for us and the curse has no right to come because Jesus can never break the covenant. The curse can only operate when we fail to stand on our covenant and receive what Jesus obtained for us.

Now let's look at how the Israelites left the Abrahamic covenant and placed themselves under the covenant of the law. Before their boast in Exodus 19:8, God looked after and protected them. No harm came to them, even when they complained and murmured. After their boast, their complaining and murmuring had serious consequences. The only thing that saved them was the goodness of God in providing them with the Tabernacle and its sacrifices, which were types of what Jesus would do for mankind when he went to the cross.

Now let's look at how God dealt with the Israelites during their journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai. Read Exodus 14:9-31 and answer the following questions.

What did Israel do when they saw the Egyptian army coming after them (v11)? _____

What did Israel want to do rather than die in the wilderness (v12)? _____

How did Moses answer the people (v13)? _____

How did God answer the people through Moses (v15)? _____

How did God stop the Egyptians from catching up with the Israelites (v19)? _____

How did God rescue Israel (v22)? _____

How did God destroy the Egyptians (24-28)? _____

Did the Israelites complain against God? _____. Did God punish them? _____

Did God save and protect them? _____

Read Exodus 15:22-26 and answer the following questions:

What did the Israelites complain about? _____

How did God answer their complaint? _____

Did God punish the Israelites for complaining? _____ Did God fix their problem? _____

What did God say he was to Israel? _____

What 'tree' did God use to make the waters of your life sweet? _____

The death of Jesus is what gave God the right to heal every area of your life. Because of the new covenant that was ratified on the cross, you now get to live healed - physically, mentally, socially, financially and spiritually.

Now read Exodus 16:1-15 and answer these questions?

What did the Israelites complain about? _____

How did God fix their problem (v8)? _____

Did God speak directly to the people? _____. Did God punish them for complaining? _____

Who is the real bread and flesh from heaven? _____

Now read Exodus 17:1-7 and answer the following questions.

What did the Israelites complain about? _____

How did God answer their complaint? _____

Did God punish the Israelites for complaining? _____. Did God fix their problem? _____

The events we have looked at show that throughout their journey to Mount Sinai the Israelites were under the protection and blessing of God. Even when they complained and murmured, God continued to supply and bless. There is no recorded calamity or death during this period. During this time the covenant that was in force for the Israelites was the covenant God made with Abraham. Notice in Exodus 15:26 God tells the people to follow His statutes and commands and He will preserve them. The only commands given to this point were those of the Abrahamic covenant. These included trusting the Lord in everything, resting on the seventh day and observing the rite of circumcision. Then in Exodus 16:4 the Lord uses His method of supplying food to give the people an opportunity to show how they will honor him. However, when some of them did not (16:20, 16:27) God did not punish them, He simply told them (Exodus 16:29 paraphrased) "I have supplied everything you need, so trust me and let me be your God". Fortunately, the people did and so continued to enjoy God's provision and protection.

Now let's look at the total change in the nature of God's relationship to the people after their boast in self effort in Exodus 19:8. Read Exodus 19:10-25 and answer the following questions.

What did God command Moses to put around the mountain? _____

What was the punishment for crossing this boundary? _____

What did Moses say to God about the people (v23)? _____

What was God's response to this statement (v24)? _____

God had to repeat his dire warning because the people had shown a lack of respect and obedience. Also, now that they were relying on their own ability to obey, God knew some would try to enter and the consequence would be that they would die. Their relationship with God had changed from being under the covenant of Abraham (God's grace) to being under the covenant of Law (man's performance).

Up until Mount Sinai the children of Israel were living under which covenant? _____

Exodus 20:1-17 is the record of God giving the people the 10 commandments. God spoke these verbally to them from Mount Sinai. What was the response of the people (v18). _____

What did the people ask Moses to do and why did they ask it (v19)? _____

So Moses left the people standing afar off and went into the cloud. Then God proceeded to give Moses all the instructions for the governing of the nation (Exodus chapters 21-23). In chapter 24:1-8 Moses wrote down the words God has said and then proceeded to ratify them as a covenant, the Old Covenant of the Law. This was done using the blood of the sacrificed bulls. Notice the people's response in Exodus 24:7. Again the Hebrew indicates this statement was made in their pride in their ability to keep God's commandments. Following this covenant ratification, God calls Moses up the mountain again and gives him the pattern of the Tabernacle (Exodus 25 through Exodus 31) and ends with giving him another two tables of testimony (31:18)

How long was Moses on the mountain (24:18)? _____

Now read Exodus 32:1-29 and answer the following questions.

What did the people ask Aaron to do towards the end of this time (v1)? _____

What did Aaron create (v4)? _____

What did the people do in front of the calf (v6)? _____

What did God say to Moses about the people (v7-8)? _____

What did the Lord want to do to the people (v10)? _____

Notice how Moses responded to God (v11-13). He said "don't do it God because if you do the Egyptians will think you are a terrible God. So please don't vent your anger. Also, you made a covenant with Abraham that you would bless his seed". Because Moses pleaded based on the covenant of Abraham, God did not destroy the people of Israel (v14). However, when Moses got back to the people he smashed the tablets of the law (v19), ground up the golden calf, spread it on the water (which made the water a blood red color), forced the people to drink it (v20) and then called those who would follow the Lord to come and stand with him (v26). At Moses command on behalf of the Lord, the Levites then executed judgment on the people and 3,000 died (v28).

Between Exodus 32:30 and Numbers 9:14 God talks to Moses and gives him the instructions for the tabernacle, the priesthood, the sacrifices and the offerings. Then the tabernacle and its furniture are built and dedicated to God. The old covenant is reiterated and the instructions for receiving the Promised Land are given. The major thing to notice is that now the Israelites standing with God is based on their self effort in keeping the law, any time they complain or fail to obey, there is a bad consequence. Read the following passages to see how this plays out. Numbers 11:1-3, Numbers 11:4-10/18-20/31-34, Numbers 14:1-12/23/29/32-38, Numbers 16:1-5/12-14/19-33/41-50 and Numbers 21:4-9.

Old covenant is all about self effort; the work of the flesh trying to please God. However, there is no work of the flesh that can fulfill God's standard of righteousness (the Law). The old covenant was given to show man that he cannot become righteous by his own performance but that he needs to come to Jesus to be made righteous (Galatians 3:24 & Romans 10:4). That's why God made the old covenant obsolete (Heb 8:13).