



THE NEW COVENANT

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NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Display each illustration where indicated in text, laying volume aside when the story line continues beyond the picture.

Lesson 1

THE GIVING OF THE OLD COVENANT

NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Early in Bible history, God chose the Jewish nation as a treasure for Himself. For hundreds of years He trained these people through His prophets, angels, priests, Moses, and others. He made a covenant with them. As a result, the Jews [Hebrews] deeply respected all of these—people, angels, the covenant. With the coming of Christ to earth, it was difficult for many Jewish people to understand that the old—though good—had lost its value. Now Jesus alone was to be revered and worshiped. To give instruction in these matters, God addressed to them the book we call *The Epistle to the Hebrews*.

Throughout the letter, the good things of the Jewish faith are contrasted with the better things of Christ. Christ is better than prophets, angels, Moses, Joshua, Aaron. The New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant. (Watch for the word “better.”) In this volume we study both the Old and the New Covenants.

The Old Covenant is also referred to as the Mosaic (Moses) Covenant. It is so-called because God spoke the words of the Covenant through His servant Moses, who in turn, gave the Covenant to God’s people. God could have spoken directly to His people Himself. Instead, He chose to speak through

Moses. For that reason Moses is known as the Mediator of the Old Covenant. He is the one who goes between God and man. (“Mediator” means go-between.)

A covenant is an agreement between two or more parties. The Old Covenant was between God and the Jewish people. It was conditional. That is to say, IF the Israelites (another name for Jews or Hebrews) would keep the Law which God gave them, GOD would keep His promises of blessing to them. (See Exodus 19:5-6.) The Israelites agreed to obey God’s commands, saying, “All that the Lord has spoken, we will do.” (See Exodus 19:8; 24:3, 7; Deuteronomy 5:27.) Alas, they failed! (See Deuteronomy 5:29.) This, of course, was no surprise to God. He knew they would fail. Years later, therefore, He promised to make a New Covenant with them. (See Jeremiah 31:31-34.) That New Covenant (referred to in Hebrews 8:10-12) is unconditional. God tells what He by Himself will do. And that is that! We begin this volume with a study of the Old Covenant.

In the opening illustration of this lesson, use names and sports (or games) that are familiar to your people. If they are acquainted with the Olympics, use that as the example.

Scripture to be studied: Exodus 19:1-20:26; 24:1-8; 34:29-32; Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:1-15, 18-22

The aim of the lesson: To show that although the people in Moses’ day continually failed God, Christian believers now have power to obey Him.

What your students should know: That believers have the Holy Spirit to enable them to obey God.

What your students should feel: A keen desire to please God.

What your students should do: Trust the Holy Spirit to give them the power to do what God wants them to do.

Lesson outline (for the teacher’s and students’ notebooks):

1. The old covenant given by God (Exodus 19:3-6; 20:1-7).
2. The old covenant—given through a mediator (Exodus 19:17; 20:19; 24:2-4; 34:29-32).

3. The old covenant—sealed with blood. (Exodus 24:6-8; Hebrews 9:18-22).
4. The old covenant was temporary (Hebrews 8:6-13).

The verses to be memorized:

God . . . [Who] brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus . . . through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will . . . (Hebrews 13:20-21a)

THE LESSON

Let us suppose that the men of our village are invited to have a contest with men from nearby villages. We are to choose two good swimmers, two runners, two who can jump high, and two who can throw a javelin (or a spear or boomerang). After days of discussion, the decision is made. It looks like this: