

## The Bible - Lesson 4 Reading

### **A. The New Testament and the Old Testament— the Two Covenants God Made with Man**

[The new testament and the old testament are the two covenants which God made with man as the two conditions upon which man may have a relationship with Him. The new testament is a continuation of the covenant God made with Abraham. In Genesis chapter twelve, God gave a promise to Abraham and later also swore to him (Gen. 22:16). Hence, the promise became a covenant made by God with Abraham (Gal. 3:15-17). Two thousand years later, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to the world, who shed His blood on the cross and enacted the new covenant (Luke 22:20). At that point the new covenant was accomplished; moreover, it became a testament because of the Lord's death.

#### **1. The Old Testament— a Covenant Which Was Added and Abolished**

[Romans 5:20 says that “the law entered.” This word means that the law was not in God's original intention, nor was it God's original ordination for man. Rather, it entered later; it was added along the way.] Due to man's fall and corruption, God added the law for the following reasons: 1) the law expresses God, in His person and attributes, to fallen man; 2) the law makes manifest man's transgressions; 3) the law exposes man's real condition of being unable to express God according to God's holiness, righteousness, and glory; 4) the law guards man as a child-conductor unto Christ; and 5) the law drives man to believe and receive Christ as grace that he may live and express God according to the demand of the law (Gal. 3:19, 22-26). [Since the old covenant was something added and was not God's original intention for man, it could not remain permanently. Rather, it became old, grew decrepit, and disappeared (Heb. 8:13).]

#### **2. The New Testament—a Covenant Which Is Better and Eternal**

[The new testament, or the new covenant, is a better covenant (Heb. 8:6). The new covenant is better than the old one, just as the reality of a person is better than his photograph. The old covenant, like a photograph, had only the outward form, but the new covenant, like the real person, has the inward life with all its reality. The old covenant was lifeless; the new covenant is constituted with the indestructible life (Heb. 7:16). Everything in the new covenant is much better than the things in the old covenant because everything in the new covenant is the reality constituted with life. Therefore, it is a better covenant.

The Bible is still the “best seller.” It is translated into more languages than any other book written by man. More than six hundred million Bibles were sent out in 1989.

The Bible is most definitely the precious gift of God for man. God did not write a book in heaven and send it down by an angel to man. He did not just inspire one well-known man of God to write a book for Him. First, there was the speaking of God to many godly men for nearly 2,500 years. Then Moses took the lead to write down God's revelations. After having been written by more than forty men over a period of 1,600 years, and after having been tested by being read and experienced by God's people for over one thousand years, the final sixty-six books were at last canonized to be the Word of God. But shortly thereafter, the Bible was locked up by the

Roman Catholic Church. Many faithful believers were put to death for having the Bible in their possession. After a thousand years, Martin Luther and his co-workers liberated the Bible from the unlawful custody of the Roman Catholic Church and made it available to the common people. However, most people received very little revelation in reading the Bible. Finally, after another five hundred years of extensive study and research, most of the Bible has been opened to us in the Lord's recovery. We did not receive all the revelations direct from God, but gathered many of them from an accumulation of revelations recorded over the past six thousand years. What we have in the recovery today is the cream of the revelation of God and the rich experiences of the saints and the churches throughout church history. We should treasure the Bible and all the recovery books that unveil the Bible to us! How much we need to study the Word with the help of the ministry! "O Lord Jesus, I want to give myself to devour Your Word until I am full of You and come to the full knowledge of the truth."

#### **QUESTIONS FOR LESSON #4**

1. What is the difference between a promise, an oath, a covenant, and a testament?
2. What is the difference between the new testament and the old testament? Which one is better? Why?
3. What is "the Apocrypha?" How do we prove that the Apocrypha does not belong in the Bible and was not there in the beginning?