
NOTES ON LESSON 3: THE BLESSING

(Also see “The Blessing” and “Answer Guide for Teachers”)

The intent of Lesson 3 is to show God’s remarkable plan to redeem mankind. The opening Scriptures review man’s need for salvation. After studying the Scriptures in “The Blessing,” it should be clear that God never intended to save the lost through the old law. In fact, God built a fault into the old law (Hebrews 8:6, 7).

As the student examines the two great promises made to Abraham, one physical and one spiritual, he should see the superiority of the new law of Christ over the old law of Moses. The first covenant was only for the children of Israel, while the second is for all nations. The first, while it was added because of transgression, promised Israel prosperity if they kept the Ten Commandments. This law was, in fact, a tutor to bring man to Christ (Galatians 3:19, 24). This study will point out that the main concern of the Old Testament was the development of the nations that came through Abraham and his descendants, while the New Testament is about blessings that come through Jesus, the “seed” (Galatians 3:16).

Promises to Abraham

Genesis 12:1–3; 22:18; Galatians 3:16. These verses point out to the student the two promises God made to Abraham: (1) that He would make Abraham a great nation and (2) that He would bless all nations through Abraham’s descendants. As this study continues, it will become clear that the “great nation” God promised developed in Egypt. God gave His people a law; but instead of a blessing, the Law brought a curse. The blessing would come through the “seed,” Jesus (Galatians 3:16).

Genesis 32:28; 46:2, 3. The children of Israel figured prominently into God’s plans. These people were the descendants of Abraham through his son Isaac and Isaac’s son Jacob, to whom God gave the name “Israel.” God reaffirmed His promise to make these descendants of Abraham a great nation and promised to accomplish this in Egypt.

Exodus 1:1–9. These verses are important as you lead your student to see that Jacob and his sons did, in fact, become a great nation in Egypt. From a small beginning (seventy descendants of Abraham went into Egypt), Israel grew to a nation of

millions. If needed, you can go to Numbers 1 to show that, after Moses had led the children of Israel out of Egypt, they had an army of over 600,000 men. This would indicate a nation of millions.

Deuteronomy 4:1–8; Psalm 147:19, 20. When Israel became an autonomous nation, the people needed their own law. At Sinai, Moses gave them the Law from the Lord. The Law was not for other nations, but for the children of Israel. Refer also to Exodus 20:1, 2; 31:12–17; 34:27, 28; Deuteronomy 5:1–6 if needed. The Law was to be observed in the land that God gave Israel. It was clearly a law for the people living in the “Promised Land” and was not only religious (ceremonial) but also moral (the Ten Commandments).

Deuteronomy 4:13, 14; 5:33 and Leviticus 26:14, 15, 33. In addition to the ceremonial aspects of the Law—with its feasts, tithes, judicial matters, and other religious items—the Lord also made a covenant with Israel. These verses link the covenant to the Ten Commandments given at Sinai. If they faithfully kept the covenant (the Ten Commandments), God would give His people physical blessings as a nation. If, however, they broke the covenant, then all the promises regarding the “great nation” would be revoked.

The Problem With the Old Law

Hebrews 8:6, 7; Galatians 3:10 through *Hebrews 10:28; John 1:17.* The Scriptures in this section point out that, while the Law served its purpose, God built a fault into it. Those who lived by the Law were under a curse. The law of Moses brought a curse because it required the impossible: perfect obedience. This section is not meant to denigrate the old law. As stated earlier, the Law served its purpose. Once and for all, it showed that man is unable to save himself. Also, these Scriptures help us to see that it was not through the old law that God intended to honor His promise “to bless all nations.”

Galatians 2:21; 3:17–21. The old law was needed because of transgressions. It clearly showed the need for a Savior and thus served as a tutor to bring people to Christ, the “seed.” Even though the Law brought a curse, death, and condemnation to

those who broke its provisions, it did not invalidate the promises made to Abraham 430 years earlier. Through the death of Jesus, God honored His promise to Abraham to “bless all nations through his seed.” Jesus died, then, not only for those of us on this side of the cross, but also for those who lived under the old covenant. See Hebrews 9:15. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world—those under the old covenant and those under the new.

The New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31, 32 through *John 14:1–6*. These Scriptures demonstrate the promise of a new covenant that was to be unlike the first. Under this covenant, God promised to be merciful and to extend His mercy to those under the first covenant. Be sure to emphasize that the only way to God is through Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 9:16, 17; Matthew 5:17 through *Ephesians 2:11–21*. It is crucial to demonstrate by these passages that the new covenant replaced the old covenant and came into effect after the death of Jesus. Jesus Himself lived and died under the old law, for the new covenant came into effect by His death on the cross. Through His death, Jesus set aside the first (Old Testament) so that He could establish the new covenant (New Testament). Jesus’ death then nailed the old law (including the Ten Commandments) to the cross, having fulfilled the law and the Prophets. Refer to Romans 6:15; 7:4–7; Hebrews 7:12; 8:6; 9:15 if needed.

The reality of a new covenant is especially important to Gentiles (non-descendants of Jacob). The old law (Ten Commandments) divided Jews and Gentiles, leaving Gentiles without hope and without God. Through the death of Jesus and the new covenant, God kept His promise to Abraham to bless all nations—both Jew and Gentile.

Which Covenant Is Better?

Hebrews 8:6; Deuteronomy 5:33 and *Leviticus 4:30, 31; Hebrews 10:1–4, 11, 12*. The new covenant has better promises than the old. Under the old covenant, the children of Israel were promised land and prosperity. Christians are promised eternal life in heaven. Under the old law, the blood of animals was offered; under the new, the blood of Jesus was offered. The old covenant sacrifices had to be made year after year, while Jesus sacrificed Himself for our sins once for all time.

New Covenant Promises

Galatians 2:21 through *Hebrews 8:12*. These

verses point out the blessings available to those living under the new covenant. Words such as “blessings,” “promise,” “life,” “grace,” “truth,” and “mercy” are used, standing in stark contrast to the condition of those under the old covenant. Be sure to ask, “Which covenant would you rather live under, and why?”

Matthew 17:1–5. Special attention should be given to this account of the Transfiguration. Peter misunderstood the appearing of Moses and Elijah. Moses was the great lawgiver, and Elijah was the great prophet. Peter offered to build three altars and was told by God, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” Emphasis should be given to the words “listen to Him!” We must respect our parents, religious leaders, Elijah, and Moses—but we are to *listen* to Jesus. Jesus’ life and death were pictured by the prophets, the old law was fulfilled by Him, and all authority is now His (Matthew 28:18).

Review & Summary

Ask the student to summarize the basic message of this lesson. Have him answer the “true/false” questions. Then ask, “What does it mean to you that the New Testament is the law now spiritually binding?” This truth should be emphasized. ❖

Relating to Others

Consider the way Jesus related to the following people during His earthly ministry. What can you, as a Christian who wants to share the gospel, learn from each of these incidents?

- The paralytic (Mark 2:1–12)
- The guests at Levi’s dinner (Mark 2:13–15)
- Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:21–24, 35–43)
- The bleeding woman (Mark 5:25–34)
- The Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24–30)
- Little children (Mark 10:13–16)
- The rich young ruler (Mark 10:17–30)
- The sinful woman (Luke 7:36–50)
- A lawyer (Luke 10:25–37)
- Zaccheus (Luke 19:1–10)
- The thief on the cross (Luke 23:39–44)
- Nicodemus (John 3)
- The Samaritan woman (John 4)
- The people at a marriage feast (John 2:1–11)
- The woman caught in adultery (John 8:1–11)