WHEN SOMETHING DOESN’T ADD UP

In discussions on the old and new covenants, scholars generally believe that references and allusions to the old covenant pertain to the historical old covenant, namely, the covenant God made with His people at Mount Sinai and its attendant law, including the Sabbath. They also believe that the New Testament’s pejorative characterizations of the old covenant apply to the Sinai covenant.

God’s covenant and law is seen as: a tutor no longer needed once one comes to Christ (Gal. 3:24, 25); “a yoke of slavery” (Gal. 5:1, NIV); a “ministry that brought death [and] . . . condemns” (2 Cor. 3:7, 9, NIV); something we must die to in order to be married to Christ and receive salvation (Rom. 7:1–4); something that became obsolete once the new covenant had come (Heb. 8:13). . .

These characterizations, and others, of the Sinai covenant and its laws are about as far from the identity-marking promises and assurances of the new covenant as one could possibly imagine, are they not? No wonder God needed a new covenant! Oh, but wait, in His preface to the new covenant, He gives reasons why a new covenant is necessary and He does not mention any of the things in the list above. Rather, He says a new covenant was needed because of how the people of the covenant had been unfaithful to the Sinai covenant. Very interesting!

In our lesson this week, we will take a closer look at how the Sinai covenant and the new covenant compare at some fundamental levels that should change the equation on how the two covenants should be compared as they relate to the gospel.
Two Eras — One Message

Write out Deuteronomy 5:1–6:9 from the translation of your choice. If you’re pressed for time, write out Deuteronomy 6:4–9. You may also re-write the passage in your own words, outline, or mind-map the chapter.
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Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

Circle repeated words/phrases/ideas

Underline words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you

Draw Arrows to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Deuteronomy 5:1–6:9. Write it out multiple times to help memorization.

How does the Sinaitic covenant given to Israel compare to the New covenant you examined in the last study?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/cov03-3
After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?

What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

What role does love play in the Sinaitic (historical “old”) covenant?

Read more at www.inversebible.org/cov03-4
What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Isaiah 51:7; 44:22
Exodus 19:5, 6/Genesis 28:14
Exodus 34:6, 7
Psalm 32:2, 5/Romans 4:5–8
Isaiah 55:6, 7
Deuteronomy 7:8, 9
Deuteronomy 10:12–19

What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Deuteronomy 5:1–6:9?

Review your memorized verse from Deuteronomy 5:1–6:9.
Where do you see Jesus in Deuteronomy 5:1–6:9?

What is Jesus saying to you through the main text?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

How does Jesus’ love shine through the text?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?
Review the memory verse. How does it apply to your life this week?

After this week’s study of the chapter, what can you apply to yourself?

How can this week’s lesson be applicable in other spheres of your life?

Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at www.inversebible.org/cov03-7
Share insights from this week’s memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.

How were both the old and new covenants gospel-bearing and gospel-revealing covenants?

How has obedience to at least some of God’s commandments already become second nature (written on the heart) for you?

What aspects do the Sinai covenant and the new covenant share?

Why does it matter whether the old (Sinai) covenant and the new covenant are completely different or share the same characteristics at the most fundamental levels?

How do the Sinai covenant and the apostle Paul’s words compare regarding the priority of love in one’s relationship with God?

How do you think the commands of Jesus and His actual presence with us are related?

Summarize the point of this week’s lesson in one line.