

# THE OBSOLETE OLD COVENANT

Through the prophet Jeremiah the Lord promised to make a new covenant with the houses of Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 31:31-34). He explained that the new one would not be like the covenant that He had made with the fathers when He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. His chosen people did not continue in the Lord's covenant but disregarded it. Jeremiah foretold of the dissolution of the very covenant to which Jews one day would stubbornly cling.

Under the leadership of Moses God brought out the Israelites from the land of their affliction just as He had foretold Abraham (Genesis 15:13, 14). The nation journeyed from Egypt through a wilderness to Mount Sinai where the Almighty made a covenant with the people (Exodus 19:1-8). The covenant required the people to obey God's voice - to do all the words which the Lord had said. His divine words to the nation included the Ten Commandments and all His judgments, statutes and precepts (cf. Exodus 20-23). This particular covenant is also referred to as the law (Galatians 3:17).

The Holy Spirit reveals that the covenant God had made with the nation after coming out of Egypt became obsolete when the new covenant was made. "In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first old. Now what is becoming old and growing old is ready to vanish away." (Hebrews 8:13). The coming and establishment of the new covenant meant the ending of the former covenant. The first covenant, which had grown old, had been purposed by God to disappear.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is our High Priest according to a different order (cf. Hebrews 4:14; 7:14-16). The changing of the priesthood thus necessitated the changing of the law (7:12). "For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment . . .; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of a better hope . . ." (Hebrews 7:18, 19). The new covenant supersedes the old covenant.

The covenant and law Jehovah made with Israel at Mount Sinai served a significant role in God's plan of providing redemption for sinners. It was given "till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Galatians 3:19). Jesus came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17), and He did (Luke 24:44). "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor." (Galatians 3:24, 25).