

**GOD'S OLD AND NEW COVENANTS****1 Corinthians 11:17-34; 2 Corinthians 2:12–3:18; 6:14–7:1**

**Memory Verse:** *Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God* (2 Cor. 3:5 ESV).

**Background Helps:**

Notice that in this week's readings there are specific references to the new covenant (1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6) and to the old covenant (2 Cor. 3:14). Saturday's reading, 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1, does not explicitly mention the term "covenant," but this passage does include the great covenant promise: "I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (6:16b; cf. Jer. 31:33, et al).

**Lesson Helps:**

Teachers have two primary alternatives for their lesson this week:


1. A lesson based on 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Paul's teaching on the Lord's Supper. This lesson would give you the opportunity to review the institution of the Lord's Supper, the night before Jesus' crucifixion (see Matt. 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-26; Luke 22:14-20). Focus especially on Jesus' reference to the "new covenant" (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). A possible lesson aim: My students will learn about the institution of the new covenant at the Last Supper, so that they will trust in Christ for the forgiveness of their sins (or, so that they will observe the Lord's Supper as a celebration of the new covenant). Review the promises of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:31-34, especially the forgiveness of sins (v. 34), which is provided for us through the death of Christ. Go over the proper observance of the Lord's Supper. Encourage (1) unbelievers to become a part of the new covenant by trusting in Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and/or (2) believers to observe the Lord's Supper in the future as a celebration of their participation in the new covenant.
2. A lesson based on 2 Corinthians 3, where Paul contrasts the new covenant with the old covenant. Notice his reference to an event which took place at the institution of the old covenant in Exodus 34:29-34. When Moses came down from Mt. Sinai with the Ten Commandments (the old covenant), his face was shining with the glory of God, and he put a veil over his face. But in 2 Corinthians 3 Paul makes a series of contrasts to show that the new covenant is even more glorious:

Verse(s)	Old Covenant	New Covenant
3	Tablets of stone	Tablets of human hearts
6	Letter, which kills	Spirit, who gives life
7-8	Ministry of death	Ministry of the Spirit
9	Ministry of condemnation	Ministry of righteousness
7-11	Glory	More glory
11	Temporary	Permanent

Under the new covenant, the Spirit of the living God transforms us into the image of the Lord, from one degree of glory to another (v. 18). And because the new covenant is so much more glorious than the old covenant, we should be bold (v. 12) and rely on God (v. 5, the

memory verse), as we proclaim this new covenant. A possible aim for this lesson: My students will learn about the contrast between the old and new covenants, so that they will (1) be transformed by the spirit into the image of the Lord and (2) be bold to proclaim the new covenant to others.

**Home Assignment:**

 Read Galatians 3–5; Ephesians 2:11–3:13.

 Memorize Ephesians 2:13 ESV.