

T3 BIBLE PROGRAMME

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COURSE 4:  
**Understanding the  
Old Testament**





## Understanding the Old Testament

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# COURSE OVERVIEW

## **Title**

Understanding the Old Testament

## **Objective**

The objective of this course is to help students learn how to read and apply the Old Testament to their lives.

## **Synopsis**

In this course, we focus on the importance of the Old Testament for the Christian. You can only truly know the New Testament through having an understanding of the Old. We will teach you how to read the various genres of the Old Testament, from law to poetry and the narratives. Various major themes of the Old Testament will be unpacked, such as covenant, the Temple and the faithfulness of God. The person of Christ is a vital theme that will also be discussed by looking at how Christ fulfilled the various feasts, and the types we find under the Old Covenant.

## **Duration**

The course content, if running this along with the filmed teachings, will be covered over 7-sessions, with each session split into approximately two 45-minutes blocks of teaching time. If this course is being covered by a live presenter, the time frames may differ. Please confirm it with them.

## **Requirements**

Try not to miss a single one! No prior study of Scripture is necessarily needed, however, bear in mind that this is not a foundational course. We will be digging deeper into Theological truths. Should you not have some basic foundational truths in place, we encourage you to first attend a foundations/introductory type of course to give you a better foundation to build on. \*Please note this is not an accredited programme/course.

## **Tools**

You will need your Bible, a pen and should you wish, a notebook for additional note taking.

## **Assessment**

The best way to learn is through application and interaction with the course content. For this reason, we have included a final optional assessment/activity. Depending on how your course is being run, this may be for self-study, a required part of your course or something you can complete at your leisure. Just check with your course coordinator. Don't fear, this is not an exam. It will merely be an opportunity for you to reflect on and apply what you have learnt during the course. \*If you do this as part of self-study, you may want to ask a pastor/elder if you can submit it to them for their input. No marking memo has been provided.

## T3 Bible Programme

The T3 Bible Programme consists of 8 Courses with each course made up of Modules. The course work can either be covered with live presentations from pastors/teachers, or filmed recordings of teachings are available. The pace at which the course work is covered is based on the organiser's preference. The course work is taught generally in the filmed teachings and does not necessarily unpack the course notes in a systematic manner. It is recommended students read the notes on their own, before or after sessions, and spend time reflecting and interacting with the notes.

Each course is a stand-alone course and it is not necessary to have attended prior courses or to complete the entire T3 Programme in order.

\*A reminder that the T3 Bible Programme is NOT an accredited or registered programme. It is for informal study only. Should you wish to work towards a formal certificate/ diploma/ degree you will need to sign up to a registered and accredited programme with a recognised institution.

## Programme Outline

- Course 1: Doctrine of Revelation: God Speaks
- Course 2: In the Beginning
- Course 3: The Fall
- Course 4: Understanding the Old Testament ... **YOU ARE HERE**
- Course 5: Coming to Know God: The Doctrine of Salvation
- Course 6: Growing in God
- Course 7: Church and the Kingdom
- Course 8: Eschatology: The Doctrine of Last Things

## Interacting with the Notes

Keep an eye out for **REFLECTION** opportunities in the course notes, where you can pause, reflect and have some space to engage with some questions or additional thoughts. There are also **FOCUS POINTS** which provide additional information, summaries or expound on previous information etc. These are always interesting reads and worth going over outside of "class time".

We trust that as you study and pursue God, seeking His face, that you will encounter Him even more and dig foundations that will take you deeper, make you stronger and will impact on the church and the Kingdom of God, for many years to come.

Blessings,

T3 Teaching Team

# ASSESSMENT TASK (OPTIONAL)

## Understanding the Old Testament

Read and Answer the Questions that Follow.

1. In light of the section we discussed on how we can learn from the examples of the Old Testament saints (See 1 Corinthians 10:6-12 and Hebrews 11).
  - o Name a Bible character who sinned and explain how you can learn from him/her example.
  - o Name a character who had faith and explain how you can learn from him/her example. (Less than 300 words)
2. Explain the reason why God gave the Law to the Israelites in light of Scriptures such as Exodus 6:7; Leviticus 26:12-13; Ezra 11:20 and Jeremiah 31:33. Also explain the purpose of the Law in light of the New Testament (See Galatians 3:19 and Romans 5:20). (Less than 200 words)
3. Explain what the Law of Christ is (see Galatians 6:2). (Less than 200 words)
4. Discuss what your favourite book of the Old Testament is and why. (Less than 150 words)

### NB Assessment Guidelines

- Use Scripture to back up your point of view, where applicable.
- Don't just repeat course content but use the course content as a "springboard" for your own ideas and to show that you have a working understanding of the concepts covered.

# INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY

## The Story of God

This teaching programme is about helping you immerse yourself into the story of God and the main characters that make up the story. The moment we came to Christ, we became part of the story of God, and our personal life stories find meaning within His grand meta-narrative. All the content in this programme is the telling of this story.

God's story has four parts to it as revealed in the Bible. Here is a brief overview of each:

1. **Creation.** The creation account in Genesis describes how God created all things as good. He created humans in His image, with the intent that we would live in fellowship with Him and serve as co-regents with God over the earth, being wise stewards over all He has made.
2. **Fall.** The Scriptures explain that man defies God and is cut off from the fellowship and intimacy he once had. The Holy Creator God simply cannot fellowship with sinful man. While Man is still in God's image, that image has been corrupted and twisted through sin and the desire for self-rule. Because of man's sinful choices, even the earth itself comes under a curse.
3. **Redemption.** God in His mercy promises to rescue and redeem man's sinful condition and restore creation back into right relationship with Him. This great rescue plan is promised and foreshadowed in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament through the ministry of Jesus. God's great plan of renewing all things begins in Jesus.
4. **Consummation.** The climax of the story when God finishes His project of redeeming the world through Jesus. He finally puts every enemy under His feet including death, sickness and Satan.

This is the greatest story ever told. God wins and gets the glory and He graciously allows us to share in His glory. This great overriding story or meta-narrative is what gives our life meaning and purpose. We are a part then of God's great story to renew all things and bring us into true life. We have one truth and one Lord and our individual stories find meaning within the 'big picture.'

## What is Theology?

Theology (from the Greek: *Theos* meaning "God", and *logos* meaning "study or discourse") is essentially the study of God – who is the 'main character' in the story we have looked at.

In our passion study God and know Him, we will take a closer look at doctrine. Doctrine (from Greek: *Didache* meaning "teaching or instruction") is simply the teaching on a specific subject or topic in the whole Bible. So to use the analogy of a builder - in order to build a house, you need to construct it section by section and brick by brick. Doctrine is like the bricks we use to build. Theology is like the house.

## Limitations of Theology

We realise that trying to study God and His ways is somewhat like an ant trying to understand the elephant. God is infinite and we are finite. But God does encourage us in His Word to apply our hearts to understanding and to find the knowledge of God (Proverbs 2:2-5). His desire is for us to love Him with our minds as well as with our emotions. But in dealing with theology, we need to always keep in mind that our understanding is limited and finite and we can only see at best, in part. Therefore, in our attitude God requires us to come to Him and His Word with humility (Isaiah 66:1-2; Job 42:2-6).

*“There are indeed some areas where human minds cannot go ... a God we can wholly explain is no bigger than our little minds.” - Winkey Pratney*

That is, a God that we can fully understand, ceases to be God!

*“Theology having reached its highest peak will always remain nothing more than man’s puny attempt to understand and explain God” - Jan Robbertze*

### REFLECTION

Why do you personally wish to study God’s Word in greater depth? What do you hope to glean during this personal study time?

### NOTES:

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## Purpose of Studying Doctrine

1. It is a requirement for leadership in the Church (1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Timothy 3:9; Titus 1:9).
2. It helps us understand, preserve and unify all of God’s amazing truths.
3. It strengthens our faith:
  - o by providing grounds and reasons for our beliefs and experiences,
  - o because faith comes from hearing ... the Word of God (Romans 10:17).
4. It helps protect us from deception (Ephesians 4: 11-14).
5. It enables us to live in a manner pleasing to God (2 Timothy 3:16).
  - o Doctrine = right belief
  - o Correction = for instance, of a wrong belief
  - o Instruction in righteousness = right behaviour
  - o Reproof = for instance, of a wrong behaviour

### FOCUS POINT

It is interesting to note that Paul’s letters nearly always address issues of doctrine before he addresses issues of behaviour.

6. It helps in the Great Commission (Matthew 28). If the church, as the only recipient and guardian of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15), departs from true doctrine and preaches a false gospel, how can men be saved?
7. It helps us reach maturity (Hebrew 5:12-6:3; Ephesians 4:11-14).
8. It is of invaluable practical use in every area of ministry. For example- preaching, teaching, pastoring, counselling, evangelism, apologetics, polemics, etc. Doctrinal studies are not a substitute for these things. However, they cannot be practised effectively without sound doctrine.

*“The often implied dichotomy between knowing God and knowing about God is a false one. One can know about God without knowing Him but the reverse is not true: one cannot know God without knowing about Him, and the more one knows about Him the better one will know Him, the more able one will be to trust Him and the more willing to obey Him.” - Nigel Day- Lewis*

### NOTES:

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# MODULE 1: THE BIBLICAL STORY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

## Extreme Views of the Old Testament

Many Christians stick to the safe and well-worn paths of the New Testament books and perhaps Psalms and Proverbs. The Old Testament can be a bit like the strange uncle we don't really understand and therefore do not spend time with. But God was very specific in having two testaments in our Bible. The Old Testament is vital to our faith as Christians. Before we can really understand Jesus and the church, we need to understand the Old Testament. As Mark Dever put it, *"If the New Testament presents God's promises kept, the Old Testament tells us about God's promises made. In other words, if you don't get what the Old Testament teaches, you'll never get Christ"*<sup>1</sup>. So the Old Testament is vital to your faith in Christ.

**We can have two extremes in our relationship to the Old Testament:**

### Some Have Rejected it

For example, in church history a man named Marcion in the 2nd Century whose, *"teaching sprang from a radical emphasis upon the discontinuity between Christianity and Judaism. The God of Jesus, he asserted, was not the same as the God of the Hebrew Scriptures"*<sup>2</sup>. There are modern day Marcionites, who still teach that Christians should have nothing to do with the Old Testament.

We might not be so radical today as to teach this, but in practice we often do the same. We are like modern day Marcionites because we see the God of the Old Testament as different from Jesus. We also reject the Old Testament in our practice by only reading what we are comfortable with and we ignore the rest. Or else we read the Old Testament as separate from the New Testament and not connected at all to the same story woven throughout the Bible.

### Some Have Glorified it

There is a popular trend to focus primarily on the Old Testament. They try to follow aspects of the Mosaic law, celebrate some of the festivals, keep the Sabbath, learn to play the Shofar and some even get circumcised as if it were somehow a more spiritual thing to do! Paul makes it clear in the New Testament that we mustn't do this. We are no longer under law but under grace. We are under the New Covenant, the law of Christ.

Our hope is that by the end of this course, you will get to have a more balanced attitude towards the Old Testament, learning how to read it and interpret it correctly; reading the old through the lens of the new.

Understanding the Old Testament will enlarge your understanding of the Character of God and His ways. It will deepen your foundations in knowing Him. It will help sharpen your faith to live for Him more effectively.

The Lord Jesus exclaimed about the Old Testament that, *"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me"* (John 5:39).

<sup>1</sup> Dever, Mark. The Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made. Page 18

<sup>2</sup>Freedman, David Noel. The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary.



# How the Old Testament Fits into God's Story

The Old and New Testaments fit together and tell the story of God.

## FOCUS POINT

How is it that the Bible which has 66 books and more than 30 authors in it, has an overarching story in which the many characters and themes fit? Because behind the human authors is the Divine Author, who fits all the different parts together.

**God's Great Story (or meta-narrative) has Four Parts/Chapters to it:**

- PART 1: Creation
- PART 2: The Fall
- PART 3: Redemption
- PART 4: Consummation

Three of the four parts are in the Old Testament:

## Creation

The first part of the story is called Creation. This is described in Genesis as God who makes all things out of nothing. He is the Creator and great Designer of life. He puts Man on the earth with the mandate to care for it and rule it, as a kind of co-regent with God. Even for us, as those who have been redeemed back into God's family, His mandate has not changed. We are still called, in Christ, to steward and extend His rule in all creation.

## The Fall

The second part of the story is called The Fall. This second act or chapter is a long and dark one. It is a dark thread that runs through the Old Testament almost to the end of the Bible (Revelation 22:11,15). The beginning is described in Genesis 3, how man and woman chose to rebel against God. The result was a tragic fall, a loss of the divine favour and presence of God, and the introduction of sin. The consequence is that man came under God's wrath. God cursed the earth and the labour of people. This ongoing desire for independence and resistance to God runs throughout Scripture.

## Redemption

The third part of the story introduces Redemption. This is most prominent in the Old Testament and culminates in the New Testament with Jesus. Although God is Holy, and Just, and morally perfect, and must punish and judge sin, He is also a God of mercy and love. So God initiated a rescue mission to reconcile and bring the fallen and rebellious mankind back into right relationship with Him. He did this in various ways, primarily through Covenant. In this course, we will spend time looking at the theme of Covenant starting with Abraham, Moses and David, and completing it with Jesus. We can only understand the work of Jesus in the New Covenant properly when we understand the other covenants.



# MODULE 2: THE BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

## The Canon of Scripture

The Canon of Scripture can be defined as, “*the list of all the books that belong in the Bible*” (Wayne Grudem). From the people of Israel to the early Christians, there was a preservation of a collection of books deemed to be God’s sacred Word to His people.

## The Formation of the Old Testament Canon

The Old Testament Scriptures did not simply supernaturally appear, or drop down miraculously from Heaven. God used certain men in their unique social conditions to write revelation. Scripture has then a dual authorship in a sense. God inspired men to write His words.

The Ten Commandments form the earliest canon, by which tablets of stone were written by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18). This is the only section of canon where no man was involved. This was the absolute authoritative Word of God and the collection grew in size through Israel’s history. Moses himself wrote additional words (the books of the Law) that were put into the Ark of the Covenant alongside the tablets (Deuteronomy 31:24-26). Joshua also added to the collection (Joshua 24:26).

It seems that although Moses is acknowledged as the writer of the Books of the Law (The Pentateuch), there was someone who edited it after him (cf. Numbers 12:3; Deuteronomy 34).

### FOCUS POINT

But what about the warning in Deuteronomy 4:2, in which God commanded that no one was to add to or take away from the Word that God had commanded?

Answer: Joshua knew the commands and must have been convinced that God Himself had authorised him to add to the commands of God/Canon.

We also see that later on it was the prophets who wrote many of the additional words from God that were added and recognised as part of the Canon (for example, 1 Samuel 10:25, 2 Chronicles 26:22, Jeremiah 30:2). So these inspired books became quickly recognised by the people as being God’s words. Books that were mostly written by Moses, Joshua, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and so on, were immediately accepted as recording God’s revelation because they were recognised as Prophets.

History shows that from 400 BC to the coming of Christ, there were no prophets who spoke the Word of God to Israel. Because there were no prophets, no Scripture was written. Although there were other writings recorded after 400 BC, they were not deemed worthy to be included in the Hebrew Scriptures.



## The Hebrew and the English Bible

There is a difference in the organisation of the Hebrew Scriptures in comparison with the English Bible Translations.

### The Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew Bible (Torah) was divided into three parts:

- The Law (Pentateuch or “five books of Moses”),
- The Prophets (the former and the latter prophets),
- The Writings.

LAW	PROPHETS	WRITINGS
	FORMER	
Genesis	Joshua	Psalms
Exodus	Judges	Job
Leviticus	Samuel	Proverbs
Numbers	Kings	Ruth
Deuteronomy	LATTER	Song of Songs
	Isaiah	Ecclesiastes
	Jeremiah	Lamentations
	Ezekiel	Esther
	Hosea	Daniel
	Joel	Ezra
	Amos	Nehemiah
	Obadiah	Chronicles
	Jonah	
	Micah	
	Nahum	
	Habakkuk	
	Zephaniah	
	Haggai	
	Zechariah	
	Malachi	





# MODULE 3: HOW TO READ AND APPLY THE OLD TESTAMENT

## Narrative

Gordon Fee, explains that the heart of the Old Testament, through all its division, is narrative. In other words, all of it is best understood essentially as part of a story. He says, *“the essential character of the Bible, the whole Bible, is narrative, a narrative in which both the propositions (truths to be believed) and the imperatives (commands to be obeyed) are deeply imbedded as an essential part”*<sup>4</sup>.

So as we look at the many varied types of genres in the Old Testament, from legal jargon to sweeping and emotive poetry, all of it tells a story. It tells a vital story which we must understand to fully be able to serve Jesus well in our generation.

## Genre

Within the Old Testament, there are many different types of genres or literary styles. The main genres we find are:

- Books of the Law
- Narratives
- Prophetic Literature
- Wisdom Books
- Poetry

The aim of the next section will be to understand how to read these various books in light of the genre in which they are written.

## Old Testament Narratives

The most common type of literature in the Old Testament is the narratives. Most of these narratives would be under the “History” section of the Old Testament but some are part of the, “Books of the Law” (Genesis and Exodus) or “Prophets” (Haggai).

The following books would contain largely narrative type material: Genesis and the first half of Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Jonah and Haggai.

It is important to remember that the narratives are stories. These narratives describe God’s dealings with the people of Israel. Their story is part of our spiritual history. The promises made to them are promises we have received through Jesus and have still to receive.

By nature, then, these narratives are about the past. They deal with past dealings and historical events that have an important bearing on us in the present.

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<sup>4</sup> Fee, Gordon, and Douglas, Stuart. *How to Read the Bible Book by Book: A Guided Tour*.

## The Three Basic Parts of a Narrative:

- Characters
- Plot (the main story)
- Plot resolution (most stories have some conflict or tension that needs resolving)

### FOCUS POINT

In traditional stories, the main character in the story is called the protagonist. The person who brings about the conflict in the story is called the antagonist. The other main characters who are involved in the story are called the agonists. In the story of God, God Himself is the protagonist. The devil and evil powers are the antagonists and God's people are the agonists.

## The Big Story Frames All Other Narratives

In the meta-narrative plot, we find that God makes human beings in His image and likeness. They were given the mandate to rule and to steward His creation for their benefit. (But the enemy enters in, tempts Adam and Eve, distorts His image and causes them to sin against God. Therefore, Adam and Eve become God's enemies).

The plot resolution is then the long story of redemption. The story of God redeeming His people back into His image and finally restoring them to rule with Him in a new heaven and a new earth.

So, as you read the Old Testament stories, keep in mind that this great meta-narrative is always the dominant story which forms a frame into which all the other stories fit.

For example:

*"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me." - John 5:39*

Jesus here is referring to the dominant overarching theme that runs throughout the Old Testament - Himself! He is referring to how the big meta-narrative redemptive story in the Old Testament, in which God saves His people, really points back to Jesus, God's plan to redeem Israel through the exodus, the sacrifices, the festivals and the leaders and other types that ultimately point to Christ, see 1 Corinthians 10:4.

## How Not to Read the Narratives<sup>5</sup>

### As Allegories or Stories Filled with Hidden Meaning

It is very easy to try to "spiritualise" the stories of the Old Testament. This was a common method of interpreting the Bible in the middle ages.

**For example:**

- Genesis 24; the story of Isaac securing a bride (Rebekah) for himself through his servant.
- The Exodus of Israel from the land of Egypt.
- A modern example of an allegory is the Narnia series by CS Lewis.

<sup>5</sup> Fee, Gordon, and Stuart, Douglas. How to read the Bible for all it's Worth

## As Moral Lessons, We Must Learn

Unless the storyteller makes a moral point, often the story did not intend to tell a moral lesson, i.e. this is what we must do or say.

### For example:

We read in Genesis 22, that God told Abraham to take Isaac to a mountain to sacrifice him to the Lord. This is not a moral story to teach parents not to kill their children. Or that obedient children should behave like Isaac did. God never intended for Abraham to kill Isaac, but to test his faith and to show His faithfulness in always providing a sacrifice.

In fact, many of the stories do not teach directly, but often illustrate a teaching that is explicitly taught elsewhere in the Old Testament. The author would have assumed His hearers knew the Old Testament and would be impacted by the power of the story.

### REFLECTION

Read the following:

- In 2 Samuel 11 and the story of David and Bathsheba, nowhere does it say, "David did wrong"
- Exodus 20:14 already teaches explicitly, "*You shall not commit adultery*"
- In Judges 16 we read how Samson went to Delilah.

## Interpreting the Story Through a Modern Lens

Many Christians are guilty of reading the Old Testament through their own modern mindset rather than trying to understand the ancient setting and context in which the stories were set.

### REFLECTION

Read the following:

- 1 Samuel 20:17; 41 - David and Jonathan's love for each other refers to their relationship as a covenant bond rather than homosexual attraction. The writer also presupposes the hearers understood Mosaic law that forbade such behaviour.
- 2 Chronicles 7:14-15.
- The promise to Solomon (cf Hebrews 11:16).

### NOTES:

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## The Characters in Hebrew Narratives

The characters in Hebrews narratives are absolutely central, but we find that there is mostly never any interest in physical appearance from the authors. Or if they do it is as an important element in the story; such as with Goliath in 1 Samuel 17:4-7, where his large size was described.

*“Hebrew narrative is simply not interested in creating a visual image of the characters. More important are matters of status (wise, wealthy, etc.) or profession (‘captain of the guard Genesis 37:36; wife, cupbearer, baker, chapters 39-40) or tribal designation (‘Midianites’ 37:36)” - Gordon Fee*

Hence, with Jesus in the New Testament, we can understand why the physical appearance of Christ was not of primary importance to the authors.

Because we are dealing with the Bible, keep in mind that God is always the central character in the story. He is the One who sees all and steps in, to act and to work all things for the good. His presence is in every situation. For example, Genesis 50:20 says, *“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”*

### FOCUS POINT

A good question to ask when reading the narratives is, “How is the character of God revealed in this story?”

## Other Important Features in Hebrew Narratives

Because the stories were designed for hearers, not readers, the authors put in various devices to make the stories memorable.

### Repetition

- Of key words, for example, Genesis 37:1-10, “brother”, “hated”.
- Of phrases, for example, in the book of Judges, *“... did evil in the eyes of the Lord”*. (See Judges 1:11, 3:7, 6:1, 10:6. A Pattern of backsliding, oppression, repentance, deliverance).

### Inclusion

This is where the story begins and is brought to conclusion on the same note or in a similar way.

#### For example:

- The story of Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 37:6-8, 50:18).
- The sweep of the Biblical story from Genesis to Revelation.

The Old Testament narratives are one of the richest and most profound ways to get to know the Character of God and His ways. Whilst they form part of history and are set in the past, God has designed that they have a vital role to play in our lives as Christians. They encourage us, warn us (1 Corinthians 10:11) and reveal the God who redeems us.

# MODULE 4: THE LAW

An important genre in the Old Testament is the Law writings.

Although the first five books of the Old Testament are collectively entitled The Law (cf Joshua 1:8; Matthew 5:17), some of it, for example, Genesis, actually contain many narratives. The Law itself is only introduced in Exodus 20, and it is with these specific commandments and stipulations in mind to which we refer when using the term, “law”.

## The Way the Word Law is Used in the Bible:

- The 600 plus commandments that the Israelites were expected to obey as part of the Old Covenant (Exodus 18:20 – plural; 1 Corinthians 9:8 - singular).
- To describe the first five books (Pentateuch) of the Old Testament, as the Book of the Law (Joshua 1:8; Luke 16:16).
- The entire Old Covenant system (1 Corinthians 9:20).

So this section is designed to help you to know how, as a Christian, we are called to read and apply the over 600 commandments and laws given to the Israelites, as found in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

## Understanding the Law

### The Law is a Covenant

A covenant is a binding agreement between two parties. A modern day example would be a contract similar to marriage, which is legally binding. In the ancient world, people entered into covenants for various reasons.

There are three types of covenants:

- **Parity Covenant:** this is a covenant between equals. Two parties negotiate and arrive at the terms of the agreement. It is a partnership, like the marriage covenant. (See David and Jonathan 1 Samuel 18:3-4). This was done to express deep commitment that held mutual benefits for both parties.
- **Suzerainty Covenant:** the whole book of Deuteronomy is structured after this type of covenant. This is a covenant that is imposed by an all-powerful *suzerain* (overlord) to a weaker, dependent *vassal* (servant). It is not between equals. It is a commandment that the lesser party has no choice but to accept, and if they break it, they are transgressors. For example, in Exodus 24 Moses reads the Covenant to the people, and in 24:7 they take an oath to obey it. The Ten Commandments were in a sense, the first instalment of the Law. After that, God through Moses gave a total of 613 laws and regulations for the Jews to follow.
- **Promissory Covenant or Covenant of Grace:** this is a legally binding promise given from one side only. In the case of the Abrahamic and the New Covenant, it is from God’s side - a gift to His people.

## Why Did God Give the Law?

It was given to help establish the right relationship with God, the nations around them and one another. (See Exodus 6:7, Leviticus 26:12-13, Ezra 11:20, Jeremiah 31:33).

*"Here were a people who knew only slavery and Egyptian culture for centuries, whom God was now about to reconstitute into a totally new people on the face of the earth. Not only must they be formed into an army of warriors ... but they must also be formed into a community that would be able to live together... At the same time, the Law set boundaries with regard to their relationships with the cultures around them." - Gordon Fee.*

### FOCUS POINT

God did not give the Law as a means of saving people, but rather as a means to show His saved people how to live.

The Israelites were saved through faith in God and through the blood of the lamb (Exodus 12; 19:4-5; Galatians 3:11). They looked forward in a sense to the coming Messiah. As Christians, we look back to the Messiah who has already come.

### NOTES:

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## The Law as Three Parts

For the sake of clarity, theologians have often "divided" the Law into three parts:

- The Moral Law,
- The Ceremonial Law,
- The Civil Law.

*"The Moral Law" (referring to the Ten Commandments), "the Ceremonial Law" (relating to the types and symbols found in the sacrificial system), and "the Civil Law" (meaning the everyday laws that governed the lives of the people). Actually, the Bible seems to make no distinction between the "moral" and "ceremonial" laws, since the one was definitely a part of the other. For example, the fourth commandment about the Sabbath Day is found in the Moral Law yet is certainly a part of the ceremonial system of Jewish holy days as well"- Warren Wiersbe<sup>6</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> Wiersbe, Warren. W. Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament.



## Ceremonial Laws

The Ceremonial Laws dealt with the worshipping life of Israel (for instance, see Leviticus 1:1-13). The sacrificial and ceremonial aspects included the food laws. The sacrificing and eating of animals were central to the worshipping life of a Jew. Because it was impossible for the people to keep the law perfectly, God provided a way for them to be forgiven, resulting in animal sacrifices. Without the shedding of blood, there was no forgiveness of sins. The Ceremonial Laws included the feasts, festivals and holy days, as well as circumcision. Worship in this way ended when Christ became the perfect sacrifice, paying the penalty for sin once and for all.

## The Law of Christ

Many of the ethical or moral laws found in the Old Testament are still applicable for us today. They have been restated by Jesus and the New Testament writers (Matthew 5:21-27) as the "law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). We see that Jesus clearly reiterates the heart of the moral law, which was to love God and to love your neighbour (Matthew 22:40). We also find that nine of the Ten Commandments have been restated in the New Testament (all except the command to observe the Sabbath). No other specific Old Testament laws can be proved to be binding for Christians.

## The Ten Commandments Today

All of the Old Testament Law is but an amplification and application of the Ten Commandments.

Nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament for believers today:

1. Have no other gods before Me (Acts 14:15; John 4:21–23; 1 Timothy 2:5; James 2:19; 1 Corinthians 8:6).
2. Make no idols or images (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:22–23; 1 John 5:21; 1 Corinthians 10:7, 14).
3. Do not take His name in vain (James 5:12; Matthew 5:33–37 and 6:5–9).
4. Remember the Sabbath Day.

This is not repeated anywhere in the New Testament for the church to obey today. Keeping the Sabbath: referred to in Matthew 12; Mark 2; Luke 6, and John 5, is to the people of Israel and not to the church. (Colossians 2 and Romans 14–15).

5. Honour your father and mother (Ephesians 6:1–4).
6. Do not murder (1 John 3:15; Matthew 5:21–22).
7. Do not commit adultery (Matthew 5:27–28; 1 Corinthians 5:1–13, 6:9–20; Hebrews 13:4).
8. Do not steal (Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10–12; James 5:1–4).
9. Do not bear false witness (Colossians 3:9; Ephesians 4:25).
10. Do not covet (Ephesians 5:3; Luke 12:15–21).

All of the Old Testament law is still the Word of God FOR us even though it is not written TO us.

*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." - 2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)*



# MODULE 5: HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS

## Introducing the Prophetic Books

The Prophetic books were written between 760 and 460 BC and are categorised in two ways: the “major” prophets and the “minor” prophets.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel are categorised as the four major prophets while the final twelve prophetic books of the Old Testament are often called the minor prophets. These terms have nothing to do with the importance of the book but simply refer to the length of the books. The minor prophets are shorter but no less important.

Remember that in the Hebrew Torah, the twelve shorter prophetic books were grouped into one large book called, “The Book of the Twelve”.

Reading the Prophetic books has generally proven to be difficult for most Christians. Many find it easier to read the narratives, Wisdom literature and even the Books of the Law. This is largely because the structure or form of the books are often not chronological or systematic in thought; they also use strong poetic imagery which is difficult to understand and relate to within our modern understanding.

## The Nature of Prophecy

### Foretelling and Forttelling

The general understanding of prophecy is that it entails speaking God's words concerning a future event. One Bible dictionary explains that prophecy is essentially foretelling. This means that *“the prophets spoke to their situation primarily by means of warnings and encouragements concerning the future.”*<sup>7</sup>

Foretelling was an important part of the prophetic ministry, not necessarily for predicting long-term future events but rather as predicting events that would affect Israel's immediate future. The Prophet spoke God's Word, which had a direct bearing on the people who heard it, instead of for people in the distant future.

#### REFLECTION

See for example Jeremiah's prophecy in Jeremiah 28, regarding Hananiah. Also the prophecy for the Jews in Chapter 29.

<sup>7</sup> Hoad, J. W. L. Promise. In et.al. *New Bible Dictionary*.



## Forthtelling

The Old Testament Prophet was not only a foreteller but also a forth-teller. In other words, He spoke God's Word into the current situations and immediate setting; he was burdened for his generation rather than for a future generation. Much prophetic ministry that happens today is forthtelling in nature; speaking God's word into current situations and events.

### What the Prophets Were Called to Do:

- **Speak God's Word**

The Prophet was first and foremost a spokesman for God. He was God's mouthpiece who had to speak out the will of God.

Ancient Israel was known to have hundreds of prophets, yet only sixteen were chosen by God, to have their spoken words collected and recorded in a book. Therefore, the prophetic books we read are a collection of spoken words. This is why it is often so difficult to read some of the longer prophetic books in one sitting; they were not written down in their original chronological sequence. For example, Baruch wrote down Jeremiah's oracles.

- **Remind God's People of the Covenant**

The Prophet ministered to a people who were bound to God in a covenant. God's covenant with Israel (Mosaic Covenant) involved various stipulations, commands and regulations.

If they obeyed the Law, God promised various blessings (Leviticus 26:1-13). If they disobeyed the Law, God was bound to punish or curse (bring His judgement on) His people, (Leviticus 26:14-39). The Law was in place because God wanted to shape a people who would learn His ways.

The prophets came in because their role was to remind the people of their responsibility to obey God's Laws. The Lord used the prophets to help the people understand the events of blessing, or cursing, that would come upon them.

The message of the prophets was then not original. They simply reminded and reproduced God's word, not their own. Their job was to remind everyone of, and enforce, the covenant blessings (Amos 9:11-15) or curses (Hosea 8:14, 9:3) depending on the faithfulness of the people of Israel to God. They might have spoken or enacted God's Word in a fresh, unique way based on their style or vocabulary, but fundamentally it was still the same message. (For example, see the Messianic prophecies; Deuteronomy 18:18 and Isaiah 42, 49).

### REFLECTION

Get into small groups, read the allocated chapters and together look for the pattern:

- Chapters to read: Jeremiah 25; Malachi 1&2; Haggai 1&2
- An identification of Israel's sin/Israel's obedience
- A prediction of a curse/blessing

- **They Were God’s Representatives.**

They were not radical social reformers or creative thinkers, but direct ambassadors who represented God in their society.

We find prophets who conveyed God’s message to a nation. For example, at God’s command, prophets anointed Kings (1 Kings 19:16), declared war (2 Kings 3:18-19; Hosea 5:5-8) or spoke against war (Jeremiah 27:8-22). They spoke fearlessly, whether to Kings (2 Samuel 12:1-14) or clergy (Malachi 2:1-9); and they always acted dependent on the One who sent them.

## **Why We Need Help in Reading the Prophets**

The Prophetic Books are often unclear because they spoke specifically into situations from very difficult cultural, political and geographical times. Reading the Prophetic books can be likened to listening to only one side of a telephone conversation, where the speaker speaks in poetry and rhyme, and you are left trying to understand the whole conversation.

Therefore, reading and approaching the Prophetic Books casually will not work. We have to approach these books with diligence, time and effort in order to understand their context.

How then can this be done?

### **Using Tools**

- Bible Dictionaries

These are a great tool. Bible dictionaries provide articles on the historical setting of each book and explain the basic outline and special features it contains. They then help you understand the unique social situation surrounding the book. Example: New Bible Dictionary.

- Bible Handbook

A Bible Handbook doesn’t go into as much detail as the dictionary but gives a basic outline, context and illustrations. Example: Lions Handbook.

- Study Bible Notes

A good Study Bible will often give some of the same background information as a Bible Dictionary. Examples: the NIV Study Bible and the ESV Study Bible are two of the best.

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# MODULE 6: HOW TO READ OLD TESTAMENT POETRY

## Poetry

Poetry as a genre is found throughout the Old Testament. We find examples of poetry in the Books of the Law, History, the Wisdom literature as well as the Prophetic books.

See, for example, Genesis 49; Exodus 15; 2 Samuel 1:19-27; Proverbs 3:13-18; Isaiah 23:16.

## Why Poetry Was So Important

Poetry was a popular writing style and was valued as a highly prized mode of expression. (Unlike today, as most of our generation don't appreciate poetry or see it as a genre of any importance or significance).

*"The extensive occurrence of poetry throughout the OT and its continued use in the NT remind us that the Bible is not simply an informative book. The biblical authors stimulate our imaginations as they fill our minds with images that give us an adequate, but partial, glimpse of the nature of God and of his relationship with his creatures." - Tremper Longman*

Biblical poetry then evoked and stimulated people's imagination. Using emotive images is a powerful way to learn and catch the attention of the listener.

In the ancient world according to Gordon Fee, "whole national epics and key historical and religious memories were preserved in poetry."

This was largely due to the fact that poetry was much easier to memorise than prose. In an oral culture where most people couldn't write, poetry was the manner in which tradition and history were preserved. Once well learned, poetry was not easily forgotten. Just as we can remember the lyrics of a song we know well, the Israelites found it easy to commit to memory and recall important truths composed through a poem.

### FOCUS POINT

God spoke through the prophets largely through poetry. Because the people were used to poetry, they would remember the words which detailed God's warnings and the promises to them.



## Imagery

The aim of the Old Testament poets was to impact the heart and to reinforce important truth. They did this through the effective use of figures of speech, such as metaphors and similes. The writers would use these figures of speech to make simple and powerful truths clear in imaginative ways.

- Metaphor

*"a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them"*<sup>8</sup>. (See Psalm 23:1; Psalm 42:3; Songs of Songs 4:1a).

- Simile

*"a word or phrase comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by like or as"*<sup>9</sup> (See Song of Songs 4:1b-3; Psalm 59:6-7; Psalm 42:1).

This means that in reading the figures of speech, there is often no need to look for deep or hidden symbolism. For examples of "deeper" symbolism, we will be studying "apocalyptic literature", as found in the Book of Revelation, later in the programme.

## The Main Feature of Hebrew Poetry: Parallelism

Parallelism is the style of restating a phrase in different ways in order to make a point.

- Synonymous parallelism

*"the second or subsequent line repeats or reinforces the sense of the first line"* - Gordon Fee (Isaiah 44:22; Psalm 36:5; Psalm 19:1-2).

- Antithetical parallelism

*"the second of subsequent line contrasts the thought of the first"* - Gordon Fee (Proverbs 10:1,28; Psalm 37:9; Psalm 20:8).

- Synthetic parallelism

*"the second or subsequent line adds to the first line in any manner that provides further information"* - Gordon Fee (Psalm 19:8; Psalm 1:3; Obadiah 21).

### NOTES:

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<sup>8</sup> "metaphor", Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

<sup>9</sup> "simile", Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary.

# MODULE 7: HOW TO READ THE WISDOM BOOKS

## Books of Wisdom

Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are considered to be the three Wisdom books of Scripture. Other Old Testament books contain a sprinkling of wisdom literature, such as Song of Songs, the Psalms and the History books.

## Understanding Wisdom

It's very important to understand what Biblical wisdom is. It has nothing to do with cleverness, IQ, natural intelligence or education. There are many educated people in fact who are fools, because they don't believe in God (Psalm 14:1). There is nothing more foolish than a person who rejects the one true God.

Wisdom can be described as the ability to have insight into people and situations and then to make the right, godly choices from that insight.

This Biblical wisdom is never abstract or ethereal but very practical and down to earth. It involves the choices we make in everyday life, not just how we conduct ourselves in the church.

This ability to make right choices rests on the person having a relationship with God. That is why Proverbs 9:10 says, *"the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"*. The ability to have insight and make Godly choices is vital for a Christian, but it is impossible to do so without being in right relationship with the Lord. This is the foundation of true Godly wisdom.

### REFLECTION

Do you "fear the Lord?"

How is your relationship growing with Him?

## The Roots of Wisdom Literature

Throughout the ancient eastern world, a class of scribes and wise men emerged who had the task of writing and collecting wise sayings (Ecclesiastes 12:9). The New Bible Dictionary explains that “*the roots of wisdom literature are probably to be found in short, crisp popular sayings which express rules for success or common observations concerning life*”.

These men were usually sponsored by the royal court or the temple and became prominent men of influence in local communities, often becoming as important as the priests and prophets.

### REFLECTION

See, for example, Edom in Jeremiah 49:7; Obadiah 8, Phoenicia in Ezekiel 28; Zechariah 9:2, Babylon in Isaiah 44:25; 47:10, Assyria in Isaiah 10:13, Egypt in Isaiah 19:11–13, and Persia in Esther 1:13. Wise Men often acted as counsellors, giving personal counsel and political advice.

### What Was the Difference Between the Prophet and the Wise Man?

The Prophet spoke God’s words, while the Wise Man was not trying to speak on behalf of God in the same way the Prophet did. Rather, the Wise Man gave advice in various forms, enabling a person to live a life pleasing to God.

Does wisdom have a place next to prophecy? Yes. Because Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit can give the gift of Wisdom (see 1 Corinthians 12:8) which is the ability to discern a situation and to give good, balanced counsel.

The problem came when the Wise men were not God fearing or submitted under God’s Word. Their advice would not be true Godly wisdom because they would be at odds with God’s truth.

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# The Two Types of Wisdom Literature

## Practical Wisdom and Philosophical Wisdom

### Practical Wisdom

This genre was the more common and popular type as it dealt with practical, real, everyday issues, in short, simple, memorable, repeatable and often humorous statements.

The aim of this kind of wisdom was to help people live successful and happy lives, rooted in the fear of God. This type of wisdom is represented well by the book of Proverbs.

Because much of the practical wisdom of Proverbs was designed to be remembered, simple overstatements are often used. These are kind of catchphrases that are not meant to be over-analysed or taken to be binding promises. In other words, as Gordon Fee says, *“it speaks truth, but not the whole truth”*. For example:

*“A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.” - Proverbs 10:4*

*“Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it.” - Proverbs 13:11*

*“Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.” - Proverbs 16:3*

*“Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.” - Proverbs 22:6*

### The Use of Contrasts in Proverbs

- Antithetical couplets: when the second line is in sharp contrast to the first line. (See Proverbs 10:1-15:29)

*“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.” - Proverbs 11:2*

*“Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.” - Proverbs 12:10*

- Synthetic couplets: when the second line builds on or completes the first line. (See Proverbs 15:30-22:16)

*“The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble.” - Proverbs 16:4*

*“Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law.” - Proverbs 29:18*

## Philosophical Wisdom

The book of Job and Ecclesiastes do not try to give simple practical advice like the book of Proverbs. In Proverbs, for example, there is the basic premise that if you work hard, you will experience blessing. (Proverbs 12:11; 28:19) However, if you read Ecclesiastes, often our labour can seem meaningless (chapter 2:12-16), and that the fruit of your hard work is enjoyed by others who did not work for it (chapter 2:21). This type of wisdom then attempts to reflect on the hard questions and contradictions of life.

Jl Packer says, *“The real basis for wisdom is to realize that most of what happens to us can often be inexplicable”*. In other words, wisdom is accepting that you cannot understand everything! Our human understanding has limits. The books of Job and Ecclesiastes teach us this.

## A Look at Ecclesiastes

### The Preacher

The author of Ecclesiastes was most likely Solomon (see 1:1). In it he called himself “the Preacher” (1:1, 2, 12; 7:27; 12:8–10). The Hebrew word is *Qoheleth* and is the title given to an official speaker who calls an assembly (see 1 Kings 8:1). The Greek word for “assembly” is *ekklesia*, and this gives us the English title of the book, Ecclesiastes. The word *Qoheleth* carries with it the idea of debating, but as you read the book, it seems he debates more with himself than with the listeners.

The book is filled with personal pronouns and is, therefore, autobiographical in nature (see Ecclesiastes 1:12-17).

### The Cynical Tone

The word “meaningless” occurs 35 times in the New International Version (NIV) and is the dominant theme in the book. All of life, without God, is empty and unable to provide happiness or meaning to his life. This includes work (1:14; 2:11, 17; 4:4, 7–8), wisdom (2:15), righteousness (8:14), wealth (2:26; 5:10; 6:2), prestige (4:16), pleasure (2:1–2), youth and vigor (11:10), life (6:12; 7:15; 9:9), and even the future after death (11:8).

The Preacher acknowledges that righteousness is rewarded and wickedness is punished (8:12–13), but he has sometimes seen just the opposite (8:14; cf. 7:15; 8:10). Wickedness gets practised even in the courts (3:16) and he had seen peoples’ rights denied (5:8). The truth is that the righteous suffer in the same way as the wicked (9:1–2), and ultimately die just as the wicked do (9:3).

Though the Preacher believed that God is providentially in control of all things (3:11; 6:10; 7:14; 9:1) and that everything has its appropriate time (3:1–8), there is a certain mystery about God’s dealings, even for the wisest people (3:11; 8:17). Thus Solomon repeatedly affirmed the inability of people to predict the future (7:14; 8:7; 9:1; 10:14) and to pick the best course of action (6:12; 11:6).

## The Heart of Ecclesiastes

*“A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?” - Ecclesiastes 2:24-25 (NIV)*

This theme is repeated in Ecclesiastes 3:12-12,22; 5:18-20; 8:15 and 12:13. Only in God can we find true meaning to all that seems senseless.

## The Reality of Life

It is important to understand the message of Ecclesiastes because as Christians we often expect an ideal life. But life is messy because we live in a fallen world dominated by sinful people and a real devil.

Many Christians expect life to be formulaic. We approach life like the counsellors of Job who reasoned that Job must have been suffering because of his sin. They preferred life to be tidy and make sense. If you sin, you suffer. If you are obedient, you will be blessed.

However, Jesus promised that following Him would result in persecution and trouble (Matthew 10:16-23, 2 Timothy 3:12). Scripture doesn't idealise our faith but prepares us for suffering. James 1:2 says, *“Count it all joy... when you meet trials of various kinds”* not, *“if you meet trials”*. Suffering is inevitable and is not always a result of your foolishness. Sometimes it is just because we live in a foolish world.

## Reading the Old through the New

One of the keys for us in reading the Old Testament is that we read it through the lens of the new. Life is meaningless apart from Christ. Because we have the benefit of greater revelation in Christ, we understand that Jesus has carried all death, futility, and despair on our behalf. We don't always have to make sense of it all because we know God works all things for the good of those who love him (Romans 8:28). Although our work can potentially be meaningless and, *“a chasing after the wind”*, if we work as unto the Lord then our, *“labour in the Lord is not in vain”* (1 Corinthians 15:58) and we will receive great eternal rewards.

*“Ecclesiastes gives a wealth of advice about how to make the most of this life. Yet an exasperated, despairing emptiness pervades the book. And, ironically, this is its greatest contribution. Ecclesiastes highlights the need we all have for something beyond anything this physical life can offer — to that which is made possible only by Jesus Christ (John 4:7-14)” - Jim Herst*

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# MODULE 8: THEME OF COVENANT

A covenant is an agreement made between two parties in which certain promises are made. Not a loose agreement, but a legal agreement - binding and serious. So this agreement defines that relationship.

**There are Three Types of Ancient Covenants (According to Gordon Fee).**

- **Parity Covenant:** this is a covenant between equals. Two parties negotiate and arrive at the terms of the agreement. It is a partnership.
- **Suzerainty Covenant:** this is a covenant between a stronger and a weaker party. The whole book of Deuteronomy is structured after this type of covenant. It is a covenant that is imposed by an all-powerful *suzerain* (overlord) to a weaker, dependent *vassal* (servant). It is not between equals. It is a commandment that the lesser party has no choice but to accept, and if they break it, they are transgressors. For example, in Exodus 24, Moses reads the Covenant to the people, and in 24:7 they take an oath to obey it. The 10 commandments were in a sense, the first instalment of the law. After that, God through Moses gave a total of 613 laws and regulations for the Jews to follow.
- **Promissory Covenant or Covenant of Grace:** this is a legally binding promise given from one side only. In the case of the Abrahamic and the New Covenant, it is from God's side - a gift to His people.

## Human Covenants and Divine Covenants

### Human Covenants in the Bible

#### Parity Covenants

- David and Jonathan - to establish their friendship, they swapped clothing/robe/belt/armour (1 Samuel 18:3).
- Laban and Jacob – for a mutual protection, they heaped up stones and swore an oath (Genesis 31:50-52).
- Solomon and Hiram – for a business agreement (1 Kings 5).
- Husband and wife (Malachai 2:14).

#### Suzerainty Covenant

- Joshua and Gibeonites – to establish peace (Joshua 9:3-27)
- Often it was done through the cutting of an animal in half or in pieces, the shedding of blood, eating a meal together.

## Divine Covenants in the Bible

God always takes the initiative, *"I will be their God, and they will be my people"* (Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 6:16). It is "one way" in a sense, with no discussion or debate about the terms. God makes the promise and sets the conditions. God then is the Suzerain (the lord).

### REFLECTION

Normally covenant is made between two equals - two parties who each have something to offer the other. But we see that God and Man are not equal. What can Man offer to God?

## The Divine Covenants

- With Noah
- With Abraham
- With Moses - called "Old Covenant"
- With David
- With Jesus - called the "New Covenant"

### REFLECTION

For additional reading and a good resource, see David Pawson's notes on Covenant (Unlocking the Bible).

## What Makes Up a Biblical Covenant

- Parties: Two parties
- Promises: What has each party promised to do in the relationship?
- Provisos: What is expected?
- Penalty: If failed?
- Period: For how long is the covenant in place?
- Purpose: Why?

### NOTES:

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# Biblical Covenants and the Christian

**FOCUS POINT**

“Testament” = “covenant”

- All five can be found in the OLD TESTAMENT
- All five can be found in the NEW TESTAMENT
- But only one of the five is called the “OLD” covenant (the Mosaic)
- And only one of the five is called the “NEW” covenant (the Messianic)

## The “New” Covenant – Completed

Announced in the Old Testament

**JEREMIAH – WHAT?**

- Inclination
- Intimacy
- Innocence

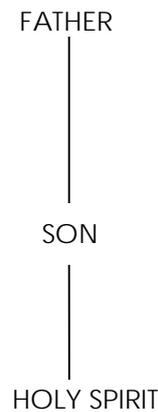
Therefore: internal individual

**ISAIAH – WHO?**

- Supreme sovereign
- Suffering servant

**EZEKIEL – HOW?**

- Human spirit renewed
- Holy Spirit received



Achieved in the New Testament

**LORD JESUS CHRIST**

- Atonement – to take away our sins
- Ascension – to fill us with the Spirit

resurrection between

**THE HOLY SPIRIT**

- Baptised in - once
- Filled with - continually

**NEW COVENANT PEOPLE**

- Body of Christ – his flock and family
- Fellowship of the Spirit – his gifts and fruit

## The Other Covenants -Continued

Note pattern - international and national

### **NOAHIC**

- Matthew 5:45b

### **ABRAHAMIC**

- Luke 1:54, 72
- Matthew 22:32
- Hebrews 6:13-20

### **DAVIDIC**

- Luke 1:32; Acts 13:34; Romans 1:3; John 7:42; Acts 15:16;
- “Son of David” – Mark 11:10; Matthew 12:23; Matthew 21:9;
- Matt 15; Matt 22:42; Revelation 3:7; Revelation 5:5; Revelation 22:16

## The “Old” Covenant – cancelled

### **MOSAIC**

- old – Hebrews 8:6
- obsolete – Hebrews 8:13
- versus Mosaic – John 1:17; Romans 10:4-11; Galatians 4:21-31
- dead to law – Romans 7:4
- temporary – Galatians 3:23 - 25

BIBLICAL COVENANTS	PARTY <i>Who is it with?</i>	PROMISE <i>(I will...) What is offered?</i>	PROVISO <i>What is expected?</i>	PENALTY <i>If failed?</i>	PERIOD <i>How long for?</i>	PURPOSE <i>Why?</i>
Noahic	<u>NOAH</u> (human race on Ararat)	<b>SURVIVAL</b> INTERNATIONAL Season Sun & Rain	POPULATE THE EARTH	(unconditional)	PERMANENT While earth remains	People available for adoption into God's family
Abrahamic	<u>ABRAHAM</u> (son ISAAC, Grandson JACOB – patriarchs - descendants in Canaan)	<b>SELECTION</b> NATIONAL Seed Land (ownership) INTERNATIONAL Blessing for all families on earth	CIRCUMCISION	CUT OFF	PERMANENT Forever	A people on earth to mediate God's blessing to others, "a kingdom of priests"
			BLESSED <i>if</i> bless Israel	CURSED <i>if</i> curse Israel		
Mosaic (Old)	<u>MOSES</u> (12 tribes of Israel on Sinai)	<b>SECURITY</b> NATIONAL Provision Protection Land (occupation) Laws	BLESSED <i>if</i> obey Health Prosperity	CURSED <i>if</i> disobey  Disasters Occupation Exile	TEMPORARY Until Messiah comes	A demonstration of divine righteousness & need for forgiveness
Davidic	<u>DAVID</u> (King of Israel in Jerusalem)	<b>SUCCESSION</b> NATIONAL King of Jews INTERNATIONAL King of Gentiles (nations)	MANY SONS <i>if</i> keep covenant	SHORT REIGN	TEMPORARY Until Messiah comes	The visible Kingdom of God on earth, ruled by His Son
			ONE SON "anointed one" HEBREW = Messiah GREEK = Christ	(unconditional)	PERMANENT Forever	
Messianic (New)	Announced by (OT) <u>ISAIAH</u> <u>JEREMIAH</u> <u>EZEKIEL</u>  Achieved by (NT) <u>JESUS</u> ' death (Resurrection Ascension in Jerusalem)	<b>SALVATION</b> INTERNATIONAL Some Jews Many Gentiles 'All Israel'  (FORGIVENESS) (HOLINESS)	REPENTANCE FAITH (FULLNESS) Trust Obedience	CUT OFF = Eternal Loss HELL	PERMANENT Forever Eternal life NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH	Righteousness subjects of the Kingdom of God free from sin

# MODULE 9: THEME OF THE TEMPLE

Understanding the theme of “The Temple” in the Old Testament is key to unlocking an understanding of church life and the Christian life.

The temple in Jerusalem was the central point of Jewish worship and culture. We see that as good Jews would do, Jesus was taken to the temple in Jerusalem to be dedicated as a baby (Luke 2:22), and every year His parents and Jesus would travel the arduous journey to the temple to celebrate the feasts (Luke 2:41). As such, the temple formed an important backdrop in the life of Jesus, because it was vital to any God fearing Jew.

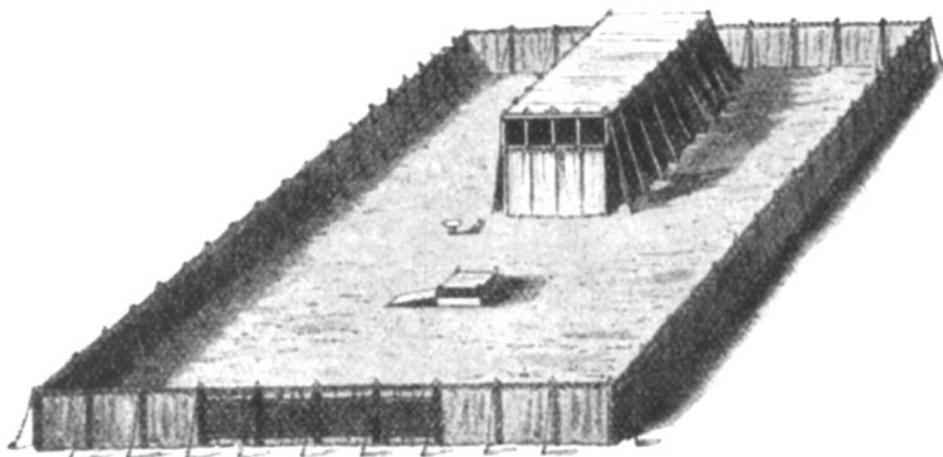
## Pagan Temples

In the ancient world, each city or town had a temple or place of worship dedicated to the local deity, served by priests or the local ruler (1 Samuel 5:2 shows an example of this).

## Wilderness Tabernacle

God specifically instructed Moses to construct a tabernacle for Him (Exodus 25:9; Exodus 25-31). This tabernacle was a portable structure that they could take with them as they travelled, served by priests. The Priests were the only ones who could perform the sacrifices.

God’s aim was to give them a place so the people of God could meet with Him; a place of worship where God could meet with men, and Heaven intersect earth (Exodus 25:8). The people understood that God did not literally live in the tabernacle, but rather it was a place where the Jews experienced the reality of God’s presence (1 Kings 8:27-30; Psalm 11:4).



The tabernacle was situated in the centre of the camp and was symbolic of God’s presence being central to the life of Israel (Numbers 2:1-2).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Illustration from Wright, William. Images from The Illustrated Bible Treasury.



## Jerusalem Temple

The Jerusalem Temple was built by King Solomon (959 BC) but later destroyed by the Babylonians (586 BC).

It was then rebuilt under Zerubbabel and Haggai the prophet (516 BC).

The temple underwent massive renovation under Herod the Great (20 BC) and became known as Herod's Temple. It was completely destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans and was never rebuilt. Today the "Dome of the Rock" is built on the spot.

God's glory abandoned the temple at the time of the exile and never returned. But the promise of a return remains. The Messiah will come and "rebuild the temple" (Zechariah 6:12-13, John 2:19-22, Isaiah 40:3, 52:7-10, Malachi 3:1-4). The rest of the notes will explain how Christ came to do this.

### Trust in God vs. the Temple

John Drane explains,

*"Devotion to the Temple could sometimes lead to misplaced nationalism, as it did in the days of Jeremiah when the inhabitants of Jerusalem were certain that nothing could happen to their city because the Temple was there (Jeremiah 7:1-15). The prophets had to remind them that God's holy presence in the Temple could become a sign of judgment as well as salvation, and it was possible to preserve the external appearance of true worship when in reality God's presence was no longer there (Ezekiel 10:1-22)"*<sup>11</sup>

## Temporary Expression of Eternal Truth

The temple was designed to be a temporary expression of eternal truth.

### REFLECTION

Why would God choose to dwell in a tent or building when Scripture clearly says that God cannot be contained? (See Psalm 11:4, 9:24).

### Heaven is God's Temple

The earthly temple was just a shadow of much greater reality; a heavenly place where God dwells in the fullness of His presence (Hebrews 8:5; 9:11).

<sup>11</sup> Drane, John. *Introducing the Old Testament*.

## Jesus is God's Temple

The New Testament significance is that the Jerusalem temple has been transferred to Jesus Christ (John 2:19-22).

### FOCUS POINT

The tabernacle/temple was the place where heaven intersected earth, God met man and Divinity met humanity. Jesus is now that place, the perfect intersection where heaven has met earth. God came to man in Jesus where He embodies the fullness of His glory (Colossians 1:19). Therefore, Jesus is the meeting place where God meets man. If we want to meet with God, we no longer need to go to a temple, we go to Jesus.

Jesus then is the temple in person. Christ then refers to Himself as the temple and also the High Priest who became the perfect sacrifice! (Reference, Hebrews 9:11-12).

*"Jesus embodies the two great narratives of Israel, the royal and the priestly strands of the Old Testament, drawing them together and establishing the new way, the royal and priestly way, for Israel and for the human race, for the sake of the world"<sup>12</sup> - NT Wright*

Everything in the tabernacle points to the person and work of Jesus.

## The Church is the Spiritual Temple

Because we are now in Christ, the omnipresent Living God chooses to dwell in one place; in His people. The Church is the Body of Christ and therefore the place of the presence of God. (1 Peter 2:4-5; Ephesians 2:21-22). So God creates a new temple through Jesus and fills it with His presence (1 Corinthians 3:10-17).

## The Glory of God

God's intention is to fill the whole world with His Glory (Psalm 72:19; Numbers 14:21) and the Church is just the beginning of that aim. The physical temple was always just a microcosm or small expression of much bigger reality.

In the book of Revelation, we see God's glory will finally fill all of Creation (Revelation 21). The tabernacle design in the Old Testament, of the Most Holy Place, was a perfect cube. In Revelation, the picture of the Heavenly City (God's dwelling place) is a perfect cube (Revelation 21:16). God's presence is now given to all (Revelation 21:3-4; 22).

Just as the temple was the centre of Jewish life, so Jesus and the church is to be the centre of the Christian life. It is the place of His presence and the foretaste of His glory that will cover the earth. Even now as we fulfil the great commission (Matthew 28), we will begin to see this take place.

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<sup>12</sup> Wright, N. T. After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters. Page 114

# MODULE 10: THE THEME OF KINGSHIP

Let us begin by placing ourselves in the midst of the first few chapters of Matthew's Gospel, before getting to our theme, that of Kingship in the Old Testament.

After an inter-testamental period spanning approximately 400 years, the emergence of the prophet, John the Baptist (the forerunner of Jesus), and subsequently Jesus, was an absolutely pivotal moment in history.

At the launch of Jesus' ministry, we read the following, as Matthew quotes Jesus citing a text from Isaiah:

*"The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles – the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region of the shadow of death, on them a light has dawned. From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of is at hand'" - Matthew 4:15-17*

The Gospel of Matthew, written to a Jewish audience (and therefore an audience with an intimate knowledge of the Pentateuch and of the Old Testament), intentionally and very importantly identifies Jesus, right from the beginning of His ministry, as linked to the hugely important theme of Kingship in the Old Testament. Jesus came as Prophet, Priest and King of the Kingdom of God, in order to fulfil the redemptive purposes of our Father God in the earth.

## FOCUS POINT

What is fascinating is that the phrase, "*the Kingdom of God*" does not directly occur in the Old Testament, but is hinted at all over the place. The idea of God as King, and of His kingly rule, are all over the text of the Old Testament. Having said that, there are various dimensions to this kingship.

As the Maker and Sustainer of all that exists, God is, "*the great King over all the earth*" (Psalm 47:2), and, "*his kingdom rules over all*" (Psalm 103:19). His kingly rule equally encompasses the past, present and future (Psalm 145:13).

Along with this general and eternal kingship, God is the king of His covenant people of the Old Testament, Israel.

*"Christianity appeals to history, and to history it must go" - George Caird, Oxford University Lecturer*

And so, the Christian God, as revealed in Scripture (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) is not just theologically or spiritually the King over all, but chooses to reveal His Kingship in and through the actual history of Israel.

We are going to briefly trace the development of the theme of Kingship throughout the Old Testament and how this theme is crucial for us to grasp if we are going to understand the majesty of Jesus as our Saviour, Lord, and King.





## A Dynasty that Lost its Way

The problem with many of the kings was that they themselves were wicked and encouraged injustice and wickedness to flourish.

*"The spectacular promises God made to David – promises that his royal house would continue forever (2 Samuel 7) – came on the back of warnings issued by the prophet Samuel about the oppressive way all earthly kings behave (1 Samuel 8). David's own behaviour and that of his son Solomon demonstrated Samuel's point only too well. And most of David's successors were weak or positively bad; even those who succeeded in restoring the life and worship of Israel (Hezekiah, Josiah) couldn't prevent the final catastrophe of exile. Psalm 89, one of the most majestic and haunting of the whole collection of the Psalms, states the problem as starkly as it can be put. On the one hand, God made all these great promises to David; on the other hand, it looks as though they have all come to nothing. The poem lays both halves before God, as though to say, 'Well? What are you going to do about it?'"<sup>13</sup> – NT Wright*

But it is out of this puzzled ambiguity that there grows, in fits and starts and eventually becoming clear and emphatic, the hope that one day there might be a true king, a new sort of king, who would set everything right, that when he takes his throne, the poor will get justice at last, and creation itself will sing for joy (Psalm 72:1-4).

This is how God's ancient promises are to be fulfilled. There will come a new king, anointed with oil and with God's own Spirit, and he will put the world back into its proper order.

And so as we turn again to the New Testament, we read in Matthew 27:32-37 that as Jesus was hung on the cross to be crucified, He hung with a sign above His head that read, "Jesus, King of the Jews".

### Key Points to Note in the Historical Development of Kingship in the Old Testament

- Kingship was an Ancient Near East cultural and societal value and practice.
- Using that cultural practice, God (the ultimate King of the heavens and the earth), chooses to weave the revelation of His kingly nature into the practical history of Israel. History is important!
- As the history of Israel unfolds, the frailty of man becomes clearer; and the faithfulness of God, who promises that the Kingdom of David (a man) will not end; seems to have failed.
- But the Israelites remain a believing and hopeful people (as God raises up prophets who keep speaking of a coming King).
- Out of the dusty recesses of Israel is born Jesus, fully Man/fully God – Prophet, Priest and KING - in whom all the kingly hopes and expectation of the Old Testament are fulfilled; as He is born into Israel's history within the Kingly lineage and heritage of David, securing an everlasting Kingdom of God upon the earth.

#### NOTES:

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<sup>13</sup> Wright, N. T. Simply Christian. Page 81



# MODULE 11: THEME OF THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

## Definition of God's Faithfulness

According to the *Dictionary of Bible Themes*, God's faithfulness can be defined as, "God's perfect loyalty and consistency in being true to His name, His character and His word"

## Faithfulness is Part of the Name and Character of God

We can only know God in the way God chooses to reveal Himself. He reveals Himself as a faithful God who keeps to His covenantal promises. (See Deuteronomy 7:8-9; Lamentations 3:22-23; 2 Timothy 2:13; Revelation 19:11)

## God is Consistently Faithful in His Character and Nature

*"God's revealed name is, of course, more than a label; it is a revelation of what he is in relation to us"* <sup>15</sup>- JI Packer

*"The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands], forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."* - Exodus 34:5-7

So we see that God's moral character is changeless. He will always be consistent with His nature (James 1:17). He will never become cynical, unreliable, or less merciful.

## God the Rock

God is called a Rock. This presents an image of stability, security and firmness (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 18:2)

## The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

God is called the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, referring to the fact that He was faithful to the Patriarchs and will be faithful to Moses and the Jews in the same way. Basically, God is telling them that He has a track record and that they can trust Him (Exodus 3:6,15,16.)

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<sup>15</sup> Packer, J. I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove. Page 86







# MODULE 12: THEME OF SOVEREIGN CHOICE

## Definition of Sovereign Choice

**Sov-er-eign**, *n.* **1.** One that exercises supreme, permanent authority, especially in a nation or other governmental unit, as: **a.** A King, queen, or any other noble person who serves as chief of state; a ruler or monarch.<sup>16</sup>

**Sovereign**, *noun*, **1.** a supreme ruler, especially a monarch ... *adjective*, **1.** possessing supreme or ultimate power<sup>17</sup>

## God is Sovereign

God is ultimately, absolutely, sovereign. He is over everything because He made all. He is subject to no-one, answerable to no-one and He continues to be over the Universe, because it is sustained by Him (Hebrews 1:3). God's absolute authority can never be rivalled because there is none like Him.

*"Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created." - Revelation 4:11*

### FOCUS POINT

God created all things. Being Creator elevates Him beyond common power. Any human monarch or sovereign receives their power, even if by divine right, ultimately from man. Men validate them, and men can invalidate them. Throughout history, kings have been overthrown and replaced. But this is not possible with God. God was never given His power; His power is His because He is God.

When God introduces Himself to Moses, He introduces Himself as an unbound ruler, capable of sovereign choice.

*"The LORD replied, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, 'the LORD,' to you. I will show kindness **to anyone I choose**, and I will show mercy **to anyone I choose**." - Exodus 33:19 (NLT - own emphasis added)*

*"The LORD does whatever pleases him throughout all heaven and earth, and on the seas and in their depths." - Psalm 135:6 (NLT). (See also Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 46:10; Daniel 4:35; Romans 9:19-2)*

But God doesn't only describe Himself in these terms, we also see Him operating in this way.

<sup>16</sup> The Free Dictionary. Farlex, n.d. Web. 08 Dec. 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Oxford Dictionaries - Dictionary, Thesaurus, & Grammar. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 Dec. 2015.



## God Often Chooses the Unlikely, or Gives No Reason for His Choice

Examples of this can be found throughout the Bible:

- **Abraham:** Genesis 12:1-3 (in contrast to Noah who may have been chosen for his righteousness, (Genesis 6:9). See also Isaiah 51:2; Hebrews 11:8
- **Moses:** Exodus 3:4 - A disgraced Levite, exiled, a murderer, yet given a special task.

*"Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." - Exodus 3:10*

- **Gideon:** Judges 6 – The youngest in a family that was least in the tribe of Manasseh.
- **Samuel:** 1 Samuel 3:4-10 - At the time God called him it seemed so unlikely, that even the High Priest didn't see it.
- **Saul:** 1 Samuel 9:17 - Highlighted by God to be a prophet.
- **David:** 1 Samuel 16 - Not the obvious choice of succession, chosen through the prophet.
- **Cyrus:** Isaiah 41:2; 45:4 – Didn't even know God, but was used by Him.
- **Jeremiah:** Jeremiah 1:4-5 – Chosen in the womb, no way of earning it.
- **Amos:** Amos 1:1; 7:15 – A Shepherd of Tekoa, with a career change, no reason given.
- **Jesus' Disciples:** Mark 2:14; 3:13 - Told to follow, selected with no reason given.
- **Saul, Ananias:** Acts 9 – Both were chosen. One an antichrist, the other just a disciple.
- **Saul/Paul:** Galatians 1:15-16 - He believed he was selected before birth for the job God had for him. He also believed the timing of His conversion was down to God.

### FOCUS POINT

We don't find God saying, "Would you like to go?". God chooses and sends whomever He wills.

In Isaiah 6:8, Isaiah seems to respond to an open call from God, "*Whom shall I send, who will go for us?*" But Isaiah was in the middle of a heavenly vision full of thunder and smoke and flying creatures - quite persuasive. So in spite of the appearance of Isaiah having a choice, God chose him.

### NOTES:

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## Type and Antitype

A type was then a real person, event or thing that was deliberately chosen by God as a kind of prophetic symbol that pointed to a truth fulfilled in the New Testament.

Romans 5:14, mentions the word type (*typos* in the Greek) specifically. It refers to Adam as a “type of Christ”.

Another example is found in 1 Corinthians 5:7. We don’t find the word type but we find the principle. We see that the Passover Lamb is a picture of Christ. The lamb is a type, pointing to the much greater reality – the crucified Messiah.

This reality or fulfilment is called the “Antitype” (*antitypos* in the Greek). In 1 Peter 3:21, Peter explains that just as Noah and his family were saved through water into a new life, so Christians are saved through the water of baptism into a new life.

## A Caution

We must be careful of seeing a type in every event, person or thing in the Old Testament (becoming a “hyper typer”). Not everything points to Jesus, and there are some things that can be taken too far. Every analogy or story will break down or could become absurd if carried too far. The type only applies in the area in which the comparison or contrast is made.

For example, Moses is seen as a type of Christ because he was a deliverer leader who led the people of God out of Egypt (see 1 Corinthians 10:2), but Moses failed to enter the Promised Land. This doesn’t mean Jesus failed to enter God’s promises or sinned in some way!

### FOCUS POINT

The New Testament points out the meaning of some of the Old Testament events, persons and things and that they point to Jesus. It would be safe to primarily stick to what the New Testament points out rather than trying to find symbols of Jesus in everything. Be careful of drawing conclusions where the Bible doesn’t.

## Basic Guidelines for Interpreting Types (from Dr Dan Mitchell)<sup>19</sup>

- There must be some notable point of resemblance or analogy. This should stand out.
- This may be a parallel idea or a contrasting idea.
- Remember, the Old Testament contemporaries of the type may not be aware of the typical significance (cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12).
- What is taught by the typological correspondence must be also taught by the direct assertion in Scripture (Exodus 12:21-23, John 1:29, cf. 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 9:1-10,18).
- It is important to realise that a type is a “supplementary” and not a “primary” source of doctrine. One must be careful not to base a point of doctrine on a type alone. For example, one may not reason from 1 Corinthians 5:7 (Christ our Passover) that since the application of the blood of the paschal lamb over the door by one family member protected the entire family, the application of Christ’s blood by one family member is sufficient to save the entire family.

There are so many types in Scripture. We cannot, for our purposes, discuss them all. We will, however, list and discuss a few of them, especially those that are clearly indicated in the New Testament.

<sup>19</sup> Carr, Kelly, Dr Christology 101, Lesson 9 Old Testament Types, Pages 4-6

## Four Categories of Types in the Old Testament

\*Note: These Scripture references and breakdown, taken from Dr K. Carr, are probably the clearest I have seen.

- People
- Events
- Things
- Feasts

## Jesus in the Old Testament: People and Events

### People

An analogous reading of Scripture is never our first reading. Every person we see as a type of the Christ is still a real historical person. None are a perfect likeness, because none were without sin. Also, the time and circumstance of their lives are always different to Christ's. Often only one part or aspect of their story is analogous. With that in mind, let us look at a few of the people often regarded as types of the Christ.

### Adam

We begin with Adam. Paul uses the word type to contrast Jesus with Adam:

*"Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a **type** of the one who was to come." - Romans 5:14 (own emphasis added)*

The word here translated type, is the same word used of the nail marks in Jesus hands in John 20. It is an "imprint, or stamp as struck from a die". In modern English we might say "peas in a pod", or "cut from the same cloth". Paul is saying that in this regard, Adam was a mirror image of Jesus:

*"For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous." - Romans 5:19*

Like a mirror image, Adam is the same, but opposite to Jesus. Both acted in ways that impacted all of mankind; Adam for ill, Jesus for good.

(See also 1 Corinthians 15:45-47)

### Aaron and Melchizedek

When the writer to the Hebrews begins to unpack the priesthood of Christ, he starts with references to Aaron.

*"And no one takes this honor for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you" - Hebrews 5:4-5*

Refer to Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5.

- Aaron was the first High Priest in the tabernacle; Jesus is the eternal Great High Priest in the tabernacle not made with human hands.
- Aaron and his line made offerings to God every day, Jesus made His offering just once, for all time (Hebrews 10:11-14).

So Aaron is not a perfect picture of Christ. He was appointed and anointed by God. He presented sacrifices. But his sacrifices needed repeating over and over again.

Jesus is therefore spoken of as being in the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:6,10; 7:11,15,17), *“who has become a priest, not on the basis of a legal requirement concerning bodily descent, but by the power of an indestructible life.”* - Hebrews 7:16

*“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is, king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest forever.”* - Hebrews 7:1-3 (Genesis 14)

The resemblance between Melchizedek and Jesus can be seen in them both being without beginning or end, belonging to an eternal priesthood, and even in the fact that they receive tithes. Hebrews highlights that Abram paid a tithe to the priest of God Most High when his great grandson Levi was still within him. This is the first occasion of a tenth being offered to the Lord, a point picked up on in Hebrews. Within the law, Levi collected tithes, but here, before the law, he paid tithe. This makes the priest after the order of Melchizedek greater than the priest of the line of Aaron.

#### **FOCUS POINT**

This can be reasonably interpreted to suggest that Jesus is to receive tithes from us, in the order of Melchizedek, outside the requirement of the law. The names of Melchizedek also line up with the Names of Jesus. His name means, “King of Righteousness”. He ruled over “Salem” which means “peace”, so he was the King of Peace.

Christ is the High Priest of a new priesthood. Aaron was appointed to minister on earth, just as Christ was appointed to minister in heaven. Everything Aaron did was only a shadow of what Christ did. Aaron belonged to an old covenant, *“obsolete and ageing”* and soon to disappear (Hebrews 8:13). Christ ministered the new covenant (Hebrews 8:6-8).

#### Abel

In Genesis 4, the Lord hears Abel's blood cry out from the ground where his brother spilt it. In Hebrews, we are told Jesus' blood speaks a better word. Abel's blood cried out for justice and retribution. The blood of Jesus speaks of forgiveness and reconciliation (Hebrews 12:24; see also Matthew 23:35; Luke 11:51).

#### Boaz

Boaz is often regarded as a type of Christ. In the book of Ruth, he fulfils the role of Kinsman-Redeemer. The Kinsman-Redeemer is a role established in Leviticus 25. Where an Israelite, through poverty, had become enslaved to a stranger or sojourner, he could be bought out of slavery by a willing Kinsman. In the case of Naomi, poverty and the death of her husband and sons had left her destitute. Boaz is pursued by Ruth (Naomi's Moabite daughter-in-law), to restore her family's fortune. This he agrees to do and marries Ruth as part of the bargain (Ruth 4).

Jesus became flesh and dwelt amongst us (John 1:14). He was like us in every way (Hebrews 2:14-18). He had the means to buy us back, which He willingly did, using His own blood (Hebrews 9,10; see also Job 19:25; Matthew 1:5; Luke 3:32; 1 Peter 1:18)

## David

When King Saul lost the plot, God says He will look for someone else to rule, *“a man after his own heart”* (1 Samuel 13:14). God finds David. And so, in an imperfect way, David is a reflection of God, or at least of His heart.

David was from the tribe of Judah, and as a direct descendant, so was Jesus.

David was sent by His father (though without the same intent that God had). He was the lone representative of God against Israel’s great foe. He delivered Israel, even before sitting on the throne. His victory was a victory for all the people.

## David’s Psalms

Besides these parallel life experiences, David also wrote some Psalms that are understood to be *Messianic* – to speak of the coming Messiah. In this way he spoke with the voice of Jesus, of Jesus’ experiences.

Rightly the most famous of all is Psalm 22 – *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* These are the very words chosen by Jesus on the cross. The Psalm is a visceral account of Jesus’ affliction, listing many things that are not believed to have ever happened to David, for example, *“They pierced my hands and feet”, “all my bones are out of joint”*.

Another example is Psalm 16:10 - *“For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.”* Jesus did not remain in *Sheol* (the place of the dead), David did. Jesus’ body did not see corruption, David’s did (Acts 13:35-37).

## Isaac

Abraham was promised many sons through his one son Isaac. In the same way, God received many sons to Himself through His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ (Genesis 15, 16, 17; John 3:16; Hebrews 2:9-11).

- Abraham offered up his only son as a sacrifice. So did God (Genesis 22, Mathew; Mark; Luke; John).
- Figuratively speaking Abraham received Isaac back from the dead. God truly received His Son, Jesus, back from the dead (Hebrews 11:19; Acts 10:40).

## Joseph

Joseph is also often seen as comparable to Jesus.

- Both were loved by their fathers (Genesis 37:3; Mark 1:11).
- Both were sent by their fathers to their brothers, and both were rejected by them (Genesis 37; John 1:11).
- Joseph and Jesus were both falsely accused and imprisoned (Genesis 39; Mark 14:57). And both were exalted after their suffering (Psalm 105:16-22; Philippians 2:8-11).
- Both offered forgiveness to those who harmed them and both were saviours to their people (Genesis 45 onwards; Luke 23:34; John 4:42; 1 John 4:14).

## Moses

Moses' life bears many remarkable parallels to Jesus' own. Here are some, but not all of the similarities:

- Both were born when the Hebrew nation was under oppression from a Gentile king. Both were saved from a specifically focused infant genocide at their birth.
- Both spent their first years in Egypt. Both had two families, one modest the other royal (Exodus 1; Matthew 2; Hosea 11:1).
- Both Moses and Jesus were aware of their call long before they fulfilled it. But both were humble. Moses gave up his royal home, and so did Jesus. They both did this to save a people who rejected them (Acts 7:25-27; Luke 2:49; Numbers 12:3; Hebrews 11:24-26; Philippians 2:6,7; John 1:11; see also Luke 19:12-14).
- Moses worked for years in obscurity as a shepherd; Jesus was 30 years old before beginning public ministry. Jesus also saw Himself as a shepherd.
- Both were given a mission to go and save God's people, in this way they are both apostles (Exodus 2,3,4; Luke 2:23; John 10; Matthew 1:21; Isaiah 9; Matthew 4:16; John 17:25).
- Both worked miracles. Moses was first in the Old Testament; Jesus was first in the New Testament (Exodus 4; Matthew 11:4-6).

### FOCUS POINT

In his work, *'Gleanings in Exodus'* (Chapter 72), A. W. Pink lists 75 ways Moses is like Jesus and challenges readers to find another 25 or more. *"The subject is well-nigh exhaustless", he writes. "And a most blessed subject it is, demonstrating anew the divine authorship of the Bible."*

## Events

Just as many people from the Old Testament foreshadow the coming of Christ, so certain events also speak of Christ, and the ministry He will fulfill.

### The Clothing of Adam and Eve

After the sin of Adam, Adam and Eve attempt to clothe themselves. God does not leave them in their covering of leaves but creates for them garments of skin. In the same way that they were clothed in the skin of an animal, sacrificed for them, so we are instructed to clothe ourselves in Christ, who was sacrificed for us (Genesis 3:21; Galatians 3:27).

### The Flood of Noah's Day

The events in the life of Noah mirror Jesus in several ways.

- The Ark was provided by God, by grace.
- God revealed and required specific means by which this salvation (by the Ark) would be accomplished.
- The Ark had many rooms but only one door (Genesis 6; Ephesians 1:3-5; 1 Peter 1:2; John 14:2,6).

Regarding the wider events of the flood. Jesus specifically referenced, *"the days of Noah"*, to describe the degree to which the world would be corrupted at the time of His return (Matthew 24:37-41).



## Jesus in the Old Testament: Things and Feasts

### Things (Objects, Places, Animals)

There are many types of Christ in the Old Testament that prepare the way for the revelation of Christ in the New Testament. For this section we will be pointing you to the objects/ symbols/ things/ offerings/ feasts of the Old Testament, that point to Jesus.

In order to try and convey some of the richness of these types, for the purpose of time, we are going to focus on *one* thing and one festival.

(\*Please note that a basic list of the main objects/symbols/things/offerings feasts of the Old Testament is included for your reading and study.)

There are many things, be they objects, places or even animals, that when read within the context of the greater narrative of Scripture, are pointing beyond themselves to Jesus.

### The Serpent on the Pole

#### REFLECTION

Read Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:14-15

The most explicitly cross-centered wilderness type in the Scriptures (John 3:14-15) was the serpent on the pole (Numbers 21:4-9). Like all the other miraculous redemptive typical provisions, the serpent on the pole was given in response to Israel's sinful complaining, and in the face of the judgement they deserved. There are a series of parallels that can be drawn between the Israelites being bitten by the serpents and then given a means of healing through the serpent on the pole and the theological truth of the redemption we have through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

#### Consider the Following:

1. The bronze serpent was God's means of salvation for the Israelites who were bitten by the serpents in the wilderness. Jesus Christ crucified is God's means of salvation for everyone who has been bitten by the deadly venom of sin in the wilderness of this fallen world.
2. The bronze serpent was God's only way of salvation for the Israelites. Jesus Christ crucified is God's only way of salvation for Jew and Gentile (John 3:16).
3. The bronze serpent was a visual representation of the wrath of God against a grumbling and complaining people. The cross of Christ is a visual representation of the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.
4. The bronze serpent represented the propitiation of the wrath of God. Whoever looked at the serpent would know that the wrath of God was turned away. The cross of Christ displays the wrath of God as well as the turning away of that wrath. Mercy and truth meet together at the cross; righteousness and peace kiss one another in the death of Jesus.
5. The bronze serpent was a symbolic representation of the venomous serpents that bit the people and brought deadly consequences on account of their sin, however, it was without the venom that caused their death. Christ represented those who were ruined by sin, making Himself a body in the likeness of sinful flesh – yet without sin – so that He might, through His death, save those who by their own sin were poisoned unto death. He was made a curse, so that we might receive the blessings of God.

6. The bronze serpent was meant to remind the Israelites of the cause of their sin. It was meant to carry their minds back to the Garden of Eden where Satan came in the form of a serpent to tempt their first parents. The punishment for the sin brought into the world through the temptation of that Serpent of Old, was laid on Jesus at the cross. The penalty for our sin fell on Him. He became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
7. With respect to the serpent in the wilderness, the healing was dependent upon the word of God concerning His means of salvation. With Christ crucified, salvation is dependent on God's word concerning His means of that salvation.
8. With regard to the poisoned Israelites being called to believe God's command, and the bronze serpent being the object of that command, we see that both the means and the instrument of God's salvation are typified. In the account of Jesus' interaction with Nicodemus both the means and the instrument of God's salvation are pointed out. A crucified Savior is the means of God's salvation. Faith (or looking to Him) is the instrument of salvation.
9. The plagued Israelites were externally called to look upon the bronze serpent in order to be healed. Sinners are externally called to look upon the crucified Son of God to be saved.
10. The serpent was lifted up before the Israelites in the midst of the camp so that those who were bitten might look and be healed. Christ was lifted up – first on the cross, then in His resurrection, then in His ascension, and finally in the preaching of the Gospel – so that sinners might look on Him and be saved.
11. The bronze serpent was the central and all-sufficient means of healing for the Israelites. The cross is the central and all-sufficient means of the saving work of Christ for the healing of all who believe in Him. The bronze serpent was the clearest type of the saving work of Jesus at Calvary. Of all the types and shadows, there was not any that showed forth the principal work of the Savior better than this type. Jesus could have pointed to the Passover, or to any of the sacrificial types that foreshadowed His atoning death, but He chose to point to this type in His discussion with Nicodemus.
12. Just as God chose a man, namely Moses, to lift up the bronze serpent on the pole so that men might look and be healed, God has chosen ministers to hold up Jesus in the preaching of Christ crucified so that men might look to Him and be saved.
13. Just as looking to a bronze serpent was a foolish means of healing poisoned Israelites, so looking to a crucified Saviour (a publicly executed Man) is a foolish means, in the world's eyes, for the salvation of sinners condemned to death.
14. The bronze serpent was held up for many for salvation from the wrath of God and the deadly consequences of sin. Christ was lifted up for many for the salvation of men from the wrath of God and the deadly consequences of sin.

**NOTES:**

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## Feasts / Offerings

### Feast of Tabernacles/Booths

See Leviticus 23:34; Numbers 29:35; John 7:37-39.

- The Feast of Tabernacles was one of three great pilgrimage – festivals of the Jewish year, held in Jerusalem, that every male was required to attend. It came at the end of the year when the harvest of the field was gathered in.
- Everyone born an Israelite had to stay in a booth/tabernacle made of palm tree leaves for the duration of the feast.
- It lasted eight days in total, with the eighth day being the start of the new agricultural season. It was a time of hopefully great rejoicing and celebration of God’s provision for the year.
- In the midst of all the feasting, rejoicing, and celebrating there was a particular set of rituals that occurred each day in the temple, including animal sacrifice and water pouring.

### The Ritual of Water Pouring as a Foreshadowing/Type of Christ

The priests would walk down through the city to the Pool of Siloam and fill a large golden pitcher with water. Walking back up to the temple they would sing Psalms and songs that remembered God’s provision of water in the wilderness and songs that petitioned God for healthy rains in the coming rainy season. But, most significantly for us, these songs were also a prophetic declaration and petition for the coming Messiah to rain salvation and righteousness down upon them (Isaiah 12:3, Isaiah 35:5-7, Isaiah 44:3, Isaiah 55:1, Joel 2:28).

The pitcher of water from the Pool, and a pitcher of wine from the temple, was then poured out over the altar in the temple as an act of sacrifice and petition.

On the eighth day, the last and greatest day of the feast according to John 7, the same ritual would take place, only this time the priests only pretended to fill the golden pitcher with water. Returning to the temple singing from what many scholars think was Isaiah 12:3-4, the priest would then pretend to pour water from this empty pitcher as a prophetic declaration of the salvation and provision that would come with the Messiah.

## Conclusion

We see then how all these different types in the Old Testament are powerfully fulfilled in Christ in the New Testament. These types show us that God has carefully and deliberately used real people, events, things and ceremonies to point us to the most important truth we need to build our lives upon, the Lord Jesus.

### NOTES:

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## A List of Types of Christ (Things & Feasts)

Note that there is bound to be a bit of crossover with some of the other types of Christ seen in the Old Testament, as there is often a multiplicity of revelation regarding Christ, that is seen in one scenario or situation.

### Listed Alphabetically:

- **Ark:** Genesis 7:16; 1 Peter 3:20; 1 Peter 3:21
- **Ark of the Covenant:** Exodus 25:16; Psalm 40:8; Isaiah 42:6
- **Atonement:** Sacrifices offered on the Day of Atonement. Leviticus 16:15; Leviticus 16:16; Hebrews 9:12; Hebrews 9:24
- **Brazen Serpent:** Numbers 21:9; John 3:14 John 3:15
- **Brazen Altar:** Exodus 27:1 Exodus 27:2; Hebrews 13:10
- **Burnt Offering:** Leviticus 1:2; Leviticus 1:4; Hebrews 10:10
- **Cities of Refuge:** Numbers 35:6; Hebrews 6:18
- **First-Fruits:** Exodus 22:29; 1 Corinthians 15:20
- **Golden Candlestick:** Exodus 25:31; John 8:12
- **Golden Altar:** Exodus 40:5; Exodus 40:26; Exodus 40:27; Revelation 8:3; Hebrews 13:15
- **Laver of Brass:** Exodus 30:18-20; Zechariah 13:1; Ephesians 5:26; Ephesians 5:27
- **Mercy-Seat:** Exodus 25:17-22; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 4:16
- **Morning and Evening Sacrifices:** Exodus 29:38-41; John 1:29; John 1:36
- **Paschal Lamb:** Exodus 12:3-6; Exodus 12:46; John 19:36; 1 Corinthians 5:7
- **Peace offerings;** Leviticus 3:1; Ephesians 2:14; Ephesians 2:16
- **Red Heifer:** Numbers 19:2-6; Hebrews 9:13; Hebrews 9:14
- **Rock of Horeb:** Exodus 17:6; 1 Corinthians 10:4
- **Rod of Aaron:** Numbers 17:1-12
- **Scape Goat:** Leviticus 16:20-22; Isaiah 53:6; Isaiah 53:12
- **Sin Offering:** Leviticus 4:2; Leviticus 4:3; Leviticus 4:12; Hebrews 13:11; Hebrews 13:12
- **Tabernacle:** Exodus 40:2; Exodus 40:34; Hebrews 9:11; Colossians 2:9
- **Table and Show Bread** Exodus 25:23-30; John 1:16; 6:48
- **Temple:** 1 Kings 6:1; 1 Kings 6:38; John 2:19; John 2:21
- **Tree of Life:** Genesis 2:9; John 1:4; Revelation 22:2
- **Trespass Offering:** Leviticus 6:1-7; Isaiah 53:10
- **Veil of the Tabernacle and Temple:** Exodus 40:21; 2 Chronicles 3:14; Hebrews 10:20

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