

THE NEW TESTAMENT'S CLAIM -- THE OLD TESTAMENT POINTS TO CHRIST

I. Introductory Questions:

- A. Isn't the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) above all a Jewish book?
- B. Do we need the Old Testament Scriptures in our church today?
- C. What is the significance of the Old Testament for us today?
- D. Why should a Christian concern himself with the Old Testament?
- E. What hinders us from reading the Old Testament?

II. The Significance of the OT in the Early Church as described in the Book of Acts:

- A. The Book of Acts is the story of God's Word "growing mightily and prevailing" (Acts 19:20; see also 28:30-31; 1:8)
- B. The apostles back up their witness of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection by the authority of the Old Testament (2:22-36; see also 17:2-3; 18:28)
- C. All parts of the Old Testament point to this message (Acts 3:11-26; see also 26:22-23)
 - *Torah*: "Moses said . . ." (3:22)
 - *Holy Prophets*: "God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets" (3:18, 21)
 - *Historical Writers* (i.e. Former Prophets): "All the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and his successors onward, also announced these days" (3:24)
 - *Poetical Books / Writings*: "David said of him . . ." (2:25ff.)

III. The Significance of the OT as testified by Jesus Christ Himself:

- A. Jesus Christ claims that things are fulfilled which are written about Him in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44; see also 24:25-33)

- B. Jesus Christ explains that the Old Testament Scriptures tell us of the necessity “for him to suffer . . . and to enter into His glory” (Luke 24:25-27; see also 24:45-49)
- C. Jesus Christ explains that the Old Testament Scriptures tell of him and that we may have life in him (John 5:39-40, 46-47)
- D. Jesus Christ explains that what the Old Testament Scriptures say about him has the same authority as his own words (John 5:46-47).

IV. The Significance of the OT as claimed in the New Testament Epistles:

- At the end of the Weekend we will come back to these texts and find instruction in them of how to read the OT for our own benefit
- A. The Old Testament was given for our *instruction*: “What was written in earlier times (i.e. the Old Testament) was written for our instruction” (Romans 15:4; cf. vv. 1-6)
- B. The Old Testament was given to us as *example and warning*: “Now these things *happened* to them as an example, and they were *written* for our instruction.” (I Cor. 10:11; see also 10:5-10 - “these things *happened* as examples for us.” [v. 6])
- C. The Old Testament was given to *prepare* our hearts for *salvation*: “to make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (II Tim. 3:15) – OT shows us why we need the salvation *in* Christ!
- D. The Old Testament Scriptures were given for and are profitable . . . (II Tim. 3:16).
 - . . . for teaching,
 - . . . for reproof,
 - . . . for correction,
 - . . . and for training in righteousness.
- E. The Old Testament was given “that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” (II Tim. 3:17)

V. Concluding Questions:

- A. Are there merely key phrases (i.e. Messianic proof texts) that are significant for us from the OT, or is the OT significant in the message that the books contain for the people of the Old Testament as much as for the people of the church today?

- B. How does the Dispensation of Grace, in which we, the NT people (i.e., the church), live, relate to the OT people (i.e., Israel)? How does the Church relate to the New Covenant? Was this Dispensation of Grace prophesied in the OT?

The Holy Scriptures

HEBREW NAMES FOR THE BOOKS	HEBREW ARRANGEMENT AND CLASSIFICATION	ENGLISH ARRANGEMENT AND CLASSIFICATION	APPROXIMATE DATES CONCERNED
In the beginning These are the names And He called In the wilderness These are the words	TORAH Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy LAW (Pentateuch)	The Beginning to 1406 B.C.
Joshua Judges I Samuel II Samuel I Kings II Kings	FORMER PROPHETS Joshua Judges I Samuel II Samuel I Kings II Kings	Joshua Judges Ruth I Samuel II Samuel I Kings II Kings HISTORY	1406-1380 B.C. 1380-1050 B.C. 1200-1150 B.C. 1100-1010 B.C. 1010-971 B.C. 971-853 B.C. 853-560 B.C. 1010-971 B.C. 971-539 B.C. 539-450 B.C. 445-410 B.C. 483-474 B.C.
Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	LATTER PROPHETS Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	I Chronicles II Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Solomon POETRY and WISDOM Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel MAJOR PROPHETS	No specific historical period covered 739-700 B.C. 627-580 B.C. 586 B.C. 593-570 B.C. 605-530 B.C.
Praises Job Proverbs Ruth Song of Songs The Preacher How! Esther Daniel Ezra Nehemiah I The words of the days II The words of the days	THE WRITINGS (Hagiographa) Psalms Job Proverbs Ruth Song of Solomon Ecclesiastes Lamentations Esther Daniel Ezra Nehemiah I Chronicles II Chronicles	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi MINOR PROPHETS	760-730 B.C. 500 B.C. 760 B.C. 500 B.C. 770 B.C. 737-690 B.C. 650 B.C. 630 B.C. 627 B.C. 520 B.C. 520-518 B.C. 433 B.C.

GRACE IN THE END -- THE OLD TESTAMENT TELLS A STORY OF GRACE (PART 1+2)

* **Basic Issue:** What kind of a book is the Old Testament? [What are the options?]

I. Outline of the Canon in Light of the “Meta-story” of the Old Testament

A. The “Meta-Story” of the Old Testament (and beyond)

1. Preparation for the Land
2. Life in the Land with prospect of being sent into exile
3. Failure to experience God’s full blessing in the Promised Land
4. Babylonian Exile (i.e., Assyrian in the case of Israel)
5. Restoration from Exile
6. Continued failure to experience God’s full blessing in the restored Promised Land
7. (Prospect of entering God’s full blessing in His presence on a “New Earth” [the ultimate Promised Land])

B. Outline of the Canon - The Canon mirrors the different sections of the history Israel lived through (see *Tanak* overhead).

1. *Pentateuch* - Preparation for and outlook to the Promised Land
2. *Prophets (Former and Latter)* - Life in the land with prospect of and eventual (Babylonian) Exile - [a few prophets go beyond the actual exile to the period of return to the Promised Land and even point to the ultimate Promised Land]
3. *Writings* - Restoration to the Land & True Return to the LORD (cf. Deut. 30:1-10 - reflections on what really matters—the Fear of God and true return (שׁוּב - *shuv*) to the LORD (humbling themselves before God)

II. Deuteronomy at/as the Center of the Canon and the OT Story

A. Statistics about the status of Deuteronomy in the NT and the church:

* The name “Deutero-Nomium” (lit. “second law”) is misleading

1. Deuteronomy is one of the most important books in the OT, because of the historical and interpretative framework it offers and the exhortative and instructional tone it sets for the rhetoric of the rest of the OT

2. Jesus quoted more from Deuteronomy than from any other book [Schultz, 2; cf. McConville, *Grace in the End*, 9; William Horbury, 2]. (Most quoted together with Genesis, Psalms, and Isaiah)

3. Deuteronomy serves as a bridge between the two testaments.

4. *Excursus*: The esteem of the “Song of Testimony” (Deut. 32) in the early church:

B. Deuteronomy is the first book written in the Pentateuch and the OT as a whole

1. Moses is commanded by the Lord to write down the sermons that he preached in the plains of Moab as the “The Book of the Law” (Deut. 31:9; cf. the references to the “Book of the Law” in Deuteronomy itself: 17:18; 28:58-61; 29:20, 21, 27; 30:10; 31:24, 26; cf. 1:1)

* We do not find this kind of command in any of the other four books of the Pentateuch.

2. The other books of the Pentateuch are written as background and foundation for Deuteronomy.

a. As we read the Pentateuch carefully, we find hints that the first four books of the Pentateuch were *contemporized* in light of Deuteronomy.

(1) Genesis 1:2a is written in light of Deuteronomy 32:10

(2) Genesis 26:2-5 is written in light of Deuteronomy 11:1

b. Moses records in the first four books the history and conditions that lead up to the brink of their entering into the Promised Land.

(1) *Genesis* - The promise of the land originates with the patriarchs towards whom God had proven Himself faithful in keeping His promises as long as they believed. The faith and obedience of the patriarchs serves as model for the people to follow as they enter the land.

(2) *Exodus* - God has delivered Israel from Egyptian captivity to covenant Himself to be their God on the basis of the Ten Words. As their covenant God, He will dwell among His treasured possession, as long as the people entering the land live in the parameters of the 10 Words.

- (3) *Leviticus* - For a holy God to dwell among them, the people must maintain holiness. *Leviticus* illustrates and applies the concept of God's holiness to the people who are about to enter the land, where they must live distinct and separate from the ways of the neighboring nations, even as God is distinct and separate.
 - (4) *Numbers* - Israel is ultimately a stubborn people, who again and again has shown its own unbelief and failure to keep God holy (Moses serves, unfortunately, as prime example in Num. 20:12). The people entering the land are, thus, faced with the challenge of a stubborn/stiff-necked heart that jeopardizes their entering the promised rest and blessings in the land.
- c. "The Book of the Law" (i.e., Deuteronomy) serves the purpose of assuring that the people would live in the fear of God and, thereby, be covenant-keeping people blessed by the LORD (Deut. 28:58f.; 31:11-13; 6:24; etc.); they were to live by such a fear as the people had in the day the LORD appeared to them on Mt. Sinai (Deut. 5:28-29; 6:1-3); this keeping of the laws and regulations would result in their possessing the land and then "living" in it (Deut. 11:31-32). The laws of Deut. 12-26 are given to assure that the people would fulfill their covenant responsibility of loving their LORD (6:4-5; 11:1, 13), not forgetting Him (6:12), serving Him, holding on to Him, and walking in all His ways with a circumcised heart that is no longer rebellious and stubborn (10:12-16); this love and service shows itself in imitating their covenant God (10:17-22), who has made them His holy/treasured possession (7:6) [by loving God they imitate Him, since He first loved them (4:37; 7:7-9, 13; 10:15)].
3. As the foundational book of the OT, Deuteronomy (i.e., the "Book of the Law") is the *only* book ever quoted in the OT (Josh 1:8; 8:31, 34; 23:6; 2 Kings 14:6; 22:8ff.; Neh. 8:1ff., 13, 18; 9:3; 13:1).

C. Deuteronomy offers a *blueprint* for the Meta-Story of the Old Testament

1. Rough outline of the book
 - a. Covenant Foundation and History (chs. 1-11)
 - b. Covenant Laws and Stipulations (chs. 12-26)
 - c. Covenant Blessings and Curses (chs. 27-28)
 - d. Covenant Renewal and Provision (chs. 29-31)

- e. Song of Testimony (chs. 32)
 - f. Moses' Blessing of the Tribes (ch. 33) and his Death (ch. 34)
2. Oversimplified statement of the blueprint of the Old Testament—Life between the curses and blessings of Deuteronomy 27-28
- a. They obey the commandments and, thus, live within the covenant stipulations and experience the blessings in the land (*Blessings*).
 - b. They disobey the commandments and, thus, live outside of the covenant parameter and experience expulsion from the land (cf. Deut. 28:64-68 {final curse}) (*Curses*).
- C. Deuteronomy offers an eschatological hope that goes beyond the history recorded in the Old Testament.
1. Deuteronomy clearly predicts that the laws of the Book of the Law will not be sufficient to keep Israel's stubborn/stiff-necked heart from rebelling against the covenant (i.e., Sinai) with the LORD; in other words, the covenant at Moab is not sufficient to keep Israel from going into exile (for the distinction of these two covenant, see Deut. 29:1).
- a. Moses knew that in spite of all the laws, rules, and stipulations (chs. 12-26) and the predicted curses/blessings (chs. 27-28), they will turn to other gods and idols, since God had told him (31:20-21).
 - b. Moses knew what rebellious and stubborn people they were—even while he was still alive—and how much more rebellious they even would be after his death (31:26-27, 29).
 - c. Moses knew that God had to this very day not given them a heart to understand, eyes to see, or ears to hear (29:4).
2. Deuteronomy predicts that God will not only fulfill His part of the covenant but also the part of His covenant people, Israel, by “circumcising their heart” and, thus, enabling them to fulfill their part of the covenant (Deut. 30:6; cf. 10:6).

3. Deuteronomy's prediction of the circumcised heart is never fulfilled within OT history. But the concept of the "circumcision of the heart" is further developed in later OT literature, like Jeremiah's "New Covenant" (Jer. 31:31ff.; 32:39f.) and Ezekiel's "Covenant of Peace" (Ezek. 36:24ff.; cf. 11:19)
4. The other books comment on the covenant laid out in Deuteronomy
 - a. Each book either illustrates the insufficiency of the Deuteronomic Covenant and, thus, the need for something greater to happen, or points out what is necessary for this something greater to happen. Part of this expectation for the circumcision of the heart to come is the need for repentance. According to Deuteronomy 30, the circumcision of the heart will be preceded by calling the divine curses and blessings to mind and "returning" to the LORD (30:1-2; cf. 4:30). Although "return" also has the physical implications of returning to the LORD and the land, in this context it is primarily referring to a spiritual act of repentance and return to covenant obedience. We may propose that, actually, the sacred books of the Old Testament, in and of themselves, serve this purpose of bringing the covenant people of God to the point of repentance and return to the LORD.

III. The Church and Deuteronomy (Deut. 32)

UNION WITH CHRIST -- THE CLIMAX OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

I. Statement of the Thesis:

- A. Deuteronomy's prediction of the "Circumcised Heart" (Deut. 30:6) is fulfilled in the NT concepts of "Union with Christ" and Regeneration.
- B. Deuteronomy's prediction of the "No-People" (Deut. 32:21) is fulfilled in the NT Church (cf. Rom 11:11-15).

II. Explanation of the Thesis:

- A. Union with Christ is the fulfilment of the prediction of the "circumcision of the heart" (Col. 2: 11-14)
- B. We have the same heart condition that Israel had in the OT (cf. Deut. 31:20-21; 31:26-27, 29; 29:4), but through the realization of our union with Christ, we have the victory in and through Christ! (Rom. 7:4-8)
 - 1. We live in Union with Christ by realizing that we have "died to the law through the body of Christ, so that we may belong to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God."
 - 2. We live in Union with Christ by realizing that life is no longer about "does" and "don'ts", but about the question of how Christ's mission and goals can be realized in my life - in the full awareness and faith that there is nothing more desirable for my life
 - 3. We live in Union with Christ by realizing that the *Life in the Flesh* will never produce a spiritual life—only the *Life in the Spirit* does!
 - a. The Life in the Flesh
 - b. The Life in the Spirit
 - 4. We live in Union with Christ by realizing that not walking by sight but walking by faith will bring a fulfilled life

III. Setting the Thesis in it's Biblical-Theological Context – Union with Christ may be seen as the core of the New Testament's teaching and, thus, as the essential way in which God works in our times (dispensation).

- A. Union with Christ is not only one of the most important doctrines, but also, unfortunately, one that has been almost forgotten.
- B. Union with Christ is at the core of the doctrine of salvation.
- C. Union with Christ is the foundational doctrine for all other doctrines in the New Testament and, thus, the essence of the “dispensation of grace.”
- D. Both dispensationalists and covenant theologians are agreed on the importance of this doctrine for salvation and the believer’s life in this dispensation of grace.
- E. *Conclusion:* We, thus, see that what is the pinnacle of God’s story of salvation finds its roots and foundation in the foundational book of the Bible—Deuteronomy. This ties both Testaments together and gives us a grasp of the overall story of the Bible, which is, indeed, a “Story of Grace;” this observation allows us to set everything in the two Testaments in its proper context.

We may agree with Thomas D. Bernard, who sees in the believer’s union with Christ, the climax of God’s revelation, as he traces God’s revelation to man from the ‘piety of the patriarchs’ to the Epistles which survey the believer’s ‘standing-point’ in Christ. [Thomas D. Bernard, *The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament* (American Tract Society, 1896; reprint, Minneapolis: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1978), 196-99, 224-27]

IV. Concluding Statement about the Thesis:

The Church does *not replace* Israel but *experiences* the extensions of Israel’s *covenant privileges* in order to make Israel jealous. On the basis of the deuteronomic blueprint for salvation history, we can say that the church is currently experiencing the spiritual components of the New Covenant for the purpose of the glory of God and the provocation to jealousy in Israel.

ACCORDING TO DEUTERONOMY -- A CANONICAL AND THEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

I. Understanding the OT as a Book of Grace

A. Approaching the Old Testament Books

1. Each Old Testament Book has a Canonical Shape—just like Deuteronomy—that needs to be considered.
 - a. The Old Testament Scriptures share in the nature and canonicity of Deuteronomy
 - b. The Old Testament Scriptures share in the homiletical and paraenetic nature of Deuteronomy.
 - (1) Daniel I. Block’s assessment of the Book of Judges well illustrates the above proposed approach of the Old Testament books as having a homiletical agenda.
 - (2) Illustrations of the Canonical Shape:
 - (a) Sock Color: Black or Blue?
 - (b) Isaiah 7:14 read in the context of 9:6-7
 - (c) Psalms and Proverbs (Pearl Neckless vs. Basket of Scrolls)
 - (d) Prophetic Books
2. Deuteronomic Connection
 - a. The book’s recipients are “under” the Book of the Law
 - b. The book’s recipients find themselves in Deuteronomy’s Historical Framework
 - c. In the deuteronomic connection lies the purpose of the Old Covenant Scriptures:
 1. The Old Testament Scriptures illustrate the insufficiency of the deuteronomic covenant, under which the recipients of the Old Covenant books lived.

2. The Old Testament Scriptures prepare the hearts of the people to receive the eschatological hope of the circumcision of the heart—something only possible through repentance and a true return to the LORD (cf. 30:1-6).

B. Appreciating the OT Books as Proclamations of the Grace of God – Grace at the “Mitte” of both Testaments

1. OT - Deuteronomium proclaims the need for greater grace
2. NT - Union with Christ realizes greater gracer

II. Reading the OT as a Book of Grace

A. Pentateuch

- B. Prophets – The historical and prophetic books (Former and Latter Prophets) illustrate the failure of Israel to wholeheartedly love the LORD and fear Him (cf. Josh. 4:24; 24:14; Judg. 6:10; 1 Sam. 12:14, 24; 1 Kgs 8:40, 43; 2 Chr. 6:31, 33; 2 Kgs 17:7, 25, 28, 37-39, 41; Jer. 32:39).

1. Former Prophets

The *Former Prophets* (Joshua to II Kings [except for book of Ruth]) are so close to the content and vocabulary of Deuteronomy that the historical critical school came up with the thesis of a “deuteronomistic historical school” who is supposedly responsible for writing these historical books.

2. Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel; 12 Minor Prophets)

C. Writings

1. Wisdom Books (Job, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes) – If there is one book, that connects the wisdom books (which distinguish themselves from the rest of the OT books, because they show no connection to the history, temple cult or prophetism of Israel) with the rest of the OT writings, it is the book of Deuteronomy with its repeated call to the “fear of God”
 - a. God’s purpose is inscrutable (i.e., difficult to understand or fathom; enigmatic) - - Life is beyond our wisdom and insight (Prov. 2:6; 20:24; 21:1-3, 30-31; Eccl. 2:26; Eccl. 9:11-12; 11:1-6; Job 28:23).

- b. God is sovereign in his purpose -- Life is beyond our control (Prov. 10:22; 16:4, 9; 19:21; 21:1-2; Eccl. 5:19; 7:13-14; Job. 23:13-15; 42:2-3; etc.).

2. Additional Poetical Writings (Lamentations; Psalms)

- a. The Gospel according to Lamentations – How is Christ then the fulfilment of OT wisdom teaching? Coming to salvation in Christ is the wisest thing man can do as he humbles himself under the sovereign, saving hand of God!
 - (a) Jeremiah attempts to bring Jerusalem to the point where they confess that their salvation is beyond their control (cf. Lam. 3:18a).
 - (b) Jeremiah attempts to bring Jerusalem to the point where they cast themselves at the mercy (lovingkindness) and sovereignty of God (Lam. 5:21-22; 3:18-40; cf. Psalter [over 80 x "lovingkindness"]).
- b. We may think of the Psalter as a transitional document:
 - (a) The OT law is replaced by the NT lovingkindness (grace)
 - (b) The OT Davidic rule is replaced by the divine rule of Christ to assure covenant faithfulness
- c. Wise living is to ever abide in the position of our salvation: in humble reference and utter dependence on the grace of our God (cf. Col. 2:1-5)!

3. Historical Writings (Daniel, Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles)

- a. These books show that God shows Himself most powerful in times of His people's vulnerability and weakness; thus, these books continue to teach the lesson of fearing God, putting God in the equation of life; living in the awareness of who God is and what He is able to do (Est. 4:12-17).
- b. At this their weakest point, Israel made God known, which was their priestly obligation among the nations; but now they did it without land, without God's symbolized presence (i.e., the temple or tabernacle), without God's representative (i.e., the king) (Est. 8:15-17; 9:1-4; cf. Exodus 19:3-6; Gen. 12:3).