

Applying the OT to Our Lives

S2 Mosaic Covenant and Israel in the OT

© Rev. Ron Jones, DMin 2023

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Introduction:

How Do We Apply the Old Testament to Our Lives?

Last week, we began a study of how to apply the Old Testament to our lives as New Testament Christians.

The 39 books of the OT contain an incredible amount of truth that we can apply to our lives, but it is different from the New Testament and we need to understand how to apply it in our lives.

In this four-week series, I am giving you some simple principles you can use to properly apply the OT to your life. These principles will open up the whole Old Testament to you to enjoy all that God has revealed in his Word.

There are many sections of the Old Testament that apply to us as believers and many that do not. In order to understand which is which we need to understand the difference between the Abrahamic Covenant and the Mosaic Covenant and how salvation in the OT like the NT was related to the Abrahamic Covenant not the Mosaic Covenant.

The series is divided into four classes entitled:

S1 Abrahamic Covenant and All Believers

S2 Mosaic Covenant and Israel in the OT

S3 What Not to Apply to NT Believers

S4 What to Apply to NT Believers

Review:

Last week, we looked at salvation in the Old Testament and two major points:

Review:

1. God's Way of Redemption - How people were saved in the OT

2. God's Plan for Redemption - What God has revealed about His plan of redemption in the OT

Review:

1. God's Way of Redemption

1.1 Salvation has always been by God's grace in providing a Redeemer, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for the sins of human beings.

Nobody can be saved apart from Christ's death on the cross, not only those who lived after the cross, but those who lived before the cross. Christ's death paid the penalty for sin and all believers of all ages are saved by His atonement for sin.

1.2 Salvation has always been by God's grace through Christ's death accepted by faith.

God has always required faith to be saved. It has never been by works. All of the OT believers mentioned in Hebrews 11 have been saved by faith.

Biblical faith:

OT Saints trusting God and looking forward to the Redeemer

NT Saints trusting God and Jesus Christ looking backward to the Redeemer

Christ's Death:

Christ the Redeemer's Death Opening the Door to the Kingdom to OT and NT Saints

Then we looked at the second point,

Review:

2. God's Plan for Redemption

The center of God's redemptive plan for the world is the Abrahamic Covenant.

The redemptive promise of God that preceded and led to the Abrahamic Covenant is the promise of a Redeemer God gave in Genesis 3:15.

This was God's original promise to Adam and Eve after they fell into sin and corrupted themselves and the world that resulted in God's covenant of redemption given to Abraham.

Genesis 3:15 →

Promise of Redeemer

Genesis 12:1-3

Abrahamic Covenant

2.1 The Pre-Abrahamic Promise of a Coming Redeemer was given by God to provide God's kingdom to all believers

In Genesis 1 and 2 God revealed Himself as the Creator, Sovereign Ruler and Judge of the universe as He created the world and human beings and gave Adam His moral standards.

In Genesis 3:15, after the fall, God promised to Adam and Eve a redeemer, the offspring of Eve, who would come and redeem the world and destroy Satan.

To accomplish that promise God made a covenant with a man named Abram, a direct descendant of Seth, Adam's son and Shem, Noah's son.

Review:

2.2 The Abrahamic Covenant of the Coming Redeemer through Abraham and His descendants, Israel, was given by God to provide God's kingdom to all believers.

In Genesis 12:1-3 God made a covenant with Abraham to accomplish His plan of sending the Redeemer to die on the cross for sin through the descendants of Abraham, the nation of Israel.

In Genesis 12:1-3, there are three unconditional promises given to Abraham to fulfill God's promise in Genesis 3:15.

Great Land to Abraham's Descendants

Great Nation to Abraham's Descendants

Salvation Blessings for all through Abraham's Descendant, the Redeemer

This is the Abrahamic Covenant – it is an unconditional covenant God made with Abraham to bring his descendant, the Redeemer into the world, to bring in his kingdom on the earth.

That covenant is a salvation covenant which includes all human beings not just Jews – “all the families of the earth.” The blessing messiah would bring is the eternal kingdom – salvation, eternal life.

God is going to accomplish His plan of bringing the Redeemer into the world through a nation which He has chosen which are Abraham's descendants.

Again, this is part of God's redemptive plan. He is not just going to use individuals as He did with Abel, Enoch, and Noah to proclaim His message of Salvation, but He is going to use a nation among the nations of the world.

Nation of Israel - Holy Nation, God's people

- 1) Be a model of a nation who worships the one true God and hopes for a Redeemer
- 2) Proclaim the one true God and His Redeemer through His oral and written Word by the prophets
- 3) Birth the Redeemer into the world and provide His first disciples to take His message to the world

And God accomplished this Abrahamic Covenant goal through the nation of Israel when they fulfilled God's plan of preserving the Old Testament revelation of the prophets and of birthing the Redeemer and providing His first Disciples.

Review:

2.3 The Redeemer's First Coming paid the penalty for sin according to the Abrahamic Covenant by the "New Covenant in My blood" in order to provide God's kingdom to all believers.

Abrahamic Covenant → Christ's death secured salvation for all

Review:

2.4 The Redeemer's Second Coming will provide the millennial and eternal kingdom to all believers according to the Abrahamic Covenant

Now, Christ's death fulfilled the third and most important promise of the Abrahamic Covenant providing salvation blessing for all.

But what about the other two promises, the land and the nation?

Abraham's descendants became a nation and were in the land, but Israel never achieved the greatness that was promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. They have yet to be fulfilled.

Why did God give these promises to Abraham? Love!

God was not just going to bless Abraham and the nation of Israel and use them for His plan as a military commander would use his troops.

No, the Lord God of the universe was going to shine His love on Abraham and His descendants and give them honor in His kingdom forever for playing such an important part in His redemptive plan. They were to be His bride that He would bless.

That is the purpose of giving Abraham and His descendants an unconditional promise of be a great nation in a great land.

This is the reason for the 1000 year millennial kingdom to fulfill God's promises to Israel of a great nation on a great land.

Abrahamic
Covenant

Millennial
Kingdom

Great Land
Great Nation
Great Blessings

Great Land
Great Nation
Great Blessings

God chose to bless Abraham and his physical descendants who believed, the believing nation of Israel, the honor of being in a land and a great nation which is the purpose of the millennial kingdom.

TRANSITION:

Abrahamic Covenant was an unconditional promise which is permanent and based on faith. The Abrahamic Covenant is the major salvation covenant in both the Old and New Testaments. All believers OT and NT are saved under it by faith.

It is the Covenant the Jews depended on for their salvation.

The true believers in Israel depended on this covenant by faith.

Luke 1:54-55 Mary proclaimed

54 He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

55 as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.

The unbelievers depended on this covenant by birth and works.

John 8:39-40

39 They answered him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works Abraham did,

40 but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did.

The Jews knew their future depended on the Abrahamic Covenant not the Mosaic Covenant.

I say this to preview that the Mosaic Covenant was not given to save anyone even the Jews knew this.

This brings us to our second major point as Session 2, the Mosaic Covenant.

S2 Mosaic Covenant and Israel in the OT

Abrahamic Covenant v. Mosaic Covenant

To accomplish this goal of using the descendants of Abraham, the nation of Israel to accomplish God’s redemptive plan, God needed to establish a separate additional covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, which would not be a part of the Abrahamic Covenant but would be added alongside it in order to establish and govern His nation.

As we look at the Mosaic Covenant, what it was and why it was given and compare it to the Abrahamic Covenant, you will see why it does not apply to us as NT Christians nor was it given to save anyone.

TRANSITION:

At the time God chose, he appeared to Moses and used Moses to bring His people out of Egypt and establish them as a theocratic nation, a nation ruled by God.

Let's turn to Exodus 19:1-6.

Exodus 19:1-6 READ

v. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;

v.6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

The people of Israel have arrived at Mount Sinai where God had brought them and wanted to covenant with them. Then God spoke to them establishing the Mosaic Covenant.

The nation of Israel would be a kingdom of priests [earthly mediators between God and the pagan nations] and a holy nation [nation set apart for God's purposes].

The Mosaic Covenant gave the Israelites the opportunity to experience temporally the two promises of the Abrahamic Covenant, the land and the nation, so that they might be a spiritual light to the world showing the truth and glory of Yahweh, the blessing of righteousness, the true Scriptures revealing God, and birth the messiah, the future conquering king who will restore God's kingdom to righteousness throughout the earth.

1. The Mosaic Covenant was an additional covenant given to govern Israel as a holy nation under God in the Promised Land.

Israel was a theocracy – a rule directly by God through the Mosaic Covenant and the prophets who were the spokesmen and mediators for God

The Mosaic Covenant was a temporary covenant given to Israel so that it might help fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant by preparing Israel for the birth of the Messiah who would bring salvation blessing through them to the world.

Galatians 3:15-18

15 To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified.

16 Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.

17 This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.

18 For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

False teachers had come into the Galatian churches and claimed that faith in Jesus Christ was not enough to be saved, but that a person also had to be circumcised and follow the Mosaic law. Faith in Christ plus the works of the Law.

Paul writes Galatians to refute this heresy. He does so by comparing the Abrahamic Covenant which he calls the Abrahamic promises with the Mosaic Law.

v. 15 In a man-made covenant or contract, once it is legally ratified, you can't add to it or annul it.

v. 16 The Abrahamic Covenant was made to Abraham's offspring, Jesus Christ

v. 17 The Mosaic Covenant did not annul the Abrahamic Covenant

v. 18 If the inheritance (salvation) comes by the Mosaic Law (which is works), it no longer comes by an unconditional promise, but salvation comes by promise because God gave an unconditional promise to Abraham.

In other words, the Mosaic Covenant does not annul the Abrahamic Covenant!

The Mosaic Covenant/Law given by God to Israel was like the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights adopted by our founding fathers.

2. The Mosaic Covenant was a covenant of three kinds of laws: moral, civil/criminal, and ceremonial to govern Israel.

Let's look at some examples from the Book of Exodus

1) Moral Law

Exodus 20:1-17

The Ten Commandments

The Moral Law taught Israel about God's standard of righteousness and thus taught them about sin and its penalty of death.

2) Criminal and Civil Laws

Example of Criminal Laws

Exodus 21:12-18

12 "Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death.

13 But if he did not lie in wait for him, but God let him fall into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place to which he may flee.

14 But if a man willfully attacks another to kill him by cunning, you shall take him from my altar, that he may die.

v.13 "but God let him" is an event beyond human control ("an act of God").
(Expositors Commentary)

Notice God makes a distinction between Premeditated murder and manslaughter.

Example of Civil Laws:

Exodus 22:1-14 READ

The criminal and civil laws taught Israel about God's justice in society and how his moral standards are lived out in a community of people.

Remember, these laws were given to an ancient agrarian civilization not to a highly developed rich (in comparison to the past) nation of modern times like America. The penalties may be different if given today.

3) Ceremonial Laws

Exodus 25 Ark of the Covenant (v.10) and the Golden Lampstand

Exodus 26 Tabernacle

The Book of Leviticus is all about the ceremonial laws regarding sacrifices and other details given to Israel.

The ceremonial laws taught Israel about the messiah and why he came. The rituals God gave to Israel taught them about sin and the need for a sacrifice in picture form. The Passover lamb was a picture of Christ and his sacrifice.

1 Corinthians 5:7

Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

The ceremonial laws also kept them separated from pagan religions in the nations around them which would ceremonially defile them.

Circumcision separated them sexually from the pagan religions which had sexual practices as part of their religion. The prohibitions against eating/drinking the blood of animals separated them from the pagan religions whose practices involved the drinking of blood. These are just two of many prohibitions in the ceremonial laws that were meant to keep the Jews from participating in pagan religions.

The Mosaic Covenant was given to govern Israel as a nation. It was their constitution, bill of rights and laws of the land for a holy nation, a nation set apart for God and his purposes.

It was given and explained in Exodus 19 through Deuteronomy 33. However, the Mosaic Covenant forms the backdrop for the entire OT from Exodus 19 on.

3. The Mosaic Covenant was a conditional covenant with blessings and curses.

It was a conditional covenant. If the Israelites followed the covenant they would get to dwell in the land and be blessed by God as a nation. If they turned away from the Lord and did not fulfill the covenant they would be driven from the land and no longer be a nation.

Why? Because they couldn't be a holy nation and blessed by God as a model to all the nations if they were sinful and disobedient to God.

Plus if God never punished them, they would not have been prepared to fulfill their role of preserving the revelation of the prophets and birthing the Redeemer.

Deuteronomy 4:39-40

39 know therefore today, and lay it to your heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.

40 Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong your days in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for all time."

Keep his decrees that you may live long in the land.

Deuteronomy 4:44-46

44 This is the law that Moses set before the people of Israel.

45 These are the testimonies, the statutes, and the rules, which Moses spoke to the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt,

46 beyond the Jordan in the valley opposite Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who lived at Heshbon, whom Moses and the people of Israel defeated when they came out of Egypt.

This says

1. The Law of Moses is for the Israelites
2. It was given as they had begun the process of possessing the land of Israel and becoming a nation.

Deuteronomy 28:1-14

Moses gives the blessings of obeying the Mosaic Covenant.

v.1-2 states that they will get blessings if they follow the covenant

v.3-14 describes the blessings that they will get (all centered in the land and them as a nation)

Deuteronomy 28:15-68

Moses gives the curses of not obeying the Mosaic Covenant

v.15 state that they will receive curses if they do not follow the covenant

v.16-68 describes those curses

This was a brilliant plan by God, but as we know the nation of Israel would fail.

Moses prophesied that the Jewish people would eventually fail to follow the Mosaic Covenant and be exiled, but because of the Abrahamic Covenant God would remember them in the “latter days” which is the time of the messiah.

4. God predicted that the Israelites would eventually break the Mosaic Covenant, and he would bring a new covenant.

Deuteronomy 4:25-31 READ

*30 When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you **in the latter days**, you will return to the Lord your God and obey his voice.*

*31 For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget **the covenant with your fathers** that he swore to them.*

God would remember the Abrahamic covenant which was an unconditional covenant and bring the descendants of Abraham back into the land before the messiah comes and transform their lives as they embrace him by faith.

Through Jeremiah the prophet, the Lord speaks of this new covenant he will bring.

The Promise of a New Covenant

The Lord promised he would bring a new covenant that was not like the Mosaic Covenant

Jeremiah 31:33

This new covenant the Lord says will have the following characteristics:

- 1) Yahweh’s law will be the desire of their hearts
- 2) They will have a national relationship with Yahweh
- 3) They all will know the Lord and have a personal relationship with him
- 4) All their sins will be forgiven

Ezekiel 36:24-28

- 5) Yahweh will put his Spirit in them to follow his ways

This new covenant is then the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant and will fulfill the promises of that Covenant. The conquering king will come and raise up a believing Israel in the promised land of Israel and will be a blessing to all the peoples of the earth who enter the kingdom of God Christ brings.

But this could not happen without the spiritual cleansing that Jesus Christ brings into one's life because of his death on the cross. Israel could not be cleansed of sin and enter the kingdom as a great nation if they did not have Jesus Christ as their Savior.

So, in order for the messiah to fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant he would need to pay the penalty for sin or people could never become righteous and enter the righteous kingdom of God that messiah would bring.

5. Jesus Christ fulfilled the Mosaic Covenant and brought a new covenant, a new phase of the Abrahamic Covenant in order to continue to fulfill that Covenant.

Luke 22:20

And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."

This covenant Jesus brought was new in relationship to the old covenant which was the Mosaic Covenant.

Jesus brought the new covenant where those who would believe in him would receive the forgiveness of sins and the promised Holy Spirit into their lives both now at the end times when the Abrahamic Covenant will ultimately be fulfilled.

SLIDE 24: BELOW

Abrahamic Covenant → All the families of the earth

Jesus First Coming → New Covenant Believing Jews and Gentiles

Jesus Second Coming → Millennial Kingdom Believing Israel and Believing Gentile Nations in physical bodies

The New Covenant in Christ was fulfilled individually in Jews after the death of Christ, but will be fulfilled in the nation of Israel in the millennial kingdom as the entire nation will be believing in Christ and Christ will reign from the throne of David.

Jesus fulfilled the Old Mosaic Covenant.

To establish this new covenant, Jesus fulfilled the old covenant. He did not cast it aside.

Matthew 5:17-18

17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

How did Jesus fulfill the Old Covenant? By

1) living the perfect Jewish life fulfilling the Mosaic Covenant as he lived and

2) by dying on the cross which paid the penalty for the Jews' breaking the Mosaic Covenant by their sin.

Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—

The Law had a curse and Jesus paid the curse. The one who paid the penalty for the curse had to be unblemished. Jesus fulfilled it.

Once the Mosaic Covenant was fulfilled by Jesus, it was completed and no longer a valid covenant. That covenant is over. Those who have come to faith in Christ are under the new covenant Christ brought.

6. The Mosaic Law pointed the Jews to Christ by showing them their sin and need of a Savior.

Besides governing the nation of Israel, the Mosaic Law had a purpose in regards to the coming Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:19-24

Why did God give the Law? Because of transgressions, because people sinned and they needed to know clearly what the sin was and what the penalty was for that sin. The purpose of the Law in regard to God's plan for messiah was to point out to the Jews, God's people, that they were sinful and cause them to yearn for salvation in the Lord.

The entire sacrificial ceremonial system was a concrete picture of sin and the need for a sacrifice to pay the penalty for sin. The ten commandments and all the civil laws pointed out God's high standards of morality and justice. When they were violated, it showed the weakness of human beings to follow God's standards on their own and their need for a Savior to break the power of sin in their lives.

This consciousness of their sin and its resultant condemnation was to act as a guardian (a moral tutor) to lead them to faith in Christ. In ancient times a “guardian” was a moral tutor. He would teach children how to behave and how to live morally. Once Jesus came, there was no need for the Mosaic Law so He perfectly fulfilled it and it is gone.

7. Christians are under the New Covenant (extension of the Abrahamic Covenant) not the Mosaic Covenant.

Galatians 3:24-26

*25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,
26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.*

Therefore, the Mosaic Covenant and its laws no longer apply to us. We are now under the New Covenant in Christ.

John 14:21

Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him."

Christians follow the commandments of Christ.

God's Moral Standards come from His Nature. The Mosaic Laws under the Mosaic Covenant reflect His moral standards. The New Covenant under Christ's commandments reflect His moral standards.

However, in the Mosaic Law God codified His moral standards and added various penalties that should be applied to a nation in civil and criminal Israel. He added ceremonial laws reflecting His moral standards which are no longer needed now that Christ has come.

The Ten Commandments are a codified form of God's moral standards with an added application of the true worship of God in the Sabbath that was only for Israel. They no longer apply to us, but all the moral principles underlying the Ten Commandments except the Sabbath are repeated in the NT, and apply to us. If the Ten Commandments applied directly to us, we would have to observe the Sabbath as the Seventh Day Adventists do.

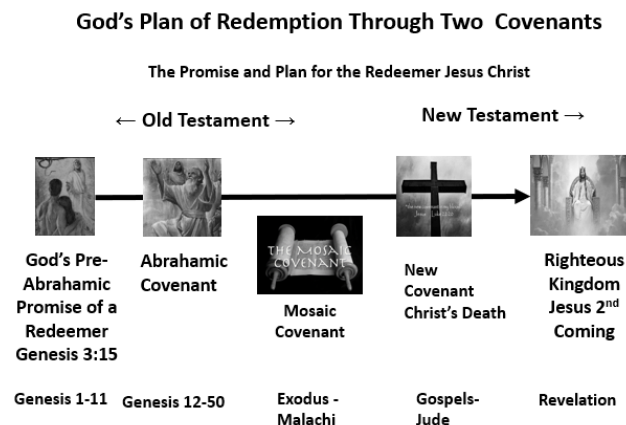
Galatians 5:18

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

In the context of Galatians, those who are led by the Spirit are Christians.

Summary:

God's Plan of Redemption in the Books of the Bible



Key Theological Distinctions in the Bible:

1. Difference between OT Believers and Israel

OT contains OT believers (saved by grace through faith) who are not a part of Israel and OT believers (saved by grace through faith) who are.

OT contains the nation of Israel who have both believers and unbelievers in them.

2. Difference between Israel and the Church

Israel and the church are distinct in God's plan

OT has promises for believing Israel's future (Abrahamic Covenant) that do not apply to the Church.

Dispensational v. Covenant Theology

I have given you a Basic Dispensational Theology
God has a future plan for Israel
Premillennial – Christ returns before a millennium
Baptism by immersion
Baptists (John MacArthur)

This is not Reformed Covenant Theology
Israel forfeited their future and God replaced them with the church
Amillennialism – Christ returns but no millennium
Baptism by sprinkling
Presbyterians/Reformed (R.C. Sproul)

Both of these theological viewpoints come with a whole lot more than I am describing and, in my opinion, are too complicated for our purposes here. This is why I don't use them except in a basic way.

Final Statement:

All that I have said about the Abrahamic Covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, and the New Covenant are the basis for the principles I am going to share with you on how to apply the Old Testament to our lives.

This we will look in the next session.

