

Applying the OT to our Lives

S4 What to Apply to NT Believers

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Introduction:

We are in the fourth week of our study of Applying the OT to our Lives

We are looking at the following points.

- S1 Abrahamic Covenant and OT & NT Believers
- S2 Mosaic Covenant and Israel in the OT
- S3 What Not to Apply to NT Believers
- S4 What to Apply to NT Believers

We are answering the question:

How do we apply the Old Testament to our daily lives as Christians so we can understand what it says about God and his will for us?

Review:

Last week we began looking at principles we can use to apply the Old Testament to our lives.

Principle #1: We apply the Old Testament to our lives according to the New Testament.

We always apply the Old Testament based on the New Testament. We are NT Christians. What we use to interpret the OT is the NT. The entire OT reflects truth about God and is useful to us, but we are studying their use in revealing God's will for us NT Christians in our daily lives.

This is a general principle that underlies the rest. The Question that we should be asking ourselves when we are reading the OT is

Key Q #1: Is this principle or truth in the OT repeated in the NT in some form for us to follow?

Principle #2 The OT portions that reflect God's plan for Israel applied to them only.

The OT portions that reflect God's plan for Israel both in the Mosaic Covenant (past) and the Abrahamic Covenant (future) applied to them only.

Key Q #2: Is this passage talking about Israel in the Mosaic Covenant which does not apply to us?

TRANSITION:

Because this second principle is broad and focuses on what we don't apply. I entitled the last session

S3 What Not to Apply to NT Believers

This week along with the first principle, we will look at three more principles that we can use to apply the OT to our lives

S4 What to Apply to NT Believers

Principle #3

The OT portions that reflect God's unchanging nature and attributes can be applied to our lives (as interpreted according to the NT).

Key Question #3: What does this passage reveal about God, his nature and attributes (as interpreted according to the NT)?

Even though the Mosaic Covenant passages cannot be directly applied to us, they do reflect the character and attributes of God.

The OT is about God creating human beings and acting in human history to redeem them after they fell into sin. It is about God furthering his kingdom. What reveals more about a being than his words and actions?

3.1 The Old Testament reveals the nature and attributes of God by displaying His actions in the lives of people.

God's plan and actions may change from the OT to the NT, but all of His actions reveal His nature and attributes. Everything we do as human beings reveal something about us. We are known not only by what we say about ourselves and what others say about us, but also what we do. God is the same way. The Bible is written to be a history of God's redemptive actions in the lives of His people so we can know Him through His words and actions and be saved.

Example God's Miracles:

We said in the last session that the OT passages that speak of God's specific miraculous work in the nation of Israel under the Mosaic Covenant do not apply to Christians.

The specific miracles that God did on behalf of Israel are not to be taken as applying to us.

Such as

Parting of the Red Sea – Exodus 14

Crossing of the Jordan – Joshua 3

Walls of Jericho - Joshua 6

Fleece of Gideon – Judges 6

That is God is not necessarily going to literally and actually part the sea for us or knock down walls for us, but what these miracles display is God's attributes.

However, God's Miracles on behalf of Israel display God's nature and attributes.

When God chooses to do something human beings and their power are defenseless against God. It also reveals God faithfulness to his promises. God has given us different promises and is just as faithful to us. It reveals the importance of faith, of trusting God no matter how big the obstacles are.

3.2 The Old Testament reveals the nature and attributes of God by giving statements about Him

Example: How do we know there is only one God?

Isaiah 44:6-8

6 Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:

"I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.

7 Who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before me, since I appointed an ancient people. Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen.

8 Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses!

Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any."

Example: What are some attributes of God?

Psalms 103

1 Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth!

2 Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

3 Know that the LORD, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

The Yahweh of the OT is the God of the universe.

God is Creator.

God chooses people to be His.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!

God is worthy of thanksgiving.

5For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

God is Creator. God is good. God is eternally loving. God is eternally faithful.

All this in one 5 verse Psalm. The Psalms are filled with revelation about God nature and attributes.

The OT is full of these statements about God that apply to us because God is the same God that we are in a relationship with.

His redemptive plan has different phases, but his character and nature are the same in the OT and NT. God is not a God of wrath and justice in the OT and a God of love and mercy in the NT. He is the same God in both Testaments.

Principle #4

The OT portions that reflect the relationship with God of all believers of all ages can be applied to our lives (as interpreted according to the NT).

Key Question #4: Does this passage reflect the relationship with God of all believers of all ages (as interpreted according to the NT)?

We have already seen that the Bible teaches that everyone is saved by God's grace through faith in Him and His Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

In Genesis before the nation of Israel was established and the Mosaic Covenant was given, God revealed Himself to individuals. But then God chose to reveal Himself to a whole nation through His prophets. Because of that, there are two main relationships God has with people in the OT.

God's relationship with the nation of Israel made up of both believers and unbelievers which was based on the conditional Mosaic covenant and God's relationship with individual Jewish believers which was based on their salvation by God's grace through their faith in him and his promise of the coming Redeemer in the promise of the Abrahamic Covenant.

So, in Exodus through Malachi, we need to distinguish when a prophet is writing about OT believers or the nation of Israel both believers and unbelievers.

In the OT, God speaks to the nation as a whole (believer and unbeliever) and to OT believers under the Mosaic Covenant. This is especially true in the Psalms.

I'll point this out as we go.

David was a believer. He writes in the Psalms about his relationship with God as a believer. Many of those verses apply to David as a believer and us as well because we too are believers.

The way to tell the difference is when David speaks of salvation and its benefits or his relationship with God because of his faith, it applies to us. When David speaks of his relationship with God as the king of Israel or as an Israelite, it does not apply to us.

Psalm 23 The Lord is My Shepherd (NT – Jesus is the Good Shepherd)

Psalm 23 applies to all believers of all ages

There are historical cultural issues, but not the Mosaic Law.

Psalm 34 applies to all believers of all ages

In the Old Testament, especially in Psalms and Proverbs, OT believers are called “the righteous” or those who fear God.”

The things God says about them apply to us.

These psalms reflect the relationship with God and God’s actions toward his flock in all ages.

READ Through the Psalm and show how David is speaking about believers like himself.

Psalm 34

v. 1-3 “let us” = believers

v.4-7 “those who fear Him” = believers

v. 8-14 “the man who takes refuge in Him” and “you His saints” = believers

v. 15-18 “the righteous” = believers

v.19-22 “those who take refuge in Him” = believers

Principle #5

The OT portions that reflect God’s universal moral standards which apply to all people of all ages can be applied to our lives (as interpreted according to the NT).

Key Question #5: Does this passage reflect God’s universal moral standards as revealed in the NT (as interpreted according to the NT)?

God has revealed His universal moral standards in the Bible in three ways:

1. God’s Moral Standards Revealed in Christ’s (and His Apostles) Commandments
2. God’s Moral Standards Revealed Before the Mosaic Law
3. God’s Moral Standards Revealed in the Mosaic Law

God’s moral standards come directly from the nature of God and therefore apply to all His creation, angels and humans alike. Thus they apply to us.

Since we are seeing how the OT applies to us then we need to look at the last two. Numbers 2-3 must be interpreted by number 1.

This I have mentioned before.

1. Commandments of Christ → 2. GMS Before the Mosaic Law
(GMS) → 3. GMS in the Mosaic Law

The first applies to the NT and the second and third to the OT.

1. God's Moral Standards Revealed in Christ's (and His Apostles) Commandments

We have already seen this is how we interpret the universal commands of God in the OT.

SLIDE 21: BELOW

2. God's Moral Standards Revealed by Revelation Before the Mosaic Law

God's Moral Standards from Genesis 1 and 2

Genesis 1 and 2 define who we are as human beings and what God has founded human civilization upon.

This defines our value as human beings and the value of marriage and the family to God which creates by its value a standard which has several moral considerations.

For example:

1. Human beings are made in the image of God.
Genesis 1: 26-27

Our nature as being created in the image of God creates our value and consequent moral standards.

Example of Moral standards from this verse.

Abortion is killing a human being who is created in the image of God and therefore forbidden. Saving the life of a human is more important than saving the life of a animal.

2. Human beings are made male and female.

In Genesis 1:27 God calls Adam a biological male and Eve a biological female.
In Genesis 2:7, God calls Adam, the biological male, a "man."

In Genesis 2:22, God calls Eve, the biological female, a "woman."

God's revelation clearly shows that gender is determined by biological sex. There are only two genders, a man who is a biological male and a woman who is a biological female.

3. Marriage is between a man and a woman.

Genesis 2:24

Genesis 9 also has two major moral commands.

4. Human beings are allowed by God to kill animals and eat them.

Genesis 9:2-4

5. Human beings are allowed to perform capital punishment if one human murders another human being (not self-defense).

Genesis 9:5

All of these commands are supracultural. They are given before cultural develops or redevelops as in the case of Genesis and therefore applies to all human beings at all times.

3. God's Moral Standards Revealed in the Mosaic Law

We already talked about this.

The Laws of the Mosaic Covenant reflect God's moral values. They can be used to give us an idea of how God feels about certain moral and spiritual issues. We don't apply the penalty of the Mosaic Covenant, but we can apply God's attitude toward that action.

God's condemnation of many sinful practices with penalties attached to it such as adultery reflect how God feels about adultery. Under the New Covenant in Christ, we don't stone adulterers to death, but from the OT we can know that adultery is evil and not to be taken lightly.

We start with the clear statements of the NT which are for us and can move to the OT which reflect God's attitudes and universal moral law about these issues.

Example: Is it wrong to go to psychics or follow astrology? What does the Bible say?

Suppose you want to know what God says about going to psychics or following astrology. Psychics fall under the category of what the Bible calls sorcery or divination. A psychic or astrologer seeks knowledge of the future or the unknown by supernatural or spiritual non-physical means.

You would first search the NT for any info on it.

Galatians 5:19-20

*19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,
20 idolatry, **sorcery**, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions*

Paul calls sorcery a work of our fleshly fallen nature. It is therefore sinful and forbidden by God.

Then you can use the OT to reinforce God's evaluation about it.

Deuteronomy 18:9-13

The Mosaic Covenant reflects God's universal moral law. The obligations and the blessings and curses we don't follow, but it reveals to us God's attitude toward a multitude of behaviors. God told the Israelites to drive these people from the land. That is part of God's plan for Israel and does not apply to us. What we can see is God's attitudes toward these kinds of sins. These practices are an abomination and are condemned by him.

SUMMARY STATEMENT BEFORE APPLICATION

So, these are the five key questions you should be asking when you are reading the OT and want to apply it to your life.

Summary Application of Key Questions for Applying the OT to our Lives:

- Key Q #1: Is this principle or truth in the OT repeated in the NT in some form for us to follow?
- Key Q #2: Is this passage talking about Israel in the Mosaic Covenant which does not apply to us?
- Key Q #3: What does this passage reveal about God, his nature and attributes?
- Key Q #4: Does this passage reflect the relationship with God of all believers of all ages?
- Key Q #5: Does this passage reflect God's universal moral law as revealed in the NT?

Let me give you one example from the Psalms: The Psalms – the prayers and songs of Israel

Who does not believe that the psalms contain some of the richest truths in all the Word of God? Many of them penned by David, a man after God's own heart, throughout his life and in a variety of circumstances. They are addressed to God or express truth about God and his ways.

They needed to be carefully interpreted as poetry. Poetry is very different from prose. They are highly metaphorical as all poetry is. They are meant to touch the heart and feelings by painting a picture in words.

The psalms can act as our very effective guide in our prayers to the Lord if we keep in mind their historical circumstances. There are many interpretive issues that arise that I am not going to go into. The psalms should always be read as a whole, each verse in light of its context.

Psalm 147

God Heals the Brokenhearted

This psalm is directly about Israel calling them to worship. It reveals some wonderful truths about God that is applicable to us.

v. 1 Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.

1. Is this principle or truth in the OT repeated in the NT in some form for us to follow?

Yes.

2. Is this passage talking about Israel in the Mosaic Covenant which does not apply to us?

No.

3. What does this passage reveal about God, his nature and attributes?

God deserves to be praised by his people.

4. Does this passage reflect the relationship with God of all believers of all ages?

Yes. It is right and good for Israel and believers to praise God for all that he has done for them.

5. Does this passage reflect God's universal moral law as revealed in the NT?

Yes. God deserves praise it is a good moral action to praise him.

v.2 The Lord builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the outcasts of Israel.

1. Is this principle or truth in the OT repeated in the NT in some form for us to follow?

No.

2. Is this passage talking about Israel in the Mosaic Covenant which does not apply to us?

Yes. God will fulfill his plan for Israel.

3. What does this passage reveal about God, his nature and attributes?

God is sovereign and powerful to fulfill his plan and gather Israel together.

4. Does this passage reflect the relationship with God of all believers of all ages?

No. God does not build up a city of his people in all ages as he does Jerusalem.

5. Does this passage reflect God's universal moral law as revealed in the NT?

No.

v.3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

1. Is this principle or truth in the OT repeated in the NT in some form for us to follow?

Yes. 1 Peter 5:7

Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

2. Is this passage talking about Israel in the Mosaic Covenant which does not apply to us?

No.

3. What does this passage reveal about God, his nature and attributes?

God is merciful and compassionate.

4. Does this passage reflect the relationship with God of all believers of all ages?

Yes. It applies to believers of all ages. God comforts believers.

5. Does this passage reflect God's universal moral law as revealed in the NT?
No.

v.4 He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names.

v.5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.

v.6 The Lord lifts up the humble; he casts the wicked to the ground.

1. Is this principle or truth in the OT repeated in the NT in some form for us to follow?
Yes.

2. Is this passage talking about Israel in the Mosaic Covenant which does not apply to us?
No.

3. What does this passage reveal about God, his nature and attributes?
God is great. God is infinitely powerful. God is all-knowing.

4. Does this passage reflect the relationship with God of all believers of all ages?
God will lift up the nation of Israel if they humble themselves before him.

God will lift up all believers if we are humble. He will also cast the wicked to the ground.

5. Does this passage reflect God's universal moral law as revealed in the NT?
Humility is a godly attitude believers should have.

v.7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; make melody to our God on the lyre!

1. Is this principle or truth in the OT repeated in the NT in some form for us to follow?
Yes.

2. Is this passage talking about Israel in the Mosaic Covenant which does not apply to us?
No.

3. What does this passage reveal about God, his nature and attributes?
He is worthy of thanksgiving for all he has done for Israel and for believers.

4. Does this passage reflect the relationship with God of all believers of all ages?
The Israelites should sing praises to the Lord and we should also with thanksgiving.

5. Does this passage reflect God's universal moral law as revealed in the NT?
Yes. God deserves thanks because it is a good moral action to thank him.

v.8 He covers the heavens with clouds; he prepares rain for the earth; he makes grass grow on the hills.

v.9 He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry.

v.10 His delight is not in the strength of the horse, nor his pleasure in the legs of a man,

v.11 but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

1. Is this principle or truth in the OT repeated in the NT in some form for us to follow?
Yes.

1. Is this passage talking about Israel in the Mosaic Covenant which does not apply to us?
No.

2. What does this passage reveal about God, his nature and attributes?
God is in control of nature and how it operates on the earth.

3. Does this passage reflect the relationship with God of all believers of all ages?

Yes. It says faith and hope in the Lord are more important to God than physical strength of armies (i.e. strength of horse and legs of man)

4. Does this passage reflect God's universal moral law as revealed in the NT?

Yes. Spiritual godly qualities are more important than physical qualities.

12 Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!

13 For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children within you.

14 He makes peace in your borders; he fills you with the finest of the wheat.

15 He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.

16 He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes.

17 He hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs; who can stand before his cold?

18 He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow and the waters flow.

19 He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and rules to Israel.

20 He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his rules.

Praise the Lord!

1. Is this principle or truth in the OT repeated in the NT in some form for us to follow?

No.

2. Is this passage talking about Israel in the Mosaic Covenant which does not apply to us?

Yes. Only to them, both believer and unbeliever alike.

3. What does this passage reveal about God, his nature and attributes?

His power, his sovereignty, etc.

4. Does this passage reflect the relationship with God of all believers of all ages?

No.

5. Does this passage reflect God's universal moral law as revealed in the NT?

God is deserving of praise and should be praised by all his creatures.

Many of these psalms are easily identified because they talk about Israel as a nation worshipping or praising God.

Many psalms are the prayer or praise of an individual. When David or another believer speaks in the psalm, he can speak both as a believer saved by God's grace by faith and as an Israelite under the Mosaic Covenant.

CONCLUSION:

Why is this important?

Romans 15:4

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

We see what an incredible God we have in all the ways God worked in and through Israel. We see all of his attributes displayed. We see what an incredible God we have when we see how OT

believers trusted God in the psalms and how God shepherded them and was their rock and shield in so many troubles. This is meant o to encourage us. You cannot get the encouragement and hope if they are not interpreted and applied properly.