



LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

Discovering the Heart of the Old Testament

WARM-UP DISCUSSIONS

- What is it about the Old Testament that appeals most to Christians?
- What aspects of the Old Testament seem to be the most puzzling?
- Which Old Testament book appeals to you most, and why?

AN OVERVIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

- OT Book Groups
 - Pentateuch (Genesis→Deuteronomy): From creation to the origin of the nation of Israel to entering the land promised to Abraham's descendants
 - Historical Books (Joshua→Esther): Children of Israel conquering the Promised Land, narratives about the kings of Israel, and the nation of Israel return to its land after 70 years of living in Babylon (Iraq)
 - Poetic Books (Job→Song of Solomon): Beautifully written books of praise and wisdom and genuine human love written in Hebrew poetic form; over 40% of OT is poetry (see. Psa. 119)
 - Prophets (Isaiah→Malachi): Major and Minor Prophets → God's dealing with Israel when it broke the Mosaic Covenant, and his love for them, by promising a future golden age
- Period of the Old Testament: approximately 2000 B.C. to 430 B.C.
- Original Languages
 - Hebrew: original vowel sounds were lost but were assigned later by Masoretes (500-950 A.D.)
 - Twenty-two consonants or letters (some have final forms that look different, others have a second pronunciation)
 - Masoretes (Jewish scribes and scholars A.D. 500-950) created the vowel pointing signs
 - Aramaic: A cognate language to Hebrew (Ezra 4:8—6:18; 7:12-26; Daniel 2:4—7:28)

COVENANTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

- Definition: A biblical covenant is a binding agreement between God and man
- Types of biblical covenants
 - Conditional (Bilateral) Covenant: God blesses humans if they obey the terms of the covenant (e.g. Deut. 28)
 - Deut. 28:1 "If you fully obey the Lord your God..." → blessings
 - Deut. 28:15 "However, If you do not obey the Lord your God..." → curses
 - Unconditional (Unilateral) Covenant: God blesses humans regardless of their obedience or disobedience to the terms of the covenant (e.g. Gen. 12:1-3)
 - Gen. 12:1-3 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you; I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a

blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

→ An unconditional covenant that God makes to humans can be viewed as a *promise from God*

C. Old Testament Covenants

1. Adamic Covenant: Includes the curses pronounced against mankind for the sin of Adam and Eve, as well as God's provision for that sin (Gen. 3:16-19)
2. Noahic Covenant: God would never again destroy mankind with a flood (Gen. 9:8-17)
3. Abrahamic Covenant: Abraham's descendants would become a great nation. God would be their God forever. This covenant contains land, seed, and blessing promises (Gen. 12:1-3, 6-7; 13:14-17; 15; 17:1-14; 22:15-18)
4. Palestinian Covenant: Amplifies the land promises of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 15:18-21; Deut. 30:3-4)
5. Mosaic or Sinaitic Covenant: Israel would be God's special people, a holy nation, but they would have to keep their part of the Sinaitic Covenant (Exodus 19-24; Deut. 28)
6. Davidic Covenant: Amplifies the seed promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. Salvation would come through David's line, through the birth of the Messiah. His throne would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:8-16)

HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT HELPS US TODAY

- A. Transferable principles: Many of the underlying principles behind the OT laws can be transferred to Christians today
 1. OT Example: "Do not reap the edges of your field but leave them for the poor" (Lev. 19:9). Transferable Principle: Take a portion of your income and give it to the Lord's work which is to include caring for the poor (Matt. 19:21. Luke 14:13; 19:8; John 13:29; 2 Cor. 9:7-9; Gal. 2:8)
 2. OT Example: "Don't cut the hair at the sides of your head or clip off the edges of your beard" (Lev. 19:27). Cultural Setting: Pagans would cut off part of their beards and offer them to their gods. Transferable Principle: Keep your personal appearance from being associated with pagan practices or groups (e.g. men dressing to look like women, or wearing insignias such as swastikas—white supremacists).
- B. OT Prophecies
 1. Fulfilled prophecies give credibility to the Bible (e.g. Daniel 2:29-43)
 2. Fulfilled Messianic prophecies found in the OT confirmed Jesus as the Messiah (Christ)
 3. Unfulfilled prophecies give hope for the future (e.g. Daniel 2:44)