

The Covenants of God
Lesson 2 – God’s Purpose in the Old Covenant
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Introduction: The Bible is *a unified book*.

- A. God has revealed to us *how He brought about* the redemption of man.
 - 1. After the fall of man we see how God moved to redeem man through Abraham. **(Gen 12:1-3)**
 - 2. Why did God not send Jesus immediately? God’s plan would be implemented “in the fullness of time.” **(Gal 4:4)**
 - 3. There is great power in looking back and seeing how God did this. God’s plan is implemented in a way *to save the most people*.
- B. Why did God not just give one covenant for all time? Again, this involves His purpose *to save as many as possible*.
 - 1. The unity of God’s plan is seen in the giving of the first covenant that bore witness of a second covenant to come. **(Jer 31:31-32; Mt 5:17)**
 - 2. We will examine some reasons why God did this.

I. The Old Covenant was made with the Jewish nation

- A. God began fulfilling *the promise made to Abraham* in the birth of a new nation.
 - 1. It would be *through this nation* that the Messiah would come! The people needed to be *molded and prepared by God!*
 - 2. The covenant made with Israel at Horeb was *not the Abrahamic Covenant* nor was it a renewal of the Abrahamic Covenant. **(Deut 5:1-3)**
 - 3. We can see that this covenant *had to be temporary* because God’s ultimate goal was to reach “all the families of the earth.” **(Gen 12:3)**
- B. This covenant would teach the Jewish nation *about God and his ways*.
 - 1. The OT taught that Israel’s relationship with God must involve *understanding of God’s holiness* so that they would be changed by it. **(Lev 11:44-45)**
 - 2. A remnant from this nation would *receive the gospel* when it was preached. **(Rom 1:16-17; Acts 3:25-26; Acts 1:8)**
 - 3. The Jewish nation was then scattered throughout the world as a separate people. This *allowed for the rapid spread of the gospel* in one generation!

II. Three Purposes for the Old Covenant

- A. It should cause the people to *see their need of a savior*.
 - 1. God’s covenant was perfect for the cause it was intended.
 - 2. By design God *wanted His people to see* the “weakness and unprofitableness” of the first covenant. **(Heb 7:18; 9:11-12)**
 - 3. A system of law without an adequate sacrifice cannot save. **(Gal 3:21-24)**
 - 4. Consider one who tried to live without sin under God’s law. This would bring a painful bondage of which they would need to be delivered. **(Rom 7:7, 12-14)**

- B. It would be a “*shadow of the good things to come*, and not the very image of the things.” (Heb 10:1)
1. This would present a powerful *proof of the inspiration and unity of the Bible*.
 2. It should *help the Jews to become Christians* when they see the fulfillment.
 3. The Old Testament instituted a form of worship that *foreshadowed the work of Jesus*. (Jn 1:29; 1 Cor 5:7)
 4. Consider the items of the temple/tabernacle and see the difference between the material shadow and the spiritual realities!
 - a. High Priest
 - b. Sacrifice
 - c. Priesthood
 - d. What other things can you name?
- C. It would contain powerful prophecies that would *lead the people to believe in Jesus*.
1. Jesus often spoke of these truths. (Jn 5:39-40)
 2. The apostles brought this up before Jewish audiences. (Acts 3:18-19)

III. The Old Covenant is in complete harmony with the New Covenant

- A. Jesus often spoke of *fulfilling all the OT prophecies* concerning Him.
1. Jesus proclaimed that all was fulfilled at the cross! (Jn 19:28-30)
 2. At the great commission Jesus affirmed that all was fulfilled! (Lk 24:44-47)
 3. Peter acknowledged the same in his preaching. (Acts 3:18)
- B. Jesus *did not destroy the law but fulfilled it*. (Mt 5:17)
1. The wedding does not destroy an engagement between a couple but it does end it. The wedding is the fulfillment of the engagement promise!
 2. Jesus’ death on the cross did not destroy the Old Testament but it did *bring this period of Bible history to an end*.
- C. Jesus recognized all of the Old Covenant as *a perfect revelation from God*.
1. He knew that “the scripture cannot be broken.” (Jn 10:35)
 2. Jesus’ work *will stand or fall with the Old Testament!* If one is of man then the other is as well.

Questions

1. List the advantages of Jesus coming when he did in “the fullness of time” rather than a much earlier time.
2. How is the later giving of a second covenant to replace the first consistent with the eternal plan of God? How can we know that the covenants work together?
3. Was the covenant made at Sinai an extension of the covenant made to Abraham? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Who did God make the covenant at Sinai with? Why does this show that a new covenant was necessary in order to fulfill the promises made to Abraham?
5. How does the Old Covenant help men today know that Jesus is the Son of God?
6. If the Old Testament is from men (filled with errors) then how does that impact the evidence that Jesus is from God?