

THE OLD TESTAMENT AS CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE

Shiv Muthukumar
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OVERVIEW

- I. **What** is the Old Testament?
- II. **Why** is the Old Testament in the Christian Bible?
- III. **How** to appropriate the Old Testament for Christian living?



INTRODUCTION

- A personal story
- Marcionism
 - A leader in the post-apostolic church in Rome
 - Dualism, ditheism, law-gospel wedge, docetic Christology
 - **Canon** – Luke + 10 Pauline epistles
 - Heresy condemned in 144 A.D.



I. WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- A good source of baby names
- A children's story book of fables
- Moral lessons for the church
- The book of Israel's law, now obsolete
- An ancient Scripture of the Jews; acknowledged by Christians and Muslims
- The story of Israel/Jews (but it talks about creation, Adam-Abraham, nations, etc.)
- The story of Yahweh (but what about his Spirit and his Word?)



I. WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- When definitions are hard to come by, let's go for *descriptions*:
- The (hi)story of God's *people* (the notion of "people")
- The story of God's dealings with his people (God-centered)
- The story of God's dealings with his people in his world (larger context, calling)
- The story of God's dealings with his people in his world from creation
- The story of God's dealings with his people in his world from creation to...?



I. WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- The story of God's dealings with his people in his world from...
 - *Just think of Genesis 1-3 for now:*
- **Creation → Fall**
- **Creation → Fall → Judgment**
- **Creation → Fall → Judgment → Redemption?**
- **Creation → Fall → Judgment → Promise of Redemption**

THE TEMPLATE IN GENESIS 1-3:

- **Creation** (Heavens and the earth, Adam and Eve) → **Fall** (forbidden fruit) → **Judgment** (banishment from Eden) → **Promise of Redemption** (seed of the woman)



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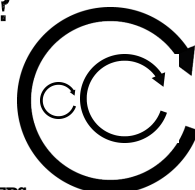
THE TEMPLATE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

- **Creation** (World, Adam) → **Fall** (sin) → **Judgment** (death) → **Promise of Redemption** (Coming Messiah)



I. WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- Story of God's dealings with his people in his world from...
- **Creation → Fall → Judgment → Promise of Redemption**

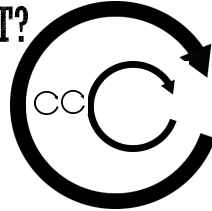


THE TEMPLATE PLAYS OUT IN THE OT IN TWO GRAND STEPS:

1. **Creation** (World, Adam) → **Fall** (disobedience) → **Judgment** (banishment, death) → **Promise of Redemption** (seed of the woman) **WORKS** (Gen. 1-3)
2. **Creation** (Israel, Abraham) → **Fall** (faithlessness) → **Judgment** (various ways) → **Promise of Redemption** (Coming Messiah) **GRACE** (Gen. 12-Malachi)



I. WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?



- Story of God's dealings with his people in his world from...
- **Creation → Fall → Judgment → Promise of Redemption**

THREE STEPS:

1. **Creation** (World, Adam) → **Fall** (disobedience) → **Judgment** (banishment, death) → **Promise of Redemption** (Messiah) **WORKS** (Gen. 1-3)
2. **Re-creation** (Nations, Mankind) → **Fall** (wickedness) → **Judgment** (flood) → **Promise of Preservation** (destruction withheld) **COMMON GRACE** (Gen. 4-11)
3. **Creation** (Israel, Abraham) → **Fall** (faithlessness) → **Judgment** (various ways) → **Promise of Redemption** (Messiah) **SPECIAL GRACE** (Gen. 12-Malachi)



I. WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?



3. **Creation** (Israel, Abraham) → **Fall** (faithlessness) → **Judgment** (various ways) → **Promise of Redemption** (Coming Messiah) **SPECIAL GRACE unfolded**
 - a. **creation** (People, Abraham-Joseph), **fall** (Egypt), **judgment** (slavery), **promise** (rescue)
 - b. **creation** (Nation, Moses, Exodus, Law), **fall** (grumbling), **judgment** (wilderness), **promise** (Canaan)
 - c. **creation** (Land, Conquest, Joshua), **fall** (idolatry), **judgment** (servitude), **promise/hope** (David in the book of Ruth)
 - d. **creation** (Kingdom, David-Solomon), **fall** (idolatry, divided kingdom), **judgment** (exile to Assyria & Babylon), **promise** (return, messiah, new creation)
 - e. **creation** (Return, Ezra-Nehemiah), **fall** (continued disobedience), **judgment** (languished, conquered), **promise** (Coming Messiah)



I. WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?



3. **Creation** (Israel, Abraham) → **Fall** (faithlessness) → **Judgment** (various ways) → **Promise of Redemption** (Coming Messiah) **SPECIAL GRACE unfolded**
 - a. **creation** (People: Genesis 12-50
 - b. **creation** (Nation: Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
 - c. **creation** (Land: Joshua, Judges, Ruth
 - d. **creation** (Kingdom: Samuel, Kings, Psalms, Wisdom, Isaiah-Zephaniah
 - e. **creation** (Return: Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi



I. WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- The Old Testament is book with a clear beginning, but without an ending... It is looking for its "happy ending"
 - *How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me?* (Exod. 10:3)
 - *How long will this people despise me?* (Num. 14:11)
 - *How long will you put off going in to take possession of the land...* (Joshua 18:3)
 - *How long will you hide your face from me?* (Psalm 13:1)
 - *How long, O LORD? Will you be angry forever? Will your jealousy burn like fire?* (Psalm 79:5)
 - *How long, O Lord?"* (Isa. 6:11)
 - *How long will you waver, O faithless daughter?* (Jer. 31:22)
 - *how long will you have no mercy on Jerusalem...* (Zech. 1:12)
 - *how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you?* (Matthew 17:17)
- *God's people sin... God withholds complete judgment... God promises redemption...*



I. WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- However, the Old Testament is full of **promises, prophecies and patterns** of a “happy ending”:

- ... he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. (Gen. 3:15) **#redeemer**
- You meant evil against me but God meant it for good... (Gen. 50:20) **#unexpected**
- The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent. (Exod. 14:14) **#grace**
- The LORD will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you (Deut. 18:15) **#Moses**
- Your throne shall be established forever. (2 Sam. 7:16) **#kingdom**
- The wolf shall dwell with the lamb. (Isa 11:6) **#shalom**
- I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts (Jer. 31:33) **#righteousness**
- I will put my Spirit within you. (Ezek. 36:27) **#union**
- He will swallow up death forever. (Isa. 25:8) **#resurrection**
- I create a new heavens and a new earth (Isa. 65:17) **#new-creation**

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I. WHAT IS THE OLD TESTAMENT?

- Of the Coming Messiah it says:

- Like Noah (doing all that God commanded him)
- Like Isaac (the promised one)
- Like Joseph (acting righteously)
- Like Moses (Leading God's people out of slavery)
- Like Joshua (Leading God's people into the Promised Land)
- Like a Priest (after the order of Melchizedek, interceding for God's people)
- Like David (a shepherd king)
- Like a Prophet (declaring the word of the Lord)
- Like a Sacrifice (wounded for our transgressions)

- Acts of God through mini-messiahs who are portraits of the Messiah who is to come...
- There are also specific prophecies about the Messiah

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BTW, WHAT IS THE NEW TESTAMENT?



A tool for doing activism, politics, business, religion, fighting culture wars, etc. ...

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WHAT THEN IS THE NEW TESTAMENT?

- It is about Jesus Christ...
 - It is about Jesus Christ as a prophet, a guru, a good man, a god, a superhero...?
 - It is about Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah of Israel (**Gen. 12-Malachi**)
 - It is about Jesus Christ as the promised seed of the woman (**Gen. 1-3**)
 - It is about Jesus Christ as the promised redemption/Redeemer of the Old Testament (**Genesis-Malachi**)

- **Creation → Fall → Judgment → Promise of Redemption (OT) → Redemption (NT)**

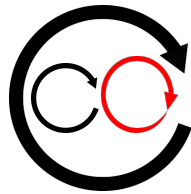
- OT: Promise, NT: Fulfillment

- OT: Plot, NT: Climax (“happy ending”)
- Watching the climax can be interesting, but without the plot it is meaningless.

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WHAT THEN IS THE NEW TESTAMENT?

- **Creation** → **Fall** → **Judgment** → **Promise of Redemption (OT)** → **Redemption (NT)**
- **Creation** (church, Jesus, Holy Spirit) → **Fall** (sin persists) → **Judgment** (brokenness, exile, death) → **Promise of Redemption** (Return of Christ, Resurrection, New Creation)
- OT: Promise, NT: Fulfillment *inaugurated*
- OT: Plot, NT: Climax (“almost happy ending”)



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WHAT THEN IS THE WHOLE BIBLE?

The whole Bible (OT and NT taken together) is:

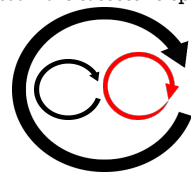
- **Creation** → **Fall** → **Judgment** → **Promise of Redemption** → **Redemption**
 - The story of God’s dealings with his people in his world from creation to redemption.
 - The story of God’s dealings with his people in his world from creation to redemption *in Jesus Christ*.
 - The story of God’s dealings with his people in his world from creation to redemption *inaugurated in Jesus Christ*.

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WHAT IS “NEW” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

▪ **Jesus!**

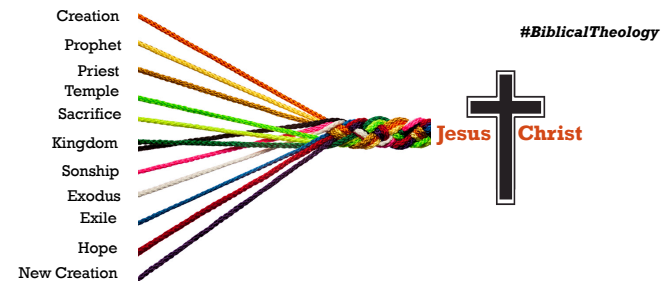
- Both are stories of God’s dealings with *his people* – but in two successive epochs.
- Read Galatians 3.
- OT promises the coming of Christ.
- NT declares the coming of Christ as Jesus and promises his coming again.



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WHAT IS “NEW” IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

- The OT themes converge in the NT in the person and work of Jesus Christ.



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WHAT IS "NEW" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

- Covenant of Grace enters into its fulfillment phase

#CovenantTheology

- Works: Adam

- Grace: Noah → Abraham → Mosaic → Davidic → New Covenant (Jesus)

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OVERVIEW

- I. What is the Old Testament?

- II. Why is the Old Testament in the Christian Bible?

- III. How to appropriate the Old Testament for Christian living?

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II. WHY IS THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE?

- Indispensable background of the New Testament
 - 320 quotations, countless allusions (Pratt, p. 15).
- Indispensable to identify who the Messiah is.
 - *And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.* (Acts 5:42)
- Fulfilled by Jesus Christ.
- Considered as inspired and authoritative Scripture by the New Testament
 - *All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable...* (1 Tim. 3:16)
 - *Now these things took place as examples for us...* (1 Cor. 10:6)
 - *Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...* (Heb. 12:1)
 - *"As it is written"* (Matthew), *"according to the Scriptures"* (Paul)
- It is the Scripture read, quoted and taught by Jesus.

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II. WHY IS THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN BIBLE?

- Without it we cannot really know or understand Jesus and the New Testament.
- Without it we would be left without "the whole counsel of God."
- Without it we cannot formulate Christian doctrines faithfully.
- Without it we would be left without examples. (1 Cor. 10)
- Without it we would not know how to live in various eras in the life of God's people.
- Without it we would be left without "a cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 11)
- Without it we would not know the origin of God's creation and covenant.
- Without it we cannot know the fullness of God, his character and his acts.
- Without it we cannot grasp the fullness of the gospel.

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