

Covenants in the Bible

Adam (Gen 3:20-21)

Noah (Gen 9:9)

Abraham (Gen 12:1-3, 15:18, 17:7)

Isaac (Gen 17:21)

Jacob (Gen 32:28-29, Exodus 2:24, Lev 26:42, 2 Chr 16:15-17)

Moses (Exodus 24:7-8)

Levi (Malachi 2:4)

Aaron (Numbers 18:19)

Phineas (Numbers 25:12)

Joshua (Joshua 24:25)

David (2 Sam 7:11-16, 2 Sam 23:5, 2 Chr 13:5, 2 Chr 21:7, Ps 89:3, Jer 33:21)

Asa (2 Chr 15:12-15)

Josiah (2 Kings 23:2-3)

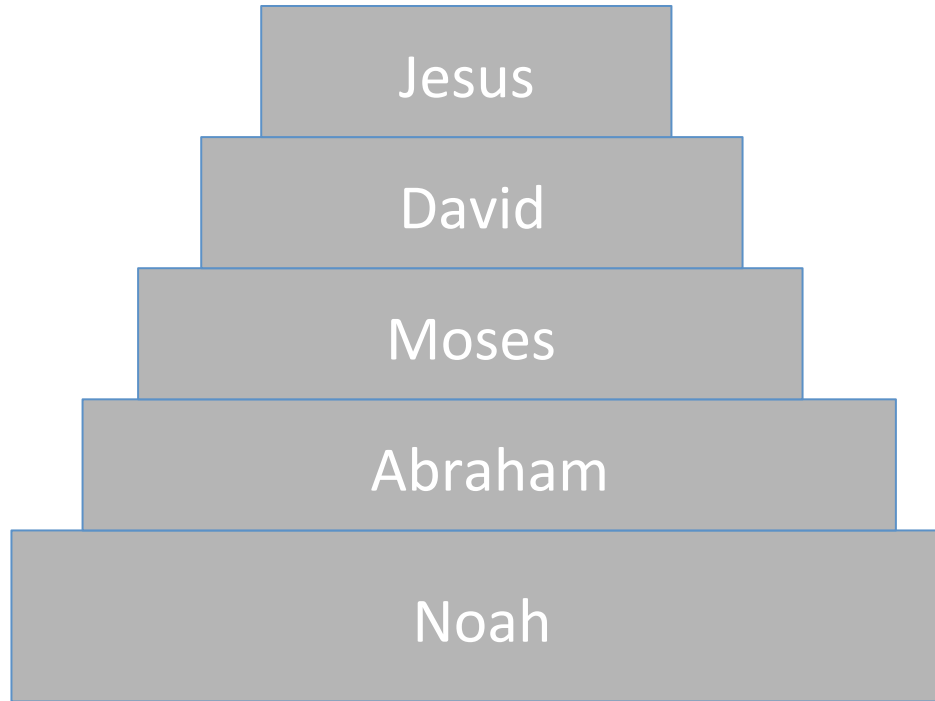
Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:10)

Jesus (Isaiah 42:6, 49:8, 61:8, Jeremiah 31:31-33, Matthew 26:28, 2 Corinth 2:6, Hebrews 7:22, 8:6-13, 9:15, 12:24)

Approaches to the different covenants:

1. **Dispensationalism:** no connection between the covenants, God saves people in different ways in different “dispensations”.
(In some versions of dispensationalism, God saves people by *works* in some dispensations. In some versions of dispensationalism, there are more than one dispensation even in the New Testament.)
2. “Ping pong” covenantal view: some are covenants of law, some are covenants of grace
3. **Covenantalism:** all the covenants are part of one continuous “covenant of grace.” All people who are saved are saved by grace.

Covenantalism: one continuous “covenant of grace.”
Later covenants build on or “fulfill” earlier ones.



Narrowing and focusing in the covenants

Noah	many sacrifices, many places, many people
Abraham	many sacrifices, many places, one people
Moses	many sacrifices, one tabernacle in many places, one priesthood
David	many sacrifices, one temple in one city, one priesthood
Jesus	one sacrifice, in one city, one priest

change of sacrificial law at change of covenant:

- non-Jewish priests allowed under Noah (e.g. Melchizedek)
- altars on “high places” acceptable under Abraham
- moving tabernacle to different cities acceptable under Moses
- only temple in Jerusalem acceptable under David (Deut 12:10-11,16:5-6)
- only one sacrifice of Christ acceptable in New Covenant

“Nesting” of the covenant documents

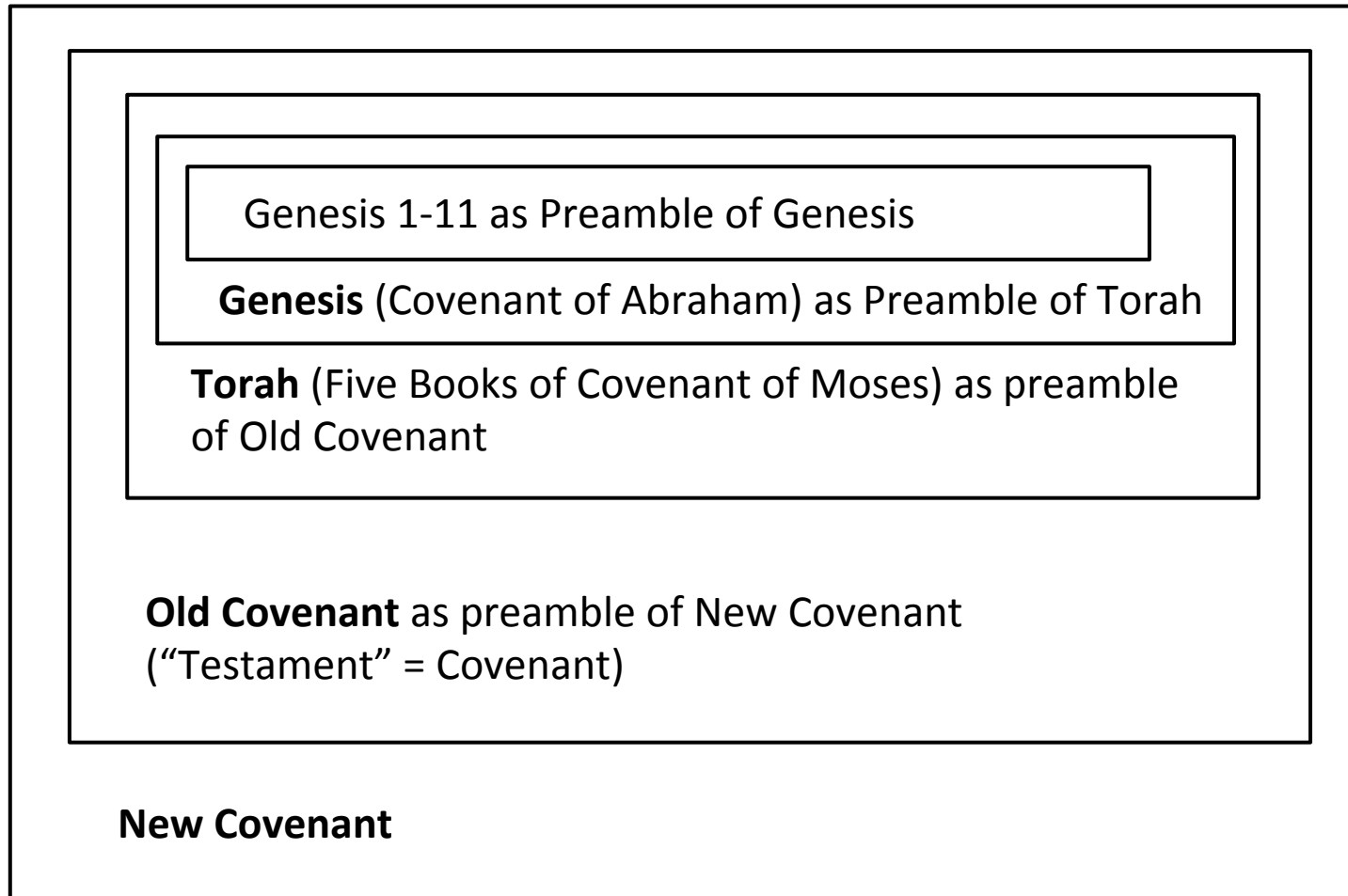
“preamble” = history leading to the covenant

“promise” = unilateral promises

“law” = rules of the relationship

“case law” = how it plays out in specific cases

general form of covenant document



Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

1. Was covenant of Moses a gracious covenant?

- Premise is that Israelites cannot save themselves, God reaches to save them in the Exodus when they cry out in faith
- God says it is not because of their righteousness; he knows they are “stiff necked” (Deut 9:4-6)
- Sin is assumed to occur:
 - sacrificial system gives way to be reconciled both as nation and individuals
- God says they will forsake him and be punished, but he will always preserve a “remnant” (Deut 30:1-6)

Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

2. Was covenant of Moses about externals, and community membership, only?

- Strong emphasis on *heart* in whole OT. Membership in the community did not guarantee favor with God.

(Deut 6:5, Deut 29:18-21)

- Covenant of Abraham was still assumed, not overturned.

Paul says covenant of Abraham was of grace, through faith (Romans 4)

“Beware lest there be among you a root bearing poisonous and bitter fruit, one who, when he hears the words of this sworn covenant, blesses himself in his heart, saying, ‘I shall be safe, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart.’ This will lead to the sweeping away of moist and dry alike. The LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.” (Deut 29:18-20)

“For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.” (Romans 2:28-29, Cf. Jeremiah 4:4, Colossians 2:11, Phil 3:3, Romans 2:28-29)

Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

3. Were Jews under the Old Covenant meant to live in fear of being kicked out of their covenantal relationship if they failed once?

- OT is full of stories of those who sinned greatly, repented and were forgiven (e.g. David). As in NT, the standard is not one sin, but the hard heart vs. the repentant heart (Ps 7:12, Ps 95:8)
- Psalms present poems of living by grace, and are good prayers for Christians (e.g. Ps 25:6-7, 32:1-5, 41:4, Ps 51, Ps 130)
- “Curse” of the law could be removed by repentance. Curse acted as “discipline” for those who did not repent, to drive them to repentance. The same applies even in the NT.

If the nation was unrepentant, the nation could be disciplined, and the nation could collectively repent (as occurred several times).

Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

“It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons...For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.” (Hebrews 12:7-8, 25)

“And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD. ... Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.” (Deuteronomy 8:2-5)

Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

“And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God has driven you, and return to the LORD your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” (Deut 30:1-6)

Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

4. Were Jews under the Old Covenant meant to be an isolated “chosen people”?

missions emphasis through OT:

- Abraham to bless all nations (Gen 12:1-3, 22:18, 26:4)
- many stories of foreigners brought into Israel (e.g. Ruth, Rahab, Uraiah)
- many laws of Moses deal with foreigners joining ceremonies
- Solomon: Temple as witness to nations
- Psalms: tell all the nations (e.g. Ps 46:10, 57:9, 96:3, 96:10, 98:2, 117:1)
- Prophets: pictures of Gentiles coming in to kingdom
- Many examples in NT of Gentiles who were either converts to Judaism or close to it

All the covenants set up a “covenant community”, including NT.

None of the covenants, including NT, are only individual (e.g., with Abraham and David, descendents are in view) even though God cares enormously about individual hearts.

Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

5. What then was the “Weakness of the Law”?

A) Repeated sacrifice system “was not able to clear the conscience.”

This system pointed to Christ: showed the need for blood sacrifice, and the seriousness of sin and holiness of God, and need for a mediator (priest). (Hebrews 8:5: a “shadow” of the true sacrifice to come)

B) Laws of covenantal identity such as circumcision, cleanness, diet made a cultural barrier to bringing in those from other nations.

“Holiness code” emphasized separation from God (e.g. “outer court” for Gentiles) due to sin; this separation is bridged by Christ.

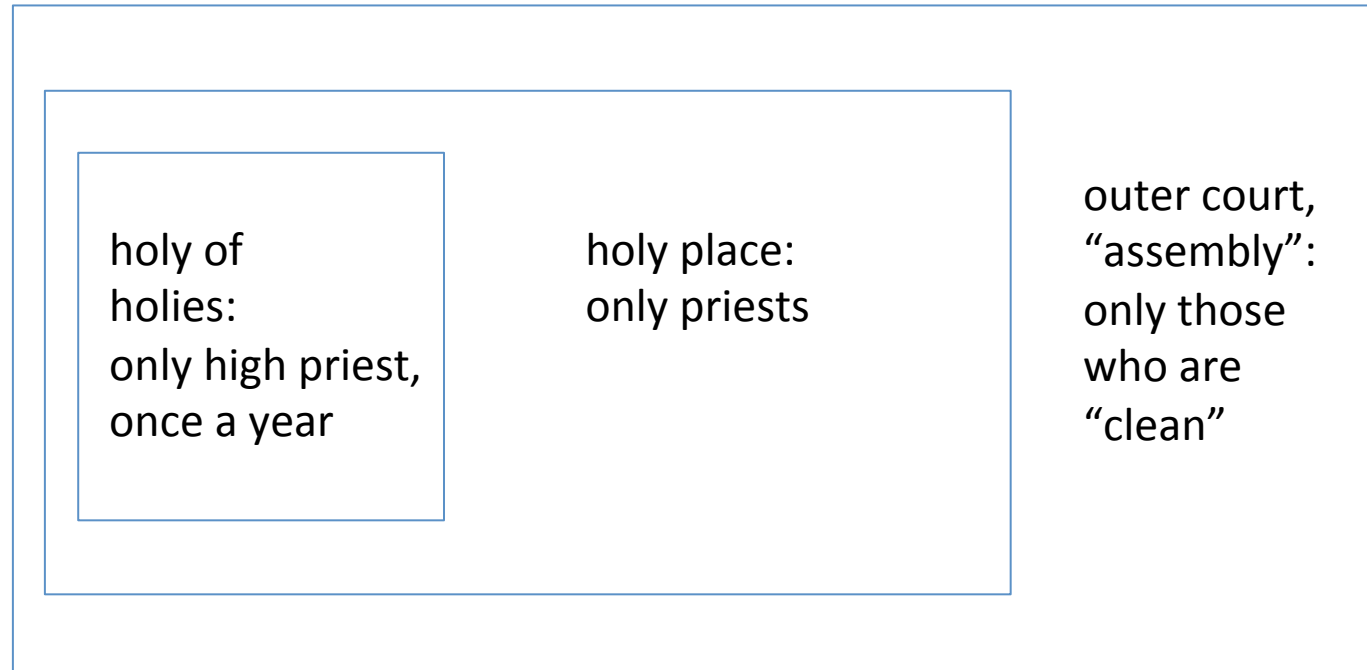
C) Earthly kingship of David and his sons were also shadow-types of the kingship of Christ.

A localized kingdom is limited in space and time.

D) Greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit in NT means people have “law written on their hearts”.

OT believers also had the Spirit to some degree, but the form of the law was that of a “schoolmaster” of rigid and external rules.

circles of exclusion in Temple worship



Teaches that God is separated from us by his holiness.

Jesus broke down the barrier: an important purpose of the Temple is to show us this work of Christ.

Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

6. Why then was Paul so hard against the Law of Moses?

A) To return to the old when the new has come is an offense, to say Christ is insufficient.

B) The motivation for returning to the Law was “works righteousness”. Properly understood, the Law of Moses was not about works-righteousness (as Paul argues in many places, and as Jesus also argued against the Pharisees) but a works-righteousness attitude would tend to focus on the externals and traditions of the OT. (Sometimes we see this with people who love older Christian traditions as well.)

C) Recall Jesus said that the Pharisees wrongly interpreted the Law, because they missed the matters of the heart (faith) and focused on external law only. (Matthew 15:8, 18-19; 23:23, John 7:38, 12:40)

Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

7. What role does OT Law have today for Christians?

In one sense, none at all. We are not “under Moses”. We have a new covenant.

But God’s universal moral law doesn’t change.

Westminster creeds: three types of laws in OT

sacrificial: point to Christ, fulfilled by him. It would be bad to do these now. (at least, as a sacrificial act)

civil: set up kingdom of Israel as a real, physical kingdom. It is not required to do these now, but expedience might make it wise to use them sometimes.

“Paradigm” use— how did these laws function at that time and what do they tell us about God?

moral law: universal principles that transcend and precede Moses, but are included in it. Embodied in Ten Commandments.

Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

controversies:

These three are not always sharply distinguished in law of Moses because for Jews they were a seamless garment. For us to determine moral law, we must look at the motivation of the law given (e.g., does God say the activity is unjust or evil?) and the precedent (e.g., is it based in creation?)

Theonomists effectively say there are only two types of law, and that we should implement all of the civil law as well (e.g. all of the punishments).

Antinomians say we learn nothing from the OT law. Some would say we have no law at all, others would hold to only moral laws restated in NT.

Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

Reformers: Three “uses” of the moral law.

1. civil: to restrain evil in society.

This does not mean restoring all the civil law of Israel, but using common sense to prevent great moral evils in society (e.g., murder) even among those who reject Christ.

2. pedagogical: to cause us to recognize our sin, to feel guilty, and be driven to Christ for grace.

3. normative: to give Christians a pattern for how to live in a way pleasing to God, even while knowing they are not able to keep it all

Focus on the Covenant of Moses (“The Law”)

9. Are there two covenants now, or one?

Dispensationalists: Israel and church are separate, parallel “tracks” to God, with different promises and different laws.

The precedent of all former covenants is that people live under all the previous ones: new community is not formed, rather, the same community has a “higher law.”

(e.g. Moses does not overturn Abraham, David does not overturn Moses.)

Paul explicitly says that the Gentiles and the Jews are one kingdom:

“Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace.” (Ephesians 2:12-15)

This “unified, one kingdom” view affects how we read the entire Old Testament

-- is this our covenant, or the story of another people?

-- are the promises and prophecies for us?

-- are we a kingdom and a people (community) like the Jews, or are we random individuals?

Focus on the specific laws of Moses

Moral Law (The Ten Commandments)

Exodus 19, recapitulation in Deuteronomy 5

Two “tables” of the law

Commands 1-4: relationship with God (“Love God with all your heart...”)

Commands 5-10: relationship with others (“Love your neighbor as yourself”)

“Case law” of Ten Commandments:

Exodus 20-23:13

Leviticus 18-20

Deuteronomy 16-25

Focus on the specific laws of Moses

Sacrificial Law (a.k.a. “ceremonial law”)

First generation Instructions for tabernacle/temple

Exodus 25-31, 40

Instructions to priests for regular sacrifices and festivals

Exodus 23:14-19

Leviticus 1-8, 16-17, 21-24

Numbers 4-10, 15, 18, 28-29

Deuteronomy 12, 15:19-16:17, 26

Laws of cleanness (which allowed access to temple)

Leviticus 11-15

Numbers 19

Deuteronomy 14

Laws of vows (sealed by a sacrifice)

Leviticus 27

Numbers 30

Focus on the specific laws of Moses

Civil Law (specific to Israel's nationhood)

first-generation assignment of land inheritance

Numbers 34-36

Deuteronomy 18:1-8

first-generation rules for war (against the “dedicated nations”)

Exodus 23:20-33

Deuteronomy 20

sabbath year and Jubilee law

Leviticus 25

Deuteronomy 25:1-18

laws to set up justice system

Deuteronomy 16-17, 19, 20-21

laws for the poor

Deuteronomy 23-25

What can we learn from the law of Moses today?

“The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the LORD are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.” Psalm 19:7-10

“In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.” Psalm 119:14-16

“Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:19

“Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law.” Romans 3:31

“But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.” James 1:25

Learning from the Sacrificial Law

The “details”: this was a working handbook for actual priests. Like the genealogies, the long passages on details show this was a real story for a real people, not just a nice story.

Key ideas:

“You shall not worship in their way.” (Deuteronomy 12:4)

“See to it that you do everything according to my plan.” (Exodus 25:40, Hebrews 8:5)

– God defines worship; we do not invent it (“regulative principle”)

The approach to God is costly. Paid by Christ.

Do we resent the “cost” of worship now?

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, “If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned.” Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I tremble with fear.”

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.”

(Hebrews 12:18-29)

Case study: the cleanness laws

- legal role: those who are unclean may not participate in holy assembly of Temple (no other penalties; many times uncleanness is unavoidable and not sinful)
- ceremonial role: no “disgusting” or unclean thing may mar the worship of God
- typological role: pictures the separation of humanity from God due to sin; we must be “washed” to come into his presence
- health role: practicing these laws is actually healthy (e.g. Seventh Day Adventists)

Case study: blood and sacrifice

Blood sacrifice is not an optional symbol but built into fabric of universe as the only thing which can atone for sin.

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.”
(Leviticus 17:11)

Bread and wine were required with every sacrifice. (Numbers 15, cf. Genesis 14:18)

They represented fellowship, were not the sacrifice themselves.
Communion is not a “resacrifice” of Christ.

Learning from the Civil Law

Society created by Mosaic law as a “paradigm”, as Jesus is the paradigm of personal holiness.

Ask: how did this aid justice and mercy in that age and place?

Case study: the sabbath year and Jubilee laws

Sabbath year:

- Loans canceled in 7th year. I.e., no loans could be made for more than 7-year term. (Loans, not all debt canceled: theft had to be repaid no matter what.)
- land to rest, not be farmed. Rest for the animals and plants, also.
A step of faith for Israelites to trust in God to provide.
- Native slaves freed with pay. (Foreign slaves still had right of redemption and right to leave without pay; see below.)

Year of Jubilee in 50th year (second sabbath year after 7 sabbath years)

- Same as a regular sabbath year, plus:
- Land returned to original owners. All land was therefore effectively only rented, pointing to God's ultimate ownership.

The poor could not be dispossessed from their land permanently, but had to work (farm) to make use of the land.

Land plays a key role as typological symbol of "inheritance". Christians are told they will "inherit the earth" (cf. Christopher Wright)

Case study: the sabbath year and Jubilee laws (continued)

Israel is eventually taken into captivity for not repenting of their breaking the Law of Moses.

The time period is given by the number of sabbath years they had skipped.

“He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years. (2 Chronicles 36:20-21)

Case study: the slavery laws

Slavery under the laws of Moses looked very different from American chattel slavery. Slaves were understood to be humans made in the image of God, not animals.

- Slaves had the right to bring masters to lawcourt for injuries; death penalty for killing a slave, and freedom (with pay) for any permanent damage. (Exodus 21:21-26)

- Slaves who ran away could not be returned. (Deuteronomy 23:15)

Why stay then?

- pay at end of six years (Deut 15:13-14); often needed to pay a debt.
- room and board, and work experience (cf. Steinbeck)
- keeping your word
- foreign prisoners of war often had no other place to go, if their nation was destroyed.

- Slavecatching illegal (Deuteronomy 24:7)

Two types of slaves: self-selling (and children) and prisoners of war

Case study: the slavery laws (continued)

- right of redemption: could pay off master to end contract early; a relative could be a “redeemer” (typological of Christ)
- marriages not to be broken up. Slave had a right to prevent master from selling him. (Exodus 21:5-6)
- Israel constantly told to remember they were once slaves and to be kind and generous to slaves.
- this type of “indentured servanthood” was viewed as a step above being a beggar. Begging was shameful.

Case study: the wars of conquest

- Israel commissioned to destroy only specific seven nations, no others (unless in self defense) (Deut 7:1)
- Israel acted as a judgment from God on these nations, by a prophetic word, when “their time had been fulfilled”
- judgment is always implicitly suspendable if people repent (e.g. Jonah) (“principle of implicit grace”)
- the wars are typological of the final judgement of God when he conquers his enemies and give his people “rest” (Exodus 15:3).
Moses and Joshua are types of “saviors”.

“Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the people of Israel except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. They took them all in battle. For it was the LORD’s doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed, just as the LORD commanded Moses.” (Joshua 11:19-20)

Was the system of the civil law of Moses a “theocracy”?

Two groups: judges and priests

- Priest class hereditary, no authority over criminal punishments (though high priest sat on “Supreme Court” of appeals)
 - only had right to bar people from worship
 - income only by voluntary tithes
 - support to poor administered by priests from voluntary tithes
- Judges elected in each town (Deuteronomy 1:13), no authority over Temple practice
 - no stated income
- King added later, supplements elected judges, also no authority over worship. King is subject to written law (Deuteronomy 17:14-20)
 - income by forced taxation, and forced labor

Learning from the Moral Law

What are the abiding moral principles here?

What do the different degrees of punishments tell me about the relative severity of certain sins? What does God say he “hates”?

Note: the punishments are part of the Civil Law, but they tell us about how severely God views certain types of moral sins.

In cases where biblical laws disagree with my society’s laws or customs, can I question the justice of my own society before I simply write off these laws as “old covenant”? How did they function in their day?

Are there degrees of sin?

On one hand, any unrepented sin deserves damnation.

“Cursed is anyone who does not abide by all the things written in the book of the Law, and do them” (Galations 3:20, Deuteronomy 27:26)

But some sins are worse than others.

“But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.” (Matt. 11:24)

“But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works” (Romans 2:5-6)

Justice demands we not pretend all sins are the same.

WCF 15.4 “As there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those, who truly repent.

WLC Q. 150. *Are all transgressions of the law of God equally heinous in themselves, and in the sight of God?* A. All transgressions of the law of God are not equally heinous; but some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

More verses on greater and lesser sins:

Jeremiah 7:26, 16:12

Ezekiel 8:13, 23:11

Lamentations 4:6

Luke 10:12, 20:47 (cf. Mark 12:40)

John 19:11

Romans 5:20, 6:19

2 Timothy 2:16, 3:13

Hebrews 10:29

James 3:1

Case study: theft vs adultery

Our society: great punishment for crimes against property

5-10 years of prison for theft

Colson: the “dehumanization” of prison

Moses: small punishments for crimes of property

Just return it! plus penalty cost: from 20% recompense for petty theft, to 4-5 times for grand theft.

Note: the laws of Moses are not like the laws of Islam, which also have severe penalties for property crime: cut off hand of thief.

Our society: small punishment for crimes against persons

adultery is viewed as “victimless”— no pity for the “cuckold”
open season on stealing other people’s mates

Moses: severe penalty for both man and woman.

(adultery was not a “property” crime, since property crimes had small punishments!)

Code of Moses was also not like the Code of Hamurabi.

Hamurabi: many laws about ensuring that low caste of slaves did not bother the upper class.

e.g., death penalty if adult lower class insults child of upper class

Moses: no classes, same law for all (stressed many times), respect for all elders (Leviticus 19:32)

Hamurabi: many laws on price controls

Moses: no laws on price controls. Establishes economic freedom in 10th commandment

Case study: “an eye for an eye”

Principle of justice: punishment shall not exceed damage done by crime

punishment can be less (principle of implied grace for the repentant)

exception: case of first-degree murder, cannot take “ransom/redemption”

Law of Moses was not about revenge, but justice.

Revenge forbidden (Leviticus 19:18)

Jesus condemns the Pharisees for misusing Law for personal revenge.

Essence of justice is a third party, who is neutral, rescuing the oppressed,
not people taking matters into their own hands.

“You shall do no injustice in court. You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD. You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:15-18)

Case study: the death penalty

Checks and balances:

Stoning guaranteed that the whole community was complicit (and therefore very certain).

Our society: done far away, I'm not part of it.

The witnesses had to be the first to throw a stone, guaranteeing they were guilty of murder if they lied.

Our society: almost no penalty for false witness.

If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you. Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

(Deuteronomy 19:16-21)

The Law and the Sermon on the Mount: motion from lesser demand to greater

<i>Pharisees ("you have heard it said")</i>	<i>Jesus ("but I say to you")</i>
1. Do not murder.	Hate, anger, and insults are a type of murder.
2. Do not commit adultery.	Lustful behavior is a type of adultery.
3. If you divorce, make it official.	Divorce without valid grounds is a type of adultery.
4. Keep your legal oaths.	Breaking your word at any time is a type of false witness.
5. Lawcourts may assess maximum penalty of an eye for an eye.	Don't take everything to court– be willing to be wronged for the sake of peace.
6. Love your neighbor. ("hate your enemy" is not in the OT, but presumably taught by Pharisees)	Love your enemies. (later: good Samaritan in response to "who is my neighbor?")

The Law and Galatians

Issue for Paul is “how are we justified?”

“We know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.” (Galatians 2:16)

Obeying the laws of Moses does not justify us. They have the three “uses” given before. Paul quotes the OT to prove that salvation is by grace through faith: Abraham, Habbakuk

“For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.’ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’” (Galatians 3:10-11)

Paul says “the law is not of faith” (3:12) not meaning that faith was unknown to Moses (who gave us the story of Abraham), but that lawkeeping is not the same as faith.

The later stage of the covenant of grace under Moses does not overturn the principle of grace by faith already clearly established under Abraham.

“The law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions.” (Galatians 3:17-19)

The laws of Moses acted as a “schoolmaster” or “guardian” of external regulations until the salvation by faith in Christ came.

“Now before [this] faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that [this] faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.” (Galatians 3:23-25)