#### Christ in the Old Testament

Summer - Fall 2020 Prepared by Dan Hager *Class Objective:* Build students' faith in Jesus by revealing Christ's supreme role in the Bible's overall story. Equip students to study the Old Testament in ways that are productive, enjoyable, and fruitful.

#### I AM has sent me to you

*Focus Statement:* God sent Moses to play a pivotal role in Israel's history. Yet, where he was ultimately leading them was to Jesus.

The pride of many in Israel related to their heritage as descendants of Abraham brought them into direct conflict with Jesus, his true promised offspring. Read John 8:31-59.

#### • Why were they upset by Jesus' teaching?

• How was Jesus calling them back to God's design?

By invoking "I am", Jesus referenced another pivotal person to Israel: Moses, the author of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Rescued as an infant from Egyptian genocide against the Hebrews, raised in Pharaoh's house, and then fleeing Egypt after murdering an Egyptian, Moses was another unlikely candidate for advancing God's purpose of rescuing humanity from sin and death. Read **Exodus 3:1-4:17.** 

• What made Moses an unlikely messenger for God to send?

• How does God identify Himself?

• How does God's rescue of Israel from Egypt continue the story began in Genesis 1-3?

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Much like they did with Abraham, Jesus and His disciples would encounter fierce opposition from Jews who also misunderstood Moses' role in God's plan. Read **Acts 6:8-7:60**.

#### • What were the major elements of Israel's history Stephen included in his speech?

Passage	Summary	O.T. reference
Acts 7:2-8		Genesis 12-36
Acts 7:9-16		Genesis 37-50
Acts 7:17-22		Exodus 1-2
Acts 7:23-29		Exodus 2
Acts 7:30-34		Exodus 3-4
Acts 7:35-43		Exodus - Deuteronomy
Acts 7:44-50		Joshua – II Chronicles

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- How was Moses a "ruler and redeemer" to Israel?
- Who was Stephen's audience, and how might they have felt hearing this speech?

• What was the accusation against Stephen (cf. Acts 6:13-14)?

• How did his speech address each of these points?

• Is it a rejection of Moses to follow Jesus?

On this side of the cross, we can see that Christ was present throughout the most pivotal moments in Israel's history. That is what we will examine in our next few lessons.

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### When I See the Blood

*Focus Statement:* Through the Passover, God brought freedom to Israel. It's no accident that this holiday would take on special significance for Jesus, too.

As Pharaoh's heart grew harder through each of the **Ten Plagues**, God said it was so that "I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (Rom. 9:17-18; cf. Exo. 5-11, esp. 9:16). When the final plague, the death of the firstborn, was threatened, God established **the Passover** with Israel. Read **Exodus 12:1-51**.

### $\circ$ $\;$ What purpose did the Passover and eating unleavened bread initially serve?

- What purpose was the ongoing observance of the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread to serve?
- What did the Passover have to do with sin?

The Passover was one of many sacrifices the Jewish people would come to observe, including the **Day of Atonement** (cf. Lev. 16). An annual observance every seventh month on the tenth day of the month, God said, "**For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the LORD from all your sins"** (Lev. 16:30). Atonement means to cover over someone's debt. Today it's known as Yom Kippur and falls during September or October.

Throughout the gospel accounts, we frequently see Jesus going to Jerusalem to observe these various holidays, including the week that He died on the cross. Read **Luke 22:8-15**.

 $\circ$   $\;$  During which festival did Jesus die on the cross?

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Consider that this festival was more like our Independence Day: the day God overthrew their oppressors and brought them freedom. When it was observed during Jesus' day, the Romans were in power. Read Luke 23:1-16 and Matthew 27:15-23.

• What were some things happening in Jerusalem over the holiday different than the norm?

This association would specifically influence how the apostles viewed Jesus' crucifixion. Read John 19:31-37.

• When John quotes Scripture as saying, "Not one of his bones will be broken", he is quoting Exodus 12:46 and Numbers 9:12. What are these passages about?

Paul would develop this association, too. Read I Corinthians 5:6-8.

• Given the context of addressing flagrant sexual sin taking place within the church, what did it mean that "Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed"?

Atonement was a major part of Christ's sacrifice: in fact, He "offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins", ending the role of animal sacrifice (Heb. 10:12). Yet, the good news is about more than just Christ's sacrifice: it is also about how He rose from the dead and "sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet" (Heb. 10:12-13). This means freedom for those He rules over. Read Exodus 4:21-23.

 $\circ$  What did God say His relationship with Israel was and why did He want to free them?

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### Spiritual Food, Spiritual Drink, But Evil Desires

*Focus Statement:* When Israel was faithless on the journey to the Promised Land, God was faithful. Through His faithfulness, we can see Christ.

Israel was suffering greatly in slavery when God sent Moses to deliver them. Read **Exodus 6:1-9**.



- What was God accomplishing for Israel by leading them out of Egypt?
- How does the Exodus continue the story God began in Genesis?

• How had slavery affected Israel?

After the **Passover** marked the end of Israel's slavery, God Himself would lead the people to the Promised Land. Read **Exodus 13:17-14:31**.

• Why didn't God lead Israel directly to Canaan from Egypt?

 $\circ$   $\;$  What did Israel need to do to be rescued from the Egyptians?

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• How does this parallel our experience?

In light of God's dramatic victory, Israel celebrated Him in a way that became the norm for God's people: they sang (Exo. 15:1-21). Yet, it wasn't long before their confidence in the LORD's strength and steadfast love faded. Read Exodus 15:22-16:36.

• Why did the people complain when they did?

• What did God accomplish by making it "rain bread from heaven"?

• How was God's provision of bread like Genesis 1-2?

Yet even after we know God can and will provide, we still have problems. Read Exodus 17:1-7.

• What was different about Israel's concern for water at Rephidim than at Marah?

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• How did God provide water this time?

 $\circ$  Who was being tested this time?

• When was a time God didn't do exactly like you wanted, and how did He ultimately provide?

Even after we see God provide, it doesn't stop even the best of us from quarreling again later on. Read **Numbers 20:2-13**.

• What were the people focused on when they quarreled with Moses?

• How would God provide water this time?

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• How is it that God "showed himself holy" through the waters of Meribah?

We must never forget the consequence of sin is death: it is purely by God's grace we are allowed into His presence. When we rebel against Him again, we should not act surprised that death follows. Read **Numbers 21:4-9**.

• How does this passage (and others like it) show God's holiness?

• How does this passage show God's grace?

These lessons would not only prepare Israel to obtain the Promised Land but to remain there. These stories became an important part of Israel's identity. Read **Psalm 78**.

• What was the psalmist Asaph trying to accomplish with this song?

• What does it mean that "God was their rock"?

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Much like Psalm 78 showed how Israel's story had led up to David's faithful reign, the Apostle Paul similarly showed how it ultimately resulted in the reign of the Son of David, Jesus Christ. Read I Corinthians 10:1-5.

• What is significant about Paul describing Israel as "our fathers" to the Corinthians?

• How was Israel's journey through the wilderness like the Christian life?

Also like **Psalm 78,** there was a very practical lesson Paul wanted the church to take from Israel's history. Read **I Corinthians 10:6-22.** 

• What are Israel's stories meant to teach Christians?

• What does it mean that "the end of the ages has come" on us (10:11)?

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Paul's understanding of the role of Christ in Israel's story was one he received from Jesus Himself. The Apostle John especially captured this in the episodes from Jesus' ministry that he uniquely recorded. Read John 3:1-21.

• How was Jesus different than what Nicodemus expected?

 $\circ$  How did the story of the bronze serpent help explain what Jesus was doing?

Though very different from what even the most knowledgeable among the Jewish people expected of the Messiah, Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of everything God had done throughout Israel's history. Read **John 6:1-15**.

 $\circ$  What about Jesus' feeding the 5,000 would have reminded the crowds of the manna?

Like ancient Israel, many failed to learn what God was teaching them. Read John 6:22-71.

• How is Jesus "the bread of life"?

Because of Jesus feeding the 5,000, many concluded He was "**the Prophet who is to come**", foretold by Moses in **Deuteronomy 18:18** and the subject of our upcoming lessons.

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### A Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation

*Focus Statement:* God had a purpose for Israel, and achieving it meant dramatic changes to how they lived life each day.

After several weeks of traveling through the wilderness, Israel finally reached the mountain where the LORD spoke to Moses out of the burning bush (cf. Exo. 3:12). Read **Exodus 19:1-15**.

o Now that Israel had been rescued from slavery, what was God's ongoing purpose for them?

• Does this have any parallels to us today?

• Why did the people need to consecrate themselves?

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Once the people were consecrated and the third day came, God spoke the most famous laws in human history. Read **Exodus 19:16-20:20.** 

o Before and after God spoke, how are we told the people reacted to His presence?

• What questions do you have about these Ten Commandments? What stands out?

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• What do the Ten Commandments tell us about who God wants His covenant people to be?

While the most famous, the Ten Commandments were hardly the only laws God gave that day. He also gave:

- Laws about the **altars** they were and weren't to build for Him (Exo. 20:22-26).
- Laws about being **right in their relationships**, including toward their slaves (Exo. 21:1-32).
- Laws about **restitution** when they or their livestock harmed another (Exo. 21:33-22:14).
- A wide variety of laws about **social justice** (Exo. 22:16-23:9).
- Laws governing their observance of the Sabbath and festivals (Exo. 23:10-19).

On that day on Sinai alone, God gave something like over 70 different commandments. Israel thought they were up to the task of obeying them. They wanted to keep the covenant but sought to do so without the presence of God. We will revisit this in the future.

#### Do All That I Say

*Focus Statement:* God gave Moses a lot more than Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. So how do we know which ones to keep?

God didn't just give Moses the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai: it was more like the Seventy-Plus Commandments, and that was just on Day One. Read **Exodus 23:20-24:8**.

o What did God promise to do if Israel kept His covenant?

#### • How did the people respond?

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As Christians, we are confronted with the issue of how we should view the Law of Moses today. Here are the basic (admittedly oversimplified) approaches:

- **1.) It is God's word, so we keep the Law**. This approach says that because these laws came from God any person living at any time should follow them.
  - Are you following Leviticus 19:19?
  - Are you following **Deuteronomy 22:8?**

In reality, even the most faithful Israelites didn't take this approach.

• What was different about what David wanted to do in **II Samuel 7:1-17** than what the Law said 400+ years earlier in **Exodus 26-27** and **35-40**? How did God feel about it?

• How was the command in Esther 9:20-32 different from the Law in Exodus 23:10-19?

• What feast did Jesus observe and where did He observe it in John 10:22-30?

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Together, this shows us that the Law was something more than a static code meant to be observed the same way for all time by all people. It would be a mistake for followers of Jesus to treat it as immediately and directly applicable to us today – especially when there was flexibility within it for the Israelites themselves!

- **2.)** Because we are Christians and not Israelites, we do not keep the Law. This approach says that as Christians, the Law that Moses gave to Israel simply does not apply to us.
  - What does Paul write to the Jewish and Gentile saints in Ephesians 6:1-4?

When the Spirit-inspired Apostles quoted from the Law and directly applied it to Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus, it would be just as much a mistake for Christians to entirely dismiss the Law as it would be to insist on its strict adherence.

**3.)** Some of the Law still applies, but other parts do not. This approach reasons that the New Testament brought forward some commandments that we should keep, but we do not have to keep those that it left out. This might be the most common approach among our brotherhood, but it is not without a few issues of its own. The Pharisees similarly tried to show how the Law applied to their day, a thousand years after it was first given. We get to see how Jesus viewed their efforts.

One of their issues was related to vows. In Numbers 30:1-2, "Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the people of Israel, saying, 'This is what the LORD has commanded. If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth." The Pharisees had applied this so that if someone vowed their financial resources to God, they were released from their responsibility to care for their parents because keeping the vow mattered more.

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• What issue did Jesus see in their approach in Matthew 15:1-9?

At least when it comes to the Ten Commandments, it is not hard to see how they apply today, except for one: **"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"** (Ex. 20:8).

• When is "the Christian Sabbath"?

• According to Paul in **Romans 14:1-19**, is it sinful to observe the Sabbath?

While there is a lot to commend about recognizing the differences between things before ("Old Testament") and after ("New Testament") Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, it still is not complete as an approach to the Law. If we simply make it about substituting one set of rules for a new set, we will struggle to explain why some things (e.g. holidays, instruments) were okay for Israel but not part of the plan now. It also does not explain instances when the Apostles would quote a Law but apply it in different ways, like when the Apostle Paul used a law about not muzzling oxen to justify paying preachers (Deut. 25:4, I Cor. 9:8-12).

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There is a better way to understand the Law: the way Jesus and the Apostles explained it!

- **4.)** The Biblical View: **"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes"** (Romans 10:4). Within the larger context, Paul explains how despite the rejection of many in Israel of Christ, that does not mean God's word failed. Read **Romans 9:1-8**.
  - What blessings did Paul say belonged to the Israelites as God's "kingdom of priests"?

• So how was the rejection of Christ by many of them <u>not</u> a failure of God's Word?

Paul goes on to explain how all of this was ultimately consistent with God's character and plan, placing Israel and the Law of Moses within the context of the larger story of what God is accomplishing for humanity. Read **Romans 9:27-10:4.** 

Further clarification is needed, though. The word we translate "end" is from the Greek *telos*. More than just meaning "an end" – as in something was happening but now it has stopped – it carries a meaning of achieving the goal, reaching the finish line, completing the work, or achieving the outcome or aim (cf. I Timothy 1:5, I Peter 1:9). This is a great example of why it can be helpful to reference multiple translations when studying the Bible.

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#### Romans 10:4

New International Version	New Living Translation	New Testament for Everyone	
"Christ is the <b>culmination</b> of	"Christ has already	"The Messiah, you see, is	
the law so that there may be	accomplished the purpose	the <b>goal</b> of the law, so that	
righteousness for everyone	for which the law was	covenant membership may	
who believes."	given."	be available for all who	
		believe"	

#### • How does Jesus help us understand, interpret, and apply the Law of Moses?

This view is only possible when we see the Law not as a comprehensive code but as part of the story of God's rescue of humanity that led to Jesus. When we view it that way – the way Jesus and the Apostles viewed it – we can understand the Law in a way that sifting through the individual commandments for their continuing applicability just cannot accomplish.

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished" (Matthew 5:17-18).

"Now before 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 faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith...But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!' So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God" (Galatians 3:23-26, 4:4-7).

In fact, as we look at the Law itself, we will soon see that such a view was always God's intention for His Law.

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#### Question and Response

*Focus Statement:* We have covered a lot of ground so far studying Christ in the Old Testament, including God's original design for creation, sin's terrible consequences, and God's work to rescue us all by bringing Jesus into the world through Israel. So, what questions do you have? What lessons have you learned?

#### 1: The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms 2: Everything Written About Me

*Focus Statement:* Jesus fulfills the Hebrew Scriptures in a powerful way. As we start to understand these ancient texts, we will start to understand Jesus better.

*Key Verse:* "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled'" (Lk 24:44).

• What are ways we commonly think of the Old Testament? What changes when we see it as ultimately being about Jesus?

### 3: In the Beginning 4: In the Beginning...Again 5: Workers 6: Helpers

*Focus Statement:* Through Jesus, we can see and understand God more clearly as He is revealed to us in Scripture and who He created us to be.

*Key Verse:* "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Gen. 1:27-28).

• When God created humanity, what was included in His design for our lives?

### 7: Tempted 8: Cursed 9: Groaning 10: Bruised

*Focus Statement:* In the midst of God's good creation, there was an enemy tempting humanity to sin. He seeks to lure us away from God's design just as he first did them. Through Jesus, we can see God isn't the problem: sin is. Moments after the Fall, God set in motion His plan to redeem humanity from the curse of sin and death.

*Key Verse:* "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15).

• How do the consequences of the sin in Genesis 3 help us understand the story of the Bible and the suffering in our world to this day?

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### 11: Believing God

## 12: Depending on Faith

# 13: Faith and Works

14: Flesh and Promise

15: After the Order of Melchizedek 16: Abraham's Children *Focus Statements:* God worked through the most unlikely of people to bring Jesus into the world

to accomplish His purpose. Their only qualification was that they trusted Him. God accomplishes His purpose in ways we wouldn't expect, and through Jesus, we see that He always keeps His promises.

Key Verse: "And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6).

### • What determined whether God worked through someone?

17: I AM has Sent Me to You 18: When I See the Blood 19: Led by God 20: Learning to Trust God 21: God was Their Rock 22: The Rock was Christ 23: The Bread of Life Focus Statements: God sent Moses to play a pivotal role in Israel's history. Yet, where he was ultimately leading them was to Jesus. Through the Passover, God brought freedom to Israel. It's no accident that this holiday would take on special significance for Jesus, too. When Israel was faithless on the journey to the Promised Land, God was faithful. Through His faithfulness, we can see Christ.

Key Verse: "He divided the sea and let them pass through it, and made the waters stand like a heap. In the daytime he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a fiery light. He split rocks in the wilderness and gave them drink abundantly as from the deep" (Ps. 78:13-15).

What problems are caused by believing in God's power to save but doubting in His care to provide for us?

### 24: A Kingdom of Priests and a Holy Nation 25: Do All That I Say

#### 26: Breaking the Commandment 27: Christ is the End of the Law

Focus Statements: God had a purpose for Israel, and achieving it meant dramatic changes to how they lived life each day. God gave Moses a lot more than Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. So how do we know which ones to keep?

Key Verse: "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exo. 19:5-6).

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Rom. 10:4).

How is the Biblical approach "Christ is the end of the law" different from other approaches to understanding the Law of Moses?

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• What questions do you have? What have you learned (so far)?

As we begin to see Christ in the Old Testament, the implications for us are clear. Read **Hebrews** 12:18-29.