

EFC Sumer Devo Series
Week of August 4, 2024
Theme: Old Testament
Scripture:

*The Lord had said to Abram,
“Go from your country, your people and your father’s
household 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.*
Genesis 12:1-2

*After this I looked,
and there before me was a great multitude that no one could
from every nation, tribe,
people and language,
standing before the throne and before the Lamb.*
Revelation 7:9

Unpack:

Last week we were looking at God’s Word as a whole, and the importance it needs to have in our own lives, and the authority that it speaks into our personal and collective lives as the church.

This week we want to focus on the Old Testament, the first 39 books of the Bible, the Scriptures that Jesus himself would have had access to and studied, and also the part of the Bible that we have today that Jesus quoted many times throughout his ministry on earth.

The question many Christians have is, given that we are now living nearly 2000 years after the New Testament was written, and that Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies, and so on, **is there still something we can learn from all the laws and the history and the poetry and the prophecy of the Old Testament?**

Can’t we just focus on the New Testament, the Gospels, the letters written by Paul and John and others?

The Old Testament just doesn’t seem relevant to my life now, does it?

Do all those laws still apply to me today? And if not all, then which ones should I obey, and which ones do I simply ignore?

Isn't it just history and while there's value in studying our history, how can it be practical for my life today?

Let's dig in and see why we need to study the Old Testament as part of our Christian discipleship.

Reflection:

The Bible is incomplete without the Old Testament.

Both testaments make up the Word of God.

In fact, we may believe that the New replaces the Old, but in fact the New completes the story of the Old.

For instance, Professor Carl Laney of Western University in the U.S. reminds us that in Genesis 3:14-19, we read how the curse of sin came upon all humanity, but in Revelation 22:3 we see the completion of God's story, how through the redemptive work of Jesus on the cross for us, the curse has been removed.

As you read New Testament passages, take time to observe how often the little footnotes or markers in the verses point back to something written in the Old Testament. The two testaments are to be read together, allowing you to connect the stories, the prophecies, the teachings, and the themes from front to back.

The Old Testament presents great truths about God and humanity.

In the first five books of the Bible (the Torah), God reaches out to humanity and introduces Himself. God introduces Himself as the Creator (Gen. 1-2), the Savior of His people (Exod. 13-14), the Holy One (Lev. 19:2), the God of wrath and judgment on sin (Num. 14), and a God of love (Deut. 7). It is in the Hebrew Bible that God reveals to Moses His attributes (Exod. 34:6-7).

We would not know God as well as we do apart from the revelation of the Old Testament. In fact, it is precisely in the Old Testament that we learn why God is so much greater than we are, because the Jesus we get to know in the New Testament is often viewed as the more loving and tender and gracious, which is all true. But God as we see in the Old Testament IS a God of justice, of wrath, and one who expects obedience and hands out consequences for disobedience. The Old Testament reminds us that we can't keep God in a nice tidy box that leads us to downplay his grandeur.

The Old Testament presents spiritual truths and lessons that are applicable for Christians.

We often get caught up in the laws and the do's and don'ts of the Old Testament, and determining that most of them are cultural, we may decide that mostly the O.T. is just history with some great stories of how God came through again and again for those stumbling Israelites.

But Paul illustrates in **1 Corinthians 10:6-10** that spiritual truths and lessons are applicable for believers. Here he recounts for the church at Corinth a number of incidents that took place during Israel's wilderness wanderings. Then he writes,

*“Now these things happened to them as an example,
and they were written for our instruction,
upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”*

Paul clearly intended for the Corinthians to learn from the lessons taught in the Hebrew Bible (see also Rom. 15:4).

*We could spend time talking about the fulfillment of many prophecies that pointed to Jesus, the Messiah.

*We could mention how character studies of people in the Old Testament, whom God used, broken as they were, and that in the same way He continues to use you and I.

*We could talk about the beauty of poetry, of Psalms of lament, of miracles, and of so much more that show us the Trinity in all its glory.

For now, let's focus our time on the following applications...

Application:

God's Word, both the Old and New Testaments, are given to us, the church, to teach us about who God is, what His purpose is, and how we can be in relationship with Him today and for eternity.

For this week I encourage you to read about Moses in the book of Exodus.

Moses is often considered the first example of who Jesus Christ would be. The writings about who Moses was and how he lived are not given to us just as an example of a good man who led the people of Israel out of Egypt.

But more than that, when we look at the life of Moses we see a picture of what Jesus was going to look like and do, only at a far greater level than Moses could ever do.

Read Exodus 1-7, one chapter each day, and look for aspects to the stories of Moses that we also see in greater measure in the life of Christ. While you may not

notice them all this time around, it is a great practice to instill in our devotional lives to read the Bible in such a way that we see Jesus showing up more than just in the Gospels.

Prayer:

“Guide us, heavenly Father, by your Spirit, to see and get to know your Son Jesus within the Holy Scriptures that we are privileged to hold in our hands each day. Help us to see your promises as true for us as much as they are true for others. And help us, by your grace, to extend the blessings of your truth to those around us each day.

In your name, Jesus, we pray. Amen!”