

If people today are under the New Testament covenant, why do we spend so much time in studying the Old Testament? Should we spend so much time studying the Old Testament?

It is true that we today are under the New Testament covenant of grace and truth, but it is also necessary that we have knowledge of the Old Testament to really understand the New Testament. The Apostle Paul wrote "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). In 1 Corinthians 10 Paul reminds the Christians of many of the mistakes and sins of the Israelites. In verse 11 Paul writes, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Question: how can I know the sins of the Israelites unless I study the Old Testament?

The truth of the matter is, we cannot understand the New Testament unless we know a great deal about the Old Testament. For example, we would not know that we are a part of the human race if it were not for the Old Testament. The Old Testament tells us that God made us (man) in His own image. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:26-28). How do we know that we are the human race and not one of the animal kingdoms? The very fact that we control animals and we are not controlled by someone else is proof that we are humans. God put man in charge. We have free will as God gave Adam and Eve. That we can think and reason, as no other part of God's creation, proves we are human.

If it were not for the Old Testament we would not know what sin is and what it does to our relationship with God. We learn all this in the first three chapters of Genesis. The Old Testament gives us the story of God preparing the world for the arrival of His Son, Jesus Christ, to be the savior of the world. We would never know this story if it were not for the Old Testament. There are over 300 prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament. Jesus stated in Matthew 5:17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill."

For some reason most people do not like to study history. As a former history teacher, one of the greatest jobs I had was convincing the students that they needed to know these historical facts. Folks, you cannot know where you are unless you know where you came from. It is impossible to understand God's scheme of redemption without knowing some of the history revealed in the Old Testament concerning God's dealings with man throughout the centuries.

We don't live under the old covenant. The New Testament reveals to us God's plan of salvation and how he wants us to live as his children. The Old Testament reveals how this salvation came into being.

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