

Kingdom, Covenants & Canon of the Old Testament

Lesson Guide

LESSON
ONE

WHY STUDY THE OLD
TESTAMENT?



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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or text versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:26)

II. Distance from Us (3:16)

When we study the Old Testament, we find that many parts of it are unfamiliar.

A. Causes (4:45)

At least two features of the Old Testament often cause us to view it as a foreign land.

1. Organic Inspiration (6:17)

The Holy Spirit employed the personalities, experiences and intentions of the original human writers in composing the Bible.

God controlled the content of Scripture so that it is without error and may rightly be called the word of God.

2 Peter 3:15-16 — Paul's letters involve both God and the human writer.

2. Divine Accommodation (9:47)

Accommodation: every time God reveals himself to humanity, he appears and speaks in finite human terms.

God designed the Old Testament for specific historical situations that the Jewish people living in the ancient Near East encountered.

B. Kinds (12:40)

Theological, cultural and personal dimensions of life are deeply entwined and influence each other in countless ways.

1. Theological (14:09)

The historical difference between:

- the revelation that the writers of the Old Testament possessed
- the fuller revelation that Christians possess

2. Cultural (16:55)

Dimensions of life characteristic of the cultures of:

- characters
- writers
- original recipients

Cultural distance occurs because human society is constantly changing.

Many differences exist between the ancient Near East and our modern world. Many things we read in the Old Testament are unfamiliar to us.

3. Personal (20:16)

People who lived in the days of the Old Testament were different from modern people in many ways.

III. Relevance for Us (23:13)

The Old Testament has abiding value for our lives.

Full life in Christ cannot be accomplished without the guidance of the Old Testament.

A. Teachings of Jesus (24:38)

1. Negative Comments (25:02)

Some of the teachings of Jesus appear, at first glance, to present a negative view of the Old Testament.

Jesus did not contradict the Old Testament. He refuted common misunderstandings of its teachings.

Jesus opposed false interpretations and reasserted the true teachings of the Old Testament.

2. Positive Affirmations (37:56)

Jesus constantly referred to the Old Testament as the basis of his own teachings.

Every detail of the Old Testament will remain in force until the end of all things.

Jesus called his followers to receive the Old Testament as God's authoritative word.

B. Teachings of Paul (41:57)

1. Negative Comments (42:27)

Many Christians wrongly believe that Paul was very negative about the Old Testament.

Paul believed that New Testament faith was fuller revelation.

Paul did not deny the relevance of the Old Testament; he simply objected to the misuse of the Old Testament.

Paul opposed those who relied on obedience to the law for their salvation. He opposed those who wanted to be justified by the law.

Paul used the Old Testament to prove that salvation is by faith alone.

2. Positive Affirmations (47:15)

Christians should expect the Old Testament to be relevant for life.

IV. Application to Us (49:54)

The Holy Spirit's help is essential to the study and application of the Old Testament.

We must learn how to apply the Old Testament in responsible ways.

A. Challenge (51:26)

Overcoming the distance that separates us from the Old Testament allows us to recognize its relevance for today.

Proper application of the Old Testament to our day involves interpreting the Old Testament in its own terms, according to its original meaning.

To apply the Old Testament properly, we must:

- look carefully at the times between the Old Testament and our day;
- see the connections and developments that took place in biblical faith.

The Old Testament was written with future generations in mind.

B. Connections (57:12)

We have three primary connections to the original audiences of the Old Testament.

1. Same God (58:34)

The God of New Testament Christians is the same God we read about in the Old Testament.

The fact that we serve the “same God” establishes important connections because God is immutable or unchangeable.

- God’s eternal counsel is unchanging.

God’s eternal plan teaches us that his purposes in the Old Testament align with his purposes in the New Testament.

- God is immutable in his character or attributes.

God’s character is unchanging. His actions in the New Testament period are harmonious with his eternal nature.

- God is unchanging in his covenant promises. He will fulfill everything he covenanted to be and to do for his people.

God made many promises to Old Testament believers. In the New Testament he is keeping those promises.

2. Same World (1:06:58)

The Old Testament comes from and describes the same world in which we live.

a. Historical Backgrounds

Old Testament events and teachings form backgrounds to events and teachings in the New Testament.

b. Parallel Situations

Many current events share similarities with earlier events.

Beyond superficial dissimilarities, our circumstances are very similar to those of Old Testament writers and their audiences.

3. Same Kind of People (1:10:01)

There are fundamental continuities that connect us with the people who lived during the days of the Old Testament.

a. Image of God

All human beings are the image of God.

b. Sinful

We are like the people of the Old Testament because all human beings are fallen into sin.

Because we are fallen images of God, we can understand how Old Testament people turned from God to sin.

c. Divided

Since the fall, human beings have always been divided into groups according to their relationship with God.

Throughout the Bible, God distinguishes three groups of people:

- Outside of covenant with God and lost.
- In covenant with God and lost.
- In covenant with God, justified by faith, and eternally saved.

The human race is divided in our day as it was in the days of the Old Testament.

C. Developments (1:16:27)

1. Epochal (1:16:57)

God has revealed himself in various epochs or ages.

There is much confusion about the kinds of epochal considerations that must be made as we apply the Old Testament to our lives today.

a. Segmented Outlook

Stresses the differences between the various epochs or ages of Scripture.

Tends to apply to modern believers only those things in the Old Testament that are repeated in the New Testament.

b. Flattened Outlook

Focuses on things that have remained the same between the various ages of Scripture.

Assumes that the Old Testament should be followed as closely as possible, unless altered by the New Testament.

c. Developmental Outlook

Looks at biblical history as both unified and developing.

All of the Old Testament is relevant for us, but every dimension of the Old Testament has developed.

All the teachings of the Old Testament must undergo epochal adjustments by passing through the filter of the New Testament.

2. Cultural (1:23:00)

We must take into account the variations between the cultures represented in the Old Testament and those of our own world.

We must make appropriate cultural adjustments to the Old Testament's message as we apply it to modern life.

3. Personal (1:24:03)

There are similarities and dissimilarities between the people of the Old Testament and modern people. We must account for these personal variations.

V. Conclusion (1:25:40)

Application Questions

1. Think of a time when the Old Testament was perplexing to you. What contributed to your initial confusion?
2. How would you respond to someone who said, “Jesus’ teaching on such things as murder, adultery and love for enemies contradicts the teachings of the Old Testament”?
3. In the Sermon on the Mount, why did Jesus keep contrasting what was *said* versus what was *written*? In what ways might modern Christians be tempted to make errors like those that Jesus refuted?
4. What benefits come from acknowledging God’s unchanging nature as you study the Old Testament?
5. Why is it helpful to recall that people in both the Old Testament and the New Testament lived in the same world?
6. What is the most significant insight you have learned from this study? Why?

Glossary

accommodate/accommodation – Term used to explain how an infinite God speaks to us in finite terms by adapting his communication so that we can understand it

canon – Authoritative standard; the exclusive collection of documents in the Judeo-Christian tradition recognized as Scripture

covenant – A binding legal agreement made between two people or groups of people, or between God and a person or group of people

developmental model – Term for the tendency that looks at both the continuity and changes between the Old Testament and the New Testament and asserts that the whole Old Testament is relevant, but must be applied in the light of the New Testament

flattened view – Term for the tendency that looks at both the continuity and changes between the Old Testament and the New Testament and asserts that if the New Testament does not mention a change, we should follow the Old Testament as closely as possible

mechanical inspiration – View of inspiration that asserts that the Holy Spirit essentially dictated the Bible, and human writers passively recorded what he said

Organic inspiration – View of inspiration that asserts that the Holy Spirit used the personalities, experiences, outlooks, and intentions of human authors as he authoritatively and infallibly guided their writing

romantic inspiration – View of inspiration that asserts that the Holy Spirit inspired biblical authors to write but did not superintend their writings

segmented view – Term for the tendency that looks at both the continuity and changes between the Old Testament and the New Testament and asserts that if the New Testament does not mention something, we do not need to apply it