

Being **FLUENT** is not easy,
even when you speak the
same language!

READ SLIDE

-- Even if we're talking the same language, it can be quite the challenge to communicate without confusion.

TR: Consider this example of communication between folks in the business world . . .



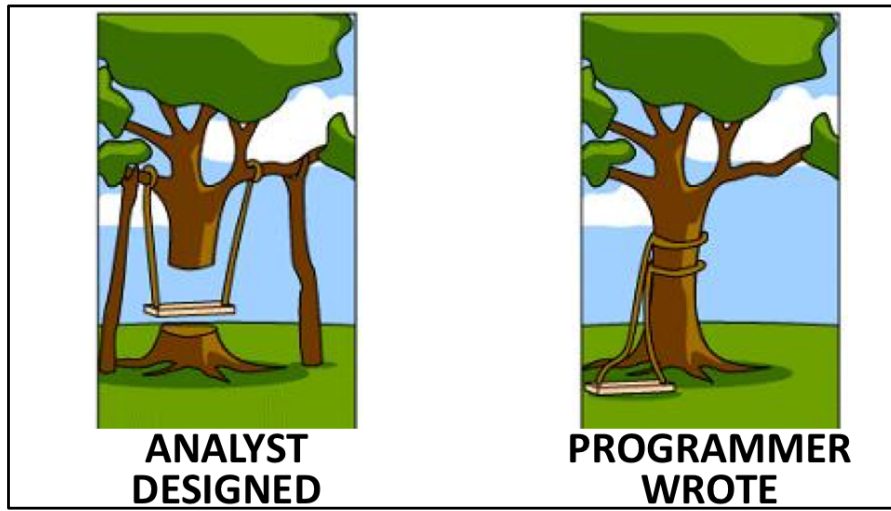
**CUSTOMER
EXPLAINED**



**PROJECT LEADER
UNDERSTOOD**

The customer explained what they wanted . . . but that's not exactly what the project leader understood.

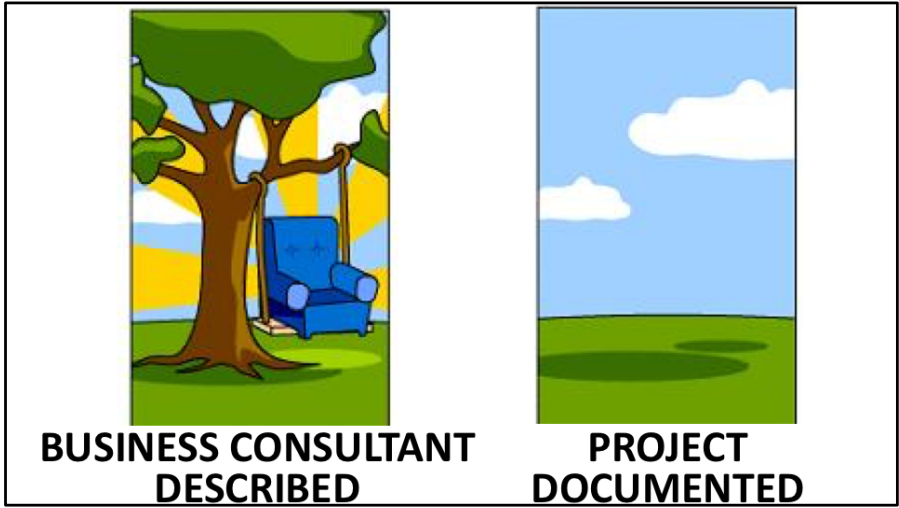
TR: Then . . .



. . . the analyst designed what she understood from the project leader's notes.

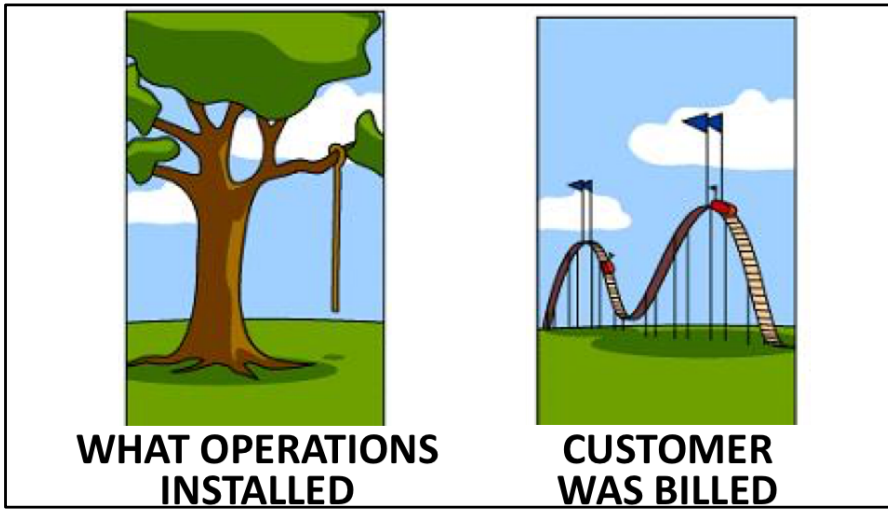
-- The programmer then developed the program he thought the analyst had in mind.

TR: Then . . .



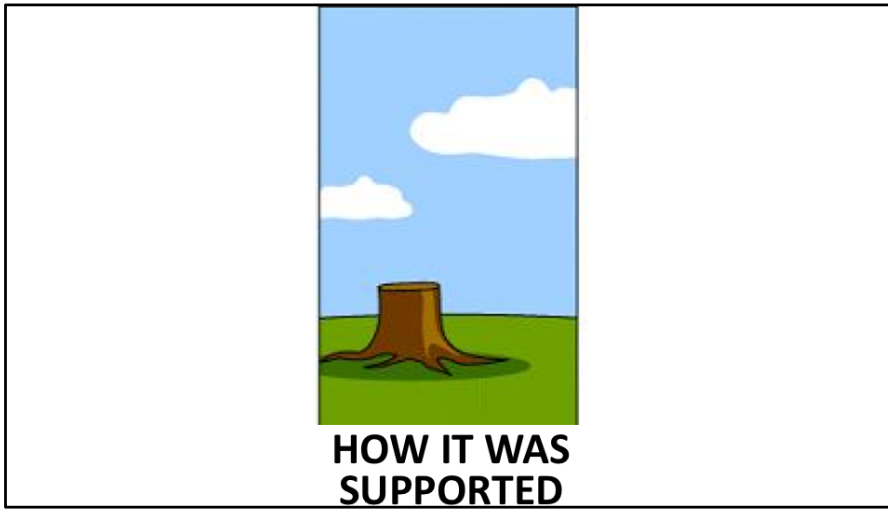
**. . . the business consultant described the glories of the project,
but the documentation left a little bit to be desired.**

TR: Then . . .



. . . operations installed the project, which was a bit different than what the customer was billed for.

TR: Unfortunately . . .



. . . the project support that was provided wasn't much

TR: . . . and, in reality . . .



. . . this is what the customer really needed.

-- We can all smile at such confusions, but it's not so funny when it is about things that really matter to us.

TR: We run into the same sort of problems as we seek to . . .



. . . be the blessing God has called us to be.

TR: As we move through the BLESS . . .

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

LISTEN WITH CARE

EAT TOGETHER

SERVE WITH LOVE

SHARE OUR STORY

... we ... REVIEW SLIDE. (Show tool say how more are available...)

-- Communication is a huge part of blessing people ...blessing by LISTENING and by SHARING.

-- And it is in this communication that we can have great confusion.

TR: This Fall we are asking ourselves ...



... “Am I IN?”

— Intentionally IN the communities God has placed me in?

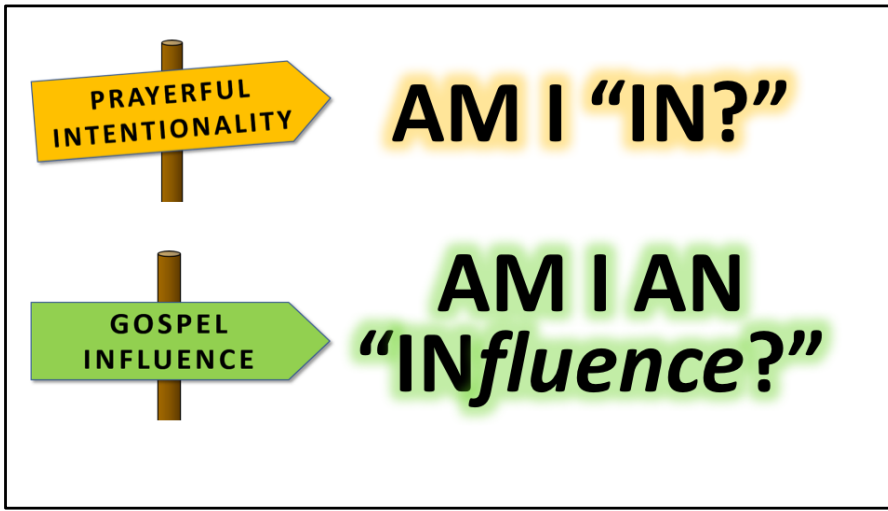
-- Am I making the most of every opportunity, to be a salt and light influence for Christ?

TR: We may get frustrated at how the world confuses the truth of the Gospel, the good news of Jesus, but it is my contention that . . .

Confusion is our
opportunity to be
Influenced
and to be
a *Gospel INfluence*

. . . this confusion is . . . READ SLIDE

TR: Remember, we are trying to . . .



... not only be IN through prayerful intentionality as we attend and then serve the people in the communities God has placed US ...

-- BUT we are also seeking to be an INFLUENCE by connecting God's story to the stories of the people in our communities.

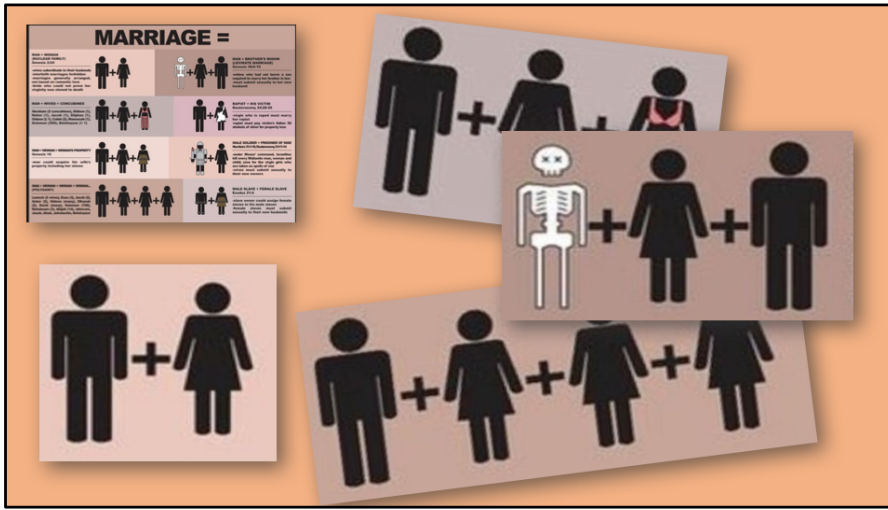
TR: In one sense, the Gospel is as simple as a tire swing on a strong maple branch. BUT, there certainly is a lot of confusion in the "Gospel-ish" communication a lot of people have heard.

**Why don't you Christians keep
all of the laws in the Bible**

**Why are you allowed
to pick and choose
which ones you obey?**

**When I compile some of the confusion I have heard in the past,
I get questions like . . . READ SLIDE**

**TR: Or as we talk about the sanctity of marriage between one
man and one woman, you'll hear . . .**



**. . . angry confusion about what the Bible teaches . . .
monogamy? Polygamy? Concubines? Levirate Marriage?**

**TR: People are further confused because of their understanding
about . . .**

**Genocide? Slavery? Sabbath?
Eating Pork? Etc.**

**Do Christians want to make our
country a theocracy? Are they
calling for a Christian Sharia law?**

what the Bible teaches about . . . READ SLIDE (top section)

**-- people are confused thinking that conservative Christians . . .
READ SLIDE (bottom section)**

**-- [sharia law] - Is part of the Gospel implementing the revealed
law of God as the path for all people?**

**TR: As I've talked with folks, I find many of these and other
confusions have a common denominator . . .**

**Confusion about the
Gospel often is tied to
misunderstanding of the
God-given **role** of the
Old Testament**

. . . READ SLIDE

TR: I think the day and age of just having . . .



. . . the NT, Psalms and Proverbs, is over.

-- READ SLIDE

-- We are living in a post-Christian era. Many people when introduced to the Bible . . . Have never heard any of the foundation passages of the Hebrew Scriptures.

-- And without them, there is no context for correctly understanding “the rest of the story” in the New Testament.

TR: We ought not not become defensive, reacting to oft-times inflammatory ways people say things, rather . . .

1 Peter 3:14b-15

Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, ¹⁵but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,**

ESV

READ SLIDE (yellow text)

TR: Verse 16

having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

ESV

READ SLIDE

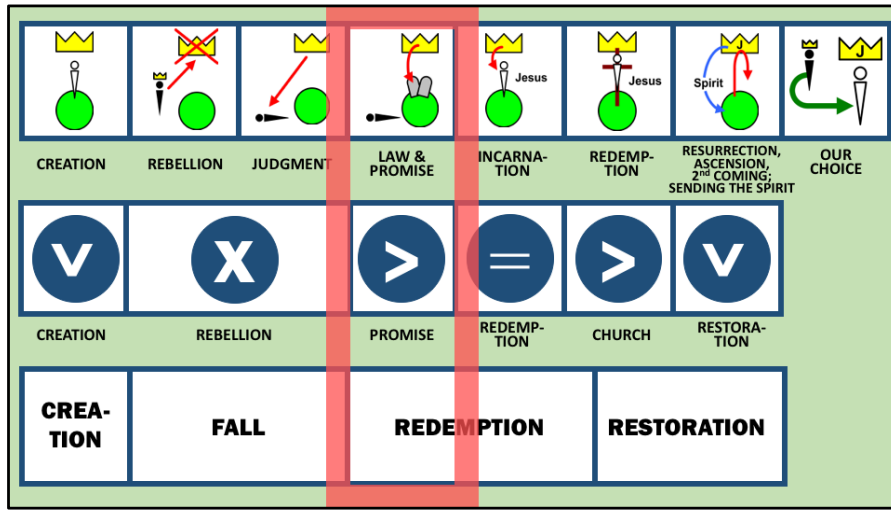
-- Because we have truly been Influenced by the Gospel ourselves, our good conscience and good behavior will also be a testimony to others, as we seek clarity in our communication.

TR: What are some of the misunderstandings of the Old Testament, and the Law it contains, that we must clear up if we are to be Gospel fluent?



How can we let the Gospel truth influence us, so that THEN, with gentleness and respect, we can influence others?

TR: In our three models . . .



... we want to consider Simple Drawing number 4, the third act, and the first half of the third movement.

-- If you haven't seen these before, this graphic is captured on the back of our worship fliers.

TR: Let's read through some key New Testament passages that give us God's take on what the OT and the Law were all about .

..

And the Scripture, **foreseeing** that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." ⁹So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- The Hebrew Scriptures foresaw that justification (being made right with God) would be by faith.

TR: So, why the Law? Let's Skip down to verse 19 . . .

Why then the law? **It was added because of transgressions**, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- This could mean a number of things but probably it was foremost in Paul's mind that the law would reveal people's sinfulness and their need for a savior.

TR: The Law, before the covenant of faith, was our school-teacher. Let's Look down to verse 23 . . .

Now before faith came, we were **held captive** under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴So then, the law was **our guardian** until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- It was our guardian, our school master, our tutor

-- It was the one that showed us our need for Christ and for justification by faith alone, in Christ alone.

TR: what is termed as Progressive revelation teaches us that God reveals His truth over time, progressively. Like the way we teach math.



We don't begin with the calculus and analytic geometry but with the basic building blocks.

TR: The Law was the guardian of those who lived before the coming of Christ, but it was not how they were saved.

I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that **he is obligated to keep the whole law.**

⁴You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you have fallen away from grace.

ESV

As Galatians 5:3 tells us . . . To be saved by the Law one would have to keep it perfectly.

-- READ SLIDE

TR: Some will then ask, in their confusion, “What about those who weren’t among the Hebrews, Gods chosen people?”

Romans 2:15-16 p. 1041

(Gentiles, without the law) show that the work of **the law is written on their hearts**, while their **conscience** also bears witness, and their **conflicting thoughts** accuse or even excuse them¹⁶ on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

ESV

Romans 2 helps us here. Speaking of those who didn't have the Law of the Old Testament, Paul writes . . .

-- READ SLIDE

-- So, the Law, the schoolmaster, makes clear that one must keep it perfectly.

-- And, the law written on all our hearts helps us clear up why virtually everyone has a sense of guilt.

TR: But the Law, with all its rules and even sacrifices, did not ultimately take care of sin. Look down to verse 25 . . .

Romans 2:25b-26 p. 1042

This was to show God's righteousness, because **in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.** ²⁶It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

ESV

READ SLIDE

-- Following the Law, especially the sacrifices, was an expression of FAITH that looked forward to the Once-for-all sacrifice.

-- But, how could we ever understand the calculus of Christ's sacrifice when we don't have the 1+1=2 building blocks of the OT sacrificial system?

TR: All the OT sacrifices, repeated so often, were not an end in themselves.

Hebrews 9:9b-10 p. 1107

According to this arrangement, gifts and sacrifices are offered **that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper,**¹⁰ but deal only with food and drink and various washings, regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

ESV

Hebrews 9 tells us . . . READ SLIDE

-- There was a time of reformation coming that would perfect our consciences.

TR: The next verses capture what this is all about. Pick it up in verse 12 . . .

(Christ) entered **once for all** into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus **securing an eternal redemption.**

ESV

READ SLIDE

TR: It is not that the Law didn't have a wonderful glory about it. 2 Corinthians says . . .

Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. ¹¹For if what was being **brought to an end** came with glory, much more will what is **permanent** have glory.

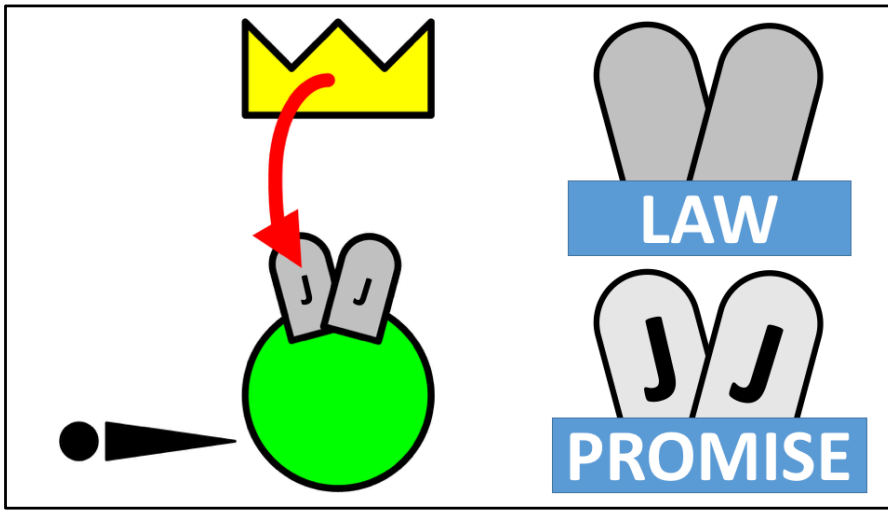
ESV

READ SLIDE

-- It had a glory that would be brought to an end, giving way to that which it pointed to.

-- As a guardian, the Law leads us to that which is permanent, salvation through the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus.

TR: As the fourth simple drawing reminds us . . .



. . . God sends us the Law and the Promise.

-- The state of humanity remains filled with darkness, and dead in trespasses, for the Law cannot save.

-- How we answer the question, “How were saints saved before Christ came?” will tell us a lot about how influenced we have really been by the Gospel.

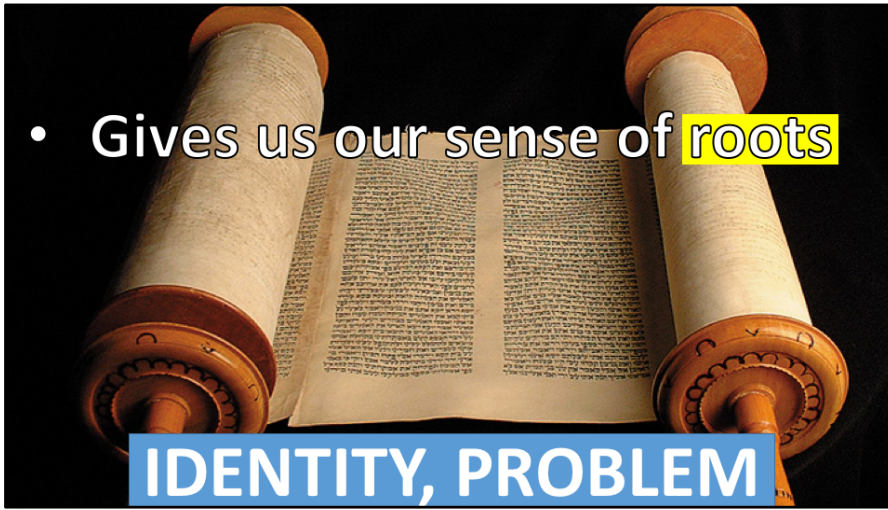
-- If we answer, by the sacrifices and good works, then why would Christ need to come? Why would He need to suffer?

-- No, they were saved by faith, trusting God based on the light they had received, His word and commands He had revealed to them at that point.

-- They were saved looking forward to the One foretold, in the line of David the King, Who would be the Suffering Servant.

TR: Moving down to point 5 in the worship flier notes . . . when we have been influenced by the whole of the Gospel, which includes all of God's Story, New Testament and Old, it . . .

- Gives us our sense of roots

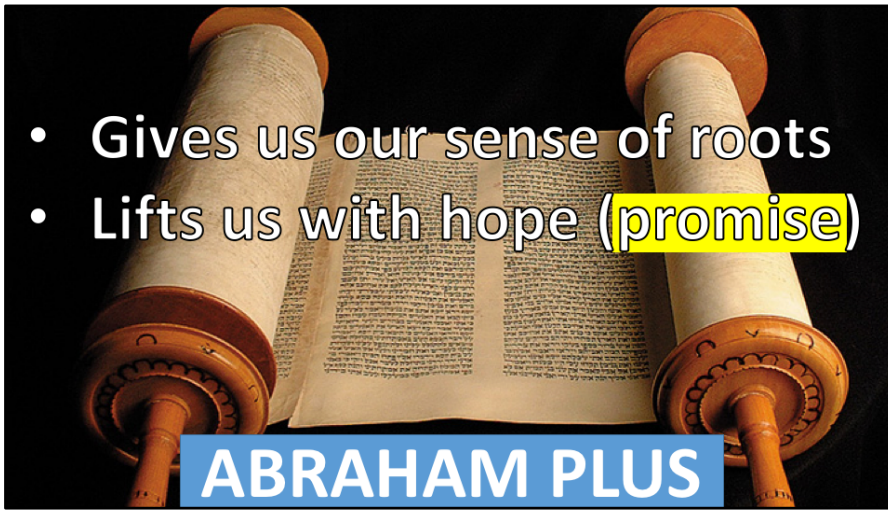


READ SLIDE

-- It tells us, as we've seen these past two weeks, that our core identity as humans is rooted in being created in the **IMAGE OF GOD . . .**

-- . . . and that **THE** problem, that should stir our anger, is the problem of **SIN**.

TR: The OT . . .



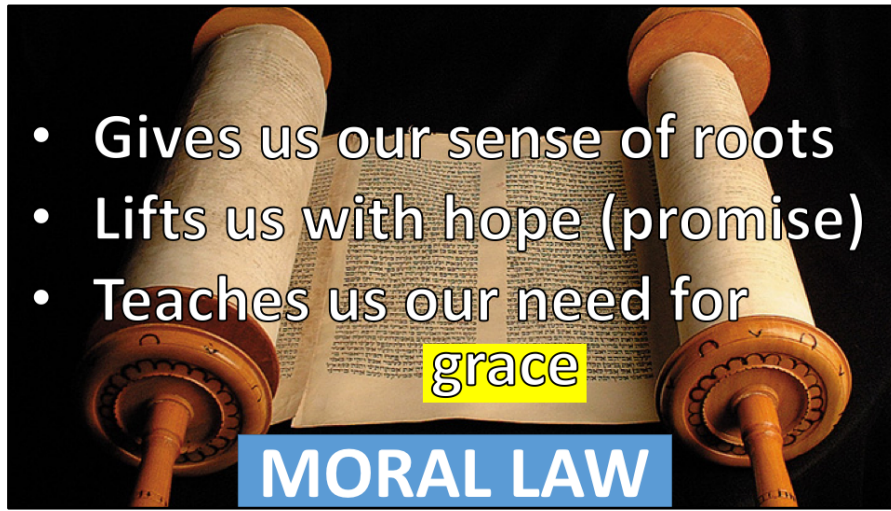
READ SLIDE

-- Beginning with the promise of the seed of the woman crushing Satan, then to Genesis 12 and the promise to Abraham, the man of faith . . .

-- . . . tracing it through the promise to Isaac, Jacob, Judah, to David, and beyond.

-- God is the Maker of promises . . . and all His promises are YES in Christ Jesus!

TR: The Moral Law of the OT . . .



- Gives us our sense of roots
- Lifts us with hope (promise)
- Teaches us our need for

grace

MORAL LAW

Read SLIDE

-- Though all are convicted by their consciences, these internal compasses can be seared.

— perhaps we've convinced ourselves that's we're doing good enough. Yeah, we're not perfect, but who is?

-- well, The absolute Law of God, which Jesus summarized as **LOVING GOD** and **LOVING OTHERS AS OURSELVES**, brings all of us to our knees.

-- When we think we are doing OK, we go to the Sermon on the Mount and let Jesus take us to the heart of the Law . . . the spirit of the Law and not the letter . . . and we are undone.

-- We pat ourselves on the back for not having an affair, but then Jesus tells us about the affairs of the heart! And this is what the Law always has been focused on. On the heart!

—Jesus had strong words to say to the Pharisees in matt. 15 when he said to them, “you hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me...”

TR: The ceremonial law, all those clean and unclean rules, impresses . . .

- Impresses on us the **gap** between God and Man



READ SLIDE

- Very likely some of the ceremonial laws were about hygiene, in a time before an understanding of germs . . .
- . . . but they go beyond that. They seem designed to help the seeker of God understand that God is holy, that He is other, that He is set apart.
- In our day when all seems casual, it is so easy to think of God in too familiar terms.
- He is our heavenly Father, but He is also Holy, Holy, Holy.
- The OT teaches us that!

—the more Holy we understand that he is, the more in awe we ought to be that he is also the father that runs to us!

—David gets at this in Psalm 8, “when I look at your heavens and the works of your hands...what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?”

TR: The sacrificial system, with all its offerings, . . .



- Impresses on us the gap between God and Man
- Sobers us to the **cost** of Salvation (Atonement)

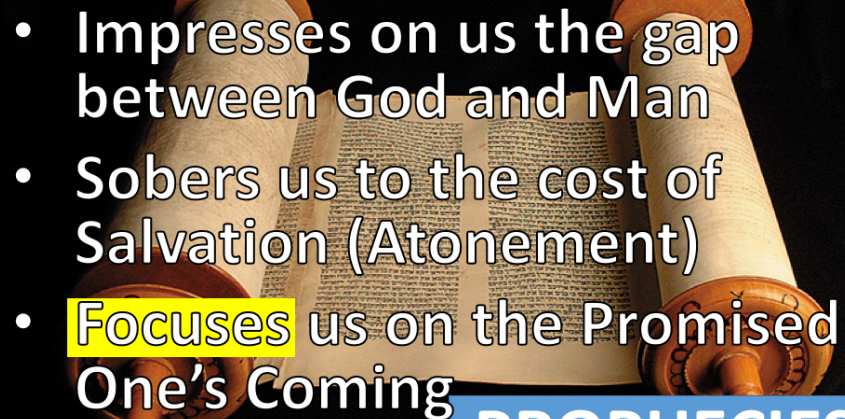
READ SLIDE

- Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, as Hebrews 9:22 tells us.
- The atonement provided by Jesus was first and foremost one of **PENAL SUBSTITUTION**. (Jesus, the substitute sacrifice that atoned and paid for the just penalty of our sin against God)
- Those who lose respect for the **BEFORE CHRIST** Scriptures also tend to then water down what happened on the cross.
- Jesus was not a helpless martyr, not a victim. He was not sucked into the politics of the day.

-- He is the Son of God, God Himself, who bore our sins, becoming sin, faced the righteous wrath of God, and bore our penalty as our substitute.

**—“He was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and by his wounds we are healed.”
Is. 53:5**

TR: Without the OT we might imagine that there could be someone else we should look for, but all the prophecy, the foretelling of details of the Messiah, . . .

- 
- Impresses on us the gap between God and Man
 - Sobers us to the cost of Salvation (Atonement)
 - Focuses us on the Promised One's Coming

PROPHECIES

. . . the Old Testament . . . READ SLIDE

-- If God hadn't given us so many specific prophecies, over such a long period of time, we might wonder if Jesus really is the Anointed One.

-- But, all the major and minor foretelling of specifics, topped with all the foreshadowing of themes and allusions, helps us tie our heads to Christ.

-- God grants to us stability and confident hope, both, Head and Heart, Intellect and Emotions.

-- And, He does so through the giving of prophecies throughout the OT.

— remember Jesus with 2 of the disciples on the road to Emmaus? ...”and beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

TR: My hope is that we can be ...

INfluenced
by the Gospel truths
about
“LAW & PROMISE”

. . . READ SLIDE

TR: It is then that we will be able to answer the charge that so many confused people raise . . .

“The Church is full of hypocrites!”

. . . READ SLIDE

TR: People who make such statements betray that they understand Christianity to be merely a religion with its own set of rules, as most world religions have.

*Why religion and
rule-keeping are
never enough.*

CLARIFY

But, if we are gospel fluent, we can **CLARIFY** that religion and rule-keeping can never be enough.

-- We can share what the Bible itself teaches about the role of the OT.

-- The church is not a display case for those who try harder . . . it is the community of those who admit their sin and their need for a Savior.

—and yes, we are hypocrites if we make Christianity about rule keeping and shame those who don't keep the rules when we ourselves can't even keep the rules.

TR: If we listen to people's stories we may hear again and again

that they imagine that their good works are the solution to atone for their past sins. But . . .

We did NOT make atonement for our sins, only Jesus could and did! God provided the LAMB!

READ SLIDE

- When we look at the Bible, written over 1400 years by 40 plus authors, in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek . . . yet we find only one theme . . . one story.
- It is a story that makes sense and clears up a lot of confusion when we look at both the Before Christ and After Christ Scriptures together, as one, complete , whole , dominant story.
- The story is about God and rescuing and reconciling a people through Jesus for his glory!
- This is the big story, the narrative of all history, that God wants you to be part of.

— that God wants every person who is listed on your bookmarks to be a part of...