

The True Nature of God Session 4 – Understanding Old and New Testament Differences

I. Review

A. Session 1 – Knowing God vs Knowing About God

B. Session 2 – God’s Nature of Goodness

C. Session 3 – The Nature of God Revealed in Jesus

II. Understanding the Difference in the two Testaments

A. Unique differences in the Old and New Testament

1. **Numbers 15:32-35 (NLT)** – ³²One day while the people of Israel were in the wilderness, they discovered a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day. ³³The people who found him doing this took him before Moses, Aaron, and the rest of the community. ³⁴They held him in custody because they did not know what to do with him. ³⁵Then the LORD said to Moses, “The man must be put to death! The whole community must stone him outside the camp.”

2. NEW TESTAMENT CONTRAST

John 8:3-11 (NLT) – ³As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd. ⁴“Teacher,” they said to Jesus, “this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?” ⁶They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. ⁷They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!” ⁸Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust. ⁹When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until

only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. ¹⁰Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?” ¹¹“No, Lord,” she said. And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”

- a. **Examples like this have given people a strange impression of what God is like.**
- b. **The Word of God does not contradict itself.**
- c. **The Old Testament image of God is incomplete.**
It is not incorrect, just incomplete.

3. **2 Kings 1:9-14 (NLT)** – ⁹Then he sent an army captain with fifty soldiers to arrest him. They found him sitting on top of a hill. The captain said to him, “Man of God, the king has commanded you to come down with us.” ¹⁰But Elijah replied to the captain, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your fifty men!” Then fire fell from heaven and killed them all. ¹¹So the king sent another captain with fifty men. The captain said to him, “Man of God, the king demands that you come down at once.” ¹²Elijah replied, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and destroy you and your fifty men!” And again the fire of God fell from heaven and killed them all. ¹³Once more the king sent a third captain with fifty men. But this time the captain went up the hill and fell to his knees before Elijah. He pleaded with him, “O man of God, please spare my life and the lives of these, your fifty servants. ¹⁴See how the fire from heaven came down and destroyed the first two groups. But now please spare my life!”

4. **New Testament Contrast**

Luke 9:51-56 (NKJV) – ⁵¹Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, ⁵²and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. ⁵³But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. ⁵⁴And when His disciples James and John saw

this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?” ⁵⁵But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. ⁵⁶For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.” And they went to another village.

5. Scripture must be accurately interpreted.

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

a. Context

b. Harmony with other scriptures

c. Consideration for the era in which it was written.

1) Era – A distinct period of history / an age

2) We are in the grace age presently.

This may also be referred to as the church age.

There are seven dispensations found in scripture.

3) This present age/dispensation (Grace) began with the establishment of the New Covenant in the blood of Christ.

4) The next dispensation/age will be the millennial reign of Christ.

d. To accurately understand why God did things different in the Old Testament vs the New Testament, we must understand the difference in the dispensation.

e. The Old Testament covers different dispensations.

1) Dispensation of innocence – Genesis 1-2

2) Dispensation of conscience –

From the time of Adam and Eve’s sin until the flood.

Historically projected to be approx. 1,600 years.

Many only had his conscience to follow, there were no laws from God to set the standard –

Left to himself, man became exceeding sinful.

3) New Old Testament era finishes in the dispensation of Law.

4) God dealt with the human race at various times in different ways.

5) From this, many conclude that the Bible contradicts itself and that God is unpredictable in his ways. THIS IS ERROR!

- 6) Once you understand that every dispensation had a purpose with the ultimate goal of our salvation through Christ, the many pieces of the puzzle fit perfectly.

III. Why did God deal differently with the human race in the Old Testament vs the New Testament?

A. Why were different dispensations necessary?

1. **When Adam and Eve willingly sinned against God they gave their authority to Satan.**
2. **God's plan of redemption included bringing a second Adam into this world – JESUS.**
3. **The process for God to redeem the human race back to himself required that He follow specific steps to maintain his complete nature of righteousness.**
4. **Jesus was the plan of God from the foundation of the world, but God had to work through a specific process to bring His son into the world as our redeemer.**