

Should We Throw Out the Old Testament

Reading the Bible with Purpose series – week 2

by Bill Aumack

We're in week two of our new series, Reading the Bible With Purpose. And we're just going to dive right in here today. So get out your sermon notes. We're hitting it hard and getting ready to go here. Hopefully, the sermon notes are right this week. For those of you who pointed out that they were wrong last week, we fired that person. For those that are guests here today, that's me. Yeah, I fired myself. All right, so let's get ready to go here.

Well, you know, **if you want to read the Bible with purpose, you've got to read the Bible purposefully.** I know you're thinking, oh, look, isn't he cute? He made a little saying. No, that's not what I'm trying to do here. Okay, but you have to have a plan. How many have heard a story about somebody who is down on their luck and they're at the bottom of the well? It can't get any worse. It's horrible. And they're in a hotel room and they pray to God, God, show me what to do. And they take the Bible and they just fling it open and go (point to random verse). And they get some magical verse that speaks to that thing. Right? How many of you, don't raise your hands, How many of you have tried that and it hasn't worked? Right. Do you think God's going to perform a miracle every single time you open the Bible? That's pretty high expectations, right? God can answer that prayer, and God has answered that prayer, and God will probably answer that prayer in the future. But I don't think you should expect for that to happen every time. So I think that you need to have a plan. What are you going to do? Are you trying to read the whole Bible in a year? Are you trying to read the New Testament, the Old Testament? Maybe you want to read the Book of Isaiah. I've never read the Book of Isaiah. Let's do that. You got to have a plan, okay?

And sometimes when you have a plan and, boy, am I speaking to me right here, the plan kind of takes over because you're trying to read the Bible in a year, and so you got to read your three chapters. And if you don't read your

three chapters, then you're behind. Now what do you do? Pretty soon you're a week behind, and you don't know whether to just skip those chapters or try and catch up and then you're out. Right? Because we were more concerned about the plan than we were about what Pastor talked about last week, and that's reading the Bible with a lens that we can begin to understand who Jesus and who God is. And the plan kind of takes over. So we need balance. You need a plan. But don't let the plan become king. God is king. Okay? So have a plan. Know what you're gonna do.

And some of you, I'm gonna be honest. Some of you need to go spend some money. Uh oh, because you need a new Bible. You need one that you can read that's in a translation that works for you. Or you need one that's got room for you to take notes. Or you need one that's in Spanish or English or German or whatever. Any German speakers, just in case. No. Anything other than Spanish. Anybody here speak any language other than English or Spanish? One person. What do you speak? Sign language. I don't think you can buy a Bible in sign language. So maybe you need to buy a new Bible. Bibles are expensive. If you looked at Bibles, they're expensive. But I'm going to ask you a question. How much is your soul worth? Go spend the money. Go spend the money. Buy a good Bible that you can use. Okay?

And one last thing on this, and I'm embarrassed to admit how long this took me to figure out, sometimes when we read the Bible, and especially the Old Testament, we get caught up in all the heroes, right? The Moses and Noah's and David's and, you know, all these great heroes of the Bible. You know, the Bible's not about them, right? The Bible's about God and what God was doing when Moses and Abraham and Noah and David happened to be standing around. Read that Bible with the lens like Pastor talked about from last week. Read that Bible with a lens. What does this tell me about God? Not what am I learning about Noah, but what am I learning about God?

All right, so today's title for this message is should we Throw out the Old Testament? And Pastor stole a bunch of my thunder in Sabbath School. So if you're here at Sabbath school, try to forget you heard all this before already,

right? And you've heard Christians say we don't need the Old Testament anymore, right? That's the Old Covenant. We're under the New Covenant. All we need is the New Testament, right? Anybody ever heard this before? A bunch of us, right? We actually got this comment once on our YouTube channel. I think it's when we were doing our series on Daniel. Somebody says, you guys spend too much time on the Old Testament. You need to focus on the New Testament. I was able to share well, right now in our Bible study time or Sabbath school, we're studying the Book of Mark. We think both are important. The Old Testament and the New Testament, okay? But the argument goes that the words “testament” and “covenant” are pretty similar words. And so we're not under the Old Covenant anymore. We're under the New Covenant. Therefore, we don't need the Old Testament anymore. We just need the New Testament.

And at first glance, that seems okay. But let's use our brains a little bit. God gave us brains. Let's use them for just a second. Let's try to imagine a world where there's no Old Testament, okay? And this is going to be hard because we've always had the Old Testament. But try to imagine no Old Testament. There's no story of creation and Adam and Eve. There's no Job, there's no Noah, there's no Abraham. There's no Israel and the 12 tribes. There's no Moses in 40 years and Canaan in the promised land. There's no anything. There's no Daniel. That means we can't have Daniel and Revelation seminars. We can only have Revelation seminars. No Old Testament. It got lost somehow in the passage of time. Now we got the New Testament, and this dude is born, claims to be God, does some miracles, gets killed by the local authorities. His followers say he rises again and goes to heaven. How many of you would believe that story? Nobody. That's a tough story to believe. That's a tough story to believe.

But in the Old Testament, we have a bunch of prophecies that point forward, right? **Scholars generally estimate that Jesus fulfilled between 300 and 570 Old Testament prophecies.** Apparently, counting prophecies is a soft science. We can't agree how many there were. Most people put the number closer to the 300. So we'll call it the 300 plus prophecies. Okay? 300 plus

prophecies that point to Jesus. Now, that makes it a lot easier to kind of believe because Jesus fills all of these. Not most of them, not some of them, not all, but this one. All of them! And if you took statistics class, your mind's spinning right now because the odds of this are crazy, right? The odds of this are crazy.

Okay, so maybe in the Old Testament we can throw out everything, but we'll just keep the prophecies. Okay, maybe that's a plan. But did you know that Jesus quotes the Old Testament at least a hundred times? Maybe as many as 180 times, because again, he doesn't always say, I'm quoting this from the book of...., he just says something and it's kind of similar to what we have in the Old Testament. So it's a little bit soft numbers, but between 100 and 180 times he quotes the Old Testament. Now if you have a Bible with the red text that Jesus says, if you count up how many texts we have of Jesus talking, it's about 1800 texts. If 180 of them are quotes from the Old Testament, that means one tenth of what Jesus said came from the Old Testament. The disciples who wrote the rest of the New Testament, if you take all their quotes in, in the New Testament, you have a number of about 300. The New Testament quotes the Old Testament about 300 times. So **Jesus and the disciples believed that the Old Testament has value**, right? If Jesus and the disciples believe the Old Testament has value, how's the rest of that argument go? Why wouldn't I? If Jesus thinks the Old Testament is valuable, what should I think about the Old Testament? It's valuable, right? He's my example. Okay?

But we still have these Christians and some churches out there that say the Old Testament, don't worry about it. And you've probably heard of people that were, we'll say, skeptical of religion and they like to pull out some weird verse that says, but you don't sell your daughters into slavery. So you're not following everything the Bible says, right? They have favorite verses they like to quote. You don't go out and kill people that work on Sabbath. So you're not following everything the Bible says. And most of the time those people haven't read the Bible. They've cherry picked a couple verses here and there and they're trying to use them. But let's talk about that for a minute. When Jesus is crucified, what happens in the temple? When Jesus dies, the veil is torn, right?

Separating the holy place from the most holy place. This signifies the new covenant. We don't have to go through a priest, we don't have to go through the whole animal sacrifices to forgive our sins. We are now able to go straight to God. This is the big difference between the Protestant church and the Catholic Church. Okay? So that's what we believe. Now, if God had wanted the Old Testament to go away, would he have ripped the veil or burned the Torah? Right. If God said Jesus died, the Old Testament is no longer valid. He would have burned up the Torah. Right. And he didn't. And he didn't. He didn't. Okay? And so we have this, actually we have a slide on that **God didn't burn up the Old Testament when Jesus died. He just ripped the curtain**, right? So God's still interested in the Old Testament, but this argument about the covenants is still out there. And people say, well, we don't need the covenant and we're under the New Covenant.

And you know, there's parts of that covenant that are hard to deal with. And we don't have time today to go through all of them and talk about every single one because that would be like a lengthy multi part sermon. But I want to talk about a few things and some guidelines of how we deal with these verses that are difficult. Right. The Bible says it. You know the Bible tells you that when you're walking around out in the desert and nature calls and you need to relieve yourself, you should use your shovel and dig a hole, do your business and cover it up. How come none of us walk around with shovels? Bible says you should carry a shovel around. Well, we have this thing called indoor plumbing, right. We don't need shovels anymore. That was something for a time and a place, not necessarily a moral command for all time, right? And so we have these principles we can use.

And so I've got a couple examples here. And we're not going to get through all these, but let's just, let's think about them for just a minute. One of the things that the Old Testament tells us, excuse me, in Leviticus 19 and in Deuteronomy 22, is that you should not wear clothing made of mixed cloth, specifically wool and linen. Wool comes from the sheep. Linen is a plant based product. It says don't wear clothes that weave those two things together. Why? Bible doesn't say why? The Bible doesn't say you can't wear a

linen undergarment and a wool outer garment. That was apparently okay. Apparently you could wear a garment that was made half of sheepskin and half of cow leather, that seems to be okay. But you couldn't mix linen and wool. And we don't know why. The Bible doesn't say. But I bet you the ancient Israelites knew why. I bet money they knew why. We presume, and again we don't know this, that this was God again trying to keep his people separate. So in the Old Testament, God's working with one nation, Israel, the Jews, and he's trying to keep them away from the pagan cultures that are around them and set them apart. And I would presume that they were doing this in their clothes. And Jesus says, God says don't do that. Don't be like them. You're special. Be different. We don't know that, but we presume that that's probably what's going on. But I bet the ancient Israelites knew why to do that. Now, when we look at these laws like this that we're not quite sure what to do with, because I would bet that every single one of us here is wearing clothes of mixed fibers today, right? It's cotton and polyester and rayon and nylon and spandex and who knows what else, right? So we've kind of said that's not important to us. We ignore that because we understand that that was for a time and a place. That's not a moral law. That was a ceremonial law to keep Israel unique. Okay? And if you had a friend that read this and said, I'm convicted that I can only wear 100% cotton shirts, are you still going to be friends with them? Are you going to say, man, you're crazy. That's not what the Bible means. Get in a big argument and a fight, right? We would have grace towards somebody that read that said, that convicts me. I'm supposed to do that even if we didn't believe it, okay?

And that's kind of easy to do with clothes. So let's pick one that's a little harder. The dietary restrictions in the Old Testament about clean and unclean meat, okay? Now, the Old Testament talks about what kind of meat you're supposed to eat and what kind of meat you're not supposed to eat. And to the best of my knowledge, the only people that follow that are Jews and Adventists. The whole rest of the world says, that doesn't matter. We don't have to do that. Okay, so what makes them say that? And we say no. And a lot of people use a verse of Peter's dream with the sheet and the animals on it.

Remember this in Acts 10 and 11 of this sheet coming down, and God says, it's got all the unclean animals on it. And God says, take them and eat. And what does Peter tell God? No. That's pretty brave, right? God says, take one. I'd be like, okay, I'll take this one. Three times he says, no. Of course, he gets invited to Cornelius house to talk to them. And he sees all these Gentiles that are gathered in the house that want to know about God. And the Bible says, Peter understood. This is a paraphrase. Peter understood that this dream was not about food, but about people. Okay? This is what makes it possible for all of us. To hear and go to heaven. Because before this it was just for the Jews. And God says, no, no, no, no. It's for everybody. So let's not make a verse that makes it possible for us to go to heaven be about food. Amen. It's not about the food, it's about people. But everybody uses that text to be about food. See, you've got to do the study on it and be intellectually honest with yourself. And that can be hard when you really want a piece of bacon. Because if you've gone to the LA County Fair, everything is wrapped in bacon. I think you can get bacon wrapped in bacon and you want that. It's hard to be intellectually honest. Now, we're not going to solve the whole thing about clean and unclean meat here, but there's other verses you can use when you go home. Look up Mark 7:19, write that down. Mark 7:19, use that verse. Okay? Now I think we would all agree that God is more concerned about the contents of your heart than he is the contents of your stomach. Amen. To use the famous euphemism, St. Peter's not standing at the pearly gates going, are you wearing a T shirt that's got wool and linen in it? Did you have bacon this morning? Pull the lever and away you go. I don't think that's how it works. Okay.

And it's not just the Old Testament we have this problem with because the New Testament says women aren't supposed to have leadership positions in church. Ooh, we're getting serious now. And we know of churches that have said, explained that away by looking at stuff and said, no women can have leadership positions. And we know churches that haven't. The Adventist church is a worldwide church. We've tried to take a worldwide view of this. And the problem is that we have parts of the world that are ready for women to be in leadership and parts of the world that aren't due to society norms of

where they live. And currently the have-nots won the vote. And so that's the rules we live under. And that makes some people very upset. And I get that. But that's just the realities of where we are. And we can look at the text where, where Paul or Paul and Peter talk about this, particularly Paul. So Paul in 1 Timothy 2:12 says, I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man. And in 1 Corinthians 14, he talks about women being silent in the church. Okay? But in 1 Corinthians 11, the same letter he says women can go into the church and pray and prophesy as long as they cover their heads before they go in. So in chapter 11, he says women can go in and pray and prophesy. So we get mixed things. He also talks a lot about women that were co laborers and helped him do all kinds of things in the church. And there's a whole list of women that he recognizes as deacons and co laborers. And we couldn't get it done without them. So there were women that were leaders in the church. So how do you, how do you justify, how do you reconcile those things? And it's hard. And it's hard because the food and the shirts we don't really view as moral issues. And if somebody believed different than us, we're like, I'd give you grace, Philip. You can wear a shirt that has linen and wool in it. And I'm okay with that. But if some woman wants to be pastor, some of us are like, oh, time out. That's a sin. Right? And we need to be intellectually honest and do our best studies on these. But we need grace for people who come down on the other side of the issue. It doesn't matter which side of the issue you come on. Be graceful for the folks on the other side, okay? You have to have that grace and mercy. And I tell you this without going into too much details. When the Adventist church came together to vote about women and pastors and leadership roles, both sides, Both sides acted in ways unbecoming of Christ followers. Okay? That makes me sad. That makes me sad, okay? Because we need to be graceful and have mercy and do the right things. And we need to be intellectually honest with ourselves to read these Bibles, these passages, and do the hard work and not just say, I believe it because my parents believed it or the pastor said it was okay, or that church over there is doing it, so I can do it too. Because on Judgment Day, God isn't going to care about what your parents or your pastor or that church over there

did. He's going to care about what you did and what you believed, Right? So be honest. Read the verses both for and against. Try and figure out where you come down on some of these issues. Don't believe me, don't believe pastor, don't believe anybody else but yourself. You have access to read the Bible just like we do. Ask questions. That's good stuff. We should do these things. Reading the Bible with purpose, not just, oh, I got through my three chapters today. Yay is me! Right. How do you feel about these things.

Open your Bibles with me to a verse that you will probably recognize. **2nd Timothy 3, 16 and 17**. We covered this in Sabbath school this morning. 2nd Timothy 3,16 and 17. Give me an amen when you get there. It says, all scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

How much scripture is useful? [All] Even the parts that are the Old Covenant that we don't follow anymore? Wait just a minute. You mean there's parts of the Old Testament that's the Old Covenant that I don't have to follow anymore, but I can still learn something from those? Absolutely, yes. Because when you're reading the Bible through a lens to understand God, those passages tell you about God. We should never dismiss the Old Testament, even the parts that are goofy and hard to read. And we don't like that law. We don't like this rule. We need to look at them and see, are they part of the sacrificial system or the ceremonial law? Were they part of something that was told to the Israelites because they were living in the desert? What do these things mean? Who were they for? Do they matter to me now? And look at them and make that decision for ourselves and be graceful for the people that think a little bit differently than you.

That's the one thing I love about the Adventist Church, is that we try to give some grace and room for a little bit different beliefs on some issues. You know, I'll tell you a secret. Pastor and I don't agree about everything. What? Okay. It's okay. It's okay. All right.

Reflection. **Have you been intellectually honest and done the work to determine if what you believe and what you practice is in line with the Bible, or do you just do what everybody else does?** I don't ever want to be in that last line. I don't ever want to just be following along. And by the way, sometimes that's hard to even recognize because you may have been brought up in a certain way. Well, my parents did this. We went to a church that did that, and it was ok. And now you're telling me it's not okay, or I went to church that told me it wasn't okay. Don't do it, don't do it, don't do it. And now you're saying it's okay. That's hard to change when you get old, right? There's a saying about old dogs and new tricks.

Okay, challenge. **Pick one thing, just one, and start your study on it. Read both sides of the issue. Study the verses that people use to support and to oppose, and make sure you have a firm foundation.** Doesn't matter how firm pastors is, doesn't matter how firm mine is, doesn't matter how firm anybody else's is, it matters how firm yours is. Amen.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you so much Lord for this wonderful Old Testament you gave us. With so many lessons and so much history and things that we can learn about you and the prophecies and the stories, we could just go on and on and on and on. It's a truly wonderful gift that you've had a hand in protecting through the centuries so that we would have it and it would be useful. Thank you Lord. Help us to know what to do with it. Help us to apply it correctly. Give us the wisdom to understand the strange parts and the weird parts that we struggle with. Help us to ask the right questions. Help us to always read it through the lens of what does this tell me, God? Lord, be with us this upcoming week as we read and study our Bibles and be with us when we come back together again in Jesus name, Amen.