



Understanding and Applying the Bible

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Schedule

- Jan 22nd** **Understanding God's Law**
- Jan 29th Understanding Historical Narrative
- Feb 5th Understanding the Psalms
- Feb 12th Understanding Wisdom Books
- Feb 19th Understanding the Prophets
- Feb 26th Understanding the Gospels
- Mar 5th Understanding Parables
- Mar 12th Understanding Acts
- Mar 19th Understanding the Epistles
- Mar 26th Understanding Revelation (Apocalyptic)



Scripture

- Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. (2 Pet 1:20-21)
- What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments. (1 Cor 2:12-15)
- For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (Heb 4:12)

Tools (part 1)

A good translation of the Bible

- BibleGateway.com
- Formal equivalence
- Dynamic equivalence
- Paraphrase
- Byzantine (Majority) vs. Alexandrian texts

Law



1. The law is a covenant between God and the nation of Israel.
2. God created the law for a specific purpose: the reconstituting of the people of Israel after the exodus from Egypt.
3. We are not one of the parties in the old covenant.
4. The law doesn't cease to reveal the holiness and faithfulness of God, now that the new covenant has arrived. It pointed (and still points) to the promise.
5. Some parts of the law are included as part of the new covenant in Christ (e.g., Eph 6:1-3). This tells us that some things never change, which means the Spirit continues to speak through the law and point us to our need for Christ (under the new covenant).

Questions to ask as we read the Law of Moses

Q1: What does the passage teach us about God and his character (i.e., his holiness and faithfulness)?

Principle: God doesn't change.

Q2: What does the passage teach us about Israel's obedience and the need to maintain boundaries (personal holiness) in our relationships with other believers and in our dealings with those outside the faith?

Principle: We all live in a broken world and have the same struggles; we need to obey God and avoid sin as his holy people.

Law: Interpretation to application, step by step

Old Covenant

Boundaries and rules to
promote holiness

Lev 19:1-2

- Between his people (Lev 19:11-18)
- Between God and his people (Deut 6:4-5; Exod 20:3-5)
- Between his people and the influence of outsiders (Lev 18:24-28; 20:23-25)

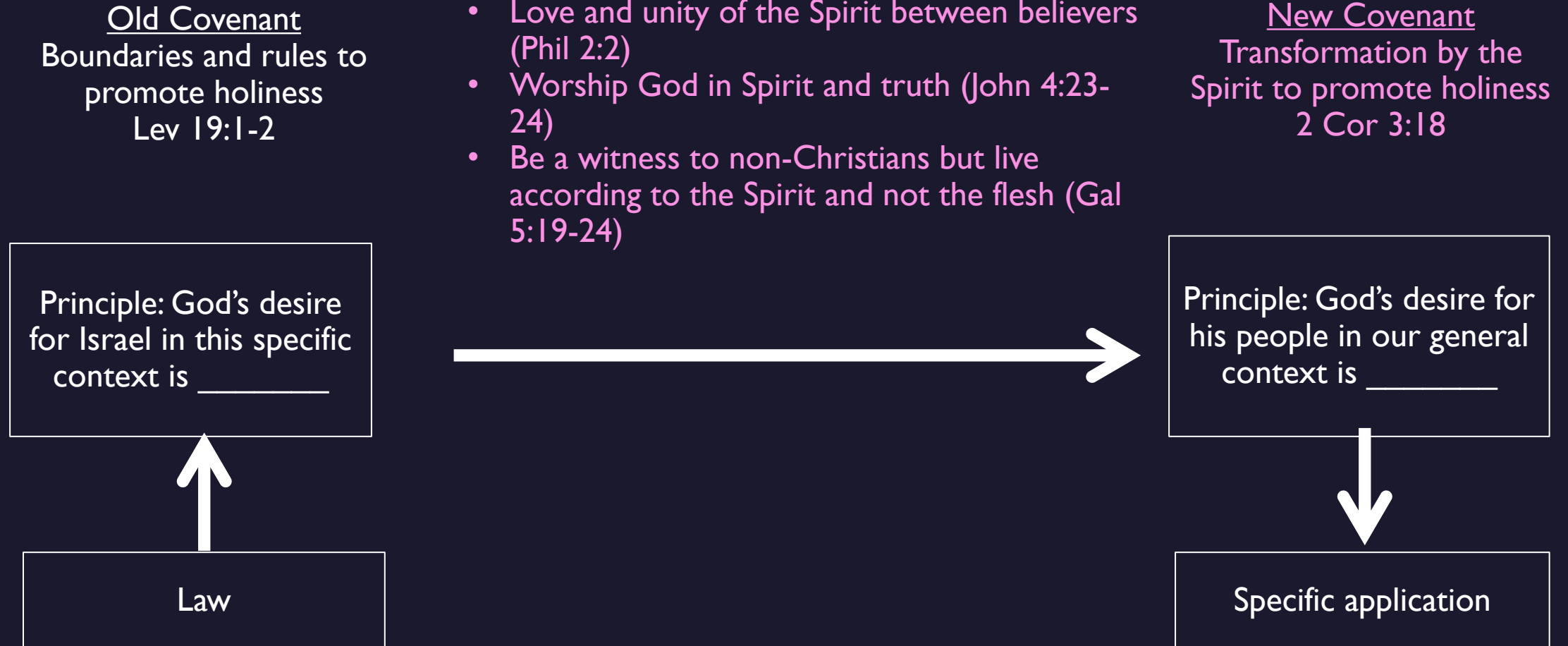
Principle: God's desire
for Israel in this specific
context is _____



Law

- Love each other and treat one another honestly.
 - Love God and put him above everything else.
 - Be a light to outsiders but maintain social and ethical boundaries; don't follow their behavior!
-
- Specific command(s)

Law: Interpretation to application, step by step



Example: Leviticus 5:1-6

¹ “If anyone sins because they do not speak up when they hear a public charge to testify regarding something they have seen or learned about, they will be held responsible.

² “If anyone becomes aware that they are guilty—if they unwittingly touch anything ceremonially unclean (whether the carcass of an unclean animal, wild or domestic, or of any unclean creature that moves along the ground) and they are unaware that they have become unclean, but then they come to realize their guilt; ³ or if they touch human uncleanness (anything that would make them unclean) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt; ⁴ or if anyone thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything, whether good or evil (in any matter one might carelessly swear about) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt— ⁵ when anyone becomes aware that they are guilty in any of these matters, they must confess in what way they have sinned. ⁶ As a penalty for the sin they have committed, they must bring to the LORD a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for them for their sin.

Example: Leviticus 5:1-6

SPECIFIC

- Not speaking up when you are a witness.
- Accidentally touching an unclean animal or carcass, or an unclean person.
- Rashly taking an oath you can't keep.

PRINCIPLE

- Violation of boundaries with regard to responsibility to others. (Omission)
- Violation of public health issues or ceremonial issues regarding cleanliness when approaching God in worship. (Ignorance/accident)
- Violation of integrity before God and others. (Acting rashly/impulsively)

Law: Interpretation to application, step by step

Old Covenant

Boundaries and rules to
promote holiness
Lev 19:1-2

Principle: Even acts of
omission, ignorance, and
impulse can be sins
(violating boundaries of
holiness) and require
atonement.

Law (specific commands
in Lev 5:1-6)



New Covenant

Transformation by the
Spirit to promote holiness
2 Cor 3:18

Principle: God expects
his people to repent and
seek forgiveness and not
make excuses due to a
lack of specific intention
to sin.

Application: When I hurt
my wife or kids I need to
take responsibility even if
I didn't mean to do it.



Lawlessness is at work...

For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. (2 Thess 2:7-8)