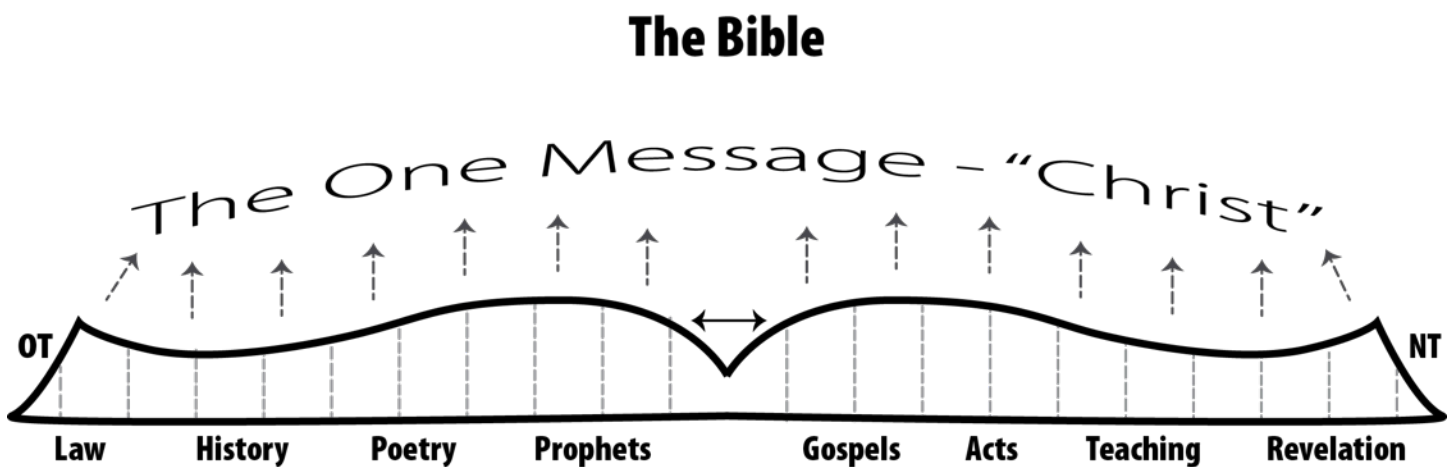


## D5 - the hermeneutic - "Left to Right"

### *Following the Nature of Progressive Revelation*

I. The relationship between proper interpretation and our hearts.

II. The relationship between God's climactic revelation of His Son and proper interpretation.



### **III. Left to Right: The way the Bible was written (following progressive revelation).**

As you strive to interpret the Bible with integrity, you must labor to hold on to tensions that you will feel tugging on you from different directions:

- ➔ *There is \_\_\_\_\_ message from the Bible I must not miss; there is one climactic revelation I must get to: Jesus Christ!*
- ➔ *God unfolded the glorious message of His Son Jesus in a \_\_\_\_\_ manner.*

*Some "Left to Right" principles:*

1. **Begin with the meaning of individual texts in order to move toward the message of the whole Bible.**
2. **Let the order or progression of revelation guide you: read/interpret texts in a forward fashion; be mindful of the progressive nature of revelation: Left to Right!**
3. **Be mindful of where individual texts sit in that progression of revelation. OT or NT? Law? Prophets? History? Wisdom? Gospels? Acts? Epistles? Etc.**
4. **Properly isolate your individual text in such a way that it allows you to temporarily hear its specific meaning more clearly than the meaning of any other passage or the climactic message of the whole Bible.**
  - a. **Positively:**
  - b. **Negatively:**
  - c. **Be very careful to not override the specific meaning of an OT text with the later message of the NT or meaning of a NT text.**
5. **Do not improperly isolate your individual text so that you never consider that a later testament or later texts have come.**
6. **Always strive to summarize, develop and refine the one message of the whole Bible.**

#### **IV. Is there continuity or discontinuity in progressive revelation?**

For example, what is the relationship between the writings of Moses (Mosaic Law) and the Christian today? As you read the writings of Moses, what has not changed at all from Moses' day to yours? Has anything changed from Moses' day to yours? And most importantly, how is Christ related to what hasn't changed and what has changed?

##### ***First, what HAS NOT changed concerning the writings of Moses and the Christian today (Christ-centered continuity)?***

According to Jesus and Paul, an organic union exists between Moses' writings and Jesus' words, John 5:39-47; Acts 28:23.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is rooted in Moses' writings and Law according to Jesus and Paul, Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; Acts 13:26-41; 17:2-3; 26:22-23; Galatians 3:8.

Paul saw his teachings united alongside the OT for the church's benefit (Peter did, too), 2 Timothy 3:10-17; 2 Peter 3:14-16.

Peter also saw his own teachings united alongside the OT for the church's benefit, 2 Peter 3:1-2.

##### ***Secondly, what HAS changed concerning the writings of Moses and the Christian today (Christ-centered discontinuity)?***

*Christ-centered, or Christ-exalting discontinuity is just as important a tool or servant that reveals the unity of the Bible as Christ-centered continuity is. We see in the following examples that discontinuity, or differences, actually can reveal unity: The unique differences between the role of a husband and the role of a wife in marriage serves to unify them. The unique differences between the roles of the members of the Godhead serve to show the unity of the Godhead. The same can be said of the unique, Christ-exalting differences between the two testaments – they serve to show the unity of the Bible. Don't fall into the trap that the only way the NT and OT can be unified is that they both have to say the exact same revelation the exact same way (don't flatten out the texts of the older and newer testaments). How does the NT exalt Christ by showing some distinctions between the OT and the NT?*

Jesus clearly declared John the Baptist's ministry to be a distinguishing line worth noticing, Luke 16:16.

Jesus acted and taught with an authority that authorized Him to inaugurate a new era and law (or regulation), Luke 4:18-21, 42-44; 7:22; 8:1; 9:11; 11:20; 17:20-21; 18:20-25; 20:1-2.

Jesus called His hearers to be specifically regulated by Him, Matthew 11:28-30.

Jesus displayed authority over Sabbath regulation in Mosaic Law, Matthew 12:1-14.

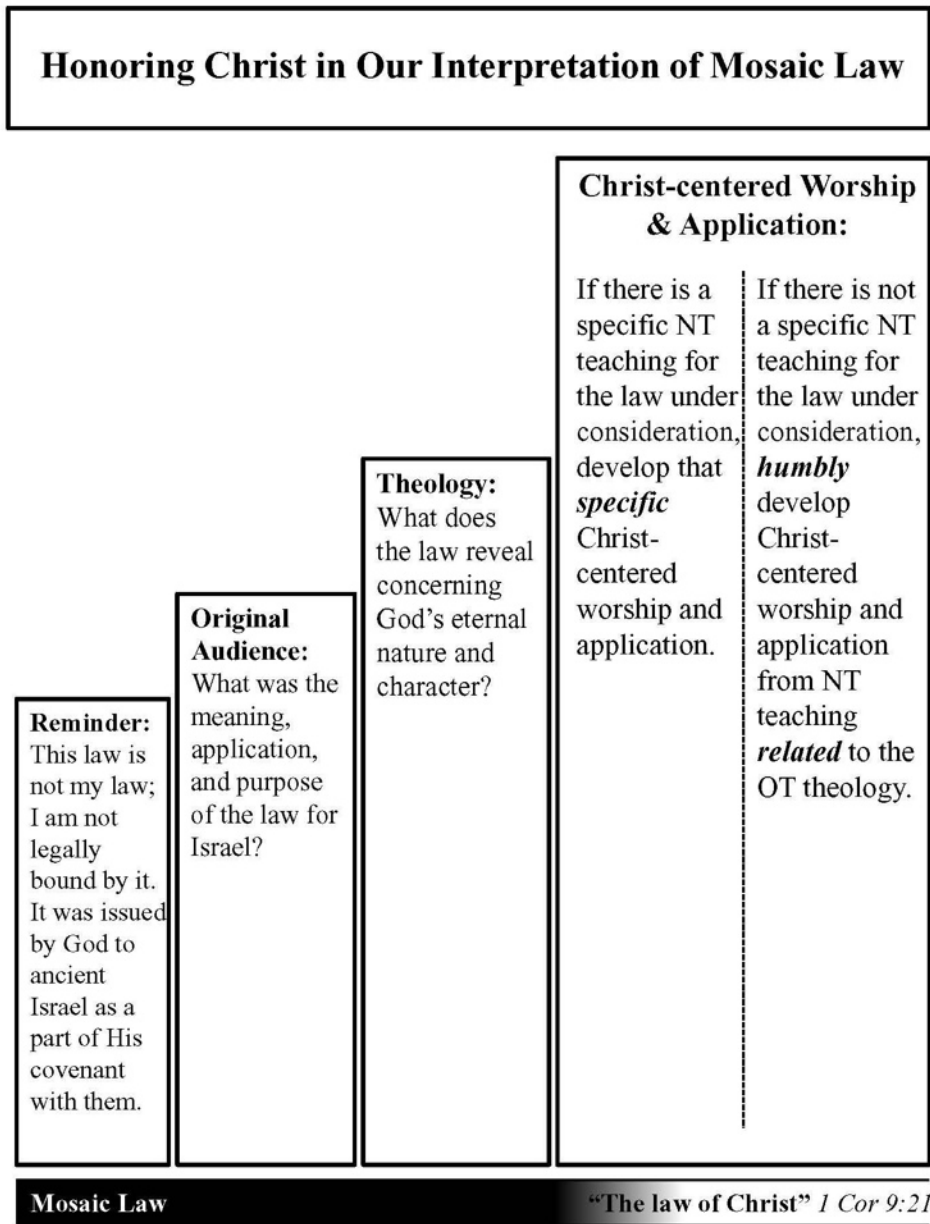
Jesus' authority reached beyond the regulation of Mosaic Law, Mark 7:14-23.

God eclipsed Moses and Elijah (the great representatives of the Law and the Prophets) with His own Son and His teaching, Matthew 17:1-18.

Jesus' authority in the Sermon on the Mount reaches beyond the authority of Mosaic Law, thus obligating all to obediently listen to His words, Matthew 5:1-48; 7:24-27.

Jesus authoritatively advanced His commands into the nations through His Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:1-3.

**A Christo-centric interpretation of Mosaic Law that attempts to hold continuity and discontinuity in proper relationship:**



- In the 'Theology' column, add other -ologies like, anthropology, hamartiology, etc.
- Something like this interpretation needs to take place with the wisdom, prophetic, and historical sections of the OT also.
- Do you see a striving for balance here between the pieces and the message of the whole? We must get to Christ as Christians (no matter where we are in the Bible). But each text must speak loudly for itself on its own terms with its original audience in mind. But the text must not speak more than what God intended it to say. That is where the difficulty lies. It is tempting to import into the OT what the NT later reveals.

**V. For your practice: Biblical themes to progressively isolate, one text at a time. How will this impact your understanding of the one message of the Bible - Jesus Christ?**

- Promised seed/offspring (to Eve, to Abraham, to David). Why so many genealogies??
- Sacrifice
- An innocent substitute (and blood)
- Sacrificial lamb
- Priest (high)
- Tabernacle/tent/temple
- King (Davidic)
- Kingdom of God
- Etc.
  
- ***Sabbath rest (an example)***
  - Genesis 2:1-3
  
  - From the Fall to Mount Sinai (Genesis 2:15; 3:17-19; 3:15 and 5:28-29; 8:10, 12; Exodus 16:22-30)
  
  - Mount Sinai – an explosion of Sabbath/rests!
  
  - The second generation to Joshua (entering the Land), Deuteronomy 12:8-10; 25:19; Joshua 11:23; 14:15 (note how “rest” is tied to “inheritance” of the land).
  
  - King David, Psalm 95:6-11.

- ★ *Do you notice what we have been doing? Every passage get's to speak for itself above all others. Not passages outside it get to run over the current passage we are in. AND, we are interpreting Left to Right. AND we have not pushed Christ into passages that He is not yet in. AND we are getting to Christ!*
- **The NT:** Jesus' first coming and rest, Matthew 11:28-30; 12:6, 8.
- What the death of Christ accomplished, Colossians 2:13-17.
- A summary or conclusion thus far, Hebrews 3:11, 18-19; 4:1-11.
- Revelation 6:9-11; 14:13; 22:1-5 (esp. v. 3)

## VI. Some quotes to chew on:

The sense of the OT text must be determined within its historical and cultural setting, and that sense is determinative for the NT fulfillment. This means that the OT economy must not be forced upon the New. There must be the allowance for genuine progress in divine revelation and salvation history. On the other hand, it is equally as grievous an error to impose the NT on the Old, as though there was some need to "christianize" it. If both Testaments are granted their integrity, their message will harmonize, since there is the single divine mind behind both. Paul D. Feinberg, *Continuity and Discontinuity*, 127

[T]he unity of the two Testaments does not require the uniformity of the two Testaments. Unity does not preclude diversity. The two Testaments may be unified just as certainly through discontinuity as through continuity. Both continuity and discontinuity are a part of the unity of the biblical revelation. There is both continuity and discontinuity between Israel and the church; and, if I understand Scripture correctly, there will be both continuity and discontinuity in the future between the church and Israel. Ibid, 128

Though Old Testament theology has a close relationship to the New Testament the two have discrete witnesses of their own. Therefore Old Testament theology must state the Old Testament's unique message before incorporating the New Testament perspective. The ultimate goal is still to produce biblical theology yet to unite the testaments at the proper moment. This procedure is sound on historical, canonical and exegetical grounds and will make scriptural unity plainer than starting from the opposite end of the canon. It will also help the Old Testament's unique value for theology be clearer. House, *Old Testament Theology*, 54

That is how Scripture differs from an encyclopedia. When I use an encyclopedia, I do not need to read other articles to understand the one I am reading at the moment. One article has no connection to another; there are no overarching themes. In the Bible, however, every passage is dependent on the whole, and the whole Bible is held together by interdependent themes that run through every passage like rebar, the steel rods that reinforce concrete. . . These themes give me a sense of identity, purpose, and direction that will fundamentally alter the way I think, desire, speak, and act. . . The sad fact is that many of us are simply not biblical in the way we use the Bible! Being biblical does not mean merely quoting words from within its pages. Being truly biblical means that my counsel reflects what the entire Bible is about. The Bible is a narrative, a story of redemption, and its chief character is Jesus Christ. He is the main theme of the narrative, and he is revealed in every passage in the book. . . Lasting change begins when our identity, purpose, and sense of direction are defined by God's story. Paul David Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*, 26-28