

## SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Join the Conversation Part 2  
TITLE: The Old Testament  
DATE: June 19, 2016  
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We are in our series called Join the Conversation: Part 2. The first installment was aimed at engaging with those who may have some strong skepticism towards Christianity, people who might get frazzled at how some Christians think about hell, homosexuality, science, and so on. We encourage you to go listen to, watch, and share those previous sermons at our web site.

This installment has a slightly different focus: Christians in dialogue with other Christians over 'tougher questions' that are often misunderstood or interpreted differently. The purpose of this series is not to answer every single question, but to help you see the value of these discussions and then take part in them.

In this message, we look at the Old Testament and the impact it can have on our lives today. The Old Testament is ultimately a picture of God's faithfulness in the face of our faithlessness. Along with its laws, sacrifices, promises, pictures, prophets, and kings, the whole Old Testament falls on Jesus.

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### Set-up:

- The Old Testament takes up over 70% of the Bible, and a good portion of it contains laws and practices that seem strange in our culture today.
- We believe that these passages make sense when we explore the historical context.

### Summary of Nehemiah 8-9:

- Nehemiah is one of the last books written in the Old Testament. It contains ALL of the Old Testament's history behind it.
- The people were "attentive to the book of the Law", which meant they were responding to the section of the Bible that includes a lot of the "weird stuff". Somehow, their understanding of it isn't alarming or off-putting. They responded with praise and humility.
- How can we process the Old Testament like these people in Nehemiah?

- In Nehemiah 9, they poetically pray the whole Old Testament story in about 30 verses, and the way they do their confession is what is going to be helpful for us as we think about processing the Old Testament.

### Application:

- Here are three resources recommended to help in your understanding of the Old Testament:
    1. [How to Read the Bible Book by Book](#) by Gordon Fee and Doug Stuart
    2. [An Old Testament Theology](#) by Bruce Waltke
    3. [The Bible Project](#) run by Jon Collins and Tim Mackie
  - The Old Testament, with all of its eccentricities, is mainly a picture of God's *faithfulness* in the face of our *faithlessness*.
  - The Old Testament is a **Story** about Abraham's family being **Set Apart**, but then continuing in **Sin** and in their need for a **Savior**.
  - When Jesus spoke after his resurrection, in Luke 24, he said what the people in Nehemiah 8-9 felt deep in their bones. He said, "Everything written in the Law and the prophets and the Psalms *is about me.*"
  - This means that the entire Old Testament, with its laws, sacrifices, promises, pictures, prophets, and kings, falls on Jesus.
1. **Be humble.**  
If life is really about God's story and not your story, there will always be room for more humility. God is the point of the story, because it's his story that we are talking about. Be humble that he has called you to be a part of it.
  2. **Be confident.**  
Not only has he called you to be a part of it, God has gifted you in a specific way to do his work. The Holy Spirit empowers every believer in Jesus with gifts to advance God's kingdom.
  3. **Be honest.**  
Be honest about sin, whether in your own life or in the lives of others around you. If we were half as quick to repent of our sin as we were to justify it, we would be in a great place.
  4. **Be Jesus.**  
If you realize that you're caught up in God's story, and that in Jesus, your sin has been

eternally dealt with, then you are a part of Christ's body. So, be Jesus to others. Go out of your way to be merciful and compassionate, to uphold truth and justice, to see people set free from whatever chains enslave them.

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**For Discussion:**

1. How are you living right now? Do you live like it is God's story, or your story?
2. In what ways has God gifted you to advance his kingdom? Are you using those gifts?
3. How can you go out of your way to be Jesus to others this week?