

וְהָיָה אַחֲרַיְכֶם מוֹת מִנְּשֵׁה עֶבֶד יְיָ  
וְהָיָה וְיֵאמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁ  
בָּרוּךְ מִנְּשֵׁה עֶבֶד יְיָ

## Teaching the Old Testament Hebrew Bible

**Old Testament**

**First Testament**

**Hebrew Bible**

~~Old~~ Testament

First Testament

Hebrew Bible

# 39 Books of the Protestant “Old Testament”

Torah	History	Poetry	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets
Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs	Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel	Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi

# Jewish Canon

Torah	Prophets Nevi'im	Writings Ketuvim
<p>1. Genesis</p> <p>2. Exodus</p> <p>3. Leviticus</p> <p>4. Numbers</p> <p>5. Deuteronomy</p>	<p>6. Joshua</p> <p>7. Judges</p> <p>8. Samuel (I &amp; II)</p> <p>9. Kings (I &amp; II)</p> <p>10. Isaiah</p> <p>11. Jeremiah</p> <p>12. Ezekiel</p> <p>13. The Twelve Prophets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Hosea</li> <li>b. Joel</li> <li>c. Amos</li> <li>d. Obadiah</li> <li>e. Jonah</li> <li>f. Micah</li> <li>g. Nahum</li> <li>h. Habakkuk</li> <li>i. Zephaniah</li> <li>j. Haggai</li> <li>k. Zechariah</li> <li>l. Malachi</li> </ul>	<p>"Books of Truth"</p> <p>14. Psalms</p> <p>15. Proverbs</p> <p>16. Job</p> <p>"Five Scrolls"</p> <p>17. Ruth</p> <p>18. Song of Songs</p> <p>19. Ecclesiastes (Qohelet)</p> <p>20. Lamentations</p> <p>21. Esther</p> <p>22. Daniel</p> <p>23. Ezra-Nehemiah</p> <p>24. Chronicles (I &amp; II)</p>

# Hebrew Bible

# TaNakh

Ta      *Torah*

Na      *Nevi'im*

Kh      *Ketuvim*

The name is an acronym formed from the initial Hebrew letters of the **Masoretic Text's** three traditional subdivisions.



# The TaNaKh was Jesus' Bible





# Torah



# Torah / Pentateuch

## Books of Moses



- The **Pentateuch** is the first 5 books of the Bible (from Greek title “five scrolls”)
- **Torah** has different meanings:
  - The Pentateuch
  - The “law”
  - **Instruction** from God to live faithfully in a covenantal relationship

# Torah Study

- \* I argue that *torah* has been understood in too limited a way in much of Western, especially Lutheran, interpretations.
- \* *Torah*, especially within the Pentateuch, is often reductionistically viewed as “law.”



# Torah (תּוֹרָה) in the Hebrew Bible

215 X in entire Hebrew Bible	Christian English translations				Christian English Average 1-4	English
	1 ESV	2 NASB	3 NIV	4 NRSV		JPS Jewish Pub. Society
1) law (normative)	195 (91%)	195 (91%)	184 (86%)	164 (76%)	86%	11 (5%)
2) instruction or teaching	20 (9%)	19 (9%)	31 (14%)	38 (18%)	13%	180 (84%)
3) ritual or custom	0	1 (.005%)	0	13 (6%)	2%	23 (11%)

- English Standard Version (ESV)
- New American Standard Bible (NASB)
- New International Version (NIV)
- New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

# Torah Study

- \* The biblical Hebrew concept of “instruction” or “teaching” would better represent the meaning in many/most passages.

Hear, my son, your father’s instruction,  
and forsake not your mother’s teaching (*torah*).  
Proverbs 1:8 (ESV)

# Torah תּוֹרָה

- Not simply “law”
- Torah in the everyday speech, such as instructions given by a mother (Prov 1:8, 6:20, cf 31:26) and a father (4:1F.)
- Priestly instruction (Jer 18:18; Ex 7:26)
- Speech of wisdom teachers or prophets (Isa 8:16; 20; 30:9).
- 5 books of the Pentateuch
- The instruction given at Mount Sinai
- **Comprehensive written will of God** (Deut 4:44 f.; 30:10, 31:9).





# Summary of Torah

Mark 12:30-31 (ESV)

<sup>30</sup> ‘And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’

(Deut 6:5)

<sup>31</sup> The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

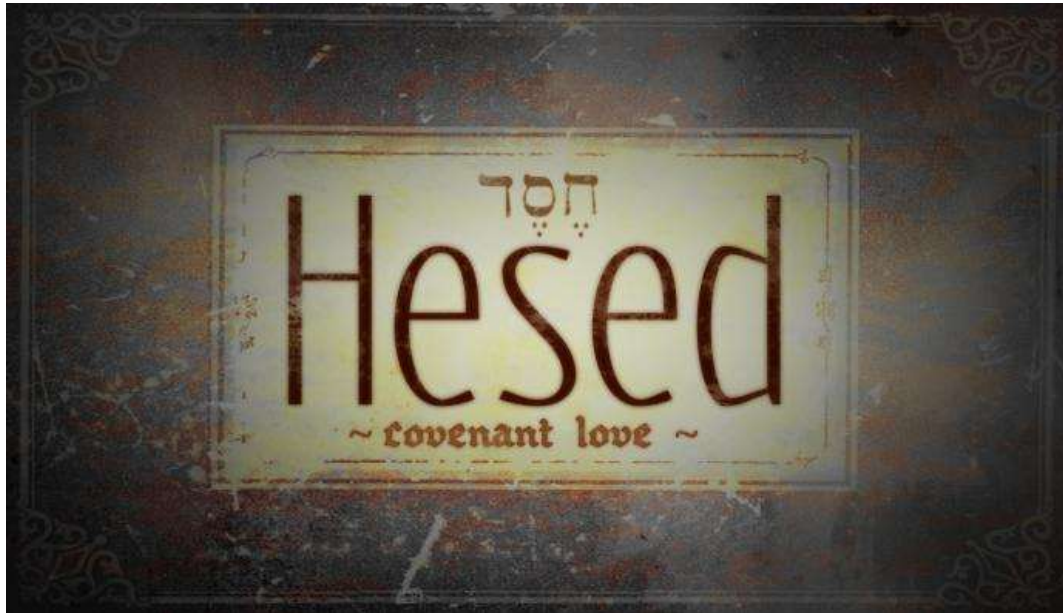
(Lev 19:18b)





# Torah Study

A close examination of the texts demonstrate that the Hebrew understanding of *torah* is dependent upon a relational context of God's covenantal, unfailing love.



The relationality and loving concern, such as a devoted parent for a child's well-being, is central to the Hebrew understanding of *torah*.

# Old Testament Misunderstandings

# Ian Provan's 7 Common Misconceptions of the Old Testament



1. **Old Testament knows a God of wrath and judgment and the New Testament knows a God of love.**

## **Problems:**

- \* **Marcion (c.85 – c.160) declared as heretic for wanting to get rid of the OT; saw an inferior God in OT, but he had to remove the OT and much of the NT as well.**
- \* **Misses God the Father that Jesus teaches us to pray to.**

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**“There is no difference on the Testaments on this matter.”**

# Marcion of Sinope, c. 85 – c. 160

- \* Believed many of the teachings of Jesus were incompatible with the actions of Yahweh, the warlike, hostile God of the Hebrew Bible.
- \* Developed a belief of two gods:
  - \* a higher, transcendent god
  - \* a lower, world creator and ruler
- \* Excommunicated as a heretic

## Marcion's Canon (12 of 27 books)

### Gospel of Marcion (assumed Luke/Acts)

Galatians	1 Thessalonians
1 Corinthians	2 Thessalonians
2 Corinthians	Ephesians
Romans	Colossians
	Philemon
	Philippians

## The other 15 books

Matthew	Hebrews
Mark	1 Peter
John	2 Peter
Romans	1 John
1 Timothy	2 John
2 Timothy	3 John
Titus	Jude
	Revelation

# Hitler and the Nazi party

- \* “German Christians” established in 1932.
- \* Nationalistic and anti-Semitic
- \* Rejected the Old Testament and the Pauline epistles of the New Testament—because of their Jewish authorship.



Reich's Bishop Ludwig Müller

# Hitler and the Nazis

- \* According to historian Doris L. Bergren, the Nazis were able to enjoy success among German Christian groups in part because of widespread biblical illiteracy — especially of the OT.





# Ian Provan's 7 Common Misconceptions of the Old Testament



## 2. Old Testament is about law and the New Testament is about grace.

Problems:

- \* One can only believe this by not reading the OT closely.

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The OT does not teach salvation by works!!!

Saved by grace out of Egypt

(and brought into a right relationship with God).

The torah comes after being “saved,” Deut. 7-9.



# Ian Provan's 7 Common Misconceptions of the Old Testament



## 3. The OT has been left behind by the NT.

### \* However:

- \* Jesus did not leave the OT behind, though with exegesis, “You have heard it said...”
  - \* “It is written...”
  - \* “I came not to abolish the torah and the prophets.”
- \* Paul and the early church utilized the OT.
- \* “All Scripture [OT] is inspired...” (2 Timothy 3:16)
- \* Marcion declared a heretic
- \* The Nazis tried to get rid of the OT

**Ian Provan,**  
Regent College,  
Vancouver, BC

# Do we still need the OT?

## The OT is Scripture.

**All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (TNIV)**

- **Scripture here means the OT!**
- **The NT wasn't written at the time of this writing!**

# OT Understanding is Vital!

Jesus quotes the  
OT 63 times!



# Theology from the whole of Scripture



**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

1906 — 1945

**“In my opinion it is not Christian  
to want to take our thoughts and feelings  
too quickly and too directly  
from the New Testament.”**

# Ian Provan's 7 Common Misconceptions of the Old Testament



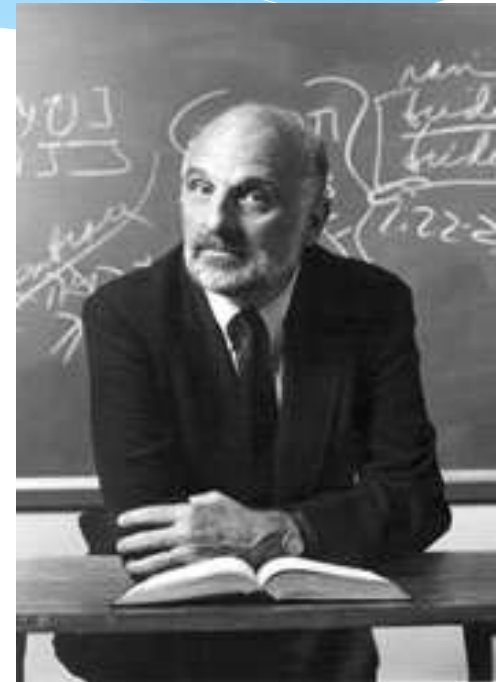
## 4. The Old Testament cannot be read the same way as the New Testament (only through the lens of the new).

### Problems:

- \* No authority on its own
- \* The OT becomes an empty theological shell.
- \* Misses what God and the author intended for the original audience
- \* Reformers saw dangers of allegorical approaches and narrowed interpretation to the literary meaning of the text.

# “hopelessly reductionist” schema

**“All of the schematic attempts to relate the Old Testament to the New—by way of promise and fulfillment or by way of law and gospel—are hopelessly reductionist and do not help us at all.”**



**Walter Brueggemann**

1933 —

"Preaching the Old Testament," Luther Seminary, Sep 23, 2014.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zMX1gfb8KQ> 6:05

# OT Understanding is Vital!

- \* One must understand the original OT context and its meaning in order to understand the NT's use of it.**
- \* Text injustice!**
- \* Don't take a text "kicking, screaming, and bleeding from its context!"**  
**David Alan Black**



# Ian Provan's 7 Common Misconceptions of the Old Testament



## 5. The Old Testament is only important as a witness to Jesus.

### Problems:

- \* Narrows the Bible down to the prophets.  
But they spoke about a lot more than the coming Messiah.
- \* Misses full revelation of God, other theological content, etc.
- \* While Jesus is the central figure in the Bible, its not sensible to reduce the great diversity of biblical content to just Jesus.

# Ian Provan's 7 Common Misconceptions of the Old Testament



## 6. The Old Testament is about Israel and the New Testament is about the Church.

### Problems:

- \* Some theologies (Dispensationalism) hold this.
- \* If one does not think the OT is continuous with the NT, then there tends to be a different view of the Sacraments (baptism and Holy Communion)
- \* Miss NT and early Church concerns that continue OT concerns (Light to the Nations, widows and oppressed, etc.)
- \* Miss that Jesus was a Jew and most of the early church were Jews and had a Jewish perspective.

# Ian Provan's 7 Common Misconceptions of the Old Testament



## 7. Old Testament ethics have been superseded (replaced) by New Testament ethics.

Problems:

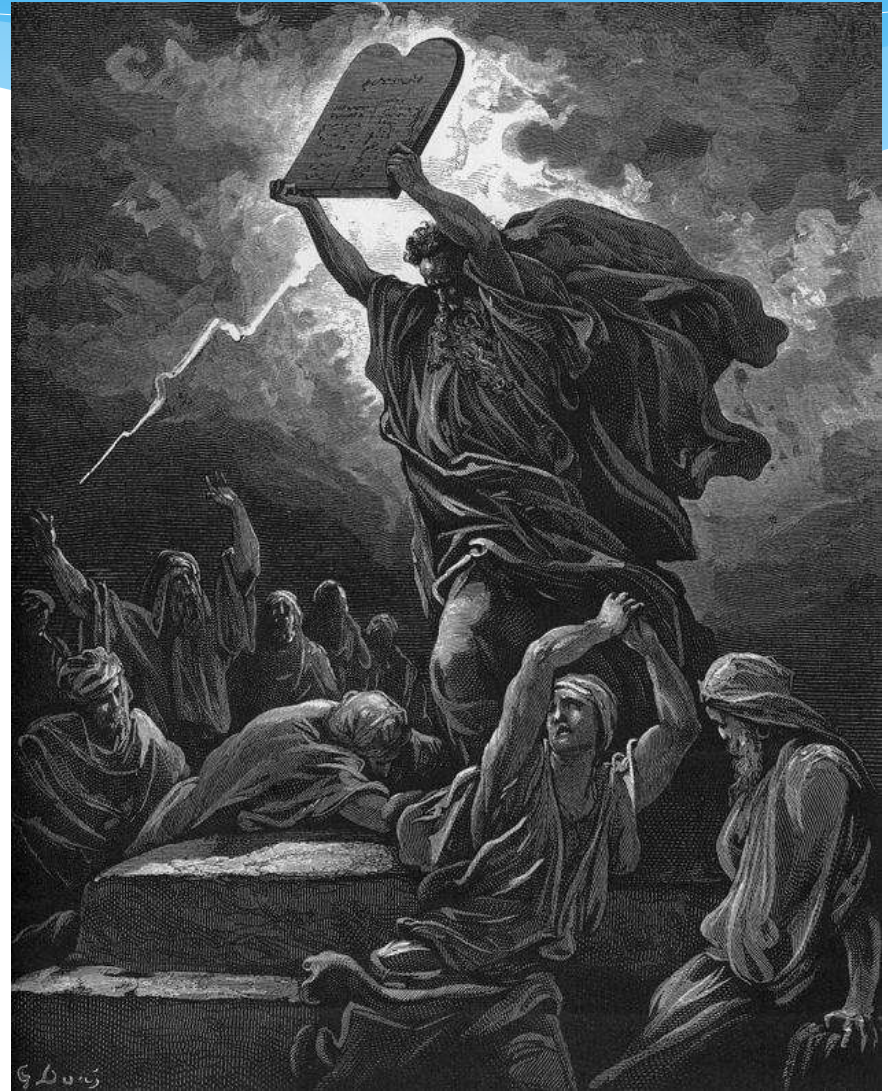
- \* “We’re Christians, and we know better” is arrogant.
- \* Great gulf put between the two testaments.
- \* Simplistic

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While there is a distinction, Jesus and Paul both quote and use OT ethics.

# Another misunderstanding

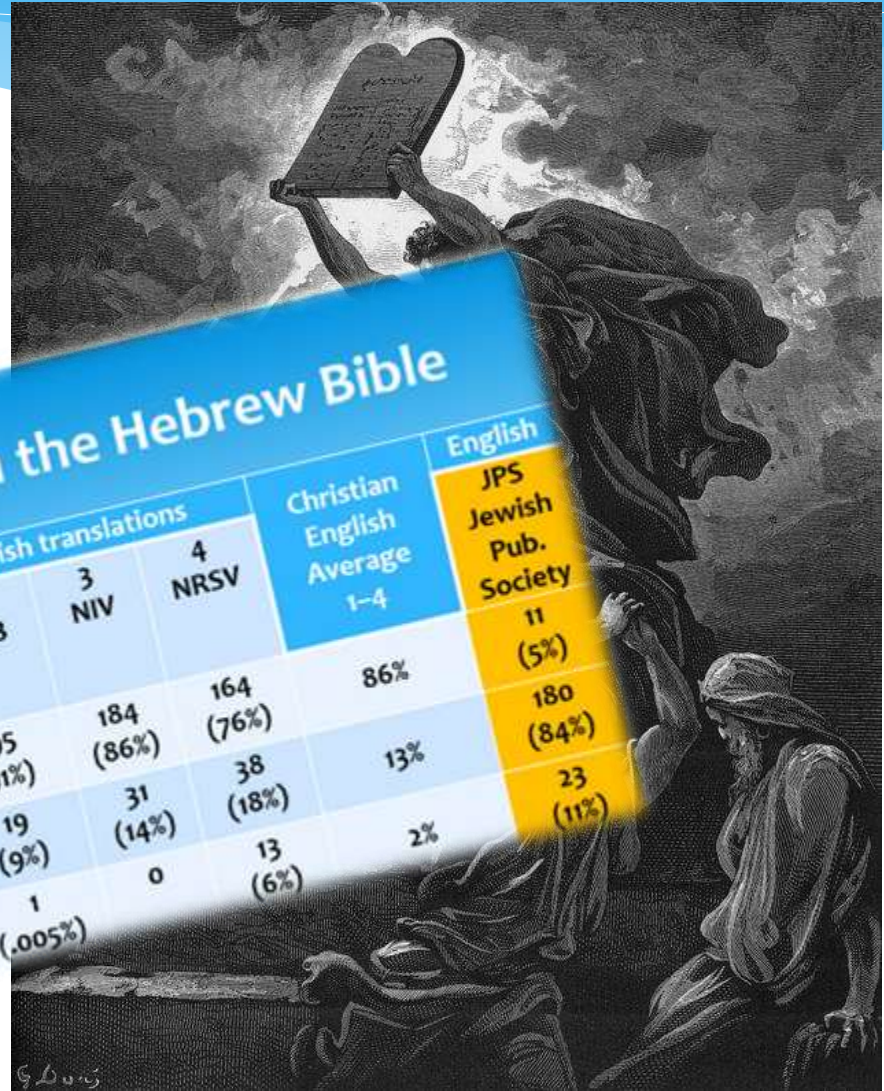
- \* The OT is just full of strange and irrelevant laws.





# Another misunderstanding

- \* The OT is just full of strange and irrelevant laws.



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# Which of the misconceptions is the most challenging?



**For you or as a minister of the Gospel?**

- 1. OT knows a God of wrath and the NT knows a God of love.**
- 2. OT is about law and the NT is about grace.**
- 3. The OT has been left behind by the NT.**
- 4. The OT cannot be read the same way as the NT.**
- 5. The OT is only important as a witness to Jesus.**
- 6. The OT is about Israel and the NT is about the Church.**
- 7. OT ethics have been superseded by NT ethics.**