**The Value of the Old Testament**, all Scriptures NKJV

Heb 8:7-9 & 13

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. 8 Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah — 9 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.

13 In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete . Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

Hebrews: the old covenant is now obsolete, we have a new covenant (or testament) from God through Jesus, but Christians still have the books we call the Old Testament

Since these books are filled with commandments many do not know what to do with those books

We do know:

John 1:16-17

17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:8-10

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

The Apostle Paul said it like this:

Gal 2:21

21 I do not set aside the grace of God ; for if righteousness comes through the law , then Christ died in vain."

Question: What Bible did Jesus have as He went around doing the will of God?

So we know that salvation is by Grace through faith and that God is not expecting us to keep every rule or law as a condition of salvation, but how does God feel about His law and commandments?

Jesus said:

John 14:21-24

21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

From this we see how important the Lord’s commands and word are to Him and to our relationship with Him. This is now not about salvation but about a deep relationship of love and respect.

We could say, that Jesus words in John 14 cover His commandments in the New Testament.

What about the commandments and laws of God in the books we call the Old Testament?

Jesus speaks of this:

Matthew 5:17-20

17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19 Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Again we see that it is not about salvation but about deep relationship with God and others.

Jesus came to fulfill the Law and Prophets not to abolish.

Animal Sacrifices of the Old Testament- fulfilled by Jesus or still active commandments of God?

Ten Commandments of the Old Testament- fulfilled by Jesus or still active commandments of God?

If God put aside the old covenant because it could not save, then why did God give it in the first place?

The Apostle Paul explains this:

Galatians 3:19-25

19 What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.

21 Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. 22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

The law was added, first one command, then 10 commandments, then many, because of man’s rebellion, to govern men until the promise of faith in Christ.

Paul says that the law was our tutor or Schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, the Greek word is paidagogos meaning the family servant whose job was to make sure the children went to school. Now that we are saved through Jesus we don’t need this service anymore.

Psalm 19:7-9

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;

The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

8 The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;

The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

Consider your old teachers, you are not in their class anymore but they can still be old friends with much wisdom to share.

Consider your old schoolbooks, you have completed the classes and graduated but when you want to look something up or remember a lesson you can still use them.

If you think of the books of the Old Testament in this way then there is much to learn from them about God, about yourself, about life.

We should make no mistake, the Law and Commandments of God are good and they are Holy.

Romans 7:12

12 Therefore the law is holy , and the commandment holy and just and good.

God loved us so much that He took His precious and holy law and commandments and nailed them to the cross of Jesus so that they would no longer accuse us.

Colossians 2:13-14

13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, 14 having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

The Apostle Paul gives us the most important lesson when it comes to learning the Word of God, Old or New Testament.

2 Corinthians 3:4-6

4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills , but the Spirit gives life.

First, we are not sufficient, our sufficiency comes from God.

Next, the letter kills, if we try to be righteous or religious by keeping commandments we begin to die inside.

Last, The Spirit gives life, when we live in the Spirit of what is being taught we grow, we live, we are used of God to bring life to others.

Examples from the Ten Commandments:

Gen 1:1 - Ex 20:17

And God spoke all these words, saying:

2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image — any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

13 "You shall not murder.

14 "You shall not commit adultery.

15 "You shall not steal.

16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

What it the Spirit of these commandments?

(Cover various ones)

Speaking more specifically of the Sabbath commandment, what is the Spirit of that commandment which we can learn from and which should be a part of having a deep relationship with God?

Isaiah 58:13-14

13 "If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,

From doing your pleasure on My holy day,

And call the Sabbath a delight,

The holy day of the LORD honorable,

And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,

Nor finding your own pleasure,

Nor speaking your own words,

14 Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD;

And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth,

And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.

The mouth of the LORD has spoken."

So then, there is blessing and deep relationship with the Lord in living the Spirit of the Sabbath (not the letter, like it must be Saturday)

Lastly, let’s take a look at the Feasts of Leviticus Chapter 23, what is the Spirit of these? What can we learn from these that will deepen our relationship with God?

John had asked me to study these and include them in this week’s series, so I have.

I noticed that we could learn a number of things from the feasts:

We could learn the details of the feasts, but would that deepen our relationship with God?

We could talk about whether the feasts are a shadow of future events: the coming of Jesus, the day of Pentecost, the judgement day, etc. , but would that deepen our relationship with God?

We could try and decide if the details of the offerings meant anything special, but would that deepen our relationship with God?

What can we learn from the feasts that will be useful?

Not pretending to know all, here is what I found:

Leviticus 23

1 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts

The feasts call Israel to focused, regular, and serious worship, on a higher level than their weekly worship.

* Many traditional Christians in the USA only attend ‘Feast day’ worship, Christmas and Easter
* In the Spirit of the feasts, we who follow Jesus regularly should also have times set aside for higher than usual level of worship
* Notice that the Lord says ‘these are my feasts’ they are His not ours

23 You shall offer these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which is for a regular burnt offering.

The Spirit of the feasts teaches us that gathering together with God and God’s people at special times to worship and eat and socialize is important for us and brings the Lord joy.

The feasts focus on remembrance of Israel’s history like the Passover (their salvation from slavery) and important yearly events like feast of the first-fruits and ingathering.

In the Spirit of holding feasts to the Lord there are histories and events of our lives that could and probably should be rightfully celebrated. (Can we list these?)

* Birthdays, anniversaries
* The day you or one of your family was: saved, baptized, ordained, delivered from disaster
* Death of a Christian Ps 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints.

**The individual Feasts, what we can learn that is useful:**

**Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread-**

This was to remember and especially to teach children and children’s children to remember the Lord’s salvation. The Israelites were saved from slavery in Egypt, we are saved from slavery to sin.

In the Spirit of this commandment, it would be appropriate to have a special day to celebrate and to teach our families about what happened to us. (Christmas gathering my home)

**Bringing the First Fruits-**

10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them :'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.

The Spirit of verse 10 gives us the useful concept of first-fruits

Prov 3:9-10

9 Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase;

10 So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.

* As the feasts are a higher than usual level of worship so we should not forget to give our regular tithes and offerings
* In the Spirit of first fruits perhaps the Lord would lead you to give the first paycheck of a new job or honor Him especially at the birth of your first child or when you receive a new home?

**New Grain Offering, seven weeks and 50 days after First Fruits (Harvest)**

22 'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God.'"

* The Spirit: always, always, leave a remnant for the poor from everything God give us, it is God’s way of providing for the poor through those of us who believe, they will bless God and probably be more eager to learn of Him

**Memorial of Blowing Trumpets**

I am not sure what we could learn from this activity today, it is spoken of briefly here and the details of the offering are given in Numbers 29, it seems to be a standard feast day, a day of rest, and it is probably a shadow of the trumpets blown in the Book of Revelation.

**The Day of Atonement-**

The Spirit of this day was clearly one of repentance, a special time set aside to acknowledge our sins before the Lord and seek forgiveness.

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 27 "Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28 And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. 29 For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. 30 And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. 31 You shall do no manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 32 It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."

* Even as saved Christians we still have many faults and sins and often we stumble

1 John 1:8-10

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Proverbs 24:16

16 For a righteous man may fall seven times And rise again, But the wicked shall fall by calamity.

* Having a day, when needed, to spend time with the Lord and confess our sins helps us to have compassion on our fellow man and fellow believers when they sin or fall

**Feast of Tabernacles-**

33 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 34 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying:'The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD.

39 'Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD for seven days; on the first day there shall be a sabbath-rest, and on the eighth day a sabbath-rest. 40 And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. 41 You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, 43 that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.'"

Deut 16:13-17

13 "You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. 14 And you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who are within your gates. 15 Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.

* In the Spirit of the feast of tabernacles we learn:
  + To celebrate that we are on a journey, from slavery (Egypt) to the promised land (heaven)
  + To make sure we are including others in our worship and journey with God, our sons and daughters, our servants, our pastors and leaders, the stranger, the fatherless, the widow who are our neighbors

Summarize: my hope is that I have shared a solid vision for the value of the Old Testament even though we have only scratched the surface. The Lord loves His Word and commandments and we love God in return when we keep them in the Spirit they were intended.