

view

January 30, 2005

This Week's Agenda

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The Lord's Day

8:30AM & 10:15AM
Sermon: David Posey

Wednesday

10 AM Wednesday: OT History, at building.

7:30 PM - Classes for all ages 18 months and up.

Adult Classes

- Auditorium: Dan Hamilton, Discipleship
- "Basics" Class (see Dennis Wade)
- Room 11-12: Young Adults, Topics – David Posey, Sr.

All classes will meet in the auditorium this evening. The elders will be delivering the annual "state of the congregation" report. Duty Roster for February is on p. 4.

News

Vivian Mowrer is here!

Vivian Mowrer was born on Monday morning, weighing in at 4 lbs, 11oz. She was a bit early, but is doing very well. Continue your prayers for Vivi, Amy, Rich and the rest of the family.

New Members

Candace (Candy) Kramer, Matt Dickey's fiancée, has placed membership with us. Also identifying with us are Hank and Kathy Wilson's daughter, Julie, her husband, Rob, and their children, Caleb and Morgan. We want to welcome all of you to the Folsom family!

Hugh Hooper Dies

Hugh was a long time member of the Sunnyvale church. He passed away after a long illness. The memorial service for him will be held on February 4th at 7 PM at the Sunnyvale building on Remington Drive.

Sickness, Injury, Continuing Health Problems

Jamie Cole, Kristen Sanderson's sister, is having some serious health problems again and undergoing more tests. She has a constant battle with headache pain and nausea and the resulting discouragement that comes from chronic health problems. Keep her in your prayers.

Please pray for Kathy Wilson who has Parkinson's disease, and keep Hank in your prayers also.



Bible Reading

Sunday – No reading scheduled

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Tuesday – Exodus 15-17; Proverbs 1

Wednesday – Exodus 18-20; Proverbs 2

Thursday – Exodus 21-24; Proverbs 3

Friday – Exodus 25-27; Proverbs 4

Dave Aubin's mother died recently after a very short illness; she was only 52. Dave and Wynter Aubin are friends of Kristen and Ed Sanderson. Please pray that they might be consoled during this difficult time.

Becky Woolpert returned from a trip and immediately had a health issue that put her in the hospital. Last report is that she is home recuperating

Continue prayers for Dave Fulton's mother, Monica (Munroe, WA); Tom Royston; Ken McClelland (cancer); Karen Gorden; Sharon Jones; Becky Woolpert; Margaret Everett (cancer); Phil Roberts (cancer); Laurie Ann Reagan (cancer); Cheryl Wilson (cancer); Bill Fling (heart problems); Chris Hamilton (friend of Justin Ivie, cancer); Peggy Olsen (Cameron Carrozza's friend's mother).

Continue to remember those Christians who are serving in Iraq, especially during the events beginning today (the elections) which the insurgents have vowed to interrupt.

Pray for Philip Cain: Trey Cain, Steve Reis, Titus Cain, Travis Dusenberry; Paul Hitchen.

Continue to pray for the expectant mothers here at Folsom: Allison Horak, Kimmie Warshaw, Sally Deschler, Kristen Sanderson, Melissa Fields and Michelle Caisse.

Pray for Eric McAdams

Out of Town

Duane Lowe is in Texas visiting family until Feb. 14th. Continue to offer a prayer for Eric McAdams, who returned to Oregon recently.

Background Notes on our Bible Readings

“Covenant”

We cannot have a complete view of the Bible unless we become familiar with the concept of *covenants*. A covenant is simply an agreement between two or more parties. A covenant, to be valid, was usually witnessed, confirmed by an oath, ratified and sealed. We read about several covenants in the Bible, but we will focus on the two covenants that we call the Old and New Testaments.

The First Covenant

The two great covenants have their beginning in the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). In the first, God promised Abraham that he would become a great nation. This promise was repeated on a number of occasions, first to Abraham and then to his descendants.

When God gave Moses the Law on Mt. Sinai, He

said, “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel. So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. Then all the people answered together and said, ‘All that the LORD has spoken

we will do.’ So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.” (Exodus 19:5-8).

God gave the people a covenant Law, known as the “Ten Commandments” or Law of Moses, by which they would be governed. Ex. 24:3-8 records the solemn ceremony in which the covenant law was read from the “book of the covenant” and the “blood of the covenant” was sprinkled on the altar and on the people (see Heb. 8:16-22). The covenant with Israel involved Israel’s pledge not to make covenants with other nations or gods (Ex. 23:32;

34:12, 15; Dt. 7:2). The covenant was dramatically repeated to David in II Sam. 7:12-16. In this rendition of the promise, God pledged that

He would establish the house of David forever

The blessings of the covenant were dependent upon the obedience of the people. Unfortunately, the people failed to keep the Law and God had to punish them, and they were eventually sent into exile. But even in punishment, God was faithful to the permanent part of His covenant, preserving two tribes for the family of David (I Kings 11:12-13).



Before God punished the people, however, He sent prophets to warn them that they were violating the covenant. Isaiah, Amos, Hosea and others warned Israel to turn back to God. In many cases, the prophets did not come to warn, but to pronounce judgment on the people and tell them the reasons why they were being punished. Usually, their messages included prophecies about the future, often centering on Jesus Christ.

Jeremiah, for example, prophesied about a new covenant; its statutes would be written deeply in the hearts of people instead of on tablets of stone. This new covenant would have forgiveness as its central theme (Jer. 31:31-34; see Heb. 8:8-13).

The New Covenant

In the New Testament, the Greek word *diatheke* is used to describe the concept of covenant. The word refers to the binding will a person makes to ensure the proper disposal of his goods upon his death (see Heb. 9:17).

During the Last Supper, Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper in which He said that in His death He would shed the blood of the new covenant (Mt. 26:26-30; I Cor. 11:25). When we repeat the memorial, we are acknowledging that Jesus ratified the

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new covenant through the shedding of His blood.

The book of Hebrews treats covenant as a central theme. The emphasis is on Jesus as a superior High Priest and Mediator of a superior covenant (Heb. 7:22; 8:6; 9:15). His blood satisfied the requirement that covenants be ratified by blood (Heb. 9:18, 20,22), just like the first covenant (Ex. 24:8), although Christ blood established an everlasting covenant (Heb. 13:20).

The writer of Hebrews sprinkles his letter with warnings about the extreme importance of keeping the new covenant. He argues that if there were provisions for punishment for violating the first covenant, how much more will be the punishment for violating the new covenant, in which God's mercy and grace is so prominently displayed in Christ's blood (see 2:1-4; 10:26-31).

The Old Covenant is Fulfilled

Many people are confused about the purpose and place of the Old Testament today. Some have the vague idea that we are supposed to observe the Ten Commandments, but do not realize that they are, strictly speaking, just part of the whole law given to Israel (see Ex. 20:1). If we are commanded to keep the Ten Commandments, then we must also keep the whole law (cf. James 2:10; Gal. 3:10ff.). Of course, no one keeps the whole law today, complete with the temple service, priesthood and animal sacrifice.

When discussing law, we must be careful to distinguish between moral law, which has existed from the time man was created, and special law, such as the Law of Moses, which was given specifically to the children of Israel and included both civil and ceremonial aspects. According to

Gal. 3:24, the Law was given as a schoolmaster ("tutor") to bring us to Christ. So the crucial thing to remember is that Christ *fulfilled* the law (see Mt. 5:17-20). Something that is filled up needs to be filled no more. The ceremonial aspects of the Law of Moses (the sacrifices, priesthood, temple service, etc.) have all been fulfilled in the death of Christ and His reign as Prophet, Priest and King.

Does the Old Covenant have authority for us today? If not, what purpose does it serve? The answer to the first question

is *no*, the Old Covenant is not authoritative for faith and practice. It has been superseded by the New Covenant. While many commands of the Old Covenant are reiterated in the New (for example, nine of the ten commandments are restated), there are many other aspects of the Old Covenant that were mere *shadows* (types) of things to come in the New (see Heb. 10:1). The shadow is superseded by substance and the substance is Christ (Col. 2:17).

The Purpose of the Old Testament

So what purpose does the Old Testament serve today? Without a knowledge of the Old Testament, we will be hard pressed to comprehend the New; or at least, our knowledge of the New will be severely impaired. It has been said that the Old Testament is the New Testament *concealed* and the New Testament is the Old Testament *revealed*.

Furthermore, the Old Testament in many cases, provides a vocabulary for the New Testament That is, we

can understand some of the terminology in the New Testament only by noticing similar language in the Old.

Another purpose of the Old Testament is that it provides numerous examples of both faith and failure. Paul referred to this purpose in Rom. 15:4 and I Cor. 10:11. Through the study of the Old Testa-

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ment we learn how to avoid the experience of the erring children of God,

as well as learning about the consequences of such failures.

Remember that the New Covenant centers in Jesus Christ. John 1:17 says, “the Law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” That is not to say, of course, that there was no grace or truth during the time of the Law; on the contrary, grace permeates the Old Testament, otherwise Israel would have been destroyed early on. And every word is true.

But the Law itself made no provision for grace, since that is not a characteristic of law. It is designed to prohibit and set standards, and has no inherent provision for forgiveness within it. On the other hand, Jesus came as the personification of grace and truth. He said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. . . .” (John 14:6). The law told the truth and was given by Moses to the people; Jesus was the truth and came to the people.

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