

## The Theological Emphases of the Old Testament

*The Loving Rule of God* (Gen. 1; 45:7,8; 50:20; Ps. 2, 89, 95-100, Is. 40; Dan. 2:44; 4-5, esp. 4:34,35)

The God of the Bible is the Creator of the universe and has no equals. He loves his creatures and is sovereign over human history. He always has the initiative. He will have the last word.

- *His plan will go forward despite the evil choices and resistance of free choosing moral agents.*

*God's Covenant Faithfulness* (Gen. 12:1-3; 15; Exod. 2:24; 2 Sam. 7; Ps. 46, 136)

God is God of promise. He is loyal and trustworthy, keeping word. This is in contrast to the fickleness and failures of his creatures.

- *The “heroes” of the Bible always come up short, but God is faithful to them.*

Of the most moving examples are God's faithfulness to the cheater Jacob and the adulterer David.

*The Holiness of God, Sin and Idolatry* (Exodus 19; Leviticus; Deut. 28; Is. 6; Habakkuk 1:13)

God is morally pure and unique—totally “other.” He will not overlook sin.

- *He calls on people for complete allegiance: “you shall have no other gods before me” (idolatry).*
- *He will punish sin with overwhelming wrath.*

*Substitutionary Atonement* (Exodus 12; Lev. 16; Is. 53)

God has provided a way for unholy sinners to receive mercy through the death of a blameless substitute. Thus, the emphasis on priesthood and animal sacrifice.

*Faith & Loyalty to God* (Gen. 15:6; Deut. 6:5; 10:12,13; Hosea 6:6)

There is a strong emphasis on having a love-trust relationship with God.

- *A mere ceremonial compliance was never what God had in mind.*

He seeks a loyal bond between himself and his creatures like a marriage.

*The Word of God and Prophecy* (Deut 8:3; 13:1-5, 18:9ff; Ps. 1, 19, 119)

God is a communicating God. He has chosen to reveal himself and his plan progressively to the Jewish nation through his spokespersons the prophets – a role that was separate from the kingship and stood in authority over all leaders. In God's view, how the nation responded to the prophets was how they responded to him. It was common for Israel to close their ears to God's prophets and instead gather "prophets" who said what they wanted to hear.

*The People of God, Chosen Nation, & Theocracy* (Gen. 12:1-3; Exod. 19:4-6)

From early on, God wanted a community, a people that he could live among and show his glory to other nations. Because of this, he wanted to build a nation that was positively different than others. In Israel, God was the King above the king (theocracy) and if they would be faithful tenants of the land he loaned them, he would prosper and protect them. This was a temporary incubation period until his Spirit would come and enable his people to be strengthened from within in order to go out among the nations of the world and reflect him.

*The Coming King and Kingdom* (Isaiah 2, 61; Micah 5:2; Daniel 2, 7)

Even though God allowed Israel to have a king and to a certain extent be a kingdom, it was understood that God's ideals would never be realized until His Messiah ruled the world and took dominion back from the Serpent. The Old Testament is filled with anticipation for this kingdom—especially when Israel lost its independence and sovereignty to conquering nations.