

## **Dr. Donald Fowler, Old Testament Backgrounds, Session 9, John 10, Divine Kingship and Law Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Fowler, Old Testament Backgrounds, Session 10, John 10 Divine Kingship, and Law, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

This lecture by Dr. Donald Fowler explores the interconnectedness of kingship, law, and shepherding imagery in the Bible. He argues that John 10's "Good Shepherd" passage is primarily Christological, revealing Jesus as the God-King of Israel, rather than a simple pastoral metaphor. Fowler further compares Mosaic law with the Code of Hammurabi, highlighting their differences in scope, morality, and underlying assumptions about guilt and innocence. He emphasizes the crucial role of law as an expression of God's kingship, both in the Old and New Testaments, rejecting the idea of a dichotomy between law and grace. Finally, he connects the concept of kingship to the leadership roles of New Testament figures.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Fowler, Old Testament Backgrounds, Session 9 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Old Testament Introduction → Old Testament Backgrounds).**



**Fowler\_OTB\_Session  
n09.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Fowler, Old Testament Backgrounds, Session 9, John 10 Divine Kingship, and Law

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Donald Fowler's lecture on Old Testament Backgrounds, Lecture 9, focusing on John 10 and the Law:

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. Donald Fowler's Old Testament Backgrounds, Lecture 9**

**Subject:** Analysis of John 10 through an Old Testament Lens & the Nature of Law in the Ancient Near East

**Overview:** This lecture explores two interconnected themes: (1) a reinterpretation of John 10, moving beyond traditional pastoral imagery to a Christological understanding rooted in Old Testament concepts of divine kingship, and (2) an examination of the nature of law in the Ancient Near East, particularly contrasting the law of Moses with the Code of Hammurabi, to emphasize the theological foundation of law in Israelite tradition and its connection to divine kingship.

#### **Key Theme 1: Reinterpreting John 10 - The Good Shepherd as Divine King**

- **Traditional vs. Christological Interpretation:** Traditional interpretation views John 10 primarily through a soteriological (salvation-focused) lens, with Jesus as a shepherd providing salvation to his sheep.
- Dr. Fowler argues for a Christological understanding, emphasizing Jesus' revelation of himself as the "Good Shepherd" who is also the God of Israel. He states, "My understanding of the passage is that Jesus is revealing himself to be the shepherd God of Israel."
- **Shepherd Imagery and Royal Titles:** In the Old Testament, the title "shepherd" is primarily reserved for God or the royal messianic figure. Jesus' usage of the title in John 10 would have immediately signaled his claim to divinity to his audience.
- Fowler notes, "In the Old Testament, no one is ever called a shepherd as a title except God or this royal messianic figure that the scripture talks about."
- While the title "good shepherd" was common for kings in the ancient Near East, its usage by Jesus had a deeper significance.
- **Symbolic Nature of the Parable:** Fowler contends that the imagery in John 10 (shepherd, hireling, wolf) should not be understood as a literal pastoral scene. He points out the discrepancies: The Palestinian wolf is small, not dangerous, and

wouldn't typically incite a shepherd to abandon the flock. This contrasts starkly with the European and American understanding of the wolf as a fierce, pack animal. He argues, "the wolf isn't really a wolf any more than the good shepherd is really a shepherd."

- He states, "When you look at the component parts of the good shepherd passage in John 10, literally none of it fits a pastoral setting."
- The "hireling" leaving the sheep for a wolf doesn't fit because wolves kill for pleasure. Abandoning them would be abandoning them to certain slaughter, which conflicts with the intention of a shepherd, even a hired one.
- **Metaphorical Meanings:** The "Good Shepherd" is clearly Jesus.
- The "wolf" likely represents either Satan or the pseudo-kings of the Herodian dynasty. It is more likely a Herodian king, implying Jesus' role as the true king. He notes, "The pseudo-king is the king who will not protect his sheep and will instead abandon them."
- The "hireling" represents these false leaders who fail to protect the people.
- **Jesus' Claim to Messiahship:** Jesus' declaration, "I am the good shepherd," is understood as an assertion of his Messiahship.
- The passage also shows a division among the Jews – some claiming Jesus was demonic, while others recognized his miracles as a sign of divine authority.
- Jesus explicitly claims his unity with the Father, which is the key theological goal of John's gospel, and connects to the prophecy of a new David in Ezekiel 34. He states, "I and the Father are one."
- **Implications for New Testament Leadership:** The term "shepherd" is primarily reserved for Jesus in the New Testament, just as it was for God in the Old Testament. New Testament leaders are only once called "pastors (shepherds), teachers" in Ephesians 4:11.
- New Testament leaders are seen as "under-shepherds" whose roles of providing for and protecting their congregations should mirror Jesus' mission and character.

## Key Theme 2: Law and Kingship in the Ancient Near East

- **Comparison of Law Codes: Moses vs. Hammurabi Capital Offenses:** The Code of Hammurabi has far more capital offenses and is far more brutal than the Law of Moses, even though the Old Testament has more laws (approx. 611-613 to 282)
- **Religious vs. Civil Law:** The Law of Moses is a *religious law* where people are executed because their actions are sinful, while the Code of Hammurabi is a *civil law* given by the state.
- **Law of Jealousy:** While both codes address marital infidelity, they differ in their presuppositions about guilt and innocence.
- In Hammurabi's code, the accused is presumed guilty and must survive a trial by ordeal to prove innocence (trial by river god).
- In Moses' law, the accused is presumed innocent and drinks holy water. If nothing happens, she's innocent. If she does have a negative physical reaction, then she is guilty. This is not a trial by ordeal, but instead shows that the Law of Moses presumes innocence before guilt.
- **Ethical vs. Non-Ethical:** While Hammurabi's code has a religious basis (given by the deity Shamash), it's not considered moral in the same way the law of Moses is.
- **Case Law vs. Propositional Law:** Hammurabi's code is primarily *case law*, dealing with specific instances ("If a man..."). Most scholars now think it is actually a list of legal decisions, not a comprehensive law code.
- The Law of Moses is primarily *apodictic* or *propositional law*, characterized by general commands and ethical statements ("You shall not...").
- **Social Stratification:** Hammurabi's code reflects a highly stratified society, with different laws and punishments for different social classes (avilum, muskeinum, vardum, and women). The Law of Moses is more egalitarian, with all Israelites considered equal under the covenant.
- **Law as a Gift of Kingship:** In the ancient world, law was seen as a gift from the gods and inherently connected to kingship. Hammurabi received his code from the god Shamash, and the same principle applies to the Hebrew Bible. Law belongs to the domain of kingship.

- Dr. Fowler states, "In the ancient world, they saw law as the gift of the gods," and "Law is a subject area that belongs in the provenance of kingship."
- In Israel, the king's role was to uphold and enforce the law given by God through Moses.
- God is the ultimate king of Israel, and he expresses his kingship through the law.
- **Deuteronomy 17 - The Law and the Ideal King** Deuteronomy 17 details how an Israelite king must be different than kings of surrounding nations. God is choosing an Israelite king, not Israel. The king's first and most important qualification is he is an Israelite (from the brethren).
- He must not multiply horses (military power), wives (international alliances), or silver and gold (materialism).
- The king's primary duty is to make copies of the law and to live in accordance with it. The law is the means by which the king relates to God and to the people, and it's how God relates to Israel.
- Fowler states, "what makes the Israelite king, in God's eyes, is his faithfulness to the law."
- **Theological Significance of Law:** Lawkeeping in the Old Testament was the sign of the covenant with God.
- It is not separate from grace. We keep the law because we love God and have been saved, not to obtain salvation. Dr. Fowler states, "We keep the law because we have experienced salvation."
- God gave law even before the nation of Israel existed, such as in Genesis 1-2 to the first couple.
- Jesus gave more laws, proportionally, than Moses. The New Testament is full of commands. "If you love me, keep my commandments," is one example.
- The concept of kingship is a unifying theme throughout the Bible, running from the Old Testament through the New Testament (Christ as King) and even the Book of Revelation (Christ shepherding with a rod of iron).

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Fowler's lecture provides a fresh perspective on John 10 and the nature of law in the Old Testament by emphasizing the central role of divine kingship. He challenges conventional interpretations and highlights the importance of understanding these concepts in their historical and theological context. His key points suggest that:

- John 10 is not just about pastoral imagery but a profound revelation of Jesus as the God of Israel and the true king.
- Law in the Old Testament is rooted in divine kingship, expressing God's will and the terms of the covenant relationship.
- The Law of Moses is more ethical and just than its surrounding counterparts, notably the code of Hammurabi.
- A proper understanding of the kingship of God can provide a consistent thread throughout the Old and New Testament.

This material suggests that a deeper analysis of kingship and law provides a unifying framework for understanding the Bible as a whole.

## 4. Study Guide: Fowler, Old Testament Backgrounds, Session 9, John 10, Divine Kingship, and Law

### Old Testament Backgrounds Study Guide: John 10 and the Law

#### Quiz

**Instructions:** Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each, based on the provided source material.

1. What is Dr. Fowler's central argument regarding the interpretation of John 10?
2. How does Dr. Fowler explain the significance of the "Good Shepherd" title?
3. Why does Dr. Fowler argue that the traditional, pastoral reading of the shepherd imagery in John 10 does not make sense?
4. What is the difference between the Palestinian wolf and the wolf that is typically understood by modern readers?
5. According to the Law of Moses, what did shepherds need to provide in order to prove their innocence when a sheep was attacked?
6. In the context of John 10, what does Dr. Fowler suggest that the "hireling" represents?
7. How does the Code of Hammurabi differ from the Law of Moses in terms of its focus and philosophy?
8. What is the primary difference in how the Law of Jealousy is handled in the Code of Hammurabi versus the Law of Moses?
9. What is apodictic law and how does it contrast with the case law found in the Code of Hammurabi?
10. How does Dr. Fowler argue that the concept of law is related to kingship in the Old Testament?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. Dr. Fowler argues that John 10 is primarily a Christological passage, revealing Jesus as the God of Israel, rather than a soteriological passage about salvation. He believes the shepherd imagery is meant to signify Jesus as the divine king.

2. Dr. Fowler explains that in the Old Testament, the shepherd title is reserved for God or a royal messianic figure. Jesus' use of this title reveals his divine identity and authority as the God of Israel.
3. Dr. Fowler argues that the details of the shepherd imagery, such as the wolf and the hireling, don't fit a realistic pastoral setting. The Palestinian wolf is not a dangerous threat, and the hireling's behavior does not align with the law of Moses.
4. The Palestinian wolf is a smaller, solitary animal, weighing only about 20 pounds and not considered a threat, unlike the much larger and more dangerous European or American wolf. This makes the idea of fleeing from a wolf unlikely.
5. According to the Law of Moses, a shepherd needed to produce the ears and hooves of the sheep to prove that the animal had actually been attacked and eaten by a wild animal, rather than being sold by the shepherd.
6. Dr. Fowler suggests that the hireling in John 10 represents a pseudo-king, likely one of the Herodian kings, who would not protect his people. This contrasts with Jesus as the true king who would lay down his life for his sheep.
7. The Code of Hammurabi is primarily civil law, focusing on societal order and punishment, whereas the Law of Moses is primarily religious law with a focus on ethical and moral behavior related to God's covenant. The Law of Moses is more focused on sin than societal offenses.
8. In the Code of Hammurabi, a woman accused of unfaithfulness was subjected to trial by ordeal, presumed guilty unless she survived a river ordeal. In the Law of Moses, she swears an oath of innocence and drinks water, and she is presumed innocent unless God shows her guilt.
9. Apodictic law is propositional law characterized by commands like "you shall not" and "you shall," making ethical statements in advance of any violations. In contrast, the Code of Hammurabi is predominantly case law, dealing with specific circumstances as they arose.
10. Dr. Fowler argues that law in the Hebrew Bible has its anchor and foundation in kingship, with laws seen as the gift of the gods or the king. God, as the ultimate king, gives laws to his people to govern their relationship with Him.



## Essay Questions

**Instructions:** Answer each of the following questions in a well-organized essay format.

1. Analyze Dr. Fowler's interpretation of the "Good Shepherd" passage in John 10. How does he use Old Testament backgrounds to support his argument that the passage is primarily Christological and not soteriological?
2. Compare and contrast the characteristics of the Code of Hammurabi with the Law of Moses, according to Dr. Fowler. Explain how these distinctions reveal differing worldviews and philosophies of law.
3. Discuss the significance of the "law of jealousy" in both the Code of Hammurabi and the Law of Moses. What does the treatment of this issue reveal about the differing concepts of justice and innocence in each system?
4. Examine the relationship between kingship and law in the Old Testament, based on Dr. Fowler's interpretation of Deuteronomy 17. How does the ideal role of the king in Israel differ from the role of kings in the surrounding nations?
5. Evaluate the implications of Dr. Fowler's assertion that Jesus gave more laws proportionally in the New Testament than Moses did in the Old Testament. What are some of the practical implications of this for believers?

## Glossary

**Apodictic Law:** Law that is propositional, characterized by commands and ethical statements that define right and wrong in advance of any specific crime.

**Case Law:** Law that is based on specific instances or cases, with decisions made on a situational basis, often dealing with individual cases of conflict or wrongdoing.

**Christological:** Relating to the study of the nature and person of Jesus Christ, particularly his divine nature and role as the Messiah.

**Covenant:** A formal agreement or pact, particularly in a religious context, between God and his people, which establishes obligations and expectations.

**Egalitarian:** Believing in or based on the principle that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities.

**Hireling:** A person who works for wages; in the context of John 10, representing those who do not truly care for the flock but only work for personal gain.

**Incarnate:** Embodied in flesh; referring to the belief that God became human in the person of Jesus Christ.

**Legalism:** The belief that salvation is earned by adhering to a strict set of laws or rules, often neglecting the deeper spirit of the law.

**Messiah:** The promised deliverer of the Jewish people, often seen as a royal figure who will usher in an era of peace and justice.

**Soteriological:** Relating to the study of salvation; how humans can be rescued from sin and its consequences and restored to a right relationship with God.

**Stela:** An upright stone slab or pillar, often inscribed with text, used for commemorative or informational purposes.

## 5. FAQs on Fowler, Old Testament Backgrounds, Session 9, John 10, Divine Kingship, and Law, [Biblicalelearning.org](http://Biblicalelearning.org) (BeL)

### FAQ: Old Testament Backgrounds, John 10, and the Law

1. **How does Dr. Fowler interpret the "Good Shepherd" passage in John 10, and how does this differ from common interpretations?** Dr. Fowler argues that the passage in John 10 is primarily Christological, focusing on revealing Jesus as the God of Israel, rather than soteriological (centered on salvation). He states that Jesus' claims as the shepherd, especially in the context of the Old Testament, where "shepherd" is a royal title associated with God or a messianic figure, were clear claims to his divine identity as the Messiah who is God incarnate. The usual interpretation is that it's simply a pastoral analogy, a homily Jesus created about himself and his sheep. Fowler disagrees, saying it is really about kingship.
2. **Why does Dr. Fowler argue that the imagery in John 10 doesn't fit a literal pastoral setting, and what does this indicate?** The imagery of the "hireling" fleeing from a wolf doesn't make literal sense in the Palestinian context, Dr. Fowler explains. Palestinian wolves are not the large, vicious animals often imagined, and they wouldn't pose a significant threat to the sheep. This mismatch suggests that the imagery is symbolic and metaphorical. The "good shepherd" is Jesus, the "wolf" could be a representation of Satan or Herodian kings, and the "hireling" could be those kings, who do not care for the sheep, revealing that Jesus is the true king.
3. **What is the significance of the Old Testament concept of "shepherd" in relation to Jesus and the kingship of God?** In the Old Testament, "shepherd" is a title primarily associated with God or a royal messianic figure. When Jesus declares himself the "good shepherd," he is aligning himself with this divine title, claiming to be the Messiah, and thus revealing himself as the incarnate God. This concept demonstrates the kingship of God through Jesus Christ, forming a central theological theme that unites the Old and New Testaments.

4. **How does the Law of Moses compare to the Code of Hammurabi, and what are the key differences?** While both law codes share some similarities, the Law of Moses differs significantly from the Code of Hammurabi. Hammurabi's code is largely civil law, with many capital offenses and punishments, reflecting a "guilty until proven innocent" approach and a heavily stratified society. The Law of Moses, by contrast, is primarily religious law, with fewer capital offenses, a more egalitarian view of its people, and a presumption of innocence. Furthermore, Hammurabi's code is mostly case law while the Law of Moses is primarily propositional or apodictic law.
5. **What is the significance of the "law of jealousy" in both law codes, and how does it reflect different philosophies?** The law of jealousy, dealing with suspected infidelity, highlights the different philosophies of the two law codes. In the Code of Hammurabi, the accused woman is subjected to a trial by ordeal, presuming her guilt. In the Law of Moses, however, the woman swears an oath of innocence and, if nothing happens to her after drinking water mixed with sediment, she is declared innocent, which suggests a "innocent until proven guilty" approach. This shows the theological differences, and the higher ethical standard in the Mosaic Law.
6. **How is kingship connected to law in the Old Testament, and what does this connection reveal about God's relationship with Israel?** In the ancient Near East, law was seen as a gift from the gods. In the Hebrew Bible, Law is part of the provenance of Kingship, and law is inseparable from the kingship of God. God revealed his law to Moses, who is considered the first king of Israel. Subsequent kings were to make copies of this law and rule according to its principles. This connection signifies that God related to Israel through covenant and law-keeping, and their obedience to the law was a critical part of their relationship with Him. This relationship continues in the New Covenant with Jesus as King.
7. **How does Deuteronomy 17 outline the qualities of a righteous king in Israel, and what implications does this have for understanding kingship?** Deuteronomy 17 provides God's vision for the ideal king in Israel. A righteous king must be chosen by God from among the Israelites, be a brother to his people (not above them), and must not be a militarist, an internationalist, or a materialist. The king was also required to make copies of the Mosaic Law and rule according to it. This highlights that a king's faithfulness to God's law, and not his military might or international connections, was paramount.

8. **How does the concept of law apply to New Testament Christians, and how does this relate to the teachings of Jesus?** While New Testament Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, law is not a negative concept. Dr. Fowler says it is inseparable from kingship and the covenant, both in the Old and New Testaments. The keeping of the law, or commandments, is an act that is done as a result of loving God, and is an act of worship. In this way, law and grace are not mutually exclusive, but connected concepts. As such, Jesus himself gave over 200 commandments in the New Testament. New Testament believers keep law as an act of love, which is a proper relationship to their King, Jesus.