

Dr. Tiberius Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 8, God as Covenant Sustainer & Giver of Salvation Resources from NotebookLM

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

1. Abstract of Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 8, God as Covenant Sustainer & Giver of Salvation, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Rata's Old Testament Theology session 8 explores God's roles as both the sustainer of covenants and the giver of salvation. The lecture emphasizes that God actively intervenes to uphold his covenants despite human failures, citing examples from the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants. **Furthermore, it examines the concept of salvation in the Old Testament, tracing its development from deliverance from physical threats to the promise of everlasting life through the Messiah.** The session highlights how Old Testament prophecies, including the suffering servant motif, find their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the anointed one. **Finally, it touches on differing interpretations of the Messiah, contrasting Christian understanding with a rabbinic perspective on atonement.**

2. 22 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 8 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Theology → OT Theology, Rata).



Rata_OTTheology_Session08.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 8, God as Covenant Sustainer & Giver of Salvation

Briefing Document: God as Covenant Sustainer and Giver of Salvation in the Old Testament

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the key themes and arguments presented by Dr. Tiberius Rata in his lecture on Old Testament Theology, specifically focusing on God's role as the sustainer of covenants and the giver of salvation. Rata emphasizes that God's involvement extends beyond the initial establishment of covenants to actively maintaining them despite human failings. He also traces the concept of salvation in the Old Testament, highlighting its initial focus on deliverance from death and enemies, evolving towards a future, everlasting salvation embodied in the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. God as Covenant Sustainer:

- **God is not just a covenant maker but a covenant sustainer:** Rata argues against a passive view of God after establishing covenants. He actively intervenes to uphold his promises despite human breaches.
- **Quote:** "The Bible teaches that God is not just a covenant maker. He's the covenant sustainer."
- **Examples from key Old Testament Covenants:**
Abrahamic Covenant: Despite Abraham's repeated failures (lying about Sarah in Genesis 12 and 20), God intervenes to protect the covenant line. His appearance to Abimelech in a dream is cited as an example. The sign of the covenant, circumcision, is highlighted, and the incident in Exodus 4 involving Zipporah's action to save Moses' life due to uncircumcision demonstrates God's insistence on covenant obedience and his subsequent intervention.
- **Quote:** "Each time, what we see is that it is God who intervenes in our mess to sustain the covenant."
- **Quote:** "So God is not just the covenant-making God; he is the covenant-sustaining God. It is God who sustains the covenant. He intervenes in our mess."
- **Mosaic Covenant:** The immediate violation of the covenant with the golden calf after the people's affirmation in Exodus 24 is presented as a stark example of

human failure. God's initial intention to destroy the people and Moses' subsequent intercession leading to God's relenting illustrates God's sustained commitment despite Israel's repeated "spiritual adultery" of worshipping other gods.

- **Quote:** "What's interesting is that right after that, we have them worshipping a golden calf... Basically, this was the gravity of the sin. That's how this was. Because they just said I do."
- **Quote:** "And yet, it is God who sustains the covenant by making and giving them a new covenant."
- **Davidic Covenant:** God's promise of a perpetual kingship and love to David is acknowledged, but Rata emphasizes the conditional "if clauses" presented to Solomon (1 Kings 6 and 8). Solomon's disobedience, particularly his interfaith marriages leading to idolatry (1 Kings 3 and 11), demonstrates the breaking of the covenant by the human partner. However, God ultimately sustains this covenant through Jesus, the descendant of David, as highlighted in Luke's Gospel and Peter's sermon in Acts 2.
- **Quote:** "So, it is Jesus through whom God sustains the covenant made with David."
- **The New Covenant:** The promise of a new covenant in Jeremiah, where the law is written on the heart by the Holy Spirit, is presented as the ultimate act of God's covenant sustenance in the face of repeated human failure.
- **Quote:** "The law written on tablets of stone can be broken... But the law is written on the heart; who can take it away? Nobody. So that's the beautiful thing about the new covenant promise. Now, through the Holy Spirit, God writes the law on our hearts so we see that God always intervenes in our mess."

2. God as Giver of Salvation:

- **Old Testament concept of salvation:** Initially, "salvation" (Hebrew: *yeshuah*) primarily referred to escaping death and deliverance from enemies. Examples from Exodus 15 (deliverance from the Egyptian army) and Psalms (deliverance from death) are provided.
- **Quote:** "See, when we talk about salvation in the Old Testament, the term first has to do with escaping death and deliverance from enemies, even though it may not have pointed to Jesus Christ yet."

- **Quote:** "In Exodus 15, after the Exodus event, in the song of Moses, the song says, the Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. Well, what salvation? Well, from death."
- **Future aspect of salvation in the Old Testament:** The prophets introduce the idea of a future, everlasting salvation. Isaiah 45:17 ("Israel will be saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation") and Isaiah 52:10 (all nations seeing the salvation of our God) illustrate this development.
- **Quote:** "Okay, so now we get a sense of not just a temporary salvation from death, but there is an everlasting, eternal dimension to the salvation."
- **Messianic Prophecy and Salvation:** God uses an "anointed one," a Messiah, to carry out his plan of salvation. The promise of this Messiah begins in Genesis 3:15 (Proto-Evangelion), which speaks of the offspring of the woman crushing the serpent's head. Galatians 3:16 and 1 John 3:8 are cited as New Testament confirmations of this prophecy referring to Christ.
- **Quote:** "Well, in the New Testament, that Messiah is the anointed one, the Messiah which is Jesus. But the promise of this Jesus, this Messiah, starts actually in the book of Genesis. We call this the Proto-Evangelion, the first gospel message."
- **Quote:** "'He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.' And we know that this is talking about Jesus."
- **The Suffering Servant Messiah:** Isaiah 53 presents a different picture of the Messiah than a conquering warrior, depicting him as a suffering servant who bears the griefs and sorrows of humanity, wounded for transgressions and crushed for iniquities, bringing healing and peace.
- **Quote:** "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes, we are healed."
- **The Anointed One (Messiah/Christ):** The term "Messiah" (Hebrew: *mashach*, to anoint) and its Greek equivalent "Christ" (*Christos*) refer to one who is anointed and set apart for a specific task. In the Old Testament, this term applied to priests, kings, and sometimes prophets, signifying consecration and bestowal of authority. David's refusal to harm Saul, "the Lord's anointed," exemplifies this respect for God's chosen.

- **Quote:** "So, in the Old Testament, the term Messiah refers to installing a person in an office in a way that will allow the person to be regarded as accredited by Yahweh. So, the word Messiah comes from mashach, which means to smear or anoint. So, Messiah literally means the anointed one."
- **Jesus as the Ultimate Messiah and Giver of Salvation:** The New Testament clearly identifies Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah who brings ultimate forgiveness for sin and eternal life. The genealogy in Matthew highlights Jesus' Davidic lineage, and Peter's declaration in Matthew 16 ("You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God") confirms Jesus' identity, though Peter's understanding of the Messianic role was initially limited. Jesus himself affirms his Messianic identity to the woman at the well (John 4). Paul in Romans emphasizes that justification comes freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Messiah Jesus.
- **Quote:** "When Jesus asks his disciples, who do you say that I am? Simon replies, you are the Messiah. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
- **Quote:** "Then Jesus declared, I who speak to you am he."
- **Quote:** "Ultimately, this Messiah gives forgiveness for sin and eternal life."
- **Rejection of Jesus as Messiah:** The lecture concludes by noting the differing interpretations of Messianic prophecies, citing a conversation with a rabbi in Israel who viewed the Messiah as a state of mind rather than a person. The reliance on "the vows of our lips" for atonement in the absence of the temple is contrasted with the biblical principle of atonement requiring the shedding of blood, ultimately emphasizing the Christian belief that Jesus is the Savior.
- **Quote:** "When you reject Jesus as a person, then you have to interpret it in different ways."
- **Quote:** "And yet the Bible says without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. Jesus is the Savior."

Conclusion:

Dr. Rata's lecture effectively presents God as actively involved in sustaining his covenants despite human infidelity. He also provides a comprehensive overview of the concept of salvation in the Old Testament, tracing its development from temporal deliverance to the promise of eternal salvation embodied in the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The lecture highlights the consistent grace and faithfulness of God throughout the Old Testament narrative, culminating in the fulfillment of his promises in the New Testament.

4. Study Guide: Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 8, God as Covenant Sustainer & Giver of Salvation

Study Guide: God as Covenant Sustainer and God as Giver of Salvation

Quiz

1. Provide two examples from the Abrahamic covenant that illustrate God's role as the covenant sustainer despite human failure.
2. Explain the significance of the circumcision incident in Exodus 4 concerning Moses and how it demonstrates God's commitment to the Mosaic covenant.
3. Describe the event of the golden calf in Exodus 32 and how God's initial response was tempered. What does this reveal about God's covenant relationship with Israel?
4. According to the text, what was the primary issue with Solomon's marriages to foreign women, and how did God ultimately sustain the Davidic covenant despite Solomon's disobedience?
5. Explain the distinction made in the Old Testament between the initial understanding of "salvation" and the later prophetic understanding of it. Provide an example of each.
6. What is the Proto-Evangelion, and where in the Old Testament is it found? Explain its significance in relation to the New Testament understanding of salvation.
7. Describe the concept of the Messiah as a "suffering servant" in Isaiah 53. How did this differ from the popular expectations of the Messiah in Old Testament times?
8. What does the Hebrew term "Messiah" literally mean, and what is the Greek equivalent? Provide examples of how the term was used in the Old Testament beyond referring to a future king.
9. Explain how the New Testament, particularly in the words of Peter and Jesus, clarifies the identity of the Messiah in relation to Old Testament prophecies about David.
10. According to the text, what is the ultimate salvation offered through the Messiah, Jesus, as understood in the New Testament?

Answer Key

1. In the Abrahamic covenant, Abraham lied about Sarah being his sister on two occasions (Genesis 12 and 20). In both instances, God intervened to protect Sarah and uphold his promise to Abraham, demonstrating his role in sustaining the covenant despite Abraham's failings. The requirement of circumcision in Genesis 17, though commanded as the sign of the covenant, was not immediately followed by Moses concerning his son, leading to God's intervention and Zipporah's act to ensure covenantal obedience and sustain the covenant.
2. The incident in Exodus 4, where God sought to put Moses to death because his son was not circumcised, highlights the non-optional nature of covenantal signs. Zipporah's act of circumcision and her words "surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me" signify the seriousness of the covenant obligation and God's intervention to ensure its continuation, even when the appointed leader falters. This demonstrates God's proactive role in sustaining the Mosaic covenant.
3. Immediately after the covenant confirmation at Mount Sinai (Exodus 24), the Israelites created and worshipped a golden calf, a profound act of covenantal unfaithfulness akin to marital infidelity on a honeymoon. God's initial desire was to destroy the people, but Moses interceded on their behalf, and God relented. This shows that while God takes covenantal breaches seriously, his mercy and willingness to respond to intercession are also integral to sustaining the relationship.
4. The primary issue with Solomon's marriages was not the ethnicity of his wives but their foreign faiths, which led him to worship other gods, directly violating God's law against interfaith marriage. Despite Solomon's disobedience, God sustained the Davidic covenant through the promise of a future descendant, Jesus, who fulfilled the promise of a perpetual kingship and God's enduring love for his people, as highlighted in the Gospel of Luke and Peter's sermon in Acts.
5. In the Old Testament, the term "salvation" initially referred to physical deliverance from death or enemies, as seen in the Psalms' pleas for rescue and the Exodus from Egypt (Exodus 15). Later prophetic understanding introduced a future, everlasting dimension to salvation, promising eternal deliverance and freedom from shame, as expressed in Isaiah 45:17 ("Israel will be saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation").
6. The Proto-Evangelion, meaning the "first gospel," is found in Genesis 3:15, where God, in his judgment of the serpent, declares, "He will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." This passage is significant because it is understood as the

earliest prophecy foreshadowing the coming of the Messiah (Jesus Christ) who would ultimately defeat evil, thus laying the foundation for the New Testament understanding of salvation through Christ.

7. Isaiah 53 depicts the Messiah not as a glorious warrior king, but as a "suffering servant" who would be despised, rejected, bear the griefs and sorrows of others, and be wounded and crushed for their transgressions. This contrasted with the popular expectation of a Messiah who would bring political and military liberation to Israel. The suffering servant prophecy revealed that the Messiah's primary mission involved humility and sacrificial atonement.
8. The Hebrew term "Messiah" (Mashiach) literally means "the anointed one," derived from the verb "mashach," meaning to smear or anoint. While often associated with the future king from David's line, the term was also used in the Old Testament to refer to anointed priests (Leviticus) and existing kings (1 and 2 Samuel), highlighting the concept of being set apart and authorized for a specific role by God.
9. In the New Testament, Peter, on the day of Pentecost, explicitly connects the Old Testament prophecies in the Psalms about a descendant of David sitting on his throne to Jesus' resurrection and ascension, declaring Jesus as the Messiah (Acts 2). Jesus himself, in his conversation with the woman at the well (John 4), directly states, "I who speak to you am he," confirming his identity as the Messiah who would explain everything.
10. The ultimate salvation offered through the Messiah, Jesus, as understood in the New Testament, encompasses forgiveness for sin and the gift of eternal life for all who believe in him. Paul's writings in Romans emphasize that justification comes freely by God's grace through the redemption found in Jesus Christ, and the "wages of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," signifying a complete and everlasting deliverance from sin and death.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the concept of God as the "Covenant Sustainer" in the Old Testament. Using specific examples from the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants, discuss the ways in which God actively maintains his promises despite human unfaithfulness.
2. Compare and contrast the Old Testament understanding(s) of salvation with the New Testament understanding as revealed through Jesus Christ. How did the prophetic hope for salvation find its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus?
3. Discuss the significance of the "suffering servant" prophecy in Isaiah 53 in understanding the nature and mission of the Messiah. How did this prophecy challenge and ultimately redefine the expectations of the Messiah in Jewish thought?
4. Explore the meaning and usage of the term "Messiah" in both the Old and New Testaments. How did the understanding of this term evolve, and how did Jesus fulfill the various aspects associated with the Messianic role?
5. Examine the relationship between God's covenant faithfulness and his role as the giver of salvation in the Old Testament. How do these two aspects of God's character and actions intertwine to reveal his redemptive plan?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Covenant:** A solemn agreement between two parties, often involving promises and obligations. In the Old Testament, God establishes various covenants with individuals and the nation of Israel.
- **Covenant Sustainer:** The attribute of God emphasizing his active role in maintaining and upholding the covenants he establishes, even when the other party fails to meet their obligations.
- **Salvation (Old Testament):** Primarily refers to deliverance from physical threats, enemies, or death. It can also carry a future hope for national restoration.
- **Salvation (New Testament):** Encompasses deliverance from sin, death, and God's wrath through faith in Jesus Christ, leading to eternal life.
- **Proto-Evangelion:** Meaning "first gospel," refers to Genesis 3:15, the earliest prophecy in the Bible foretelling the defeat of Satan and the coming of a redeemer.
- **Messiah (Hebrew: Mashiach):** Literally "the anointed one," referring to individuals (kings, priests) set apart for sacred service. It also refers to the prophesied future king and deliverer of Israel.
- **Christ (Greek: Christos):** The Greek translation of the Hebrew word Messiah, used in the New Testament as a title for Jesus, signifying his role as the anointed one.
- **Suffering Servant:** A figure described in Isaiah 53 who endures suffering and sacrifice for the sake of others, understood by Christians to be a prophecy of Jesus Christ.
- **Intercession:** The act of pleading or mediating on behalf of another person or group. Moses' intercession for Israel after the golden calf incident is a key example.
- **Anointing:** A ritual act of applying oil to someone's head, signifying their appointment or consecration to a specific office or task, such as king, priest, or prophet.

5. FAQs on Rata, Old Testament Theology, Session 8, God as Covenant Sustainer & Giver of Salvation, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: God as Covenant Sustainer and Giver of Salvation

1. The lecture states that God is not just a covenant maker but also a covenant sustainer. What does this mean, and can you provide examples from the Old Testament to illustrate this point?

God's role as covenant sustainer means that despite humanity's failures to uphold their end of the covenant, God actively intervenes to maintain and fulfill his promises. Examples include the Abrahamic covenant where Abraham lied about Sarah, yet God intervened to protect the covenant lineage through Abimelech. In the Mosaic covenant, the Israelites worshipped a golden calf immediately after agreeing to the covenant, but God relented from destroying them due to Moses' intercession, ultimately promising a new covenant. Similarly, despite Solomon's disobedience, God sustained his promise to David of a perpetual kingship through the eventual coming of Jesus.

2. The Abrahamic covenant had certain obligations. How did Abraham and his descendants fare in fulfilling these, and how did God respond to their failures?

The Abrahamic covenant included obligations such as walking before God and being blameless (Genesis 17:1). However, Abraham himself failed in this, as illustrated by him lying about Sarah being his sister on two occasions. Despite these failures, God consistently intervened to sustain the covenant, demonstrating his commitment even when humans falter. This highlights that the covenant's continuation relied on God's grace and initiative, not solely on human obedience.

3. The lecture discusses the sign of the Abrahamic covenant being circumcision. What was the significance of this event involving Moses and his son in Exodus 4, and how does it relate to God as a covenant sustainer?

In Exodus 4, God sought to put Moses to death because his son was not circumcised, the sign of the Abrahamic covenant. Zipporah then circumcised their son, and God relented. This seemingly obscure event underscores the seriousness of the covenant sign and demonstrates that even for the chosen leader, adherence to the covenant was crucial. God's intervention and subsequent sparing of Moses after the circumcision highlights his

role in upholding the requirements of the covenant, even when it necessitates a forceful reminder.

4. The Mosaic covenant, established after the Exodus, was also broken by the Israelites. What was the immediate and serious transgression mentioned, and how did God respond?

Immediately after the confirmation of the Mosaic covenant in Exodus 24, the Israelites broke it by worshipping a golden calf. This act of idolatry was likened to a newlywed committing adultery on their honeymoon, signifying a profound betrayal of their commitment to Yahweh. God's initial response was to want to destroy the people, but he relented due to Moses' powerful intercession, again demonstrating God's sustained commitment despite the people's infidelity.

5. The lecture contrasts the old covenant written on stone tablets with the new covenant. What is the key difference, according to the text, and what is the implication of this difference?

The key difference lies in where the law is written. The old covenant was written on stone tablets, which could be broken. The new covenant, however, promised in Jeremiah and fulfilled through the Holy Spirit, involves God writing the law on the hearts of believers. The implication is that this inward transformation makes the covenant unbreakable from God's side, as the desire and ability to follow God's will are internal and divinely empowered.

6. The lecture emphasizes that the Davidic covenant, promising a perpetual kingship, found its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus. How does the New Testament, specifically Luke and Acts, support this claim?

The Gospel of Luke explicitly connects Jesus to the Davidic covenant. The angel Gabriel announces to Mary that her son, Jesus, will be given the throne of his father David (Luke 1:32-33). Peter, in his Pentecost sermon in Acts 2, argues that the Psalms concerning a future king were not ultimately about David but prophesied the resurrection and reign of the Messiah, Jesus, a descendant of David, thus fulfilling God's promise of a perpetual Davidic ruler.

7. The Old Testament concept of "salvation" is discussed in the lecture. How did this understanding evolve from initial meanings to encompass a more future and eternal hope, and how does the figure of the Messiah relate to this?

Initially, salvation in the Old Testament primarily referred to deliverance from immediate threats like death and enemies, as seen in the Exodus and the Psalms. However, prophetic passages later introduced the idea of an "everlasting salvation," pointing towards a future, eternal dimension of rescue and restoration. The Messiah was prophesied as the agent through whom this ultimate salvation would come, although the nature of this salvation (suffering servant vs. conquering king) was not always fully understood.

8. The lecture explains the meaning of "Messiah" and its connection to Jesus. What does the term signify in both the Old and New Testaments, and how did Jesus fulfill the various expectations associated with this title, including aspects that were surprising to some?

The term "Messiah" (Hebrew) and "Christ" (Greek) both mean "anointed one," referring to individuals set apart for a specific office or task, such as kings, priests, and sometimes prophets, through anointing with oil. While some in the Old Testament expected a conquering, warrior Messiah who would bring political liberation, the prophecies in Isaiah, particularly Isaiah 53, revealed a suffering servant Messiah who would bring salvation through his suffering and death. Jesus fulfilled both aspects, being the rightful Davidic king but also the suffering servant who atoned for the sins of humanity, a surprising and initially perplexing reality for many, including his own disciples.