

Andy Stanley: 'Part of the Bible Is Obsolete and Outdated'

Pastor Andy Stanley recently defended his claim that parts of the Old Testament were rendered “obsolete and outdated” by Jesus’ new covenant. Stanley’s new book *Irresistible* debuted to some controversy last fall, but the megachurch pastor sought to clarify his position during an uncut interview with 100 Huntley Street’s Maggie John.

In the video, John asks Stanley how to properly read the Old Testament.

“Our tendency because of the way we’ve been given the Bible is we want to make God’s activity in the Old Testament fit with the Sermon on the Mount’s ‘love your enemies,’” Stanley says. “When you read the Old Testament, it’s like, I don’t see a lot of enemy love going on. Well it’s not because it was two different gods. God didn’t change. The covenants changed. It’s a brand-new covenant. But to get to the new, we had to go through the history of the old. So we read the Old Testament in light of God’s faithfulness to His people. God is a God that keeps His promises.”

He continues: “But what we can’t do is take the promises that God gave to Israel and sanitize them and kind of dust them off and twenty-first-century them, and somehow make them fit with Jesus and make it all blend together. Now Christians do that all the time. And I don’t think there’s any great harm done necessarily. But again, my concern is not for the people who are in. My concern is for the people who are trying to come back or the people for whom the gospel is so muddy or muddled for them based on Christians doing all kinds of crazy things based on their understanding of the Bible.”

Stanley cites Hebrews 8:13, which says, "By calling this covenant 'new,' he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear" (NIV). In the video interview, John asks Stanley about his use of the word "obsolete."

"I think if the average evangelical pastor got up and quoted those verses in Hebrews without telling people they were in the Bible, they may lose their job," Stanley says. "But it is right there. ... [Hebrews] is written by a Jewish person who says that covenant that you grew up on is obsolete and outdated. Which means, one of the authors of the Bible said part of the Bible is obsolete and outdated. Now there are people watching this interview that think I'm making that up. They've never seen those verses. But it's so consistent with what Paul taught. It's so consistent with the Sermon on the Mount."

Stanley affirms there "will always be a place" for the Old Testament, but asserts that the new covenant is superior and has replaced it.

"Why would you reach back to an inferior covenant with inferior promises when God has given you a better covenant with better promises?" Stanley asks. "...Of course there will always be a place for every part of the Old Testament and the old covenant within the Old Testament in our Christian preaching and teaching and application. But again, understanding the context is very important."

John then points out to Stanley that some pastors may interpret his words as verging on heresy. Stanley says he's certainly heard those criticisms before.

"I've been called a heretic," Stanley responded. "And privately, not publicly, I always say every church reformer started as a heretic. Just remember that. Martin Luther, John—that's the first time I've said it out loud in an

interview. I'm not claiming to be a reformer. Really, this is so not about me. None of this is original with me. I mean, this has been said by so many people so many times, but unfortunately these conversations oftentimes get buried in theological context. So I'm trying to bring what I think every Christian should understand about their own faith to light."

Watch the full video interview [here](#). The section quoted here begins roughly 27 minutes in.