

The Christian & the Old Testament

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March / April 2017

There is a misconception concerning the attitude of churches of Christ toward the Old Testament. We accept every word of the Bible and recognize that there are great benefits to be derived from a careful study of the old covenant.

When Paul said that “Every scripture is inspired of God” (2 Timothy 3:16), he obviously included the holy scripture of the Jews. When Jesus affirmed that “the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35), only the Old Testament was in existence. The Lord even went so far as to say that if we believe not Moses’ writings, we cannot believe in Christ himself (John 5:47). This we believe and teach. It is rich in spiritual food for Christians as It provides many faith-building lessons. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning...” (Romans 15:4). Timothy had been taught those sacred writings from childhood, and they made him wise unto salvation (2 Timothy 3:15).

It provides solid answers to life’s most serious and perplexing questions. We would have no sure knowledge of the origin of the cosmos for it is the Old Testament verses that tell us God spoke things into existence (Psalm 33:6). We would have no strong reply to the wild speculations of the evolutionist, man’s relation to God, the origin of sin and the curse that rests upon man and creation, if it were not for Genesis. Additionally, the origins of the various nations and languages, the riddle of the vast fossil record inscribed across the face of the whole earth as explained by the account of the flood in Noah’s day, and hundreds of other questions are similarly answered in this book. The Old Testament is the foundation upon which the new covenant was erected. “So that the law is become our tutor to bring us into Christ...” (Galatians 3:24). The law was a shadow of good things to come (Hebrews 10:1). It foreshadowed the coming Christian age in which Jesus fulfilled all of the prophecies concerning the Messiah (Luke 24:44-45). The New Testament takes up just where the Old leaves off.

When we open the New Testament, we are immediately confronted with institutions, persons, and events that would forever be a mystery were it not for the Old Testament. In Hebrews 11, the writer draws numerous lessons from the lives of Old Testament saints. We learn both of things to observe and things to shun. “Now these were our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (1 Corinthians 10:6).

Jesus said that the Jew’s scriptures bore witness to him. In Acts, Peter told Cornelius that all the prophets bore witness of Christ. The 300 plus prophetic details of Christ’s life and ministry provide an overwhelming basis for belief in Him as God’s Son. The same is true of prophecies relating to the church. As Christians, we are under Jesus and the New Covenant. Paul states, “But now we have been discharged from the law” (Romans 7:6), and that the old law “passeth away” and the new remains. Christ “abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances” (Ephesians 2:15). He took the Old Covenant out of the way, nailing it to his cross (Colossians 2:14, 16-17). We have a better covenant! When Peter would have equally honored Moses, the law giver, Elijah the prophet, and Christ, God spoke from His throne saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matthew 17:3-5). It

has well been said, “The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed; the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.”