

Why Study the Old Testament?

Introduction:

1. Recently, in a Bible class, I was asked a question regarding the real importance of studying the Old Testament. After all, it was correctly pointed out that we serve God in keeping with the instructions contained in the New Testament, and that the Law of Moses has been blotted out and nailed to the cross. So, in essence, what is the real purpose in studying the Old Testament?
2. In my judgment, this is a very good question, and it deserves a Bible answer.
3. It is a fact that the Law of Moses is not binding on people today.
 - a. Jeremiah, speaking to the people of his day, declared that the day would come when God would make a new covenant with His people. Jeremiah 31:31-35.
(1) In Hebrews 8:7-13 the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34 is quoted; it is depicted as having been fulfilled, and in verse six he tells us that Christ is *"the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."*
 - b. In Hebrews the writer tells us that the priesthood has changed, and that with the *"priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law."*
 - c. Hebrews 9:15-17 reveals that Jesus is *"the mediator of the New Testament.."*
 - d. In Hebrews 10:9-10, regarding the Mosaic covenant, the text says of Jesus that *"He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second."*
 - e. Note also Col. 2:14-17.
 - f. And Gal. 3:19,24-25.
4. Many more similar scriptures could be cited, but these are sufficient to prove that we are not under the Old Testament. So why spend time studying the Old Testament?
5. The New Testament tells us that there is value in studying the Old Testament. Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:6,11.

Discussion.

I. How Not to View the Old Testament:

- A. As a Guide on how to become a Christian.
 1. Scriptures shows that we cannot be justified by the law, Ga. 2:16
 2. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1:16.
 - a. The cardinal facts of the gospel are the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, I Cor. 15:1-4. So before Jesus died the gospel did not exist in actuality.
 3. Salvation is in the name of Christ, not Moses, Acts 4:12.
 4. If those who have become Christians were to seek to justified by Moses' law, they would thereby fall from grace, Gal. 5:4!
- B. As a Guide for Worship in this age.
 1. Jesus informed the Samaritan woman that Jerusalem would cease to be the place of worship, John 4:20-24.
 2. In Worship, we submit to Christ, not Moses, Col. 3:16-17.
- C. As a Pattern for the church to follow.
 1. The church is not an Old Testament body, Matt. 16:18.
 - a. It existed in the *"eternal purpose"* of God from the foundation of the world, Eph. 1:4; 3:10-11.
 2. But the beginning of the house of God (i.e., the church, I Tim. 3:15) would occur in a later dispensation, Isaiah 2:2-3; Luke 24:47,49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,41,47.

II. Why Study the Old Testament?

- A. It informs us of the Origin of the Universe, and of man.
 1. The origin of the universe: Genesis 1:1; Heb. 11:3; Psalm 33:6,9.
 - a. The universe as we know it did not always exist; it had a beginning.
 2. The origin of man, Genesis 1:26-27.
 - a. We were created by God; therefore we are amenable to God!
 - b. We did not evolve from a single celled organism that spontaneously sprang from nothing into existence!
(1) The theory of Evolution, which has never been proven and can never be proven, not only denies the Bible; it also diminishes man!
 - c. Gen. 2:16-17. When we violate God's law we sin, I John 3:4. Sin separates us from God, Rom. 6:23.

- B. It Informs us of the Nature and Attributes of God.
Note: God cannot change! Malachi 3:6; James 1:17. Therefore whatever were the nature and attributes of God in the Old Testament constitutes the same for today.
1. His omnipotence, Gen. 17:1; Job 42:2.
 2. His omniscience, Prov. 5:21; 15:3; Heb. 4:13; Isa. 46:10.
 3. His omnipresence, Psa. 139:7-12; Jer. 23:23-24.
 4. His Self-Existence, Ex. 3:14; John 8:58; John 5:26.
 - a. His is a self-caused existence; existence which is independent is everything else.
 5. His eternity, Psa. 90:2; 93:2; 2 Peter 3:8.
 6. His immutability, Psalm 102:26-27; Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17.
 7. His holiness, Isa. 6:3; 8:13; I Peter 1:14-19.
 8. His goodness and severity, Rom. 11:22.
 - a. Goodness illustrated, Genesis 1-2.
 - b. Severity illustrated, Genesis 3; Gen. 19.
- C. It Strengthens our Faith in the Bible as the Word of God.
1. Consider Prophecy and Fulfillment.
 - a. God is able to declare the end from the beginning, Isa. 46:10; John 13:19; 14:29.
 2. Significant prophecies in the Old Testament:
 - a. The seed of woman, Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4.
 - b. The seed of Abraham, Gen. 12:3; Matt. 1:1; Gal. 3:16, 29.
 - c. The land promise, Gen. 12:5,7; Josh. 21:43-45.
 - d. The one born of a virgin, Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:21-23.
 - e. The prophet like unto Moses, Deut. 18:15,18; Acts 3:22.
 - f. The sacrificial death of Jesus, Isa. 53:5,7; Acts 8:32-35.
 - g. The word going forth from Jerusalem, Isa. 2-2-3; Luke 24:47,49; Acts 1:8,9-11; Acts 2:1-4.
 - h. The kingdom to be established during the days of the Roman Empire, Dan. 2:44; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:24.
- D. It Strengthens our Faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
1. John 5:39; Luke 24:27,44.
 2. He would be of the seed of Abraham, Gen. 3:16; Matt. 1:1-2; Gal. 3:16.
 3. He would be of the tribe of Judah, Gen. 49:10; Heb. 7:14.
 4. He would be born in Bethlehem, Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1-6.
- E. It illustrates that God says what He means, and means what He says!
1. About the importance of correct worship, Gen. 4:3-5; Heb. 11:4; Lev. 10:1-2.
 2. About the importance of "little things." Consider the carrying of the ark, Ex 25:12-15; 2 Sam. 6:6-7.
 3. The folly of rejecting God's simple instructions, 2 Kings 5:10-14.
- F. It illustrates what it means to walk by faith.
1. We must walk by faith, 2 Cor. 5:7.
 2. How faith comes, Rom. 10:17.
 3. Illustrate with Noah.
 - a. "*Make thee an ark of gopher wood,*" Gen. 6:14,22; Heb. 11:7.
- G. It illustrates the Importance of walking by faith.
1. Hebrews 10:39; 11:1,6.
 2. The many Old Testament examples of those who did, Heb. 11:4-40.
- H. A proper understanding of the Old Testament is essential to understanding portions of the New Testament.
1. Consider the book of Hebrews; countless times the Old Testament is quoted with regards to different point being made. Consider the book of Revelation; its types, symbols, figures of speech, etc., refer us back to the Old Testament.
- I. An Understanding of the contrast between the Old and New makes us more aware of the importance of taking God at His word, and doing His will! Heb. 2:1-3. It helps us to better appreciate the New Testament.

Conclusion:

1. God spoke in different ways in the past; He now speaks to us through His Son, Heb. 1:1-2. We must obey Him!
 --Bobby Witherington, May 8, 2016