

- ***Read Romans 15:4*** This year, as a congregation, our daily Bible reading will consist of the first 14 books of the Old Testament. That reading begins this week and will be Genesis 1-8. I thought about going ahead and studying through a text this evening, but I chose instead to take some time to talk about the importance of reading, meditating on, and studying the Old Testament text.
- Tonight, I would like for us to consider the Old Testament text and see how exactly it benefits the Christian. Sadly, as with many things, people tend to take an extreme stance with and view of the Old Testament. Some would say that the Old Testament is useless. Others would say that the Old Testament is all we need. We want view the Old Testament in an accurate way. We want to use it for what it ought to be used for, but we don't want to use it for more than God would have us to use it for, today. Let's consider these things that were written in earlier times and how they are useful for us today.

The Christian & the Old Testament

I. The Old Testament is not the Christian's standard of authority.

- A. Jesus fulfilled the purpose of the Law of Moses and transferred its authority to His own Covenant.
1. Early on in His ministry, Jesus made it clear that He had come to fulfill the Law and have it accomplish its purpose. **(Matt. 5:17-19)**
 2. For the time being, He said that it still possessed authority and that it should be followed and respected until that time when its purposed had been accomplished.
 3. Paul teaches us that the Law served as a tutor to bring us to faith in Jesus. **(Gal. 3:23-25)** Once faith was established then the Law no longer had a purpose and its authority was made void.
 4. The Hebrew writer discussed this issue extensively in that Letter. He says that the new covenant (Covenant of Christ) was coming into power and the old was becoming obsolete. **(Heb. 8:13; 10:9,10)**
 5. Through Jesus's death, He established a New Covenant that all submit to and live under. **(Heb. 9:15-17)**
- B. Because all things concerning the Old Testament have been accomplished, we are not to use it as a source of authority. We can learn from it, but our authority is established in Christ.
1. All authority has been given to Jesus, and it is He, His Apostles, and His inspired writers who hold authority for God's people, today. **(Matt. 28:18)**
 2. We can tell that there was a changing of authority in regards to God's people because the Apostle Paul was constantly having to write to Christians concerning their usage of the Law.
 3. The letter to the Romans is full of teachings by Paul concerning the differences between the Law of Moses and the covenant of Christ. Paul has to make it very clear that men are justified by faith apart from works of the Law. **(Rom. 3:28)**
 4. It wasn't just the Romans though, the Galatians had some struggles concerning the Law, as well. **(Gal. 5:1-4)**
 5. Some in Galatia were trying to bind circumcision as a necessity of obedience, but Paul says that they were wrong for trying to be justified by law. They were no long walking in the grace of Jesus.
 6. The same thing is true for us. We are not to try to use the OT or the Law of Moses as authority for practice in our faith. We are only to follow the teachings of Christ.

II. The Old Testament is full of numerous examples of faith that the Christian can learn by.

- A. Back in **Romans 15:4**, Paul states that those things of earlier times, those things of the OT writings are there for our instruction. They are there for our learning as other translations would say.
1. Paul states that we can look to the examples, decisions, mistakes of the OT characters and we can learn from them.
 2. We can look to those who did things well, and we can imitate their godly actions.
 3. We can look to those who persevered in bad times in order to be encouraged.
 4. We can even look to those who made mistakes and learn how not to replicate their mistakes.
- B. There are so many people who were in so many different situations that we can learn from.
1. We can look to Job as an example of an individual who faced unspeakable tragedy, yet he still fell to his knees, worshipped God, and didn't sin or blame God. **(Job 1:20-22)**
 2. The story of Cain and Abel is an example of a person who didn't know how to deal with the success of others and their own rejection and shortcomings. **(Gen. 4:1-8)**

3. The story of Joseph & Potiphar's wife teaches us the lengths we ought to go to in staying faithful to our God. **(Gen. 39:1-20)**
4. The sad situation of David & Bathsheba teaches us about the scary snowball effect of sin and how things can spiral out of control before we ever know it. **(II Sam. 11)**
5. These are just a small handful of numerous examples that we could pick out of the OT as examples that we can learn by. Some are good, some are bad, but all of them can teach us something and they can instill within us hope that we can follow the will of God.

III. The Old Testament is a treasure trove of spiritual knowledge for the Christian.

- A. The Old Testament is full of teachings and knowledge that edifies and educates the Christian.
 1. The Old Testament teaches us about the nature of God.
 2. It teaches us about the origins of so many things...man, sin, sacrifices, covenants, etc.
 3. It teaches us about God's Grace and how it has always been a part of God's character.
 4. It teaches us about animal sacrifices and how they lead us to the sacrifice of Jesus.
 5. It teaches us about about sin and how God cannot be a part of it.
 6. It teaches us about the consequences of sin and how much God hates it.
- B. Coming to know and understand all of these things gives us a complete picture of the Bible that we couldn't know if we didn't have or didn't study and come to know the Old Testament.
 1. We wouldn't know about the origins of man. We wouldn't know the details of how sin came through man.
 2. We wouldn't know the full importance of life and blood and how it ties in with covenants and the forgiveness of sins.
 3. We wouldn't know the full picture of Jesus and the many prophecies of the OT. We wouldn't have the great evidence of God that is predictive prophecy.
 4. We wouldn't about much of God's providence and how it worked within the lineage of Jesus.
 5. We wouldn't know about the history of God's people, and everything that God had done for them.
 6. There are just so many things that we wouldn't know if we didn't have the Old Testament writings.
 7. There are so many nuggets of knowledge and wisdom that are contained in the OT that we need to come to know and be familiar with. That can only happen if we take the time to read, study, and meditate on those things written in earlier times.

I'm extremely excited about our dedicated efforts in reading the first 14 books of the OT this year. I'm excited to utilize the bible coloring program and the PATH Bible study method to take our study of the OT writings to the next level. Our hope and prayer is that we will all be strengthened and edified in our study, and of course that God will be glorified in our efforts. May God help us to be dedicated to our daily Bible reading, and may we put forth the effort to grow together as a church as we read together in the Old Testament this year.