

THE PURPOSE AND USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TODAY

Introduction

- 1) Our Bibles are divided into an *Old Testament* and a *New Testament*
 - a) The fact that one is “old” and the other “new” suggests fundamental differences (see Heb. 8:8-13; 2 Cor. 3:6, 14)
- 2) Not all agree as to the use of the Old Testament today
 - a) Some avoid any use or study of it because it is considered of no profit to Christians today
 - b) Others continue to point to it as an authority for our worship and service to God today
- 3) What is the use and purpose, if any, of the Old Testament today?
 - a) Is it worth the time to read, study, and learn from? To what extent and for what objective?

I) **Respect and Honor Old Testament as the Word of God**

- A) Jesus honored it as the inspired word of God (Matt. 5:17-18; Jn. 5:39; 10:35)
 - 1) Even after being fulfilled [purpose completed], it is still “Holy Scripture” (2 Tim. 3:15)
- B) Quoted throughout the New Testament (Matt. 1:22-23; Rev. 2:27; over 280 direct quotations)
 - 1) Cannot dismiss the vital importance of the Old Testament when the New Testament is filled with the fulfillment and application of its prophecies, promises, and principles

II) **The Purpose of the Old Testament Today Is Not...**

- A) **To be our Covenant and Law**
 - 1) The Law of Moses was given to Israel (Deut. 5:3; Josh. 23:6; Mal. 4:4)
 - 2) We live under the New Testament [Covenant] today (1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 9:15; 2 Cor. 3:6)
 - a) The Old Testament [Covenant, Law] was taken “out of the way” (Col. 2:14; Heb. 10:9)
 - i) Includes all acts of worship and service enjoined under that Law (covenant)
 - b) We are now under the Law of Christ (Matt. 17:4-5; Heb. 7:12; Gal. 6:2)
- B) **To Justify Sinners**
 - 1) The Law of Moses cannot justify sinners; only Christ can (Acts 13:39; Gal. 3:10)

III) **The Purpose of the Old Testament Today Is...**

- A) **To Provide Hope** (Romans 15:4)
 - 1) “Things written before” were written for our “learning” – it is profitable to study OT!
 - 2) OT Scriptures provide hope through “patience” [perseverance] and “comfort”
 - a) Inspired record of old teaches us how and why we should *persevere* [endure]
 - i) Examples of the faith of the great people of old (Heb. 11:13; 12:1)
 - ii) No matter how difficult it gets, faithfulness is the right way (Jas. 5:10-11; Lk. 17:32)
 - b) Inspired record of old provides *comfort* to the faithful today
 - i) God always keeps His promises and helps us (Josh. 21:45; Rom. 15:8; Heb. 13:5-6)
 - ii) God’s plan is to save all the faithful in Christ (Gal. 3:16, 29)
 - iii) The faithful will receive a great reward (Heb. 11:16)
 - 3) A thorough knowledge of OT history furnishes us with solid hope in God and His word
- B) **To Provide Examples for Our Admonition** (1 Corinthians 10:11)
 - 1) Written for our “admonition” = lit. “a putting in mind”; instruct; mild rebuke or warning
 - a) Admonitions taken from real examples of OT Israel’s failings (vv. 5-10)
 - i) Not lust for evil things, avoid idolatry and sexual immorality, not test God or murmur
 - 2) Lessons: Take heed lest you fall (1 Cor. 10:12); can bear and escape temptation (v. 13)

- 3) Other examples of lessons from the OT
 - a) Bold, strong preaching is needed (Rom. 10:20; Isa. 8:20; 58:1)
 - b) God has preserved a faithful remnant (Rom. 11:1-5)
 - c) Effectiveness of fervent prayer (Jas. 5:16-18)
 - d) Fearful judgment of God against sin (Jude 7, 11, 14-15)
- C) **To Make One Wise for Salvation in Christ** (2 Timothy 3:14-15)
 - 1) Timothy knew “Holy Scriptures” [OT] from childhood (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5)
 - a) Made him wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus – how?
 - i) Promises/prophecies pointed to Christ (Jn. 1:45; 5:39, 46; Acts 10:43; 17:2-3; 28:23)
 - ii) The Law of Moses brought the Jew to Christ (Gal. 3:19, 24-25)
 - 2) Knowledge of OT history informs us as to God’s early design for man’s salvation in Christ
 - a) Also teaches important and continuing principles of grace, faith, obedience, worship, love, humility, morality, modesty, sobriety, submission, etc.

Conclusion

It is very worthwhile to study and learn from the Old Testament. Therein we learn principles that strengthen our hope in Christ, examples that admonish us to righteous living, and fulfilled prophecies that make us wise concerning the salvation we enjoy in Christ today! The more we learn from the OT, the more we understand and appreciate what God has provided for us today in the NT that leads unto eternal life.