

Pressing on the Upward Way

NT regularly uses OT characters to teach moral and spiritual lessons

I. Old Testament Excellence

1. Above reproach; free of disreputable habits.
Pr.22:1. Dn.6
2. Excellence in marriage. Jg.14-16;
1 K.11; 21. Ruth
3. Stewardship. Gn.24. Gn.39
4. Unselfishness. (Mt.7:12) Lv.19:...18
5. Bridled temper. Gn.16. Ec.7:9.
6. Unapproved examples. Gn.4:5. Est.1.
7. Sobriety. Pr.23:29-35. Noah, Gn.9

8. Not violent. Pr.26:21
9. Not greedy. 2 K.5, Gehazi. Pr.30:7-9
10. Gentle. Pr.25:15
11. Child training. Dt.6. Jer.35. Proverbs.
Eli. Zacharias and Elizabeth, Lk.1.
12. Hospitality. Gn.18-19
13. Love what is good. Am.5:15

14. Sensible; curb worldly desires. Gn.41:39
15. Righteous. Job 1:1, 8
16. Holy, devout, pious. Lv.19:2
17. Self-controlled. Dn.1:8
18. Dependent on Word. Ps.119
19. Able to teach Word. Ezr.7; Neh.8.
2 Chr.17:7-9

I. Old Testament Excellence

II. New Testament Application

The list (1 – 18) =
qualifications for elders
(1 Timothy 3; Titus 1)

Some elders would have been Jews

Trained for years in OT

Devout: reverent,
God-fearing

Acts 2:5,
Jews

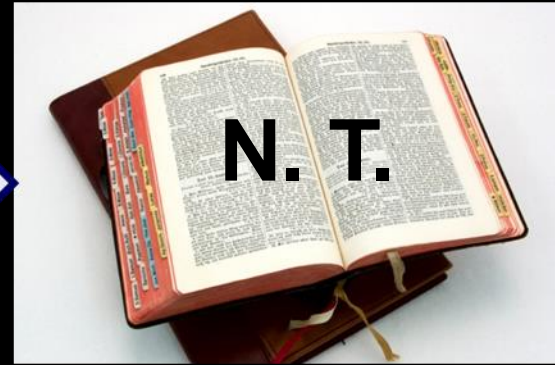
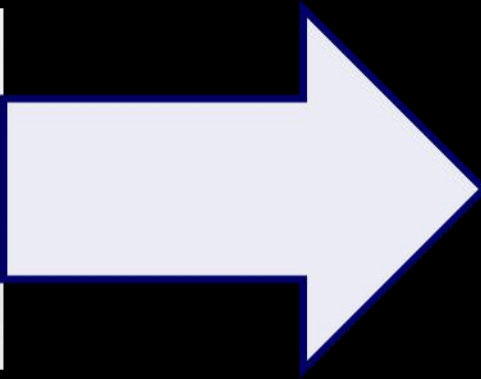
Acts 8:2,
Christians

5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven

2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

Pious Jews . . .

- Could easily shift from OT to NT



Expect Messiah

Jesus Messiah

- Ac.9:19-22, **Saul** (persecutor) to Paul (preacher) of Christ
- 2 Tim.3:4-15, from expecting Messiah . . . to Jesus, the Messiah

Paul's Method (Acts 13-14)

- Begin in synagogue, go to Greeks
- Ro.1¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek
- Elders of synagogues closely resembled elders of church – cf. Ezk.34

Thessalonica – Acts 17

- Synagogue (Thessalonica), 1
- Customary practice, 2-3
- Some were persuaded, 4
 - Could this explain 1 Thes.5:12?

¹² And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you . . .

Corinth – Acts 18

- Crispus, chief ruler of synagogue
- Would bring qualifications and experiences with him . . . [As 1 Th.5:12?]
 - Because of OT training, they were not novices. Lk.2:25-35

Spiritual gifts could not supply moral, social, and family qualities.
Would supply information necessary for teaching and serving

Some may have been proselytes:

Acts 10, Cornelius (devout, v.2)

Devout: reverent,
God-fearing

```
graph TD; A([Devout: reverent, God-fearing]) --> B[Acts 2:5, faithful Jews]; A --> C[Acts 10:2,7 faithful Gentiles]; A --> D[Acts 8:2, faithful Christians];
```

Acts 2:5,
faithful
Jews

Acts 10:2,7
faithful
Gentiles

Acts 8:2,
faithful
Christians

Acts 13:16, Israelites and God-fearers (26)

Acts 13:42-43, Jews and devout proselytes

God-fearers

- “In the Acts, ‘proselytes of the gate’ are called [‘men that worship God’]...and simply [R.V. devout proselytes] “–Th.
- “Term applied to former polytheists who accepted the ethical monotheism of Israel and attended the synagogue, but who did not obligate themselves to keep the whole Mosaic law” (particularly circumcision) – BDAG.
 - Lydia, 16:14
 - Justus, 18:7
 - Devout Greeks, 17:4

So what?

1. “NT is false; no one could meet these qualifications in short time”
 - True if start from scratch
 - False if devout students of OT [Stephen, Philip, et al., Ac.6-7]
2. “No one could meet every qualification they apply to group.”
 - Consider Saul – apostle Paul...
3. “May be true but I can’t do it”
 - We have OT and NT!



Note Well...

1. Devout, daily study can produce wonderful results over many years (Dt.6).
 - This mindset should describe every modern parent...
2. Elders are strong Christians who have studied the Word seriously and have eagerly put it into practice.
3. Most qualifications of elders are required of (and possessed by) every strong Christian.