

The Importance of the Old Testament

by Shawn Abigail

Shawn Abigail emphasizes the vital role of the Old Testament in understanding Scripture, Jesus Christ, and effective gospel preaching.

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31

Topics: "Old Testament", "Biblical Context"

Description

Shawn Abigail emphasizes the importance of understanding the Old Testament, highlighting that it is inspired Scripture, teaches us about the Lord Jesus Christ, helps in preaching the gospel, provides encouragement, and aids in understanding the New Testament by providing context for deeper insights into the New Testament teachings.

Transcript

Many Christians will admit the Old Testament confuses them and they really do not know its themes very well. Why should we make the effort to grasp its message?

It is inspired Scripture

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim 3:16-17). If we do not study the Old Testament, we are ignoring Scripture that is useful for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness. Furthermore, we will not be thoroughly equipped for every good work. If we want to do the Lord's work, we need a firm foundation in both the Old and the New Testaments.

It teaches us more about the Lord Jesus Christ

The Old Testament is a rich source of information on the Lord Jesus Christ. At this point, many people will object and remind us that "Jesus" is not mentioned in the Old Testament. While it is true that His name "Jesus" is not mentioned, He is the topic of the Old Testament from start to finish.

Shortly after the resurrection, two disciples were walking on the road to Emmaus. They met a Stranger who rebuked them for their slowness of heart. "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." At this point, none of the New Testament had been recorded. The "Scriptures" that the Lord Jesus used was the Old Testament. It is the

testimony of the New Testament that the Old Testament tells us about the Lord Jesus Christ.

It helps us preach the gospel

The gospel is most clearly explained in the New Testament, but the Old Testament contains sections that are useful in illustrating it. If we want to see an example of a truly repentant heart, we can look to King David in Psalm 51. A fine definition of repentance is given in Ezekiel 18:30-32.

Of all the books in the Bible, Romans explains the gospel in the most doctrinal manner, yet there are approximately 70 Old Testament quotations.

The sinner who is confident of his own righteousness will find the strongest rebuke in Isaiah 64:6. One of the finest texts to use for a gospel message is found in Numbers 21:4-9. Indeed, the Lord Jesus used it Himself (Jn. 3:14-15). If we do not understand the Old Testament, we rob our gospel preaching and personal witnessing of much of its power.

It is encouraging

Some of the most encouraging and familiar passages in the Bible are found in the Old Testament. The book of Lamentations has the reputation of being the most depressing book in the Bible, and yet we read in 3:22-23, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness." This scripture is the basis for the hymn, "Great is Thy Faithfulness." Isaiah 40:31 is one of the best loved verses in the entire Bible: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

It helps us understand the New Testament

Most of the New Testament assumes you have a thorough knowledge of the Old Testament. When we understand the Old Testament we open up the fullness of what the Holy Spirit wants us to gain from the New Testament. Romans 4 explains salvation by faith apart from works, using the example of Abraham, building an argument based on the order of events in Abraham's life.

Another example is seen in Hebrews 7 and 8. We might be able to understand parts of the teaching here, but only those well-versed in the OT scriptures dealing with the person and ministry of the Levitical high priest are prepared to appreciate the ministry of the Lord Jesus as our great High Priest today.

Context is possibly the most important rule in Bible interpretation. If we fail to understand the biblical background to the New Testament, we will defeat our efforts to rightly understand the passages we study.

It is interesting

If you heard Bible stories when you were a child, chances are some of your favorite stories were from the Old Testament. These true events still make fascinating reading. Don't rob yourself of some of the most interesting passages in the Bible!

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