

LESSONS LEARNED from THE OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7

Objections and Opposition

On a number of occasions I have come across Christians who seem to despise knowledge, wisdom and instruction. *"Why are you doing a study on the Old Testament? What possible relevance can that have to us today?"*, *"But the Letter kills! It is only the Spirit that gives life!"* said another. ***"Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge, but he who hates correction is stupid."*** Proverbs 12:1

We received criticisms over The Bible in a Nutshell articles beginning with the Old Testament. *"Why don't you just start with the New Testament?"* A surprising number have dismissed the Old Testament as *"irrelevant"* to Christians today! ***"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul..."*** Psalm 19:7. Scripture alone is our ultimate authority. Yet, many of the prevalent practices and prejudices of all too many Christians today, are challenged and demolished by the matchless Word of God. The more we study the Bible, the clearer it is that much of what is being done in the name of Christianity worldwide, is far removed from Biblical Christianity. *"My people perish for lack of knowledge..."* Hosea 4:6.

Progressive Revelation

The Bible is progressive revelation. You can only understand the New Testament in the light of the events, characters, laws, sacrificial system, covenants, promises and prophecies of the Old Testament. A great building needs a deep and strong foundation. A tall tree needs an intricate root structure. ***"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 complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."*** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

God's Word is the Truth that Transforms

Our Lord Jesus prayed: ***"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth."*** John 17:17

Lessons Learned from the Survey

What are some of the things that I have learned during this three year project of studying, preaching through and summarising every Book of the Old Testament?

Everything has Consequences

Everything has consequences. Every promise comes with conditions. Nobody gets a blank cheque, or a free pass from God. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple – twice – should have made that crystal clear!

Neutrality is a Myth

There is no middle ground. You are either for God, or against Him. You are either under the blessings, or under the curses, of Deuteronomy 28. We reap what we sow. ***"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."*** Galatians 6:7

God is Not Permissive

God did not give us the Ten Suggestions. God has provided us with specific guidelines and clear instructions as to how to approach and worship Him. The abrupt judgement of the sons of Aaron,

the High Priest, for introducing *strange fire* provide a shocking illustration of how the holiness of God should lead us to fear God and to obey Him.

Cleansing and Consecrating is Required

We may distinguish between what is right and what is wrong, however God clearly distinguishes between the **sinful**, the **secular** and the **sacred**. Just as there is a process that **profanes** the holy and makes it common and that **pollutes** the common to make it unclean, so there is a process of redeeming the situation by **cleansing** the unclean and **consecrating** the common to make it holy. Leviticus, explains the downward process that profanes and pollutes and ends in death and the upward process of cleansing the unclean and consecrating the common to make it holy.

Seven Deadly Sins of Israel

The people of Israel were condemned for: **ignorance, idolatry, infidelity, immorality, ingratitude, injustice and interfaith**. The Scriptures roundly condemn the spiritual adultery of **prophets, priests, princes, profiteers and people**.

The Most Condemned Sin

The sin most often condemned in the Bible is **idolatry**. We plainly have much idolatry in the world and even in the church today.

Cremation is Condemned

Cremation is plainly condemned in Amos 2:1. All the patriarchs practiced burial (Genesis 47:29-30; 50:25-26; Exodus 13:19). Yet, many Christian leaders today say that the Bible has nothing to say concerning whether it is better to practice burial, or cremation.

Body Piercing is Condemned

Body piercing and tattoos are expressly forbidden in the strongest terms, along with occultism. Yet many leaders in the church today claim that the Bible says nothing about body piercing and tattoos!

No Age Restrictions

It is also apparent that all ages were instructed to gather for worship and the reading of the Law. There is no mention of children's church in the Bible!

Do Not be Unequally Yoked

There are repeated, emphatic prohibitions against mixed marriage. Ezra and Nehemiah in particular focussed intense condemnation on the giving of one's sons and daughters to marry those of other nations. Yet today, all too many claim that the Scripture is silent on this matter.

Who You Marry Matters

There are many genealogies in the Scriptures, emphasising the importance of who our ancestors are. Who we marry matters for all eternity. We are saved to serve.

Presumption is Not Faith

Much of what is today presented as faith, is condemned as presumption in the Bible. In presuming that Sarah could give her maid, Hagar, to Abraham to conceive a child that could fulfil God's promise of an heir, set in train a disastrous series of events. *"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."* Proverbs 14:12

Roots of the Muslim Menace

The presumption of Abraham and Sarah led to the birth of Ishmael *"a wild man"; "...his hand shall be against every man, and every man's hand against him..."* Genesis 16:12. To a large extent the

violence and hostility of the Muslim Arab nations today, is an ongoing legacy from that presumption, 4,000 years ago.

Esau Have I Hated

The Bible says that God loved Jacob, but He hated his brother, Esau (Malachi 1:2-3). Esau showed contempt for the Covenant by marrying two Hittite woman, who were a grief of mind to his parents, Isaac and Rebecca (Genesis 26:34-35). Esau later married a daughter of Ishmael (Genesis 28:9). Esau despised his heritage and sold his birthright for a mere plate of food (Genesis 25:33-34). The descendants of Esau, Edom, became the intractable enemies of the people of God.

The Enmity of the Edomites

The descendants of Esau, the Edomites, are condemned, in particular by Obadiah, for their role in the fall of Jerusalem, joining in the destruction and looting. After the Exile of the people of Judah to Babylon, the Edomites migrated into, the now mostly depopulated, Judah. The Edomites came to control Judah to such an extent that the Edumians became kings of Judah. Herod the great, an Edomite, became king of Judah in 37 B.C. The age-old enmity between Esau's descendants and those of Jacob, are seen in the attempt of king Herod to murder Jesus at His birth in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16-18). The hatred of the Jewish high priests and the mob in the streets against the Lord Jesus Christ leading to His betrayal, mockery of a trial and crucifixion, reflected how much the poison of the Edomites had infected the people of Judah.

Dates and Context Matter

Chronology is important. Context is key. Many pre-exilic prophecies (already fulfilled) are today being applied to present and future events. End times *prophets* often abuse Old Testament prophecies given before the Exile and fulfilled in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, are being peddled as futuristic and confusing a great number of people. These false prophets open up the church to ridicule and inoculate a great many people against the church, which they perceive as *crying wolf*, date setting and prophesying events which fail to take place.

Return of the Judaizers

Today's Judaizers, Hebrew Roots, Sacred Name movements and Zionists are actually a cult. The first Church conference in Jerusalem (Acts 15) rejected the premise of the Judaizers. The Books of Galatians, Philippians and Hebrews expressly reject and condemn these teachings. The Zionists, Judaizers, Hebrew Roots and Sacred Name movements are worshipping a false god and proclaiming a false gospel. ***"Therefore the Law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith."*** Galatians 3:24. In 1 Corinthians 10, we read that all these things are written for our instruction. Judgement begins at the House of God.

Jesus Christ is the Fulfilment of all Messianic Prophecies

Our Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of all Old Testament Messianic prophecies. The Old Testament must be interpreted Christologically. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Seed of the woman, the Door to the Ark, the Seed of Abraham, the Sacrifice of Isaac, Jacob's Ladder, Joseph lifted out of the pit, our Passover Lamb, the Rock from which water flowed in the wilderness, the Bread of life, the Serpent lifted up on the stake in the wilderness, our High Priest, the Commander of the army of the Lord, our Kinsman Redeemer, the Sign of Jonah, the Fountain of living waters.

The Path of Blessing or the Broad Way to Destruction

God sent His messenger, John. The Lord Himself came into His Temple and cleansed it. Moses and Elijah point to Christ. All the prophets point to Christ. Christ has come. He is the Sun of Righteousness who has arisen with healing in His wings. Christ is the Fountain which brings blessing to all the nations of the earth. Those who bless Christ will be blessed. Those who curse Christ will be cursed. He is the only hope for mankind. ***"Now to Abraham and his Seed were the***

promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ." Galatians 3:16

Chose This Day Whom You Will Serve

The Old Testament ends with a warning of a curse as the New Testament ends with a promise of God's blessings on all who will trust and obey Him.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage." Galatians 5:1

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