

June 17, 2007

## The Antiquity of the Gospel

**Rom. 1:2**

### Introduction

Some of you may have heard the story of Henry Dempsey

He was a pilot who was flying his 15 passenger Beechcraft 99 turboprop from Lewiston, Maine to Boston some time ago

At 4000 feet he heard a noise in the back of the plane where the rear stairs were

He turned the controls over to his co-pilot and walked back

About that time the plane hit turbulence that knocked him against the door and it fell open

Dempsey was sucked part of the way out, fell face down on the steps and grabbed for something...anything that might save his life

He caught a railing and held on for dear life

The co-pilot thought he had fallen completely out and diverted the flight to a nearby airport

When he landed they found him with his face 12 inches off the runway and with his hands so tightly clinging to the rails that his fingers had to be pried open

Well, brethren, the life and death grip with which Henry Dempsey held on to the stair railing at the back of that Beechcraft turboprop is the kind of grip that we must have on the truths of God's Word

The wind, the suction, the gravity and the noise that swirled around that man and tried to pull him to his destruction are not nearly as dangerous as the prevailing currents of thought that are swirling around us today that would seek to loosen our hold, and ultimately break our grip, upon the biblical gospel

And the stakes are much higher, because the gravity and swirling currents that are pulling men away from the truth are sucking them, not merely to physical death, but to eternal destruction in hell

That's one of the reasons that we need to study and to understand the book of Romans

We must not be like children who are carried away with every new wind of doctrine that comes blowing by

We need to have a firm grip upon the truths of the gospel

So we return this morning to our study of Paul's epistle to the Romans

After a couple of introductory sermons, last time we began to study the contents of this great epistle itself

And this brings us to the introductory section of the letter which begins with what is called a salutation

Or an opening greeting

It's a very rich and interesting salutation and it's not something to just brush over too quickly

So I'm taking the time for us to look at it carefully

First, Paul gives a summary description of himself in v.1, which we considered last time  
And he now follows with: **A Summary Description of His Subject or Message**

v.1 ends with the words "separated to *the gospel of God*", and here his message is first introduced

This is Paul's great theme, the gospel, as we've seen

This, in fact, is the overall theme of the entire letter

But here in his salutation he introduces it for the first time

He gives a brief summary, and yet a very profound summary of his subject

He describes it in terms of its divine origin, "*the gospel of God*"

Its basic nature, "gospel"; it is good news

Its antiquity, "promised before through the prophets in the Holy Scriptures"(v.2)

Its central figure, "Concerning His Son Jesus Christ"...and so on(vv.3-4)

I've already opened up the basic nature of this message, "the gospel of God, the good news, of God "

So this morning our focus will be on v.2 and the beginning of v.3

These words... "the gospel of God which he promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord"

Here we have one of the most important statements in the N.T. with reference to the antiquity of the gospel

And also concerning the essential unity of the Old and New Testaments

Paul is telling us that the gospel that he preaches is not something new

It's not a departure, or a breaking away from the Old Testament scriptures

It is simply a continuation of what God had already been doing...

And the fulfillment of what God had already promised, going all the way back to the beginning, and running right through the O.T.

It's simply another act in one and the same divine drama

Now this is something very characteristic of Paul

This is what we constantly see in his preaching that is recorded for us in the book of Acts

And this is what we constantly see in his epistles

There is this concern to show that this new message that he preaches is really not new

It's true that the historical events on which it is based had just happened, but it is not new in the sense that this is some new idea

No, it is a message that is rooted in the O.T.

Let me give you some examples of how the Apostle does this

Let's look at an example of his preaching over in Acts 13(turn)

Beginning with v.16 all the way down to v.47 we have the first recorded example of Paul's evangelistic preaching

I'm not going to read all of it..etc..(comment)

You'll notice that he begins by reviewing Israel's long history to show that God sent Jesus as a descendant of David, according to his promise

And that everything that happened to Jesus during the days of his earthly ministry fulfilled the Holy Scriptures

He was condemned and crucified as the prophets had said he would be

Afterward he was raised from the dead as the prophets said he would be

This is the focus of vv.16-33

In the latter half of this sermon Paul quotes from Ps.2:7, then from Is.55:3, then from Ps. 16:10 to confirm that the resurrection was, indeed, prophesied

In v.41 he quotes from Hab.1:5 as he warns about the danger of unbelief

Then at the end of his sermon in v.47 he quotes from Is.49:6, "I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth"....

To show that his proclamation of the gospel, not only to Jews, but to Gentiles, was also rooted in the O.T. scriptures

When you have opportunity read through this sermon and you'll see that Paul's preaching was full of references to the O.T.

He is very concerned to show that what has happened in the Christ-event is but the fulfillment of what God had already promised

This is just one example, there are other examples in the book of Acts

And then, of course, we see this constantly in Paul's epistles

We'll see it over and over in this epistle as we continue our study

We see it, for example, when he opens up the doctrine of justification by faith in ch.3

He begins that great section with these words, "Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed(listen), *being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets*"

There it is!!...

In one sense it's now been revealed, since the events upon which this message is based have just happened

But Paul is anxious to make clear that in another sense this message is not new

It was already witnessed to by the law and the prophets

Then after setting forth the doctrine of justification by faith in ch.3, he appeals in ch.4 to the O.T. example of Abraham, and the words David, to show that this has always been God's method of saving sinners

And he keeps going back to the O.T. like this throughout the epistle

Indeed having begun this letter in this way here in ch.1:2, he ends it in the same way in ch.16:26

Picking up with v.25, here's how the epistle ends, "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began..."

Yes in one sense the fullness of the gospel was not yet revealed, until Christ actually came...

But Paul doesn't stop there

"According to the mystery kept secret since the world began?..."

v.26, "But now made manifest, *and by the prophetic Scriptures* made known to all nations, according to the command of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith---to God alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever, Amen"

It is now made manifest, but it's not really new, it was already made known by the prophetic Scriptures

Well we could go on giving example after example like this in Paul's epistles

Remember his classic statement of the gospel in 1 Cor.15, for example...

How does he put it?

"For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day *according to the Scriptures*"

It all happened according to the Scriptures

If we had time I could demonstrate the same thing in the preaching of Peter and others

And, indeed, we see the same thing in the preaching of Christ himself during his earthly ministry

Well what I want to do this morning in the time remaining is, first, give a brief exposition of the contents of this great statement

And then, secondly, I hope to open up some of the very important and practical implications of this statement

So, first of all,....

## I. A Brief Exposition Of The Contents Of This Statement

We first need to be clear on exactly what Paul is saying here

He's telling us something very important about the gospel

Notice, **first**, he tells us that the gospel was promised by God beforehand

Or it could be translated "announced by God beforehand"

This is not something new, Paul says

It's not something detached from the past, that has no connection to the past, or that amounts to a complete break from the past

The things that have now occurred and that I preach to you and write to you in this epistle were promised, or announced, by God beforehand

Then he tells us, **secondly**, by what medium the gospel was promised by God beforehand

"Which He promised before *through his prophets*"

Now Paul uses the term “prophets”, here, not in the restrictive sense to refer merely to those particular books of the O.T. that are called the prophets

But in the wider sense in which the term was sometimes used to refer, really, to the whole of the O.T. scriptures

The language, “the prophets” is used of the writings of Moses, for example, in Acts 3:22

David is referred to as one of the prophets in Acts 2:30

You see, there’s a sense in which the entire O.T. is referred to as the prophets

Sometimes the O.T. is referred to as “the law and the prophets”

Sometimes as “the law and the prophets and the psalms”

Sometimes it’s just referred to as “the law” and at other times simply as “the prophets”

So the medium through which God made known these promises beforehand was through his prophets

Now notice something very important here

Here we are clearly told that it was God who spoke through the prophets

Or more accurately, “through *his* prophets” as the text says

Through those men that he had chosen

These were not just able and clever men who had a unique understanding of the times...

Far sighted, religiously minded men, who were skilled at observing social trends and tendencies and at understanding human nature and, therefore, were good at making predictions

No, they were men God had chosen, *his* prophets

And they were men, who were not speaking from their own ideas or out of their own personal discoveries, or out of their own personal insights...

It was God who was speaking through them

Notice it doesn’t merely say “which he promised before by His prophets”

It says, “through his prophets”

The preposition is “*dia*”; God Himself was speaking through his prophets

Then notice, **thirdly**, the location of the announcement of the gospel by God through his prophets

“Which he promised before through His prophets *in the Holy Scriptures*”

Actually in the original there’s no article

It is in Holy Scriptures, drawing attention to this particular quality of the O.T. scriptures

That they are *Holy* Scriptures

That is they are set apart from all other writings as sacred and special and one of a kind

They are unique and sacred because it is God who speaks through His prophets in the scriptures of the O.T.

Now this last clause is very important

It underscores, *first of all*, that the announcement beforehand of God's good news is in writing, the writings of the prophets, the O.T.

*Secondly*, it underscores the special and unique nature of those writings  
The books of the O.T. are *holy* writings

Writings that are set apart as special and unique  
They are not merely human compositions

They are the record of what God himself has spoken through his prophets  
You see, brethren, the prophets were men who both received divine revelation and who spoke, and wrote by divine inspiration  
Sometimes these two terms are confused

Revelation is God making known certain things...God giving information to his prophets  
Inspiration is that which controls the prophet's expression of what God has revealed to him

Well, you see, a prophet is a man with whom you have both revelation and inspiration  
God revealed certain things to his prophets, but they weren't then left to put their own interpretation on it, and to express it in their own way

No, God also controlled what they said, and what they wrote  
So that they spoke and they wrote by divine inspiration

In other words, a prophet not only received the Word of God revealed to him..  
But he proclaimed the Word of God, and recorded the Word of God in the very Words of God under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit

Notice how this is emphasized by the apostle Peter in 2 Peter 1:20ff (turn)  
Peter is speaking of the O.T. and he says, "Knowing first, that no prophesy of Scripture is of any private interpretation"...

Now the word "interpretation" here doesn't mean that these men could not interpret the scriptures, or were not allowed to interpret God's Word  
No, Peter is saying that O.T. Prophecy was not a man giving his own ideas about the world and about the future...

That the prophesy of Scripture is not derived from the prophet's own personal viewpoints  
That's the thought

Scripture is not an individual giving his personal ideas and interpretation of what he believes God has revealed to him  
Well then what is it?

He tells us in the next verse...(read-v.21)  
In other words, they were carried along by the Spirit in what they spoke

God did not merely give revelation to them and leave it at that  
The Holy Spirit controlled how they expressed the revelation that God gave to them...  
So that what they spoke and what they wrote was by divine inspiration

And then notice, **fourthly**, we are told that this gospel announced by God beforehand through his prophets in the O.T. has as its focus God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord  
 "Which he promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures"  
v.3, "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord"

Now commentators debate about what precisely this prepositional phrase, "concerning His Son Jesus Christ" is intended to be connected to in the construction of this long sentence  
 Some argue that it's connected to "the gospel of God" at the end of v.1

"Separated to the gospel of God...concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord"  
 And v.2 is then simply a parenthetical statement before getting back to the main thought

Others argue that the phrase is directly connected to v.2  
 But really either way you look at it, it's saying the same thing

Namely that the gospel, that gospel God promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, has as its focus a person  
 And that person is God's Son

And God's Son is none other than Jesus Christ our Lord  
 This phrase tells us, both that the gospel of God has as its focus Jesus Christ

And that this gospel that has as its focus Jesus Christ was already promised and announced beforehand in the O.T. scriptures  
 Which, therefore, points to the fact that Christ was the focus of God's promises in the O.T.

Well having sought to open up the contents of this great statement....  
 In the time we have left I want us to consider, secondly,...

## **II. Some Important Implications Of This Statement**

What does all of this mean when it comes to our understanding of the Bible as a whole?  
 And what does it mean practically for us as a church and for each of you as individuals?  
 Well there are many lessons that could be drawn from this, but I'll limit myself to three

**First of all**, this text calls us to examine ourselves regarding our view of the O.T. scriptures  
 Here the apostle Paul puts his seal upon the divine inspiration and authority of the O.T.  
 And the apostle was simply underscoring what Jesus himself taught about the O.T.

Remember our Lord's words in Mt. 5:17-18, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled"  
 Jesus says that when Moses and Jeremiah and all of the O.T. authors wrote, they were so guided by the Spirit that their very exact words, down to the smallest Hebrew letter and the smallest curve of a letter cannot pass away until all be done  
 That's the high view that both the apostles and our Lord Jesus himself, had of the O.T.

I've already commented on how often Paul refers to the O.T. scriptures  
 How he roots his teaching in the O.T. scriptures

The events of the O.T., the teachings of the O.T., the promises of the O.T.

Read through the gospels and you'll see Jesus doing the same thing over and over again

And how we need to be reminded of this in this day we live in

A day in which, in many protestant denominations and in many religious schools and colleges and theological institutions and university Bible courses, the authority and inerrancy of the scriptures is denied

And the attack is especially leveled against the O.T....

So that you actually have many people today who seem to think that they can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and call themselves Christians...

And yet more or less reject the accuracy and authority of the O.T.

But always remember that Christ embraced the O.T. as the infallible and inspired Word of God, and the apostles did the same

And we must do so as well

"Why does it matter?", someone asks

Well to accept a view of the O.T. which is less than the view of Christ and the apostles is, first, to bring into question the integrity of our Lord

It's to bring into question his honesty, or in other words, it's to call Jesus a liar

Or, at best, it's to say that Jesus was mistaken in his view of the O.T.

That he thought the O.T. was authoritative and infallible, but he was wrong

And if Jesus Christ was a liar, or if he was mistaken, then we have a Savior who is not sinless or he is not God

And if Christ is not God, and if he is not sinless, the fact is we have no Savior

And this lands us in the same place with respect to the apostles

If Paul is wrong in his view of the O.T. scriptures, then Paul's gospel is wrong, because that gospel is rooted in the O.T. scriptures

Also if Paul's view of the O.T. is wrong, we have no reason to have any confidence in anything else that he wrote....

Or in anything else that any of the other apostles wrote

Therefore we are left, not only with an uninspired non-authoritative O.T., we are also left with a uninspired non-authoritative N.T.

So in the end, if you reject the divine inspiration and authority of the O.T. , you have , in effect, denied the entire Christian faith

So, you see, a man's view of the O.T. is not just a minor issue

Young people, and all of us, don't be fooled by these people who profess to believe in Christ, and to respect him, and love him...

And yet they take a lesser view than he and his apostles did of the O.T.

Don't be fooled by them and don't be intimidated by them either



No matter how kind and sweet they may be, and no matter how many degrees they might have behind their names

They are false teachers and rejecters of the biblical gospel

And, my friend, don't stop at just accepting the inspiration and authority of the O.T....

Love the Old Testament, read the Old Testament, master the O.T.

Listen if you don't know your O.T. there is so much of the N.T. that will never make sense to you because the teaching of the N.T. is rooted in the O.T.

There is so much of the richness of the gospel itself that you will never be able to fully grasp

There's story about Joseph Parker the great English preacher and contemporary of Charles Spurgeon

Once after a sermon an old lady waited on Parker in his vestry to thank him for the help she received from the message

"You do throw such wonderful light on the Bible, doctor" she said

"Do you know that until this morning, I had always thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were man and wife?"

That's an extreme case, but there are many people in Christian churches who are almost that bad when it comes to the O.T.

Don't be like some people I read about the other day

The new pastor at a church was asked to teach a boy's class in the absence of the regular teacher

He decided to see what they knew, so he asked them, "Who knocked down the walls of Jericho?"

Well all the boys denied having done it and the pastor was appalled by their ignorance

At the next deacons' meeting he told about the experience

"Not one of them knows who knocked down the walls of Jericho", he lamented

The deacons were silent until finally one seasoned veteran of disputes spoke up

"Preacher, this appears to be bothering you a lot. But I've known all those boys since they were born and they're good boys. If they said they didn't know, I believe them. Let's just take some money out of the repair and maintenance fund, fix the walls, and let it go at that"

Now those are funny stories

But sadly they're not that far from the truth regarding the ignorance of the O.T. that is often found in professing Christians

Let it not be true of you, or of me

But not only does this text call us to examine ourselves regarding our view of the O.T.

**Secondly**, in this text we have a powerful confirmation of the unity of the message of salvation in all ages

We see that, that message is essentially the same in both the Old and the New Testaments

Explain-v.17.....(Heb. 10:38).....Habbakkuk

In that great Messianic Psalm, Ps. 2, the Psalmist writes in v.12, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him"

You see, under the Old Covenant as well as the New, it was penitent faith that secured the favor of God and the blessings and benefits of salvation

And the object of that faith was Christ

That could be demonstrated further from the O.T., but the infallible interpreter of the O.T., the N.T., makes this very clear

It tells us that O.T. saints were saved by faith in Christ, just as N.T. saints are

For example, Luke, in Lk.Ch.2, identifies the faithful remnant in Israel when Christ was born as those who were waiting in faith for the fulfillment of God's redemptive promises

In Acts 10:43 Peter declared to Cornelius that, "Of Him (of Christ) all the prophets bear witness that through His name whoever believes in Him shall receive remission of sins"

Comment

Remember when the resurrected Jesus was on the road to Emmaus with two of his disciples

We are told in Lk.24:27 that, "Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself"

He did the same thing later with the eleven apostles

Lk.24:44, "Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me"

In Rom. 4, where the Apostle Paul is setting forth the doctrine of justification by faith, *who* does he use as an example to enforce his argument?

He uses the example of Abraham

What about Heb. 11, that great chapter on faith and its practical influence in sanctification and perseverance?

Who does the writer use to illustrate the nature and practical influences of saving faith?

He refers to the example of the O.T. saints

According to that chapter who was the object of Moses faith?

Heb.11:25ff tells us that he choose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt"

So we see the unity of the message of salvation in all ages

And always remember that

There has always been but one way of salvation and that one way is by grace through faith in Christ

But now this raises the question how was Christ and the gospel revealed in the O.T.?

Well Paul tells us here in our text that the gospel was promised, or announced, beforehand by God through His prophets in the O.T....

Let me just survey of just sampling of these promises

They begin in Gen. 3:15 when after Adam's sin God comes and he promises to Adam and Eve that the day would come when the seed of the Woman would bruise the serpents head  
He gives this promise about a coming Redeemer

And then as we go on Abraham is called out and God tells him that all of the nations of the world would be blessed through his seed

In Gen. 49:10 the promise is made that the Messiah would be born of the tribe of Judah  
He is to be a prophet like unto Moses but greater than Moses (Deut. 18:15)

He will be a descendant of David and his throne will be forever(2 Sam.7)  
He will be the son of David and yet David's Lord (Ps. 110)

He will be the servant of Jehovah and on him the Spirit of God will rest and He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles (Is. 42:1-2)

He will be a suffering servant who will be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities (Is. 53)

His virgin birth is predicted in Is. 7:14; the exact place of His birth in Micah 5:2

Even the visit of the wise men is predicted in Is. 60:3,6

His character and unique relation to God, is presented in Is. 11:1-5  
Including his divinity in Is. 9:6 and Ps.45:6-7

The fact that he would restore Israel and save the Gentiles is promised in Is. 49:6

And that He would draw all nations to God, Is. 2:3; 61:11, Micah 4:2

Very specific details of His rejection by men and His sufferings and atoning death on the cross are given in Ps.22; Is. 53; Zech. 12:10, and Ps. 34:20

His resurrection was promised in Ps. 16:9-10; His ascension in Ps. 68:18

His session at the right hand of God is predicted in Ps. 110 and Ps. 2

You see, my dear friends, the O.T. is full of Christ!!!!

He is revealed in all of these promises and many others that I've not mentioned

Virtually His entire life and work are predicted and promised in the O.T. scriptures

And not only is He revealed in the promises, he was revealed in types

In the O.T. we have many types of the person and work of Christ

The gospel was also revealed in the sacrifices

All of those sacrifices of the innocent victims in the place of sinners pointed to the sacrifice of Christ

The one who, according to the prophet Isaiah, would be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities

So in all of these various ways the gospel of Christ was promised and revealed to sinners in the O.T.

And by means of this revelation the Holy Spirit brought the O.T. elect to faith, and they were saved and accepted by God

Now certainly the gospel was not revealed in the O.T. with the clarity that it is now in the N.T.

The O.T. was the age of promise, the N.T. is the age of fulfillment

The O.T. saints saw through the dim light of a partial revelation

We see now through the full of light of a completed revelation

So we're not to carry back into the minds of the O.T. saints our own New Covenant fully developed, full orb'd understanding of these things

However at the same time we must never be guilty of thinking that Adam and Eve, or Abel or Noah, or Abraham or David, or any of the O.T. saints, were saved in any other way than we are

They were saved by grace through faith in Christ

The object of their faith was the Seed-Redeemer revealed in the promises

And the ultimate reference of those promises was to Christ

But my main point is this...it's the same point Paul is making in our text..

The gospel proclaimed by Paul did not begin with Paul

It was already announced by God's prophets in the O.T. scriptures

There is an essential unity that exists between the Old and New Testaments

Beware of any system of theology that denies that unity or which fails to give proper weight to that unity

This is one of the problems with Dispensationalism, for example

Always remember that though there are differences between the Old Covenant and the New, they are not totally distinct unconnected enactments of God in which he deals with men upon different principles

They both establish one and the same standard of righteousness, reveal one and the same gospel, point to one and the same salvation

And have one and the same object of saving faith, the Christ of God

And this leads us to the third important implication of our text

**Thirdly**, this text reminds us that the gospel of Christ is the focal point of the entire Bible

Brethren, we will never understand, read, or proclaim the scriptures rightly if we don't see this

The whole Bible, from beginning to end, centers upon Christ and His redemptive work

The Bible, in no part of it is merely a book of virtues or a how-to manual, to give us helpful hints on how to have a happy life

It is the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ

Listen to these words of John Calvin (reading scriptures)

"The scriptures should be read with the aim of finding Christ in them. Whoever turns aside from this object, even though he wears himself out all of his life in learning, he will never reach the knowledge of the truth"

Listen to this quote from Spurgeon (preaching of the scriptures)

He tells about minister who once addressed an aspiring preacher in this way, "Don't you know, young man, that from every town and every village and every hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road that leads to London?....so from every text in scripture there is a road towards the great metropolis, Christ. And, my dear brother, your business is, when you get to a text, to say, now what is the road that leads to Christ?.. the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savour of Christ in it"

Now was Spurgeon saying that every sermon must be specifically and exclusively about some specific aspect of the person, or character, or work of Christ?

No, we must preach the whole counsel of God, much of which deals with very practical issues of living, and other things

Every individual text and every individual passage does not refer specifically and directly to Christ

But the point is that all of those issues, and all of the teaching of scripture is couched within a book and within an overall context and climate that has as its primary focus and theme Christ and His redemptive work

And so ultimately every thing we preach, in some way or another is to be related to Him and to the gospel

Explain- applies to teaching S.S.....etc....

We're never to preach or to teach a Sunday School class, in such a way that a Moslem or a moralist could just as well have preached the same sermon or taught the same lesson

No, our preaching and our teaching must always be Christian

It should in one way or another, at some point or another, bring to bear upon the heart realities of the gospel

The same is true in our reading of the scriptures

If you merely read the Bible in any part of it, as a book of virtues...

Or as some kind of guidebook which you go to, to find helps and hints to happy living, with no reference to Christ, with no reference to the gospel, you're missing it

And, dear friends, have we not seen this morning that this is not only true of the N.T., it is true of the O.T.

And so in all of your reading of the Old Testament look for Christ, and relate what you read to God's great plan and work of redemption

Ask yourself where does this book fit in the unfolding of God's plan of redemption?

Where does this event fit, or this narrative, or this O.T. character, fit in the unfolding of God's great plan of salvation

What gospel concepts does this illustrate?

What gospel themes does this illuminate?

See Christ in the promises, see Him in the shadows and types, see Him in the sacrifices

See the way being prepared for His coming in the entire unfolding of O.T. history

If you'll keep asking yourself questions like this it will completely transform your devotional reading of the O.T.

The O.T. will begin to come alive

Well as I close....

If you're here this morning and you're unconverted learn from what we've seen that if you're ever going to be saved you must be saved in the same way sinners have always been saved, even from the beginning of time

You must be saved by grace through faith in Christ

The same gospel that was first preached to Adam and Eve is preached to you this morning

You too, like Adam have sinned

Indeed, you were in Adam when he sinned

He was acting as your representative in the garden and when he fell you fell with him

Furthermore, you have inherited from Adam a sinful nature

And not only are you condemned in Adam, and not only do you have a sinful nature

But you have also committed many acts of sin

This is your condition, my friend

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God"(Rom. 3:23)

Rom. 3:10, "There is none righteous, no not one"

And that includes you

And because of your sin you have deserved the wrath of God and the eternal punishment of hell

But listen to me, the same good news that was preached to Adam and Eve is preached to you this morning

God comes to you, just as he came to them as they stood guilty and trembling before Him in the garden

He comes to you today in all of your sin and guilt and what does he do?

He makes a gracious promise to you

A promise concerning this one who would come to bruise the serpents head

The one who has now come, just as the O.T. promised

God comes to you in your sin and he says believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved

There is a Redeemer appointed for sinners

And God doesn't ask you to work for salvation, this salvation is all of grace

It is a free gift to those who do not deserve it, but who deserve just the opposite

He points you to His Son, the promised seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham....

The seed of Judah, the seed of David, the suffering servant who has offered up his soul as an offering for sin, according to the scriptures

The exalted Lord who was raised from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God, according to the scriptures

Christ has come and he has fulfilled all of these promises

And God in the gospel points you to his Son  
Christ is able and willing to save you

And if you're willing to be saved from the guilt and power of your sins and to be reconciled to God, all He asks you to do is to entrust your soul and your life to Him  
He has promised, "Whoever believes in Me shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life"