

Overview of Old Testament - Introduction

“15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

~ 2 Timothy 3:15-17

I. What is the Bible?

- A. It's nature - “inspired” lit. “God-breathed” (v. 16), God has written us a book through the instrumentality of human authors
- B. It's purpose and message - to give us *wisdom* that leads to *salvation* through *faith in Christ Jesus* (v. 15) - mankind is foolish and lost, God has given us the Bible in order to tell us how to be saved by believing in Christ! (Rom. 10:17)
 - 1. *This is the reason that Christ and the gospel are everywhere* (Jn. 5:38-40, 45-47, Lk. 24:27, 44-47, 1 Pet. 1:10-11) - if you miss that you miss all!
 - 2. *Spiritual message* - morality is part of salvation; the Bible deals with salvation and with the kingdom of God, which are essentially spiritual: God is Spirit (Jn. 4:24), salvation takes place in the spiritual realm (Eph. 2:6, Col. 2:11), brings us into spiritual fellowship with the living God to worship Him in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:24, Phi. 3:3), brings us into spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:12), produces spiritual service and obedience (Rom. 7:6, 12:1). The Bible deals with these great, spiritual aspects of salvation and of His kingdom; it deals primarily with the spiritual realm/dimension.

What is God concerned with? (1 Cor. 9:9-11)

The Bible is not given so that we can simply learn doctrine or simply live a good, happy life, but so that we might really be saved in the full sense of the term.

II. How the Bible is written

- The Bible is the *record* of how God is accomplishing His *eternal purpose* (Eph. 3:8-11)
- *God's eternal purpose* - “to display His glory by advancing His kingdom and exalting His Son” - quickly trace through work of redemption from eternity past to eternity future; Jonathan Edwards illustration of the construction of a building
- *Form follows function* - the Bible is primarily an inspired historical record of God’s mighty acts (Ps. 145:3-7) in His work of redemption accompanied by inspired commentary! Not a catechism or a systematic theology, but a *record or testimony* - the apostles were “witnesses bearing testimony” (1 Jn. 5:11-12, 1:1-4, Jn. 1:14, 19:35, Acts 20:21, 2 Pet. 1:16)
- *Christianity is a historical religion*, our faith rests upon the real, historical events (ex. Graeme Goldsworthy translation of Matthew genealogy by missionary)

III. How to read the Old Testament

1. Follow the overall big picture - God’s accomplishment of His eternal purpose
2. Also zoom in on types (ex. Mandelbrot set). What is a type? A type is a *historical parable* - God inspires the events and the recording of them in order to teach us a spiritual lesson
- God has gloriously designed the OT to serve this double purpose: Augustine, “The new is in the old concealed; the old is in the new revealed”
3. It was fitting for God to suspend the advent of Christ (Matt. 13:16-17, 35, Eph. 1:10, Judges 13)

IV. Some guidelines for reading types

- How do we know we should read the OT in terms of types? 1) NT use of OT - e.g. how does Paul interpret the accounts of Abraham? Exodus? 2) the spiritual nature of the Bible’s message;
 1. Exegesis, not eisegesis - not trying to find some allegorical meaning, but rather, *God's explicit meaning in that passage*; not strained, forced, creative; but natural, clear, and fitting; e.g. Jud. 19
 2. Keep overall message of Bible clear in your mind

3. Go from literal meaning to spiritual meaning - start with historical, then seek to spiritualize it - e.g. 2 Kings 7:9, 5:13
4. Look for NT references or parallels
 - a. References - serpent in wilderness, Jonah, Passover, manna, High Priest
 - b. Parallels
- Genesis 29:20/Heb. 12:2, “So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her”
- Deut. 9:5/Tit. 3:5, “It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you are going to possess their land”
- Deut. 20:16/Col. 3:5, “Only in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes”
- 1 Sam. 17:50-51/Heb. 2:14-15, “Thus David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, and he struck the Philistine and killed him; but there was no sword in David’s hand. Then David ran and stood over the Philistine and took his sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it.”
- Also Gen. 22:7-8/John 1:29

5. Look for recurring symbols in Bible (with caution): water (God’s eternal life from the Holy Spirit), oil (anointing of the Holy Spirit), blood (death, atonement), 7 (completion/perfection, 2 King. 5), thorns (curse, sin), leprosy (uncleanness of sin, 2 Kings 7)
6. Need the Spirit’s illumination