

Learning From God

It is more and more astounding to me that so many people seem to know so little about the Bible. Ninety-five percent (my guess) of it is not that hard to understand and it is such a blessing to read, it seems odd that so many ignore it.

I often hear people refer to Old Testament passages as if they apply today but they don't. Some do read just a bit and see something they like and apply it to America or to themselves or to some political situation when, in reality, it does not apply at all. In fact, the Old Testament died on the cross with Jesus (Colossians 2:8-14). We cannot be in a covenant relationship with the New Testament if the Old Testament is still alive (read Romans 7:1-4). Jesus' death ratifies the New Testament and it did not come into effect until His death (read Hebrews 9:15-17).

Jesus lived and died under the Old Testament. Since the cross, we are under the New Testament. So... does the Old Testament have a place today? Certainly, but not for our doctrine. From the Old Testament we learn how to recognize who the Messiah is. From the Old Testament we learn His lineage, what town He was to be born in, what he would accomplish, how he would die and how He would save His people.

And we gain something else from the Old Testament: Hope! Hope comes from several places (see also Romans 5:1-5), but God also has plans for us to gain *hope* as we see His work and his faithfulness throughout history. Paul was speaking of part of God's plan in Romans 15:4, which reads:

**For whatever was written in earlier times was written
for our instruction, so that through perseverance and
the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.**

The Old Testament gives us instruction about God, how He works and His long term plans for the world He created. As we see His plan unfolding throughout the history of mankind, it gives us hope. Why? Because we see His power, His love, and His plan to get us to heaven with Him for eternity.

Of course Jesus is the ultimate manifestation of God's plan from the very beginning. Jesus finishes the New Testament in His life, death and resurrection - all as God planned. No wonder we find *hope* when we understand God's plan from beginning to end, from Genesis to Revelation. The Old Testament is a finely fitted message that links to the New Testament in the life and work of Jesus.

Yes, the Old Testament has been fulfilled, but from it we can grow a deeper hope as we see our God keeping His promises and exercising His love and power to bless those who choose to love and follow Him. Are you on board?

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