

## LESSON 1 - CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT    *2 Timothy 3:14-17*

To understand the Bible, we must read and study it with a Christ-centered view. This applies both to the Old and the New Testaments. The Gospel message of Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead by Whom God's people are justified and from Whom God's people receive spiritual life and faith is the central truth of every book of the Bible, from Genesis to Malachi and from Matthew to Revelation. These Gospel truths may not be stated in exact doctrinal terms in every book of the Old Testament, but they are the central truths that underly and saturate all the revelation of God's glory before Christ actually came into the world. Just as it is revealed in the New Testament, the Old Testament is the revelation of how God saves sinners by His free and sovereign grace based solely upon the merits of the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of all of God's chosen people. The Old Testament reveals Christ in prophecy, picture, and type, as well as in its stated doctrine. This is the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and this truth is the key to understanding the whole Bible. Again, if we are to read and understand the Bible properly, we must read and interpret it with a CHRIST-CENTERED VIEW. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy -

***2 Timothy 3 - (14) But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of Whom thou hast learned them; (15) And that from a child thou hast known THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (16) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.***

There is no doubt that "*the Holy Scriptures*" to which Paul referred here is the Old Testament writings. This is all that he had at that time. There is no doubt that Paul understood how the written word at that time was "*by inspiration of God*" (i.e. God-breathed). Paul understood these "*Scriptures*" to be the verbally-inspired, inerrant Word of God and not just the writings and opinions of men. There is no doubt that Paul knew how the revelation of God in Christ in the Old Testament was able to make one "*wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*" Salvation by God's grace based on the righteousness of Christ freely imputed to God's people and received by them in God-given faith has always been the one and only way of salvation. This was true in the Old Testament as it is true in the New Testament. The Old Testament scriptures are "*profitable*" (useful) for "*doctrine*" (the teachings of God's Word), for "*reproof*" (conviction of our sins), for "*correction*" (showing us the right way of dealing with our sins), and for "*instruction in righteousness*" (the right way to walk by faith in Christ). The Old Testament reveals that the only way of salvation from our sins is by God's grace through the blood of Jesus Christ (the Lamb of God), which is His righteousness imputed to us, the very righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel (*Rom. 1:16-17*).

Consider some of the words of the Lord Himself concerning this matter. After His resurrection, the Lord walked for awhile on earth. One day He met two men from a village called Emmaus who talked of all the things that had happened in the Lord's crucifixion. Read *Luke 24:13-27*. Later on, just before His ascension unto glory, He sat down with His disciples and taught them how to preach the Gospel from the Old Testament. Read *Luke 24:44-48*. Consider another example of the Lord's own testimony -

**John 5 - (39) Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: AND THEY ARE THEY WHICH TESTIFY OF ME. (40) And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life. (41) I receive not honour from men. (42) But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. (43) I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. (44) How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only? (45) Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. (46) For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. (47) But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?**

Christ stated that the “*Scriptures*” (the written Word of God) testify of Himself. They testify of the GLORY OF HIS PERSON (*ex. Isa. 9:6-7*). We learn from the Old Testament that the Messiah (Christ) had to be both God and man in one Person without sin. It was only as Godman without sin that He could accomplish His work as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of God’s people, chosen and given to Him before the foundation of the world. They testify of the POWER AND SUCCESS OF HIS FINISHED WORK for His people (*Dan. 9:24*). Before the world began, in the everlasting covenant of grace, Christ was made, and willingly agreed to be, the Surety of His people. He had the whole debt of all their sins imputed (charged, accounted) to Him and obligated Himself to pay that debt with the price of His blood (*Gen. 3:21; Exod. 12*). To pay that debt, He had to be made flesh, and, as Godman, He was made under the law as their Substitute to die in their place to be their Redeemer and secure their salvation and eternal life (*Gal. 4:4-6; Heb. 2:14-17*). By this great work, He established the only righteousness by which God has justified His chosen people (*ex. Isa. 45:19-25; Jer. 23:5-6*).

The Old Testament testifies of the reality of God as both a just God and a Savior, One who is sovereign, holy, righteous, as well as loving, merciful, and gracious. This revelation of God comes as He reveals Himself in and by the promised Messiah and the work of redemption. The Old Testament testifies of the utter sinfulness and depravity of all people, fallen in Adam and born spiritually dead and unable, unwilling, to believe and come to the Lord HIS way of salvation. The Old Testament reveals the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ by Whose righteousness sinners are justified before God (forgiven of all sins and declared righteous on a just ground), and from Whose righteousness sinners are born again and brought to faith in Christ and true repentance. The whole Old Testament, even the revelation of the Old Covenant Law of Moses, shows the impossibility of sinful people being saved and accepted with God by their attempts to keep that law (*Rom. 3:10-23*). It shows how the Law given to Israel on Mount Sinai was given to show them their sinfulness and their need of salvation by God’s grace through the merit of the promised Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ (*Rom. 5:20; Gal. 3:19; Rom. 9:31–10:4*).

The revelation of Christ begins at the beginning of the Old Testament in *Genesis* and carries on through *Malachi*. One of the chief figures in the Old Testament is Abraham whom God used in a great way to reveal how He justifies the ungodly (*Rom. 4:1-5*). God set forth Abraham as a prime example of how He saves sinners by grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. Read the words of our Savior concerning Abraham. When speaking to the Pharisees of Abraham, the Lord said -

**John 8 - (56) Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad. (57) Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? (58) Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.**