



DELIGHTING

— THROUGH CHRIST —

IN THE OLD

— AND FOR CHRIST —

TESTAMENT

— JASON S. DEROUCHIE —

Foreword by Stephen J. Wellum



“This book will change the way you read the Old and the New Testaments. Beyond this, if you are a pastor or teacher, this book will change the way you preach and teach from the Old and the New Testaments. Thankfully, while Jason DeRouchie’s ideas are big, the words and the chapters are not. I will joyfully wear out my copy.”

Tom Kelby, President, Hands to the Plow Ministries; President, Table Fellowship Churches

“Jason DeRouchie’s love of the Old Testament is contagious. He loves the Old Testament because it leads him to his Savior. Neglecting the Old Testament results in an impoverished understanding of the words and works of Christ. Even though the Old Testament’s language, culture, and worldview can strike modern readers as foreign or arcane, DeRouchie demonstrates how the Old Testament can be both accessible and awe-inspiring. He does more than merely inform his readers; he seeks to inflame their hearts, beginning with the Law and all the Prophets. DeRouchie serves the global church by opening the treasures of the Old Testament, allowing them to illuminate the New Testament, exalt Jesus, and lead readers to greater faithfulness and deeper worship.”

Joe M. Allen III, Assistant Professor of Missions, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Spurgeon College

“We love to tell the stories of the Old Testament to children but, sadly, often fail to rejoice in it for ourselves. In *Delighting in the Old Testament*, Jason DeRouchie helps us see Christ in this part of God’s word, resulting in a joy-filled faith. I highly recommend this book to you, whether you are a Christian in the pew or a leader in the church. Don’t rush through it. You will see the Old Testament Scriptures as you have never seen them before!”

Conrad Mbewe, Pastor, Kabwata Baptist Church, Lusaka, Zambia; Founding Chancellor, African Christian University

“While Christians may confess that the first three-quarters of the Bible is ‘breathed out by God’ (2 Tim. 3:16) and bears witness about Jesus (John 5:39), and although they may affirm that it is ‘profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness’ (2 Tim. 3:16), they often find it difficult to discover in it the kinds of life-transforming riches that would lead them to be ‘complete, equipped for every good work’ (2 Tim. 3:17). Put another way, it is one thing to believe that the Old Testament is a bottomless mine of life-transforming gospel gold, and it is quite another to experience its riches as one mines deeply. With *Delighting in the Old Testament*, Jason DeRouchie has handed us a tool for mining, helped us get started, and given us instructions so that we can dig deeply for the rest of our lives. This book provides a model for Christ-saturated and biblically grounded reading of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. Church groups and classrooms will be blessed as they learn how to read, see, hope, and live in light of the Christ-centered message of the first three-quarters of the Bible.”

Ian J. Vaillancourt, Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew, Heritage Theological Seminary; author, *The Dawning of Redemption* and *Treasuring the Psalms*

“When it comes to Old Testament studies, Jason DeRouchie is one of this generation’s most trusted authors. In *Delighting in the Old Testament*, he brings his considerable gifts to bear as he walks the reader through how to read the Old Testament in light of the person and work of Christ. This accessible, reader-friendly volume will biblically inform and spiritually inspire all who read it. Whether you’re a new believer or an established scholar, I highly recommend this book.”

Jason K. Allen, President, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Spurgeon College

“From bacon and tattoos to typology and hermeneutics, *Delighting in the Old Testament* covers an incredible amount of ground when it comes to helping us understand and apply ‘Jesus’s only Bible.’ Of particular import is how much more attention and care teachers and evangelists should take as we teach the Old Testament. All Christians stand to benefit immensely as they worship their way through this comprehensive and informative text. Feel your heart leap for joy as you see how Jesus heals you of your spiritual disabilities and purchases for you every spiritual blessing!”

Gloria Furman, author, *Labor with Hope* and *Missional Motherhood*

“For a Christian, understanding how Jesus is the center and climax of Scripture is of utmost importance. In this volume, Jason DeRouchie channels decades of study to help readers appropriately read the Old Testament as Christian Scripture by examining how Jesus fulfills all of God’s promises. I love this book because it helps believers delight in God’s word and delight in the God who gave us his word.”

Benjamin L. Merkle, M. O. Owens Jr. Chair of New Testament Studies and Research Professor of New Testament and Greek, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; Editor, *Southeastern Theological Review*

“This book is a dream come true. For years, Jason DeRouchie has won my trust. He cherishes both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Messiah himself. And without pretense or fudging, he loves to see the genuine, authentic marriage of the sacred text and its supreme Treasure. Few take both the Old Testament and Christ with such seriousness and contagious joy. Now, in this book, a world-class professor leverages his learning and skill in the Hebrew language, discourse analysis, and the full text of Scripture to train lay leaders, common Christians, and all careful students of the Bible, not just to read and understand the Old Testament better, but through it to encounter the King himself in the full sweep of his majesty and to delight in him.”

David Mathis, Senior Teacher and Executive Editor, desiringGod.org; Pastor, Cities Church, Saint Paul, Minnesota; author, *Habits of Grace*

“If *delight* is not the first word that comes to mind when you think about the Old Testament, then this book is a gift to you. Jason DeRouchie is a trusted scholar and just the man we need to teach us that the Old Testament prepares for and points to Jesus Christ. This happy discovery awaits all who read *Delighting in the Old Testament*.”

C. J. Mahaney, Senior Pastor, Sovereign Grace Church, Louisville, Kentucky

“I have benefited from Jason DeRouchie’s work both personally and professionally for decades, and this book represents yet another gift to those who would engage its content. His work is clear, thorough, and compelling. Additionally, his argument is fundamental and essential for the full and proper interpretation of the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. If you are not convinced, repent and reread it.”

Miles V. Van Pelt, Alan Hayes Belcher, Jr. Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Languages and Director, Summer Institute for Biblical Languages, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson

“Jason DeRouchie is a faithful guide to the Old Testament. He shows that its theological message is that God reigns, saves, and satisfies through covenant for his glory in Christ.”

Andy Naselli, Professor of Systematic Theology and New Testament, Bethlehem College and Seminary; Elder, The North Church, Mounds View, Minnesota

“Jason DeRouchie’s work will be immensely helpful to a wide variety of readers. It is both accessible and comprehensive. It is practical and well researched. I’m looking forward to hearing of its impact in a variety of contexts around the globe.”

Ryan Robertson, President, Reaching & Teaching International Ministries; Elder, Third Avenue Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky

Delighting in the Old Testament

Delighting in the Old Testament

Through Christ and for Christ

Jason S. DeRouchie

Foreword by Steven J. Wellum

 **CROSSWAY®**
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

Delighting in the Old Testament: Through Christ and for Christ

© 2024 by Jason S. DeRouchie

Published by Crossway
1300 Crescent Street
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, except as provided for by USA copyright law. Crossway® is a registered trademark in the United States of America.

Cover design: Jordan Singer

First printing 2024

Printed in the United States of America

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. The ESV text may not be quoted in any publication made available to the public by a Creative Commons license. The ESV may not be translated into any other language.

Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995, 2020 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved. www.lockman.org.

Scripture quotations designated NET are from the NET Bible® copyright © 1996–2016 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://netbible.com>. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Quotations marked NETS are taken from *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, © 2007 by the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Inc. Used by permission of Oxford University Press. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked NRSV are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

All emphases in Scripture quotations have been added by the author.

Trade paperback ISBN: 978-1-4335-9122-8

ePub ISBN: 978-1-4335-9124-2

PDF ISBN: 978-1-4335-9123-5

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: DeRouchie, Jason Shane, 1973– author.

Title: *Delighting in the Old Testament : through Christ and for Christ* / Jason S. DeRouchie ; foreword by Steven J. Wellum.

Description: Wheaton, Illinois : Crossway, 2024. | Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023005477 (print) | LCCN 2023005478 (ebook) | ISBN 9781433591228 (trade paperback) | ISBN 9781433591235 (pdf) | ISBN 9781433591242 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Jesus Christ—Biblical teaching. | Bible. Old Testament—Criticism, interpretation, etc.

Classification: LCC BT225 .D476 2024 (print) | LCC BT225 (ebook) | DDC 221.606—dc23/eng/20230726

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2023005477>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2023005478>

Crossway is a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

LB		33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24			
15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

*To Tom Kelby and Andy Naselli,
brothers who have seen, savored, served, supported, and stimulated*

Contents

List of Illustrations *xi*

Foreword by Stephen J. Wellum *xiii*

Preface *xix*

Abbreviations *xxv*

Introduction *1*

Ten Reasons the Old Testament Matters for Christians

Part 1

READING WELL: HOW JESUS HELPS CHRISTIANS
INTERPRET THE OLD TESTAMENT *15*

- 1 The Old Testament's Audience and Comprehension *19*
New Testament Perspective
- 2 The Old Testament's Audience and Comprehension *37*
Old Testament Perspective
- 3 Christ as Light and Lens for Interpreting the Old Testament *53*

Part 2

SEEING WELL: HOW JESUS'S BIBLE
TESTIFIES ABOUT HIM *71*

- 4 The Story of God's Glory in Christ *75*
- 5 Seeing and Celebrating Christ in All of Scripture *91*
- 6 The Message of Genesis and the Hope for Christ *109*

Part 3

HOPING WELL: HOW JESUS SECURES
EVERY DIVINE PROMISE 131

- 7 The Importance and Challenge of Claiming Old Testament Promises 133
- 8 Relating Old Testament Promises to Christians 155
- 9 Claiming Old Testament Promises through Christ 173

PART 4

LIVING WELL: HOW JESUS MAKES
MOSES'S LAW MATTER 191

- 10 Relating Moses's Law to Christians 195
- 11 Evaluating Alternative Proposals 213
- 12 When Jesus Maintains the Law 237
- 13 When Jesus Transforms or Annuls the Law 257

Conclusion 279

Tips for Delighting in the Old Testament

Glossary 287

Illustration Credits 301

General Index 305

Scripture Index 313

Illustrations

Figures

- 3.1 The Bible's progressive revelation of Old Testament mystery 67
- 3.2 Interpreting the Old Testament through the lens of Christ 68
- 4.1 Salvation history in the context of Scripture 79
- 4.2 God's KINGDOM plan through images 80
- 4.3 Salvation history and the overlap of the ages 87
- 8.1 Old Testament promises reach believers only through Christ 157
- 9.1 The fulfillment of Old Testament promises through the lens of Christ 176
- 9.2 God maintains the promise of serving as a light while extending it to all in Christ 179
- 9.3 God maintains the promise of his presence while extending it to all in Christ 181
- 9.4 God maintains the promise of his dwelling while extending it to all in Christ 183
- 9.5 God maintains his promises to Israel while extending them to all in Christ 184
- 10.1 The law's fulfillment through the lens of Christ 209
- 10.2 The law's fulfillment over the bridge of Christ 210
- 13.1 The holiness continuum 266

Tables

- 4.1 Stages in God's KINGDOM plan 78
- 6.1 Seven ways to see and celebrate Christ in the Old Testament 110
- 6.2 The "these are the generations" structure of Genesis 112
- 6.3 The command-promise structure of Genesis 12:1-3 120
- 8.1 Mosaic covenant blessings, curses, and restoration blessings 158
- 8.2 Paul's use of the Old Testament in 2 Corinthians 6:16 162
- 12.1 Types of old covenant laws by content (abridged) 238
- 12.2 Types of old covenant laws by content (extended) 242
- 13.1 The centrality of the Sabbath in the Ten Commandments 259

Foreword

THE BIBLE IS A BIG BOOK that spans centuries and consists of many topics and diverse literature. Yet, the Bible, despite being written by multiple authors and addressing various subjects, is one grand metanarrative whose central message is about what our triune Creator-covenant God planned in eternity and executed in time to glorify himself by redeeming his people, judging sin, and making all things new in Christ Jesus (Rom. 11:33–36; Eph. 1:9–10; Col. 1:15–20). Indeed, from Genesis to Revelation, the Bible’s main message is first about the triune God before it’s about us and how *he*—although perfectly complete and satisfied in himself—has graciously chosen to share himself with us, which results to the praise of his glorious name, his sovereign grace, and our eternal good (Eph. 2:1–10).

However, if we are to grasp and comprehend the Bible’s central message, Scripture cannot be read in a piecemeal way, as if we could isolate one text from another. Instead, we must approach and interpret Scripture according to what Scripture *is*, or better, we must read it *on its own terms*. What, then, is Scripture, and what are its own terms? We can answer this by noting three truths.

First, Scripture *is* God’s word written through the agency of human authors unfolding God’s eternal plan (2 Tim. 3:15–17; 2 Pet. 1:20–21). Given this truth, despite Scripture’s diversity of content, there is an overall unity and coherence to it precisely because it *is God’s* word written. Furthermore, since Scripture is God’s word given through human authors, we cannot know what God is saying to us apart from the writing(s) and intention(s) of the human authors. What Scripture says, God says. And given that God has spoken through multiple authors over time, this requires a careful *inter-textual* and *canonical* reading to understand God’s full revelation of himself. Scripture does not come to us all at once. Instead, as God’s plan unfolds,

more revelation is given, and later revelation, building on the earlier, results in more clarity and understanding from the perspective of the later authors. As more revelation is given, God's unfolding "mystery" is unveiled (see Rom. 16:25–26; Eph. 1:9; 3:3–6; Col. 1:25–27), and we discover how the individual parts fit with the whole. Even more significantly, we discover *who* is central to that plan, namely our Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, Scripture is God's word written *over time*, hence the idea of the *progress* of revelation and the unfolding nature of revelation in redemptive history. Revelation, alongside redemption, occurs *progressively*, largely demarcated by the biblical covenants located within the larger categories of creation, fall, redemption, and the dawning of the new creation in Christ. Thus, to understand the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), we must carefully trace God's unfolding plan as unveiled through the biblical covenants. This is why our exegesis of specific texts and entire books must result in a "biblical theology" that is concerned to read Scripture and put together the entire canon in terms of its redemptive-historical unfolding. Scripture consists of many literary forms that require careful interpretation, but what unites the biblical books is God's unfolding plan, starting in Genesis with creation, accounting for the fall, unpacking God's redemptive promises through the covenants, and culminating with Christ's coming and inauguration of the new creation by the ratification of a new covenant.

Third, Scripture is God's word *centered* in our Lord Jesus Christ. Although some think this statement is controversial, it is simply true to what Scripture teaches. As the New Testament opens, Jesus is presented as the fulfillment of God's saving promises from the Old Testament (Matt. 1:1–17; Luke 1–3). All that has preceded Christ—promises, types, and covenantal unfolding—has anticipated his coming. In fact, our Lord himself unambiguously teaches us this truth. In a staggering statement, Jesus claims that he is the *fulfillment* of the Law and the Prophets, meaning not only that the entire Old Testament pointed to him but also that its continuing and abiding authority must be understood in light of his person and work (Matt. 5:17–20). By this statement, Jesus views himself as the eschatological goal of the Old Testament; he is the one to whom the Old Testament pointed forward and in whom all God's plans and promises are realized.

But Jesus's statement in Matthew 5 is not merely a one-off. In Matthew 11, as he teaches us about his relationship to John the Baptist, the last of the

old covenant prophets, Jesus views himself as the focal point and center of all of history, the one who fulfills all of God's plans and purposes in himself. The same truth is taught in Luke 24. As Jesus comes alongside to comfort two downcast disciples, he does so by going back to the Old Testament and rehearsing how the Law, Prophets, and Psalms properly spoke of him and anticipated the events occurring in his life, death, and resurrection (Luke 24:13–35, 44). A crucified Messiah isn't something strange but precisely what the Old Testament taught and anticipated. As Jesus unpacks Scripture, he magnificently explains how the Old Testament, properly interpreted and despite its diversity, is about him.

These truths are also taught by the opening thesis statement of the book of Hebrews. “Long ago,” the author reminds his readers, “God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,” and he did so “at many times and in many ways” (Heb. 1:1). God's word is given over time, and it points forward to something more to come. In fact, the phrase, “at many times and in many ways,” underscores this point. God gave the Old Testament revelation, and it is, therefore, fully true and authoritative. Yet it is purposely incomplete as it points beyond itself to Christ's coming. But what the prophets looked forward to—namely, “the last days” and the coming of Messiah Jesus, now, “in Son” (*en huiō*, Heb. 1:2)—is here. In other words, in Christ's coming and work, the entirety of God's previous revelation and redemptive purposes have now reached their fulfillment. All of this reminds us that there was no reduction of the Old Testament's authority, but God intended the Old Testament to point beyond itself to his full self-disclosure in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Although these truths are plainly taught in Scripture, unfortunately today's evangelical church has a difficult time making sense of them. We struggle over how Scripture, especially the Old Testament, is to be applied to our lives and how it is rightly about our Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Testament has become almost a foreign book to many in our churches. Even some prominent pastors advocate a Marcion-like “unhitching” of the Old Testament from the New, since, after all, the church is the people of the new covenant, not the old. But the problem with this kind of teaching is that it denies what Scripture teaches in a whole host of ways.

For starters, it denies what Paul teaches in 2 Timothy 3:15–17. In this important statement, we often forget that Paul's reference to “Scripture” is

first referring to the Old Testament as God's breathed-out word and, thus, as fully authoritative for Christians. What he assumes is that the church is grounding its doctrine and life on the Old Testament, since the New Testament is still being written. As a result, it is not only wrong but also dangerous to ignore the Old Testament since it, along with the New Testament, functions for us as the basis for how we are rightly to think about God and live before him as his redeemed people in Christ. No doubt it is true that as Christians we are not "under the law" *as a covenant* now that Christ has come. However, this does not mean that the entire Old Testament, including the Mosaic covenant, does not continue to function for us *as Scripture* and, thus, to demand our complete devotion, study, and obedience.

Furthermore, this kind of teaching undercuts the biblical and theological foundation for the New Testament and thus seriously risks misunderstanding who Jesus is, along with the entire message of the gospel. Our Lord Jesus Christ does not appear *de novo* in the New Testament, that is, out of thin air. Instead, who Jesus is and what he has done in his redemptive work is entirely dependent on the biblical-theological framework, content, and structures of the Old Testament. Unless we ground the gospel first in the Old Testament, we will quickly lose the central truths of Christian theology. This is why ignorance of the Old Testament is no small matter. In truth, it's a matter of life and death, and as such, given our lack of knowing the Old Testament, it is not surprising that the theological life and health of today's evangelical church is in trouble.

Given this sober truth and stark reality, I am thrilled to recommend Jason DeRouchie's excellent and timely work, *Delighting in the Old Testament: Through Christ and for Christ*. For the time in which we live, this book helps the church properly recover the breadth, depth, and beauty of the Old Testament. In a succinct way, DeRouchie teaches the church how to read the Old Testament properly and apply it to our lives in light of Christ's incarnation and new covenant work. What the church is desperately lacking about how to understand and apply the Old Testament *as Christian Scripture* to our lives, DeRouchie remedies by providing sound instruction. In so doing, he teaches us how the Bible's covenantal storyline, types, and glorious promises are centered in Christ, fulfilled in him, and applied to the church. Probably the most helpful feature of the book is the various case studies. For example, by applying specific texts, DeRouchie illustrates

how to read and apply the Mosaic law to our lives as new covenant believers. By avoiding the extremes of a strict continuity or total discontinuity of the application of the law-covenant to us today, he moves beyond mere theory to practice and masterfully demonstrates how to apply correctly God's word to our lives.

Generally speaking, the evangelical church is deficient in basic biblical and theological knowledge and literacy. If this serious problem is not remedied, the church will continue to drift as she is tossed back and forth by every wind of doctrine (Eph. 4:14). The remedy to our present situation is sound and faithful biblical and theological exposition, which DeRouchie wonderfully provides. My prayer is that this book will be widely read, digested, and applied. If it is, then the church will be strengthened, fortified, and better equipped to know and glorify our triune God as we learn to proclaim anew the unsearchable riches of Christ (Col. 1:27–28) from the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).

Stephen J. Wellum

PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
LOUISVILLE, KY

Preface

What's the Point of This Book?

Is the Old Testament still significant for believers today? Can Christians faithfully see anticipations of Christ there and celebrate him? How should believers engage Old Testament texts that address ancient covenants and kingdoms and that are filled with promises and laws from a different age in salvation history? This book guides readers into delighting in the Old Testament through Christ and for Christ.

Through my parenting, pastoral ministry, biblical counseling, international missions, and leadership training both in the academy and in rural and urban churches, the Lord has continued to show me how vitally important his Old Testament word is for Christians today. So many doctrinal and ethical challenges arise from unhealthy approaches to the Old Testament.¹ Furthermore, the Old Testament clarifies most doctrinal and ethical answers when Christians read it properly through Christ and for Christ.

This book seeks to be immensely practical, for it addresses:

- *reading* the Old Testament how God intends (part 1),
- *seeing* Jesus where Scripture discloses him (part 2),
- *hoping* in all God's promises for us (part 3), and
- *living* faithfully in relation to God's law (part 4).

Three-fourths of our Christian Bible is *Old* Testament, which was written “for our instruction” and to serve us (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 1 Pet. 1:12). Indeed, “all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching,

¹ Some of those challenges this book addresses include health and wealth prosperity teaching and the Christian's relationship to old covenant promises and laws.

for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). This volume seeks to equip Christian laypeople and leaders to delight in the reality that the Old Testament is Christian Scripture.

Jesus stands at the center of God’s purposes in creation and salvation. All the Old Testament’s laws, history, prophecy, and wisdom point to Jesus in various ways, and through him God fulfills all that the Old Testament anticipates (Matt. 5:17–18; Mark 1:15; Acts 3:18; 1 Cor. 1:23–24). “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rom. 10:4), and “all the promises of God find their Yes in him” (2 Cor. 1:20). The old covenant regulations regarding “food and drink . . . festival or a new moon or a Sabbath” were all “a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ” (Col. 2:16–17). “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17).

Paul told Timothy, “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). The apostle envisioned four generations of multiplication, and I write this book with a similar intent. I hope Christian laypeople and leaders will learn from this tool and then guide others through family devotions, Bible studies, classroom instruction, and sermons, all so that more and more Christians can receive from and relish the Old Testament as God intended.

One great way to profit from this book is to approach it in a small group, one chapter per week, under the care of a coach who has already worked through the material. Once complete, the group members could each become coaches in new groups.

An Overview of the Book

After an introduction that supplies ten reasons why the Old Testament is important for believers, the book has four parts:

1. “Reading Well—How Jesus Helps Christians Interpret the Old Testament” (chaps. 1–3): Both Old and New Testament authors recognized that God gave the Old Testament for those connected to the messianic era and that only through Jesus does God enable people to read the Old Testament as God intends. Christians alone bear the spiritual ability to interpret the full meaning of the Old

Testament, and Christ's life, death, and resurrection provide a necessary lens for understanding rightly all God means.

2. "Seeing Well—How Jesus's Bible Testifies about Him" (chaps. 4–6): Along with reading through Christ, Christians must see that Christ's glory is the end to which God gave the Old Testament. This section offers seven ways the biblical authors model reading the Old Testament *for Christ*. It concludes with a case study in reading Genesis this way.
3. "Hoping Well—How Jesus Secures Every Divine Promise" (chaps. 7–9): In Jesus, *Old Testament* promises remain a vital means for Christians to grow in holiness and persevere through suffering. This section highlights weaknesses in the way prosperity preachers approach biblical promises. It then offers key principles that guided the New Testament authors when they appropriated Old Testament promises and shows how Jesus fulfills promises by maintaining them (with or without extension), transforming them, or completing them.
4. "Living Well—How Jesus Makes Moses's Law Matter" (chaps. 10–13): None of Moses's law-covenant is directly binding on believers today, but *all* of Moses's law still guides us when read in view of how Christ fulfills the law. Specifically, Moses's law still matters in the way it reveals God's character, anticipates the saving work of Christ, and models what justice and love looked like in the age before Christ. This section evaluates alternative approaches to old covenant law, including several defective and dangerous perspectives. It then supplies four case studies to show how Jesus maintains the law (with or without extension), transforms the law, or annuls the law.

The conclusion provides seven tips for delighting in the Old Testament. Every chapter (as well as the introduction and conclusion) closes with "Review and Reflection" questions, and the book ends with a glossary of key terms for easy reference.

A Word about Footnotes and the Term "Law"

This book has many footnotes, some of which are lengthy. Sometimes these notes show my homework, but other times they simply direct the reader to

other resources that handle the topic at hand. I encourage all lay readers to skip the footnotes since they sometimes include academic material that is only pertinent to advanced readers. Nothing substantial will be lost from the book's message if you skip them all, so please don't let their presence overwhelm or distract you!

Within both the ESV and this book's body, the capitalized term "Law" usually refers to the first canonical division of Jesus's Hebrew Scriptures. These five books of Moses (Genesis–Deuteronomy) are also known as the Pentateuch, and some refer to the corpus by the Hebrew term "Torah." In contrast, the lower-case term "law" refers to instruction or a legal prescription, which elsewhere some render as "torah." Thus, "Moses's law" or "the law" commonly refers to the body of guiding precepts that shape the stipulations of the old Mosaic covenant and that are found within the Law/Torah/Pentateuch, most specifically in Exodus–Deuteronomy.

Some Words of Thanks

This book captures my maturing reflections on the central role Christ plays in biblical interpretation. They are now decades in the making and saturated with Yahweh's grace. After equipping me through formal education, God used a single lunch conversation eighteen years ago with John Piper and Justin Taylor to right the trajectory of my life and ministry and to set me on a path of gospel hope and of seeing and savoring Jesus in all of Scripture. After listening to me speak of my desire to make much of God's glory as an Old Testament professor, Taylor kindly asserted, "I hear a lot about God's glory and very little about Jesus."

As a Christian, did my hermeneutical approach and ministry practice align with the truth that God created all things (including the Old Testament) by the Son, through the Son, and for the Son (Col. 1:16) and that "all the promises of God find their Yes in [the Son of God, Jesus Christ]" (2 Cor. 1:20)? Could I, who like Paul was a teacher of Jesus's Bible, say with the apostle, "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2; cf. 1:23)? Did I approach Abraham as one who saw and rejoiced in Jesus's day (John 8:56), even if from afar (Heb. 11:13; cf. Matt. 13:17), and did I affirm that Moses, in his writings, wrote of the divine Son (John 5:46–47; cf. 5:39)? Did I grasp that to "understand the [Old Testament] Scriptures" means that in them I should find a unified message

declaring the saving work of the Messiah and the mission he would spark (Luke 24:45–46; cf. Acts 26:22–23)? Did I truly believe that “God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer” (Acts 3:18; cf. 3:24), and did I recognize that they were all carefully searching and inquiring about the person and time of Christ’s sufferings and subsequent glories and yet “were serving not themselves” but us (1 Pet. 1:10–12; cf. Acts 10:43; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11)? Did I affirm that Paul and Timothy’s sacred writings could only make others wise for salvation—past, present, and future—when linked to faith in Christ (2 Tim. 3:15)? Did the principles guiding my interpretation of the Old Testament affirm that there were “mysteries” kept secret there that only the lens of Christ’s coming could disclose (Rom. 16:25–26; cf. Isa 29:18; Jer. 30:24; Dan. 12:8–9) and that, because of this, the apostolic teaching provides a necessary grid for properly grasping all that God wants us to gain from the Old Testament (Acts 2:42; Eph. 2:20)? In short, did I interpret and preach old covenant materials in a way that embraces that “only through Christ” does God lift the veil, allowing us to fully understand and appropriate their significance (2 Cor. 3:14–15)?²

With such questions shaping my soul, the years that followed sitting under Piper’s faithful preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church sharpened the sword I had been taught to wield and awakened a commitment within me and my family to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ. I am especially grateful to Pastor John for his investment in my life through the years and for his modeling what it means to study, practice, and teach God’s word in a way that seeks the obedience of faith among all the nations for the sake of Christ’s name (Rom. 1:5). Much of what this book teaches I shaped during our years of partnership at Bethlehem College & Seminary. Piper has faithfully committed to cherish the majesty of the triune God through careful study, the treasuring of truth, humble holiness, and pastoral and joyful proclamation shaped in a context of divine sovereignty and driven by love for the nations. I have received all of these from him, and I thank him for leading me and so many others to love Jesus and to treasure the gospel more.

2 This paragraph came from Jason S. DeRouchie, “Lifting the Veil: Reading and Preaching Jesus’ Bible through Christ and for Christ,” *SBIT* 22, no. 3 (2018): 158. Used with permission.

I thank Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's trustees, President Jason Allen, Provost Jason Duesing, and other administrators for granting me a research sabbatical in spring 2022 to complete this book. To be *for the church* around the globe means that we must remain *for Christ* in all things. I am grateful to be part of an institution that is committed to this vision.

I also thank the Crossway team for their commitment to biblical faithfulness and for accepting and supporting this project. Chris Cowan served as my editor, and he provided Christ-honoring oversight, careful copyediting, and wise counsel that have made the whole book better.

Many other notes of thanks are in order. I thank my doctoral fellow Brian Verrett for aiding my initial ponderings in how best to shape this book. I thank former students Joel Dougherty, Ryan Eagy, and Joey Karrigan for helping me design the book's images. I also thank those who read through the manuscript and offered useful feedback: Joey Allen, Brandon Benziger, Teresa DeRouchie, Tyler Hall, Scott Jamison, Tom Kelby, Joey Reichhoff, Ian Vaillancourt, and Nate Weller. I rejoice in my wife Teresa and all my children who encouraged me and celebrated with me in seeing this volume completed.

I dedicate this study to two of my dear friends—Tom Kelby and Andy Naselli. Their companionship, brotherhood, and gospel collaboration have been sweet gifts to my soul through many years, trials, and joys. My work with Tom began in 2008 with the training of rural pastors in Wisconsin. His joy in the Lord, his faithfulness, and his biblical wisdom and practice have been a rich blessing to me and my family. I celebrate our relationship and partnership that now continue through the global service of Hands to the Plow Ministries. Andy and I were colleagues for many years at Bethlehem College & Seminary, and at that time we co-taught an advanced biblical theology course during which I solidified many of this book's elements. I praise the Lord for our years of friendship and the deep commitments to Scripture, Christ, and his church that I have witnessed in his life. May the Lord keep us faithful and use us to see all the nations he has made worship before him and glorify his name (Ps. 86:9).

Jason S. DeRouchie

SAVORING THE SWEETNESS OF THE LIGHT (ECCL. 11:7–8)

CHRISTMAS 2022

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doublday, 1992
ApOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
DBSJ	<i>Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal</i>
DJG	<i>Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels</i> . Edited by Joel B. Green and Scott McKnight. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992
DLNT	<i>Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Development</i> . Edited by R. P. Martin and P. H. Davids. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997
DNTUOT	<i>Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. K. Beale, D. A. Carson, Benjamin A. Gladd, and Andrew David Naselli. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023
DOTP	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch</i> . Edited by T. Des- mond Alexander and David W. Baker. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
GTJ	<i>Grace Theological Journal</i>
HALOT	<i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated

- and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson.
4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999
- JBL* *Journal of Biblical Literature*
- JBMW* *Journal of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*
- JBTS* *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies*
- JETS* *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
- JSNT* *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
- JSOT* *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
- JSOTSup* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
- JSPHS* *Journal for the Study of Paul and His Letters*
- LHBOTS* The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
- LNTS* The Library of New Testament Studies
- LQ* *Lutheran Quarterly*
- LXX* Septuagint
- MJT* *Midwestern Journal of Theology*
- NAC* New American Commentary
- NDBT* *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Edited by T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000
- NICNT* New International Commentary on the New Testament
- NICOT* New International Commentary on the Old Testament
- NIDB* *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Edited by Katherine Doob Sakenfeld. 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007
- NIDOTTE* *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Edited Willem A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997
- NIVAC* NIV Application Commentary
- NovT* *Novum Testamentum*
- NSBT* New Studies in Biblical Theology
- NTS* *New Testament Studies*
- PNTC* Pillar New Testament Commentary
- RB* *Revue biblique*
- RTR* *Reformed Theological Review*
- SBJT* *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*
- SOTBT* Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology
- StBibLit* Studies in Biblical Literature (Lang)

<i>STR</i>	<i>Southeastern Theological Review</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Joseph Fabry. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2018
<i>Them</i>	<i>Themelios</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TLOT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by Ernst Jenni, with assistance from Claus Westermann. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997
<i>TMSJ</i>	<i>The Master's Seminary Journal</i>
<i>TNTC</i>	Tyndale New Testament Commentary
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>WUNT</i>	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft
<i>ZECNT</i>	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

Introduction

Ten Reasons the Old Testament Matters for Christians

For our instruction.

ROMANS 15:4

IS CHRIST REALLY PART OF the Old Testament message? Should I as a believer in the twenty-first century claim Old Testament promises as mine? Do the laws of the Mosaic covenant still matter today for followers of Jesus? In short, is the Old Testament *Christian* Scripture, and if so, how should we approach it?

Delighting in the Old Testament: Through Christ and for Christ seeks to help Christians make connections to Christ and practical application to the Christian life from every page of the Old Testament. As we will see, this goal is *not* to turn “all Old Testament texts into predictions of or, more precisely, pictures foreshadowing the coming of Jesus,”¹ though this is true of some texts. Instead, it seeks to clarify what the apostle Paul, as an Old Testament preacher, meant when he told the Corinthians, “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). In D. A. Carson’s words,

This does not mean that this was a new departure for Paul, still less that Paul was devoted to blissful ignorance of anything and everything other than the

¹ Richard L. Schultz, *Out of Context: How to Avoid Misinterpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), 33. Schultz’s caution is merited but misses the heart of what I mean by Christocentric interpretation.

cross. No, what he means is that all he does and teaches is tied to the cross. He cannot long talk about Christian joy, or Christian ethics, or Christian fellowship, or the Christian doctrine of God, or anything else, without finally tying it to the cross. Paul is gospel-centered; he is cross-centered.²

Therefore, this book is a study in biblical and practical theology. It supplies a rationale for thinking about the Old Testament like Jesus and Paul did. It also guides Christians in faithfully reading the Old Testament and in properly responding to its claims. For all who are looking to Jesus as Savior, sovereign, and satisfier, this book seeks to help you:

- by *faith* see and celebrate Christ as we read the Old Testament in faithful ways,
- rightly *hope* in Old Testament promises through Jesus, and
- genuinely *love* others with the help of the old covenant law when appropriating it in view of how Jesus fulfills it.

To understand the Old Testament fully, we must start reading it as believers in the resurrected Jesus, with God having awakened our spiritual senses to perceive and hear rightly. As Paul notes, Scripture's truths are "spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14) and only *through Christ* does God enable us to read the old covenant materials as God intended (2 Cor. 3:14). This, in turn, allows our biblical interpretation as Christians to reach its rightful end of "beholding the glory of the Lord" and "being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:14–18). Thus, we read *for Christ*.

Some Christians may query, if we are part of the new covenant, why should we seek to understand and apply the Old Testament? While I will develop my response throughout the remainder of this book, I will give ten reasons here why the first word in the phrase "*Old Testament*" must not mean "unimportant or insignificant to Christians."³

2 D. A. Carson, *The Cross and Christian Ministry: Leadership Lessons from 1 Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 41.

3 The following ten reasons are adapted from Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017), 6–11. Used with permission.

1. The Old Testament Was Jesus's Only Bible and Makes Up 75 Percent of Our Christian Scripture

If word count says anything, the Old Testament matters to God, who gave us his word in a book. In fact, it was his first special revelation, and it set a foundation for the fulfillment we find in Jesus in the New Testament. The Old Testament was the only Bible of Jesus and the earliest church (e.g., Luke 24:44; Acts 24:14; 2 Tim. 3:15), and it is a major part of our Scriptures. Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matt. 5:17). “The Law and the Prophets” to which he refers is the Old Testament.

2. The Old Testament Influences Our Understanding of Key Biblical Teachings

By the end of the Law (Genesis–Deuteronomy), the Bible has already described or alluded to all five of the major covenants that guide Scripture’s plot structure (Adamic/Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and new). The rest of the Old Testament then builds on this portrait in detail. Accordingly, the Old Testament story heightens hope for a better king, a blessed people, and a broader land, all of which the New Testament then realizes. Specifically, as I note elsewhere:

The *Adamic-Noahic covenant* with creation establishes the crisis and context of global curse and common grace out of which the other covenants clarify God’s solution and saving grace. The *Abrahamic covenant* forecasts the hope of Christ and new creation through its conditional yet certain kingdom promises of land(s), seed, blessing, and divine presence. The remaining covenants clarify how God fulfilled these promises in two progressive phases. In the *Mosaic covenant* (phase 1) Abraham’s offspring as a single nation experience blessing and curse, which results in their exile from the promised land. The *Davidic covenant* recalls the promises of a royal Deliverer and declares the specific line through whom he will rise. Then the *new covenant* (phase 2) realizes these hopes in an already-but-not yet way through the person and perfect obedience of Christ Jesus, whose kingdom work overcomes the curse with universal blessing, makes Abraham the father of many

nations to the ends of the earth, and reconciles all things to God through the new creation.⁴

Without the Old Testament, we wouldn't understand the problem for which Jesus and the New Testament supply the solution. "As one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men" (Rom. 5:18). Similarly, we would miss so many features of God's salvation story without the Old Testament. Just consider how Paul speaks regarding the Israelites: "To them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen" (Rom. 9:4–5). Finally, without the Old Testament, we wouldn't grasp the various types and shadows that point to Jesus. The Old Testament alone clarifies what John meant when he said of Jesus, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). And the Old Testament indicates what Jesus meant when he said of his body, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19, 21).

Furthermore, there are some doctrines of Scripture that are best understood only from the Old Testament. For example, where is there a clearer description of how God created the world than Genesis 1:1–2:3? Where else can we go other than the Old Testament to rightly understand sacred space and the temple? Where other than the Psalter should we go to know what Paul means by "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)?⁵ Where better than Isaiah 40 does the Bible declare the incomparability of God, whose revealed name is "Yahweh" (usually rendered in English translations as "the LORD"), which means, "he causes to be."⁶ Where other than Isaiah 53 can we get a more succinct expression of penal

4 Jason S. DeRouchie, "An Arc of the Covenant: Tracing How the Bible's Storyline Climaxes in Christ," *SBIT* 26, no.1 (2022): 37 (emphasis added). Cf. Jason S. DeRouchie, "Question 22: What Is a Biblical Theology of the Covenant?," in Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, *40 Questions about Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2020), 215–26.

5 The Greek translation of the headings in Pss. 67 and 76 includes the same terms for "psalms . . . hymns . . . and spiritual songs" that we find in Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16.

6 "Yahweh" is the personal name by which the one true God identified himself and that the seers, sages, and songwriters employed in worship and preaching. Yahweh is both the Creator of all things and Israel's covenant Lord. As his name declares, Yahweh alone is the onlyuncaused being from whom, through whom, and to whom are all things.

substitutionary atonement—when God poured out his wrath for our sin on his Son?⁷ All of these are principally derived from our understanding of the Old Testament.

Finally, the New Testament worldview and teachings are built on the framework supplied in the Old Testament. In the New Testament we find literally hundreds of Old Testament quotations, allusions, and echoes, none of which we will fully grasp apart from saturating ourselves in Jesus’s Bible.⁸

3. We Meet the Same God in Both Testaments

Note how the book of Hebrews begins: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1–2). The very God who spoke through Old Testament prophets like Moses, Isaiah, and Malachi speaks through Jesus!

Now you may ask, “But isn’t the Old Testament’s God one of wrath and burden, whereas the God of the New Testament is about grace and freedom?” Let’s consider some texts, first from the Old Testament and then from the New.

Perhaps the clearest and most significant Old Testament statement of Yahweh’s character and action is Exodus 34:6: “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” The Old Testament then reasserts this truth numerous times to clarify why it is that God continued to pardon and preserve a wayward people: “But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and he turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac,

⁷ This very important biblical teaching declares that Christ Jesus died on the cross as a substitute for sinners who believe. God imputed or counted the sins of the elect to Christ and counted his perfect righteousness to us. God punished Christ in our place and by this satisfied the demands of justice so that God would justly forgive sinners without compromising his holy standard. For more on this concept, see Rom. 5:18–19; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9. For its specific relationship to Isa. 52:13–53:12, see Thomas D. Petter, “The Meaning of Substitutionary Righteousness in Isa 53:11: A Summary of the Evidence,” *TJ* 32, no. 2 (2011): 165–89; J. V. Fesko, “Imputed Righteousness: The Apostle Paul and Isaiah 53,” *TMSJ* 32, no. 1 (2021): 5–19.

⁸ See, e.g., G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007); G. K. Beale et al., eds., *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2023); cf. Gary Edward Schnittjer, *Old Testament Use of Old Testament: A Book-by-Book Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2021).

and Jacob, and would not destroy them, nor has he cast them from his presence until now” (2 Kings 13:23). “For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him” (2 Chron. 30:9). “Many years you bore with them and warned them by your Spirit through your prophets. Yet they would not give ear. Therefore you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands. Nevertheless, in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a gracious and merciful God” (Neh. 9:30–31). Thus, God’s grace fills the Old Testament.

Furthermore, in the New Testament, Jesus speaks about hell more than anyone else. He declares, “Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matt. 10:28). Similarly, “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matt. 18:6). Paul, citing Deuteronomy 32:35, asserts, “Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord’” (Rom. 12:19). Also, the author of Hebrews says, “For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries” (Heb. 10:26–27). Peter spoke of his own role as a messenger of judgment and then contrasted this with how the Old Testament prophets like Samuel, Jeremiah, and Zechariah pointed to Jesus as the one through whom people would receive forgiveness: “He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:42–43).

God is as wrathful in the New Testament as he is in the Old, and the Old Testament is filled with manifestations of God’s saving grace. Certainly, there are numerous expressions of Yahweh’s righteous anger in the Old Testament, just as there are massive manifestations of blood-bought mercy in the New Testament. Indeed, in Jesus all saving grace reaches its climax. Nevertheless, what is important is to recognize that *we meet the same God in the Old Testament as we do in the New*. In the whole Bible we meet a God

who is faithful to his promises both to bless and to curse. He takes both sin and repentance seriously, and so should we!

4. The Old Testament Announces the Very “Good News” We Enjoy

Gospel means “good news” and refers to the truth that, through Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection, God reigns over all and saves and satisfies sinners who believe. Paul states that “the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached *the gospel* beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed’” (Gal. 3:8). Abraham was already aware of the message of global salvation we now enjoy. Similarly, in the opening of Romans, Paul stresses that the Lord “promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures” (i.e., the Old Testament prophets) the very powerful “gospel of God . . . concerning his Son” that he preached and in which we now rest (Rom. 1:1–3, 16). Foremost among these prophets was Isaiah, who anticipated the day when Yahweh’s royal servant (the Messiah) and the many servants identified with him would herald comforting “good news” to the poor and broken—news that the saving God reigns through his anointed royal deliverer (Isa. 61:1; cf. 40:9–11; 52:7–10; Luke 4:16–21). Reading the Old Testament, therefore, is one of God’s given ways for us to better grasp and delight in the gospel (see also Heb. 4:2).

5. Both the Old and New Covenants Call Us to Love and Clarify What Love Looks Like

Within the old covenant, love was *what* Yahweh called Israel to do (Deut. 6:5; 10:19); all the other commandments clarified *how* to do it. This was part of Jesus’s point when he stressed that all the Old Testament hangs on the call to love God and neighbor: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 22:37–40). Christ emphasized, “Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 7:12). Similarly, Paul notes, “The whole law is fulfilled in one word: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Gal. 5:14; cf. Rom. 13:8, 10). As with Israel, the Lord calls Christians to lives characterized by love. However, he now gives all members of the new covenant the ability

to do what he commands. As Moses himself asserts, the very reason God promised to circumcise hearts in the new covenant age was “so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Deut. 30:6). Moses’s old covenant law called for life-encompassing love, and Christians today can gain clarity from the Old Testament on the wide-ranging impact of love in all of life. As we will see, this happens rightly only when we account for how Jesus fulfills every particular law.

6. Jesus Came Not to Set Aside the Old Testament but to Fulfill It

Moses said that those enjoying circumcised hearts in the new covenant age would “obey the voice of the LORD and keep all his commandments that I command you today” (Deut. 30:8). Moses knew that the laws he was proclaiming in Deuteronomy would matter for those living in the days of restoration.

Similarly, far from setting aside the Old Testament, Jesus stressed that he came to fulfill it, and he highlighted how the Old Testament’s instruction was lastingly relevant for his followers.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:17–19)

In chapters 10–13 we’ll consider further the significance of this text, but what is important to note here is that, while the age of the old covenant has come to an end (Rom. 6:14–15; 1 Cor. 9:20–21; Gal. 5:18; cf. Luke 16:16), the Old Testament itself maintains lasting relevance for us in the way it displays the character of God (e.g., Rom. 7:12), points to the excellencies of Christ, and portrays for us the scope of love in all its facets (Matt. 22:37–40).

7. Jesus Said That All the Old Testament Points to Him

After his first encounter with Jesus, Philip announced to Nathanael, “We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote”

(John 1:45). Do you want to see and celebrate Jesus as much as you can? The Old Testament authors wrote about him! As Jesus himself said, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me” (John 5:39; cf. 5:46–47). Then, following his resurrection, “beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). Abner Chou notes, “The text does not say Jesus read all the Scriptures as about himself. It states he expounded the things concerning himself that are throughout the Scriptures.”⁹ This distinction is important, for the Old Testament addresses many things other than Christ—an array of experiences, persons, powers, and perspectives. Nevertheless, we must not limit Jesus’s meaning to a handful of “specific messianic prophecies” or to his affirmation that he is “the embodiment of YHWH” and “embodies the fulfillment of the whole promise of the Hebrew Bible” as the biblical story climaxes in Jesus.¹⁰

Indeed, as the use of Scripture in Luke and Acts illustrates, the phrase “all the Scriptures” in Luke 24:27 points not only to these elements but also “to patterns and prefigurements that anticipate the arrival of David’s greater Son.”¹¹ When Jesus “opened . . . the Scriptures” and his disciples’ “minds to understand” them (Luke 24:32, 45), he shows that his entire Bible—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings—declares a unified message of the Messiah’s suffering and triumph and the mission his life would generate: “that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things” (24:46–48; cf. 24:44). As Brian Tabb articulates, “Luke 24:47 establishes the Christological focus of his disciples’ preaching (in Jesus’s name), their central message (repentance for the forgiveness of sins), and the universal scope of their mission (to all

9 Abner Chou, *The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2018), 133; see also I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978), 897; Daniel I. Block, “Christotelic Preaching: A Plea for Hermeneutical Integrity and Missional Passion,” *SBJT* 22, no. 3 (2018): 12.

10 Against Block, “Christotelic Preaching,” 13.

11 Brian J. Tabb, *After Emmaus: How the Church Fulfills the Mission of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 24. Tabb’s entire book shows how “Luke 24:44–47 summarizes the essential message of the Scriptures and offers disciples a hermeneutical model or lens for reading the Bible with the proper focus” (36–37).

nations).”¹² Similarly, Paul taught “nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:22–23).¹³ As an Old Testament preacher, he could declare, “I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). As we will see in chapters 4–6, if you want to know Jesus more, read the Old Testament through believing eyes!

8. New Testament Authors Expect Us to Read the Old Testament

The New Testament often cites the Old Testament in ways that call us to look back at the original context. For example, Matthew 27–28 portray Christ’s tribulation and triumph at the cross by recalling Psalm 22 many times. Jesus quotes Psalm 22:1 when he declares, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). In stating, “And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots” (Matt. 27:35), Matthew alludes to Psalm 22:16, 18, which reads,

They have pierced my hands and feet—

.....

They divide my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.¹⁴

The apostle notes how those passing by “derided him, wagging their heads” (Matt. 27:39) and how the Jewish leaders mocked Jesus, asserting, “He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him” (27:43). Both statements come from Psalm 22:7–8:

All who seek me mock me;
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;
“He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him;
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

12 Tabb, *After Emmaus*, 32. For a fuller exposition of this text, see 21–30.

13 For an exposition of this text, see Tabb, *After Emmaus*, 30–33.

14 “They have pierced my hands and feet” is the preferred reading in all the major English versions except the NET Bible. For justification of this majority reading, see DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament*, 129–31; cf. Conrad R. Gren, “Piercing the Ambiguities of Psalm 22:16 and the Messiah’s Mission,” *JETS* 48, no. 2 (2005): 283–99.

And after Jesus's resurrection he directs the women, "Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me" (Matt. 28:10). Envisioning that Yahweh would rescue him, the suffering king in Psalm 22 declares,

I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you. (Ps. 22:22)

We then learn,

All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before you.
For kingship belongs to the LORD,
and he rules over the nations.

.....

they will come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn,
that he has done it. (Ps. 22:27–28, 31)

And it is from this context that Jesus, then, declares to his brothers, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:18–20). To fully understand their words, the New Testament authors call us back to the Old Testament through their quotations and allusions.

9. New Testament Authors Recognized That God Gave the Old Testament for Christians

Regarding the Old Testament prophets, Peter explains, "It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you" (1 Pet. 1:12).¹⁵ Similarly, Paul was convinced that the Old Testament authors wrote *for* new covenant believers—those following Jesus on this side of his death and resurrection.

¹⁵ In chap. 2 we'll see evidence from the Old Testament that the prophets knew they were writing for those associated with the Messiah at the end of the age.

“For whatever was written in former days was written *for our instruction*, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4; cf. 4:23–24). “Now these things happened to [the Israelites] as an example, but they were written down *for our instruction*, on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor. 10:11).

In the Old Testament we find many “profitable” things that call for “repentance toward God” and “faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:20–21). Indeed, in the Old Testament we find the very “gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24). Based on this fact, New Testament authors regularly used the Old Testament in their Christian teaching (e.g., 1 Cor. 9:8–12; Eph. 6:2–3; 1 Tim. 5:18; 1 Pet. 1:14–16). Later in the book we will consider how Christians should relate to Old Testament promises (chaps. 7–9) and laws (chaps. 10–13). Nevertheless, the point stands that the prophets of old wrote what we call the Old Testament for Christians. Part 1 of this book will delve further into this fact and its implications for interpreting the Old Testament as God intends.

10. Paul Demands That Church Leaders Preach the Old Testament

Paul was a herald of the good news of God’s kingdom in Christ (e.g., Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:30–31), which he preached from the Law of Moses and the Prophets—the Old Testament (Acts 28:23; cf. 26:22–23). He testified to the Ephesian elders, “I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:26–27). The *whole counsel of God* refers to the entirety of God’s purposes in salvation history as revealed in Scripture. Luke wants us to know that, had the apostle failed to make known the Lord’s redemptive plan of blessing overcoming curse through the person of Jesus, he would have stood accountable before God for any future doctrinal or moral error that the Ephesian church carried out (cf. Ezek. 33:1–6; Acts 18:6). With the New Testament, Scripture is complete, and we now have “the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). This “faith,” however, is only understood rightly within the framework of “the whole counsel of God.” So may we be people who guard ourselves from blood guilt by making much of the Old Testament in relation to Christ.

Significantly, Paul was referring to the Old Testament when he spoke of the “sacred writings” that are able to make a person “wise for salvation”

and of the “Scripture” that is “breathed out by God and profitable” (2 Tim. 3:15–16). Knowing this fact colors our understanding of his following charge:

Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passion, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (2 Tim. 4:2–4)

Paul believed Christians like Timothy needed to preach the Old Testament to guard the church from apostasy. While we now have the New Testament, we still must study, practice, and teach the Old Testament like Jesus and his apostles did for the good of God’s church.

Conclusion

Paul urged Timothy, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). This study seeks to supply believers with an interpretive framework and guide for rightly handling the Old Testament as God’s word for us. Part 1 calls for *reading well* the Old Testament by interpreting it through and for Christ. Part 2 then develops this call by indicating how Christians can *see well* Christ’s person and work within the Old Testament. Part 3 considers how to *hope well* in Old Testament promises, which through Christ become certain for all who are in the church. Finally, part 4 overviews how to *live well* by applying Old Testament laws in view of how Christ fulfills them. May this book result in faith, hope, and love abounding more and more as Jesus’s followers increasingly embrace the Old Testament for the Christian Scripture it is.

Review and Reflection

1. What place has the Old Testament had in your own walk with Christ?
2. Give an example of how God has used the *Old* Testament in your own life “for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (1 Tim. 3:16). How have you used the Old Testament in someone else’s life?

3. What does the author mean by interpreting the Old Testament *through* Christ and *for* Christ?
4. What are some key biblical teachings for which the Old Testament provides foundational understanding?
5. How would you respond to someone who claimed the Old Testament God is one of wrath, but the New Testament God is one of grace?
6. How would you define the “gospel”? Can you give an example of where the Old Testament promises it?
7. Give an example of how the Old Testament points to Jesus.
8. Which of the ten reasons why the Old Testament still matters for Christians was most compelling? Why?
9. What was the greatest insight you gained in reading this chapter? What is your greatest takeaway?
10. What are you most eager to learn in studying this book?

PART 1

READING WELL

How Jesus Helps Christians Interpret the Old Testament¹

*To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God,
but for those outside everything is in parables, so that*

*“they may indeed see but not perceive,
and may indeed hear but not understand,
lest they should turn and be forgiven.”*

MARK 4:11–12

*Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to
my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according
to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for
long ages but has now been disclosed and through the
prophetic writings has been made known to all nations.*

ROMANS 16:25–26

¹ Much of part 1 updates material first published in Jason S. DeRouchie, “The Mystery Revealed: A Biblical Case for Christ-Centered Old Testament Interpretation,” *Them* 44, no. 2 (2019): 226–48. Used by permission. Cf. Jason S. DeRouchie, “Question 21: What Role Does ‘Mystery’ Play in Biblical Theology?,” in Jason S. DeRouchie, Oren R. Martin, and Andrew David Naselli, *40 Questions about Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2020), 205–14.

Their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts.

But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:14–16

One of the reasons Jesus spoke in parables was to extend the mission of judgment that Yahweh first gave to the prophet Isaiah:

Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
keep on seeing, but do not perceive. (Isa. 6:9)

Yet Jesus explained the parables to his disciples, disclosing what he called the “secret/mystery” of God’s kingdom (Mark 4:11–12). Paul notes how God through the gospel and the preaching of Jesus was revealing the same “mystery” that for so long was unknown to the multitudes but that now all nations were grasping through the Old Testament’s prophetic writings (Rom. 16:25–26). The apostle stresses how turning to the Lord Christ becomes the means for reading the old covenant materials as God intended (2 Cor. 3:14–16). Indeed, he later notes how “the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ” (2 Cor. 4:4). Nevertheless, Paul proclaims this glorious message because the “God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

Part 1 of this book supplies a biblical-theological foundation for Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament. Using more technical language, it supplies an initial framework for a biblical theology of hermeneutics. Biblical theology is the study of how the whole Bible progresses, integrates, and climaxes in Christ. Hermeneutics is the branch of knowledge that deals with interpreting literary texts, especially the Bible.

My thesis is twofold. *First*, I will argue (1) that the Old Testament is Christian Scripture, (2) that God originally gave it with Christians in mind,

and (3) that the Old Testament authors had a sense that most of their words would be more meaningful for those living in the messianic age of restoration than for those living before it, whether believer or nonbeliever. Thus, the Old Testament message is in many ways clearer and more relevant for Christians today than it ever was for those before Christ. *Second*, I will argue (1) that faith in Christ alone supplies the necessary light for seeing and savoring God's revelation in the Old Testament and (2) that Jesus's appearing in salvation history supplies the necessary lens for most fully understanding and appropriating the divine author's intended meaning in the Old Testament.

I will sustain this twofold thesis over the next three chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 parallel each other. Both chapters argue that the Old Testament authors wrote their texts to instruct Christians and that Christians today can understand the Old Testament's message better than the old covenant unbelieving majority or believing remnant because of the coming of Christ. Chapter 1 does this from a New Testament perspective, while chapter 2 does it from an Old Testament perspective. Chapter 3 concludes the argument by demonstrating that Christ must be both our light and lens for properly interpreting the Old Testament. My hope is that, at the end of part 1, you will believe that Jesus alone enables us to understand and appropriate the meaning of the Old Testament as God intended.

The Old Testament's Audience and Comprehension

New Testament Perspective

Serving not themselves.

1 PETER 1:12

ACCORDING TO THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORS, the Old Testament authors knew that they were speaking and writing for new covenant believers, and they also had some level of conscious awareness about who the Christ would be and when he would rise. With Christ's coming, anticipation gave rise to fulfillment, and types found their antitype, which means that new covenant members can comprehend the fullness of the Old Testament's meaning better than the old covenant rebel or remnant.

The Old Testament's Audience

Paul believed that God gave the Old Testament for *new* covenant believers. Referring to the statement in Genesis 15:6 that Abram's faith was "counted to him as righteousness," Paul asserts that "the words 'it was counted to him' were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also" (Rom. 4:23–24). Similarly, just after identifying Christ as the subject in Psalm 69, the apostle emphasizes, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the

Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).¹ Furthermore, upon recalling Israel’s history in the wilderness, Paul says, “Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor. 10:11). In each of these three texts, Paul stresses that the Old Testament author wrote his text for the benefit of believers living this side of the cross. The apostle does not clarify whether this was only God’s intent as the ultimate author, or whether this was also the Old Testament human authors’ intent. What is clear, however, is that for Paul, the Old Testament was *Christian* Scripture and fully applicable to believers when read through Christ.

The apostle says this much to Timothy, who was raised on the Old Testament by his Jewish mother and grandmother (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5). Paul writes that the “sacred writings” of Timothy’s upbringing—what we call the Old Testament Scriptures—“are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Tim. 3:15). People today can get saved from God’s wrath and from the enslavement of sin by reading the Old Testament through faith in Christ! Thus, Paul then asserts, “All Scripture is . . . profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17). New covenant believers can correct and reprove straying brothers and sisters from the Old Testament when it is read in relation to Jesus. Because of this, Paul calls his young protégé to “preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). God gave the Old Testament for Christians. It’s part of our Christian Scriptures, and we must use it to know God and savor Christ.

Based on this fact, New Testament authors frequently cite Old Testament instructions in their exhortations, assuming their relevance for believers today. For example, Paul, as a new covenant preacher, draws from a series of execution texts in Deuteronomy when arguing for the excommunication of the sexually immoral man in 1 Corinthians 5:13 (cf. Deut. 13:5; 17:7, 12; 21:21; 22:21, 22, 24; 24:7).² The apostle also has no problem using the Ten Commandments when he charges children, “Honor your father and mother’

1 For a careful supporting analysis of Paul’s claim in Rom. 15:4, see George W. Knight III, “The Scriptures Were Written for Our Instruction,” *JETS* 39, no. 1 (1996): 3–13.

2 Knight rightly notes, “Here the apostle takes account of the difference that fulfillment [through Jesus] has brought about and at the same time maintains the principle continuity for the instruction as it relates to the Church, and in doing so he also has ‘written for our instruction.’” Knight, “The Scriptures Were Written for Our Instruction,” 10.

(this is the first commandment with a promise), that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land” (Eph. 6:2–3; cf. Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16). Similarly, Paul tells the young pastor, “Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain’” (1 Tim. 5:17–18; cf. Deut. 25:4; 1 Cor. 9:8–12). Likewise, Peter recalls the refrain in Leviticus when he writes, “Be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Pet. 1:15–16; cf. Lev. 11:44–45; 19:2; 20:26). Because we are now part of the new covenant and not the old, there are natural questions that rise regarding how exactly the Christian should relate to specific old covenant laws or promises.³ Nevertheless, the point stands that God gave the Old Testament to instruct Christians.

Now, as noted, when Paul states that the Old Testament “was written” for our instruction, he was not explicit as to whether the Old Testament human authors understood this. Peter, however, makes this clear when he writes that the Old Testament prophets knew that they “*were serving not themselves but you*, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look” (1 Pet. 1:12). The apostle emphasizes that God revealed to the inspired human authors themselves that their words in the Old Testament were principally *not for themselves* but for those living after the arrival of the Christ. Therefore, far from being not applicable for believers, the Old Testament is *more relevant* for Christians today than it was for the majority in the old covenant era.

The Old Testament Prophets’ Understanding of Christ’s Person and Time

Jesus declared, “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad” (John 8:56). The patriarch eagerly expected the Messiah and his coming. Similarly, reflecting on Psalm 16:8–11, Peter calls King David a “prophet” and asserts, “Knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ” (Acts 2:30–31; cf. Luke 18:31–33; Acts

3 For an explanation of how old covenant promises relate to Christians, see chaps. 7–9; for old covenant laws, see chaps. 10–13.

3:18, 24; 10:43). Peter believed that David himself anticipated Christ's coming in Psalm 16,⁴ and David's last words before death affirm that this author of many psalms was hoping in a just ruler who would overcome the curse and initiate a new creation (2 Sam. 23:3–7).⁵ Similarly, the writer of Hebrews stresses, "These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar" (Heb. 11:13). The Old Testament remnant enjoyed some level of light, by which they could see clearly and understand rightly many of the things God used them to declare; they themselves wrote of the Christ and hoped in him.

On the other hand, we also read, "I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it" (Luke 10:24; cf. Matt. 13:17). It seems that we should understand Yahweh's prophets of old as truly seeing God's beauty and purposes, as well as the hope that awaited them, while we also affirm that they did not experience and, therefore, comprehend all that we experience and comprehend in Christ. For them, full disclosure awaited a later day.⁶

Peter captures both sides of this interpretive framework when he writes:

Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. (1 Pet. 1:10–12)

4 Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017), 72.

5 On this reading, see Brian A. Verrett, *The Serpent in Samuel: A Messianic Motif* (Eugene, OR: Resource, 2020), 143–77.

6 For similar conclusions, see Robert L. Plummer, "Righteousness and Peace Kiss: The Reconciliation of Authorial Intent and Biblical Typology," *SBIT* 14, no. 2 (2010): 54–61; G. K. Beale, "The Cognitive Peripheral Vision of Biblical Authors," *WTJ* 76, no. 2 (2014): 263–93. Beale writes, "There is always a related range of meaning that appropriately is an expansion of the explicit meaning that is expressed. . . . Old Testament authors may have had some inkling of how the meaning of their texts would be later interpreted in what would appear to us surprising interpretations" (265, 283). Cf. G. K. Beale and Benjamin L. Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed: A Biblical Theology of Mystery* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 343, 359.

According to Peter, the Old Testament prophets were themselves students of earlier revelation, whether previously written biblical books or prophetic oracles they received by dreams or visions.⁷ And under the guiding hand of the Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21), they “searched and inquired carefully” to know both *who* the Messiah would be and *when* he would appear, thus predicting Christ’s sufferings and the days of the church.⁸ While they did not know Jesus’s name, they had a general sense of the type of person he would be and of when he would come, and they often learned this from studying the Scriptures (e.g., Ps. 119:2; Dan. 9:2; John 5:39; 7:52).⁹ From this perspective, we can say that the Old Testament authors themselves (though not most of their contemporaries) already visualized much of the fulfillment that the New Testament identifies as culminating in Christ. While revelation did progress from the Old to New Testaments, the development was often from conscious, prospective prediction (whether direct or typological) to realized fulfillment and not simply prediction of which only God was originally aware but which we now recognize retrospectively.

This understanding of Old Testament texts is fueled when we consider how previous Scripture¹⁰—of which the prophets were searching and inquiring

7 For arguments that the “prophets” here are indeed *Old* Testament prophets, see Dan G. McCartney, “The Use of the Old Testament in the First Epistle of Peter” (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1989), 24–31; Mark Dubis, *Messianic Woes in First Peter: Suffering and Eschatology in 1 Peter 4:12–19*, StBibLit 33 (New York: Lang, 2002), 108–10.

8 In contrast to the NIV and CSB, the ESV is correct in identifying that the Old Testament prophets inquired about “what person or time” (similarly, see NRSV, NET, NASB). Peter always uses the Greek *tis* as a pronoun and *poios* as an adjective, which would result in a translation like “what person or what circumstances.” See G. D. Kilpatrick, “Peter 1.11: ΤΙΝΑ Ή ΠΟΙΟΝ ΚΑΙΡΟΝ,” *NovT* 28, no. 1 (1986): 91–92; Mark Dubis, *1 Peter: A Handbook on the Greek Text*, Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 19.

9 Moyise concludes that the verbs for “searching and inquiring” in 1 Pet. 1:10 “refer to some sort of exegetical activity.” Steve Moyise, *Evoking Scripture: Seeing the Old Testament in the New* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 79. Similarly, Sargent states, “Peter stresses that the Old Testament prophets were students of all earlier revelation.” Benjamin Sargent, *Written to Serve: The Use of Scripture in 1 Peter*, LNTS 547 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2015), 22. Against Edward Gordon Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Essays*, 2nd ed., Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1981), 134.

10 On this point, I agree with Kaiser that, before considering how subsequent revelation handles our passage, we must first use “all the divine revelation found in the books that *preceded* [historically] the selected text we are reading or studying as the context and ‘informing theology’ that could have the first input to ‘thicken’ the meaning.” Walter C. Kaiser Jr., “Single Meaning, Unified Referents: Accurate and Authoritative Citations of the Old Testament by the New Testament,” in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old*, ed. Kenneth Berding and Jonathan

carefully—and the patterns in Israel’s redemptive story¹¹ inform our reading, filling out implications of a text’s meaning along with that which is explicitly stated. By “implications” I mean those subsidiary or implicit meanings that we can show fall within the author’s “peripheral vision,” though he may not have been conscious of them.¹² A proper reading of the Old Testament requires that we, for example, appreciate how Genesis 3:15 or 22:17–18 shapes and informs messianic hope in all the rest of the Bible, how associations between Yahweh and his Messiah (e.g., Hos. 3:5) may influence later readings elsewhere that only mention Yahweh (e.g., Hos. 11:10–11), or how past types like sacrifice may guide a messianic reading within later texts (e.g., of the day of the Lord as sacrifice in Zeph. 2:7). The Old Testament prophets and New Testament authors seem to have read their Scriptures in this way.

Furthermore, when Peter says that “it was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced” (1 Pet. 1:12), he is highlighting that the Old Testament prophets were very aware that their searching and inquiring and writing were more for us than them. That is, they saw the things that God promised but merely “greeted them from afar,” convinced “that apart from us they should not be made perfect” (Heb. 11:13, 40). Jesus testified that the Scriptures “bear witness about me” (John 5:39), and rebirth in Christ allows one to see him as the promised King (cf. John 3:3).¹³ As Philip declared to Nathanael, “We

Lunde, *Counterpoints: Bible and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 53 (emphasis original); cf. 72, 75. Similarly, though rightfully allowing for interaction with historically later works as well, Beale writes, “When a New Testament writer refers to an Old Testament passage, both the explicit and subsidiary understanding of the Old Testament author’s meaning compose what we would call the New Testament writer’s respect for the Old Testament contextual meaning. In addition to the explicit meaning from the specific text quoted and explicitly attended to by the New Testament author, this contextual meaning may include ideas from the immediate or nearby Old Testament context that are in mind, as well as ideas from other Old Testament books that are related to the meaning of the focus text.” Beale, “The Cognitive Peripheral Vision of Biblical Authors,” 273; cf. Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 349.

- 11 See G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), 96–102.
- 12 See especially Robert H. Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible: Playing by the Rules*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 30–38; Robert H. Stein, “The Benefits of an Author-Oriented Approach to Hermeneutics,” *JETS* 44, no. 3 (2001): 451–66; Beale, “The Cognitive Peripheral Vision of Biblical Authors,” 263–93, esp. 266–70; Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 344–47.
- 13 John frequently uses this statement to speak of a verbal testimony after a visible encounter (e.g., John 1:34; 3:11, 32; 19:35).

have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth” (John 1:45; cf. 5:46).

As in the case of Daniel (see chap. 2), the full meaning of some Old Testament texts can transcend the human author’s understanding.¹⁴ This is so because God’s purposes often far exceed human understanding (Deut. 29:29; Eccl. 8:16–17; Isa. 55:8–9) and because he was authoring not simply individual books but *a* book (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21) whose parts were “incomplete” until Jesus “fulfilled” them by his coming (Matt. 5:17; 11:13; Rom. 10:4).¹⁵ Nevertheless, while the coming of Christ certainly fills out the meaning of numerous Old Testament texts, the New Testament testifies that the Old Testament authors usually understood their end-times visions, had a true hope in the coming Messiah, and had some sense about the timing of his coming. Furthermore, interpreters should expect that the Old and New Testament

14 By “full meaning” I refer to both a Bible passage’s sense and referent. Since E. D. Hirsch’s landmark volume *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), scholars have often limited meaning to *human* authorial intent, and I am highly sympathetic to this view. Numerous scholars, however, have offered fair critique of this perspective, seeing as one of Scripture’s authors is God, whose purpose was not simply to write books but *a* book. See Philip B. Payne, “The Fallacy of Equating Meaning with the Human Author’s Intention,” *JETS* 20, no. 3 (1977): 243–52; Raju D. Kunjummen, “The Single Intent of Scripture—Critical Examination of a Theological Construct,” *GTJ* 7, no. 1 (1986): 81–110; Peter Enns, “Apostolic Hermeneutics and an Evangelical Doctrine of Scripture: Moving Beyond a Modernist Impasse,” *WTJ* 65, no. 2 (2003): 263–87; Jared M. Compton, “Shared Intentions? Reflections on Inspiration and Interpretation in Light of Scripture’s Dual Authorship,” *Them* 33, no. 3 (2008): 23–33; Vern S. Poythress, “The Presence of God Qualifying Our Notions of Grammatical-Historical Interpretation: Genesis 3:15 as a Test Case,” *JETS* 50, no. 1 (2007): 87–103; Vern S. Poythress, “Dispensing with Merely Human Meaning: Gains and Losses from Focusing on the Human Author, Illustrated by Zephaniah 1:2–3,” *JETS* 57, no. 3 (2014): 481–99; Douglas J. Moo and Andrew David Naselli, “The Problem of the New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament,” in *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016), 702–46. Significantly, Hirsch himself has refined his statements, affirming that his original line between “meaning” (which is textually bound) and “significance” (which is fluid) is not as fixed as he once thought. E. D. Hirsch, “Meaning and Significance Reinterpreted,” *Critical Inquiry* 11, no. 2 (1984): 202–24; E. D. Hirsch, “Transhistorical Intentions and the Persistence of Allegory,” *New Literary History* 25, no. 3 (1994): 549–67; cited in Darrell L. Bock, “Single Meaning, Multiple Contexts and Referents,” in Berding and Lunde, *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old*, 123n15. On the question of the New Testament’s use of the Old Testament, Kaiser is perhaps the strongest voice arguing that human authorial intent *exhausts* the full meaning of every Old Testament text, so that the New Testament authors are in *every instance* simply identifying what the Old Testament authors already meant in full. Walter C. Kaiser Jr., *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New* (Chicago: Moody, 1985); Kaiser, “Single Meaning, Unified Referents,” 45–89. Stein is another evangelical following this basic approach to biblical interpretation. Stein, “The Benefits of an Author-Oriented Approach to Hermeneutics,” 451–66; Stein, *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*.

15 So too, Moo and Naselli, “The Problem of the New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament,” 735.

uses of antecedent Scripture organically grow out of the earlier materials and never contradict them because all Scripture comes from God (2 Tim. 3:16) and because the prophets “searched and inquired carefully” (1 Pet. 1:10) and made Spirit-led interpretations (2 Pet. 1:20–21), learning from the Spirit and “interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual” (1 Cor. 2:13).

The Rebels’ Inability to Understand the Old Testament

The New Testament is clear that the blindness associated with the old covenant unbelieving rebel majority continued into Christ’s day. We see this incapacity, for example, in the religious leaders, whom Jesus confronted numerous times. To Nicodemus he questioned, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?” (John 3:10). And to other Jews he said, “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life” (John 5:39–40). Of the Pharisees he asserted through a parable, “If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead” (Luke 16:31). The Jewish leaders were spiritually blind, unable to see how the Old Testament itself pointed to Christ.

Matthew highlights several episodes in Jesus’s life where he treats those who were supposed to be masters of the Scriptures as though they didn’t know how to read them. The Pharisees could not understand their own Scriptures:

Have you not read what David did when he was hungry? . . . Or have you not read in the Law how on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are guiltless? . . . If you had known what this means, “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,” you would not have condemned the guiltless. (Matt. 12:3, 5, 7)

Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female? (Matt. 19:4)

Have you never read,

“Out of the mouth of infants and nursing babies
you have prepared praise”? (Matt. 21:16)

Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone”? (Matt. 21:42)

And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said
to you by God? (Matt. 22:31)

The Gospels indicate the roots of such blindness. For example, Jesus again addresses the Pharisees and Sadducees, asserting, “You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign!” (Matt. 16:3–4). At the core, their inability to interpret rightly was related to their innate evil and adultery against God. Similarly, Mark points to the leaders’ “hardness” as the reason they refused to celebrate his coming: “And [Jesus] looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart” (Mark 3:5). John further records Jesus’s assertion, “Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires” (John 8:42–44). Earlier John includes Jesus’s statement:

The Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard. . . . I know that you do not have the love of God within you. . . . How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? (John 5:37, 42–47)

The texts speak of innate wickedness that stands hostile to God, of hard hearts, of desires that are not submitted to God but that are aligned with the devil, and of a passion for man’s praise over the glory that comes from God. The religious leaders of Christ’s day loved being noticed in the public square and getting the best seats in the synagogues and at feasts (Matt. 23:6; Luke 11:43; 20:46). They were more concerned with their

own exaltation than with God's. And the result was that they could not hear God's voice or savor God's beauty and purposes in the Scriptures. Thus, Jesus bemoaned over Jerusalem, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes" (Luke 19:42; cf. Isa. 54:13). The leaders were living in spiritual darkness, unable to grasp the Old Testament's testimony of God's glory in the face of Christ. And where the leaders went, the rest of the nation went also.

Speaking of the broader crowd that followed Jesus yet failed to exert saving faith, John writes,

Though [Jesus] had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet might be fulfilled:

"Lord, who has believed what he heard from us,
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said,

"He has blinded their eyes,
and hardened their heart,
lest they see with their eyes,
and understand with their heart, and turn,
and I will heal them."

Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. (John 12:37–41)

Note that John stresses that the people's deafness and blindness were "that the word spoken by the prophet [Isaiah] might be fulfilled." God intended that his word through the prophets would be like a closed book until the time when the revealer of mysteries would come. Thus, quoting Isaiah 6:9–10, Jesus disclosed to his disciples the meaning of his teaching, declaring,

To you has been given the secret [or "mystery"] of the kingdom of God,
but for those outside everything is in parables, so that

“they may indeed see but not perceive,
and may indeed hear but not understand,
lest they should turn and be forgiven.” (Mark 4:12)

Paul echoes the realities we’ve seen thus far when he writes,

Israel failed to obtain what it was seeking. The elect obtained it, but the rest were hardened, as it is written,

“God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes that would not see
and ears that would not hear,
down to this very day.” (Rom. 11:7–8)

The apostle draws the phrase “to this very day” from Moses’s words in Deuteronomy 29:4 that “*to this day* the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear.” The rest he cites from Isaiah’s statement regarding the ungodly:

The LORD has poured out upon you [Israel]
a spirit of deep sleep,
and has closed your eyes. (Isa. 29:10)

Elsewhere, the apostle emphasizes, “The [Jews’] minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away” (2 Cor. 3:14). For Paul, Moses’s veil that he wore after encountering the divine presence served as a parable of the people’s spiritual emptiness. “To this day, whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed” (2 Cor. 3:15–16). The old covenant bore a “ministry of condemnation” (2 Cor. 3:9), and only through Christ can one rightly see and celebrate how the Old Testament itself anticipates the superior new covenant’s “ministry of righteousness” (2 Cor. 3:9). Through Jesus, God lifts the veil, disclosing how the old covenant had always magnified Christ’s glory.

The old covenant age was one of ignorance and hardness (Acts 17:30; Eph. 4:18; 1 Pet. 1:14), with the devil keeping most of the world blind to

God's glories culminating in Christ. "If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case, the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:3–4). But in Jesus new creation dawns, with gospel light breaking over the horizon and dispersing darkness and shadow. "God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6).

Why would God purpose to extend such a season of hardness, ignorance, and blindness where the majority did *not* understand his word, cherish his precepts, heed his commands, or hope in his promises? Paul believes God purposed to move those receiving his mercy to marvel more at his manifold glory in Christ:

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? (Rom. 9:22–24)

The Lord made the darkness so deep and the night so long so that we on whom the light has dawned may be able to savor even more the warmth, brilliance, and merciful glory of God bound up in his gift of Christ.

Some of the Remnant's Delayed Understanding of the Old Testament

The New Testament is clear that some were anticipating Christ's coming and rightly grasped his person and work. At the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew notes how a group of "wise men from the east" saw a star that they associated with the "king of the Jews" and came to worship him (Matt. 2:1–2). The Jewish leaders were then able to note from their Scriptures that the Messiah was to be born "in Bethlehem of Judah" (Matt. 2:5–6).

Similarly, with many allusions to Old Testament texts, Luke narrates how Gabriel told Mary that the son whom she was to call Jesus would "be great," "called the Son of the Most High," and reign on "the throne of his father David . . . over the house of Jacob forever" (Luke 1:32–33). With allusions back to Hannah's prediction of the messianic king (see 1 Sam. 2:1–10), Mary then praises God as the one who

has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever. (Luke 1:54–55)

Zechariah, too, recognized his own son John [the Baptizer] as a pointer to the coming Redeemer, who would be

a horn of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David. (Luke 1:69)

Devout Simeon was “waiting for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25) and for “the Lord’s Christ” (2:26). Upon seeing Jesus, he declared,

My eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel. (Luke 2:30–32)

Not only this but he also appears to have anticipated Jesus’s mission of suffering and how he would separate the righteous and unrighteous, when he told Mary, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed” (Luke 2:34–35).¹⁶ There were many in Jesus’s day who were “waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38).

Nevertheless, many of the disciples closest to Jesus failed to recognize fully who he was and all that their Scriptures anticipated about him. After noting that he was now revealing “the secret [or “mystery”] of the kingdom of God” to them (Mark 4:11), Jesus queried, “Do you not understand this parable?” (4:13). Later, following both his feeding of the five thousand and his calming of the storm, his disciples still “did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened” (Mark 6:52). Rather than recognizing that Jesus controlled

¹⁶ See John Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1989), 121–22; Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), 116–17; Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 149–50.

creation and was their satisfier and supply, they still failed to see him for who he was. Jesus regularly charged the crowds to “hear” and “understand” (e.g., Mark 4:9, 23; 7:14), but he remained astonished that his closest followers did not grasp his meaning: “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see?” (7:18). And again, “Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?” (Mark 8:17; cf. 8:21). We then read, “But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him” (Mark 9:32).

Significantly, Mark uses two parallel healing accounts to highlight the progressive growth of the disciples’ understanding. Mark first compares Jesus’s two-stage healing of the blind man (Mark 8:22–26) with Peter’s partial understanding of Jesus’s identity and mission. Peter rightfully confesses that Jesus is the Christ (Mark 8:27–30) but does not align with God’s purposes for Jesus culminating in the cross (8:31–33). Next, Mark’s account of Jesus’s instantaneous and complete healing of blind Bartimaeus in Jericho signals how fuller understanding will come the more one embraces Jesus’s mission of death and resurrection in Jerusalem (Mark 10:46–52).

Luke too emphasizes the disciples’ lack of knowledge of the Old Testament. After his resurrection, Jesus challenged the two on the road to Emmaus, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:25–26). Even the closest followers of Jesus were culpable for failing to see. What mercy, then, is shown by Christ in disclosing himself by opening the Old Testament word to minds once closed. Following their encounter with the resurrected Christ, Christ’s two students recalled, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while *he opened to us the Scriptures?*” (Luke 24:32).¹⁷ Christ made them wise to the Old Testament’s meaning, thus fulfilling what both Isaiah and Daniel said would come to pass—that after a season of ignorance

the deaf shall hear
 the words of a book,
 and out of their gloom and darkness
 the eyes of the blind shall see (Isa. 29:18)

¹⁷ See Dane C. Ortlund, “‘And Their Eyes Were Opened, and They Knew’: An Inter-Canonical Note on Luke 24:31,” *JETS* 53, no. 4 (2010): 717–28.

and that at the time of the end “those who are wise shall understand” (Dan. 12:10).¹⁸

Luke further unpacks what the resurrected Christ enables with respect to the initial three-fourths of the Bible. After his encounter with the two men, he appeared to a group that included the eleven remaining apostles. We read, “Then he said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then *he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures*” (Luke 24:44–45). The resurrected Christ now allows the community associated with him to see things in the biblical text that were there all along but ungraspable without the correct light and lens. Jesus was revealing a “mystery” that was not totally new revelation (their gaining understanding of *the Scriptures*), but its full disclosure was to a significant extent hidden to them.¹⁹ In Christ, God “enlightens” the eyes of our hearts (Eph. 1:18). He shines into our once darkened hearts “to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6). He grants “strength to comprehend” the love of God (Eph. 3:18–19), “revealing” Jesus to us (Matt. 13:16) and “giving us understanding” (2 Tim. 2:7).

John’s Gospel in particular highlights how Christ’s resurrection and glorification mark a turning point in the disciples’ understanding of Scripture, providing a lens for reading rightly.²⁰

18 Luke tells us that the meaning of Jesus’s impending tribulation and resurrection is “concealed” (Luke 9:45) and “hidden” (18:34) from the disciples and that the eyes of those with Christ on the road to Emmaus “were kept from recognizing him” (24:16). In view of Jesus’s stress that the Father and Son alone reveal truths about Jesus’s person and work (Luke 10:21–22) and Luke’s comments that the disciples’ eyes “were opened” (24:31), Jesus “opened” the Scriptures to them (24:32), and Jesus “opened” their minds to grasp the Scripture’s meaning (24:45), Tabb concludes, “God is ultimately the one who prevents the disciples from initially grasping Jesus’s true identity. . . . Jesus brings *clarity* to the Bible’s central message and gives his disciples the spiritual *capacity* to grasp his teaching. The word translated as ‘opened’ (*dianoigō*) is used three times (vv. 31, 32, 45) to highlight our dual need for *revelation* and *receptivity*.” Brian J. Tabb, *After Emmaus: How the Church Fulfills the Mission of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), 26 (emphasis in original).

19 Beale and Gladd, *Hidden but Now Revealed*, 30.

20 See especially D. A. Carson, “Understanding Misunderstandings in the Fourth Gospel,” *TynBul* 33 (1982): 59–91; Ardel Caneday, “The Word Made Flesh as Mystery Incarnate: Revealing and Concealing Dramatized by Jesus as Portrayed in John’s Gospel,” *JETS* 60, no. 4 (2017): 751–65. Caneday notes the difference between the two articles as follows: “While Carson’s focuses on the disciples’ *reception* of Christ’s revelation, my thesis accents Christ’s revelatory *impartation*” (753, emphasis in original).

The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But [Jesus] was speaking about the temple of his body. When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken. (John 2:20–22)

Jesus’s resurrection moved the disciples to embrace in a fresh way both “the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.” Consider also the final comments in the verses below.

They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written,

“Fear not, daughter of Zion;
 behold, your king is coming,
 sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. (John 12:13–16)

Only when the Father glorified his Son did Christ’s followers connect how the Old Testament Scriptures testified to Christ’s triumphal entry.

Conclusion

The New Testament authors affirm that the Old Testament was written for Christians (Rom. 4:23–24; 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11) and that the ancient prophets knew that they were writing for the benefit of new covenant saints (1 Pet. 1:12). Yahweh’s prophets knew something about Christ and the time of his coming (1 Pet. 1:10–11; cf. John 8:56; Acts 2:30–31; Heb. 11:13), but the full meaning of an Old Testament text at times transcended the human author’s understanding.

Fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah (John 12:37–40; cf. Isa. 6:10; 53:1), the innate wickedness and hard-heartedness of most of the Jewish leaders and

broader Jewish populous rendered them spiritually disabled. In judgment, God hardened them so that they were unable to understand his word or see his purposes culminating in Jesus (Rom. 11:7–8). Only “through Christ” is their blindness removed (2 Cor. 3:14).

As early as Jesus’s birth, some like Simeon properly understood that the Christ’s triumph would only come through tribulation (Luke 2:25–38). However, full understanding of Scripture’s testimony about Jesus’s death, resurrection, and global mission came to most of his disciples only after his resurrection (Luke 24:45–47; cf. John 2:20–22; 12:13–16).

Review and Reflection

1. According to the New Testament authors, for whom was the Old Testament written? What texts are the most significant in making this point?
2. What is one example of a New Testament author applying the Old Testament to believers today? For each of the examples given, how is the New Testament author using the Old Testament text?
3. Use a couple of New Testament texts to clarify how much of the meaning the Old Testament prophets understood about their own messages.
4. Describe the significance of 1 Peter 1:10–12 for our grasp of how the Old Testament prophets went about their task, why they engaged in it, and what they were seeking to know in relation to Christ.
5. What evidence does the New Testament give that the spiritual disability of old covenant Israel continued into Jesus’s day? Among what groups was the disability present?
6. What significant truth does Romans 11:7–8 teach, and to what Old Testament texts does it quote or allude?
7. What important insight does 2 Corinthians 3:14–16 provide regarding how to read the Old Testament as God intended?
8. What special significance does the author see in how Mark uses the two accounts of Jesus’s healing a blind man? How did their healings symbolically depict the disciples’ growth in understanding?
9. What event enabled Jesus’s disciples to understand their Scriptures rightly? What does this imply for us to fully understand the Old Testament today?
10. What was the greatest insight you gained in reading this chapter? What is your greatest takeaway?

