

66 Books, 1 Message

Once we understand that all 66 books tell one story, the Bible comes to life! Our study is catapulted to another level. We see the connections on every page, and we recognize the incredible foresight that our Lord has demonstrated. We have a great God who had a great plan which is revealed in a great book!

The Big Picture

So then, what is the storyline of the Bible? What is the big picture? Jesus answered this question on the road to Emmaus (*Luke 24:25-27*). "Beginning with Moses and the Prophets, He explained the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." Later, at His ascension, He said, "All things written about Me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (v. 44, 45).

The big picture of the Bible is quite simple. It's all about Jesus. He is the storyline of Scripture. Jesus said, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; but it is these that testify of Me... If you believed Moses, then you would believe Me, for Moses wrote about Me" (*John 5:39-46*). From beginning to end, the Bible is about Christ.

Picture the Bible like a giant mosaic with lots of tiles comprising one image. That mosaic has four basic sections — Creation, the Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. At creation (*Genesis 1, 2*), mankind was fashioned by God into His own likeness, the image of Christ. At the Fall (*Genesis 3*), we marred that image with our sin.

The largest part of the Bible (*Genesis 4 to John 21*) was the unfolding of God's plan to redeem us from the Fall. Finally, though He is in the process of re-conforming us to His image, in the end, God will fully restore His image in us (*Acts 1 to Revelation 22*). Furthermore, the glory of God that was once on earth at creation will be reestablished on earth at the end of the story.

Significance of the Old Testament

Notice the value that Jesus placed on the Old Testament (*Luke 24:25-27, 44, 45; 16:19-31*). Of course, it was all that Jesus had at that time, but still, if He used the Old Testament to enlighten men about Himself, about their redemption, how important is it for us to read today?

Every story, character, poem, proverb, and prophecy has something to do with Christ and His purposes. How could we ever get tired of studying the Old Testament, especially when every line alludes to the Savior of men? It is often said that the New Testament is in the Old concealed, while the Old Testament is in the New revealed.

Notice also that Jesus recognized divisions in the Old Testament — Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. During His ministry, He verified every book of the Old Testament (except *Esther*), either by referring to it or quoting from it.

Christ's affirmation of the Old Testament gives it authority. It is inspired by God and, therefore, true and trustworthy.

29 Should we not be students of it?

We should, but our tendency is to ignore the Old Testament, to skip over it because it's too difficult or dry. Let us take the challenge of Joshua and David and "meditate on it day and night" (*Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3*), for we will be blessed if we do.

Typology

One of the most intriguing and encouraging facets of the Old Testament is typology. Typology is a method of biblical interpretation, whereby an element found in the Old Testament is seen to prefigure one found in the New Testament. Instead of typology, we might use the word *symbol*, when one object, word, phrase, number, or person represents another, particularly in the case of Christ. Christ is pictured in the Old Testament numerous times in numerous ways (i.e., Abe's ram, Noah's ark, Joseph, the tabernacle of Moses).

One of my favorite types from the Old Testament is a man named Melchizedek (*Genesis 14:18-20*). Melchizedek was a priest-king from Salem, who introduced himself to Abraham after the war to save Lot and his family. Melchizedek was no ordinary man though. His name meant "righteous king," for he was the King of Salem, which means "peace." He fed Abraham bread and wine, the body and blood of the coming cross, perhaps? He blessed Abraham, and Abraham gave him an offering. Abraham would not have made an offering to a man. Maybe, then, Melchizedek was not a man. No, Melchizedek was a type, an Old Testament symbol of Christ.

Later, in the New Testament, when we see Melchizedek's name mentioned again (*Hebrews 7:1-4*), he is connected to Christ, who was a priest in his order. What does that mean? Didn't Aaron, Moses' brother, establish the only lineage of priests? Evidently not. Melchizedek did too; and his line preceded Aaron's line, which means that it superseded him. Christ was a priest from the highest line possible, perhaps because Melchizedek was Christ Himself!

The best type of Christ is the Tabernacle (*Exodus 25-40*). Every part of that sanctuary, every number, every measurement, and every object is symbolic of some facet of Christ or Christianity.

The picture is clear — the Bible is 66 books with one message to point to Christ. All parts are woven together with one thread, the scarlet thread of the redemptive cross. May we never grow tired of exploring the riches and depth of its wisdom. May we never grow too familiar with its stories and characters that we miss the big picture. All is for Christ, "that He may have preeminence in all things" (*Colossians 1:18*).