



## World Christian Fellowship

[www.wcflondon.com](http://www.wcflondon.com)  
[wcflondon@gmail.com](mailto:wcflondon@gmail.com)

### Why do we need to study Old Testament?

**If Christians are part of the new covenant, why should we seek to understand and apply the Old Testament?**

Why the first word in the phrase Old Testament must not mean unimportant or insignificant to Christians?

- 1. The Old Testament was only Scripture Jesus used and makes up three-fourths (75.55 percent) of our Bible.**

The Old Testament matters to God, who gave us his Word in a book. In fact, it was his first special revelation, which set a foundation for the fulfilment we find in Jesus in the New Testament.

The Old Testament was the only Bible of Jesus and the earliest church.

**Matthew 5:17**, *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil.*

**Luke 24:44**, *Then He said to them, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”*

**Acts 24:14**, *But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets.*

**2 Timothy 3:15**, *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

Old Testament is the major part of our Scriptures.

## **2. We meet the same God in both Testaments.**

**Hebrews 1:1-2**, *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,<sup>2</sup> has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

The God who spoke through the Old Testament prophets speaks through Jesus.

Some 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 Testament.

The most foundational Old Testament statement of God’s character and action is Exodus.

**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 reiterates this truth numerous times in order to clarify why it is that God continued to pardon and preserve a wayward people.

**2 Kings 13:23**, *But the Lord was gracious to them, had compassion on them, and regarded them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence.*

**2 Chronicles 30:9**, *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.*

**Nehemiah 9:30–31**, *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.*

Thus, God’s grace fills the Old Testament, just as it does the New Testament.

Further, in the NT, Jesus speaks about hell more than anyone else.

**Matthew 10:28**, *“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”*

**Matthew 18:6**, *“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”*

Paul, citing **Deuteronomy 32:35**, in

**Romans 12:19**, *“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’”*

**Hebrews 10:26-27**, *“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”*

Thus, God is just as wrathful in the NT as he is in the Old Testament.

**Acts 10:42–43**, *“And [God] commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that [Jesus] is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him all the [OT] prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”*

Here the New Testament apostle identifies himself as a proclaimer of Jesus as judge, whereas he says the Old Testament prophets proclaimed Jesus as the means of forgiveness.

Certainly, there are numerous expressions of God’s righteous anger in the Old Testament, just as there are massive manifestations of blood-bought mercy in the New Testament.

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 to both bless and curse. He takes sin and repentance seriously, and so should we.

### 3. The Old Testament announces the same gospel

The gospel is the good news that through Jesus, the divine, crucified, and resurrected Messiah, God reigns over all and saves and satisfies believing sinners.

**Galatians 3:8**, *“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’”*

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 the powerful gospel of God concerning His Son.

**Romans 1:1-5**, *Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God<sup>2</sup> which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,<sup>3</sup> concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,<sup>4</sup> and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.<sup>5</sup> Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name,*

Paul says that he was not ashamed to preach the same message.

**Romans 1:16**, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*

Foremost among these prophets was Isaiah, who anticipated the day when God's royal servant (the Messiah) and the many servants identified with him would herald comforting "good news" to the poor.

**Isaiah 61:1**, *"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;*

**Isaiah 40:9–11**, *O Zion, You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, You who bring good tidings, Lift up your voice with strength, Lift it up, be not afraid; Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" <sup>10</sup>Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand, And His arm shall rule for Him; Behold, His reward is with Him, And His work before Him. <sup>11</sup>He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.*

**Luke 4:16–21**, *So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: <sup>18</sup> “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; <sup>19</sup> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” <sup>20</sup> Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. <sup>21</sup> And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”*

Reading the Old Testament, therefore, is one of God’s given ways for us to better grasp and delight in the gospel.

**Hebrews 4:2**, *For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*

#### **4. Jesus said that all the Old Testament points to Him.**

After his first encounter with Jesus, Philip announced to Nathaniel.

**John 1:45**, *“We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophet wrote”*

Do you want to see and saviour Jesus as much as you can?  
We find Jesus in the Old Testament.

Jesus Himself said.

**John 5:39**, *You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*

**John 5:46-47**, *For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. <sup>47</sup> But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”*

**Luke 24:27**, *And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

After His resurrection, proclaiming the gospel of God’s kingdom.

**Acts 1:3**, *to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*

**Luke 24:45-47**, *And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup>Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup>and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

A proper "understanding" of the Old Testament will lead one to hear in it a message of the Messiah.

**Acts 26:22–23**, *Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— <sup>23</sup>that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles."*

Paul as an Old Testament preacher, he could declare like this to Corinthians.

**1 Corinthians 2:2**, *For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

If you want to know Jesus more, read the Old Testament!

## 5. Jesus came fulfil the Law and the Prophets

Far from setting aside the Old Testament, Jesus stressed that He came to fulfil it, and in the process, He highlighted the lasting relevance of its teaching for Christians.

**Matthew 5:17-19**, *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. <sup>18</sup>For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. <sup>19</sup>Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

It’s important to note here that the age of the old covenant has come to an end.

**(Romans 6:14–15; 1 Corinthians 9:20–21; Galatians 5:18; Luke 16:16),**

The Old Testament itself maintains lasting relevance for us in the way it displays the character of God.

**Romans 7:12**, *Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.*

The Character of God points to the excellencies of Christ and portrays for us the scope of love in all its facets (**Matthew 22:37–40**).

As Moses asserted, in the day of heart circumcision (**Deuteronomy 30:6**), which we are enjoying today.

**Romans 2:29**, *but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*

All His teachings in Deuteronomy would still matter!

**Deuteronomy 30:8**, *And you will again obey the voice of the Lord and do all His commandments which I command you today.*

## **6. Both the Testaments conveys the message of love.**

Within the old covenant, love was what the Lord called Israel to do (Deut. 6:5; 10:19); all the other commandments simply clarified how to do it.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-5**, *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! <sup>5</sup>You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*

**Deuteronomy 10:19**, *Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.*

This was part of Jesus's point when He stressed that all the Old Testaments hangs on the call to love God and neighbour.

**Matthew 22:37-40**, *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." <sup>38</sup>This is the first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup>And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

**Matthew 7:12**, *Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

Similarly, Paul also preached the same.

**Galatians 5:14**, *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."*

**Romans 13:8 &10**, *Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.*

<sup>10</sup>*Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.*

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.

**Deuteronomy 30:6, &8,** *And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.*

*<sup>8</sup>And you will again obey the voice of the Lord and do all His commandments which I command you today.*

Moses's old covenant law called for life-encompassing love. Christians today, looking through the lens of Christ, can gain clarity from the Old Testament on the wide-ranging effect of love in all of life.

## **7. The Old Testament substantially influences our understanding of key biblical teachings.**

By the end of the Torah/Law (Genesis to Deuteronomy, the first 5 books of the Bible), 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 OT narrative builds anticipation for a better king, a blessed people, and a broader land.

The Old Testament creates the problem and includes promises that the New Testament answers and fulfils.

We need the Old Testament to understand fully God's work in history.

Some doctrines of Scripture are best understood only from the Old Testament.

**Is there a more worldview-shaping passage than Genesis 1:1–2:3?**

Where else can we go other than the Old Testament to rightly understand sacred space and the temple?

**Is there a more explicit declaration of God's incomparability than Isaiah 40?**

**Is there a more succinct expression of substitutionary atonement than Isaiah 53?**

Where should we go to know what Paul means by “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16)?

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’ll fully grasp apart from saturating ourselves in Jesus’s Bible.

## **8. The New Testament stresses that God gave the OT for Christians.**

**1 Peter 1:12**, *To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.*

The Old Testament authors understood that they were writing for a future audience, Christians identified with the New Testament church.

Similarly, Paul was convinced that the divinely inspired Old Testament authors wrote for New Testament believers, living on this side of the death and resurrection of Christ.

**Romans 15:4**, *For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

**Romans 4:21-24**, *and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. <sup>22</sup> And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.” <sup>23</sup> Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, <sup>24</sup> but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,*

**1 Corinthians 10:11**, *Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.*

Timothy, who was raised on the Old Testament by his Jewish mother and grandmother.

**2 Timothy 1:5**, *when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.*

**2 Timothy 3:14-15**, *But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, <sup>15</sup> and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

People today can get saved from God's wrath and from the enslavement of sin by reading the Old Testament through the lens of Christ.

**2 Timothy 3:16–17**, *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,<sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

New covenant believers can correct and reprove straying brothers and sisters from the Old Testament, when read in relation to Christ.

New Testament authors regularly used the Old Testament as the basis for Christian exhortation, assuming its relevance for Christians.

**(1 Corinthians 9:8–12; Ephesians 6:2–3; 1 Timothy 5:18; 1 Peter 1:14–16).**

Because we are now part of the new covenant and not the old, there are natural questions that arise regarding how exactly the Christian should relate to specific old covenant instruction. Nevertheless, the point stands that the Old Testament, while not written to Christians, was still written for us.

## Conclusion:

The Old Testament still matters for Christians builds on the fact that Paul was referring to them when he spoke of the “sacred writings” that are able to make a person “wise for salvation” and the “Scripture” that is “breathed out by God and profitable”.

**2 Timothy 4:2–4**, *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*<sup>3</sup> *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;*<sup>4</sup> *and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*

For Paul, Christian preachers like Timothy needed to preach the OT in order to guard the church from apostasy. While we now have the NT, we can, and indeed must, appropriate the OT like Jesus and his apostles did for the good of God’s church.

Paul stresses that those who unhitch themselves from the OT put themselves in danger of falling away from God.