

BBS#15 • How Jesus Used & Viewed The O.T.

Laden with guilt, and full of fears,
I fly to Thee, my Lord,
And not a glimpse of hope appears
But in Thy written Word.

The volume of my Father's grace
Does all my griefs assuage;
Here I behold my Saviour's face
Almost in every page.

This is the field where hidden lies
The Pearl of price unknown,
The merchant is divinely wise
Who makes this pearl his own.

Here consecrated water flows
To quench my thirst for sin,
Here the fair tree of knowledge grows,
Nor danger dwells therein.

This is the judge that ends the strife,
Where wit and wisdom fail;
My guide to everlasting life,
Through all this gloomy vale.

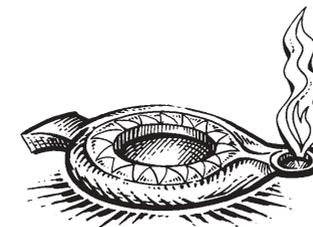
Oh, may Thy counsels, mighty God,
My roving feet command;
Nor I forsake the happy road
That leads to Thy right hand. (Isaac Watts)

BASIC BIBLE STUDY

An Introductory Guide To Understanding The Scriptures

PART FIFTEEN

How Jesus Used And Viewed The O.T.

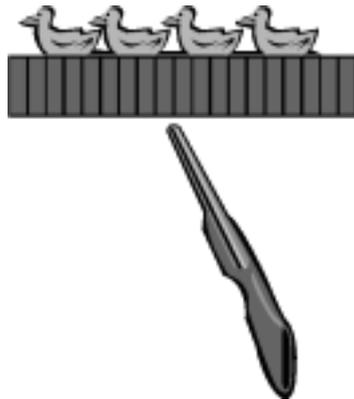


"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path"
PSALM 119:105

It is fashionable to take potshots at the Scriptures.

THE DA VINCI CODE

Dan Brown has done so with his book, The Da Vinci Code. He claims that the Bible is not the inspired Word from heaven, but a dubious text has been edited by man to the extent that, out of an original pile of 80 'gospels,' we are left with a mere 4.



Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, he alleges, have been carefully selected for sheer political purposes, while the other 76 gospels have been unceremoniously scrapped.*

NOTHING NEW

His allegation is totally untrue ... but it is nothing new. Man has been launching attacks on the Bible for centuries!

Interesting, pivotal questions are:

- How did Christ Jesus view the scriptures?
- What value did He place on them?
- What use did He make of them?

These are vital questions ... because they dictate the value, importance, and use that we should set on, and make of, the scriptures!



HOW JESUS USED AND VIEWED THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

me?' ... Quicken me after Thy lovingkindness"

Christ understood the mind of that psalmist. He could identify with his desire. Extremely well; for He had the same thought and desire Himself!

Have you ever considered what Jesus rested upon in the middle of His adversity - his ultimate adversity - on the cross?

It was the Word of God.

There, in the grip of death, as he bled for sinners, He began to quote the lines of **the 22nd Psalm**. "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (**Psalm 22:1**) ... and just as that Psalm ascends from the note of tragedy to that of triumph at its half-way stage (**verse 21**), so Jesus, in His loud shout of victory from the cross reflects this: "It is finished"! (**John 19:30**). And now, at the very end of the pouring out of his soul as an offering for sin, Christ is back resting upon the words of the Book. "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit," He cries (**Luke 23:46**). It is a direct quotation from **Psalm 31:5!**

Children of God have slipped out into the bliss of heaven with these words upon their lips. Augustine, for example. And John Huss. And Martin Luther ... to name but a few.



The point is: throughout Christ's adversity, the scriptures were a tremendous comfort. He who said to John the Baptist at the Jordan when he came to be baptized, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it cometh us to fulfil all righteousness," (**Matthew 3:15**); He who, in **Matthew 26:54**, commanded Peter to put his sword back in its scabbard with the words, "But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" - now submits to the arrows of hell and the sword of heaven on the tree and dies to fulfil the scriptures He authored and upheld!

We do well to note the lesson. Only in the scriptures will we find hope, and comfort and consolation in the fiery days of adversity.

you gave me another stab with the sword until I realized I was not fighting you but God." He had been converted from his infidelity by the thrusts of the Book of God!

This is not just the best sword, it is the only sword!

When David, in the village of Nob, was in need of a weapon, Ahimelech told him that the only one in their possession was Goliath's sword, kept wrapped in a cloth. David said: "There is none like that; give it me" (**1 Samuel 21:9**). He had proved the worth of that sword before, when, in the valley of Elah, he had drawn it out of its scabbard and used it to separate Goliath's head from his shoulders! He would now, with confidence in it, put it to use again!

There is nothing to match the Book of God. Nothing can defeat it. No sceptic can fashion a theory that will honestly blunt it. No seduction can melt it. No determined assault can bend or break it. It is so utterly without rival that **Hebrews 4:12** declares of it: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

You go out against temptation in the bare hands of your flesh, and you will end up embracing it! But go out against temptation with the sword of the Lord, and, no matter how Goliath-like in terms of sheer size and scale that temptation seems, it will be sure to hit the floor!

- [1] Christ's Confidence in the Scriptures;
- [2] Christ's Confirmation of the Scriptures;
- [3] Christ's Contention by the Scriptures;

[4] CHRIST'S COMFORT FROM THE SCRIPTURES.

The psalmist could say, in **Psalms 119:50**, "This is my comfort in my affliction: for Thy word hath quickened me."

The same individual cried, (in **the 82nd and 88th verses of the same Psalm**): "Mine eyes fail for Thy word, saying, 'When wilt Thou comfort

The Master and His use of His Bible then is our subject. We can learn much from this!

[1] CHRIST'S CONFIDENCE IN THE SCRIPTURES.

Consistently, Christ refers to the Old Testament narratives as being historically correct. He speaks of:

- * The creation, and the institution of marriage (**Matthew 19:4&5, Mark 10:6-8**),
- * the murder of Abel (**Luke 11:51**),
- * Noah, the Flood, and the ark (**Matthew 24:37-39, Luke 17:26&27**),
- * Abraham (**John 8:56**),
- * the institution of circumcision (**John 7:22**; cf. **Gen. 17:10-12; Leviticus 12:3**),
- * the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah (**Matthew 10:15; 11:23&24, Luke 10:12**),
- * Lot (**Luke 17:28-32**),
- * Isaac and Jacob (**Matthew 8:11, Luke 13:28**),
- * the burning bush (**Luke 20:37**),
- * the passover (**Matthew 26:18**),
- * the manna (**John 6:31, 49&58**),
- * the brazen serpent in the wilderness (**John 3:14**),
- * the giving of the commandments (**John 7:19, 23**),
- * the laws concerning tribute money (**Matthew 17:24&25; 22:17-19**),
- * the purification of lepers (**Mark 1:44**),
- * the sabbath law of the priests (**Matthew 12:1-12**),
- * David eating the shewbread (**Matthew 12:3&4, Mark 2:25&26, Luke 6:3&4**),
- * David as a psalm-writer (**Matthew 22:43, Mark 12:36, Luke 20:42**),
- * the glory of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (**Matthew 6:29; 12:42, Luke 11:31; 12:27**),
- * Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (**Luke 4:25&26**),
- * Elisha and the healing of Naaman (**Luke 4:27**),
- * Daniel the prophet (**Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14**),
- * Jonah and the great fish (**Matthew 12:39-41, Luke 11:29, 30&32**),
- * the murder of Zechariah (**Luke 11:50&51**).

Actually, this last reference - **Luke 11:50&51** - is so wide in its sweep

that Christ surveys the whole course of history from the beginning (Abel) right through to the end of the Old Testament Era (Zacharias). "That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, 'It shall be required of this generation'."



From the days of Adam (Abel) right through to the last days of the Old Testament period when Zechariah lived (and died), Christ treated this all as historical – as a record of absolute facts – as true in its entirety!

He believed the Bible (as it was in His day) from cover to

cover - or from one end of the scroll to another!

Now this is a fact worth noting - and imitating!

FREQUENTLY QUOTED FROM DISPUTED PASSAGES

In fact (and this is another point that we should take careful note of), those passages and incidents that the sceptics reject out of hand and try, by their malicious lies, to cut to ribbons, are the very ones that Christ used the most for His illustrations.

Curious? Perhaps.

Coincidental? Never!

For example:

- Jesus often went to the Book of Deuteronomy for quotations - a book that a chief rabbi, Dr. Hertz, described as "unsurpassed in its rush of rhythmic sentences, its ebb and flow of exalted passion, its accents of appeal and denunciation"; but one which the liberal critics seek to savage and dismember!
- There are said to be no less than 164 unmistakable quotations

thrusts, prefaced each time by the words, "It is written" (**Matthew 4:4,7&10**), the devil's temptations were hacked to pieces! There they are, lying limp and lifeless, withering on the desert floor!

There is a grand solidity about the words "It is written." In the perfect tense, they mean, "**It stands written.**" In other words, "**This is the permanent, unchangeable witness of the Eternal God.**"

DEVIL TRIES TO USE THE WORD

Of course Satan himself made an attempt to wield this same sword against Christ out there in the blinding arena. In **Matthew 4:6** we read his words: "If thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, 'He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone'."

It was a poor, twisted, untrained and desperate effort by one staring defeat in the face, because while Shakespeare's statement is true - "The devil can cite Scripture to his purpose" - he always does it in such a devious way that it is a misquote, a misrepresentation of the mind of God, a mischievous addition or subtraction from the words that the Lord has actually uttered (**Psalm 91:11&12**: cf. **Genesis 3:1-5**). He forever handles this Book by mishandling it! He forever quotes this book by misquoting it!

Dr. Caesar Malan of Switzerland was travelling in the same compartment of a Paris-bound train as an infidel. The Bible-denier began to argue with Dr Malan about the scriptures and Christianity.

To each and all of the infidel's arguments, Dr Malan responded with an exact quotation from the scriptures. He never once expressed his own opinion - or even attempted to further explain the scriptures he quoted.

Exasperated, the infidel exclaimed: "*But I don't believe the Bible! What's the sense in you quoting it to me?*" To that the Swiss doctor replied: "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" - the words of Jesus in **John 8:24**.

Ten years later Dr Malan received a letter from Paris. The writer - the infidel he had met on the train - reminded him of the conversation they had so long ago, and said: "*You simply used the sword of the Spirit and stabbed me through and through. Every time I tried to parry the blade,*

A PATTERN TO BE FOLLOWED

These persons who appear to base their erroneous teachings on the Bible, who can quote some scripture texts that apparently lend some weight to their arguments, that dress their statements in the most plausible and pious clothing imaginable ... how do we answer them? When they come to our doors, or confront us on the streets - what do we say to them?

Do we merely blurt out the familiar response of the sinner which betrays his fear of being swept into waters too deep for him, "I'm not interested"? or is a rather lame, (though true), "I've got my own religion. I'm a Christian" all we have to offer in response? It is sad when this is so. To be reduced to this type of answer - well, let's face it, it's pretty poor!

It is good to be able to recognise that these people are in error and are promoting all manner of evil; very good indeed! But is it not a most excellent thing to be able to go much further, and do what the Saviour did when He was confronted with these figures of controversy and corruption - to show from this Book exactly where they are wrong?! "Have ye not read?!"

We should learn how to handle this Book so as to contend effectively against the merchants of error and evil!

Against Scepticism Christ battled by use of the Scriptures; also against **(b) SEDUCTION**.



Going out into one of the most daunting theatres of war in the world - the wilderness where He was tempted by the devil (**Matthew 4:1**) - Christ brought a most formidable weapon with Him: the Word. And there, in that place where hell and heaven were let loose upon the scene, Jesus faced the arch-enemy of souls - and defeated him.

How?

He drew out the "sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Three great thrusts were made with its mighty blade. And with these

from or references to the Old Testament scriptures in the recorded teaching of Jesus: half of these are taken from that section the modernists have most bitterly attacked: the Pentateuch - the five books of Moses.

- His reference to various OT judgments: the flood in Noah's day; the fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah; the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, (**Luke 17:32**).



- His defence of the Book of Jonah. (Regarded as something of a scoffer's paradise!)
 - Jonah: three days and nights in the belly of the great fish; **Matthew 12:40**.
 - The men of Nineveh, to whom Jonah preached; **Matthew 12:41**.

Are we meant to interpret Christ's endorsement of this Book of Jonah, and all the events contained within it, as: imaginary persons, who at the imaginary preaching of an imaginary prophet who had an imaginary experience, repented in imagination, and shall rise up in the day of judgment to condemn the actual hard-heartedness and unbelief of those who actually heard Christ's words in **Matthew 12**!?

NOT A COMPLETE LIST

The list of references that Jesus made to the Old Testament that we have just given is by no means complete.

More than that. Even the list of references and allusions to the OT scriptures that are recorded in the New Testament is not complete - for, did John not say, (in **John 21:25**), "And there are also many other

things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written!"

Therefore, Christ stood up for - expressed His belief in - and set His stamp of approval on - the accuracy of the records of the Old Testament scriptures many more times that we can ever know!

ALL OF SCRIPTURE PERMANENTLY VALID & AUTHORITATIVE

As for us, let us be content with the all-embracing words of Christ in:

- **John 10:35:** "The Scripture cannot be broken."
- **Matthew 5:18:** "For verily I say unto you, 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."



[Note the fact that when Jesus spoke of "all" of Scripture being fulfilled, right down to the individual "jot" and "tittle," He was affirming that the Old Testament has permanent validity and authority until the end of the age, and that it is permanently valid in its entirety as well as in its particular details.

Its smallest letter, which in the Hebrew language is the letter yod , or even the smallest part of a letter (tittle), has permanent validity, power, and authority].

Our Lord Jesus was not some theological liberal whose job it was to take apart the Scripture, nor was He interested in destroying the authority of Scripture, as many theological liberals do.

Why do theological liberals destroy the authority of Scripture? So that they can sin freely.

It is vital that we have the same view of the accuracy of scripture as Jesus had!

And ... if anyone questions the authority of Scripture, he questions the authority of the Son of God Himself! It is impossible to destroy Scripture and yet believe in Jesus as the Son of God.

to "earnestly contend for the faith" against the scoffings and scepticism of His many adversaries. How did He do it?

BACK TO THE BOOK

Christ's way was always to bring them back to the Book!

Some examples.

- To a crafty, snare-setting lawyer He responded, in **Luke 10:26**, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?"
- To a group of critics He asked (**Matthew 12:3**): "Have ye not read?"
- To a squad of Pharisees who pretended that they were caught on the horns of a dilemma - but who were really trying to tie Jesus up in His words and catch Him in His answer, He started (**Matthew 19:4**): "Have ye not read?"
- He questioned those jealous and jaundiced scribes, who were enraged at the praise conferred on Christ from the mouths of the children, (**Matthew 21:16**): "Yea, and have ye never read ...?"
- To the chief priests, after outlining a most scathing parable designed to strike deeply into their hearts, He applied His message by saying, (**Matthew 21:42**): "Did ye never read?"



This, of course, is but the smallest selection of His responses - reproofs - rebukes: each one characterised and energized by an appeal to the Word of God! "What saith the scriptures?" was Christ's first, last and continuing 'port of call' in all controversy - and with its unanswerable authority, its immense power, and its stinging and withering blasts He routed His enemies!

A pattern for us to follow? Certainly it is! The way in which Christ handled occasions of controversy directs us to the manner that is most wise and effective for us to adopt. Romanists, ecumenists, Russellites (Jehovah's Witnesses), Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists - and a host of other cults and -isms; how do we deal with them?

not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him”

• **1 John 3:14&15**: “We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him”

- (and in many other different ways), we should be striving to fulfil those words in our lives; to ‘live up to’ these descriptions that God gives of a true child of His grace!

We need more grace to determine to fulfil the declarations of the scriptures as Christ did ... to make our practices square with this Word ... to break loose from the paths of those backslidden Israelites, who, in **Jeremiah 2:33**, were lambasted for “trimming their way to seek love” - and rather trim our way to reflect the teaching and the principles of the Book we claim to be our only rule of faith and practice! This should be our desire – our daily prayer!

**Master, speak! Thy servant heareth,
Waiting for Thy gracious word;
Longing for Thy voice that cheereth,
Master, let it now be heard.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee:
What hast Thou to say to me?**

**Master, speak! and make me ready,
When Thy voice is truly heard,
With obedience glad and steady,
Still to follow every word.
I am listening, Lord, for Thee;
Master, speak, oh, speak to me!**

[1] Christ's Confidence in the Scriptures;

[2] Christ's Confirmation of the Scriptures;

[3] CHRIST'S CONTENTION BY THE SCRIPTURES.

Christ used the scriptures to contend against (α) **SCEPTICISM**.

At various points in His earthly ministry it became necessary for Christ

J. Russell Howden once stated: “I cannot conceive of a true disciple of Christ who belittles or disparages his Master's estimate of the Word of God. The Lord Jesus was accustomed to take the Old Testament in His hand and appeal to it on all occasions, and His word is ‘The scriptures cannot be broken.’ If you and I are to be disciples of Jesus, then it behoves us to see to it that we rate the Bible as highly as He rated it.”

[1] Christ's Confidence in the Scriptures;

[2] CHRIST'S CONFIRMATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Christ did not come to bring about the disintegration or destruction of Scripture.

The purpose of Messiah's mission was revealed as far back as **Psalms 40:6-8**: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. 7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book [it is] written of me, 8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law [is] within my heart."

Jesus came to fulfill and uphold God's word.

By living and dying (and by rising again and ascending), Christ fulfilled the scriptures! He demonstrated their truth!



A key text is **Matthew 5:17&18**: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, ‘Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.’”

When were these words spoken? In His first sermon to be recorded in this book – a message that is commonly referred to as ‘the Sermon on the Mount.’

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Therefore, right at the commencement of His earthly ministry, Jesus ran up the flag and nailed His colours to the mast, identifying His purpose in coming to earth as being the fulfilment of the prophecies contained in the Old Testament scriptures! The commands of the law He had not come to explode, but expound; not to expel; but explain; not to eliminate, but enforce.

SIX EXAMPLES OF JESUS UPHOLDING THE LAW

And He wasted no time in showing this! For, after He had declared His aim in **Matthew 5:17**, He took six examples of the teaching of the Mosaic law:

- * **Matthew 5:21**,
- * **Matthew 5:27**,
- * **Matthew 5:31**,
- * **Matthew 5:33**,
- * **Matthew 5:38**, and
- * **Matthew 5:43**

- and then proceeded that all that He said did not contradict, but rather confirm, that teaching!

SEAL OF APPROVAL ON ALL SCRIPTURE

Our Lord sets His seal of approval on all three sections of the Old Testament Scriptures in Luke 24:44, and insists that all three point to Him: "And He said unto them, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me'."

All of Scripture - from Genesis to the end of the Old Testament - points to Jesus Christ. Every sacrifice mentioned in Scripture points to Him.

In His COMMENTS, Jesus confirmed the truth of the scriptures.

In His CONDUCT too.

How else can we explain His:

- * Taking to Himself a body of human flesh,
- * Descending to earth,
- * Assuming the form of a servant,

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- * Suffering great anguish of soul, exhaustion of body, grief of spirit,
- * Rendering a life of perfect obedience to God,
- * Showing an unwavering determination to go to the cross, submit to be wrongly accused, and improperly classified along with two transgressors, bear the sins of His people there, endure the full penalty of a broken law, shed His life-blood,

- other than stating that He endured all of this humiliation so that the Scriptures would be fulfilled, the law of the Lord would be magnified, and the eternal plan of heaven would be performed?

100% ACCURATE!

There can be no doubt or confusion about it: by His Comments and His Conduct, Christ confirmed this Book ... confirmed that its predictions were 100% accurate; confirmed that its promises were 100% true; confirmed that its legislation was 100% just; confirmed that its message was 100% merciful!



OBEDIENCE REQUIRED

What does this underline for us? Quite simply, the necessity for our obedience to the words of this Book!

When, (for example), the Bible describes a true child of God in the terms of:

- **Romans 6:6**: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin"
- **1 John 2:3&4**: "And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, 'I know Him', and keepeth