

# SESSION 1: WHAT & WHY?

## Learning Objectives

1. Define and describe Christ-centered teaching.
2. Discover reasons for Christ-centered teaching.
3. Identify contrasts to Christ-centered teaching.
4. List four clear, appropriate, biblical pathways to Jesus from Old Testament passages.

## Definition and Descriptions of Christ-centered Teaching

*What do we mean by Christ-centered teaching?*

...not that we \_\_\_\_\_ teach the Old Testament.

...not that we \_\_\_\_\_ talk about Jesus.

...not that we simply \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus.

**1. In Christ-centered interpretation, the teacher explains how a text relates to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Bible—Jesus’s life, death, and resurrection.**

“Whatever passage of the Bible one is studying, it is important to remember that the person and saving work of Jesus Christ is the ultimate focus of God’s revelation.”<sup>1</sup> Robert Plummer.

Christ-centered interpretation places any passage within the context of \_\_\_\_\_; that is, it places any passage within the whole story of the Bible.

**2. In Christ-centered interpretation, the teacher explains how Old Testament passages \_\_\_\_\_ or prepare for Christ’s life, death, and resurrection.**

a. \_\_\_\_\_: describes the redemption that Jesus will bring through the cross.

b. \_\_\_\_\_: shows man’s need for redemption that Jesus will bring through the cross.

“...Christ-centered preaching rightly understood does not seek to discover where Christ is mentioned in every biblical text, but to disclose where every text stands in relation to Christ.”<sup>2</sup> Bryan Chapel.

**3. In Christ-centered interpretation, the teacher uses \_\_\_\_\_ within the Bible to point to or prepare for Christ’s life death and resurrection.**

“... and so from every text in Scripture, there is a road to the metropolis of Scriptures, that is Christ.”<sup>3</sup> Charles Spurgeon.

**Summary: If Jesus is the focus of the Bible, we want to make Jesus the focus of \_\_\_\_\_.**

### **Reasons for Christ-Centered Teaching**

*Why should we practice Christ-centered interpretation?*

**1. ...Because Christ-centered interpretation is how \_\_\_\_\_ and the Apostles read the Old Testament and expected their followers to do the same.**

#### **Jesus’s Claims**

a. John 5:31-45

Jesus claims that the Old Testament \_\_\_\_\_ about him and his ability to give eternal life.

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ his opponents who read the Old Testament without recognizing Jesus as the focus.

“The Bible—yes, even the Old Testament—is about Jesus. To read the Old Testament in another way is, according to Jesus, to read the Old Testament like disbelieving Jews.”<sup>4</sup> Edward Klink.

b. Luke 24:13-49

Jesus shows that the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Old Testament speaks \_\_\_\_\_ to the events of his death and resurrection.

Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ why his followers did not see in the Old Testament that he would suffer, die, and rise.

“The resurrected Jesus presents himself as the fulfillment of Scripture, and his life as both the interpretation and actualization of Scripture (vv. 27, 44–45).”<sup>5</sup> James Edwards.

#### **The New Testament Pattern**

a. Apostles’ \_\_\_\_\_ in Acts

Acts 1:22-36: Peter applies Psalm 16 & 110 to \_\_\_\_\_ in the Pentecost sermon.

Acts 13:32-39: Paul follows the same \_\_\_\_\_ in his preaching.

b. \_\_\_\_\_ letters

Romans 1:1-2: Paul opens his letter by stating that the gospel was \_\_\_\_\_ by the prophets of the Old Testament and connects Jesus to David.

Paul then supports his instructions on the gospel with approximately \_\_\_\_\_ Old Testament citations and numerous allusions.

“The ways in which Paul uses the OT is of great significance for the [biblical interpretation] of Christians today. We should learn from him to retain a high respect for the OT Scriptures and to read them from the viewpoint of the Christ-event—to read them as God’s word pointing to Christ.”<sup>6</sup> Peter Balla.

c. \_\_\_\_\_ New Testament Authors

The author of Hebrews claims that Jesus fulfills the patterns of Old Testament \_\_\_\_\_, places, people, and institutions.

Hebrews has the second most \_\_\_\_\_ to the Old Testament in the New Testament.

Revelation has the \_\_\_\_\_ references to the Old Testament using Old Testament imagery to describe Jesus’s past and future work.

**Summary: We want to read & teach the Old Testament from a \_\_\_\_\_ perspective!**

“The New Testament Scripture in many ways operates like an answer key that unlocks the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. Grasping how Jesus and the New Testament authors approached their Bible enables us to see better the divine author’s intent in Scripture.”<sup>7</sup> Jason DeRouchie.

**2. ...Because Christ-centered interpretation is consistent with the Bible’s \_\_\_\_\_.**

**a. Unified \_\_\_\_\_**

If the Bible is the word of \_\_\_\_\_ (as the biblical authors claim), then the reader would expect a unified account from the divine author.

Authorial \_\_\_\_\_ applies to the divine author as well as the human author.

In addition, interpreters can cite divine authorship in order to find \_\_\_\_\_ meaning in an Old Testament passage than the human authors understood when writing their texts.

Contemporary interpreters have the benefit of hearing the \_\_\_\_\_ story which the divine author is still in the process of telling in the Old Testament.

**b. Unified \_\_\_\_\_**

The story develops in four major movements: Creation, \_\_\_\_\_, Redemption, & Consummation.

Biblical (human) authors demonstrate that they \_\_\_\_\_ on each other and contribute to a unified work greater than any of the parts.

They are not writing \_\_\_\_\_ stories but \_\_\_\_\_ to the whole Bible.

Exodus 34:6-7 is reproduced in Numbers 14:18, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2, Nahum 1:2-3, Psalm 86:15, 103:8, 145:8, Nehemiah 9:17 among others.

The \_\_\_\_\_ results from the curses of disobedience to the Law.

\_\_\_\_\_ of the Old Testament is reproduced in the New Testament.<sup>8</sup>

**c. Unified \_\_\_\_\_**

The story has a unified plot of God's \_\_\_\_\_ of sinful man through the work of Jesus.

The Old Testament \_\_\_\_\_ on a note of unfinished expectation, and the New Testament continues the story as fulfilment of the Old.

The story ends with man returned to the \_\_\_\_\_ presence of God in an Eden-like city.

“From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is a Christian book. The whole Bible tells us the story of the Redeemer.”<sup>9</sup> Tony Merida.

**Summary: We want to teach the Bible as \_\_\_\_\_ not a collection of loosely related stories.**

“Some would compare the Bible to a wall of fabric, with each bolt bearing its own makeup. In contrast, I propose that Scripture is much more like a massive, intentionally crafted quilt, with each square (or biblical book) bearing its own color, texture, and story, but with the whole displaying a message far greater than the parts.”<sup>10</sup> Jason DeRouchie.

“The Bible is a book about Jesus.”<sup>11</sup> Robert Plummer.

**Contrasts to Christ-Centered Teaching**

**1. \_\_\_\_\_ Historical Teaching**

a. Emphasizes the \_\_\_\_\_ author's meaning and the \_\_\_\_\_ literary context.

Ultimately this method becomes a history lesson about \_\_\_\_\_.

b. Fails to see the Bible as a \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ story.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ **Focused Teaching**

- a. Makes human \_\_\_\_\_ the focus of the lesson.

Old Testament stories do not always \_\_\_\_\_ a moral lesson.

Old Testament characters do not \_\_\_\_\_ set a good example.

The true \_\_\_\_\_ of the Scripture is Jesus.

- b. Can lead to \_\_\_\_\_.

In moralism, the interpreter makes moral behavior the basis for \_\_\_\_\_ before God.

“[Moralism] presents a truth apart from the history of redemption and, therefore, apart from the cross, the resurrection, the ascension, the Lordship of Christ. It unconsciously assumes that we can go back to the Father apart from the Son.”<sup>12</sup> Edmund Clowney.

Teachers can \_\_\_\_\_ promote moralism.

- c. Christ-centered teaching can include moral \_\_\_\_\_.

*“In Christ-centered preaching, the rules of Christian obedience do not change; the reasons do. Believers are exhorted to serve God in loving response to his sure mercy rather than in dreadful or self-serving payment for his conditional favor.”*<sup>13</sup> Bryan Chapel.

A \_\_\_\_\_ for whether moral instruction is Christ-centered or not is if someone who is Jewish, Muslim, Mormon or others who promote a works-based righteousness would agree with the teaching.

“Satan does not mind a moral improvement plan; what he hates is Christ being proclaimed.”<sup>14</sup> Tony Merida.

**Summary: These contrasts are at best \_\_\_\_\_ and at worst \_\_\_\_\_ to the gospel.**

“We must read the Old Testament as Christians and not as though Christ had not come, for this is how the divine author intended us to read his book.”<sup>15</sup> Jason DeRouchie.

**Pathways of Christ-Centered Teaching**

*How do we get to Jesus from an Old Testament passage?*

1. **Storyline:** How does this passage fit into the overarching story about Jesus’s work of salvation?

2. **Theme:** Is there a theme in this passage that I can trace through the Old Testament until its fulfillment in Christ?
3. **Pattern:** Is there a pattern based on Old Testament symbols that Jesus fulfills?
4. **Direct Reference:** Do the New Testament authors use this Old Testament passage to describe Jesus and his work?

These pathways will help us to point to or prepare for Jesus in any Old Testament passage.

### **Homework/Reflection Questions**

1. What did Josh say was most important about today's session and the entire training curriculum?
2. What was the most significant aspect of this session for you?
3. Look back over the learning objectives at the beginning of the session, have you met them?
4. What is the biggest obstacle for you when it comes to Christ-centered teaching? What keeps you from practicing this method or why do you practice other methods?
5. Read Matthew 1:1, 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, 2 Timothy 3:14-17, 1 Peter 1:10-12, 2 Peter 1:19-21.
  - a. How do these passages contribute to the Christ-centered nature of the Scripture (especially the Old Testament)?
  - b. Do you notice things in these passages that you did not notice before going through this session?

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- <sup>1</sup> Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (2010), 151.
  - <sup>2</sup> Bryan Chapel, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 3rd ed. (2018), 260.
  - <sup>3</sup> Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All of Scripture* (2007), 16.
  - <sup>4</sup> Edward W. Klink III, *John*, ZECNT (2016), 298.
  - <sup>5</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, PNTC (2015), 714.
  - <sup>6</sup> Peter Balla, “2 Corinthians,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (2007), 753.
  - <sup>7</sup> Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (2017), 364.
  - <sup>8</sup> Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (2000), 555.
  - <sup>9</sup> Tony Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor: A Field Guide for Word-Driven Disciple Makers* (2016), 55.
  - <sup>10</sup> Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (2017), 350.
  - <sup>11</sup> Robert L. Plummer, *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* (2010), 152.
  - <sup>12</sup> Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (2003), 33.
  - <sup>13</sup> Bryan Chapel, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 3rd ed. (2018), 300.
  - <sup>14</sup> Tony Merida, *The Christ-Centered Expositor: A Field Guide for Word-Driven Disciple Makers* (2016), 62.
  - <sup>15</sup> Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (2017), 366.