



## The Nine Major Movements of OT History

- Universal Dealings Gen. 1-11 4000-2166
- Patriarchal Period Gen. 12-50 2166-1804
- Slavery in Egypt Ex. 1 1804-1446
- The Exodus under Moses Ex. 2—Deut. 1446-1406
- Conquest & Division of Canaan Joshua 1406-1350
- Period of the Judges Judges, Ruth, 1350-1051  
1 Sam. 1-8

## The Nine Major Movements of OT History

- The Monarchy 1 Sam. 9—2 Sam; 1051-605  
1-2 Kings; 1-2 Ch.
  - United - 1 Sam. 9—1 Kings 11 - 1051-931
  - Divided - 1 Kings 12—2 Kings - 931-586
- The Babylonian Exile Ezekiel, Daniel, 605-538  
certain Psalms
- Restoration Period Ezra; Esther; 538-4  
Nehemiah

## George Herbert

“Oh! That I knew how all thy lights combine,  
And the configuration of thy glory,  
Seeing not only how each verse doth shine,  
But all the constellations of the story.”

## The Unifying Message of the Old Testament



## Four Views of the OT

- 1) The OT is **sub-Christian**.
- 2) The OT is **non-Christian**.
  - Leonard Thompson: “[the] Hebrew Scriptures are a complete work and do not need the NT to complete them.”
- 3) The OT is **pre-Christian**.
  - John Bright: the OT “is not of and by itself a Christian message.... The OT ... stands in discontinuity with the New because it speaks a BC word, not an AD word.”
  - A book directed to Israel only.
- 4) The OT is **Christian**.
  - Sidney Greidanus: “the dilemma of how to get a Christian message out of a non-Christian or pre-Christian book is a predicament of our own making.... The OT and the New are both parts of the Christian Bible.”
- Cf. [2 Cor. 3:14-16](#)

## The OT is Christian!

- Gleason Archer: “The OT presented the preparation of which the NT was the fulfillment; it was the seed of which the achievement of Christ and the apostles was the glorious fruit.”
- Harrison in his Introduction to the OT: It was “the common belief of the Fathers [Origen, Jerome, Chrysostom, Augustine] that the OT was in principle a Christian book.”

## The NT's Use of the OT

- Only four NT books have no reference to the OT:
  - Philemon
  - 1-3 John
- References to the OT:
  - Matthew: 135x
  - Luke: 140x
  - Acts: 169x
  - Romans: 103x
  - Hebrews: 115x
  - Revelation: 574x
  - NT refers to Isaiah: 308x
  - NT refers to Psalms: 303x

## Most Commonly-Suggested OT Themes

- God
- God's Glory
- The Rule/Sovereignty of God
- The Kingdom of God
- The Promised Blessing of God (Kaiser)
- Christ
- Redemption

## The Right Method

- The best way to determine the OT's theme is to examine the NT's inspired commentary on the OT!

## The Unifying Theme of the OT

- Eph. 3:11
  - God's “eternal purpose”
  - *Purpose* means “plan or resolve”
  - Singular = one purpose or unified plan
  - Lit., “the purpose of the ages”
  - God accomplished that one unified plan in Jesus Christ.
    - “which he [God the Father] carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
    - The person of Jesus Christ is at the galactic center of God's eternal plan.
    - Cf. Eph. 1:9-10
  - Not just Christ in his person, but especially Christ in his work of redeeming lost humanity.
  - Note: Eph. 3:8-10

## The OT's Theme

- Gleason Archer (in ZPE, “Old Testament”): “The Christian church regards the OT as authoritative Holy Scripture because its Founder and Savior so regarded it.... His apostles understood the entire Hebrew Scripture to constitute a composite unity ultimately authored by God and infallibly setting forth the divine will and plan for man's salvation.... The NT showed that the Hebrew Scriptures constituted an organic unity, focused upon a single great theme and setting forth a single, but all-comprehensive program of redemption.”

## The OT's Theme

- Merrill Unger in his *Introductory Guide to the OT*: "its central unifying theme is the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer."
- In Unger's *Guide to the Bible*: "The theme of Scripture is human redemption. The principal character is the world's Redeemer, Jesus Christ, God incarnate. Everything in the OT that precedes his incarnation points to this grand event and its outworking in human redemption."

## The OT's Theme

- John MacArthur in the *MSB*: "To understand the Bible, it is essential to grasp the sweep of that history from creation to consummation. It is also crucial to keep in focus the unifying theme of Scripture. The one constant theme unfolding throughout the whole Bible is this: God for His own glory has chosen to create and gather to Himself a group of people to be the subjects of His eternal kingdom, to praise, honor, and serve Him forever and through whom He will display His wisdom, power, mercy, grace, and glory. To gather His chosen ones, God must redeem them from sin. The Bible reveals God's plan for this redemption from its inception in eternity past to its completion in eternity future. Covenants, promises, and epochs are all secondary to the one continuous plan of redemption."

## The OT's Theme

- MacArthur: "There is one God. The Bible has one Creator. It is one book. It has one plan of grace, recorded from initiation, through execution, to consummation. From predestination to glorification, the Bible is the story of God redeeming His chosen people for the praise of His glory."

## The OT's Theme

For His own glory, God accomplishes His eternal plan to redeem a people through His eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.



## One Theme—Three Parts

- 1) The Person of Christ
- 2) The Work of Christ
- 3) The Instruction of the Redeemed

## 1) The Person of Christ

- Christ permeates OT prophecy.
  - Would be a Human Being
    - Gen. 3:15 – I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."
  - From one man and nation
    - Gen. 12:1-3 – the Seed who will bring blessing upon all the nations will come through the descendants of one man, Abraham, and the nation that comes from him.

## 1) The Person of Christ

- From one tribe in Israel
  - Gen. 49:10 – “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him *shall be* the obedience of the peoples.”
- From one family in Judah
  - 2 Sam. 7:16 – “Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever.””

## 1) The Person of Christ

- Born of a virgin and both human and divine.
  - Is. 7:14 - “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”
- Will accomplish redemption by the sacrifice of Himself
  - Isaiah 53
- Born in one particular town
  - Micah 5:2 - “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Too* little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.”

## 1) The Person of Christ

- Christ permeates OT history.
- **1)** Christ appears in the very first verse of the OT.
  - Gen. 1:1 – in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
  - John 1:3—“All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”
  - 1 Cor. 8:6 –“Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him”
  - Col. 1:15-16—“For by Him all things were created, [both] in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him.”
  - Heb. 1:2 – “spoken by His Son...through whom He made the world”

## 1) The Person of Christ

- “The Angel of the Lord.”
- Always the definite article
- Hebrew can also refer to a *messenger*
  - almost half of the times it occurs in the OT it is translated *messenger*.

## Arguments for The Angel of YHWH being Christ:

- He is called Jehovah in several passages
  - e.g., Gen. 16:13 - Then [Hagar] called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, “You are a God who sees”; for she said, “Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?”
- He is distinct from Jehovah
  - e.g., Zech. 1:12-13 – “the Angel of YHWH answered and said, O YHWH, how long will you have no compassion for Jerusalem?”
- He must be the 2nd person of the Trinity, the eternal Son of God.
  - Only Person revealed bodily in the NT
  - He no longer appears after incarnation
  - Both He & Christ are sent by the Father
  - We’re told that no one has ever seen the Father (John 1:18)
  - Process of elimination: Christ!

## Voices of History

- Justin Martyr: “Permit me, further, to show you from the book of Exodus how this same One, who is both Angel, and God, and Lord, and man, and who had appeared in human form to Abraham and Isaac appeared in a flame of fire from the bush and conversed with Moses.”

## Voices of History

- Irenaeus writing about the books of Moses says: "The Son of God is implanted everywhere throughout his writings: at one time, indeed, speaking with Abraham, when about to eat with him; at another time with Noah, giving to him the dimensions of the ark; at another, inquiring after Adam; at another bringing down judgment upon the Sodomites; and again, when He becomes visible, and directs Jacob on his journey, and speaks with Moses from the bush."

## Voices of History

- Tertullian: "It is the Son, therefore, who has been from the beginning administering judgment, throwing down the haughty tower, and dividing the tongues, punishing the whole world by the violence of waters, raining upon Sodom and Gomorrah fire and brimstone, as the Lord from the Lord. For He is who was at all times came down to hold converse with men, from Adam on to the patriarchs and the prophets, in vision, in dream, in mirror, in dark saying; ever from the beginning laying the foundation of the course of His dispensations, which He meant to follow out to the very last. Thus was He ever learning even as God to converse with men upon earth, being no other than the Word which was to be made flesh."

## The Testimony of Scripture

- [John 5:39, 46](#)
- [Luke 24:25-27](#)
- [Luke 24:44, 46-47](#)
- Sermons in Acts (Peter & Paul)



## The Sermons in Acts

- Acts 2:24-36
- Acts 3:13 – "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His servant Jesus, *the one* whom you delivered and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.
- Acts 3:17-18 – "And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers did also. 18 "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled.

## The Sermons in Acts

- Acts 3:22-23 – Christ is the prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15).
- Acts 3:24 – "And likewise, all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and *his* successors onward, also announced these days.
- Acts 3:25-26 – "It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.' 26 "For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one *of you* from your wicked ways."

## The Sermons in Acts

- Acts 7:52 – "they killed those who had previously announced the coming of the righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become"
- Acts 10:43 – "of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins"
- Acts 13:23 – "From the descendants of this man, according to promise, God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus,

## The Sermons in Acts

- Acts 18:28 – Apollos demonstrated “by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ”
- Acts 26:22 – “stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles”
- Acts 26:26-27 – “For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner. “King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do.”

## The Sermons in Acts

- Acts 28:23 – “trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets”
- Rom. 15:8-9 - Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises *given* to the fathers, 9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, “THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME.”

## 2) The Work of Christ

- Rom. 3:21 - But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.
- Rom. 4:1-26 – uses Abraham & David to show that the OT taught justification by faith alone.

## 2) The Work of Christ

- Rom. 4:23-24 - Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,
- Rom. 16:25-26 - Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, 26 but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading* to obedience of faith.

## 2) The Work of Christ

- Gal. 3:16-29
  - The Abrahamic Covenant included the gospel message and the promise of Christ (6-16).
  - The Law was a temporary provision until the Seed had come (17-22).
  - It was a tutor to lead us to Christ (23-24).
  - To belong to Christ is to inherit the spiritual promise of the Abrahamic covenant (25-29).

## 2) The Work of Christ

- 1 Pet. 1:10-12
  - The prophets understood that salvation would come through the Messiah.
  - They didn't know “what person or time”
  - The Spirit predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and His glory.
  - The Prophets understood that His sufferings would come first and His glory would follow.

### 3) The Instruction of the Redeemed

- Rom. 15:4 - whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.
- 1 Cor. 9:9-10 - For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? 10 Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing *the crops*.
- 1 Cor. 10:6 - Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.
- 1 Cor. 10:11 - Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

### The OT's Theme

For His own glory, God accomplishes His eternal plan to redeem a people through His eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.



### The Major Sub-themes

- John MacArthur in the MSB:
  - Scripture is always teaching or illustrating:
    - 1) the character and attributes of God;
    - 2) the tragedy of sin and disobedience to God's holy standard;
    - 3) the blessedness of faith and obedience to God's standard;
    - 4) the need for a Savior by whose righteousness and substitution sinners can be forgiven, declared just, and transformed to obey God's standard; and
    - 5) the coming glorious end of redemptive history in the Lord Savior's earthly kingdom and the subsequent eternal reign and glory of God and Christ."

### Some Important Conclusions

- The fact that Christ is the central figure of both the Old and the New Testaments, immediately raises the value of the entire OT for the NT Christian.
  - cf. John 5:39 - "OT Scriptures speak of me".
- As Christians, understanding the central theme of the OT validates our use of and the benefit we receive from the Old Testament (1 Cor. 10:1-11).
- Christ's important place in the OT, underscores the consistency and continuity between the testaments.

### Some Important Conclusions

- Christ has been and will always be the mediator between God and man.
  - John 14:6 - "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father but by me".
  - 1 Tim. 2:5 - "there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus".
- It demands that we be students of the Old Testament (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

### 2 Timothy 3:15-17

- Identifies all three parts of the unifying theme of Scripture:
  - 1) The atonement - "the sacred writings are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith." (3:15)
  - 2) The Person of Christ - "which is in Christ Jesus."
  - 3) The Teaching for Believers (3:16-17)