

Why Do We Need the “Old” Testament?

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But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 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. (2 Timothy 3:14–15)

Scripture is divided into two main sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament—but if we have a “new” one, why do we need the “old” one?

The Old Testament is full of rich (and 100 percent reliable) history and is the only true foundation for understanding the world around us. But God’s Word is far more than a history textbook. It’s packed with thousands of vibrant accounts about real people—their failures and successes, disobedience and faithfulness, intense physical and spiritual warfare, and countless choices for good or evil.

The apostle Paul warned the Corinthian believers to remember and learn how the Israelites were judged for their idolatry, since “all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition” (1 Corinthians 10:11). In the same way, we should study and learn from the lives of those in the Old Testament.

God inspired the writers of the Old Testament, and He guided and orchestrated the events recorded therein—with His people in mind. Every detail God chose to include in Scripture is important, and all of it fits perfectly together to tell the awesome truth of God’s plan to accomplish His marvelous salvation through Christ for fallen humanity.

Today’s passage tells us that from a young age, Timothy knew “the Holy Scriptures,” which were capable

of making him wise for salvation. At the time Paul wrote this letter to his young protégé, the Holy Scriptures consisted primarily of the books of the Old Testament, which provide us with the historical foundation of the Gospel message expounded in the New Testament (Romans 15:4).

As we have discussed in the past several devotionals, Scripture has one consistent message and one central theme. From the first chapters of Genesis, we read of how God created a perfect world but man sinned, which brought a consequence of death—so a Deliverer was promised, the Seed (i.e., offspring) of the woman (Genesis 3:15). This promised Messiah is anticipated throughout the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament in the person of Jesus Christ, who died in our place so that we could be saved.

It is crucial for Christians to seek to understand and declare “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27) because, “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction of righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

In order to effectively reach the world with the message of Scripture, we need to diligently study and strive to live out the truth of God’s Word—all of it!