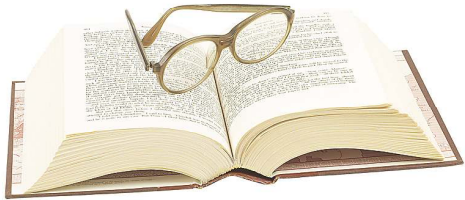


MESSAGES FROM WAYNE'S STUDY



WHAT ABOUT THE OLD TESTAMENT?

#0014

What would you do if you were suddenly placed out on the mission field with many unsaved natives around you and all you had was the Old Testament and what you personally know about Salvation, perhaps with a few letters from friends?

It would appear that many people regard the Old Testament as unimportant compared with the New Testament. Look in Bible stores - scores of reference books on the New Testament but only a scattering of books on the Old Testament .

Well, that is exactly the situation the first century church was in. They had no New Testament at all! Have you ever considered Paul's conversion? *"And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. . . . So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Acts 9:8-9,19-20 (NKJV)* How could Paul, after three days of blindness and a few days at Damascus, "immediately preach the Christ?" He was one of the biggest persecutors of "The Way!"



We know that Paul was brought up in the school of Gamaliel. He knew much of the Old Testament by heart. He had heard, no doubt, a little about this "Jesus." With three days of blindness, he had the perfect opportunity to review his Old Testament knowledge in view of this new revelation to him. There are **many** places in the Old Testament that contain prophetic statements about the Messiah as well as other topics which were "types" of Christ (i.e. the Tabernacle). In his mind, Paul could now "plug Jesus Christ" into all of these references and see what God's plan really was. I might note that, not long after, he spent three years in Arabia where he had additional time to do such study. This great man of God had only the Old Testament to learn from!

Paul was not alone! The Gospels did not appear until about 50 AD, John even later. Acts builds on Luke so it was even later. The "catholic" epistles (Hebrews, Peter's John's and Jude's) came along later in the first century. And, of course, Paul did not have the Pauline Epistles to read from! Neither did any of the other members of the early church and yet Christianity flourished.

When they assembled in church and read the Scriptures, which Scriptures did they read? Yes, they read the Old Testament Scriptures. Eventually, they began to read some of Paul's epistles. By then end of the first century they had most of the New Testament to read, but this was a long time after Pentecost! One of the criteria used in accepting a new writing into the New Testament was how well it agreed with the Old Testament.

My fiends, if you are studying only the New Testament, thinking that you are getting all of God's Word that you need, please reconsider! The Old Testament is equally important. In addition, three-fourths of your Bible is the Old Testament!