

The Way Of Our Lord Is Being Restored

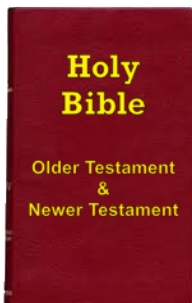
Reality 24. The Older Testament Reveals A Sovereign, Powerfully Awesome God

If you're like many Christians these days, chances are that your familiarity with the Older Testament is limited to some of its most famous accounts: Creation and Adam and Eve; Noah and the calamitous flood; King David's rise to power; and of course some of your favorite psalms. But there's so much MORE to the Hebrew Scriptures, especially in you getting to appreciate what an awe-inspiring and amazing God we serve!

In this Reality we'll review some of the reasons the Older Testament has been minimized or even set aside by anti-Semitic theologians — "religious influencers" who see little value in Christians knowing and heeding the Hebrew Bible, the "Old Testament". Remember, the Hebrew Bible was the very Bible our Lord Jesus Himself knew and fully obeyed, and it was the only Bible in existence long after His ascension! We include several links to prior materials we've prepared on the topics we'll be reviewing in these Realities, and we encourage you to explore these. In bypassing the amazing texts of the Older Testament, you've missed so much of the revelation of God's Person and Nature and Character that's presented so clearly in these essential 39 books. You've probably also been taught that His relational parameters for the Israelites whom He chose as His "treasured possession" are completely different for "Christians", and that as a Christian you have no responsibilities to our Father and Lord Jesus other than to just agree with and "believe" the Gospel. Does that describe your own concept of being "born again"?

Do you know our heavenly Father and Lord Jesus as They want to be known?

Beginning in this Reality and several to follow, we'll reveal a far more personal relationship which our heavenly Father had with specific individuals as recorded in the Older Testament than anti-Semitic theology has presented over the centuries. God personally communicated with those He selected to do His will, and He still does today — only now we who are in union with Christ through His indwelling Spirit are able to commune with our Father at all times and to hear and obey His specific commands to us! There's so much for us to gratefully take in about this amazing God IF we pursue Him to know Him more fully in every chapter and book of the Older Testament (as well as the New). For instance, ✓our Father has *absolute sovereignty* in all matters of His creation even if we don't recognize His hand behind them; ✓He reveals specific guidance (*rhema*) to those He chooses to do His specific will to accomplish His specific purpose; ✓He provides unique and marvelous power to complete the task He has assigned. And note this: If you know God from the Older Testament as well as the Newer Testament, your awe-filled appreciation will galvanize your ongoing way of life in our Lord Jesus!



There's utterly no way you can fully participate in the divine interaction our Lord Jesus offers His followers in the Newer Testament without a thorough understanding of the Older Testament. **FYI:** Theologians have divided the Bible into two sections, the Old Testament and the New. (That's pretty evident in your own Bible!) But GOD views the Bible as *one continuous revelation from beginning to end*. The Older Testament is His launch pad for you to comprehend His sovereignty and awe-inspiring power over everything visible or invisible. More specifically for you, it's in the Older Testament that the reality of your sinful de-

All Scripture is God-breathed

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy
6. Joshua
7. Judges
8. Ruth
9. 1 Samuel
10. 2 Samuel
11. 1 Kings
12. 2 Kings
13. 1 Chronicles
14. 2 Chronicles
15. Ezra
16. Nehemiah
17. Esther
18. Job
19. Psalms
20. Proverbs
21. Ecclesiastes
22. Song of Solomon
23. Isaiah
24. Jeremiah
25. Lamentations
26. Ezekiel
27. Daniel
28. Hosea
29. Joel
30. Amos
31. Obadiah
32. Jonah
33. Micah
34. Nahum
35. Habakkuk
36. Zephaniah
37. Haggai
38. Zechariah
39. Malachi
40. Matthew
41. Mark
42. Luke
43. John
44. Acts (of the Apostles)
45. Romans
46. 1 Corinthians
47. 2 Corinthians
48. Galatians
49. Ephesians
50. Philippians
51. Colossians
52. 1 Thessalonians
53. 2 Thessalonians
54. 1 Timothy
55. 2 Timothy
56. Titus
57. Philemon
58. Hebrews
59. James
60. 1 Peter
61. 2 Peter
62. 1 John
63. 2 John
64. 3 John
65. Jude
66. Revelation

pravity becomes crystal clear as you realize how greatly you've violated His righteous ways whether intentionally or not, and whether through what you've done or haven't done. And through the Older Testament you begin to internalize more deeply that the God Who created all things could also demonstrate such love, forgiveness and compassion for you that He gave you Jesus, the One He promised to Israel would come for Jew and Gentile alike.

Anchor this truth for yourself: The entire Bible is God's unchanging Word for all ages. Paul wrote with confidence that "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2Timothy 3:16,17). Again, at that time "Scripture" consisted only of the Older Testament, the Hebrew Bible. So if the Hebrew text was both "God-breathed" and "useful" for the first followers of Jesus, do you think that it's any less necessary for you to be "thoroughly equipped for every good work"?

👊 A warning for you to consider: One of the great evils perpetuated by anti-Semitic theologians is the deception that there is discontinuity between the Older and Newer Testaments, that one has nothing to do with the other. Several of these **learned intellectuals** have even audaciously declared or insinuated by their neglect to teach the Hebrew Scriptures as God's Word that the God of the Older Testament and the God of the Newer Testament are actually two different gods.



All too often only New Testaments are distributed to people who are seeking God. But without accessing the Older Testament truths which led up to the Newer Testament, seekers and believers alike have a vastly deficient view of our Father and Lord Jesus, and utter ignorance of His righteous commandments and His holy purposes. The tragic result has been widespread law-lessness among Christians especially in the US, since so many have been erroneously taught that God's laws don't apply to them. And as survey after survey attests, the morals and actions and values of Christians today are no different than those of non-Christians.

Think about it. Maybe you're among the majority of today's Christians who have none of the awesome reverence and holy fear of God which permeate the Older Testament. The Hebrew followers of Jesus in the Newer Testament didn't need to be taught about the fear of God since that was a given in their upbringing. But if you have no awe-filled regard for God, then repentance becomes optional in your life, something you've heard about but see no need to

do yourself. The will and purposes of our heavenly Father for your life are a side consideration to you at best (if His will and purposes are even part of your decision making).

But within the valuable life lessons of the Older Testament, you can't miss that the people who please God are those who put Him and obedience to His will first. The folks He especially commends didn't let their obedient trust get sidetracked by personal pleasure! In Reality 22, [**If You Don't Bear Lasting Fruit, Do You Really Belong To Jesus?**](#) Sue wrote that the vast majority of Christians we've encountered live among the "thorns" about which Jesus speaks: *"Now the [seeds] that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity"* (Luke 8:14). You have most likely been influenced by **anti-Semitic theology** which has kept from you these life-altering facets of the Older Testament: ✓ its foundational significance in drawing unbelievers to repentance and trust; ✓ its vital role in revealing the commanding rule of our Lord Jesus as Lord of someone's life; ✓ the core role which the Holy Spirit plays in the lives of those who do belong to our Lord. If you and others you know had absorbed the truths of the Older Testament and then encountered Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you'd find far fewer whose lives *"are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life."* Anti-Semitic-concocted gospels would say that the "choked" are still "saved". But God's Word says they're *not* saved without fruitfulness confirming the Holy Spirit's presence. Fruitfulness doesn't earn you heaven, but it's evidential in proving you're heading there.

The Hebraic pattern to becoming genuinely born again

Trevor McIlwain of New Tribes Missions experienced phenomenal response when he taught native peoples the Bible in chronological order from Genesis to Revelation. When they completed the Older Testament, they fully grasped the depth of their own sin and their inability to pay the penalty for those sins. Then when they heard about the atonement of Jesus on their behalf, they were overwhelmed with gratitude to respond in love for His sacrifice on the cross. Out of love for God they would cling to Jesus through any trials they might face.

In light of the perceived disconnect between the Testaments that so many scribal theologians teach, McIlwain writes that many heresies, misinterpretations, overemphasis of particular verses, and even the development of denominations and sects can be traced back to failing to teach the whole Word in its chronological, panoramic format from Genesis to Revelation.

Consider the vast distinction between man approaching God from man's point of view, and God approaching man out of His great love. Ponder these points drawn by McIlwain in his thought-provoking book, *"Building on Firm Foundations"*: 🖱️ "The Gospel is not man accepting Jesus as his Savior, but that God accepted the Lord Jesus as the perfect and only Savior two thousand years ago. 🖱️ The Gospel is not man giving his heart or his life to Jesus, but that Christ gave His life, His whole being, in the place of sinners. 🖱️ The Gospel is not man receiving Christ into his heart, but that God received the Lord Jesus into Heaven as the mediator of sinners. 🖱️ The Gospel is not Christ enthroned in the human heart, but that God enthroned the Lord Jesus at His right hand in Heaven." Christ has already fulfilled the reconciliation requirements of His Father. His payment is complete. His resurrection is a sign to us on earth that the sacrifice for our sin has been accepted by God the Father. He is satisfied. Hallelujah!

You are discipled in the Bible in the Hebraic pattern by learning more about Who God really is and what He demands of you as Jesus' own, beginning with how you enter the New Covenant. His stipula-

tions for entering the New Covenant are found in the Older Testament. If you study the Bible or even a particular book of the Bible, you may glean more facts. But just studying doesn't help you live with the depth of grateful and loving responsibility to the awesome and powerful Lord which His Lordship commands. Too many, especially evangelicals, use the Bible as a Christian's sole means to get close to God. Yet the Bible text itself reveals that the indwelling Holy Spirit, the fulness of the Godhead in the genuinely born again in Christ, is our closest intimacy with God. More on this in our next Reality!

Satan's Great Achievement: Undervalue The Older Testament

In Teaching Email 142, [*Avoid The Paralyzing Analysis Of The Scribes*](#) (Part 4) we wrote: *"What You Don't Know About The Older Testament Can Be Hurting You"*. Your spiritual life may be compromised by lies from the past! During the second century a businessman named Marcion promoted an anti-Semitic heresy. Borrowing from Plato's cosmic dualism, Marcion maintained that the God of the Older Testament was evil. By association, therefore, the chosen people of that God were evil as well. The Jews were blamed for Christ's death rather than our sins putting Him there. Marcion was obsessed with persuading Christians that the Older Testament was inferior to the Newer Testament. He even fought to remove it from the canon!

Furthermore, Marcion argued that the God of the Hebrew Scriptures demanded blind obedience to unreasonable laws and should therefore be disregarded. By contrast the Newer Testament introduced Jesus as a "god of love" having no relationship to the wrathful deity of the Older Testament. Coinciding with Marcion's influence, Hellenized "Church Fathers" who were heavily influenced by dualism allegorized much of the Older Testament into spiritual stories rather than recognizing it as divine revelation and historical narrative. They set aside God's just and good laws and commands in the Hebrew Scriptures which delineated how our holy and loving God planned for people to live in a right relationship with Him.

The "Church Fathers" altered the scriptural meaning of many of the Older Testament accounts to "sanitize" and spiritualize what was actually recorded. Some even divided God into two parts: a vengeful and irrelevant "Older Testament" deity of the Law, and a "Newer Testament" Lord of grace who overlooks believers' sins. Perhaps even you have ignored or discounted the Older Testament writings as irrelevant to anyone but Jews. But whenever you think (or are taught) that the Hebrew Bible is a secondary (or even immaterial) reference source for your practice of faith and conduct, you're under the influence of Marcion's lies. You've divided God! And anytime you hear that "the Old Testament is the law and the New Testament is grace", you're hearing the "**Marcion effect**" on Christianity. But God's Word and the Spirit fully affirm that both Testaments are resplendent with God's grace toward humanity!

Replacement Theology Has Absolutely No Regard For The Older Testament

A prevailing misconception within much of Christianity is that Christians have replaced Israel in all of God's divine plans. Many scriptural passages which pertain specifically to the Jewish people are now "spiritualized" to be blessings to the Church, while any of God's curses pertain solely to the Jew. You've been influenced by "Replacement theology" if you're taught that God has permanently rejected the Jewish people and that the Church has replaced them, and that the promises God made to the Jews now apply only to the Church. Many Christians today hold to this lie without even knowing they've been deceived. Are YOU among the deceived?

For a clearer understanding of replacement theology, see Restoring The Early Church, [*Chapter 17 The Loss Of Our Hebraic Roots*](#).