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The Divine Purpose for the Writing of the Old Testament

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BIBLE STUDY



by Harold L. Willmington

The Divine Purpose for the Writing of the Old Testament

Question: What was God's ultimate purpose in inspiring the writing of the Old Testament? In a nutshell, to accomplish a twofold purpose.

To prepare us for the Saviour. During the first Easter Sunday afternoon our risen Lord appeared to two disciples on route to Emmaus. They did not recognize Him at first, but Christ used this opportunity to summarize the Old Testament in their hearing: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

The second purpose was to prepare us for His service. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. 10:11).

Additionally, the Old Testament prepares us for the message of the New Testament. Of course, the great theme of the New Testament is a completed salvation. Note how the Old Testament

presents this wonderful plan of redemption.

Adam and Eve illustrated that salvation clothes us (Gen. 3:21; Zech. 3:1-5; Rev. 3:5,18; 19:7-8). The first terrible result of sin upon Adam and Eve was the realization of their shame and nakedness before God (Gen. 3:7). But the gracious Creator then forgave and clothed His two sinful citizens in Eden (3:21).

Cain and Abel illustrated that salvation guarantees us acceptance. Cain's example demonstrates the wrong way to be accepted (Gen. 4:4-5; Eph. 1:6). Abel made the first recorded "public profession of Christ" on earth when he offered the blood sacrifice while Cain became the first religious rebel by offering a bloodless sacrifice.

The Ark and the Passover illustrated that salvation protects us from God's wrath (Gen. 7:1; Exod. 12:23; see also Rom. 1:18; Col. 3:6; 1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 6:17). The unprotected will be subjected to a future world judgment wrath (the message of the Ark) and to a personal Great White Throne judgment (the lesson from the Passover).

Abraham and Isaac illustrated that salvation provides for us an acceptable substitute (Gen. 22:12-14; see also Isa.

53:4-6; 1 Peter 3:18). Some 20 centuries after Abraham offered up Isaac, another Father lifted up His only Son on the same spot, but this time there was no last-minute reprieve.

The Manna and the smitten Rock illustrated that salvation satisfies us (Exod. 16:14-15; 17:6; see also Ps. 103:5; 107:9). Bread from the sky and water from a rock.

The brazen serpent illustrated that salvation cures us (Num. 21:9; John 3:14). In the New Testament Christ applied this Old Testament event to Himself and led Nicodemus to salvation.

Naaman illustrated that salvation cleanses us (2 Kings 5:1-14; Ps. 51:7). This Syrian pagan was the only man in the entire Old Testament to be cleansed from the dreadful scourge of leprosy.

The tabernacle illustrated that salvation restores lost fellowship (Exod. 25:22; Ps. 23:3). One of Israel's most tragic moments in the Old Testament was the worship of a devilish Egyptian golden calf god (Exod. 32). Both idolatry and immorality were involved in that sordid affair. But the newly constructed tabernacle was able to once again assure Israel's fellowship with God.

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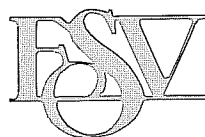
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