**Why Study the Old Testament?**

**Introduction:**

“One of the most fundamental questions which has faced theology and the church in every age and still demands an answer today is whether or not Christianity also needs an Old Testament. Is the Old Testament to be thrown away as obsolete, or preserved as a relic from days of yore, or treasured as a classic and read by scholars, or used occasionally as a change from the New Testament, or kept in a box in case it should be needed some day?” David Baker, Two Testaments, One Bible

**Theme:**

Discuss five reasons for studying the Old Testament and the importance and value of each.

**Body:**

1. **God was its Author.**

Hebrews 1:1 “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets.” NKJV This verse informs us that in time past God spoke to the fathers by the prophets. God was doing the speaking, making His will known to mankind. Paul’s words in II Timothy 3:16 refer also to Old Testament books. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...” God was the source. Since He is God, we should listen to what He has to say! We should have the attitude stated in this verse. Psalm 119:161-162. “Princes persecute me without a cause, But my heart stands in awe of Your word. I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure.” NKJV Can you imagine receiving a letter from the person that you love the most and yet never taking the time to read it? Think about that.

1. **The Old Testament contains the only complete and accurate account of the origin of this world and of mankind.**

Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” NKJV Where else can you find a detailed account of the six days of creation, what was created when, or an account of God’s creating Adam and Eve and the beginning of the institution of marriage? Genesis 1 and 2 as well as Job 38-40 provide information found nowhere else. From these chapters, we can know that the world was created in six literal 24-hour days just a few thousand years ago and that evolution played no part in it. Let’s thank God for the Old Testament Scriptures. John 1:1-3 has so much more meaning when we read the Old Testament chapters. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” NKJV

1. **The Old Testament describes God’s nature.**
2. He’s eternal. Deuteronomy 33:27 “The eternal God is your refuge, And underneath are the everlasting arms. . .” NKJV [God, the Great I Am, shows the value of the Old Testament.]
3. He’s faithful. Isaiah 44:6-8 “Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, Since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, Let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid, Have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one.’ ” NKJV What God foretold in the Old Testament, did happen.
4. He’s just. Deuteronomy 32:4 “He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.” NKJV
5. He’s loving, merciful and kind. Psalm 31:19, 21 “Oh, how great is Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You Which you have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of men! 21 Blessed be the Lord, For He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a strong city!” NKJV God gave the world 100 years to repent in the days of Noah.
6. He’s powerful. I Chronicles 29:10-11 “Therefore David blessed the Lord before all the assembly; and David said: ‘Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, And You are exalted as head over all.’ ” NKJV The Flood, the Tower of Babel, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah are examples of God’s power.
7. **The Old Testament instructs us by its examples.**

Read I Corinthians 10:5-12. “But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” NKJV Paul says what happened to God’s people in times pasts should teach us a lesson. The principles involved are timeless. By reading about the Old Testament characters mentioned in Hebrews 11, we should be encouraged and our faith strengthened. Quote Romans 15:4 “For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” NKJV They’re for us to learn from. It instills within us a hope when we see people of old enduring afflictions yet remaining faithful. Yes, we can learn much from pages of the Old Testament.

1. **It tells of the origin of sin and the need for redemption.** Genesis 3 declares how sin entered the world in the Garden of Eden. That same chapter mentions the coming of the Seed, the Messiah. Much of the Old Testament foretells of this Great Deliverer and the fact that His coming was essential for man’s salvation, the central element in God’s plan for man’s redemption. Isaiah 53:4-6 “Surely He has born our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way, And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” NKJV

Read Romans 5:18-19. “Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.” NKJV Because of Christ’s death on the cross, the shedding of His blood, all who so choose may be justified, pronounced “not guilty.” What about you? Will you obey Him now?

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