

# The Big Picture of Scripture

## Lesson 5: Identifying the Bible's Chief End

- I. Christ is the first and the last of all Bible interpretation because *Christ is the Bible's chief end*.
  - A. In order to know how any given part of the Bible relates to us, we need to answer two prior questions: 1) *How does the text in question relate to Christ?* and 2) *How do we relate to Christ?*
    1. Since Christ is *the* Word of God, God's fullest and final word to mankind, all other words in the Bible receive their final meaning from Him, Jn 1.1-2, 14, 18; Heb 1.1-4; cf. Mt 3.15; Mk 14.49; Lk 22.37; Jn 13.18. Recognizing the Lordship of Christ over all creation is recognizing that *He* dictates to us the terms for understanding the Bible, Jn 5.39.
    2. Another way of saying this is that Christ is the Mediator between God and us, 1Tim 2.5. *God's word to us in the Bible is mediated to us through Christ*. There's no direct word from God to us outside of Christ because we're covenant-breakers. Every word sinners can lay claim to is a word mediated to us through the person and work of Christ, a word that becomes ours by faith in and union with Christ, cf. Hos 1.10-11; 2.16-23; 2Cor 1.20.
      - a) Jesus Christ is the link between every part of the Bible and ourselves. Thus, the words of the OT are mediated through Christ in that we only know what God is saying to us through them when we see them fulfilled in Christ for us.
    3. In fact, all facts in the universe must be interpreted in light of God's fullest revelation in Christ, Col 1.16; Heb 1.1. Christ reveals and interprets all truth about God and all creation.
  - B. At the heart of Christ's teaching and work is the gospel, Mk 1.14-15.
    1. It's important to see that Christ didn't come because the time was fulfilled, but rather He fulfilled the time by coming. Fulfillment isn't a reference to history, but to the way He fulfills all the expectations of OT history at the time appointed by God, cf. Mt 3.15.
    2. Jesus tells us that the central theme of His message is *the coming of the Kingdom of God*. By not explaining what He means Christ makes clear that He's speaking of an already existing idea in the minds of the Jews. He's speaking of the Kingdom promised to Abraham in the historical narrative and prophesied by the prophets as a future event, Hos 1.10-2.1; 2.16-23.
    3. And He points out the significance of the Kingdom by saying it demands *repentance and faith*. By repentance, the people must turn away from their desire to be independent of God and submit to God's kingly rule. And by faith, they must trust in the rule of the King and rely on His word alone for their lives.
    4. This means the Kingdom Christ brings is a Kingdom in which God offers to restore fellowship with Himself for those who oppose and hate Him. It's a Kingdom which calls the wayward sinners home, Hos 5.15-6.3.
    5. Thus, Jesus is bringing about a renewal of the OT covenant through the NT gospel event.
      - a) He'll stand in the place of covenant-breaking Adam as a new Adam *and* of covenant-breaking Israel as a new Israel, and He will keep covenant, Mt 4.
      - b) He'll offer Himself up as the Passover Lamb and put away the people's sins once and for all, acting both as the High Priest and as the Lamb itself, and thereby reconcile sinners to God, 1Cor 5.7; Gal 2.20; Eph 1.7; Heb 7.25; 10.1-14.
- II. Christ is the fulfillment of the OT, Rom 1.1-4.
  - A. Consider the first sermons of both Peter (Acts 2) and Paul (Acts 13). They preach the gospel from the OT and declare that Christ has fulfilled it.

1. The OT is fulfilled, Acts 2.16-21, 25-31, 34-36; 13.16-23, 32-39;
  2. ...in the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth, Acts 2.22; 13.23-26;
  3. ...who died, Acts 2.23; 13.27-29;
  4. ...and rose again, Acts 2.24, 32; 13.30-31, 34-37;
  5. ...and is now exalted, Acts 2.33, 36; 13.34;
  6. ...through His forgiveness of sins, Acts 2.38; 13.38-39;
  7. ...Therefore, Acts 2.38-40; 13.40-41.
- B. It's impossible to proclaim Jesus Christ as the Saviour without constant reference to the foundations which have been laid in the history of God's saving work in the OT and in the types and shadows of the OT because His gospel is the fulfillment of it all. He's the goal and chief end toward which it *all* moves.
- C. The relationship of the OT to Christ.
1. Prophetic word: completed in Christ, Heb 1.1-2.
  2. All prophecy: fulfilled in Christ, Acts 13.32-33.
  3. David's line: ended in Christ, Rom 1.3.
  4. Promise to David: fulfilled in Christ, Acts 2.30-31.
  5. Old Testament tells of salvation: in Christ, 2Tim 3.15.
  6. The entire Old Testament: concerns Christ, Lk 24.27.
- D. OT themes applied by the NT to Christ.
1. Creator, Word, Wisdom, Son of God, Adam, Israel, Son of Abraham, Judge Prophet, Priest, King, Light of the Nations, New Covenant, Salvation, Servant of God, Anointed One, Redemption, Shepherd.
- III. This compels us to examine the OT foundations of the gospel and see that the gospel can't be the gospel without the OT.
- A. We need to go back to the beginning of the biblical story and follow it through until we arrive again at the gospel—all the while—with the Christian perspective that the progression of events will only find their true meaning in Christ.
- B. We must remember this. The OT is a story without an ending. Judaism and Islam have both provided their endings to the story that we as Christians can't accept as valid because we know that Jesus Christ is the goal of the OT and provides its true meaning. Any understanding of, and commentary on, the OT that doesn't presuppose this fact is at best incomplete and at worst un-Christian.