

The Trinity and the Old Testament

By Don Green

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Truth Community Church

4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road
Cincinnati, OH 45255

Website: truthcommunitychurch.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm

Well, we have a somewhat unusual topic, you might say, to study together tonight, although it's one of my favorite topics that I've ever preached on. I know you've heard me say that many times but this time I really mean it. Over the past couple of weeks for those of you maybe that have missed or are just catching up with us, we've done a brief study on the deity of Christ. We've studied seven different aspects that show the deity of Christ out of the Gospel of John, and before we return to our sequential study of the Psalms next week, I wanted to do one final message that bears on the matter of the deity of Christ and more specifically the doctrine of the Trinity, and what we're going to look at tonight is the relationship of the Old Testament to the doctrine of the Trinity. I love this topic.

Now, in times past, we have taught on the Trinity and relying primarily on New Testament passages and the question comes up, "Well, what does the Old Testament have to say about it?" We're going to look at that. Jewish teachers believe that the Old Testament contradicts the idea of the Trinity. They emphasize that the Old Testament says in passages like Deuteronomy 6:4 that, "the LORD is one!" And they say the idea that one God existing in three persons is a violation of that basic fundamental truth that is the cornerstone of what they say that they believe and our question is: what do we think about that? How are we to think about that?

Now, before I go any further, I want to say that just as a matter of, I don't know, personal integrity or personal relationships that matter to me, I have interacted with spiritually minded Jews on this topic in times gone by. They were unfailingly gracious, they were intelligent, they were insightful as they have disagreed with me. It was a delight to spend time with them even though we had such fundamental differences. One time I even was in the home of a Rabbi spending time with him during one of the Jewish meals. It was a wonderful time that I'll never forget and so I say these things with a strong sense of memory and sympathy to those times gone by but I do have to say for the sake of greater obligation and loyalty to Christ, that I believe that these friends are uninformed, that they are greatly mistaken, and their error is one that puts souls in danger, and so we have a responsibility to address this matter clearly from Scripture, and the beautiful thing about tonight is that we're going to go to their own Scriptures to be able to talk about this and to see what the Bible says.

The Old Testament says that there is one God. We accept that premise. The question, however, is what is the nature of that one true God? And that's the question that we need

to answer. Let me put the question differently and we could state the question like this: does the Old Testament anticipate the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity? That's the question. Can you see echoes of this coming doctrine in the Old Testament? Do you find things in the Old Testament that suggests what New Testament Christians teach even if they're not there in the fullness of the revelation? And the answer to that question is absolutely, without qualification, without hesitation: yes, that is absolutely the case.

Now, let me just give you a definition of the Trinity that we have used in the past just to keep things fresh in your mind. The doctrine of the Trinity teaches this: that there is one true God with only one essence who eternally exists in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three persons are each equally and fully God, they each equally deserve worship and obedience, yet these three persons are only one God. There is only one essence and somehow God exists with that one essence in three persons. And as I've said in times past, we have that message available on CD, it's online, "What is the Trinity?" to answer that question, to lay those things out in greater detail. I'm going to assume all of that content with what we're saying here this evening.

The question for tonight, just to state it one more time is: what does the Old Testament, what can we look at in the Old Testament that would give us an indication of this doctrine? Well, what you're going to see is three lines of Old Testament thought that support the Christian notion that the one true God exists in a plurality of persons. There is no question about this. It is clear in what we are going to see. So I'm going to give you three things here this evening along those lines and the first one is this, what are we going to look at, what could we see from the Old Testament that would point us in this direction? First of all, we're going to consider the Hebrew word for "one." The Hebrew word for "one." That may seem like an awfully simple starting point but it is crucial to what we have to say. Orthodox Jews recite Deuteronomy 6:4 twice a day. It is their prayer called the Shema, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!" And that verse is part of that Jewish daily prayer. They recite it twice a day, morning and evening. So what's the math on that? 730 times a year, leap year 732 times. That is just so deeply ingrained in their thought that it is a reflexive thought to them and Jews say that the Trinity is not true because the Lord is one, and they repeat that over and over again.

Well, what do we say to that? Well, what we do is that we look at the nature of what the Hebrew word for "one" means and what it says and how it is used. It's not enough to simply recite a mantra, "The LORD is one! The LORD is one!" and then stick your fingers in your ears and refuse to listen to anything that would explain what that means. That is not an acceptable way to respond to God's truth. What does this word mean? How is it used, is the question. Well, the Hebrew word for "one" that is used in Deuteronomy 6:4 is the word "echad" with my meager Hebrew pronunciation. Echad, e-c-h-a-d, if you were going to do a transliteration in English. "The LORD is echad." Now, one lexicon, a standard theological lexicon says that "echad" means this, it does this, and I quote: it stresses unity while recognizing diversity within that oneness. Let me say that again. This is probably about as technical as it's going to get here tonight. "Echad" stresses unity while recognizing diversity within that oneness.

Let me give you an illustration before we look at some scriptural examples here. If you go to a vineyard and you pick a bunch of grapes, you could hold that bunch of grapes up and say, "Here is one bunch of grapes." True. That's a proper use of the word "one." But within that bunch of grapes, there is a sense of diversity. There are many grapes on that bunch; there is a stem, there are branches to it, so there is diversity even within the oneness of the bunch of grapes. That's just a simple illustration to help you see that "one" is not a word that excludes a sense of diversity within the oneness.

Now, let's look at some biblical ways that this word "echad" is used. Let's get a flavor for its usage going to Jewish Scripture, you might say. Look at Genesis 1. You see, the whole Jewish polemic against the Trinity hinges on the fact that oneness excludes any sense of diversity and their own Scriptures won't allow them to make that argument. Their own Scriptures contradict it. Go to the account of the creation in Genesis 1:3. It's amazing how this just jumps off of the text at you. In Genesis 1:3, "God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness." Watch this, verse 5, "God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, echad day," one day. Think about what that means. Evening and morning constituted one day, echad. It was a single unit with plurality within the unit. Right there the word "echad" is being used in a way to show that there is diversity within the oneness of the day.

That's not the only place that you see this. Look over at Genesis 2. You remember the story of how God took a rib from Adam and fashioned a woman for him out of the rib. Let's look at Genesis 2:21, "So the LORD God caused," Genesis 2:21 for those of you keeping score at home. Genesis 2:21, "the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. The man said, 'This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become echad flesh," one flesh. One flesh, man and woman within that oneness. So once again you see the idea of diversity. Two separate persons sharing the one essence of marriage.

And so as you just look at those little simple examples that could be expanded upon with other Scriptures, echad teaches us to expect a diversity within the oneness. It's the lexical meaning of the term. You see it used this way in the opening chapters of Genesis, one day: morning and evening; one flesh: man and woman sharing the essence. So this echad, it tells you to expect diversity, it doesn't exclude it. Our Jewish friends are greatly mistaken on a most fundamental tenant of theology. It's sad but the nature of the Trinity is consistent with echad.

Going to a New Testament text, John 10:30, Jesus expressed this concept, not in Hebrew, but he said, "I and the Father are one." So the Old Testament anticipated that kind of plurality within the unity of God.

Now, please understand what we are saying and what we're not saying: we are not saying that the word "echad" establishes the full Christian doctrine of the Trinity. We're not saying that. We are simply saying that it is consistent with a sense of plurality that completely contradicts a Jewish insistence on oneness without any diversity in the oneness. That's crucial to this cornerstone doctrine about the nature of who God is.

Now, the Old Testament is consistent with the Trinity in another way that I think is quite compelling. This brings us to our second point tonight. The second point is: the plural references to God found in the New Testament. The plural references to God. In the Old Testament, God repeatedly refers to himself in the plural. Genesis 1:26, why don't you turn there with me so you can see this in your own Bibles and not just merely rely on my quotation. I like to say that when you see it in the text for yourself you know that I'm not making this up. So Genesis 1:26, "God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image,'" in "Our image," notice that. "'Let US make man in Our image according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'" Do you see it there? "Let Us. Our image." Plural right from the very beginning.

At the tower of Babel, God said, look over at Genesis 11:7. God is speaking, in fact, let's look at verse 6 just so you can see that plainly, "The LORD said," Genesis 11:6, "the LORD said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.'" Verse 7, "'Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech.' So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city." Notice the basic things of grammar of nouns and verbs that are contained in this passage. Verse 6, "The LORD said." The Lord is the one who is speaking here and it's the Lord who said, "Let Us go down." He's referring to himself in the plural.

One other passage, we won't turn there, but Isaiah 6:8. Isaiah said that, "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying," and the Lord is speaking, "'Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?'"

Genesis 1:26, Genesis 11:7, Isaiah 6:8. Notice what is happening here in all of these passages. Somehow in some manner, God is deliberating with someone within himself. There is a plurality as God speaks to and considers himself in his own being. That is anticipating the fuller New Testament revelation. How can God be "us" if he is absolutely one with no distinction whatsoever? It makes no sense. There is something here as we look at the Hebrew word for "one" and as we look at these plural references to God.

Now, some Jewish writers will say this, they'll say, "Well, God is talking to the angels when he says these things." That doesn't work at all. The angels were not co-participants in creation. God did not create man in the image of angels when he said, "Let Us create man in Our image." He created man in the image of God, Genesis 9:6, James 3, among other places. So that doesn't go anywhere without just turning yourselves into pretzels and having no kind of logic that is consistent through the way that you handle these

passages. God refers to himself in the plural, the Hebrew word for "echad" anticipates diversity within oneness, and so this plurality is consistent with the New Testament teaching on the Trinity. These things are very important.

Now, let me take you to a third matter for consideration here this evening and that is what we call the "angel of the LORD" passages. The "angel of the LORD" passages. So first we saw the Hebrew word for "one"; secondly, we saw the plural references to God; thirdly, we are going to see the "angel of the LORD" passages that contribute to our understanding of these matters. All of these independent, in some ways seemingly incidental matters, that cumulatively all point in the same direction. The Old Testament, speaking of these "angel of the LORD" passages, the Old Testament often refers to a heavenly being known as "the angel of the LORD" and he is equated with God and yet he is distinct from God.

Look at Genesis 16 with me beginning in verse 7, let's say. This is the story of Sarah and Hagar. Now in verse 7, chapter 16, verse 7, "the angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. He said, 'Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?' And she said, 'I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.' Then the angel of the LORD said to her, 'Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.' Moreover, the angel of the LORD said to her, 'I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.'" Now look at verse 13, "she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, 'You are a God who sees'; for she said, 'Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?'" The angel of the LORD is called "the LORD who spoke to her" and "a God who sees." Look at verse 13 there with me again. Remember, it's the angel of the LORD who has been talking with her and then right there, Moses says that Hagar, "called the name of the LORD who spoke to her," equating the angel of the LORD with the name of Yahweh. He is distinct from God and yet he is called God himself.

Look over at Exodus 3 with me. Exodus 3 as we'll see this in another place as well. This is the account of the burning bush where God made himself known to Moses. In Exodus 3:1, "Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God." Verse 2, "The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed." So the angel of the LORD is appearing to him in the midst of this fire and so in verse 3, "Moses said, 'I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up.'" Verse 4, "When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.'" Verse 2, the angel of the LORD appears to him in the midst of the bush. In verse 4, it's God calling to him from the midst of the bush. He is distinct from God and yet he is called God himself. Once again, you see the plurality in the midst of God's oneness in Old Testament revelation.

Now, we won't take the time, there are many other passages in the Old Testament that show this "angel of the LORD" phenomenon. You can write them down and look at them

later if you're so inclined: Genesis 22; Genesis 31; Numbers 22; Judges 6; Judges 13 and others that we won't even take the time to list. This is a repeated phenomenon showing that the angel of the LORD, who is distinct from God and yet he is called God himself.

So we come back to what we said earlier: the Hebrew word for "one," the plural references to God, and the "angel of the LORD" passages all anticipate the doctrine of the Trinity. Now, it just occurred to me that there is at least one person in here with a measure of Jewish background in his life and family. This matters and so we are glad to be able to open these things up and see what Scripture says.

So in light of these things, I want you to see and just understand if you get nothing else out of the message because this comes down to a matter of strength in your own understanding of your faith, it comes down to a matter of not being intimidated by those who would come with a brashness and thinking that they can quote one portion of one verse and settle a whole matter of theology. That's not true. That's not how we handle Scripture and Christians can be just as bad about doing that hermeneutical little trick as anyone else. Here's the thing, beloved: you have to let all of Scripture speak if you're going to have a meaningful theology. You have to let all of Scripture speak if you're going to maintain any kind of stance that you take the word of God seriously. You can't pick and choose the things which agree with your preconceived notions and then ignore everything else. That doesn't work. That is not a matter of handling the word of God with integrity, I don't care how many people say it and repeat it. Let me just say this one more time because I think it's really important and I don't mean to be flippant when I say this: when it comes to the matter of the Old Testament, when it comes to the matter of the nature of God and understanding the fullness of what Scripture says, you cannot simply quote Deuteronomy 6:4, "The LORD is one!" and then stick your fingers in your ears, "The LORD is one! The LORD is one! and I'm not going to listen to anything else." If you do that, at least be honest enough to say, "I don't care to see what the rest of Scripture says. It doesn't matter to me. That one verse is all that matters." Then at least we can have an honest conversation. No, it doesn't work that way. You must allow the entire Old Testament to speak to this matter.

Now, do these three lines of evidence, the plural references to God, the Hebrew word for "one," the "angel of the LORD" passages, here's a key question, I want you to understand what we're saying and what we're not saying: do those lines of evidence prove the doctrine of the Trinity as we have defined it using New Testament revelation? Do they prove Father, Son and Holy Spirit? No, they don't. They don't go into that level of detail. We are not saying that. What we're saying is that the Old Testament is consistent with what would come later. We're saying that the Old Testament shows plurality within God while we are also saying that the New Testament teaches this doctrine of the Trinity which we defined earlier.

Now, here's something that I think if you've never really considered what we're about to say, this will open up a lot of understanding to you and I think this is really exciting to look at. How can we put all of these things together? How can we say that the Old Testament teaches a diversity within God's oneness and say at the same time it doesn't

prove the doctrine of the Trinity, and at the same time say we believe the doctrine of the Trinity? How can we put all these things together? It starts to make your head spin a little bit if you're not careful. Well, that brings us to our fourth point tonight that I'm delighted to share with you and it's this: it is the role of progressive revelation. The role of progressive revelation and this is a wonderful doctrine to consider. Look, we only know God because God has made himself known. God has revealed himself. We would not know God if he had not done that. Adam sinned away our opportunity to know God. He plunged his whole human race of which he was the representative head into darkness, into spiritual oblivion, and so God made himself known despite the sin of man. Here's what you need to know, you ask yourself the question: how can we know that these things are true? How can I have a sense of confidence in these things? How do I know what I know? Well, we know because God has made himself known and here's the thing for you to understand. This will really help you develop some maturity and put some meat on your spiritual bones, you might say. We'll take a little bit of time to look at this. God revealed himself in greater detail over time. God did not simply give all of his revelation at once as soon as Adam fell into sin. He did it in bits and pieces over time and we know that for many many reasons. The Bible was written by about 40 men over a period of 1,500 years. God parceled out, he measured out different aspects of his revelation over a long period of time until such time as the New Testament Canon was completed and revelation ceased. He did it over time and you can see this very very clearly in the Scriptures themselves.

Watch this with me. You see this even in the Old Testament in the way that God spoke to Moses. Go back to the book of Exodus with me. Go back to Exodus 6. What I love about these things is that they are just present right there in the text of Scripture. You can see them for yourself. I'm not giving you any esoteric explanations here. This is all right on the surface. So in Exodus 6, beginning in verse 1, "the LORD said to Moses, 'Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for under compulsion he will let them go, and under compulsion he will drive them out of his land.'" Watch what he says here, verse 2, "God spoke further to Moses and said to him, 'I am the LORD,'" I am Yahweh, and he said, "'and I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, Yahweh, I did not make Myself known to them.'" So the one true God made himself known to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He made himself known truly to them, however, now that he is revealing himself to Moses as he is about to deliver his people from the bondage in Egypt, he says, "I am going to show you, I am going to make known more about myself than I did to the patriarchs." So he revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob with one measure of light, and then think about it this way, I never thought about it this way before until just this moment: it's like having a three-way bulb in your lamp. You turn it on and there is light, true light, and you can see by it. You turn it another notch and there is greater light that is expanded that shows even more light. You turn it a third time and it goes up to 150 watts and the whole room is lit up. It's like that with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God made himself known, he turned the switch, it was on 50 watts. He goes to Moses and he turns the switch and he makes it even brighter as he reveals himself in his name Yahweh.

As God, as you go through the Old Testament, God spoke through the later prophets and he taught the Jews to expect a coming Messiah. As the Old Testament closes with the book in our English Bibles of Malachi, you are left expecting someone to come. You are left with this sense of unfulfilled prophecy at the end of the Old Testament. God has said there is a coming one, there is a suffering servant to come, and at the end of the Old Testament, if you just read the Old Testament without any knowledge of the New, you would be left saying, "Something is missing. There is something incomplete about this." That's why the Jews in the New Testament were looking for the Messiah. They were waiting. It had been a 400 year period of silence.

With that in mind, now go to the Old Testament, remembering we're talking now about the whole matter of progressive revelation. 1 Peter 1 and we're going to pick up right where I left off in the opening text that I read. 1 Peter 1:10, the Apostle Peter says, "As to this salvation," the salvation of which he had just been writing that is glorious, that God has by his great mercy given to us, we're born again to a living hope, this wonderful salvation that we have that is enough to sustain us through our trials and to give us hope even if we suffer for a little time in the process. That salvation. Verse 10, look at it with me, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." Even as the prophets were speaking, they had this sense that there was something that was going to follow after their ministry was done. There were glories yet to come. There were sufferings of Christ. There were glories to follow that they did not yet know and so they searched it out. They studied. They yearned to look into these things. Carefully they searched and what did they find in their lifetime? Verse 12, "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven - things into which angels long to look."

Brothers and sisters, friends in Christ, beloved fellow Christians, look at what is right on the surface of the text here. Notice the sequence that this text teaches us. There were the prophets in verse 10. They prophesied, they faithfully fulfilled their ministry and we thank God for them, and yet as they were doing this, in verse 11 notice the sequence, the Spirit of Christ was indicating to them that there were sufferings and glories to follow. In their ministry, they said the Spirit of God revealed to them there is more to come. Then you go to verse 12 and you see that Scripture tells us that these things now have been announced to you. It's going to follow, the New Testament comes, now it's here. Revelation progresses. When Christ came to earth – watch this, beloved – when Christ came to earth and manifested the deity which we studied over the past two weeks, Jesus Christ during his incarnation as he walked on the earth, was fulfilling, was revealing in his flesh the fullness of the nature of God which the Old Testament for 1,500 years had been preparing people to expect.

Let's step back and quiet our hearts and bow low before the things that Scripture is showing to us. Do you realize that one thing among many that this means is that a sovereign, omniscient, omnipotent God had one glorious plan in his mind from the

beginning and he gradually unfolded it to his people over time and was working out what he had ordained before time began as these revelations kept coming and expanding in greater and greater light. We do not have an haphazard faith. We do not serve a God who is figuring out things as they went along like open theists would try to teach us. Not at all. God knew the end from the beginning and he unfolded it in a manner that his people were able to receive and understand. It's like a baby that can take milk for a while and then he graduates to more solid food as he grows; in like manner, God gave his revelation in increasing measures of maturity to his people through those who spoke the word of God to them and so we marvel at the wisdom of God. We marvel. We worship at the feet of a God who is this great and this wise and who is so perfect in his outworking of his purposes that he can do this over millennia in a way that is perfectly consistent with things that were said from the start.

One final text that I would take you to, Hebrews 1. Again, this is all about, this final point is about the matter of progressive revelation. Hebrews 1, just before the book of James, just after the book of Philemon which we will return to on Sunday. Hebrews 1. When Christ came to earth, before I read the text, when Christ came to earth, he was bringing to light what the Old Testament had been expecting all along. Look at Hebrews 1:1, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." Notice: long ago, God spoke like this. In these last days, he has spoken like this. It was in the prophets, many different ways, different prophets who spoke, now that that time period is over, now the Son has come and God has made his final disclosure. Christ is the culmination of everything that the Old Testament was pointing to.

Here's another way for you to think about progressive revelation and to see and to understand that the Old Testament, the Old Testament, God was under no obligation in the Old Testament to reveal the fullness of the doctrine of the Trinity because he did it on his timetable; he did it the way he wanted to do; he did it in a way that gave hints of things that were to come later. Here's what I want you to see, here's another illustration that those of you that wear glasses like I do can understand perfectly. With my glasses off, I cannot see you clearly. I see little forms of human existence in front of me but I cannot recognize your features. I only know who you are because I have memorized exactly where each one of you sit, but that has nothing to do with what I'm talking about here right now. When I take my glasses off, I can't see you clearly even though you are there in front of me. When I put my glasses on, I see it all. I see you clearly. What was fuzzy and only in outline form now comes into perfect perception, 20/20 vision. Note this: nothing changed. You were there all along. The only thing that changed was that something additional made my vision better so that I could see clearly what before was only in a blurry outline. It's somewhat that way with the doctrine of the Trinity. The Old Testament teaches that there is one God with some kind of plurality and it teaches that in multiple ways, in multiple passages. We can't define it precisely from the Old Testament picture but we can see it from a distance. We can see that there is something there, then we put on our New Testament glasses and we say, "Ah, there it is. There is the culmination of the revelation of God in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ who taught us

to anticipate the coming of the Holy Spirit who himself is God who would indwell us." The New Testament fills in the details that the Old Testament gave us in outline form and we know to receive this New Testament revelation because Jesus Christ is the perfection and the fulfillment of all the Old Testament prophecies that pointed to him.

So let's bring this full circle as we wrap it up for tonight. When Jews challenge our faith, mock us and distort our teaching of the Trinity, here's what we do without fear, without any sense of intimidation: we go to their own Scriptures and we open it up and we say, "We've got to look at all of this, not just part of one verse." And with humility and gentleness, we show them that the Old Testament teaches them to expect exactly what it is that you believe as a New Testament Christian, as one who affirms the Trinity. We can start at Genesis 1:1 and walk our way through and say, "This is what Scripture teaches us to expect and in the Lord Jesus Christ, you see the culmination of the revelation that your own Scriptures tell you to expect." And we invite them to gladly read Isaiah 53 which they often skip over in their Scripture readings, and say, "Here in Isaiah 53, you see what the fulfillment of your own Scriptures did. He laid down his life."

In fact, let's close with Isaiah 53. Look over at that with me. We see the culmination in Christ of the great hope of Israel. Of course we're unashamed to proclaim this to them. Of course the Apostle Paul said he was not ashamed of the Gospel; that he delighted in opening these things to Jews and Gentiles alike. And what do we find? What does Isaiah 53 point to? It points to this servant of the Lord in verse 4, Isaiah 53:4, "Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him." We find in the Lord Jesus Christ the fulfillment of this prophecy looking for a time when there would be a sin-bearing substitute. Scripture teaches us that that sin-bearing substitute was the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Savior of Jews, the only Savior of Gentiles, and we call all men to repent of their sins and to put their faith in him for salvation knowing that this New Testament call to salvation is in perfect alignment with what the Old Testament taught us to expect.

Let's bow together in prayer as we close.

Father, we thank you for the marvel of your revelation. We thank you and we praise you for the wisdom that devised such a plan to unfold revelation consistently, progressively over time, to embed in the older revelation hints of that which would one day come later. Father, we thank you that you have opened our eyes, that you have awakened our hearts, that you shed the light of God into our soul so that we might be awakened and born again to see these things, that we might repent and turn to Christ and receive the salvation that comes only through him. Father, we trust in your word and we believe every aspect of it. We pray that you would help us grow still more. And Father, for those that are here in the room or perhaps watching over the live stream that have not yet turned to Christ, we ask you once again, Father, that by your mercies, by your kindness,

by your grace, you would open their eyes to see the glory of Christ and that they would fall on their knees, as it were, before him and gladly embrace him as Lord and God, the second person of the glorious Triune Godhead who gave his life for their sins on the cruel cross of Calvary some 2,000 years ago. Father, take us now, use us, bless us, protect us, guide us as we go. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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