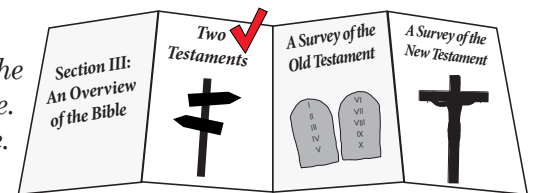




## Section 3: Overview

### Part 1: Two Testaments

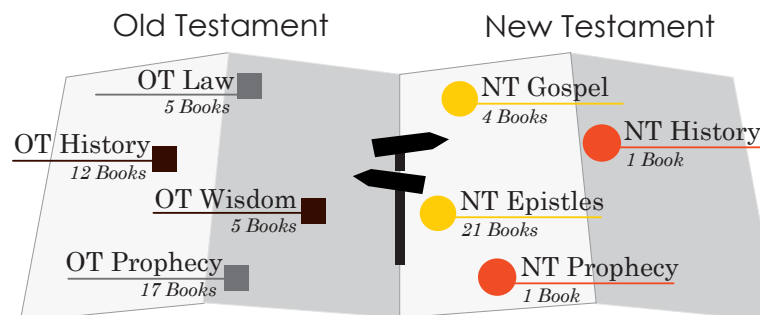
\*The following three lessons are intended to introduce an overview of the Bible. The author suggests spending time memorizing the 66 books inside. This discipline will be valuable in many ways throughout the Christian life.



#### A Single Step

The Bible is one great book with one central message: the redemption of man from sin. When someone opens the Bible for the very first time, it can feel overwhelming. Perhaps they ask: *Where should I start? How much should I read?* Anyone who is willing to learn should take comfort knowing that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.<sup>1</sup> He wants us to learn and be edified when we read. Even though the Bible is a big book, we can see it as a long journey. The journey of 1,000 miles always begins with one step. We should start by understanding the general layout as our first step toward Biblical literacy.

#### The Two Testaments



A Testament is a covenant or agreement. The Bible is organized into two major testaments: the Old and New Testament. While God made many covenants in the Scriptures, two distinct groups bear the honor of having the Bible refer to their Testament with God. According to the Bible, a testament with God was brought about by blood.<sup>2</sup> The Old Testament was established about by the blood of bulls and goats. The New Testament was established by the blood of Jesus Christ.

The first Testament is commonly referred to as *Old* because we do not live under it today.<sup>3</sup> The second covenant in the Bible is the *New* Testament because it came after (and replaced) the Old Testament. It was brought about by the death of Jesus Christ. When Christians worship God on Sundays and partake in the Communion, we drink grape juice from a cup.<sup>4</sup> This joint symbol represents Jesus' blood (the grape juice) of the new covenant (the cup). It is amazing to see the connections that God has put in the Bible for us to better understand His will!

<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:33

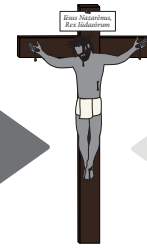
<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 9:16-22

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews 9:15

The New Testament brought about a new age of time that continues today: *The Christian Age*. Jesus' sacrifice makes salvation from sin and spiritual death possible for all mankind.<sup>5</sup>

**Old Testament**

- Everything before Jesus
- A covenant made with animal sacrifices



**New Testament**

- Jesus' life + everything afterwards
- A covenant made with Jesus' sacrifice

## *Evidence, Example, and Wisdom*

Some Christians may consider the Old Testament as non-relevant to their lives since we are saved through the New Testament of Jesus. However, the Old Testament is essential and valuable for Christians. It holds pivotal history that the New Testament does not address (i.e. Creation). The Old Testament holds powerful *evidences* for the Divine inspiration of the Bible.<sup>6</sup> Christians can also use the Old Testament for *examples*. The lives of the men and women from within this time can be learned from. Christians can observe great faith and great sin. The New Testament says this concerning the Old Testament:

*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.*<sup>7</sup>

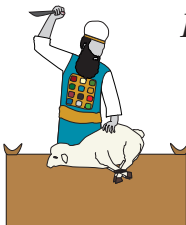
Another wonderful blessing of the Old Testament is the appreciation of the Psalms, Proverbs and other books of *wisdom*. These books teach us about praise, trust, and understanding God's will.

## *Should Christians Obey the Old Testament?*

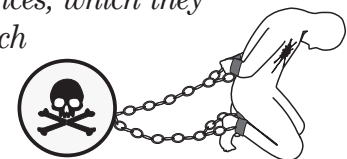
While useful for example and wisdom, Christians cannot obey the Old Testament as covenant law. Consider a sample of New Testament truths about Christians who attempt to obey the Old Testament as covenant law:

*Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, **we are no longer under a tutor.***<sup>8</sup>

*For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. [...] In that He says, "A new covenant," **He has made the first obsolete.** Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*<sup>9</sup>



*For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. [...] For **it is not possible** that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*<sup>10</sup>



Some people may be worried when they hear this. They may believe Christians must honor the Ten Commandments or other parts of the Old Law. Please understand that any moral law from the Old Testament that God wants us to follow today is also found in the New Testament. Consider the example of honoring our parents. In the Old Testament, God wrote a specific command for children.<sup>11</sup> We serve a God of patterns. He still cares about children honoring their parents. In fact, the New Testament refers the Old Testament Law in example:

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 26:28, Mark 14:24, Luke 22:20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

<sup>5</sup> See Hebrews 9-10

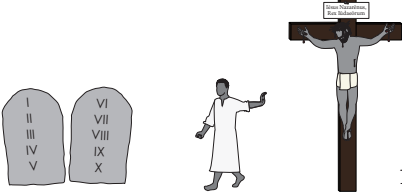
<sup>6</sup> See *Bible Series Lessons One-Three*

<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:11

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”<sup>12</sup>

## A Divine Warning

The Holy Spirit inspired the apostle Paul to warn Christians who attempt to obey the Old Testament. The Bible says these people are in danger of losing their salvation:



*You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.*<sup>13</sup>

Christians respect the Old Testament as a wonderful series of books that can inspire us, teach us, and explain parts of God’s plan of Redemption. However, we should be cautious not to apply these teachings as commandment, since we live under the New Testament. We have been blessed richly to see the completed Word of God! To turn back to the Old Law is to deny God’s gracious act of sending Jesus as a sacrifice for sin. To turn our backs on Jesus is to give up our salvation.



## An OT Overview & the Promised Messiah



In the Old Testament, the thirty-nine books can be divided into four major groups. Time will not permit a deep study of every single book. Instead, we will look at the major groups and offer a glimpse to make them more familiar. The sacred writings of the 39 books before the Christian Age help produce a saving faith based on the promise of the Messiah (or Christ).<sup>1</sup> We will also consider how the four major groups point to Jesus as this *promised messiah* in each of the following ways:<sup>2</sup>

- (A) The sacrifice and/or priest element of the Messiah
- (B) The kingdom(ship)/reign/covenant of the Messiah
- (C) The depravity of the world without a Messiah / the need for a Messiah
- (D) The lineage and/or life history of the Messiah
- (E) ‘Types’ of Messiah (to be fulfilled in the anti-type)

## Books of Law

The first five books are primarily about God’s Law. (1) Genesis is about *Beginnings*. These beginnings include: God creating everything; mankind falling into sin; Abraham’s family becoming the small nation of Israel. (2) Exodus is about *Deliverance*. God sent Moses to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. God established a covenant with Israel on Mount Sinai. This marked the beginning of the Mosaic Age.

(3) Leviticus is about *Instruction*. The Law of Moses explained various topics for the Israelites to better understand the covenant and what God requires. (4) Numbers is about keeping *Records*. A census of the people was recorded. Also recorded are the wanderings of the people in the desert wilderness. (5) Deuteronomy was about *Obedience*. The Law is rehearsed and reviewed. Moses died and leadership was passed to Joshua.

<sup>11</sup> Deuteronomy 5:16

<sup>12</sup> Ephesians 6:1-4

<sup>13</sup> Galatians 5:4 NASB (emphasis added)

<sup>1</sup> e.g. Timothy’s conversion in 2 Timothy 3:14-15

<sup>2</sup> \*Brevity of this study requires that several wonderful examples of Jesus in the Old Testament will be left out. The author offers you the challenge to read the Old Testament and find even more connections to the Christ.

## The Messiah in OT Law

### **G** Lion of the Tribe of Judah

(B) Kingship of Messiah + (D) The lineage of Messiah

Genesis 49:10 | *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. (Jesus descended from Judah and reigns as a spiritual king (Matthew 1:2-3; John 18:36))"*

### The Great High Priest **L**

(A) The sacrifice and/or priest element of the Messiah

Leviticus 16:11 | *"Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. (Compare to Hebrews 9:24-26)"*

### **N** Striking the Rock

(C) The depravity of the world without a Messiah / the need for a Messiah

Numbers 20:10-12 (\*Moses disobeyed God's command and was unable to be the perfect leader. There was a need for someone greater to lead the people.)

### A Prophet Like Moses **D**

(E) Types of Messiah (to be fulfilled in the Antitype)

Deuteronomy 18:15-22 | *I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. (John 12:48-50)*

## Books of History

The next section is the *history* of God's special people, the Israelites. (6) Joshua is about *Conquest*. Joshua led Israel through the wars, partial conquest, and land division the Promised Land. (7) Judges is about *Hard Times*. The Israelites fell into a cycle of: (A) sin, (B) punishment, (C) repentance, and (D) deliverance by "Judges." (8) Ruth is about *Redemption*. A young foreigner struggled during dark days in Israel. She became an ancestor of the royal family of Israel and the Messiah. (9-10) 1 and 2 Samuel are about a *Transition to a King*. Israel transitioned into a time when Kings ruled. The major character is King David, a great grandson of Ruth, and forefather to Jesus. (11-12) 1 and 2 Kings are about *Slow Destruction*. The kingdom split into the northern "Israel" and the southern "Judah." Bad kings and sinful living eventually led both kingdoms into slavery. (13-14) 1 and 2 Chronicles are a *Judean Review*. These are different records of the same era as 1-2 Kings.

## The Messiah in OT History

### **J** Rahab's Descendant

(D) The Lineage and/or life history of the Messiah

In Joshua 2, 6, a Gentile woman named Rahab helped God's people. Her faith was honorable and she became a part of the line of Jesus (see Matthew 1:5. She shows that Jesus came from a diverse heritage representing all of mankind.)

### Kinsman Redeemer **R**

(E) Types of Messiah (to be fulfilled in the Antitype)

\*Boaz = Kinsman Redeemer = Jesus type. According to Leviticus 25, a kinsman redeemer was someone who could free a family member in need. The Law said (A) they must be related; (B) must be willing to redeem; (C) must be free himself; (D) must be able to pay the price. These types all point to the Great Redeemer: Jesus. He was (A) related (Hebrews 2:14-16); (B) He was willing (Matthew 26:39, 42); (C) He was spiritually free, without sin. (Hebrews 4:14-15); and (D) He was able to pay the price (Hebrews 9:11-16).

### **S** Samuel's Lament

(C) The depravity of the world without a Messiah / the need for a Messiah

1 Samuel 2:25 | *If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?* (Samuel correctly laments that there is a need for one who can be the advocate between God and man.)

### The Line of David **S**

(B) The kingdom(ship)/reign/covenant of the Messiah

2 Samuel 7:12-16 | (15) *But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. (16) And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.* (Jesus was a descendant of David, and became the King of a spiritual kingdom, the church. See John 18:36, Colossians 1:16)

### **E** Priests leading the people

(A) The sacrifice and/or priest element of the Messiah

Ezra was a priest who led a remnant of the people back from captivity. The long years of various leadership types did not work. Neither the judges nor the kings had been faithful to God. Now the priests were leading the people. Ultimately, the Messiah would be the Great High Priest. (See Hebrews 4:14-16)

(15) Ezra is about *Restoration*. Some of the Jews returned from captivity and rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem. (16) Nehemiah is about *Reconstruction*. Rebuilding the wall and city of Jerusalem continued even though enemies tried to stop the Jews. (17) Esther is about *Preservation*. A Jewish woman became queen of Persia and saved her people from a genocidal destruction.

## Books of Poetry & Wisdom

The Books of Poetry and Wisdom were written before and during the books of Israel's history. These books are not written primarily as narratives, but can teach us great moral truths. (18) Job is about *Suffering*. A man of faith loses everything—from his wealth to all his children. His three friends join him on a journey of understanding about suffering and why bad things happen to good people. (19) Psalms is about *Praise*. These are a collection of sacred expressions of humanity reaching out to God.

(20) Proverbs is about *Wisdom*. These are short sayings of general truths mostly written by Solomon, the wisest of Israel's kings. (21) Ecclesiastes is about the *Life's Purpose*. Solomon seeks clarity and discovers the meaninglessness of a life without God. (22) Song of Solomon is about *Love*. This is a symbolic poem about the loving relationship between a man and a woman.

### The Messiah in OT Wisdom

**J**

#### A Mediator Needed

(B) The kingdom(ship)/reign/covenant of the Messiah

*Job 9:32-35* | "For He is not a man, as I am, That I may answer Him, And that we should go to court together. (33) Nor is there any mediator between us, Who may lay his hand on us both. (34) Let Him take His rod away from me, And do not let dread of Him terrify me. (35) Then I would speak and not fear Him, But it is not so with me. (\*See 1 Timothy 2:5 for our great Mediator, and how He leads us into a better covenant: Hebrews 8:6)

#### A Crucifixion Scene

**P**

(D) The Lineage and/or life history of the Messiah

*Psalm 22:1* | My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning? ... (17) I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. (18) They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots. (These events took place in Matthew 27 at Jesus' crucifixion.)

**P**

#### All Have Sinned

(A) The sacrifice and/or priest element of the Messiah

*Proverb 20:9* | Who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin"? (The rhetorical question of Proverbs 20:9 is intended to be answered with, "No one can." Since all sinned, we all stand in need of a sacrifice to atone us for our sins. See Romans 3:23-24)

#### No One is Worthy

**E**

(C) The depravity of the world without a Messiah / the need for a Messiah

*Ecclesiastes 7:20* | For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin. (Quoted in Romans 3:10)

**S**

#### Husband & Wife / Christ & Church

(E) Types of Messiah (to be fulfilled in the Antitype)

*Song of Solomon 5:1* | "I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride; I have gathered my myrrh along with my balsam. I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey; I have drunk my wine and my milk. Eat, friends; Drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers." (\*Ephesians 5:22-25)

## Books of Prophecy



Also written throughout the history of Israel are seventeen books of prophecy. Some were written while Israel was powerful, others were written while they were in captivity. The prophets were sent by God to rebuke sin and tell people to repent. They show examples of great faith in hard times. They foretold the redemption to come through Jesus Christ. (23) Isaiah is about *Salvation*. Some of the prophecies are the clearest concerning the coming Messiah and His kingdom. (24) Jeremiah is about *Judgment*. He announced the impending captivity and sufferings of Judah, the final overthrow of its enemies, and the coming of the New Covenant. (25) Lamentations is about *Sorrow*. Jeremiah wrote sad laments over the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. (26) Ezekiel is about *Glory*. He prophesied messages of warning and comfort to the Jews in their captivity.

(27) Daniel is about *Faith & Future*. Daniel is a narrative of some of the Jews in captivity. It also makes a series of prophecies concerning future kingdoms, including the Kingdom of Heaven that would come through Jesus. (28) Hosea is about *Unfaithfulness*. God commanded Hosea to marry a prostitute. She later returned to infidelity as an example to the Jews of their infidelity to God. (29) Joel is about *Woes & Blessings*. Joel made predictions of Judah's coming destruction and God's favor for those who would repent. (30) Amos is about *Judgment and Visions*. He prophesied that Israel and other neighboring nations would be punished by conquerors from the north; and of the fulfillment of the Messiah's future kingdom.

(31) Obadiah is about *Judgment on Edom*. He foretold of the desolation of a neighboring country called Edom. (32) Jonah is about *Judgment and Mercy*. Jonah attempted to run from God but later repented. However, he struggled to understand God's mercy and purpose. (33) Micah is about *Rebuke*. Judgment and captivity are prophesied about Israel. Evildoers and wicked men are rebuked. The birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem and other Messianic prophecies are made. (34) Nahum is about *Wrath*. God's wrath and rebuke of Nineveh are written. Prophecies of the downfall of Assyria are foretold.

(35) Habakkuk is about *Trust*. A prophet questioned God's purpose, and God encouraged him. Habakkuk preached woe to the wicked, and that the just live by faith. (36) Zephaniah is about *Faithfulness*. He foretold the overthrow of Judah for its idolatry and wickedness to come. A faithful remnant would have hope. (37) Haggai is about *Reconstruction*. Prophecies are made about the rebuilding of the temple. (38) Zechariah is about *Visions*. Prophecies continue about the reconstruction of the temple and the Messiah. (39) Malachi is about *Coming Soon*. Wickedness was rebuked and prophecies were made relating to the Gentiles and the coming of Christ.

## The Messiah in OT Prophecy

### **I** The Suffering Servant

(A) The sacrifice and/or priest element of the Messiah

*Isaiah 53:4-5 | 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. (Jesus' sacrifice fulfilled this Messianic prophecy in Scriptures such as Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, and John 19.)*

### An Everlasting Kingdom **D**

(B) The kingdom(ship)/reign/covenant of the Messiah

*Daniel 2:44 | "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever. (Jesus' kingdom, the church, is revealed in such Scriptures as Matthew 16:18 and Colossians 1:13.)*

### **A** Darkness at Noon

(D) The Lineage and/or life history of the Messiah

*Amos 8:9 | "It will come about in that day," declares the Lord GOD, "That I will make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark in broad daylight. (See Luke 23:44)*

### 3 Days and 3 Nights **J**

(E) Types of Messiah (to be fulfilled in the Antitype)

*Jonah 1:17 | And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights. (See Matthew 12:39-40 for Jesus' comparison between Jonah's trial and Jesus' death burial and resurrection after three days.)*

### **N** Wrath and Justice

(C) The depravity of the world without a Messiah / the need for a Messiah

*Nahum 1:2-3 | God is jealous, and the LORD avenges; The LORD avenges and is furious. The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies; (3) The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And will not at all acquit the wicked. The LORD has His way In the whirlwind and in the storm, And the clouds are the dust of His feet. (Even Gentile nations who did not have the Jewish Law were guilty of disobeying God. They stood in need of a Redeemer who could save them from their sins.)*

A Bible student who is reading the Bible for the first time might be intimidated by so much new information. Even though the Bible is a big book, we can see it is like a long journey. The journey of 1,000 miles always begins with one step. Keep stepping! Only through a consistent study of God's Word will a Bible student be able to see the Scriptures as God intended: a message of hope for a world lost in sin.

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. (2 Timothy 3:16)*