

Why do Christian Bibles include the Old Testament?

Various Scriptures

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I. Special Revelation

The Christian worldview insists that God has created human beings in His _____ with the capacity to grasp and to embrace what is true. Hence, we can know truths about God, about ourselves, and about the world because God has chosen to reveal these truths to us – both in creation and in Scripture, in general revelation and special revelation.

II. Why receive and reverence the writings of the OT?

A. One God (cf. Gen 1:1; Jn 1:1-4; Acts 13:16ff; 17:22ff; Heb 1:1-4)

First, we receive and reverence the books of the OT because there is only one God who has revealed Himself in both the Old and New Testaments. The God who took on human flesh and dwelt among us in the Person of our Lord Jesus is the very God who _____ heaven and earth in Genesis (Gen 1:1; Jn 1:1; Acts 17:24-26) and rescued our fathers from bondage in Egypt (Acts 13:16ff). That God is our God.

B. One Savior (cf. Lk 24:44-49; Col 2:16-17; Heb 10:1-10; Rev 13:8)

Second, we receive and reverence the OT because there is One Savior, Jesus the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus is the One to whom the entire OT points. So Jesus declared to the disciples following His resurrection:

⁴⁴...“These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” ⁴⁵And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸And you are witnesses of these things.” (Lk 24:44-49)

The Scriptures of the OT find their fulfillment in Jesus (Col 2:16-17). Jesus is the promised Seed of the Woman who crushed the head of the seed of the serpent (Gen 3:15). He is the seed of Abraham in whom all the families of the earth shall be blessed (Gen 12:3). He is the Prophet greater than Moses to whom all God’s people are to give heed (Dt 18:15). He is the Great High Priest to whom all the high priests of Israel pointed (Heb 8:1ff). He is the Son of David anointed by God to rule over God’s people and build God’s Temple (2 Sam 7:12ff). He is the _____ of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). Hence, our fathers in the OT were blessed and forgiven of their sin as they trusted in the _____ whom God would send to remove their sin. The Westminster Confession explains (WCF 7.V):

This covenant [of grace] was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel: under the law, it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all fore-signifying Christ to come; which were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation; and is called the old Testament.

C. One People (cf. Eph 2:11-22)

Finally, Christians receive and reverence the OT as Scripture because there is one _____ . As those united to Christ, we are Abraham's offspring (Gal 3:29), members of the commonwealth of Israel (Eph 2:12), the true circumcision (Phil 3:3).

¹¹Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—¹²that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Though we *were aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, we have now been brought near*, restored to fellowship with God and to union with God's people. Paul uses different analogies to teach this. In Romans 11, he uses the analogy of an _____ tree. In Hebrews 3, he uses the analogy of a _____. There is one people of God.

III. Implications

A. Same Scriptures (2 Tim 3:16-17 cf. Rom 3:1-2; 15:4; Ps 119)

First, we share the *same Scriptures* with our fathers and mothers. This book tells one central story: the story of our Loving Creator who manifest His glory in the Creation of the world and the rescue of that world from destruction through His Son Jesus.

¹⁶All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17)

B. Same Hope (cf. Acts 24:14-16; Rom 8:18-25; 15:4)

Second, we share the *same hope*: the _____ of the dead: the deliverance of all creation, human beings in particular, from the bondage of sin and death.

"But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which [my enemies] call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:14-16).

C. Same Temptations (1 Cor 10:1-13; 2 Pet 2:9)

Finally, we face many of the same temptations as our fathers. We are subject to the same sinful tendencies and need to learn from their failings even as we learn from their faith. Paul exhorts the Corinthians:

⁶Now these things [that happened to Israel] became our _____, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. ⁷And do not become idolaters as were some of them... ⁸Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did...; ⁹nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; ¹⁰nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹Now all these things happened to them as _____, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

IV. Conclusion