

Seeing Christ in All of Scripture?
Reading the OT, the Way Jesus Did

The Reformation brings us back to the basic doctrine of Christ alone. We proclaim Him. The Reformation reminds us of who we are — Christians. We are all about Christ.

How do we proclaim Christ especially from the OT? We need to remember that Scripture is to shape our lives to honor Christ. Some say we should read all the OT as Christocentric.

Honoring Christ in the Means and in the Ends: i.e., we want to honor Christ in our hermeneutics as well. We need to understand how Jesus read His Bible — that will lead us to honoring Him in the means *and* the ends.

1. Surveying the Christocentric Approach

- See *TMSJ* article
- Surveying the Christocentric Hermeneutic
 - ✓ What — it seeks to link every OT passage to the *saving* work of Christ
 - ✓ How — they would insist in a literal, historical, grammatical framework; every text is a window into the gospel or a fallen condition focus
 - ✓ Problem — their insistence to apply this to every OT text and thus *the meaning is not aligned with the implications*. Every text has a range of allowed meanings and implications and this approach violates that.
 - ✓ Why
- Evaluating the Christocentric Hermeneutic
 - ✓ Hermeneutics (see below)
 - ✓ What is the danger? It creates a canon within a canon — one idea of Scripture becomes the only idea of Scripture. It risks other doctrines (like the Trinity — it eliminates theology proper or pneumatology) — and virtually every other doctrine.
 - ✓ What is at stake? The full glory of Christ. A canon within a canon cannot show the full framework of the work of Christ — the framework desires to glorify Him more and they end up glorifying Him less. We cannot afford to get this wrong.
 - ✓ Nevertheless —
 - We need to think about how to proclaim Christ
 - We need to think through hermeneutics: broad theological issues and specific passages
 - The solution is to read the Bible the way Jesus did

2. How Jesus Read His Bible

- Jesus' Hermeneutic as the Hermeneutic of Scripture
 - ✓ Jesus as the continuation of the prophets — it is the continuation of the ministry of the prophets (Dt. 18:15; Heb. 1:2). People say that Jesus is a prophet and He says He is a

- prophet and He continues the expository ministry of the prophets. He does not contradict what He has said. Jesus upholds the Scriptures. He has the hermeneutic of the prophets.
- ✓ Jesus as the foundation for the apostles — cf. Heb. 3:1; Jn. 14:26. The way NT writers use the OT is the way Jesus used the OT.
 - ✓ Jesus' hermeneutic is the hermeneutic of Scripture: this is the way Scripture operates. This is the way you read Scripture.
 - ✓ The reason the apostles, prophets, and Jesus all share the same ministry is that they all share in the same ministry of revelation; as we continue in the same kind of ministry (participating in it by upholding what has been revealed), we need to use the same hermeneutic.
- So How Does Jesus Read His Bible (Lk. 24)?
 - ✓ Literal hermeneutic
 - Affirms authorial intent — did Jesus abide by authorial intent? Jesus did not reinterpret the OT passages. Jesus did not read into the text, but He revealed the things that were already there. Jesus says the problem of His hearers is that they were slow to believe — Jesus didn't reinterpret the OT for them, but He gave them a new heart to believe.
 - Affirms the prophets knew what they were talking about — Jesus says that they knew what they were talking about — ***all that the prophets have spoken***. He honors the topic that the author of the OT passage stated. Jesus follows their exact logic and the way that they used Scripture. E.g., Lev. 18:5; Ezk. and Nehemiah both say that they can't keep that Law because they need a new heart, which is what Jesus did with the Rich Young Ruler — “you can't keep the Law.”
 - ✓ Grammatical
 - Attention to details — cf. Lk. 24 — ***all the prophets have spoken*** = Jesus has exhaustive knowledge of the OT and rebukes them for what the prophets have already spoken and revealed. Cf. Mt. 22 — “I am the God of Abraham...” — that phrase is a declaration of covenant faithfulness made to those men. If they are dead, they won't see them personally unless there is a resurrection. Jesus knew the details of Scripture and how Scripture used those details. We preach phrase by phrase and word by word because Jesus did.
 - Understands Interconnected details — Cf. Jn. 3 — Jesus will be lifted up for crucifixion and (Jn. 12), lifted up for exaltation. This is Jesus' reference to Isaiah's use of Isaiah (52:13 for crucifixion). Jesus makes the connection Scripture makes.
 - ✓ Historical
 - Affirms history in Scripture — He affirms Gen. 2, etc. He doesn't just view history as a bunch of random events but a part of God's plan (e.g., “the prophets anticipate this day”). He reads the OT as it moves to the NT. He got that from the prophets. He follows historical intent. Jesus understands past to present to future. Jesus' hermeneutic is *fully* historical
 - Understands Redemptive-History
 - What Do We Learn?
 - ✓ Jesus had a literal grammatical historical hermeneutic. This should encourage us, because what we've been taught and do because that's the way Jesus did it. We should be encouraged and convicted by it. This is what God will hold us accountable to do.
 - ✓ The OT already has robust theology. We don't need to read it in. We just need to

carefully read and discover it.

3. How Should We Read Our Bibles (OT)

- Prophecy (From Jesus' literal hermeneutic)
 - ✓ The prophets do predict Christ. The OT is filled with Messianic prophecy, beginning at Gen. 3:15. Cf. Ps. 22 — how do we know it's Messianic? Did that happen in David's day? Then it must be something eschatological and the Messianic King. Cf. also Ps. 2.
 - ✓ Prophecy has deep theology — it's not just about prophecy and fulfillment; the prophets were working out a theology. Cf. Micah 5:2 — Israel is awaiting a new David dynasty, so Jesus being born in Bethlehem is the new and ultimate David.
 - ✓ What we lose if we flatten or omit OT: the *substance* of Christology. The OT has so many messianic prophecies and each of them contribute a uniqueness to Christology. We want our people to see the full glory of Christ, which is seen in the direct prophecies.
- Participation (From Jesus' literal hermeneutic)
 - ✓ Tension of distinct from God the Father but yet God Himself.
 - ✓ Christ's dominance in God's plan from beginning to end
 - ✓ What we lose if we flatten or omit the OT: Christ's *centrality*. You miss *all* that Christ has done by focusing only on the climax of His ministry. He is involved as the main hero moving all of history forward — He becomes less dominant in the new hermeneutic. When we show Him in fullness it shows His greater glory.
- Preparation (Micro — From Jesus' grammatical hermeneutic) — Jesus believed that the details mattered and He demonstrated that.
 - ✓ Prophets weave together theology that relates to Christ — this isn't direct prediction; not everything in the OT is inherently Messianic, but it is going to prepare for Him by allowing us to see the theological significance of what Christ does. If you know what the OT says, then every detail of Christ's life will have meaning. If you know the theological *what* of the OT, you will know the theological *so what* in the NT.
 - ✓ See though the life of Christ — to show detail after detail that is revealed in the OT.
 - ✓ Birth — genealogy exists for the search of the seed of Adam and Abraham. The genealogy proves the exclusivity of Christ — the one and only One.
 - ✓ Life and Ministry
 - Timing — cf. Jn. 1-2 — why does John go day by day through the first week of Jesus' ministry? Is there anything in Gen. 1 about a week? YES! It climaxes with a wedding, as does Jesus' first week of ministry.
 - Place — cf. Mt. 4 is Jesus' ministry of kindness to those who have suffered most; cp. the work of the King to save the people in the OT. Jesus is also the true King of Israel because He doesn't kick out the lame and the blind but He heals them. Moses also gives a pronouncement from Mt. Sinai culminating in curses that condemn the people for their inability to keep the Law; Jesus' first words on a Mount are "blessed" (Mt. 5:1).
 - Teaching —
 - Actions —
 - ... e.g., Jesus changes Simon's name to Peter, just as God did with Abraham.
 - ... John walks through OT and demonstrates that Jesus is the God of Israel.
 - ... Cf. Mk's account of the feeding of the 5000 — why the emphasis on *green* grass?

Cf. Ps. 23. Jesus is *the good Shepherd*; Mark emphasizes Jesus' compassion on the people because they did not have a shepherd.

... Every aspect and detail of Christ is brought out by the OT.

✓ Death

- Timing — e.g., the Passover — this was not accidental; it was intentional and you need the OT to bring out the fullness of meaning.
- Place — the Mt. of Olives was always the place OT kings fled to get away; would Jesus run? No. He faces the enemies on Mt. Olives. He is not cowardly, but He is brave and the true King of Israel.
- Theology — Cf. Is. 53 — Jesus' bones were not broken (just like the Passover lamb); He is fit to be the penal substitute. He *is* the righteous One who stands in our place.

✓ Resurrection

- Timing —
 - ... Jesus rises on the third day (the sign of Jonah); cf. also 1 Cor. 15 (Hos. 6). Even though Israel committed adultery and should die, He will resurrect them on the third day. In every way possible they will be raised, because of Christ. Death–victory–sting is taken from Hos. 6.
 - ... The first day of the week relates to the act of creation/we are a *new* creation.
- Theology — Is it any wonder that Jesus is mistaken for a gardener in Jn. 20? The first gardener is Adam and Jesus is the new Adam!
- Place —

✓ So much more in the gospels and beyond (cf. Rev).

✓ What we lose if we flatten or omit the OT: the *sophistication* of Christ's work. The OT weaves a rich and deep theology — and we lose the sense of the perfection of Jesus life if we approach Scripture with the historical-redemptive method.

• Preparation (Macro — From Jesus' historical hermeneutic)

✓ God's plan moves to Christ —

- Torah — God is preserving His people for a King
- Historical narratives — the plan of God is moving to a King
- Wisdom literature — Job shows the need for wisdom and the gospel, which connects with Christ; the Psalms teach us how to be worshippers, which prepare us for the King; only Christ can fulfill the wisdom of Proverbs...
- Prophets — the big picture is arranged around Christ in anticipation of His kingly work.
- All the OT moves to Christ — it may not be looking at the details, but it does anticipate the whole story that gets us to Christ.

✓ What we lose if we flatten or omit the OT: the *significance* of Christ's work. We preach the OT because we want to give our people the full weight of God's plan that there is only One who can fulfill the plan and give the glory to God.

Conclusion:

- The Reformation: it was also about a reformation of Christ alone *and* hermeneutics
- From prophets, Christ, apostles, and Reformers to us
- May we do the hard work of honoring Christ in the means and end. It is our turn and responsibility. We don't need a new approach to hermeneutics. We need to be faithful.