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Studying the Bible as a Whole
Jim Stauffer

Many people read the Bible out of reverence for its source. Many of those who do read it rarely study it. To many it seems to be a book filled with stories of moral lessons that often appear to be unrelated to each other.

We find poetry, history, genealogy, apocalyptic literature, epistles to churches, law and wisdom; all to be understood as one integrated message. It is in actuality a single book with many chapters that communicates a connected revelation of the will of God. It relates a detailed overall theme and in that sense is like most books we read. These are reasons we must study it as a whole to benefit from its message.

It is important to bear in mind as we study that God wrote the entire book. Yes, He used men to accomplish the feat but he inspired those men by the Holy Spirit in order to arrive at a perfect revelation of His will. (2 Timothy 3:16,17; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; Jeremiah 1:4-10)

The plot of the Bible is God's plan to redeem man from sin. Almost immediately upon being placed in the garden, Adam and Eve sinned being deceived by Satan. Since the Bible is a book of progressive revelation, all places, persons and events lead and contribute to this major plot.

Typology is a consistent method of teaching employed in the Scriptures. Typology is the use of types and anti-types to tell us of things to come. The type always precedes the anti-type and is of lesser importance or value since it is only a type or shadow of the real thing to come. We are encouraged in the New Testament to learn from the successes and failures of God's people in the Old Testament. (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:1-11)

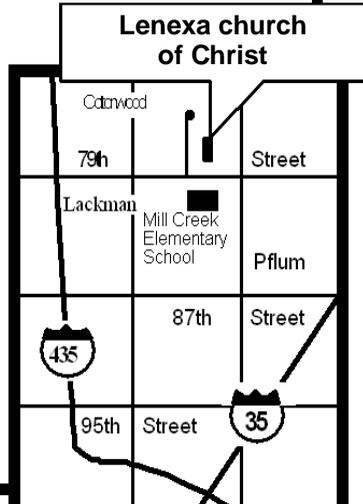
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MEETING TIMES
Sunday - Bible Classes: 9:30AM
Worship Services 10:20AM & 5:00PM
Wednesday - Bible Classes 7:00PM
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One of the most often discussed and easier to understand of these is the comparison of Moses and Christ. Moses as the deliverer of Israel from Egyptian bondage is a type of Christ who delivers all mankind from the bondage of sin. It is important to realize the areas in which types and anti-types agree and learn from that comparison. However, we should not try to make the type a perfect match to the anti-type in all ways. It is much like the shadow of a figure. It gives a clear outline but the details are usually not all as clear. In this case the lesson is one of delivering God's people from bondage. Moses delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt while Christ now delivers all men from the bondage of sin. The major component in both cases is only those who obey and follow can be delivered.

This deliverance from sin by Christ is the crowning point of the Bible story. We are led to this by all the chapters that piece together the will of God and bring us to this glorious conclusion.

We understand that we, like the first century Christians, should study and understand the Bible this way. They recognized Christ and His mission as the central theme of the Bible by prophecies culminating in His birth. (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:21-23) They further understood when they read both the prophecies and the story of His death. (Isaiah 53; John 19:24-28)

Attempts to separate stories related in Scripture and to treat them as unrelated to the central theme of redemption through Christ will diminish the power of the message and render God's word of no value to the student.

It must be recognized as the word of our Creator and then studied in the way it was revealed, as a complete story of the plan of God to redeem man from sin. It is the message of our salvation and as such should be the most important message we shall ever receive.

What Makes A Pattern In Christianity?

The sum total of what God has said about anything becomes the pattern for it. Examine the following statements. Are they true or false?

1. All that God has said about the plan of salvation is a pattern for salvation to every person.
2. All that God has said about the New Testament Church is a pattern by which it is identified.
3. All that God has said about becoming a member of the Lord's church is a pattern for everyone.
4. All that God has said about the acts of worship is a pattern.
5. All that God has said about the day to observe the Lord's Supper is a pattern for Christians.

6. All that God has said about the church and the support of preaching is a pattern to observe.

7. All that God has said about the church and helping the needy is a pattern for Christians today.

8. All that God has said about following Christ in Spirit, etc., is a pattern for us.

I count it safe to follow the information we have in the Bible. I commend what it says to everyone. James said, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (James 2:10).

- by B.G. Hope

Attendance

Attendance at worship services and Bible study times has always been a problem. Faithful brethren have constantly agonized over those who didn't attend. It has been that way in every generation, including among the very first Christians. The Hebrew writer was compelled to pen these famous words:

"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Notice the reasons why you should attend every scheduled service:

1) IT' S A COMMAND: The NASV says: "not forsaking our own assembling together". This ought to be reason enough, but the Lord has provided plenty of additional motivation ...

2) YOU NEED THIS: If you've been thinking that worship is something that God needs - FORGET IT! Worship is for us, not Him. The passages says that the assembly allows an opportunity to be "exhorting (encouraging) one another". Brother, you need this, and you miss out on it when you are not here.

3) OTHERS NEED YOU: As a member of the Lord's body, you are in a 'give and take' situation. Too many apparently feel that it is all 'take' - they never 'give'. But we are commanded to "consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (NASV). The worship services provide an excellent opportunity for doing that very thing. You can't encourage your brothers and sisters by your absence. On the other hand, brethren are seriously discouraged by low attendance.

Those who neglect the assemblies dishonor God, miss out on a great spiritual blessing, and violate the rule of brotherly love and concern. Think!

- by Greg Gwin