

Teaching Christ in All of Scripture

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For three years, Jesus taught his disciples that he himself was the LORD of the Scriptures and the MESSIAH of the Scriptures. They didn't get it ... until his death and resurrection. That Jesus is both Lord and Messiah is the main point of Peter's sermon at Pentecost in Acts 2.

Similarly, in Luke 24 the Lord Jesus rebuked the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus for not recognizing Christ in the Old Testament:

21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." 25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

He rebuked them for not seeing Christ in all of Scripture. And he would probably rebuke us for not seeing Christ in all of Scripture.

Four Ways to See Christ in All of Scripture (especially the OT)

1. Christ is Lord, the second member of the **Trinity**, omnipresent and omniscient. Therefore, Christ was present (along with the Father and the Spirit) at every event of the Old Testament (creation, fall, flood, Abraham, covenants, etc.), bringing to pass all of God's holy will. (Westminster Shorter Catechism: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.") Christ has two names in the Old Testament that show he is God:

a. Kurios. In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament), the translators decided to use the Greek word, *Kurios* (Lord), for the 6500 times the sacred name YHWH appeared. The Apostles of Christ understood many of those 6500 uses of *Kurios* to be referring to the Son of God. Examples: Isaiah 6:10 with John 12:41; Psalm 68:18 with Ephesians 4:8)

b. The Angel of the Lord. Scholars associate the Angel of the Lord with God the Son, since the Angel of the Lord "speaks as the Lord God, bears the name of God, and reveals the Glory of God" (Clowney). The Angel of the Lord spoke to Moses out of the burning bush and said that he is the I AM. He appeared to Joshua as the Commander of the Lord's Army, and told Joshua to take off his shoes. He appeared to Abraham and wrestled with Jacob. He was the cloud and pillar of fire that led Israel. In short, the Angel of the Lord is God, yet separate from God—in other words, Christ.

Therefore, even before we look for types and symbols of Christ in the Old Testament, we need to understand that the omnipresent Son of God was there at every turn in the OT narrative.

2. Christ is the Servant of the Lord, the Savior, who covenanted with the Father and the Spirit to save God's people. Therefore Christ is the climactic fulfillment of every Old Testament **promise** of salvation (Genesis 3:15, etc.), every **prediction** of the Savior (Isaiah 53, etc.), and he is the fulfillment of every Old Testament **symbol** or **type** or **prefiguring** or **foreshadowing** of the Savior (snake lifted up in the wilderness; the "only son" carrying the wood up Mt. Moriah—which is Mt. Jerusalem—in order to become a sacrifice).

Adam is our head; Christ is the last Adam (Ro. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:45)

Isaac is the seed of promise; Christ is the true Seed.

God gave manna to his people; Christ is the Bread that comes from heaven.

Israel is the vine; Christ is the true Vine.

Israel is God's son; Christ is the true Son.

Israel is God's servant; Christ is the true Servant.

Israel's kings are shepherds; Christ is the true Shepherd-King (Ez. 34:11-16)

David is the Messiah; Christ is the ultimate Messiah.
 The temple is where God's people meet God; Christ is the true temple.
 The priests mediate between God and man; Christ is the true priest.
 The lambs are sacrificed to atone for Israel's sin; Christ is the Lamb of God.
 Isaac, the only son, carried the wood of sacrifice up Mount Moriah (Jerusalem); Christ is God's only Son who gave his life on the "mountain of the Lord."
 God provided the ram on the mountain of the Lord; Christ is the Lamb of God.
 Moses should have struck the rebellious Israelites with the rod of judgment, but the Angel of the Lord commanded him to strike the rock on which He stood instead; Christ is the Rock who was struck for our rebellion.

A **type** is "an event, a series of circumstances, or an aspect of the life of an individual or of the nation, which finds a parallel and a deeper realization in the incarnate life of our Lord, in his provision for the needs of men, or in his judgments and future reign" (Francis Foulkes). However, the words "deeper realization" in this quotation are not strong enough. It should read "climactic realization." "The coming of Christ brings the fulfillment, the realization of what was anticipated by God's servants, the saviors, prophets, kings, priests, and judges of the Old Covenant" (Clowney).

3. Christ is the Word of God (John 1:1,2). Therefore, every time there was any communication from God in history, Jesus was present. This means that (1) the Son of God was present in every direct communication of God in the Old Testament (creation, speaking with Adam, Abraham, Joshua, etc.), and that (2) the Son of God was present with every Scripture author guiding them as they wrote down the Scriptures (Moses, David, Matthew etc. 1 Peter 1:10-12). The same Jesus who was sitting with the writers of the Scripture, is with you when you read the Scriptures in your quiet time and when you prepare your lesson, and when you stand up to teach.

4. Christ is the Hero of the One Story of the Bible (Bible Storyline Approach). When I was a kid in Sunday School, I knew all the stories in the Bible, but I didn't know the One Story. Carson: "The gospel makes sense only in the storyline of the Bible, and not in any other storyline." So if we want our students to understand and love the gospel, they have to understand and love the storyline.

How to Bring Christ into an Old Testament Lesson

Some not-so-good ways

1. Depend on your own **imagination**, such as teaching that David's five stones remind us of the five wounds of Christ on the cross, or that the red cord that Rahab tied points to Christ's blood.
2. Teach the passage as merely a **history lesson** or a **moral lesson** ("Be brave like David"; "Don't be like Cain"). Then, at the end of the lesson, tack on a boilerplate gospel invitation that is pretty much the same every week. When we do this, the gospel invitation isn't obviously related to the lesson. The students eventually tune out the gospel presentation because it's pretty much the same every week. This method can be illustrated like this:

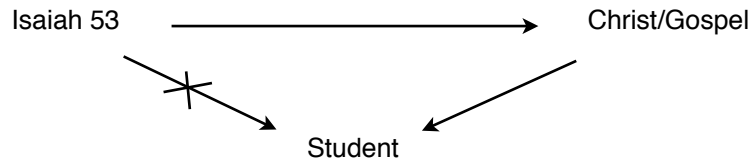


Some Better Ways to Teach Christ in all of Scripture (esp. the OT)

We can illustrate a better approach of teaching Christ in all of Scripture by using triangles.

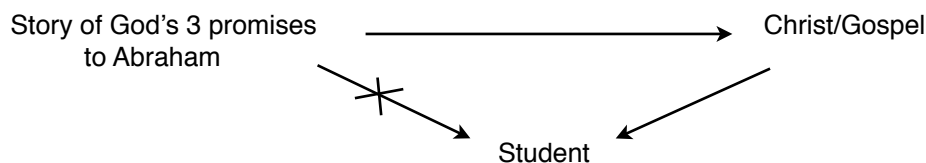
A Lesson on Prophecies about the Messiah

The passages that lend themselves most easily to “seeing Christ in the Old Testament” are direct prophecies of the Savior, like Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 53. It’s easy (and correct) to go directly from the prophecy to its fulfillment in Christ, and then apply that gospel fulfillment to the student:



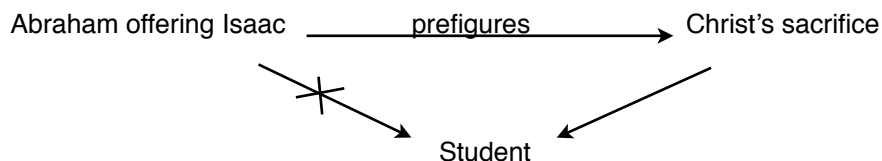
Using the Salvation Storyline to see Christ in the Old Testament

Since the entire Old Testament is part of the salvation storyline that leads to the Gospel, we can find Christ in virtually any Old Testament story by thinking about where that story fits into the storyline, and how it points to Christ. “In the story of Abraham, thousands of years have passed and God still hasn’t sent the Serpent Crusher to bring us back to God like he promised. Does God tell the truth? Always! Did he forget his promise? Never! He’s going to fulfill his promise through Abraham. One of Abraham’s “seed” (descendants) will be the Savior who destroys Satan and reconciles humans with God.....”



A Lesson about a Type, a Symbol, or a Foreshadowing of Christ

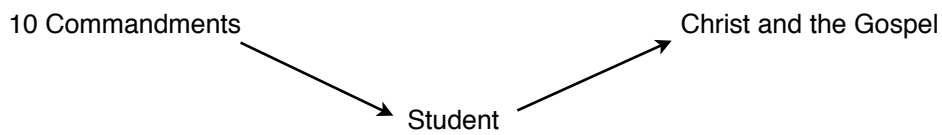
The Old Testament is filled with types, symbols and prefigurements of Christ and the gospel. Preaching types and symbols from the Old Testament fell into disrepute when the church tried to distance itself from the overblown allegorical teaching of Origen and those who followed his method. But perhaps the pendulum swung too far. We can avoid the excessive allegorical systems of Origen, and still be aware of the rich typology of Christ that fills the Old Testament.



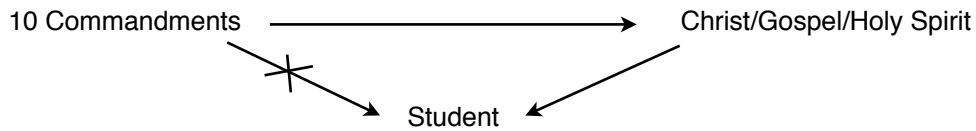
A Lesson about law and morals

For many years people have been rightly warning us about the danger of “moralism,” that is, using the Old Testament stories as simply moral tales. But don’t forget that the New Testament writers themselves used Scripture stories to exhort Christians toward godly and moral living. But our exhortations to moral excellence must be different from what a synagogue teacher would have taught, because we’re on the other side of the cross. We’re in the New Covenant. Your students have the Holy Spirit of Jesus living in them (or soon will). Paul says in Romans 8 that we put to death the misdeeds of our body “by the Holy Spirit,” not by moral determination or by some technique. Because of the death and resurrection of Christ, the penalty of sin has been paid for, and the power of sin has been broken. Here are two kinds of moral lessons, one that uses the law to lead people to salvation in Christ, and another that uses the law to lead to holy living.

Using Old Testament laws and stories to lead people to salvation in Christ



Using Old Testament laws and stories to lead Christians to holy living:



Resources to help us get better at seeing Christ in the Old Testament:

The God Who Is There, D.A. Carson, a video series that traces major theological trajectories from Genesis to Revelation, such as creation, temple, presence of God, kingdom, sacrifice, priest, etc. thegospelcoalition.org/course/the-god-who-is-there/#course-introduction You can choose to watch the videos or download mp3s for later listening.

One-Story Approach (Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ). The quickest introduction to this approach is the short film *Ee-Taow*, which you can find on Youtube. There's even an 11-minute version of the film on Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYuRa1iPM8U>

Preaching Christ in all of Scripture, Edmund P. Clowney, Crossway.

Reading the Word of God in the Presence of God, Vern Poythress, Crossway.