

WHY BAPTISTS BELIEVE WHAT BAPTISTS BELIEVE, PART 17

The Bible is divided into two main parts: The Old Testament and the New Testament. My observation is that many Christians don't particularly like to study the Old Testament because they think that it is no longer relevant for them. According to Hebrews 8:6 the new covenant that Jesus mediates is better and is enacted on better promises than the old covenant. But that does NOT mean that we should just completely ignore the Old Testament. There is plenty that we can glean from studying it. I believe God gave ALL the Bible to us and that He has preserved it for a reason. We CAN learn a lot from it.

[Note: the above was not part of my original class but I added it later]

THE OLD TESTAMENT

[Question 9] There are a total of **39** books in the Old Testament, which deal with the period of time from the **creation**, the beginning of the world, to the **coming** of Christ, the promised Messiah.

[Question 10] is a series of True - False questions taken from Luke Chapter 24. Here Jesus made several statements about the Old Testament as it related to Himself. He viewed it as pretty important. He should have because it was His scripture. The Old Testament was the only scripture that existed at the time of Jesus's earthly ministry. The New Testament had not been written yet. So, let's take a look at some of the things Jesus said about the Old Testament.

"These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). Here

Jesus appears to His disciples after His resurrection. He is reminding them of things He taught them before He went to the cross. The Jews in Jesus's day divided their scriptures (Old Testament) into those three parts - the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms.

True or false? It was only necessary for Jesus to fulfill what was predicted about Him in the Prophets. From verse 44 we know that is **False** because Jesus also mentioned the Law and the Psalms.

Jesus is on the road to Emmaus and He is talking to two of His followers who were not part of the original Twelve. One was named Cleopas and the other guy is not named. I call them "Cleopas and the other guy." "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He [Jesus] interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27).

True or false? All of the Old Testament mentions something about Jesus. That is **True** based on how Jesus saw Himself "in all the scriptures."

Again, Jesus is talking to Cleopas and the other guy on the road to Emmaus. He says, "Was it not necessary that the Christ [speaking of Himself] should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:26).

True or false? It was necessary for Christ to suffer. That is a **True** based on the rhetorical question Jesus asks here - "Was it not necessary...?" In other words, yes, it WAS necessary.

Jesus is talking to His disciples and says, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead" (Luke 24:46).

True or false? The Old Testament predicted Jesus's death and resurrection. That is **True**. According to what Jesus said, both WERE predicted and part of God's plan.

Jesus is continuing His thought: "...and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

True or false? According to the Old Testament it is the reforming of one's life that must be preached in the name of the Messiah ("the Christ," speaking of Jesus). Based on what Jesus says here, that is **False**. It isn't a reformed life that should be proclaimed. Rather, it is repentance and the forgiveness of sins.

Now let's take a look at the general divisions of the Old Testament. I just mentioned how the Jews divided their scriptures - the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms. Another common way of dividing the Old Testament is by the books of History, the books of Poetry and the books of Prophecy.

The way I learned it growing up in the Baptist church, in Vacation Bible School and Sunday School... The five general divisions are: (1) the Books of the Law, which are the first five books of the Bible, Genesis thru Deuteronomy; (2) the Books of History, Joshua thru Esther (3) the Books of Poetry, Job thru Song of Solomon (4) the Major Prophets, Isaiah thru Daniel and (5) the Minor Prophets, Hosea thru Malachi.

[Question 11] You're asked to identify, out of seven possible divisions listed, which two are NOT divisions of the Old Testament. The answers are the **Books of Prophecy** and the **Apocryphal Books**. Place an "X" next to these two because they are not considered to be divisions of the Old Testament. Let me explain. First, the Apocrypha is made up of 15 books that are not recognized by Baptists or by most evangelical denominations as being inspired scripture. The primary reason for this is their questionable authorship.

Second, with respect to the Books of Prophecy, the fact is that in the Old Testament you find prophecies not just contained in the Major and Minor Prophets but there are many prophecies in other

places such as in Genesis, Deuteronomy, 2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles, Job, and Psalms.

Let me say something about the Major and Minor Prophets. The designation of “Major” and “Minor” does NOT denote their importance. All the prophets are important. In general, the Major Prophets tend to be longer and better known than the Minor Prophets. But there are exceptions to this. For example, the book of Daniel, a Major Prophet is shorter than the book of Zechariah, which is a Minor Prophet. Also, Jonah, a Minor Prophet is more well-known than Ezekiel, who is a Major Prophet.

[Question 12] talks about the various Old Testament characters. They teach us a lot about trusting and following the LORD. We see in their lives the rewards for being faithful. I won't take the time to discuss this question. Do this on your own. It is relatively easy.

Paul is speaking to the church at Corinth: “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

[Question 13] What two things did Jesus Christ do that Paul said were taught in the Old Testament? First, He **died** for our **sins**.

In Isaiah 53:5-12 you have what we know as the “Suffering Servant” passages. It talks about He was afflicted and beaten and so forth. All throughout the Old Testament we get this revelation of the promised One who is to come, the Messiah. Only Isaiah talks about this wonderful person suffering and dying. That must have confused the people of Isaiah's day. Of course, when Jesus came, He fulfilled the Old Testament scriptures including that one.

Second, Paul says that Jesus was “raised on the third day.” He was **resurrected**. In Acts Chapter 2 Peter is preaching at Pentecost. He quotes Psalm 16:10 which says, “You will not abandon My soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.” Peter sees Jesus as the fulfillment of this prophetic Messianic psalm, having been resurrected from the dead.

But that’s not all. Jesus spent about 7 weeks making appearances and giving final instructions to His followers. He then **ascended** back to the Father (Acts 1:9-11) Again, Peter preaching at Pentecost in Acts Chapter 2 sees the Messiah’s ascension in another psalm, this time in Psalm 110:1. Peter, speaking of Jesus, says this: “Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool’” (Acts 2:33-35). Peter applies this psalm to Jesus.

So then, when Peter and Paul and the other apostles preached in the New Testament, what scriptures did they use? I already mentioned that the New Testament had not been written yet, so all they had was the Old Testament.

Paul is on one of his missionary journeys... “Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ’” (Acts 17:1-3). Paul’s practice was that he would go into the various synagogues and preach this message from the Old Testament. He would show Jesus to them. Eventually they would

get angry and kick him out. They didn't believe him. They rejected Jesus as the Messiah.

[Question 14] What resource did Paul use to show the Jews in Thessalonica the good news about Jesus Christ? **Old Testament scrolls**. This is the form in which the Jewish scriptures were maintained in their synagogues. For your information, the original process of book binding by the Christian community (known as a "codex") began in the 2nd Century A.D. Furthermore, the printing press was not invented until the 15th Century A.D. So transcribed, handwritten parchment scrolls were common in those early years.

"But what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ would suffer, He thus fulfilled" (Acts 3:18).

[Question 15] How many of the Old Testament prophets wrote of Christ? **ALL of them**. All of the Major Prophets did - Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel; all of the Minor Prophets did - Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. In addition, other men that you don't normally think of as prophets wrote about Jesus - men like Moses and David.

The Old Testament foretold the Messiah's coming. In the New Testament we see time and time again where Jesus Christ fulfilled these scriptures. In the next question we have several examples of this.

[Question 16] This exercise is intended to show the connections between Old Testament prophecies and their New Testament fulfillment. The first example listed on the left side is Isaiah 11:1 which states that the Messiah would be a descendant of Jesse and his son David. In the right-hand column are a series of New Testament scriptures that fulfilled the prophecies on the left. The answer to the first one is **J** - Luke 1:31-33. It is the passage where the angel comes to Mary to announce that she will be the one to carry the Christ child. The angel in his

declaration to Mary makes a direct reference to Isaiah 11:1. So, Jesus is going to be the fulfillment of that.

The second example is that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, which is what Micah 5:2 prophesies. The fulfillment of that is **I** - Matthew 2:1-6, the story of the wise men. They have made their way to Jerusalem looking for the Jewish Messiah. They are asking about Him - "Where is He? For we saw His star and have come to worship Him." King Herod should have known but he didn't, so he asked the experts in the scriptures. They said, "In Bethlehem of Judea for it is written by the prophet [speaking of Micah]" and then they quote Micah 5:2, "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

A third example is that Jesus would be born of a virgin, from Isaiah 7:14. That fulfillment comes in **H** - Matthew 1:18-25 when Joseph is hesitant to take Mary as his wife after she got pregnant. An angel comes to Joseph and says, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." The angel goes on to say, "She will bear a son, and you will call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet." Then he quotes Isaiah 7:14, "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us)."

So, do the rest of these on your own. There are many more examples of Jesus fulfilling Old Testament scriptures.