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# Christ in all the Scriptures

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*The book of Exodus fits within the framework of the OT – God’s inerrant Word – and we should see Christ in the OT and in Exodus. The theme of Exodus is redemption and is rooted in Genesis 3:15. What is a type?*

Imagine for a moment that a rich aunt willed to you an ornate jewellery box containing some rare diamonds, but no one gave you the key. What use are diamonds inside a locked box? For many Christians, the Old Testament is like a locked chest; they believe it contains priceless treasure, but finding the key is the problem.

Where, then, are the keys to unlock the Old Testament? These keys come in the pages of the New Testament. The Lord Jesus and the apostles often quote the Old Testament and allude to events it describes. One estimate<sup>1</sup> is that there are at least 1600 direct quotations of the Old in the New and several thousand more New Testament passages that allude to Old Testament verses. The New Testament writers build on the foundation of the Old Testament.

It is clear from 1 Peter 1:10-12 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 that Old Testament writers ‘were given words from the very mind of God, and were frequently moved to write far more Truth than they appreciated ... The inspired writers ... studied their own words just as we search the Scriptures today. No doubt

they understood what they had written up to a point, but became “Bible students” when they wished to grasp the detailed implication of the message God had channelled through them.<sup>2</sup>

### The origin and structure of the Old Testament

Who wrote the Old Testament? The references above show that God used human authors to write his Word. As they wrote, he directed their use of words and guarded them from error. To quote the apostle Paul, ‘All Scripture is God-breathed’ (2 Tim. 3:16). God’s Word is therefore inerrant – it is free from error and always true.

Who was the human author of Exodus? The book itself identifies Moses as the author (17:14; 24:4; 34:27). Furthermore, Jesus attributes this book to Moses, for example, debating with the Pharisees he said, ‘For Moses said, “Honour your father and your mother”, and “Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death”’ – these two quotations, cited by Jesus in Mark 7:10, are from Exodus 20:12 and 21:17.<sup>3</sup>

The Old Testament consists of thirty-nine books divided into four groups. The first group (Genesis to Deuteronomy) is known as the Pentateuch (the word means ‘five books’) or ‘the books of Moses’. Secondly, there are twelve books of history: Joshua to Esther. Thirdly, there are five books of poetry: Job to Song of Solomon. The last group consists of seventeen books of prophecy: the five major prophets, Isaiah to Daniel, followed by the twelve minor prophets, Hosea to Malachi.

Jesus alludes to the Jewish summary of the Scriptures in his conversation with the Emmaus road disciples when he told them that ‘Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms’ (Luke 24:44).

The apostle Peter placed Paul’s letter on a level with the Old Testament when he wrote, ‘His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction’ (2 Peter 3:16). Because the New Testament

apostles followed in the footsteps of the Old Testament prophets in writing ‘the holy Scriptures’, we may use the apostles’ writings to interpret those of the Old Testament.

### **The purpose and theme of the Old Testament**

Why did God give us the Old Testament, and is there a central theme running through the thirty-nine books? Paul tells us that ‘the holy Scriptures ... are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.’ He affirms that God’s Word ‘is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work’ (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Old Testament (‘the holy Scriptures’) show us how to become Christians (‘salvation through faith in Christ Jesus’), how to live as Christians (‘teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness’) and how to serve the Lord (‘thoroughly equipped for every good work’). The Bible – both Testaments – is a book about salvation, sanctification and service. We cannot experience salvation, make progress in sanctification, or serve God apart from Christ.

Paul writes about the purpose of the Old Testament, not only in his letter to Timothy, but also in his longer epistle to the Romans, ‘For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope’ (Rom. 15:4). The apostle makes a similar point in his letter to the Corinthians, ‘Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did’ (1 Cor. 10:6). His words are in the context of events recorded in the book of Exodus that teach us about Christ the Rock.

### **How does the Old Testament relate to the New?**

The Bible divides into two major sections: The Old Testament and the New Testament. The word ‘testament’ means

‘covenant’ – this word sums up the message of the Bible. ‘It is the covenant of grace, the covenant in which God pledges salvation to his people on the basis of Christ’s atoning death.’<sup>4</sup>

What is the message of both Old and New Testament? It is that salvation is through faith in Christ alone. In the Old Testament, God saved believers through faith in the Christ of prophecy; from New Testament times onwards, God saves believers through faith in the Christ of history. Salvation in both dispensations is through faith in Christ alone. ‘It cannot be stressed too strongly that God has always had only one plan of salvation and that is through his Son. The Old Testament is not, therefore, the record of God trying to save people in one way (the law of Moses) and the New Testament the record of him trying another way (Christ). The people in the Old Testament era were saved in exactly the same way as we are, that is, through faith in Christ. The only difference is that they looked forward in faith to what Christ would do, while we look backward to what he has done.’<sup>5</sup>

In reading the Old Testament, we must bear in mind, the doctrine of ‘progressive revelation’ – God reveals spiritual truth gradually in his Word. Truths hinted at in the earlier parts of the Bible, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, are more fully explained in later books until we reach the full revelation of the New Testament. The Old Testament is incomplete without the New Testament. We read in Colossians that the rituals of the Old Testament are ‘a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.’ The writer to the Hebrews echoes Paul, ‘The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves’ (Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1). These verses are crucial for our understanding of the Old Testament, especially the books of the Pentateuch.

### **Christ in the Old Testament**

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Christ is at the heart of the Old Testament. But how do we see Jesus Christ in the Old Testament without resorting to bizarre

allegorical interpretations? We are to compare one Scripture with another, using the fuller revelation of the New Testament to interpret the Old Testament, keeping in mind the central biblical topic of salvation through Christ's death on the cross.

Talking to the distressed Emmaus Road disciples the Lord Jesus 'beginning with Moses and all the prophets, ... explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself' (Luke 24:27). Later that same day, Jesus suddenly appeared to the fearful disciples and 'said to them "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures' (Luke 24:44-45). On an earlier occasion Jesus said to his Jewish critics 'If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me' (John 5:46). Paul, defending himself before King Agrippa, said 'I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen – that the Christ would suffer and ... rise from the dead' (Acts 26:22-23). All the roads of the Old Testament – including the book of Exodus – lead to the Lord Jesus Christ. We have divine authority to find Christ in the Old Testament.

Having set the book of Exodus into the context of the Old Testament, we can now move towards seeing Christ in Exodus. Some words of Robert Sheehan point us in the right direction. 'The importance of Moses in the Old Testament is not likely to be overstated ... Moses stands as the mediator of the Old Covenant in the same way as our Lord Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant. Law came through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17; 2 Cor. 3). Of course, there is a distinction: Moses is God's servant; Jesus is God's Son.'<sup>6</sup>

### **The link between Genesis and Exodus**

The book of Exodus is rooted in the first gospel promise in Genesis 3:15, 'And I will put enmity between you and

the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.' Who is the 'offspring' – 'seed' (NKJV) – predicted in this text? The apostle Paul identifies the woman's offspring as the Lord Jesus Christ in Galatians 3:16: 'The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say "and to seeds", meaning many people, but "and to your seed", meaning one person, who is Christ.' He came to earth through a virgin birth to defeat Satan and to deliver his elect from the devil's power. Genesis 3:15 predicts Christ's defeat of Satan on the cross. To conquer Satan, the conqueror is wounded and crushed.

Michael Bentley explains the connection between the first two books of the Bible: 'While the book of Genesis tells us of the call of Abraham and the story of his descendants, Exodus describes God's choice of a people for his special possession and the establishment of an acceptable system of worship of his great and holy name. The foundation for the concepts of priesthood, the temple ... and the means whereby God's people can approach their holy God are also laid down in this second book of the Bible.'<sup>7</sup>

However, there are some interesting contrasts between Genesis and Exodus. In Genesis, we read the history of a family whereas Exodus relates the history of a nation. The descendants of Abraham are few in Genesis but are numerous – probably about two million – in Exodus. In Genesis, the Hebrews are welcomed and honoured in Egypt but in Exodus, they are hated and feared. In the first book, there is a Pharaoh who declares to Joseph, 'God has made all this known to you'; in the second book, we read about a Pharaoh who declares 'Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord' (Gen. 41:39; Exod. 5:2). Genesis ends with Joseph in a coffin and Exodus closes with God's glory descending on the tabernacle in the wilderness.

## **The theme of Exodus**

Exodus is clearly a book about redemption. God says to his people 'I will free you from being slaves ... I will redeem you.' Moses sings, after crossing the Red Sea, 'In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed' (Exod. 6:6; 15:13). What is redemption? 'The language of redemption is the language of purchase and more specifically of ransom, and ransom is the securing of a release by the payment of a price ... Ransom presupposes some kind of bondage or captivity, and redemption, therefore, implies that from which the ransom secures us.'<sup>8</sup>

Redemption involves a cost; a ransom price is paid. Philip Eveson suggests that there are three aspects to this cost – all pointing us to Christ the Redeemer.<sup>9</sup> Firstly, the arm of Lord: 'I will redeem with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgement' (Exod. 6:6). God exerted great power to redeem the Israelites. His 'mighty acts of judgement' – the plagues – were an expression of divine judgement and showed God's power over Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt (Exod. 7:3-4; 12:12; 15:11; 18:11). The Lord Jesus Christ is the suffering Servant who redeems his people at great cost to himself as is evident from Isaiah 53. Secondly, the Passover sacrifice: the death of the lambs on Passover night was the ransom price paid to release the Israelites from God's judgement. Redemption was accomplished by the death of the lamb whose blood was daubed on the doorframes of each Israelite house. God said 'When I see the blood, I will pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt' (Exod. 12:13). Christ is our Passover Lamb, we are redeemed by his blood (1 Cor. 5:7; Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19). Thirdly, the Lord said that 'the first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal' (Exod. 13:1-2; see also verses 11-16). However, the Lord took the Levites 'in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman.' God said 'The Levites are mine, for all the firstborn are mine ... in Israel,

whether man or animal. They are to be mine, I am the LORD' (Num. 3:13). Because the number of firstborn sons exceeded the number of Levites, five shekels per person were paid to redeem the extra boys. This procedure anticipates Christ, becoming the substitute of God's people; he came 'to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45; see also Isa. 53:5-6). 'Christ's redeeming blood is of infinite worth and has effected eternal redemption for the countless myriads of God's people from every tribe and nation.'<sup>10</sup>

### Old Testament types

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We will see in the book of Exodus types of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is a type? The word comes from Romans 5:14, where we read about 'Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.' 'Pattern' is translated as 'type' in the New King James Version and as 'similitude' in the Authorised Version.<sup>11</sup> In Romans 5, the apostle Paul compares and contrasts Adam and Christ. Biblical scholars debate the definition of the term and what is, or who is, a type. In this book, I am going to use Dr. Peter Master's definition as a guideline: 'Types are persons or objects or events that serve as prophetic illustrations or likenesses of New Testament fulfilments.'<sup>12</sup>

### Unlocking the treasure

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My aim in this book is to use the New Testament keys to unlock the treasure chest of Exodus. I want you to see in the book of Exodus the Lord Jesus Christ, the Pearl of Great Price. To change the metaphor, I want you to see Christ's portrait in the second book of God's Word so that you will marvel at the wonder of his redeeming love and so that you will want to devote your life to serving him.

So then, let's take the keys and unlock the chest...