

# UPLOOK

MAY 2009

Assess the Need • Catch the Vision • Take the Challenge

## THE EMERGENT CHURCH

Chet Plimpton

## READ WITH UNDERSTANDING

Don Norbie

## RICHMOND, KY

The Gospel Surge  
Begins

## BIBLICAL DATING

*Does the part  
we need to  
know & live  
start here?!*

# The Old Testament

The first three-quarters

[www.uplook.org](http://www.uplook.org)



Novelty is not the same as freshness. This is why the Bible remains alive, powerful, and relevant, even though it hasn't changed for millennia.

## Is Being Novel Novel?

"There is nothing new under the sun." (Eccl. 1:9)

**W**e live in a world that is changing at a faster rate than ever before. (Well, maybe not faster than during the Flood, but we're talking about sustained change over long periods of time.) People are constantly changing styles, jobs, homes, and, tragically, even spouses. The world is obsessed with the internet where any website that is the same two days—or two hours!—in a row is a disappointment. What does this hunger for change mean for the church?

Change in the church can be healthy, but only if it doesn't compromise our obedience to the Word of God—or, better still, if the change brings us closer to the Scriptures than we were before. However, many of the alterations taking place in churches today fall into two other categories.

**Departure from the Word of God.** Society is increasingly hostile to the Scriptures, and many believers are succumbing to the pressure to adjust the church in a (vain) effort to please the world. Watering down the Bible's teachings, abandoning the distinction in the roles of men and women, refocusing the assembly to entertain the lost—these are all examples of modifications that belittle the Bible. The irony is that, for all the lofty talk of innovation and breaking free, these modifications to the church aren't fresh or creative at all. They only serve to make a church part of the homogenous mass of trendy churches that currently flood the world. No study, prayer, or thinking is required. Just jump on the bandwagon. If it doesn't work out, don't worry. There will be a new bandwagon along in a few months. Maybe that one will work.

It's like disgruntled young people who, in order to prove their independence and individuality, get the same hair styles and clothing (and tattoos and piercings) as all of their peers. Vive la différence! They have cast off the chains of one conformity only to embrace another, far more shallow, conformity.

**Change for the sake of change.** There are those who believe that novelty is inherently profound. This applies to doctrine as well as practice. You can count on these men to have a different (read: bizarre) interpretation of almost every verse of the Bible. No passage is safe from their clever insights. Every other Christian for twenty centuries has missed the nuances they see in almost every phrase of Scripture.

Again, the irony is that such novelty is anything but new. Paul wrote to Timothy, "*As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine*" (1 Tim. 1:3). Other translations render it "strange doctrines," and, believe me, some of them are very strange indeed. It turns out that sometimes being weird isn't profound. Sometimes it's just weird.

This isn't to say that there's nothing new for us to learn from the Scriptures. There's infinitely more for us to learn! But such learning will come through the disciplines of study and meditation, not through "sanctified imagination". And concerning our practice, change can be good—there's no virtue in clinging to unbiblical traditions. But novelty is the easy path. We need Christians who are willing to sacrifice the time and effort to study the Bible, learn the Bible, and obey the Bible, because the only change worth having is change that brings us closer to the Word of God.

# U P L O O K

MAY 2009

Volume 76 • Number 3

Founded in 1927 as Look on the Fields, UPLOOK is published monthly except for occasional combined issues which count as two issues, by Uplook Ministries and Uplook Ministries (Canada).  
Street Address: 12064 Linden Drive, Marne, MI, 49435-9683  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2041, Grand Rapids, MI, 49501-2041

Phone: (616) 677-6127

Fax: (616) 677-6129

Website: <http://www.uplook.org>

E-mail: [uplook@uplook.org](mailto:uplook@uplook.org)

ISSN #1055-2642

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UPLOOK magazine is intended to encourage the people of God in fidelity to His Word, fervency in intercessory prayer, labors more abundant, and love to the Lord. Believing in the practical Headship of Christ and the local autonomy of each assembly, this is not intended to be an official organ of any group or federation of local churches. The editor and authors take responsibility for materials published. For any blessing which accrues, to God be the glory.

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Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with all unsolicited material. News items must be submitted at least two months in advance of issue requested. Selected news items will be carried for two issues (if time permits). The editor reserves the right to determine those items best suited for the magazine. Editorial decisions are final. Photos accepted. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope for photos you wish returned. Send news items to [frontlines@uplook.org](mailto:frontlines@uplook.org)

### Postal Information

US POSTMASTER: (USPS 620-640)  
Send address changes to UPLOOK,  
P. O. Box 2041, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2041  
Periodical postage paid at Grand Rapids, MI.

CANADIAN POSTMASTER:  
Send address changes to UPLOOK,  
P. O. Box 4089, St. Catharines, ON L2R 7S3  
International Publication Mail Product  
(Canadian Distribution) Sales Agreement No. 40020782

BRITISH POSTMASTER:  
Send address changes to UPLOOK,  
P. O. Box 1163, Bristol BS39 4YA

**Subscription Information:** The Uplook magazine mailing list is maintained on a subscription basis. There is no charge for a subscription, however you must renew your subscription annually in order to continue receiving the magazine. An initial subscription is for six issues. Thereafter any time you renew, your subscription will be extended a further ten issues. There are three ways to renew:

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## Reader's Guide to the Origins Debate (part 2)

Scientific evidence within a consistent Bible framework

Charles Darwin hesitated to publish his ideas on how new species of animals came to exist because he knew they would cause major controversy in the scientific and theological worlds of the 1850's.<sup>1</sup> He was right. And now, one hundred fifty years after publication of *The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection*, the emotionally charged debate continues. Hundreds of books from all sides of the debate have been published in the last fifty years alone. Not all of these are worth reading. So where does the interested Christian reader who wants to be informed about the debate even begin? The resources I recommended in part one of this series should provide a good basic understanding of the issues.<sup>2</sup> For those desiring a deeper understanding of the scientific failings of Darwinism, read the pivotal books, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by molecular biologist Michael Denton<sup>3</sup> and *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* by biochemist Michael Behe.<sup>4</sup> These two seminal works have provided the foundation for the so-called "Intelligent Design" (ID) movement. Other books by William Dembski, Jonathan Wells, and Stephen Meyer are part of the same ID genre. ID proponents affirm that all we understand about the universe supports the existence of a Designer/Creator but do not identify who the Designer is. For the Christian, this position is ultimately unsatisfactory because it fails to take into account the self-revelation of God as the Creator, Sustainer, and Saviour found in the Bible.

While it is important to know and understand the scientific and philosophical criticisms of Darwinism, it must be appreciated that if, indeed, the fundamental molecules-to-man theory of evolution is false, this does not prove to the non-Christian that Christianity is true. But for those who by God's grace have come to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is also important to understand scientific evidences within a consistent Biblical framework. Where does the serious Christian look for this type of information?

Many helpful resources can be found online from organizations like the Institution for Creation Research (ICR) or Answers in Genesis.<sup>5</sup> ICR's founder, engineer Henry M. Morris, believed that "the doctrine of creation is indeed the foundation of every other doctrine or precept of Christianity."<sup>6</sup> Historically, Morris is seen as the father of the creation science movement. The Creation Science Fellowship in Pittsburgh, PA provides basic, intermediate and advanced reading lists of recommended materials on their website.<sup>7</sup> By far the best resource to help the reader choose appropriate level books is available free from the Creation Research Society in the form of their Resource Catalog.<sup>8</sup> The catalog is divided into topical sections like biology, astronomy/physics, paleontology/anthropology, etc. Each section categorizes books as either popular or in-depth and gives a short synopsis of the content.

Not everything in print is worth reading, true. But a friend often comments that "the one who does not read has no advantage over the one who cannot read." 📖

—MICHAEL G. WINDHEUSER, PH.D.

1 Abigail Lustig, ed., *Darwinian Heresies* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

2 Michael G. Windheuser, "Reader's Guide to the Origins Debate (part 1)," *Uplook Magazine*, Jan/Feb 2009.

3 Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory In Crisis* (Chevy Chase, MD: Adler & Adler Publishing Inc., 1986).

4 Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1996).

5 [www.ICR.org](http://www.ICR.org); [www.AnswersinGenesis.org](http://www.AnswersinGenesis.org)

6 Henry M. Morris, *The Long War Against God: The History and Impact of the Creation/Evolution Conflict* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989).

7 [www.csfpittsburgh.org](http://www.csfpittsburgh.org)

8 [www.CreationResearch.org](http://www.CreationResearch.org) and [www.crsbooks.org](http://www.crsbooks.org)





## Richmond, Kentucky

The Gospel Surge begins in earnest May 23.

**F**or three special weeks in May/June, Richmond, KY will be visited by saints, joining the GNOM team, who are eager to spread the Good News there. **Door Hanger Week** (May 23-29) is for those eager to distribute gospel literature to every house in Kentucky's 6th largest city. Then during **Door Knocker Week** (May 30-Jun 5) believers will engage the citizens in spiritual discussions at their doors, by after-school kid's clubs, car washes, and evening gospel events with Joe Reese (ON), etc. **Follow-up Week** (Jun 6-12) will seek to consolidate the gains of the effort.

Richmond, established in 1798, the seat of Madison County, was designated the fastest-growing city in Kentucky during the 1990s. At present, the population is 32,333 with 11,840 households and about six thousand families residing in the city. Influenced strongly by the presence of Eastern Kentucky University, the median age is 25 years. In 2006, the median household income (MHI) for Richmond was \$30,326 (compared with the U.S. MHI of \$60,374). About 25% of the population lives below the poverty line, including 26.2% of those under age 18 and 19.9% of those age 65 or over. This compares with 12.6% under the poverty line nationwide.

Please pray, and plan to be involved. Find out more at: [www.goodnewsoutreach.info](http://www.goodnewsoutreach.info)

You may also sign up for regular reports from Richmond by requesting them on the home page at [www.uplook.org](http://www.uplook.org)

### LADIES' MISSIONARY CONFERENCE

Hosted by Turner Road and Oakwood Bible Chapels, the 32nd Annual Conference is planned for May 2 from 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM at Turner Road Bible Chapel, 2100 Turner Rd, Windsor, ON. Lunch provided. Child care for 2 yrs. old & under. Speakers: Kathy VanEssen – MSC and Susan Blok – New Life Prison Ministries. **Contact:** Jan Gillis ph: 519-967-1075 email: [ngillis@cogeco.ca](mailto:ngillis@cogeco.ca)

### REDFIELD, IA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Hilltop Chapel will have their Bible conference May 2-3. The scheduled speaker is Joe Reese (ON). **Contact:** Dave Hammond ph: 515-523-2357

### 64th ANNUAL LA CONFERENCE

Lake Park Chapel, 201 Schlieff Dr, Belle Chasse will hold its conference May 2-3, beginning at 3:30 PM. Enjoy a spiritually refreshing weekend in God's Word with Ted Gliske (MN) speaking. **Contact:** Ray Cummings,

103 Dickson Dr, Belle Chasse, LA 70037 ph: 504-239-7068 email: [lakeparkchapel@cmaaccess.com](mailto:lakeparkchapel@cmaaccess.com)

### CONFERENCE IN CLAREMONT CA

The brethren at Claremont Bible Chapel, Claremont CA will host their 19th annual conference May 15-17. Joe Mikhael (AZ) and Craig Shakarji (MD) are the invited speakers. Accommodations and meals provided. **Contact:** J. Harry Elliott ph: 909-621-1064 Rick Markley ph: 909-625-7463

### VESSELS OF HONOR 2009

A young adults conference convened by East Tulsa Bible Chapel will be held on the campus of Park University, Parkville, MO May 22-25. The theme is "Pioneering" with general session speakers Mike Attwood (GA) Warren Henderson (WI) and Jabe Nicholson (MI). Seminar session speakers, along with the general session speakers, are Mona Schon-

berg and Larry Sax. **Contact:** Jim Lindamood ph: 918-663-1121 email: [jimlindamood@vesselsofhonor.org](mailto:jimlindamood@vesselsofhonor.org) Dan Moffitt ph: 918-744-6484 email: [danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net](mailto:danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net) web: [www.vesselsofhonor.org](http://www.vesselsofhonor.org)

### CAMP HOPE IN GEORGIA

Camp Hope will hold their Home School Camp for ages 7-19, in the will of the Lord, May 25-30. The speakers will be Andy Scott (Junior) and John Gordon (Teen). The week begins Monday with registration at 3:00 PM and ends Saturday after breakfast. Visit Camp Hope's website [www.camphopega.org](http://www.camphopega.org) for a complete listing of their summer camp schedule and registration. **Contact:** Steve Roys, 7011 Pony Lake Rd, Dahlonega, GA 30533 ph: 770-536-4787 email: [camphopega@arilion.com](mailto:camphopega@arilion.com)

### SKYLAND BIBLE CONFERENCE 2009

The 53rd annual conference will be held at Bryan College, Dayton in the

## FRONT LINES *continued*

beautiful foothills of southeast Tennessee. The conference begins Saturday, Jun 27 and continues through Friday, Jul 3 with Steve Price (KS) and Johnny Gordon (NC) speaking. **Contact:** Wes Patterson ph: 336-923-1030 web: [www.skylandbible.org](http://www.skylandbible.org)

### DISCIPLESHIP CAMP 2009

The Minot Assembly of Believers in Jesus Christ, Minot ND announce a Discipleship Camp. The session will be held at a camp near Minot Jun 28 - Jul 4 beginning at 5:30 PM Sunday and ending with breakfast on Saturday. This will be a time of Bible study, fellowship, and recreation for young Christian men and women 16 yrs. and older. There is no camp fee. **Contact:** Discipleship Camp 2009, 9111 Project Road N, Burlington, ND 58722 ph: 701-852-6628 e-mail: [dwscott@srt.com](mailto:dwscott@srt.com)

### FAMILY CAMPS IN MISSOURI

Ozark Family Camp hosts three separate weeks of family camp during Jul and Aug at Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp, Freeburg, MO. The camps are a great source of fellowship with other believers and spiritual encouragement. There is no set fee for camp but rather it is provided on a donation basis. **Contact:** Dan Moffitt email: [danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net](mailto:danmoffitt@sbcglobal.net) web: [www.ozarkfamilycamp.com](http://www.ozarkfamilycamp.com)

### TURKEY HILL RANCH BIBLE CAMP

For the complete 2009 camp and conference schedule for Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp, visit the camp website at [www.turkeyhillranch.com](http://www.turkeyhillranch.com) **Contact:** Sonny Williams, Director, 13781 Maries Road 301, Vienna, MO 65582 ph: 573-744-5843 email: [sonny@turkeyhillranch.com](mailto:sonny@turkeyhillranch.com)



Donnie MacMullen

### NEW HAMPSHIRE CONFERENCE

Berean Gospel Assembly, Langdon, NH will host their Follow-Me Conference Jul 16-19. Roy Wahab (ON), Jesse Gentile (FL) and Jeremiah Morrison (KY) are the scheduled speakers. The topic is "Radical Christianity" – following the Lord Jesus in practical ways and meaning business for Him in our daily lives. **Contact:** Nathanael Pena ph: 603-499-3099 email: [goserveurking@gmail.com](mailto:goserveurking@gmail.com)

### SOUTHEAST FAMILY CONFERENCE

Camp Hope will host their 2nd annual conference Jul 25-31 in the will of the Lord. Speakers will be Thomas Wheeler (TX) and Alan Malchuk (NC) for the adults and Nate Thomas (SC) for the children. Registration begins Saturday afternoon with the first meeting at 7:00 PM. Camp will end Friday morning. **Contact:** Steve Roys, 7011 Pony Lake Rd, Dahlonega, GA 30533 ph: 770-536-4787 email: [camphopega@arilion.com](mailto:camphopega@arilion.com) web: [www.camphopega.org](http://www.camphopega.org)

### WEST VIRGINIA BIBLE CONFERENCE

The WV assemblies invite you to their annual family camp Aug 2-7 with speakers Charles Fizer (IA) and Mike Attwood (GA). Children's ministry will be with Nate Thomas (SC). A nursery is also provided. The conference is held at Bluestone Camp and Retreat near Hinton, WV, surrounded by beautiful mountain scenery. A detailed brochure can be mailed to you per request. **Contact:** Brent Jones ph: 304-466-4738 e-mail: [brentandhope@verizon.net](mailto:brentandhope@verizon.net)

### UPWARD BOUND 2009

Upward Bound will be held again at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo,



At Upward Bound during the week in Algonquin Park

ON. Running from Sunday, Aug 16 to Sunday the 23rd, the focus of week one is intensive Bible study and practical teaching from the Scriptures, but there are also times of social and recreational activities. Week two is a canoe trip into Algonquin Park running from Sunday Aug 23 to Friday the 28th. Speakers: Brian Cretney (ON), Charlie Tempest (ON), Craig Shakarji (MD), Dennis Leblanc (NB) Sandy McEachern (ON). Attendees are welcome to attend either or both weeks. **Contact:** [armceachern@gmail.com](mailto:armceachern@gmail.com)

### MEN'S BIBLE STUDY SEMINAR

Pine Bush Bible Camp, Bloomingburg, NY is planning an intensive Bible study seminar Aug 23-27 for men who are serious about the study of God's Word. Randy Amos (NY) will speak on the subject "God's Calling and Prophetic Plan for the Nations, Israel and the Church." The seminar starts with Sunday dinner and ends with breakfast on Thursday. The cost is \$95. **Contact:** Charles Myers ph: 732-451-9444 web: [www.pbbs.org](http://www.pbbs.org) email: [Cvspeedie@aol.com](mailto:Cvspeedie@aol.com) After July 1st, call the Camp at 845-361-1871.

### LABOR DAY WEEKEND CONFERENCE

The 2009 Mid-South Bible Conference will be held Sep 4-7 at Horton Haven Christian Camp. This is an event for the entire family with ministry and activities for all age groups. The accommodations range from deluxe private rooms in the lodge to rustic cabins and an RV area. Warren Henderson (WI) will be ministering to the adults, Justin Phelan (IA) will be the teen speaker and Art Manning

(IA) will be teaching the children.  
**Contact:** Horton Haven Christian Camp, P. O. Box 276, Chapel Hill, TN 37034 web: [www.hortonhaven.org](http://www.hortonhaven.org)

### YOUTH CONFERENCE AT CAMP HOPE

Camp Hope in Georgia will hold their annual Youth Conference Sep 5-7 with Dwight Knight (IL) speaking. Registration begins Saturday at noon and camp ends Monday at 11:15 AM. No lunch is provided Saturday or Monday. Cost: \$60/person.  
**Contact:** Jamie Wolfgram  
 ph: 706-799-7053  
 email: [Jcdiwolfgram@aol.com](mailto:Jcdiwolfgram@aol.com)

### ANNUAL LADIES CONFERENCE IN GA

Camp Hope will be having their annual Ladies Conference Sep 25-27 with Vicky Gaynier speaking. The conference begins Friday with registration at 7:00 PM and ends Sunday at 10:00 AM. Cost: \$60 per person.  
**Contact:** Barbara Thorpe ph: 706-359-6297 email: [sambarb@nu-z.net](mailto:sambarb@nu-z.net)  
 Camp Hope ph: 770-536-4787  
 email: [camphopega@arilion.com](mailto:camphopega@arilion.com)  
 web: [www.camphopega.org](http://www.camphopega.org)

### PACIFIC BIBLE MINISTRIES

This annual conference will be held Sep 28 - Oct 2 at the Mission Springs Christian Conference Center 75 miles south of San Francisco, CA in the Santa Cruz mountains. The conference begins Monday with dinner at 6:00 PM and ends Friday with lunch. Speakers: Alan Parks (SC) and Keith Keyser (PA). **Contact:** Max Krieger ph: 323-256-1992 email: [maxnbethk@sbcglobal.net](mailto:maxnbethk@sbcglobal.net)

### COMMENDATION

The elders from Bible Fellowship Assembly, Porcupine-Timmins,

ON, CA are pleased to announce the commendation of *David & Becky Jenkinson* to full-time work for the Lord. They have been in faithful fellowship and serving the Lord at BFA for 27 years. During the past two years they have been burdened for and are conducting Gospel meetings with Christians in Shillington, ON. They conduct a home Bible study, are active in marriage counseling and minister to local northern assemblies as the Lord leads.

### NEW ASSEMBLY IN WALPOLE, NH

A new assembly known as Berean Gospel Assembly is temporarily meeting in homes for worship and fellowship. Meetings are on Thursday nights for Bible study and Sunday mornings for the Lord's Supper and Family Bible Hour. **Contact:** Robert Gentile ph: 603-835-6189  
 Alan Chidester ph: 603-495-1415  
 email: [chidester5@gsinet.net](mailto:chidester5@gsinet.net)

### NEW WORK IN SYRACUSE, NY

A new assembly has begun in Syracuse, meeting in homes for worship and Bible study. Meeting times are Tuesday nights for Bible Study and Sunday mornings for the Lord's Supper and Family Bible Hour. Believers are welcome to join for worship and fellowship. **Contact:** Abey Abraham ph: 315-708-3839  
 email: [abey\\_a@yahoo.com](mailto:abey_a@yahoo.com)  
 Ray Shetley ph: 315-218-5958  
 email: [rlshetley@gmail.com](mailto:rlshetley@gmail.com)

### UNIFIED IN HARRISBURG

Derry Street Gospel Chapel and New Life Bible Chapel, both of Harrisburg, PA have united into one assembly. Believers are now meeting at Har-

risburg Bible Chapel, 5503 Union Deposit Rd, Harrisburg, PA 17111 ph: 717-652-8214 **Contact:** Robert Walker, 520 Frog Hollow Rd, Harrisburg, PA 17112 ph: 717-599-5953

### NEW MEETING PLACE IN GEORGETOWN

As of Jan 2009 the saints at Halton Hills Bible Chapel began meeting at the Georgetown District Seniors Centre, 318 Guelph Street, Unit 9, Georgetown, ON L7G 4B5 **Contact:** Hanniel Ghezzi ph: 905-873-1005  
 info: [info@haltonhillsbiblechapel.com](mailto:info@haltonhillsbiblechapel.com)

### VOICES FOR CHRIST


The *Voices for Christ* website features over forty thousand audio sermons from brethren dating back to the 1950's, all conveniently in mp3 format for easy download to a personal computer or an mp3 player. They are actively searching for audio messages on reel-to-reel, cassette or CD, both classic and modern, to restore, digitize and distribute. Their work is free of charge, and they are willing to return the original material along with the messages on CD or optional hard drive which could be utilized on a chapel's website in addition to the VFC website. **Contact:** Dwight Beavers ph: 919-477-2827  
 email: [dbeavers2@nc.rr.com](mailto:dbeavers2@nc.rr.com)  
 web: [www.voicesforchrist.org](http://www.voicesforchrist.org)

### COLLECTING DUST?

Did your parents or grandparents leave a library collection of Bible teaching? Please consider making these valuable books accessible to other believers who would put them to good use. Assistance with the shipping cost is available. **Contact:** Doug Engle ph: 620-200-2045  
 email: [dougengle76@gmail.com](mailto:dougengle76@gmail.com)

## FRONT LINES *continued*


### MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES



*Emmanuel Bible Camp* in PEI, Canada is looking to the Lord for a camp manager for the upcoming season. Fifty-five years in presenting the gospel to boys and girls in the area, Emmanuel continues to emphasize Christ in all its ministry.

**Contact:** Grant Canfield email: [gandscanfield@pei.sympatico.ca](mailto:gandscanfield@pei.sympatico.ca)  
web: [www.emmanuelbiblecamp.ca](http://www.emmanuelbiblecamp.ca)

*Bethel Bible Camp*, Woolwine, VA requires a Maintenance Manager with mechanical aptitude. He will need to be commended by his home assembly. A home is provided.



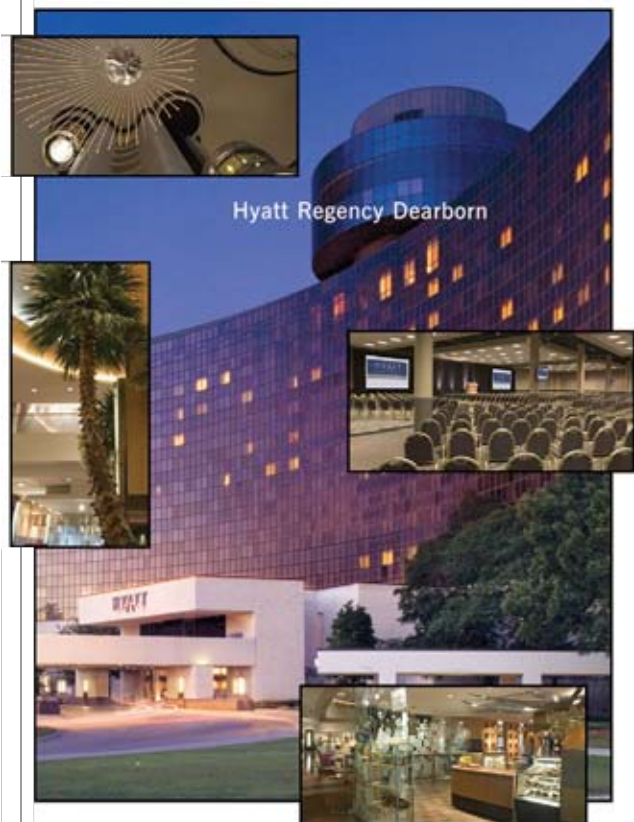
**Contact:** John Hand,  
Bethel Bible Camp, P. O. Box 71,  
Woolwine, VA 24185  
e-mail: [keptbyhim1936@va.net](mailto:keptbyhim1936@va.net)  
ph: 276-930-4289

*Parkside Ranch* in Orford, Quebec has need of a couple to be involved full time. It would be ideal if they were commended and have a desire for camp ministry. Responsibilities include maintenance, farm management, administration and involvement in the camping program.

**Contact:** [diron.w@sympatico.ca](mailto:diron.w@sympatico.ca)  
web: [www.parksideranch.com](http://www.parksideranch.com)

Campers horseback riding during the 2008 Summer camp at Parkside Ranch

*Guelph Bible Conference Centre*, a year-round Christian camp and conference facility is seeking a candidate to fill the position of General Manager. The successful candidate will have a passion for Christ and will demonstrate good leadership and people skills. The General Manager needs to be a good communicator who will work in conjunction with the Board to coordinate the day-to-day operations of the camp including customer relations, promotion, finances, maintenance, business operations and strategic planning. A desire to see individuals grow in Christ is essential. **Contact:** Bruce Dureno ph: 519-734-1196 email: [bdureno@mnsi.net](mailto:bdureno@mnsi.net) web: [www.guelphbbblecc.com](http://www.guelphbbblecc.com)



## 2009 International Conference

# RISE UP & CHOOSE

**Dec. 28-31 2009**

**Dearborn, MI. USA**

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**Roy Hill**  
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There will also be a number of seminars of special interest to everyone.

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# Reading with Understanding

Cutting a straight line through the Word

**One's goal should be to understand the true meaning and importance of the passage.**

So, how do you read the Bible? What is your goal? Ezra is a beautiful example of how one should approach Scripture. *“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances to Israel”* (Ezra 7:10, NKJV). His life's goal was a mastery of the Scripture, obedience to it, and communication of its truths to others. Did he not *“seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”* (Mt. 6:33), as our Lord later commanded?

Before his death, Paul counseled Timothy, *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth”* (2 Tim. 2:15). The Greek *orthotmneo* is “to cut straight,” a term often used in tent making. The NIV translates *“who correctly handles the Word of truth.”* One's goal should be to understand the true meaning and importance of the passage. To teach the Word of God is a heavy responsibility. Do it well, Timothy.

One should handle the Word of God with reverence and care. It is God-breathed and is filled with spiritual truth (2 Tim. 3:14-17). Like the miner digging for gold in the mountains, one must work hard and dig for the truth.

## Grammar

First of all, one must read and study the text grammatically. This means beginning with the words which need to be defined, as we have done above. Start with an English dictionary. Then check a concordance with a list of Hebrew and Greek words at the back. This

can be most helpful. A Bible dictionary will also prove useful. Compare other passages that use the same word. Go no further until you understand the meaning of each word in the passage.

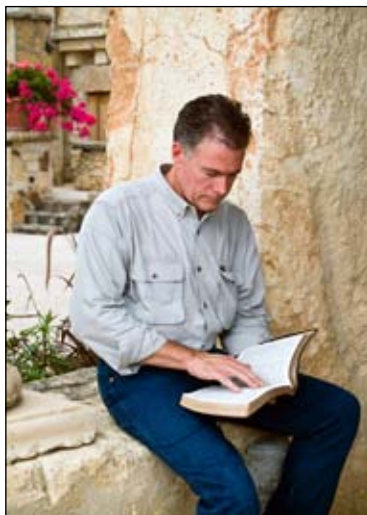
An intense, grammatical study of a passage requires a more literal translation, such as the New King James or the New American Standard. Paraphrases may read easily, but the translators tend strongly towards dynamic equivalence, leaving the translator much room for his personal bias and prejudice.

Then one needs to understand how the words are coupled together and are related in each sentence, paragraph, and passage as a whole. How are these words connected? How do they modify and interact with one another? Read and study, considering the context carefully.

## Context

One must always keep in mind the book as a whole: the author, time, occasion, and purpose for writing. For example, the book of Genesis was not written as a science text book. The creation account does not give us dates and details of geology. This was not the purpose of the book, and such details would have been meaningless to much of mankind in ages past. God is affirmed as the Creator and the creation is described in its progression, culminating in the creation of man. Its simple language and profound spiritual lessons can be understood by all.

Secondly, one should study historically. Much of the message may not be understood unless there is some knowledge of the historic setting and the culture. It is difficult to understand Daniel without some knowledge of the history of the time. Here a Bible



dictionary or commentary will be helpful. Who was Nebuchadnezzar? When did he reign and where was his kingdom? The Bible is not a book of philosophy dealing with abstract ideas or morals. Both the Old and New Testaments are anchored in history. It is most helpful to know something of the history of the times being studied. To know something of Jewish history from 450 B.C. to the time of Christ will help one understand the setting of the gospels. It is also vital in understanding Daniel's prophecies.

### Typology

One should understand the importance of typology in the Scriptures. The word "type" comes from the Greek *typos*, from the verb *typto*, "to strike, or to smite." It is the mark of a blow, an impression, hence, a figure or image. From this comes the thought of a pattern or example or type. The Old Testament contains objects and events designed by God which point forward to the reality that was to come later. The tabernacle with its service is a prime example of this. The book of Hebrews expounds this great object lesson, rich with truths concerning the Christ and His redemptive work. *"For the Law having a shadow of the good things to come and not the very image, can never with these same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect"* (Heb. 10:1). These things were shadows cast by the reality that was to come.

Certainly if a person, event, or object is referred to in the New Testament, one is safe in calling it a type. And there may be other historic events which the Spirit has included in Scripture because of the spiritual truth they convey. One thinks of the experience of Joseph and how his life pictures Christ in a number of ways. But one must be careful in the use of types. Doctrines may be illustrated by a type, but there should be the clear teaching of the New Testament to define doctrine. Be cautious then in the use of types. Some teachers have been guilty of allegorizing Scripture to the point that its clear teaching is ignored. Be careful with numerology. Some have become obsessed with numbers, seeking to find some hidden numerical structure in every passage. They may feel their ministry in life is to lead others into this esoteric knowledge revealed to the few who are enlightened. It is true that certain numbers have significance, such as seven, which seems to stress completeness and perfection. But read the text for its obvious, plain meaning.

### Figures of speech

Read figures of speech with discernment. The Lord used exaggeration to make a point, such as cutting off one's hand if it causes one to sin. Obviously he did not intend people to mutilate the body, but to remove that which leads one to sin. Origen, a third-century theologian, reportedly took it literally and castrated himself, a tragic misinterpretation.

Parables are comparisons of earthly events with spiritual truth. Usually they are intended to illustrate one point. The question was asked, *"Who is my neighbor?"* Our Lord told the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) to emphasize that our responsibility to show love extends to all. It may be used to illustrate the gospel but that was not the original intent. And the idea that the two coins teach that the church age will last 2,000 years is sheer nonsense.

### Obedience

Finally, read and study the Word with a view to obeying it. This was Ezra's goal. He wanted to study the Scriptures and then obey them.

The goal of teaching is not teaching but a transformed life. Paul stressed this. *"Now the purpose (goal) of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith"* (1 Tim. 1:5). Paul gives profound teaching about the incarnation of Christ (Php. 2), but the goal is not simply to build a theology; the goal is to cause believers to cultivate the mindset of our Lord and to live humble, sacrificial lives.

It is imperative then that one study God's Word carefully, beginning with an accurate exegesis of the passage. Then apply it to life. Jesus said, *"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your Word is truth"* (Jn. 17:17). God's desire is to have a godly, holy people, bearing with dignity *"that noble name by which you are called"* (Jas. 2:7). 📖



## The Relationship Between the Testaments

The earthly gives way to the heavenly

**“We worship the Lord in Spirit, not in a temple. A building can be a help or a hindrance.”**

**“***If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”* (John 3:12). In the quiet of

the night, Nicodemus came to the Lord Jesus Christ. He had seen the signs our Lord did (v.2; also 2:23). Surely this was God’s kingdom. God sends, man obeys, miracles result.

The Lord Jesus surprised Nicodemus. He said that to see or to experience the kingdom of God, one must be born again. Nicodemus tried to understand. After all, he was *the* teacher of Israel (v. 10); he knew the Old Testament well. But if Nicodemus didn’t know the earthly things that the Old Testament prepared him for, how could he believe the heavenly things of the New Testament? This tells us that the Old Testament prepared the way for the New Testament which, in turn, fulfilled the Old (Heb. 8:13).

Our Lord’s answer to Nicodemus’ question *“How can these things be?”* (v. 9) shows how we should use the Old Testament. He reminded Nicodemus of Numbers 21:4-9. Moses lifting up the brass serpent was a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ being lifted up on the cross for the salvation of all who would look to Him in faith (vv. 14-16). The Old Testament identified the Christ and revealed what He would do while on this earth. (See also Jn. 5:39; 6:45, 46; Lk. 24:26)

But when the Christ came, *“His own received Him not”* (Jn. 1:11). They failed to recognize their own Messiah because they did not know their own Scriptures. Had they paid closer attention to the Old Testament, they would have known Him. He came to fulfill the Law

(Mt. 5:17f). He was the living reality of all that the Old Testament spoke.

But we must not end there. We must *“go on to perfection not laying again the foundation of repentance...and faith”* (Heb. 6:1). Once men recognized our Lord as the Messiah of the Old Testament, He prepared them for new, heavenly things (Jn. 3:12; 16:12). Let us consider some of them.

### A new worship

John begins by saying *“the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us...full of grace and truth”* (Jn. 1:14). Old Testament temple worship found its reality in the person of Christ. Our Lord purged the temple (Jn. 2:13ff), calling it His Father’s house (Jn. 2:16). When challenged, He spoke of the cross: *“Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up”* (Jn. 2:19). The temple pictured His body.

Then He spoke to a Samaritan woman. When she argued religion (Jn. 4:19ff), He said, *“the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth”* (Jn. 4:23). The Jews worshiped to the letter of the Old Testament, not in spirit. The Samaritans worshiped in error, not in truth.

The Old has been fulfilled and replaced. We worship the Lord in Spirit, not in a temple. We may meet under a shady tree in the heat of the day (as many do) and worship the Father. A building can be a help or a hindrance. When we worship in spirit and truth, the Lord Himself is the attraction.

Such worship demands a new priesthood (Heb. 7:11f). *All* believers are now priests. We must not go back to a priestly caste who officiate in planned worship and teach the Word of God. Nor should we return to wearing robes, bearing special titles, or using altars



## SPIRIT AND TRUTH *continued*



**“Some talk of Christian nations. But the church has no national borders to defend.”**

and equipment. Our priesthood gives us *“boldness to enter into the holy of holies...”* (Heb. 10:19) and to *“draw near”* (Heb. 10:22). No Old Testament priest could do that. Our needs are a pure heart, an assured faith, etc., not old types. Our worship begins where the Old Testament’s worship left off.

Such worship includes ministering to one another as the context shows (Heb. 10:24f). But we must not worship in word only. Worship in spirit and truth demands...

### A new spirit

The Lord Jesus said, *“if anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”* (7:37f). John says that He was speaking of the Holy Spirit who *“was not yet given.”* The Holy Spirit certainly existed from all eternity. He also worked on the earth from the beginning (Gen. 1:2; 1 Sam. 10:6). Yet, it was God’s plan to give the Spirit in a new and special way. And why was He not yet given? John explains: *“because Jesus was not yet glorified”*. The Holy Spirit would be given as the Spirit of the risen, glorified Christ.

In the Old Testament, animal blood was presented *by the hands of a priest*. In the New Testament, the blood of Christ was presented and is applied by His eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14). The work of salvation is finished. There is now no reminder of sin (Heb. 10:2f). Our conscience is clean. We are *“free from dead works to serve the living God.”* The Old covenant could make nothing perfect (Heb. 7:11, 19; 9:9). But grace has freed us from the works of the Law.

As God’s children, we now walk in the Spirit. Thus we have a quiet heart (Jn. 14:1, 27), comfort (Jn. 14:16-18), a new hope (Jn. 14:2), fruitful lives (Jn. 15:5), and full joy (Jn. 15:11). As His friends, we live a life of love to Him and to one another (Jn. 13:33f; 15:14). We can know His will (Jn. 15:15; 17:7) and the true nature of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn. 16:8-11). This keeps us from self-righteous judgment and mere moral teaching. We are free to preach the gospel of God’s grace. Life in the Spirit then produces...

### A new glory

John *“beheld His glory”* (Jn. 1:14) but Nicodemus could not see the Kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3). Christ’s glory was *“full of grace and truth,”* and John adds, *“of His fullness we have all received”* (Jn. 1:16). How wonderful that *“as many as received Him...were born of God”* (Jn. 1:12f). Ours is the glory of being His children.

In Christ, we have *“heavenly things”* (Jn. 3:12). So we are told, *“set your mind [affection] on things above and not on things on the earth”* (Col. 3:2). We are also *“blessed...with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ”* (Eph. 1:3), transcending the earthly.

How sad, then, when believers live earthly lives. Many act as if material well-being depends on obedience. Sincere obedience that *“fails”* often shakes their faith. How good to live generously, having received of His grace and fullness (2 Cor. 8:7-9). Some talk of Christian nations. But the church has no national borders to defend. Others look to political leaders. How good instead to recognize elders—men with a shepherd’s heart for fellow believers. They care for our spiritual well-being at their own cost. They show godly lack of interest in material wealth, having gained the riches of His glory (Eph. 3:16-19).

Joyfully, we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. We are accepted in God’s beloved Son. Because we love Him, we desire to do His good will, to honor Him in word and in deed. Not all can see such glory now, but, one day, all will (Col. 3:4). As we gaze upon His glory, we are changed into His likeness (2 Cor. 3:18). It is a work of the Spirit of Christ.

So ours is the *“work”* of worship. With satisfied hearts and nothing to gain, we seek to honor Him. We know Him (Jn. 10:14). The worth of His person is revealed by His saving ways. As we worship Him, we desire to act like He does. The Holy Spirit honors our desire by giving occasion to act like Him. So we are *“transformed...from glory to glory”* (2 Cor. 3:18). Such fellowship with the Spirit glorifies Christ (Jn. 16:14) and bears fruit (Jn. 15:8) to the glory of the Father. 📍



# The Direction of the Emerging Church Movement

Moving the church away from Christ and the gospel?

**T**he emerging church movement insists that change in the identity, life, and message of the church is necessary if the church is going to be relevant in the present postmodern world society. The movement has valid concerns for relevancy, but, unfortunately, it is driven by postmodernism, so the changes it promotes are moving the church away from Christ and the gospel.

### Five Themes of the Emerging Church

**Movement** The first is what Scot McKnight calls “prophetic rhetoric,” meaning always being “consciously and deliberately provocative.” Brian McLaren states, “Often I don’t think Jesus would be caught dead as a Christian, were He physically here today.”<sup>1</sup> Erwin McManus said, “My goal is to destroy Christianity as a world religion and be a recatalyst for the movement of Jesus Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

The second theme is postmodernism. Emerging church leaders defend postmodernism saying it does not deny truth but instead rejects “metanarratives.” The problem is that while rejection of “metanarratives” would include erroneous worldviews like Marxism, it also includes true worldviews like creation.

The third theme is “Praxis-oriented.” How we live should definitely reflect the teaching of the Word of God. However, under this theme, the Emerging Movement assumes a holistic interpretation and approach to what Paul stated as “*the ministry of reconciliation*,” (2 Cor. 5:18) focusing not on lost souls, but societal problems.

The fourth theme is “post-evangelical,” meaning the church should be suspicious of systematic theology because language cannot capture absolute truth, so no systematic theology should be considered final.

The fifth theme is political. Emerging leaders proudly denounce “conservative-evangelical-politics-as-usual” and describe themselves as “left-wing.” McKnight states that, in his opinion, most emerging leaders are politically left.

**Denying the authority of Scripture** The movement does not view the Bible as the final authority, especially

on controversial issues. For example, McLaren states, “Frankly, many of us don’t know what we should think about homosexuality. We’ve heard all sides but no position has yet won our confidence.” How can it possibly be difficult to understand that homosexuality is a sin when God so clearly and absolutely says so (e.g. Rom. 1:26f)?

**Destruction by deconstructionism** Brian McLaren stated

“Brian McLaren stated he is trying to find an alternative to ‘the narrow, exclusivist understanding of hell.’”

he is trying to find an alternative to “the narrow, exclusivist understanding of hell (that unless you explicitly accept and follow Jesus, you are excluded from eternal life with God and destined for hell).”<sup>3</sup> McLaren suggests that the Scriptures, “simply

don’t say what many Christians commonly say they do,” and, “There’s so much going on metaphorically in Jesus’ teaching about hell and judgment.”<sup>4</sup> Are we to assume by this that there is no real fire, no real torment for the wicked, and no eternal punishment of the unbelieving? What then did Jesus mean when He said, “*Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Mt. 25:41)?

**Relativist pluralism—a disastrous experiment** The Emerging Movement is knowingly putting the church in grave danger by promoting relative pluralism. Brian McLaren likens this approach to a kind of chemotherapy treatment, saying, “emerging postmodernism ... sees relativist pluralism (meaning all opinions or views are of equal value) as a kind of chemotherapy ... In order to kill the malignancy, the patient (the church), has to take dangerous medicine that would prove poisonous if taken in too high doses or for too long”<sup>5</sup> (parenthesis mine). What gives the Emerging Movement such authority? Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, promised, “*Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth*” (Jn. 16:13).

**“Chastened Epistemology” and “Proper Confidence”** When describing its epistemology, the Emerging Movement is fond of saying “Only God is Absolute Truth and only God can genuinely know Absolute Truth. All our knowl-



**“The Emerging Movement is saying to the church, ‘You must not be too confident of what is absolutely true!’”**


edge is tinged.”<sup>6</sup> New terms have been coined to describe this position such as “Chastened Epistemology” and “Proper Confidence.” The Emerging Movement is saying to the church, “You must not be too confident of what is absolutely true!” In His prayer for us in John 17:17, Jesus identified the Scriptures as the written, objective truth of God. He prayed, “*Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy Word is truth.*”

**Defined by behavior—but whose standard?** The Emerging Movement is rightfully concerned for the Church “to live like followers of Jesus in everything they say, do, and think.”<sup>7</sup> For that reason, its leaders claim the movement is “concerned with praxis and not simply theology.” However, Tony Jones defended lesbianism as a sexual orientation saying, “We haven’t yet found that there’s anything that justifies us breaking fellowship with somebody else who loves and is trying to follow Jesus. Why would you break fellowship with someone because you have a different understanding of the atonement than they do? Or a different understanding of human sexuality than they do?”<sup>8</sup> This demonstrates the futility of seeking to live right without believing right.

**The purple gospel** The Emerging Movement insists that the social gospel cannot be separated from the spiritual gospel. Scot McKnight describes it as a “purple gospel,” saying, “A purple gospel takes us beyond both evangelical preoccupation with forgiveness and liberal preoccupation with injustice. It takes us beyond both not by suggesting both are wrong but that both are right—and that a purple gospel is a sin and systemic resolution.”<sup>9</sup> Sin is an offense against God which requires judgment upon the sin through Jesus Christ the sin-bearer. Systemically, sin is simply “out there,” rather than “in me” which reduces redemption to “social activism,” and places the focus of the gospel on removing injustice in the world. The “purple gospel” mixes God’s grace and human determination. According to the Bible, the gospel message is not purple but, instead, is pure and focused. Paul said the gospel of Christ is “*the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth*” (Rom. 1:16).

**A politically correct eschatology** Brian McLaren, commenting on eschatology said, “very literally, the lives of thousands of people hang in the balance because ... the dominant religious group in the country with the most weapons of mass destruction embraces an escha-

tology that legitimates escalating violence.”<sup>10</sup> McLaren also says, “Eschatology of abandonment, which is how I would characterize certain streams of the left-behind approach, has disastrous social consequences.”<sup>11</sup> It can only be understood by McLaren’s reference to “eschatology of abandonment” that, in his view, the rapture would constitute a desertion by Christ of the world, rather than a gathering of His own to Himself.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the most compelling consideration for change in the church called for by the Emerging Movement is for spiritual relevancy or “how faith is lived out” in today’s postmodern society. Very unfortunately, the Emerging Church Movement itself confusedly mixes biblical truth with heretical views as to how the church should become more relevant. Still, it is a valid concern for all of us as believers that our lives bear witness to the life of Christ within us, in order that as members of His body we may effectively witness to the world around us. 

—CHET PLIMPTON

### Endnotes

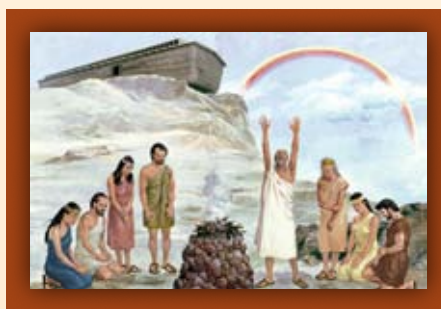
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# Literal or Figurative?

It is often suggested—sometimes even by Christians—that many of the most well-known events of the Old Testament aren't to be taken literally. They are, we are told, merely stories intended to convey a message. The events of the first eleven chapters of Genesis are particularly questioned in this regard. How should we interpret Old Testament events? The simplest answer to that question is to ask another question: how did the Saviour interpret Old Testament events? The answer is clear. During His earthly ministry, Christ went on record as interpreting literally all the controversial OT accounts:

- The creation of Adam and Eve (Mt. 19:4f)
- The murder of Abel (Lk. 11:51)
- The existence and activity of Satan (Lk. 10:18)
- Noah, the ark, and the flood (Mt. 24:37)
- The destruction of Sodom, the salvation of Lot, and the loss of Lot's wife (Lk. 17:29,32)
- The calling of Moses (Mk. 12:26)
- The Ten Commandments (Mt. 19:18)
- Manna from heaven (Jn. 6:31-51)
- The brazen serpent (Jn. 3:14)
- David eating the showbread (Mt. 12:3)
- The Queen of Sheba visiting Solomon to see his wisdom & glory (Mt. 12:42; 6:29)
- Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (Lk. 4:26)
- The future role of Elijah (Mk. 9:12)
- Elisha and Naaman the leper (Lk. 4:27)
- Jonah in the great fish and the repentance of Ninevah (Mt. 12:40-41)
- The wickedness and judgment of Tyre and Sidon (Mt. 11:21)
- The prophecy of Daniel (Mt. 24:15)
- The death of Zechariah between the altar and the sanctuary (Lk. 11:51)

**The Master has spoken. For His followers, this settles the matter.**



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*The arrangement of the Hebrew Bible* “the Law of Moses...the prophets...the psalms” (Lk. 24:44)

Tanakh (Torah + Nevi'im + Ketuvim)			
The Law (Torah)	The Prophets (Nevi'im)	The Writings (Ketuvim)	
Genesis	<b>The Former Prophets</b>	<b>The Books of Truth</b>	
Exodus	Joshua	Psalms	
Leviticus	Judges	Proverbs	
Numbers	Samuel	Job	
Deuteronomy	Kings	<b>The Five Scrolls</b>	
	<b>The Latter Prophets</b>	Song of Solomon	
	Isaiah	Ruth	
	Jeremiah	Lamentations	
	Ezekiel	Ecclesiastes	
	The Twelve (Hosea – Malachi)	Esther	
			<b>Other Writings</b>
			Daniel
Ezra-Nehemiah			
		Chronicles	



*A summary of the arrangement of the books in the English O.T.*

People & Events	History Books	Poetry Books	The Prophets
Creation – Egypt	Genesis	Psalms	
Exodus – Sinai	Exodus		
Sinai	Leviticus		
Wanderings	Numbers		
Preparation to go into the Land	Deuteronomy		
Conquest of the Land	Joshua		
Judges	Judges, Ruth		
Samuel	1 Samuel 1-8		
Saul	1 Samuel 9-31		
David	2 Samuel		
Solomon	1 Kings 1-11	Song of Solomon, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes	
The Divided Kingdom	1 Kings 12 – 2 Kings 17		Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah
Judah only	2 Kings 18-25		Nahum, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Habbakuk
Exile in Babylon			Daniel, Ezekiel
Return to rebuild the temple	Ezra, Esther		Haggai, Zechariah
Return to rebuild Jerusalem	Nehemiah		Malachi
<b>Inter-testament period – “400 Silent Years”</b>			

## *A summary of the various periods of Old Testament history*

Period	Date (B.C.)	Scriptures	Key Events	Key People
Edenic	4178 – ?	Genesis 1-3	Creation, the Fall	Adam & Eve
Primeval	? – 2095	Genesis 4-11	The Flood, Babel, Noahic Covenant	Cain, Abel, Seth, Noah
Patriarchs	2095 – 1809	Genesis 12-50	Calling of Abraham, Sodom and Gomorrah, Joseph's dreams	Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph
Bondage	1809 – 1448	Exodus – Leviticus	Exodus, the Law, Kadesh, the Tabernacle	Moses, Aaron
Wanderings	1448 – 1410	Numbers – Deuteronomy	Censuses, God's provision, the Rock, the serpent on the pole	Moses, Aaron
Conquest	1410 – 1395	Joshua	Jericho, three campaigns, division of the land	Joshua, Caleb, the elders who survived Joshua
Judges	1395 – 1053	Judges – 1 Samuel 8	The moral decline of Israel	Ruth, Boaz, judges, Eli, Samuel
United Kingdom	1053 – 933	1 Samuel 9 – 1 Kings 11	Establishment of the nation	Saul, David, Solomon
Divided Kingdom	933 – 608	1 Kings 12 – 2 Kings 25	Division of the kingdom, Assyrian & Babylonian captivities	Elijah, Elisha, kings, prophets
Babylon	608 – 538	Ezekiel, Daniel	Fiery furnace, wall writing, lions' den	Ezekiel, Daniel
Return	538 – 425	Ezra – Esther	Three returns to Israel, rebuilding the temple and Jerusalem	Zerubbabel & Joshua, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

## BIBLICAL DATING *(Not that other kind of dating)*

The simplest way to construct a timeline of the Old Testament is to work backwards. The following seven steps outline a relatively simple procedure for building such a timeline.

1. Daniel 9:24-27 fixes the date of the crucifixion at 483 Jewish prophetic years after Nehemiah 2:1. For a detailed explanation of this, see *The Coming Prince* by Sir Robert Anderson.
2. The return from Babylon under Ezra (chapter 1) took place a little less than a century before the time of Nehemiah.
3. 2 Chronicles 36:21-23 tells us that the Babylonian exile began 70 years prior to the events of Ezra 1.
4. The dates in Kings and Chronicles can work us back through the kingdom years.
5. 1 Kings 6:1 specifies that it was 480 years from the Exodus to the fourth year of Solomon's reign, so now we have dates back to the Exodus.
6. Galatians 3:17 states that it was 430 years from God's promises in Genesis to the Law. This extends our timeline back to the time of Abraham.
7. Lastly, Genesis 5 and 11 give a fairly precise timeline from creation until Abraham.

Three points to keep in mind:

1. This is an *extremely* simplified approach to creating an Old Testament chronology. There are many issues (length of years, royal ascension years, etc.) that allow for a certain flexibility in the timeline, but nothing that would amount to a difference of centuries or more.
2. Regarding the dates in Genesis 5 and 11, some people point out that "became the father of" might mean "became the ancestor of" and, hence, there may be some generations skipped. However, that doesn't change the dates at all. For example, when Genesis 5:12 says that Kenan lived seventy years and became the father of Mahalalel, from a dating point of view, it doesn't matter if "father" means "father," "grandfather," or "great-grandfather." The point is that Mahalalel was born 70 years after Kenan.
3. Historically speaking, there's very little question about when Abraham lived. Since Genesis 5 and 11 so clearly outline the chronology from Adam to Abraham, the approximate date of creation can be calculated regardless of whether we go through the biblical or extra-biblical route of determining the date Abraham lived.



# Jacob and Esau

Brothers born for adversity

**T**here could not have been two more different boys. When we are introduced to Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25, the contrast between these twins is both stark and ironic. Esau was a “skilled hunter and a man of the field.” On the other hand, Jacob was “a mild man dwelling in tents.”

If Esau were alive today, he would be the star of the hockey team and the hunk whom the girls chase. He was what the world would call a “man’s man,” the kind of young lad any father would be proud to have as a son. Jacob, on the other hand, was a “mama’s boy.” He preferred to be relaxing in the camp, rather than roaming the deserts hunting antelope with his older brother.

The fact that we later find Jacob cooking a stew is a hint that he likely spent more time in the kitchen as a boy, learning from Mom how to cook the food, rather than learning from Dad how to procure the food, as Esau did. In the culture of the day, any man would have thought Esau to be the logical choice of the twins to one day lead the family. Surely he had the strength and the guts to do the job. But this wasn’t God’s plan.

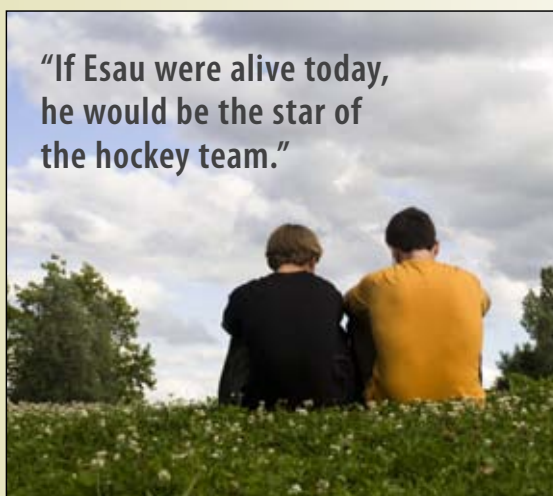
The story of these two boys is one that has come close to me in the past year or so as I ponder my relationship with my own brothers. I have three. Each of us is as different from the others as you could expect. Like Esau, I’m the oldest and I’m also a “man of the field.” I’ve hunted and fished since my boyhood, shunning the bright lights of the city for the woods and lakes.

My brother down from me is, you might say, much like Jacob. He’s a milder man and prefers to be on his own. Unlike Jacob though, whose name means “con- niver” or “deceiver,” Dave is as straightforward and honest as a man could be. The next down from him, Daniel, has had his struggles as a teenager. Yet he’s invariably upbeat, energetic, and positive. My last brother, Noah,

lives up to his name well. He was practically born with a hammer in his hand and can build a house single-handedly. Seven years younger than me, he’s already the

biggest of us and he’s as rock-solid spiritually as he is physically.

I say all this because one thing that has pressed upon my mind more and more is the need for us as young men to make investments in our brothers. Sometimes, it’s our blood broth-




**“If Esau were alive today, he would be the star of the hockey team.”**

ers who get overlooked while we spend more time with Christian guys outside our family.

All of my brothers have qualities that could make them great men of God. But when I think about the kind of older brother I was, did I make investments in them? Did I encourage them, see their strengths, and urge them upward? Or, like Esau, was I concerned only with fulfilling my own desires without making time for my family? Years of living in his older brother’s shadow must have left a seething desire for revenge in Jacob’s heart.

What caused the disaster in Isaac’s family was partly a favoring of one son over the other, but it was also jealousy on Jacob’s part and contempt on Esau’s. Neither of these men could overcome their differences and love each other as brothers.

As men, our brothers can be our closest allies as we walk through the Christian life. But when our relationship is not right, we can be each other’s worst enemies.

The years we spend together at home can be strained at times, but the older I get, the more I realize they’re a gift from God. Let’s redeem those times and not provoke one another to wrath.  —ANTHONY CAPUANO

## Studying the Old Testament

Six simple suggestions

**If we don't know anything about genre, we'll find ourselves hopelessly confused.**

**D**id you love hearing stories from the Old Testament as a child? Of course you did. Stories about Adam and Eve, Noah, Moses, and King David enthralled us as children. So do you love studying the Old Testament today? I hope so, but I'm also realistic. Somewhere along the line, many of us lost our love for the Old Testament. We grew up, started to realize that there was something more than just some interesting stories, and we got discouraged. But it doesn't need to be that way! Our study of the Old Testament can be rich and enjoyable, if only we remember some simple suggestions.

### Start with the basics

We must not start our study of the Old Testament as if it were something completely new to us. Certainly, it is somewhat different than the New Testament. But the same basic rules of interpretation apply: consider the context, compare Scripture with Scripture, look for repeated words and themes, consult several reliable translations, and, after doing your own study, consult several good commentaries. Yes, these are the basics. But they apply to our study of the Old Testament as much as to our study of the New Testament.

### Consider the genre

It has been said that we should be not read every book in the Bible as if Paul wrote it. The Bible is filled with a number of different literary genres. There are gospels, doctrinal epistles, and apocalyptic literature in the New Testament. The Old Testament contains historical accounts (e.g. Kings and Chronicles),

major poetic passages (e.g. Psalms), Law (e.g. Leviticus), wisdom literature (e.g. Proverbs), many books of prophecy, and, of course, the category-defying book of Genesis.

If we recognize the genre of the book we are studying, we'll have a proper foundation for understanding it. On the other hand, if we don't know anything about genre, we'll find ourselves hopelessly confused. To read apocalyptic literature as if it were a poem is to ignore the reality of coming events. To read a poem as if it were an epistle is to invest every word with a technical meaning when the author intended to convey feelings. Yes, there is doctrine in the poems, and the words have meaning, but the genre makes it clear that God is presenting great concepts in poems rather than all the details we would expect in an epistle. Identify the genre when you start your study.

### Know your history

The events of the Bible, and particularly the Old Testament, cannot be properly understood apart from their historical background. That is not to say that we need to spend years studying secular historical accounts. But the Bible itself presents historical background. What was happening in Israel at the time that this prophet wrote? Which prophets were contemporaries of each other? What does the rest of the Bible say about the historical context of the passage you are studying? These are the types of questions we need to ask ourselves when studying the Bible.

We live in a post-historical society. History is ignored, even demeaned, by people who proudly believe they have nothing to learn from the past. But Christians are a historical people. We understand the benefits of histo-



## FIRM FOUNDATIONS *continued*

ry. While a post-historical society sneers that history is unreliable because it is written by the victors, we know that not only is history important, but that we have a Book which speaks infallibly on the subject of history. By rejecting a secular philosophy that rejects history, we will have a setting for our study of the Old Testament.

### Watch for themes

The New Testament epistles are rich with meaning. Each sentence and word has deep theological significance. But the Old Testament deals more with the vast sweep of themes. Rather than a concentrated explanation of doctrine, the doctrine is spread through whole chapters and books. Needless to say, this requires a different type of study. Yes, in-depth study is still useful, but the student of the Old Testament must do survey reading in order to gain familiarity with the bigger picture.

The great themes of the Old Testament center on the character of God and His interactions with sinful man. In the Old Testament, we learn that Jehovah is God and that He is not like the gods of the nations. We learn that God is holy and that mankind is sinful. We learn that God hates sin and that the forgiveness of sin requires a blood sacrifice.

Yes, individual verses are still important. For example, we read of the holiness of God in Hosea 11:9, “*for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee.*” But even more than a single verse, the holiness of God is a major theme which sweeps through page after page and book after book. So it is with all the great themes. As you study the Old Testament, watch for these themes and you will find yourself thoroughly enjoying them.

### Remember the dispensation

If we assume a standard seven dispensation model, then six of the dispensations are found in the Old Testament. In fact, four of the dispensations are found in Genesis! But even more importantly, whether we acknowledge seven dispensations or not, it is clear that the Old Testament presents only the occasional clue concerning the then-future dispensation of grace. Indeed, the Old Testament says much more about the millennium than it does about the dispensation of grace.

But does this mean that grace is not found in the Old Testament? Of course not! God’s grace is demonstrated right from the beginning, in Genesis 3:21 when He fash-



ioned garments of skins for the fallen Adam and Eve. But, just as clearly, law was more prominent in God’s dealings with man in the Old Testament (Jn. 1:17). Yes, grace was demonstrated in the Old Testament, but a fuller demonstration of grace was to come in the dispensation of grace, inaugurated by the Lord Jesus Christ.

As another example, we know that during Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit ministered in some special way (Ps. 51:11) but was not yet given in fuller measure (Jn. 16:7).

So leaving aside simplistic objections based on the title of the current dispensation, all believers must acknowledge that something was very different about God’s dealings with mankind in the Old Testament. If we read the current dispensation back into the Old Testament, we will confuse ourselves. If we recognize each dispensation as a unique aspect of God’s self-revelation, our study will be moving in the right direction.

### Suggestions on word studies

Word studies are more difficult in Old Testament Hebrew than in New Testament Greek. In the first place, Hebrew has inseparable prepositions. For example, the first word in the Bible is the word “beginning” with the inseparable preposition “in” tacked on the front. In the Hebrew Bible, it looks like one word, but you need to ignore the preposition “in” and look up the word “beginning” in your Bible. Yes, this is more technical than most people need to worry about, but it is something to look for.

A second tip for Old Testament word studies is to recognize that Hebrew has a smaller vocabulary than Greek, and so the meaning of many words is context driven. One cannot take every possible meaning that a Hebrew word could have and impose each one on a passage until you find a meaning you like!

### Final suggestions

Read the Old Testament through from beginning to end to get a feel for the whole scope of the book. Understand the major characters, the timeline, and the historical context. When you have recognized the genre, read the book to try to get an impression of the overall message. And then study the book for the pure joy of understanding God’s truth in the Old Testament! 🕒

## Christ in the Old Testament

The veil is removed.

Are we intimidated by the Old Testament? Is it a closed book to us? Perhaps we've forgotten its Key.

The Jewish religious leaders of New Testament times had devoted their lives to studying the Old Testament. In many cases, their motives were noble—a desire to please God and even a desire to gain eternal life. But, however commendable their motives, they had missed the main point, and, one day, the Main Point stood before them and said, “*You search the Scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life; it is these that bear witness of Me*” (Jn. 5:39).

These words speak to us, too. Do we see Christ as we read the Old Testament? Here's where to look.

### Prophecy

To begin with, we see Christ in Old Testament prophecy. As we read these prophecies, we discover that they focus not so much on future events as they do on a Person. Events are only significant insofar as they speak of Him. (This is why the Bible ignores so much that the world considers crucial yet details events that the world dismisses.) All of history is with a view to gathering all things together in Christ (Eph. 1:10), and, in Old Testament prophecy, we see how God has been inexorably moving world events toward that end.

Prophecies about the coming Messiah are found throughout the Old Testament, not simply in the Prophets. From the Seed of the Woman (Gen. 3:15) to the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2), all the Old Testament writers give us glimpses of the Coming One.

Old Testament prophecies largely fall into two categories: prophecies about Christ's first coming as the suffering Messiah and prophecies about His second coming as the reigning Messiah. In the first category, we have prophecies concerning His birth (Isa. 7:14; Mic. 5:2),

early life (Hos. 11:1), character (Isa. 42:1-4), ministry (Isa. 61:1-3), triumphal entry (Zech. 9:9), rejection (Isa. 53:3-4), betrayal (Zech. 11:12-13), crucifixion (Ps. 22), resurrection (Ps. 16:10), and ascension (Ps. 68:18). In the second category, we have prophecies about the tribulation (Isa. 24), Christ's return (Zech. 14:3-8), His judgment (Ezek 20:34-38), and His rule (Ps. 72). Messianic Psalms are a special type of Old Testament prophecy rich in teaching about the Lord Jesus (e.g. Ps. 2, 24, 110, etc.).

Together, all of these Old Testament prophecies provide us with a portrait that proves that the Lord Jesus is the Messiah and reveals His glories to His people.

### The Angel of the Lord

We also see Christ in the Old Testament in the appearances of the Angel of the Lord. Just as God has many sons but there is only One who is called the Son of God, so also the Lord has many angels, but there is only One who is called the Angel of the Lord. Time after time, we see the Angel of the Lord identified as God Himself. When the Angel of the Lord spoke to Hagar (Gen. 16:7), we are told that “*she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her*” (v. 13). When the Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3:2), we read that it was God who was in the bush (v. 4). Truly this angel is “*the Angel of His presence*” (Isa. 63:9).

So we see that the Angel of the Lord is God, but how do we know that He is God the Son? To begin with, we see He fills the same submissive role as the Son (Ex. 23:20; 1 Chron. 21:9-17). Secondly, appearances of the Angel of the Lord ceased as soon as the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Thirdly, the Angel of the Lord claims one of the names of Christ: Wonderful (Jdg. 13:18; Isa 9:6).



## THE MAIN POINT *continued*



Lastly, appearances of the Angel of the Lord are manifestations of God, and it is always the Son's role to manifest the Godhead to men (Jn. 1:18; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3).

Therefore, we can learn of Christ through His preincarnate appearances as the Angel of the Lord. Each such appearance is a picture of His work today. He is still *"the God who sees"* (Gen. 16:13), the One who has been sent *"before you, to guard you along the way, and to bring you into the place which I have prepared"* (Ex. 23:20), and the Angel who has redeemed us from all evil (Gen. 48:16).

### The LORD

Thirdly, we learn about Christ in the Old Testament as we learn about the God of the Old Testament. The Bible could not be clearer about the undiminished deity of Christ. He is *"the Mighty God"* (Isa. 9:6) and *"in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form"* (Col. 2:9). As we learn about the Lord in the Old Testament, we're learning about God the Son just as much as we are about God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. In fact, the New Testament is full of parallels where Old Testament teaching about Yahweh is applied to Christ.

**Christ shares the names of Yahweh.** He is the "I AM" (Ex. 3:14 & Jn. 8:58), "the First and the Last" (Isa. 44:6 & Rev. 1:17), and "the Lord of Lords" (Deut. 10:17 & Rev. 19:16).

**Christ shares the offices of Yahweh.** He is the Shepherd (Ps. 23 & Jn. 10:11; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4) and the King (Jer. 23:5-6; Jn. 1:49; 12:13).

**Christ shares the work of Yahweh.** He is the Creator (Isa. 44:24 & Jn. 1:3), He forgives sins (Isa. 43:25 & Mk. 2:5; Lk. 5:24), and He is the object of worship (Ex. 34:14; Deut. 6:13 & Mt. 2:1-2, 11; 14:33; 28:17).

**Christ shares the attributes of Yahweh.** He is unchangeable (Ps. 102:21-27; Mal 3:6. & Heb. 1:10-12; 13:8), eternal (Ps. 90:2 & Isa. 9:6; Mic. 5:2), and omnipotent (Jer. 32:17, 27 & Mt. 28:18; Rev. 1:8).

### Names

Fourthly, the Old Testament teaches us about Christ as it teaches us His names. *"His name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace"* (Isa. 9:6).

He is the Branch who is king (Jer. 23:5), servant (Zech. 3:8), man (Zech. 6:12), and God (Isa. 4:2).

He is the God of Abraham (Gen. 31:42), the Fear of Isaac (Gen. 31:42), and the Holy One of Jacob (Isa. 29:23).

He is Immanuel (Isa. 7:14), the Messenger of the

Covenant (Mal. 3:1), the Prince of Princes (Dan. 8:25), the Redeemer of Israel (Isa. 49:7), and the Light of the Gentiles (Isa. 42:6).

### Pictures

Finally, there are a multitude of Old Testament pictures, shadows, and types that speak to us of Christ. Of course, no picture is perfect—they are limited and flawed. But each picture reminds us of some facet of the One who is the object of His Father's heart. What kind of pictures of Christ do we have in the Old Testament?

**There are people who picture Christ:** Adam (Rom. 5:14), Melchizedek (Heb. 5:6), Isaac (Heb. 11:19), Joseph (son, servant, sufferer, saviour), Moses and Aaron (Heb. 3:1), Boaz (the kinsman-redeemer), David (the beloved shepherd-king), Solomon (the wise, glorious, rich king), and Joshua (Hebrew for 'Jesus').

**There are institutions which picture Christ:** the priesthood (Heb. 5-8), the Levitical offerings (Heb. 9-10), and the cities of refuge (Heb. 6:18).

**There are ceremonies which picture Christ:** the Sabbath (Col. 2:16f), the Passover (1 Cor. 5:7), and the First Fruits (1 Cor. 15:20).

**There are objects which picture Christ:** the brass serpent (Jn. 3:14), the rock (1 Cor. 10:4), the lamb (Jn. 1:29), the Ark, and the Tabernacle.

### Conclusion

Have we ever felt that the Old Testament is unimportant for us today? Nothing could be further from the truth! It is a gold mine of revelation about our Lord Jesus Christ.

Are we intimidated by the Old Testament? Do we have trouble understanding it? Is it a closed book to us? Perhaps we've forgotten its Key. Focusing on Christ will open up the Old Testament to us. The Scriptures tell us that *"until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ"* (2 Cor. 3:14).

On the road to Emmaus, two of His disciples were privileged to walk beside Him, and their hearts burned within them as He opened the Scriptures and showed them that the Old Testament is all about Him (Lk. 24:27, 32). We may be thousands of years away from the exposition that took place that day, but the Teacher still walks beside us. He still opens up the Scriptures to reveal Himself to His disciples and, when He does, our hearts still burn within us. 🕯



## The Shack

Engaging, creative, but ultimately disappointing

**T**he novel *The Shack* has taken the Christian community by storm. It is likely that someone you know has read it. This self-published work has sold well over one million copies in a single year and has stood at the number one position for paperback fiction on the New York Times' bestsellers list for a number of months. The author, William P. Young, has been interviewed by numerous news outlets. Many Christian leaders have applauded the book.

**Remarkable but disappointing** Ironically, *The Shack* is a remarkable book and yet, at the same time, a disappointing book. It is remarkable because the story is engaging, creative, and, at times, profound. But it is disappointing because of the unorthodox theological perspective to which the author returns time and again. Although this book is a fictional novel about the spiritual and emotional journey of the main character, Mackenzie "Mack" Allen Phillips, the author also intends it to be a theological work, dealing with the nature of God, the Trinity, salvation, faith, and other biblical doctrines. It is this theological perspective of *The Shack* that we will seek to explore. Of the book's many doctrinal problems, three in particular need to be highlighted.

**1. A quasi-universalistic view of salvation** William Young teaches a universalistic model of salvation. Little is ever said about repentance, faith, or conversion to Christ. On the other hand, Young repeatedly states that sin is not punished, all individuals are forgiven of their sins, and all that God now seeks is a relationship with man. He has God say, "I don't need to punish people for sin. Sin is its own punishment, devouring you from the inside. It's not my purpose to punish it; it's my joy to cure it" (p. 120). In another place, "...you asked me what Jesus accomplished on the cross; so now listen to me carefully: through his death and resurrection, I am now fully reconciled to the world" (p. 192).

**2. Rejection of biblical authority** Over and over again, *The Shack* sends the message that personal experience with God trumps the biblical authority of Scripture. Concerning Scripture, Young writes, "...God's voice

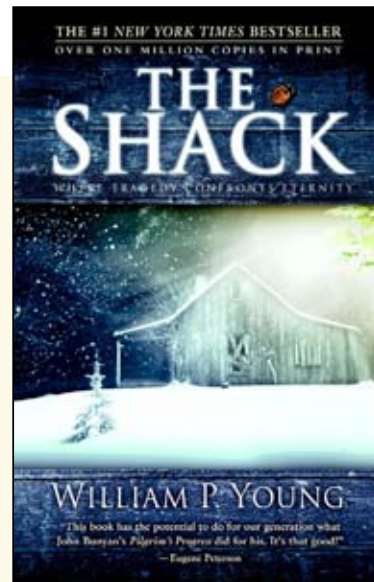
had been reduced to paper, and even that paper had to be moderated and deciphered by the proper authorities and intellectuals...

Nobody wanted God in a box, just in a book.

Especially an expensive one bound in leather with gilt edges, or was that guilt edges?" (p. 66). Mack, the main character, asks God where people will find Him. God responds, "You might see me in a piece of art, or music, or silence, or through people, or in creation, or in your joy or sorrow...you will see me in the Bible but just don't look for rules or principles..." (p. 198).

**3. Openly questioning the Trinity** The doctrine of the Trinity is at the very heart of *The Shack*. But the Trinity is reinterpreted in a way which theologians throughout church history would never have imagined. God the Father is portrayed as "...a large beaming African-American woman named...Elouisa...or...Papa" (pp. 82-87) and bears nail prints in His hands just as Jesus does (p. 107).

Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, is described as "...a Middle Eastern man dressed as a laborer...Jesus" (pp. 82-87). Although fully divine, this Jesus is portrayed as more human than divine. Yet, Scripture depicts the very opposite: the Bible shows Christ's human nature to be subject to His divine nature. In the novel, Mack asks Jesus, "You created the world...?" "I created it as the Word, before the Word became flesh. So even though I created this, I see it now as a human" (p. 109). "Although he is fully God, he has never drawn on his nature as God to do anything..." Papa explains (p. 99). "So when he healed the blind?" questions Mack. "He did so as a dependent, limited human being trusting in my life and power to be at work within him and through him. Jesus as a human being, had no power within himself to heal anyone," replies Papa (p. 100).



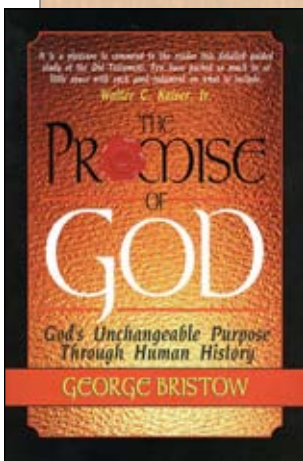
A more detailed version of this review can be found here:  
[www.bit.ly/bibleandlife-shack](http://www.bit.ly/bibleandlife-shack)

## LOOK AT BOOKS *continued*

The third Person of the Trinity, God the Holy Spirit, is depicted as "...a small, distinctively Asian woman '...I am Sarayu...keeper of the gardens among other things...'" (pp. 82-87). Young teaches that the Holy Spirit was a created being. Mack says, "Sarayu, I know you are the Creator..." Sarayu replies, "A created being can only take what already exists and from it fashion something different" (p.131). Although Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the Holy Spirit was a created being, the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person of the Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son.

**Conclusion** It is unfortunate that such a moving story is set in a backdrop of so much false teaching and imagery. Sadly, this is a book that many would want to give to a hurting friend but cannot do so in good conscience because of its doctrinal content. *The Shack* is rife with theological liberalism, Emerging Church ideology, and startling irreverence. As we would not welcome a Bible teacher into our churches who taught these doctrines, even so we should not bring these doctrines into our homes and lives in book form. Christians who are interested in reading *The Shack* should be strongly warned about the errors contained in it. ❗

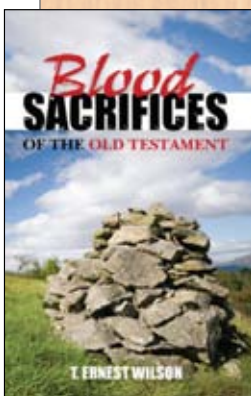
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## God's Two Chief Hebrew Names

What's in a Name? Quite a bit, actually ...

Some choose names for their sound. God chooses names for their meaning.

There are many names for God; no one name could express all that He is. The study of them is not only most illuminating but should lead us into intimate fellowship with Him. By it we enter into the heritage of all His people: the unfolding of the progressive self-revelation of God through the ages.

Most of the Old Testament names of God are made up of two words—*El* (the shortened form of *Elohim*) or *Jehovah*, and another word which reveals some specific attribute or grace of God. In these composite titles, the first part has the full wealth of meaning which we see *Elohim* and *Jehovah* to possess, and the second part is some further unfolding of His Person, will, or provision for His people.

### Elohim

First, in order of use, is *Elohim*, the word used in Genesis 1:1-2:3. It occurs some 2,550 times in the Old Testament, second only to *Jehovah*. It means, quite simply, God. The opening words of Scripture make clear its meaning; they declare Him to be supreme, eternal, and

almighty, the Creator of the universe.

*"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."* The absolute monotheism of this statement, written at a time when the peoples of the world believed in many gods, bears the hallmark of divine self-revelation and is one of the most striking attestations of the inspiration of the Scriptures. There is not even a sidelong glance at the gods of the heathen. *Elohim* alone is the Fount and Source of all life and being.

This declaration concerning God is even more striking in that the word *Elohim* is afterwards used in the Bible not only for God, but also for the gods of the heathen. That does not mean that these are true gods: they are the figments of men's minds and the work of their hands—though behind them lurk the powers of evil (Deut. 32:17; 1 Cor. 10:20). When fallen men departed from the true self-revelation of God, they created for themselves the gods they wanted, and, in so doing, they also corrupted the divine title *Elohim* (Gen. 31:30; Ex. 12:12; 23:24). God had created men for Himself. Estranged from Him, their hearts were restless. But the gods they made in a vain hope of satisfying their need were a degradation of the true revelation of God.

This distinction between God and the gods of the heathen is the theme of many a Bible story. In Egypt, Pharaoh's magicians could simulate some of the signs which God gave of His power, yet, in the real tests, the gods of Egypt proved impotent. Later, the Philistines, having captured the Ark of the Covenant, thought that this indicated the greater power of their god over Israel's—until they twice found Dagon ignominiously lying on his face, the second time smashed. Also, on Mount Carmel, the issue was, *"The God that answereth by fire, let Him be God"*—with the resultant cry, *"The LORD, He is the God, the LORD, He is the God"* (1 Ki. 18:39).

*Elohim* is a plural noun. When God speaks in Genesis, it is in the plural: *"Let Us make man..."* But the verbs used are singular, making indisputably plain that there is no hint in the plural noun of more than one God. This is often explained as a "plural of majesty," just as reigning monarchs today, in official proclamations and documents, refer to themselves as "we."



Can you find the name of Jehovah in this passage?

It looks like this:

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## THE GLORY REVEALED *continued*

However that may be, devout Christians have always seen in this first of the Old Testament names of God, a foreshadowing of the truth of the Trinity. The use of the plural noun intimates the truth that within the Godhead there is a plurality of Persons. The foundational fact established by the Old Testament is that “*The LORD our God is one LORD*” (Deut. 6:4). But within the one essential Godhead, there are three Persons. God is a Tri-unity. In the Old Testament, however, this was merely hinted. It could not possibly be realized or understood until the full revelation came in the Person and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is ever self-consistent, however, and even if men could not then receive it, the truth of the Trinity was indicated in the very opening words of Scripture.

### Other forms of “Elohim”

A simplified form of *Elohim*, *El*, is often used, meaning “The Mighty One.” Examples of this are Nehemiah 9:32, “*Now therefore, our God (Elohim), the great, the mighty, and the terrible God (El)*” and Psalm 19:1, “*The heavens declare the glory of God (El)*.” The thought that underlies both forms of the word is this: God is almighty, able to do precisely and fully according to His will. “*God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*” He spake, and it was done. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all.

The singular of *Elohim*, *Eloah*, is used principally as a poetic form of the word and so occurs chiefly in the poetical books. Its first use occurs in Deuteronomy 32:15, “*Then he forsook God (Eloah) which made him.*” That God is the only true object of worship is a needful note, alongside that of the almightiness of God. He is not only the One to whom we can turn when in distress; He is the One whom we should worship.

### Jehovah

Second only to *Elohim*, in order of appearance, *Jehovah* is, above every other name of God, the one most precious to the Jews and the most revealing of His grace toward His people. It is by far the most frequently used of the names of God, occurring some 6,823 times, according to the lexicographers.

A more literal translation of the Hebrew is *Yahweh*, but that is strange-sounding to us, and *Jehovah* has come to possess a distinctive value we would be reluctant to forgo. In most translations, it is usually rendered LORD, in capital letters. The only exceptions are when it is joined to *Adonai* (translated “Lord”). Then it is rendered GOD—Lord GOD (*Adonai Jehovah*).

The precise meaning of the name is obscure. In the Hebrew, it was originally composed of four consonants: YHWH—known to theologians as “the tetragrammaton”—to which the vowels of *Adonai* were afterwards added (except when the name is joined to *Adonai*; then the vowels of *Elohim* are used). The Jews came to regard the name as too sacred to pronounce, however, and in the public reading of the Scriptures they substituted *Adonai* for it.

*Jehovah* was to them “the incommunicable name.”

It is generally regarded as derived from the verb “to be,” and some scholars suggest that it means “I am, was, and will be”—anticipating, from the very beginnings of the divine self-revelation to man, the majestic title ascribed to Him by the heavenly host: “*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come*” (Rev. 4:8). But God’s own exposition of the name makes its meaning clear—“I AM THAT I AM” (Ex. 3:14). And lest there should be any doubt, He added, “*Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*”

Whereas *Elohim* reveals Him as the Almighty, *Jehovah* sets Him forth as the eternal God: “*the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.*” We shall never, in time or eternity, exhaust the revelation of His Being and grace, but we shall go on forever discovering new glories of His Person and attributes. This name, therefore, has aptly been described as “the ineffable name.”

**“In the real tests, the gods of Egypt proved impotent.”**



### Other forms of Progressive revelation

There is a progressive revelation, indeed, in the use of this name, *Jehovah*. We first find it in Genesis 2 and 3, used in relation to man. Whereas He created the heavens and the earth as *Elohim*, as *Jehovah* He made man in His own image and likeness. The two names are, in fact, joined together in the story of Adam and Eve as *Jehovah Elohim* (LORD God) to make indisputably plain that *Jehovah* is *Elohim*. They are one and the same God.

It is significant that the only exception in Genesis 2 and 3 to the use of the two names coupled together is in the dialogue between Eve and the serpent: there *Elohim* alone—the impersonal name—is used. But when Eve bore her first son, Cain, she said, “*I have gotten a man from Jah.*” And in Genesis 4:26, after the sad story of the rapid degeneration of the descendants of Cain, we read concerning the godly line of Seth—“*then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.*”

Much later, when Moses had suffered his first rebuff from Pharaoh, God said to him, “*I am the LORD: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by My name Jehovah was I not known to them*” (Ex. 6:2-3). This has perplexed many people, for the name *Jehovah* occurs frequently in Genesis. What is meant is that God was here investing the name with a new meaning. Before this, it had been a title—“the Self-existent One”—now it was to become a personal name. He was not merely “God,” but *Jehovah*, whom they knew by name, in all the wondrous intimacy which that implies. More than that: He was entering into covenant with them, and *Jehovah* was His covenant name. It contained within itself the pledge of all that He had promised to do for them and be to them. They were to be His people and He their God. They were to know Him in a personal, covenant relationship.

### Other forms of “Jehovah”

In those years of gradual unfolding of His will and purposes and grace, the name *Jehovah* took on ever new meanings for them. To express these, other names were attached to *Jehovah*: *Jehovah-rapha*, “the LORD that healeth”; *Jehovah-tsidkenu*, “the LORD our righteousness”; *Jehovah-nissi*, “the LORD my banner,” etc.

Upon the foundations of this knowledge of the LORD gained in the wilderness, Israel in the land of promise proved Him to be all that His name *Jehovah*

had pledged—One who, almighty and unchanging, was indeed “*the glory in the midst and a wall of fire round about.*” But One who was also jealous of His rightful place as the Lord their God and would by no means ignore their sin. As the people apprehended what He was to them, they began to express their faith in the names they gave their children—*Jehoram*, “exaltation of God”; *Jehoshaphat*, “God judges,” etc.

**“Before this, [His name] had been a title—“the Self-existent One”—now it was to become a personal name. He was not merely “God,” but Jehovah, whom they knew by name, in all the wondrous intimacy which that implies.**

A contraction of *Jehovah*, *Jah*, is used some fifty times in the Hebrew Scriptures and is always translated LORD in the King James Version with the single exception of Psalm 68:4, where it is transliterated. It seems to express the thought of gladness on the part of His people in the realization of what God is and does for them. It first occurs in the Song of Moses—“*Jah is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation*” (Ex. 15:2; cf. Isa. 12:2; 26:4, *Jah Jehovah*). And “Praise ye the LORD,” occurring some twenty-five times in the Psalms, is “Hallelujah.”

Finally, God, who had revealed Himself at different times and in various ways, came in the Person of His Son to make Himself fully known. Jesus, whose name is an abbreviation of *Jehoshua*, “*Jehovah the Saviour*,” reveals the Lord our God. He declared Himself to be the “I am,” again and again assuming that divine title, with all that it implied (Jn. 8:58). He is the living One, having life in Himself. In Him, we have the heart of God revealed. 🕊



## ELDER HELPS *To feed, to take heed, and to lead*

### Above the Law?

**“Whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all.”**

In the local assembly, as in all of God’s plans, authority and responsibility go hand in hand. We see them both in Hebrews 13:17. *“Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.”* In this verse, the elders’ authority comes with a heavy responsibility: the elders much keep watch over the souls of the flock and do so with the knowledge that they will one day be called to account for how they exercised that care.

Regrettably, elders—at least those elders still on earth—are not immune to the pull of the flesh. As such, there can be the temptation to abuse authority. This can happen in a number of ways.

**Authority without responsibility.** Some elders are very eager to contemplate their authority but not nearly so keen to meditate on their responsibility to care for the flock. For such men, serving as an elder means codifying all of the rules God “forgot” to give us and then using their authority to enforce these new rules, with swift consequences for any sheep that hesitates to fall in line. In this, they emulate the Pharisees, who were quite skilled at making up new rules and then *“teaching as doctrines the commandments of men”* (Mt. 15:9). An elder’s authority comes from the Word of God. To make up our own rules is to mistakenly believe we have inherent authority rather than derived authority. It is to unwittingly (we hope) believe that it is our church rather than the Lord’s. It is to view ourselves as masters instead of stewards.

**Lording it over the flock.** This is the danger that Peter warns of. Arrogant, hard men, proud of their “position” and drunk (or at least tipsy) with power. How

utterly unlike the Good Shepherd! For all of His limitless authority, He could say, *“I am gentle and humble in heart”* (Mt. 11:29). The true elder, Peter tells us, views himself as a servant and example of the flock, not a lord. Such an elder has learned the lesson Rehoboam spurned. The elders (not a coincidence) counseled him to *“be a servant to this people today”* (1 Ki. 12:7). Instead, he exalted himself and split the kingdom. Those who would split assemblies walk in his footsteps.

**“I EXHORT THE ELDERS AMONG YOU...SHEPHERD THE FLOCK OF GOD AMONG YOU...NOR YET AS LORDING IT OVER THOSE ALLOTTED TO YOUR CHARGE, BUT PROVING TO BE EXAMPLES TO THE FLOCK.” (1 PET. 5:1-3)**

**Above the law.** Lastly, there are those who think that they—or their family—are above the law. Rules are strictly enforced for others, but convenient allowances are made for him-

self. These, too, have their Old Testament counterparts: kings who felt their authority placed them above the Law. King Uzziah who, *“when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the Lord his God, for he entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense”* (2 Chr. 26:16) and was struck with leprosy until the day of his death (v. 21). Or King Saul, who usurped the priests’ role (1 Sam. 13:9ff) and lost the kingdom (v. 14).

An elder shouldn’t ignore or belittle his authority, but neither should he exercise it as pagans do. *“You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”* (Mk. 10:42-45) 📖

*We appreciate the comments and questions we receive. They help us deal with current needs. Please keep them coming to [elders@uplook.org](mailto:elders@uplook.org)*

## The Importance of the Old Testament

On the Emmaus Road, the Lord began with Moses and the Prophets.

*“How many of us, when asked to turn to the book of Obadiah, begin to feel queasy?”*

**T**he Old Testament makes up almost three-quarters of the Bible and yet it remains a closed book to many of us. How many of us, when asked to turn to the book of Obadiah, begin to feel queasy? How often do we read the Old Testament and end up more confused than enlightened? Do we ignore the Old Testament and stay on the familiar ground of the New Testament? Or, worse still, has knowing that the church is distinct from Israel (1 Cor. 10:32) led some of us to wrongly conclude that the Old Testament is less important than the New?

It might encourage us to keep in mind that when Paul wrote to tell Timothy that *“all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable”* (2 Tim. 3:16), he was largely referring to the Old Testament. And when he goes on to say that

the Scripture is given to equip us for *“every good work”* (v. 17), this tells us that we require *all* Scripture if we are to become mature believers.

What then are some of the ways in which the Old Testament is important to us today?

### Salvation

*“From childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is Jesus Christ”* (2 Tim. 3:15).

It is sometimes thought that the New Testament alone contains the gospel. Some even think that, in Old Testament times, people were saved

by keeping the Law. Paul dealt with these errors when writing the book of Romans. In it, he assures us that salvation has always been on the basis of faith, and he uses the Old Testa-

ment to prove it. Romans 4 asks, *“What does the Scripture say?”* and then quotes Genesis 15:6 which says, *“Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.”* Romans 4 also quotes Psalm 32:1-2 to show us that David was saved by faith. The gospel has always been the only way of salvation, and it was preached in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament (Heb. 4:2).

How much poorer would our gospel efforts be without the Old Testament accounts of people like Rahab, Ruth, or Mephibosheth to illustrate the gospel message? Or without verses like Isaiah 64:6 which tells us that *“all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment”*? Or without Isaiah 53’s description of the One who was *“led as a sheep to slaughter”*? In fact, it is this very passage that was used to lead the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ (Acts 8:32). And we read that the Jews at Berea believed because they *“examined the Scriptures [the Old Testament] daily, to see whether these things were so”* (Acts 17:11-12).

### Instruction

*“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope”* (Rom. 15:4).

The Old Testament is an essential source of instruction. Even though most of the Old Testament is written primarily to Israel, there are at least four ways that the Old Testament can instruct us today.

**The Old Testament reveals timeless truths to us.** The Old Testament reveals the character and nature of God. Since God is unchangeable (Mal. 3:6), all that we learn about His character in the Old Testament is true today and will still be true in eternity.



## THE FIRST THREE-QUARTERS *continued*

**The Old Testament provides the basis for much of the New Testament's teaching.** When we read about tongues in 1 Corinthians 14, we find in verse 21 a quote from Isaiah 28:11. Much of the error we hear today regarding the gift of tongues flows from the fact that the Old Testament reference in 1 Corinthians 14 is usually completely ignored. Salvation, divorce, head coverings, the Lord's table, and countless other teachings could be listed which have their basis in the Old Testament and which are either misunderstood or poorly understood because that basis is generally ignored.

**The Old Testament illustrates many New Testament teachings.** The Old Testament's illustrations of worship, redemption, substitution, priestly work, etc. help us to appreciate New Testament teachings to a depth that we wouldn't be able to with only the New Testament.

**Applications may be made from Old Testament commands that don't apply directly to us today.** At first glance, we might write off a command such as *"You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing"* (Deut. 25:4) as being inapplicable today, but 1 Corinthians 9:9-10 makes an application for us and informs us that that application was intended.

The Old Testament was *"written for the generation to come; that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord"* (Ps. 102:18).

### Admonition

*"Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come"* (1 Cor. 10:11).

Not only are the Scriptures profitable for teaching and instruction in righteousness, but they are also profitable for reproof and correction (2 Tim. 3:16). Along with instructing us, the Old Testament admonishes us. It is good to learn from our mistakes, but it's even better to skip the mistake phase altogether by learning from the mistakes of others. God didn't record the sins and faults of His people in the Old Testament so that we might be self-righteous or amused, but in order that we might avoid the same errors.

1 Corinthians 10 lists some of the chastenings that fell on Israel for their unbelief, evil cravings, idolatry, immorality, and grumbling. Then we are told that these things were recorded "for our admonition." Even in judgment God is gracious as He uses that judgment to warn others (cf. Ex. 9:16 and Josh. 2:9-10).

*"There is nothing new under the sun"* (Eccl. 1:9). The sins we struggle with today are the same sins the Israelites struggled with. If we were to pay more attention to the record of God's Old Testament people, perhaps we would find ourselves repeating fewer of their errors.

### Christ

*"You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me"* (Jn. 5:39).

The Old Testament is important for salvation, instruction, and admonition, but, above all, it is important because it testifies about the Lord of Glory. The Father's desire is that we share His delight in His Son and the entire Bible has been given to us to that end.

There are many ways in which we see Christ in the Old Testament: prophecies, appearances of the Angel of the Lord, pictures, His names, and as the Lord Himself. (See article on p. 21) Our knowledge of Christ is immeasurably deepened by the Old Testament.

In the end, this last reason for the importance of the Old Testament is a summing up of the first three. The gospel is not a religion nor a set of instructions, it is a Person (Gal. 1:6), and *"there is salvation in no one else"* (Acts 4:12). And if we truly desire instruction and admonition, there is no better place to find it than at the feet of the One who is the Truth; nothing is more practical than learning of Him (2 Cor. 3:18). As we read the Old Testament, let us look for Christ.

*"And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures"* (Lk. 24:27). 🕊



**FOR YOUR STUDY:**  
Refer to this list of references to Old Testament passages in the New Testament on the web here: [www.uplook.org/foryourstudy/ot.html](http://www.uplook.org/foryourstudy/ot.html)



We need to rethink the whole idea of adolescence. What's with youth groups having 35-year-olds? If "three score and ten" is our life-span allotment, then 35 is middle age.

My grandfather, father and father-in-law were all meeting with the elders in their 20s. That meant they had been taken seriously and motivated to spiritual maturity in their teens.

Newt Gingrich's article can be found in its entirety at: [tinyurl.com/endteenyrs](http://tinyurl.com/endteenyrs)

## Growing Up On Time

If the world is going faster, why are Western young people slowing down?

It's impossible to keep up. The world hurtles at dizzying speed toward its final destiny. There are new wars *du jour* whenever we turn on the TV; Armageddon seems to be in dress rehearsal mode. Meanwhile science grows exponentially, and, among other things, develops increasingly efficient ways to annihilate the planet's population. *Tempus megafugit*. Yet for all this haste, one area where things are impeded is the maturation of young people.

In a recent article called "Let's End Adolescence," former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich writes: "We have to end adolescence as a social experiment. We tried it. It failed. It's time to move on. Returning to an earlier, more successful model of children rapidly assuming the roles and responsibilities of adults would yield enormous benefit to society."

Whatever society does, the Church needs to return to Bible thinking. The transition since Bible times in almost every culture was considered to be in the early teen years, as still practiced by Jewish families with their Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies.

Gingrich observes: "Adolescence...has degenerated into a process of enforced boredom and age segregation that has produced one of the most destructive social arrangements in human history: consigning 13-year-old males to learning from 15-year-old males." He notes this has led to the following: "Trapping poor people in bad schools, with no work opportunities and no culture of responsibility, we have left them in poverty, in gangs, in drugs, and in irresponsible sexual activity. As a result, we have ruined several generations of poor people who might have made it if we had provided a different model of being young."

While such tragic results have not been replicated among local assembly youth, how many young people largely waste a decade or more on the sidelines. Men like T.E. Wilson and David Long were in the heart of Africa by their 21st year. Johnny Phelan, one of the last pioneers of the mid-south, told me he headed to Nashville to see an assembly started when he was 21. However he *was* working with an older brother—who was 22! Brother Phelan observed, "We didn't know what we couldn't do, so we went ahead and did it." Pitching a tent through the winter, they saw souls saved and a work established. What would you think of two men (would you even call them men?) in their early twenties doing such a thing today? Foolhardy? No, let them sit and observe how older saints do it for a while.

Gingrich concludes: "It's time to change this—to shift to serious work, learning, and responsibility at age 13 instead of age 30. In other words, replace adolescence with young adulthood. But hastening that transition requires integrating learning into life and work."

There is some debate over the ages of the Lord's disciples. Some think most were still in their teens because Jesus only arranged for Peter's temple tax, required from age 20 and up. But there should be no debate over Paul's instructions: "*Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity...give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you...*" (1 Tim 4:12-14). Of course if young adults want to be taken seriously, they need to *be* serious. So we also exhort: "*be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned*" (Titus 2:6-8). 📖

# THE PROGRESS OF *Old Testament* THOUGHT

THE HEBREW NATION was founded that, through them, the whole world should be blessed: *the Messianic Nation*.

The way the Hebrew nation would bless the world would be through the family of David: *the Messianic Family*.

The way the family of David would bless the world would be through one great King to be born in the family: *the Messiah*.

Thus, in founding the Hebrew nation, God's *ultimate* object was to bring Christ into the world. God's *immediate* object was to establish, in a world of idolatry, as a background to the coming of Christ, the idea that there is one true, living God.

*by Henry H. Halley*

