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EQUIPPING THE BIBLE TEACHERS OF CONCORD BAPTIST  
CHURCH, CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE,  
TO INTERPRET THE OLD TESTAMENT  
CHRISTOCENTRICALLY

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

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by  
John Aaron Martin  
December 2015

**APPROVAL SHEET**

EQUIPPING THE BIBLE TEACHERS OF CONCORD BAPTIST  
CHURCH, CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE,  
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CHRISTOCENTRICALLY

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

I dedicate this work to my family.

To my beautiful bride, Emily, you have been a constant support and prayerful encourager throughout this journey. I thank God for you and for the countless ways you serve Jesus Christ in your faithful service to and love for me.

To our children, Emeline, Cameron, Elijah, and Josie, you fill my heart with joy. It is a privilege to be your earthly father. By God's grace you will come to know, love, and treasure your heavenly Father through faith in Jesus Christ.

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## PREFACE

This project was not accomplished by my efforts alone. I know that my name will appear on the credits of this work, but I could not have completed this project without the loving support, encouragement, and sacrifices of many people. Pastor David King from Concord Baptist Church has faithfully modeled Christ-centered expository preaching on a weekly basis. He has been a friend, mentor, and fellow pastor for many years. I am grateful for his encouragement and investment in my life. Much of what I know about Christ-centered preaching I learned from him.

I could not have finished this project without the support and encouragement of the family of redeemed sinners called Concord Baptist Church. Twelve years of ministry in this fellowship have taught me about Christ-like love, sacrificial service, merciful patience, and steadfast faithfulness. The saints and leadership have allowed time away for study and writing. Some have given financially to the pursuit of this degree so that my family would not have to bear the financial burden of higher education alone. I also want to thank the other pastors with whom I serve: Drew Scott, Kris Foster, Bill Horton, David Johnson, Chris McKinney, and Mark Mims. These men have allowed me the flexibility to complete this project, and each of them has invested in the success of this ministry project in various ways. Pastor David Hawkins has shown me how one practices affirmation in ways that honor Jesus and humble the saint.

I thank God for the leadership and instruction offered by Dr. T. J. Betts, Dr. Michael Wilder, and every member of the faculty and support staff who serve in the Doctor of Ministry program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. My

experience at Southern has been one of the most gratifying and practical educational experiences of my career.

I am grateful for the loving support and encouragement of my father and mother, John and Karen Martin. They have sacrificed financially to assist me in the pursuit of this degree. But more importantly, they have prayed for me every step of the way.

Finally, I could not have completed this project without the love and support of our children, Emeline, Cameron, Elijah, and Josie, as well as my wife, Emily. To say “thank you” to my precious wife is a woefully inadequate expression of gratitude and thanksgiving. She has graciously given me many hours of solitude for reading and writing when she would have preferred to spend time with me. She has quietly served my needs without complaint. My beloved is a wonderful gift from God, a helper fit for me, who regularly teaches me about the value of the kingdom of Christ in the ways she serves the good of our family and the glory of Jesus Christ.

I offer this ministry research project for the good of the local church and the glory of God’s risen Christ. May the Father be pleased to use it to strengthen the saints, magnify the supremacy and beauty of Jesus as revealed in all of Scripture, and build Christ’s church.

John Aaron Martin

Chattanooga, Tennessee

December 2015

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to equip the Bible teachers of Concord Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee to interpret the Old Testament Christocentrically.

#### **Goals**

The first goal of this project was to evaluate what 90 percent of the current and identified prospective Bible teachers believed about the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament through a pre-course survey.<sup>1</sup> The pre-course evaluation revealed the participant's general understanding of interpreting Christ from the Old Testament. In addition, the pre-course evaluation examined what current methods Bible teachers used to teach Jesus Christ from the Old Testament. The questionnaire used a 6-point Likert scale to measure the participants understanding of various fundamental issues related to preaching and teaching Christ from the Old Testament. This goal was regarded as successfully met when the pre-course survey was completed by 90 percent of identified Bible teachers and was analyzed yielding a clearer picture of current practices in preaching and teaching Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

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<sup>1</sup> Concord Baptist Church has 36 men and women who teach regularly, and 7 other potential teachers have been identified.

The second goal of this project was to recruit a minimum of 15 current and prospective Bible teachers who desired to improve their ability to interpret Jesus Christ from the Old Testament to participate in a ten-week seminar titled “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament.” Recruitment took place in three ways. First, the pre-course survey distributed to every current and prospective Bible teacher at Concord Baptist Church served as a recruiting platform. Second, general announcements were made to the entire congregation beginning four to six weeks prior to the first seminar. These announcements were published in the monthly newsletter and worship folder and through multimedia slide presentations in the sanctuary and atrium on the church campus. Third, the teacher of the class personally invited all current and identified prospective Bible teachers who taught at Concord Baptist Church in any capacity to participate in the class. The desired enrollment measurement for this class was the enrollment and participation of 15 to 43 students. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 15 Bible teachers enrolled in the seminar by signing a commitment card, indicating their pledge to complete the course in its entirety.

The third goal of this project was to create and develop a ten-week seminar titled “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament” that demonstrates from Scripture that Jesus is the main focus of the whole of Old Testament Scripture. The seminar addressed key issues related to Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament. An expert panel<sup>2</sup> of teaching pastors measured the goal by utilizing an evaluation rubric to assess Christ-centered hermeneutic principles, biblical faithfulness, teaching methodology, and

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<sup>2</sup> The expert panel consisted of the following local pastors: Troy Walliser, Chris Gaither, and David Price.

contextual usability of the teaching model. This goal was considered successfully met when at least 90 percent of the evaluation criterion scored at sufficient or above.

The fourth goal of this project was to equip Bible teachers at Concord Baptist Church with a Christocentric interpretation of the Old Testament by teaching a ten-week seminar titled “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament.” The seminar incorporated lecture, reading assignments, and practical textual examples to demonstrate and teach how to effectively discover and apply Jesus Christ from the Old Testament. Each class lasted two hours. The seminar incorporated three aims: to equip adult Bible teachers with helpful exegetical tools to read and interpret Jesus Christ in the Old Testament; to provide practical categories to simplify a Christological lens for interpretation; and to bolster confidence in adult Bible teachers so that they can confidently communicate the Old Testament in a way that points to Christ. Measurement of this goal involved administering a post-course survey that disclosed if participants had developed a Christocentric method for teaching Christ from the Old Testament. In addition, the post-class survey measured if any of the participant’s methods for Christ-centered interpretation changed. Post-class interviews were also conducted two weeks after the last class to serve as an additional measurement tool. This goal was considered successfully met when a t-test for dependent samples demonstrates a positive, statistically significant difference between the pre and post-course survey indicating that participants demonstrated understanding of how to effectively interpret Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

## **Ministry Context**

These goals were accomplished as the project was implemented at Concord Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee. A significant number of gifted men and women teach the Word of God at Concord Baptist Church. No fewer than 43 church members were currently teaching the Bible in Sunday school, life groups, growth groups, or occasional seminar or retreat settings, or have been identified as people worth watching for future teaching ministry. These teachers were both male and female, and their teaching contexts ranged from preschool-aged children to mature adults.

As the Pastor for Discipleship, I have had many opportunities to observe the teachers at Concord Baptist Church in various teaching contexts. These observations occur regularly and provided the background information necessary to justify the purpose of this project.

Many Bible teachers at Concord approach biblical interpretation from a theocentric perspective, often times approaching the biblical text with high regard for authorial intent but little regard for the canonical unity which demonstrates the overarching story of God's redemption of sinners through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Despite philosophical agreement about the supremacy and importance of Christ for the ministry of the Word, when assigned a teaching text from the Old Testament, many Bible teachers at Concord have struggled to interpret and apply the text in light of the person and promise Jesus.

Regular observation of lay Bible teachers at Concord Baptist Church suggests that many Sunday school teachers, life group leaders, men's ministry, and women's ministry leaders have struggled to answer the question, "What is the Old Testament

about?” The difficulties of Old Testament genre and context partly explain why so many teachers avoid teaching from the Old Testament whenever possible. Consequently, when teaching the Old Testament is unavoidable, the instruction regularly digresses into historical lectures, moral stories about biblical heroes, character studies designed to exegete relevant universal life principles, and imposing imperative-driven, legalistic moral codes detached from the empowering work of the Spirit in the gospel.

The threat of Christ-less moralism is especially pernicious because it suggests that with enough human effort and reorientation of the mind, followers of Christ can effect moral transformation on the basis of performance. Such approaches to Old Testament interpretation and application rob the gospel of its power to save sinners. Therefore, it is imperative that Bible teachers at Concord Baptist Church are equipped to effectively interpret the Old Testament Christocentrically as the primary means of grounding Old Testament interpretation and application in the gospel.

Lay teachers lacking a Christ-centered hermeneutic of their own for the Old Testament struggle to find many resources available to assist in Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament. There are plenty of books about the need for Christocentric preaching and teaching of the Old Testament, but very few are accessible to the lay Bible teacher with limited study hours at their disposal. Most of the resources on the market are filled with complex grammatical, rhetorical, and hermeneutical principles that leave the interpreter without seminary training feeling overwhelmed and confused.

A multitude of factors have determined the lens by which most of the teachers at Concord Baptist Church read, interpret, and teach Scripture. As a traditional Southern

Baptist church, Concord Baptist has deep ties and commitment to denominational literature in disciple-making. This dependence and loyalty often leaves the indiscriminate teacher at the mercy of the hermeneutic used by the author of the curriculum.

Additionally, there are very few quality exegetical aids such as historical, grammatical, and theological resources made available to teachers through the church library and on-going training. Finally, what little exegetical training the lay teachers at Concord have received in the past has largely been influenced by a theocentric rather than Christocentric approach to biblical interpretation.

Concord Baptist Church's undiscerning commitment to denominational literature, dearth of exegetical resources and training, and unchallenged theocentric approach to Scripture has resulted in an assortment of concerns at Concord Baptist Church, which include (1) a lack of confidence in the Old Testament; (2) a lack of knowledge of the Old Testament and how to connect the past with the present in light of Jesus Christ; (3) the reduction of Old Testament application to moralism, history lessons, and character studies to the neglect of the person and work of Jesus Christ; (4) the practical belief that the New Testament abrogates the Old Testament; and (5) a misunderstanding of what the Old Testament is about in relationship to Jesus Christ.

In Luke 24:27, Jesus set in motion a tectonic shift in hermeneutics when he interpreted to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, "all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Christ-centered interpretation is admittedly popular in evangelicalism today, but the life-giving nourishment of reading the Bible with a Christocentric lens has not been made accessible to the everyday lay Bible teacher struggling to interpret the Old Testament in light of the

person and promise of Jesus Christ. Every Bible teacher needs to be equipped with effective ways to interpret the Old Testament Christocentrically.

Concord Baptist Church is gifted with many solid Bible teachers who care deeply about teaching God's Word with faithfulness and accuracy. The majority of these teachers approach their study of the Bible with seriousness, and they steward their teaching gift with humility. Knowledge that those who teach God's Word are judged by God with greater strictness is sobering, and as such, many of Concord's teachers desire to improve in their ability to communicate God's Word. Accountability to God, faithfulness to the Scriptures, and following the pattern of Jesus and the Apostles are some of the primary reasons the Bible teachers of Concord Baptist Church need to be equipped to effectively develop a Christocentric perspective of the Old Testament.

### **Rationale for the Project**

The current pastoral teaching ministry at Concord Baptist Church is characterized by gospel-centered, Jesus-magnifying, expository preaching of the whole Bible. Additionally, Christocentric interpretation of the Old Testament is consistently modeled by the pastoral staff in corporate teaching settings. However, when it comes to the lay teaching ministry, many Bible teachers at Concord Baptist Church struggle to understand the relevance of Old Testament Scripture to their lives in relationship to the person and promise of Jesus Christ. As a result, they find Christ-centered interpretation and application from the Old Testament difficult.

Preaching and teaching Christ from the Old Testament is critical because hearers of God's Word need to hear distinctly Christian messages. Moral maxims and

advocating ethical conduct fall woefully short of the gospel message. Jay Adams

fervently articulates the necessity and distinction of Christian preaching and teaching.

If you preach a sermon [or Bible study] that would be acceptable to the member to a Jewish synagogue or to a Unitarian congregation, there is something radically wrong with it. Preaching, when truly Christian, is *distinctive*. And what makes it distinctive is the all-pervading presence of a saving and sanctifying Christ. Jesus Christ must be at the heart of every sermon you preach. That is just as true of edificational preaching as it is of evangelistic preaching.

Edificational preaching must always be evangelical; that is what makes it moral rather than moralistic, and what causes it to be unacceptable in a synagogue, mosque, or to a Unitarian congregation. By evangelical, I mean that the import of Christ's death and resurrection – His substitutionary, penal death and bodily resurrection – on the subject under consideration is made clear in the sermon. You must not exhort your congregation to do whatever the Bible requires of them as though they could fulfill those requirements on their own, but only as a consequence of the saving power of the cross and the indwelling, sanctifying power and presence of Christ in the person of the Holy Spirit. All edificational preaching, to be Christian must fully take into consideration God's grace in salvation and in sanctification.<sup>3</sup>

Understanding the relationship between the salvation of God as revealed in the Old Testament and the gospel of Jesus Christ is also critical for maintaining the unity of the Bible. Those who teach and preach God's Word need to proclaim the Old Testament Scriptures in such a way that the hearer grasps the reality that the entire Bible is about one God revealing to humanity his eternal plan of redemption for sinners through the person and work of Jesus Christ alone. Graeme Goldsworthy has said, "One of the most important implications of the nature of reality as presented by the Bible [is] God is there and he is not silent."<sup>4</sup> God is speaking the same message of salvation in the Old Testament that he is speaking in the New Testament. The task of the teacher is discerning and revealing the path that leads the hearer to Jesus Christ.

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<sup>3</sup> Jay Adams, *Preaching with Purpose* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982), 147.

<sup>4</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 19.

Determining what Bible teachers at Concord Baptist Church believe about the nature and purpose of the Old Testament was evaluated by their responses to the pre-course survey. This survey revealed their understanding of the unity of Scripture as it relates to Jesus Christ. In short, this survey helped identify their biblical theology. Do Bible teachers at Concord Baptist Church have a bifurcated view of salvation, believing that salvation in the Old Testament is by works and law-keeping, but comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ in the New Testament? In what ways did they believe Old Testament events reveal the need for a Savior? Did they recognize any Christ-figures in the Old Testament? How did they understand Jesus Christ and his relationship to Old Testament prophecy? How did they apply the Ten Commandments, and in what way did they believe those commandments still binding today? Upon completion of the survey, class participants were challenged to thoughtfully consider two questions. The first is “How does the Old Testament relate to Jesus Christ?” The second is, “How do I interpret Jesus Christ in the Old Testament?”

These questions were answered during the ten-week seminar “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament.” The class enabled lay Bible teachers to effectively interpret Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. Jesus Christ as prophet, priest, and king should impact how the Old Testament is proclaimed as he fulfills those offices par excellence. Since only Jesus Christ gives meaning to life, it is of the essence that those who teach the Old Testament know how to help hearers make sense of life as they wrestle with death, temptation, suffering, hardship, discontentment and sin.

Several benefits resulted from the “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament” seminar. First, participants enrolled in the seminar discovered how pervasively Old

Testament testimony points to Christ. A broad survey of all Old Testament literary genres demonstrated how prophecy, history, poetry, narrative, wisdom, and apocalyptic literature found their ultimate fulfillment in the person and promise of Jesus Christ.

Second, those who desired a legitimate path to preach Christ from the Old Testament with biblical integrity were equipped with the tools for Christocentric exposition without artificial or shallow connections to the person and promise of Jesus Christ. Third, the seminar addressed key issues and concerns related to Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament so that as students interacted with the stated concerns, they were able to communicate an applied, reproducible Christocentric methodology to others. Finally, the overall discipleship program at Concord Baptist Church was strengthened by developing a comprehensive Christ-centered approach to biblical interpretation and teaching that impacted individuals from ages 0 to 100.

The fact that many lay Bible teachers did not know how to teach the Old Testament without turning the lesson into an historical lecture or a grace-less, heavy-handed, legalistic “to-do” list aimed at meeting religious obligation made this project necessary. Too often interpretation of the Old Testament esteems biblical characters as the primary heroes and exemplars in such a way that God as the supreme protagonist is overshadowed or minimized. Sadly, this approach to the Old Testament misses the point of the Old Testament entirely. When Bible teachers turn the Old Testament into moral stories, principles, life-lessons, and historical narratives without connecting them to God’s story as revealed in Jesus Christ, hearers are led away from the gospel path that God intends to lead to Christ. The compelling people, stories, prophecies, wisdom literature, and Law of the Old Testament are designed to point to man’s need for a Savior.

This project aimed to provide a road map lay Bible teachers could follow to interpret Jesus Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures. As Charles Spurgeon once famously said,

Don't you know, young man, that from every town and village and every hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London? So from every text in Scripture there is a road toward the great metropolis, Christ. And my dear brother, your business is, when you get to a text, to say, 'Now what is the road to Christ?' I have never found a text that had not got a road to Christ in it, and if I ever find one. . . I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get my Master, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a Savior of Christ in it.<sup>5</sup>

Those who teach God's Word week in and week out need the tools to equip them to make legitimate biblical interpretation and application of Jesus Christ from the Old Testament. There is a road leading there, and this project provided the necessary resources for the average lay Bible teacher to find Christ and apply the gospel from the Old Testament.

### **Definitions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

The following definitions, limitations, and delimitations were used in this project.

*Apostolic hermeneutic.* The Apostolic hermeneutic is the exegetical approach to the Bible taken by the New Testament authors embracing "the redemptive historical setting of the fulfillment of God's covenantal relation to his people in Jesus the Messiah."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Charles H. Spurgeon, "Christ Precious to Believers," sermon at Music Hall, Royal Scurry Gardens, London, March 13, 1859.

<sup>6</sup> Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from all the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2007), 151.

*Christocentric or Christ-centered interpretation.* Christocentric or Christ-centered interpretation is understanding and applying the biblical text directly and finally in light of the person and work of Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup>

*Reading Christ in the Old Testament.* Finding Christ in the Old Testament, or what might be otherwise understood as a Christocentric perspective of the Old Testament, is unfolding the progression of thought from the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms that introduces hearers to the person and promise of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament narrative.<sup>8</sup>

One limitation of this project was the 15 week minimum time allotment for the ministry project. The ten-week seminar titled “Finding Jesus in the Old Testament” was delimited to no more than 44 Concord Baptist Church Bible teachers.

### **Research Methodology**

This project’s design was to equip Bible teachers to effectively interpret the Old Testament Christocentrically. As stated previously, four goals determined the success of this project. Weeks 1 through 2 of the project involved developing and administering a pre-course survey (see appendix 1). The survey, based on a 6-point Likert scale, was designed to evaluate the general knowledge Bible teachers possessed of how to teach Jesus Christ from the Old Testament. Questions on the pre- and post-seminar

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<sup>7</sup> Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 227-77.

<sup>8</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Scriptures Testify about Me* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishing, 2013), 56-57.

questionnaire contained both normal and reverse scoring.<sup>9</sup> Fundamental issues related to a Christocentric perspective of the Old Testament included, but was not limited to, (1) the participants understanding of Christ and his relationship to covenant; (2) Christ figures present in the Old Testament; (3) Jesus' relationship to Old Testament Law; and (4) Jesus' relationship to Old Testament prophecy. The pre-course survey was distributed and completed by all active and prospective Bible teachers at Concord Baptist Church.

During week 3 of the project, Bible teachers were recruited from those who completed the pre-course survey to participate in a ten-week seminar titled "Reading Jesus in the Old Testament." As stated previously, the goal was to employ at least 15 Bible teachers to participate in the seminar. Recruitment occurred in three ways.

First, the pre-course survey distributed to every current and prospective Bible teacher at Concord Baptist Church served as a recruiting platform. Second, general announcements were made to the entire congregation beginning four to six weeks prior to the first seminar. These announcements were published in the monthly newsletter and worship folder, during the announcement time during corporate worship, and through multimedia slide presentations in the sanctuary and atrium on our church campus. Third, the teacher of the class personally invited all current and identified prospective Bible teachers who teach in any capacity at Concord Baptist Church to participate in the class.

In addition, the training seminar titled "Reading Jesus in the Old Testament" was developed during weeks 4 through 8. This seminar addressed key issues related to Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament, including but not limited to, (1)

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<sup>9</sup> Questions requiring reverse scoring include questions 9, 10, 18, 24, 26, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 42, and 43.

determining whether Old Testament preaching and teaching should be Christ-centered or God-centered; (2) understanding whether the Old Testament really is a Christian canon; (3) discovering how the Old Testament points the reader to Jesus Christ; and (4) learning how to use the New Testament when interpreting the Old Testament in ways that are consistent with the Apostolic hermeneutic modeled in the New Testament. The seminar also took into account the results of the pre-course survey, which identified any contextual bias, misunderstanding, or deficiency with regard to seeking and finding Christ in the Old Testament. The seminar helped Bible teachers committed to expository preaching and teaching develop an applied methodology that employed sound hermeneutic principles and practical help for the average Christian teacher and lay person.

Once the curriculum was developed, an expert panel evaluated the curriculum by means of a rubric (see appendix 2). The curriculum evaluation rubric assessed the exegetical merit of the proposed Christ-centered hermeneutic principles, biblical faithfulness to the redemptive historical narrative, appropriateness of teaching methodology, and contextual usability of the teaching model within the prescribed local church. The expert panel determined whether the curriculum was: insufficient; requires attention; sufficient; or exemplary. This evaluation and necessary revisions occurred during weeks 9 through 11.

At the completion of the curriculum evaluation, I taught a 10-week training seminar on equipping Bible teachers to effectively discover Jesus Christ in the Old Testament during weeks 12 through 21. The title of the seminar was “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament.” Limited to no fewer than 15 participants, the seminar prepared Bible

teachers to understand and apply sound Christ-centered hermeneutic principles in an effort to aid teachers in three ways: (1) equipped adult bible teachers with helpful exegetical tools to discover and apply Jesus Christ from the Old Testament; (2) provided practical categories to streamline and focus a Christological lens for interpretation; and (3) bolstered confidence in adult Bible teachers so that they can confidently navigate the Old Testament in a way that points to Christ.

Upon completion of the seminar, the participants completed a post-course survey given in week 21 to measure any positive statistical change by participants in their knowledge and understanding of various fundamental issues related to preaching and teaching Christ from the Old Testament (see appendix 3). The post-course survey disclosed if participants could identify, understand, and apply the fundamental issues related to preaching and teaching Christ from the Old Testament. A t-test for dependent samples demonstrated a statistically significant difference between the pre and post-course survey indicating that participants demonstrated understanding of how to effectively discover Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

In addition, participants conducted written exit interviews during weeks 22 through 25 in order to determine how class participants were implementing the principles learned from the seminar into their existing teaching methodology (see appendix 4).<sup>10</sup> The project was completed once the data was analyzed and evaluated during week 26.

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<sup>10</sup> All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Research Ethics Committee prior to use in this Doctor of Ministry project.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION FOR DEVELOPING A CHRISTOCENTRIC PERSPECTIVE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

As Jesus of Nazareth's earthly ministry began, he seized the local synagogue as the center of his teaching ministry. A principle focus of the synagogue as the hub of Jewish religious life was the reading and teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures. From the outset of his ministry, beginning in his hometown of Nazareth, Jesus revealed his unique relationship to the Hebrew Scriptures. Upon reading Isaiah 61, as the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon him, Jesus confidently asserted, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Luke 4:21).<sup>1</sup>

Later, the church's activity paralleled Jesus' by centralizing corporate gatherings around the synagogue and temple before eventually moving to house churches. Followers of Jesus did not attempt to isolate themselves from Judaism as Christians. Instead, they saw Christianity as the natural fulfillment of Judaism's hope. The hope of Israel was anchored to the coming Messiah, and the early Christian church embraced Jesus Christ as God's promised Messiah. The hope of the radical, revolutionary, culture-transforming

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible.

movement called Christianity was authenticated and defined by Jesus' sinless life, death, burial, and resurrection, the Triune God's preordained plan for the salvation of the world.

Consequently, those who embraced Jesus as Messiah through faith understood the impact of his Messianic status for understanding their sacred writings. As Graeme Goldsworthy perceptively insists, "If Jesus was the one mediator between God and man, then he must mediate the meaning of the whole of God's communication to us."<sup>2</sup> In other words, Jesus Christ himself is the key to understanding the Old Testament.

Understanding of the person and promise of Jesus Christ is crucial to discerning the aim and purpose of the Old Testament. As the Apostles understanding of the centrality of the person and promise of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament matured, their approach to interpreting and applying the Hebrew Scriptures evolved. By the time of Jesus' ascension, New Testament evidence suggests his disciples consistently interpreted the Old Testament in gospel-centered light. As Michael Barrett has appropriately explained, "Understanding the Old Testament is . . . impossible without reference to Christ. He is the key that unlocks all the mysteries of the Old Testament."<sup>3</sup> Time and again in the Gospels and Epistles, New Testament authors reveal how the person and promise of Jesus brings the entire Old Testament into focus.

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<sup>2</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics* (Nottingham, England: IVP, 2006), 62.

<sup>3</sup> Michael P. V. Barrett, *Beginning at Moses: A Guide to Finding Christ in the Old Testament* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador – Emerald International, 1999), 13.

## **Jesus, the Promised Messiah**

The New Testament presents the birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God's covenant promises. God's fixed promise to dwell with His people as their God forever is fulfilled in the One who would represent the whole. As Adam, the first representative head of humanity, caused death to reign in all men (Rom 5:14), grace and righteousness "reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:17). All of God's promises are fulfilled and guaranteed in Jesus (2 Cor 1:20).

Though God's covenant promise is revealed progressively in the Noahic, Abrahamic, Davidic, and New Covenants, the covenant promise is first disclosed immediately after man's fall in the garden in Eden in Genesis 3:15. Created in God's image, Adam and Eve were placed in a living, loving, lasting relationship, a covenant bond, with Creator God. As creatures made in God's image, they were given authority, responsibility, and ability to enjoy, love, and serve the Sovereign Creator of the universe.

But Adam and Eve disobeyed the one command of God not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:16). Under the influence of Satan, Adam and Eve deviated from God's will in disobedience, and the result was a catastrophic fall from grace for God's image-bearers and the entire cosmos.

Creator God's intervention occurred almost immediately. In the midst of God's eschatological judgment on the serpent (Gen 3:14-19) is the seed of the promise to restore the covenantal relationship broken by the disobedience of humanity. Judgment and the consequence of death would not have the final word; grace would prevail.

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. (Gen 3:15)

This promise of restoration and renewal is the *protoevangelium*, the first gospel, Yahweh's announcement of the triumph of the future seed (Gen 3:15; Heb 2:14).

There is very little credible disputation in Christian history about the identity of the offspring (i.e., seed) born of woman in Genesis 3:15. All textual evidence points to the conclusion that the "offspring" is singular rather than representative of all humanity, and this evidence is confirmed in the New Testament (Gal 3:16). The "seed" is the last Adam, Jesus Christ (Gal 4:14; 1 Cor 15:45; Matt 22:42-45; Luke 1:32).<sup>4</sup> Scholar Walter Kaiser, who generally argues that the Old Testament should only be interpreted in a Christocentric light when there is explicit Messianic evidence in the text, agrees that this promised offspring is a reference to the Messiah, even if he is only an obscure glimpse of God's promise-plan for the redemption of sinners. The last Adam was "going to be the central figure of the unfolding drama of redemption in the world."<sup>5</sup>

Consequently, if the person and promise of Jesus Christ completes God's plan and purpose to redeem sinners, then serious Bible readers are compelled to investigate the entire Bible in response to this bold assertion. Conscientious readers must pay particular attention to the Old Testament, whose own testimony points to Jesus Christ as the last Adam, in light of his incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation.

Furthermore, an examination of the teaching ministry of both Jesus and the Apostles supports teaching the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. The clear path of

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<sup>4</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, 1-17*, The New International Critical Commentary of the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 197.

<sup>5</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 37.

redemptive historical progression, fulfillment, and escalation in the Old Testament demonstrates the continuing relevance of the Old Testament to the New Testament people of God. Additionally, the Emmaus disciples' encounter with the resurrected Christ (Luke 24:13-49) confirms the thesis that Jesus Christ himself understood that he was the central theme and message of the Bible.

### **Jesus in All of Scripture**

Following Jesus' death, the resurrected Christ approached two grieving disciples and rebuked them for their lack of scriptural understanding of the necessity and purpose of his suffering and death.

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)

Jesus' rebuke expresses disappointment in the disciples at their ignorance of how the Old Testament foreshadowed the suffering and death of God's Messiah. The obtuseness of the Emmaus disciples crippled their ability to fully orient themselves around Jesus' teaching and obscured their ability to interpret the present circumstances around Jesus' death. In other words, their understanding of the prophets was incomplete. Leon Morris criticizes the disciples inadequate understanding of the prophets when he says, "The disciples had no doubt seized on the prediction of the glory of the Messiah, but had failed to take to heart the darker side of his mission."<sup>6</sup> Their understanding and

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<sup>6</sup> Leon Morris, *Luke*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1988), 357.

expectation of Jesus, as is often the case with many Christians, was based upon a very selective reading of the Old Testament.

The perspective of the Emmaus disciples was obviously shrouded by an unawareness of realities that should not have been hidden from them. Not only did the Old Testament predict a suffering Messiah, but Jesus himself spoke of the inevitable reality of his suffering, death, and resurrection (Luke 9:44-45; 18:31-34). Jesus' point is unmistakable: the Old Testament points to the certainty of both suffering and resurrection by the Righteous One.

Upon considering Jesus' claim, a key objection is raised: how could Jesus Christ be present in the Old Testament centuries before his birth? Moreover, one might be inclined to question the justification for Jesus' rebuke of the Emmaus disciples. After all, how could they have known what symbols and signs to look for apart from Jesus revealing those symbols and signs? Yet, Jesus repeatedly places himself at the center of Old Testament meaning in both his preaching and works. For example, the series of confrontations with the Pharisees and religious leaders in Luke 5:12-6:11 end with Jesus' bold declaration that he is "lord of the Sabbath." By implication, Jesus is claiming authority to determine the intended meaning and interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Tragically, it was not only Jesus' opponents who failed to rightly apprehend the significance of his words and works. Had the disciples fully comprehended Jesus' message and ministry, they would have seen him as the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament. The well-worn paths of the Old Testament Scriptures where the Messiah

had once been overlooked would have then presented a clear path to Jesus Christ as the promised and prophesied Messiah.<sup>7</sup>

The blind ignorance of the Emmaus disciples is not altogether unexpected. Scholar Joseph Fitzmyer explains the consensus in first century Judaism did not anticipate a suffering Messiah.<sup>8</sup> Anthony Collins makes a similar argument when he says “all Old Testament Jews were not looking for Messiah based on the ‘messianic interpretation placed on them by the New.’”<sup>9</sup> Such claims by modern scholarship, even if potentially accurate in their depiction of first-century Judaism, are at odds with the teaching of Jesus. He is crystal clear in stating the Old Testament prophets did indeed have an expectation of a suffering Messiah, even if first-century Jews did not.

Determining whether or not first-century Judaism anticipated a suffering Messiah hinges upon how the term “messiah” was used and understood. The term is derived from the Hebrew term *masiah*, which originates from the verb *masah*, meaning to smear or anoint. From an Old Testament biblical-theological perspective, the Messiah is the “anointed one”. He is chosen, designated, qualified, and consecrated for God’s task, and would come in the future to be God’s king (1 Sam 2:10, 35; Pss 2:2; 20:6; 28:8; 84:9; Hab 3:13; Dan 9:25-26).

Walter Kaiser argues “the majority of [Old Testament] passages that speak about [the hope of a] glorious future do not refer to a future king at all; instead they are

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<sup>7</sup> Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 56.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing, 1988), 1565-66.

<sup>9</sup> Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 14.

usually about Yahweh, who acts either in judgment or deliverance.”<sup>10</sup> What Kaiser fails to account for is the uniqueness of God’s relationship with his anointed king. The promise of the Davidic covenant is that David’s greater Son will sit on the throne of his kingdom forever (2 Sam 7:13). It is on the basis of God’s covenant promise to David that all texts about the hope of a glorious future speaking directly about Yahweh point to or find their fulfillment in the king who has come to announce, proclaim, and establish God’s kingdom as God’s anointed one (Mark 1:15). In short, God’s anointed king is none other than God himself revealed in and through Jesus Christ.

Though the reality of Jesus’ suffering and resurrection as God’s anointed one was hidden to his Emmaus followers, Christ decisively illuminated their darkened understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures in this providential post resurrection encounter. In truth, the disciples were blind not only because of their ignorance of the Scriptures, but also because they lacked the spiritual insight to see Christ in the Old Testament. This is why Luke explains to the reader “[Jesus] opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45). The reprimanded disciples needed illumination in order to understand “everything written about [Jesus] in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms” (Luke 24:44), and how what was written had then been fulfilled in the person and promise of Jesus.

Jesus balances his rebuke with the companion of instruction. The purpose of his chastisement is not a heavy-handed dose of shame intended to belittle the Emmaus disciples for their ignorance. Rather, his criticism presents the opportunity to reveal the

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<sup>10</sup> Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 15.

path toward seeing Christ's person and promise more clearly in the Old Testament. Luke says "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). Jesus showed them the legitimate path to reading about him in the Old Testament.

"Moses and all the Prophets" speaks to the entirety of the Hebrew Scriptures from front to back. Even if "Moses and all the Prophets" does not refer to "all the Scriptures," at the very least it refers to Moses as the first of the prophets and all those set apart for prophetic ministry by God after him. All of the prophets, by the nature of the prophetic office, ultimately point to Messiah.<sup>11</sup> The word of God spoken by Old Testament prophets looks forward in anticipation of the Word incarnate (John 1:1, 14; Heb 1:1-2). In an effort to make sure this point is not overlooked, in Luke's transcript of the rest of Jesus' conversation with the Emmaus disciples, he tells the reader that everything written in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms is fulfilled in Christ (Luke 24:44).

In the event that somehow the thick-headed Emmaus disciples may have presumed that Jesus did not have the entirety of the Old Testament in view, he also "interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). That all the Scriptures point to Jesus Christ is a Lucan emphasis repeated elsewhere in the Book of Acts, the companion volume to Luke's Gospel.

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<sup>11</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1997), 845. See also Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 136, where Kaiser makes a strong case for the person and promise of Messiah as the basis for the prophetic announcement by the Latter Prophets of what God was doing and was going to do in the future.

And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.” (Acts 17:2-3)

And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus. (Acts 18:27-28)

The point Luke underscores is transparent: there is continuity in God’s plan of redemption, and the Old Testament reveals that continuity.

Prior to Jesus’ clear declaration that all of Scripture points to and finds its fulfillment in his person and promise, he emphasizes the necessity of his suffering, as predicted in the Old Testament, as the pathway to his glory (Luke 24:26). The use of “glory” does not refer to praise in Luke’s Gospel. Usage of the term elsewhere in Luke and Acts suggests either the majesty or authority of Christ (Luke 9:31-32; 21:27; Acts 7:55).<sup>12</sup> Context implies Luke likely has in mind the authority of Christ, meaning that when Jesus speaks of the necessity of his suffering to enter glory, it is not probable that he has resurrection in mind. Rather, Jesus is pointing to himself as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophetic expectation of Messianic authority.<sup>13</sup> In other words, Jesus possesses the authority to rightly interpret the Old Testament.

As has already been discussed, the promise of Genesis 3:15 is fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. The grief and confusion of the Emmaus disciples following Jesus’ death reveals there is little doubt about their anticipation and expectation of Messiah. Willis J. Beecher describes this anticipation:

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<sup>12</sup> Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 918.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

This messianic doctrines [was] preached by the prophets, sung in the Psalms, built into the temple, [rose] with the smoke of every sacrifice, [was] the quickner [*sic*] of Israel's conscience, the bulwark against idolatry, the protection of patriotism from despair, the comfort under affliction, the warning against temptation, the recall to the wandering; in short, [it was] a doctrine of salvation offered to Israel and every Israelite; more than this, [it was] Israel's missionary call to the nations, inviting all without exception to turn to the service of Yahaweh [*sic*].<sup>14</sup>

The Emmaus disciples were not rebuked for failing to anticipate the Messiah; they were rebuked for failing to recognize the Messiah would suffer. According to Jesus, his suffering was prophesied. If the prophecy of Jesus' suffering was so clear, how did the Emmaus disciples, and many other followers of Jesus, miss the prophecies of his suffering? What evidence do we find in the Old Testament prophesying the suffering of the Messiah?

The promise of Genesis 3:15 hints at the suffering of the promised Messiah, for the serpent "shall bruise his [the promised seed] heel." The enmity between the cursed serpent and the Son guaranteed to reverse the effects of the first sin and restore order reached its climax when Jesus suffered an agonizing death on the cross in order to redeem sinners through swallowing up death in the victory of his resurrection (1 Cor 15:54-54).

Not only does the conflict between the serpent and the promised offspring hint at a suffering Messiah, but the prophets anticipate the Messianic suffering as well. While not every prophetic book includes a "direct messianic prediction in their works," all of them hint at or include "something that pertains to the messianic era in the broad

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<sup>14</sup> Willis J. Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise* (1905; repr, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975), 243.

sense.”<sup>15</sup> These broad references to the messianic era are seen in what Beecher calls the concept of inaugurated eschatology, in which the Scriptures tease the tension between the “now” and “not yet” realities of prophetic fulfillment.<sup>16</sup> What is promised in the prophets almost always includes contemporary fulfillments in their predictions while anticipating the ultimate fulfillment through the work of God in his promised Messiah. Darrell Bock argues,

In making this point, Jesus Christ appeals to two types of prophetic fulfillment. Texts that are directly prophetic refer only to Christ, while typico-prophetic texts reflect patterns that Jesus reenacts and escalates to show their fulfillment or their eschatological inauguration at a new level. This combination of texts shows that Jesus fulfills some things now, while he fulfills other things later.<sup>17</sup>

The point is that the prophets are always forward-looking in their anticipation of the greater fulfillment of God’s covenant promises to his people, and they anticipate the means of God achieving his victory through both glory and suffering.

The concept of a suffering Messiah is prominently prophesied by Isaiah (50:4-9; 52:13-53:14) and Zechariah (11:4-14; 12:10; 13:7). Again, the intent of the Prophets is not to explicitly draw out every aspect of the person and promise of the Messiah.

However, because they all hint at some aspect of the Messiah’s work, they all attest to the totality of his promised achievements and the means by which those gains will be accomplished.

The Law of Moses and the prophets are not alone in confirming the reality of a suffering Messiah; the Psalms do as well. The Psalms date as far back as the time of the

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<sup>15</sup> Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 139.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

<sup>17</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:5*, Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 1917-18.

exodus, and most were probably composed during the reign of King David (and Solomon). The entirety of the Psalms were later compiled and edited into the form found in the biblical canon after Israel returned from exile.<sup>18</sup> The date of compilation is relevant because it reveals the Psalms were compiled strategically at a time when there was no king in Israel. This latter compilation suggests the Psalter is not compiled as a book of remembrance of the anointed king of Israel's past, but in anticipation of the anointed king of Israel's future.

In addition, Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 seemingly serve as an introduction to the entire Psalter. The blessed man of Psalm 1 is the one who delights in the Word. The blessed man of Psalm 2 is the man who delights in the Son. The Apostle John ties these blessings together when he announces,

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1, 14).

The point is the blessed man is one who delights in the Son revealed by the Word. Based on the date of compilation and the introductory psalms which frame the entire Psalter, we discover the Psalms are often forward looking in anticipation of the greater fulfillment of the Davidic covenant. All of the psalms are about Messianic hope revealed in the person and promise of Jesus.

To strengthen this argument, Gordon Wenham contends the book of Psalms presents two pictures of the Davidic house. The first picture, as expressed in Psalms 2, 72, 110, and 132, shows the ideal son of David who is also the Son of God to whom the

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<sup>18</sup> Gordon Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed: Praying and Praising with the Psalms* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 57.

nations bow down (72:10; 110:1).<sup>19</sup> The second picture is revealed in the Davidic laments and thanksgivings, which often portray a suffering David who is rescued from the assaults and pursuits of his enemies by the mercy and grace of God. Wenham contends, “If we do put the two pictures together – the ideal king with universal sovereignty, and the innocent suffering David – we arrive at the picture of a David who through suffering inherits a universal kingdom.”<sup>20</sup> When looking at the Psalms as a whole, contrasting the conquering king in Psalm 2 with the forward trajectory of an afflicted David in Psalm 3 and onward, the evidence confirms the future David would suffer before he gains ultimate victory.<sup>21</sup> Derek Kidner agrees, “It would scarcely seem too much to infer . . . that wherever David or the Davidic King appears in the Psalter . . . he foreshadows to some degree the Messiah.”<sup>22</sup>

In the context of Messianic hope one discovers explicit teaching and predictions of a suffering Messiah. Psalms 78 and 118 speak of the rejection of the Messiah. Psalms 69 and 109 announce the betrayal of the Messiah. Psalms 16 and 22 foresee the death of the Messiah, while Psalms 16 and 102 anticipate the Messiah’s victory over death. The Psalms predict Jesus’ suffering. On the basis of this evidence Jesus indicts the biblical ignorance of the Emmaus disciples.

It is critical to understand Luke’s specific perspective in emphasizing the Emmaus encounter. The importance of faithfully interpreting the Old Testament in a

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<sup>19</sup> Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed*, 98.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> David Murray, *Jesus on Every Page: Ten Simple Ways to Seek and Find Christ in the Old Testament* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 188.

Christocentric light is revealed by what is lost otherwise: a failure to do so obscures the clarity by which Jesus is seen. Seeing the suffering and then exalted Christ is the focus of the entire encounter. The Emmaus disciples failed to see Christ clearly. Luke indicates their blindness is not grounded in a lack of continuity between Jesus' pre- and post-resurrection body, as if their misperception is grounded in their confusion about his physical identity. Rather, Luke demonstrates their ignorance of what the Old Testament teaches about Jesus has clouded their understanding.

According to commentator Joel Green, Jesus is not suggesting the Emmaus disciples needed supernatural revelation to see and understand that the Righteous One must suffer as much as they lacked a robust "hermeneutical process of comprehending the purpose of God in the correlation of Jesus' career with the Scriptures of Israel."<sup>23</sup> Green further proposes that Jesus can only be understood in light of the Old Testament, and the Old Testament "can only be understood in light of what has happened with Jesus."<sup>24</sup>

The explicit and pervasive Christ-centered focus of the New Testament and the imbalance of New Testament teaching over Old Testament teaching in contemporary churches suggests Christian discipleship depends more on New Testament light than Old. However, the ability to know and follow Jesus Christ faithfully depends as much on the Christ-follower's ability to read Jesus in the Old Testament as it does in the New Testament. Since "all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be

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<sup>23</sup> Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, 843-44.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17), the spiritual formation of the Christian disciple into the Spirit-filled conformity of Jesus’ character must be informed by both the Old and New Testament. In short, one cannot rightly understand the person and promise of Jesus by the New Testament alone; he must be read in all of Scripture. At stake is a robust understanding of the unity of the Bible enabling disciples to read and apply the entire Bible from a Christian perspective.

### **Jesus: The Fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets**

The unity of the Bible cannot be understood without reconciling the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Law and the Prophets. The word “Law” in the New Testament has at least three different meanings depending on the way it is used in context. It can refer to the first five books of the Old Testament, known as the Torah, such as in Luke 24:44 when Jesus says, “These are the words that I spoke to you . . . that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

In addition, “Law” can refer to a faulty understanding of the intent of the Mosaic Law in relationship to the person and promise of Jesus. According to Richard Hays, the Law originally had the primary function of *defining the identity of God’s people*, the Jews.<sup>25</sup> This identity was defined by law-covenant. The Law as law-covenant was the administration established between God and his people to regulate their way of

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<sup>25</sup> Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013), 45.

life and expose their sin until Jesus is revealed as the promised Messiah.<sup>26</sup> The Law made known the path to life (Lev 18:5), but only to those who could obey it perfectly. Yet no one obeyed it perfectly, and as a result, it brought only death. Despite this reality, it is demonstrated repeatedly in the New Testament that Jewish religious leaders ignored the impotence of the Law to produce life. Instead, they demanded religious performance as desperate attempts to earn salvation, misrepresenting the purpose of the Law by turning it into a deadly tool for legalism.

Finally, “Law” can refer to the Old Testament as a whole, such is its usage in Matthew 5:17-20. Jesus teaches that he did not come to “abolish the Law or the Prophets . . . but to fulfill them” (Matt 5:17). He understands “Law” as the Pentateuch and the “Prophets” as all of Old Testament Scripture. By combining these two words, Matthew’s intended meaning is “the Law and the Prophets” are the entirety of the Old Testament.<sup>27</sup>

Jesus’ teaching is often set apart by the phrase, “You have heard it said, but I say to you.” His expansion of the Law and the Prophets, but especially the Law, appears to raise suspicion among those who hear Jesus teach the word of God. For the religious Jew, the phrase, “You have heard it said, but I say to you,” stood in curious contrast to the prophetic salutation, “Thus says the LORD.” Contextually in Matthew 5, Jesus’ lack of visible religious endorsement of common religious practices such as fasting, almsgiving, studying the Torah, etc., in the Beatitudes at the beginning of the Sermon on

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<sup>26</sup> Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 152.

<sup>27</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992), 107.

the Mount may have raised questions and created confusion about his scriptural orthodoxy.<sup>28</sup>

Matthew 5:17-20 is primarily about Jesus setting the record straight about his relationship to the Law. As Leon Morris says, “Christ affirmed its continued validity and he fulfilled it.”<sup>29</sup> In other words, Jesus’ goal is not to make the Hebrew Scriptures less important; rather, his teaching elevates and expands the importance of the Old Testament. Jesus’ understanding of and teaching on the Law is more contemplative and radical than the teaching of the religious leaders of his day. His purpose to elevate and expand the importance of the Old Testament is evident in 5:21-48 as he explains and further develops the application of the Mosaic Law. For example, Jesus teaches his hearers that sinful anger is equal to murder, and lusting in one’s heart after another person is comparable to adultery. In short, by advancing the importance of fulfilling the Law, Jesus teaches that obedience to God requires more than outward obedience alone; it also involves the inner transformation and righteous motivation of the heart and mind as well. Jesus says, “I have not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matt 5:17). He has not come to do away with the Law entirely, but he has literally come to “fill it [the Law] full,” complete it, and bring it to its desired end.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew 1-12: The Christbook* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 196.

<sup>29</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 107.

<sup>30</sup> Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 197.

All that Jesus means by fulfillment is not entirely clear. In fact, the question of “how” Jesus fulfills the Law is left dangling in verse 20. Leon Morris offers three possibilities.

To fulfill has been understood in three ways: (1) It may mean that he would do the things laid down in Scripture. (2) It may mean that he would bring out the full meaning of Scripture. (3) It may mean that in his life and teaching he would bring Scripture to completion. Each point to an aspect of the truth, and Jesus may well have meant he would fulfill Scripture in more ways than one.<sup>31</sup>

D. A. Carson adds, “The best interpretation of the difficult verses says that Jesus fulfills the Law and prophets in that they point to him, and he is their fulfillment.”<sup>32</sup>

Carson is right. The Law and the prophets point to Jesus. He wants his followers to understand that his words and teaching are not contrary to the Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus is elevating the authority and necessity of Scripture rather than minimizing it. Fredrick Bruner points out, according to Jesus, the Old Testament is undoubtedly God’s Word, while claiming the authority to rightly interpret the written word of God.<sup>33</sup> His goal is to help his followers understand the unity of his words and the Hebrew Scriptures in light of his person and promise. The utility of the Law and the prophets cannot be rightly understood and applied apart from Jesus Christ.

Consequently, biblical interpreters must be wary of any teaching that sets Christ against the Old Testament. Jesus is not out to destroy the Old Testament, but rather, his goal is to bring it to its desired end. The Old Testament can only be understood by looking at Christ as the perfect law-keeper who fulfills all its demands. In light of the

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<sup>31</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 108.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 197.

person and promise of Jesus, the Mosaic Law can now fulfill its primary purpose, which is “clarifying the character of holy living that the church is called to pursue presently, in gratitude for the gracious redemption we have received through Christ, as well as portraying the ultimate, consummative separation of the holy from the profane when the King returns to winnow chaff from grain and to separate tares from wheat.”<sup>34</sup>

One of the ways we know Jesus’ understanding of his relationship to the Law and the prophets is accurate is because he has Christological authority to make such a claim. In verse 17, Jesus’ declaration he has “come” not to abolish but “fulfill them” implies Messianic status. The verb “come” carries the sense of “I came down to earth” as one who has “come from heaven.”<sup>35</sup> The high regard Christ has for the Old Testament is rooted in the reality that he has the authority and eyes to interpret it.<sup>36</sup>

If Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets, then the implications for how Christ-followers should understand and apply the teaching of the Law and the prophets are significant. Old Testament imperatives are no longer applicable as mere examples to be followed in the strength and motivation of human resolve. Since Christ is the fulfillment of the Law, and in Christ his followers also fulfill the righteous requirement of the Law (Rom 5:3) by the Spirit, it behooves readers of the Old Testament to interpret the Law in a Christocentric light. Bruner insightfully says, “The obedience of

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<sup>34</sup> Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 283.

<sup>35</sup> Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 197.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

Jesus' followers [to the Law] is grateful obedience to an already fulfilled Law, so grateful that they would now like that fulfillment to have some fruit in them.”<sup>37</sup>

For the follower of Jesus, fulfilling the Law is different from observing, keeping, doing, or obeying the Law. In Jesus, the obligation to obey the Law has been brought to completion because only Jesus could fulfill the Law. He is the obedient Son no one else can be. Bruner's point is, in Christ, the just demand of the Law is fulfilled in us rather than by us. However, the fulfillment of the Law in us leads to a new way of living, in love as fulfillment of the Law.

The moral implications of the Law are precisely Jesus' point in verses 19-20. It is important to note Jesus intends for his followers to abide by the ethical commands revealed in Scripture. No commandment of God is to be taken lightly. The Law demands righteousness, and Jesus expects his followers to seek the fruit of righteousness.

However, the righteousness Jesus has in mind is different from the righteousness of the Pharisees who looked for strict legal conformity and moral adherence. The religious leaders looked to law-keeping as the path to life, but instead found it to be a dead end because all who are under Law are under a curse and under sin. For precisely this reason Jesus takes aim at the condition of the inner man. While the ethics of both the Pharisees and Jesus emphasized inner motivation, Jesus “challenges . . . the actual conditions of their hearts.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 199.

<sup>38</sup> Craig S. Keener, *Matthew*, The IVP New Testament Commentary (Downers Grove: IL: IVP, 1997), 113.

Critical to understanding the Law and the prophets is Jesus' focus on his person and promise. The righteousness Jesus has in mind must come from spiritual fruit grounded in new birth through faith in Jesus. For the follower of Jesus, "their righteousness is a given righteousness. Nowhere do we get the idea that the servant of God achieves in his own strength the kind of living that gives him standing before God. But he is given that standing, and Jesus looks to him to live in accordance with that standing."<sup>39</sup>

When reading the Old Testament, followers of Christ must obey imperatives only as they embrace the person and promise of Jesus as the motivation behind obedience to Old Testament imperatives. The central focus of obedience is Jesus Christ because Jesus as "the thing signified" by the Law and the prophets "is naturally more important than the sign (the Law and the prophets) pointing to [him]."<sup>40</sup>

The centrality and supremacy of Jesus in relationship to the Law and the prophets is precisely the point that Jesus wants to bring into focus. Jesus, who brings the Law to its appointed end, is more important than the signs that point to him. The Law reveals our sin (Rom 3:20). The Law reveals God's standards (Matt 5:17-20). The Law reveals the Savior (Gal 3:23-24). The Law and the fulfillment of the Law find ultimate meaning in Jesus.

How does this impact Old Testament interpretation? The Law and the prophets are shadows pointing to the reality of Jesus Christ. God's people, as his temple, fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law by the law of the Spirit of life in faith-filled obedience

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<sup>39</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 111.

<sup>40</sup> Bruner, *Matthew 1-12*, 199-200.

(Rom 8:2). Understanding Jesus as the confirmation and fulfillment of the righteous requirement of the Law reveals the path toward gospel-centered interpretation of the Old Testament. Leon Morris correctly explains the forward-looking nature of the prophetic message:

The prophetic teachings point forward (principally) to the actions of Christ and have been realized in them in an incomparably greater way. The Mosaic Law points forward (principally) to the teachings of Jesus Christ and have also been realized in them in an more profound manner.<sup>41</sup>

In summary, Jesus Christ gives new life or meaning to the Old Testament (the Law and the prophets). Edmond Clowney summarizes how Jesus elevates the meaning of the Old Testament in a helpful way:

Yet, in him, all that is new is also old. When Jesus arrives to fulfill Old Testament prophecy, he brings a new covenant, the kingdom of the King. He does not, however, wipe out the old. However, his coming brings the dawn that the Old Testament promised.<sup>42</sup>

The Old Testament is relevant for New Testament Christians because Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. Reading the Old Testament in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ causes it to come alive with meaning and application. Sidney Greidanus perceptively recognizes that those who struggle to read the Old Testament as Christian Scripture stumble over self-imposed obstacles:

The dilemma of how to get a Christian message out of a “non-Christian” or “pre-Christian” book is a predicament of our own making, for it does not arrive out of the Scriptures. Of course, as we move from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we notice progression in redemptive history as well as revelation. But progression does not make the Old Testament non-Christian or pre-Christian. The headwaters of a river are not “non-river” or “pre-river”; they are an essential part of the rivers as it

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<sup>41</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 108.

<sup>42</sup> Edmund P. Clowney. *How Jesus Transforms the Ten Commandments* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 7.

flows downstream. Moreover, as a river moves forward even while remaining where it has always been, so the progression in redemptive history and revelation takes place without disqualifying the past. For progression takes place within the larger continuity. Jesus, the person who moved redemptive history and revelation forward like no one else, said in Matthew 5:17, “Do not think I have come to abolish the law or the prophets [that is, the Old Testament]; I have not come to abolish but to fulfill – that is, to reveal its full meaning and bring it to consummation.”<sup>43</sup>

Christ followers look for continuity in the unified history of redemption which progresses from Old Testament to New. The Bible is one story about God’s one plan of redemption in the person and promise of Jesus Christ who fulfills the Old Testament.

### **The Old Testament Bears Witness to Jesus Christ**

Every biblical author points forward to Jesus, but most people in Jesus’ day failed to make this connection. During his earthly ministry, Jesus challenged the way the religious leaders of his day read the Hebrew Scriptures. The Pharisees and the scribes were devoutly studious men who dedicated their lives to diligent, meticulous study of the Old Testament. Most of these men believed that as one’s knowledge of the Scriptures increased, so did their experience of life in the world to come.<sup>44</sup> However, Jesus rebuked this kind of thinking. The skepticism the Pharisees and scribes demonstrated towards Jesus reveals their unbelief in his claims. His diagnosis of their unbelief was both scathing and startling because, according to Jesus, those who reject him are guilty of rejecting Moses (John 5:39-47).

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<sup>43</sup> Sidney Greidanus. *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 184.

<sup>44</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1995), 292.

The background of John 5:39-47 is the healing of a lame man, which serves as a Christological declaration of the person and promise of Jesus Christ. It is not Christ's healing miracle alone that demonstrates his authority; it is also his bold proclamation of God as his own Father, which was paramount to making himself equal with God (John 5:18). Predictably, Jesus' claims enrage the religious community, further exacerbating the divide between Jesus and the religious leaders.

Throughout chapter 5, hearing and believing dominate the text as central themes leading to eternal life. The Apostle John calls various witnesses to the stand to testify to the validity of Christ's claims about himself. The witness motif stands out prominently in John's Gospel. The Law demanded two to three witnesses to verify a claim (Deut 19:15), and John uses this requirement of the Law to state his case. According to John, Jesus believed that John the Baptist (John 5:33-35), the works as given to him by the Father that no one else did (John 5:36; 15:24), and the Heavenly Father (John 5:32, 37) all bear witness to himself.

The Jews rejected Jesus' self-authenticating claims, which is not surprising from a contextual and historical perspective. Accepting Jesus' claims on their own basis would have been tantamount to blasphemy within Jewish tradition, but John tells us they rejected the Father's testimony as well (John 8:12-13, 16-19). However, the reader is left guessing about the specific nature of their rejection because while "the personal nature of this divine witness to the Son is clear; the precise referent is not."<sup>45</sup> Regarding the nature of the witness, Carson says it is likely,

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<sup>45</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 262.

A general reference to all the Father's revealing work – in antecedent redemptive event, in Scripture, in peculiar attestation of Jesus (as at baptism), in the life of those who came to recognize who Jesus is. All such gracious revelation from the Father is understood by the New Testament writers, not least John, to serve as witness to the Son.<sup>46</sup>

It is in this context that John stresses the significance of the most critical witness: the Scriptures and Moses bear witness to Jesus Christ (John 5:39, 46).

For the serious student of the Old Testament, any accusation of an erroneous understanding of their meaning would have been both offensive and mystifying. The fact that the religious leaders searched the Scriptures was a good thing. The problem was they searched the Scriptures in the wrong way. The Pharisees and scribes thought that life was found in the Scriptures themselves. Herman Ridderbos speaks to this widely held belief when he writes, “The Jews believed that in the Scriptures they had, unlike other nations, received the divinely given means by which to acquire righteousness unto life, the means of ‘making alive.’”<sup>47</sup>

However, life is found only in the Savior disclosed by the Old Testament. Morris reminds the student of God's Word that life is found in the person to whom Scripture testifies, not the words themselves: “There is no life in the Scriptures themselves, but if we will follow where they lead, they will bring us to Him [Jesus], and so we find life, not in the Scriptures, but Him through them.”<sup>48</sup>

In a shocking revelation, Jesus declares that those who devoted their lives to studying the Old Testament entirely missed the point of the Scriptures. As Carson points

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<sup>46</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 262.

<sup>47</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 204.

<sup>48</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 292.

out, they entertained a kind of literalism that Jesus rejects because he is not literally in the Old Testament.<sup>49</sup> Carson goes on to explain the importance of the way the Bible should be approached.

The intent of “you think” – also in light of vs. 39b and vs. 45ff. – is not to discredit Scripture as a source of light and life or, even less, to reject them altogether, but to persuade Jesus’ hearers to distance themselves from the manner in which the Jews “searched” the Scriptures and believed they “had” life in that pursuit.<sup>50</sup>

The religious leaders are blamed for a wrong examination of the Old Testament, which consequently blinded them to the truth of witness that authenticated Jesus’ claims, causing them to reject Jesus outright (John 5:40).

Here is the warning: in studying the details of the Old Testament one may miss the testimony of the Old Testament. The testimony is Jesus Christ. Promises in the Old Testament reveal the person of Jesus Christ. Graeme Goldsworthy reveals a critical component to understanding the Old Testament in a Christocentric light:

A key point . . . is that Jesus did not see himself as coming to eradicate the old and establish something totally new. The gospel event is not *de novo* but is seen as the completion and fulfillment of all God’s saving acts and promises in the Old Testament.<sup>51</sup>

Life is found in Jesus, not in the words that point to Jesus. The object of faith is Christ himself, not the words about Jesus Christ. If the order of these things gets reversed, the result is the forfeiture of eternal life.

John the Apostle’s point is this: faithful interpreters of the Old Testament must embrace the person and promise of Jesus as the interpretive key for understanding and

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<sup>49</sup> Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 263.

<sup>50</sup> Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 204-5.

<sup>51</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scriptures* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 48.

applying the Old Testament. Note what John Calvin says about the Old Testament bearing witness to Christ:

We ought to read the Scriptures with the express design of finding Christ in them. . . . By the Scriptures, it is well known, is here meant the Old Testament; for it was not in the Gospel that Jesus Christ first began to be manifested, but, having received testimony from the Law and the Prophets, he was openly exhibited in the Gospel.<sup>52</sup>

The link between the writings of Moses and the words of Jesus is the final piece of evidence confirming Jesus as the central focus of the Old Testament. John writes, “If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?” (John 5:46-47). The interchangeable correspondence between the words of Jesus and the writings of Moses clearly identifies Jesus as the focal point of the Old Testament.<sup>53</sup> Jesus is making a strong statement here: one cannot claim faithfulness to the teachings of Moses and at the same time reject Jesus’ words. At the heart of rejecting Jesus is the sin of unbelief, not only unbelief in Jesus’ teaching, but in the Mosaic Law as well. Unbelief in Jesus is synonymous with unbelief in Moses.

In fact, Jesus explains that Moses, the one upon whom Israel had set their hope, will “accuse” Israel to the Father. In short, Moses will stand as witness against Israel. The false hope of Israel was that salvation was found in adherence to the Law. But the Law cannot save; it only accuses. Leon Morris explains, “Had they listened to Moses they would have experienced conviction of sin leading them to look for a Savior.”<sup>54</sup> What

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<sup>52</sup> Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 140-141.

<sup>53</sup> Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 207.

<sup>54</sup> Morris, *The Gospel of John*, 295.

does it mean to “believe Moses”? Look and listen to the promised prophet who brings salvation by faith (Deut 18:15). Moses was not pointing to himself as the source of salvation. The Law is given through Moses, by grace, to reveal the need for saving grace found only in Jesus Christ.

Ultimately there is no conflict between the writings of Moses and the words of Jesus. As Irenaeus observed, “Jesus here indicates in the clearest possible way that the writings of Moses are his words. If, then, this is the case with Moses, then it is beyond doubt that the words of the other prophets are his words as well.”<sup>55</sup> Based on the testimony of Jesus the Son of God, there is unquestionably no other conclusion that can be determined than accepting that the Law and the prophets point to the person and promise of Jesus Christ.

### **Abraham Believed the Gospel**

Nowhere is the importance of interpreting the Old Testament Christocentrically seen more clearly than in understanding the promise of God’s salvation. How did people in the Old Testament experience salvation? The promise of salvation is announced in Genesis 12:2-3: “And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” The promise of salvation is experienced in Genesis 15:6: “And he [Abram] believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.” In short, salvation in the Old Testament is announced and experienced through the same means explicitly expressed in the New Testament: by faith. Just as New

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<sup>55</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), 353.

Testament believers are justified, Old Testament believers are justified by God, through faith, by grace alone. Martin Luther said regarding salvation in the Old Testament, “When God spoke to Abraham he did not speak of things to be done, but instead of things to be believed.”<sup>56</sup>

The implications of this reality for Old Testament hermeneutics are critical. First, if New Testament teaching asserts that people can only be justified by God through faith in the one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ (1 Tim 2:5), then Old Testament persons who experienced salvation must have anticipated Jesus Christ in some way by believing God. The consequence is biblical interpreters must connect the antecedent salvation experience that occurs prior to the birth, life, and death of Christ to the gospel event itself in preaching and teaching the Old Testament.

Second, the promise God made to Abram must be understood to be the Good News – the gospel itself – even though it is not the fullest expression of the gospel message. Christopher Wright explains:

For Paul, the whole of his theology of mission hinged on his understanding of the crucial importance of the promise to Abraham and its universal significance. Galatians 3 is a clear witness to this. For Paul, the very Gospel itself began, not just with Jesus, but with Abraham. For what, after all, was the Good News? Nothing other than God’s commitment to bring blessing to all nations of humanity as announced to Abraham.<sup>57</sup>

If God’s intention to bring blessing to the entire world through Jesus Christ begins with Abraham, then understanding the identity of the true children of Abraham radically changes the way one interprets and applies the Old Testament. In contrast with

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<sup>56</sup> Martin Luther, *Commentary on Galatians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 153.

<sup>57</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1992), 66.

the Jewish understanding of “sons” and “seed” of Abraham, Douglas Moo explains Paul’s use of justification and righteousness language as the way to express Christian status before God in contrast with the Jewish understanding of “sons” and “seed” of Abraham. Moo writes, “If the Galatians who come to know Christ the same way Abraham did – by faith, then what was true of Abraham in Genesis 15:6 must be true for all who come to Christ in faith.”<sup>58</sup> The question of the identity of the true children of Abraham dominates Galatians 3-4 and provides necessary insight for Old Testament interpretation in light of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:8 reveals how the Hebrew Scriptures anticipate and anchor hope in the promise of Jesus Christ as revealed to Abraham. Paul writes that “the Scripture” foresaw that “God would justify the Gentiles by faith”. The means by which Gentiles hundreds of years later would believe God in faith was achieved as Scripture “preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed’.” The result is that “those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith” (Gal 3:9).

Paul’s interpretation of “all nations will be blessed by you” is far richer than Jewish exegesis allowed.<sup>59</sup> There is a clear point of continuity in Paul’s hermeneutic: faith is how people enter God’s community. Faith has always been the plan and means by which people experience salvation; thus, explaining what Paul means when he says the Scriptures were “foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith.” Galatians

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<sup>58</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians*, Baker Exegetical Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 198.

<sup>59</sup> Timothy George, *Galatians*, New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 225.

reveals justification by faith alone is clearly a point of both confusion and contention for the Jews.

What does Paul mean by “the Scripture”? Does he have a specific text in mind or is he speaking more broadly about the Old Testament in general? Scholar Timothy George clarifies Paul’s use of the term “the Scripture”:

Whether the word Paul used for Scripture refers to the specific verse he quoted (actually a conflation of Genesis 12:3 and 18:18) or, as seems more likely, to Scripture as a whole, it is clear, as [F.F.] Bruce rightly observes, that Paul used “Scripture” here “more or less as an extension of divine personality”.<sup>60</sup>

In order to make sense of Paul’s language in Galatians 3:8, the doctrine of biblical inspiration as revealed in 2 Timothy 3:15-17 is clearly implied by identifying “Scripture” with the God who speaks.<sup>61</sup>

F. F. Bruce convincingly argues that Paul’s use of “the Scripture” in Galatians 3:8, as noted by Timothy George, is “more or less as an extension of the divine personality”.<sup>62</sup> God’s Word – both audible and inscripturated as revealed throughout redemptive history – always has salvation accomplished through the person and promise of Jesus in mind. If Bruce is correct in supposing that Scripture is an extension of divine personality, then this suggests that God is speaking the same message in both Testaments, even if he is not saying all that there is to say about his plan of salvation in the Old Testament. Therefore, it can be rightly said that the gospel is announced in the Hebrew

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<sup>60</sup> George, *Galatians*, 224.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 156.

Scriptures because God's design to justify people by faith has remained unchanged since before the creation of the world.

The two claims that Paul is making are clear: (1) the Old Testament looks ahead to when God will justify Gentiles by faith; (2) The gospel was preached to Abraham. Moo rightly argues that the two claims are restatements of the same thing in different terms, "God's justification of the Gentiles, foreseen in Scripture, is the essential content of the gospel, a gospel that was 'announced ahead of time' to Abraham in the promise 'that all nations would be blessed' in him."<sup>63</sup>

Jesus spoke of the reality of Abraham looking ahead to the promise of Messiah in the Gospel of John. In John 8:56 Jesus says, "Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." John Calvin says the sense of what Jesus means is that "faith has its degrees of seeing Christ."<sup>64</sup> Bruner describes the varying or progressive degrees of faith like this: (1) When Abraham believed God and his promise early on and acted on them in faith, he clearly anticipated a great day of fulfillment and "was glad"; (2) When Abraham continued believing the Lord and his promises later on, he "saw" that great Day of fulfillment in some unexplained and probably growing ways. He anticipated a grand, cosmic, blessed coming in the future.<sup>65</sup> In other words, Jesus is saying, "I am the one Abraham expected".

Some biblical interpreters fail to see Christ in the Old Testament unless he is explicitly mentioned because they view the gospel more as an historical event than a

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<sup>63</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 198-99.

<sup>64</sup> Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), 552.

<sup>65</sup> Bruner, *The Gospel of John*, 552.

progressive promise revealed in Scripture. Indeed, the gospel is a one-time historical event for the redemption of sinners who believe God in faith, but it is also a promise announced from the very beginning. Throughout the Holy Scriptures, God speaks his word of promise as an extension of his divine personality throughout progressive redemptive history.

### **Conclusion**

The preceding exegetical survey of how the New Testament reconciles the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Old Testament reveals the person and promise of Jesus in the gospel as the hermeneutical key for understanding the Hebrew Scriptures. First, Jesus used New Testament light to interpret the Old Testament as revealed by his encounter with the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24:25-26, 44-45). Second, Jesus declared himself as the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets (Matt 5:17-20), meaning, he is the center of meaning and application of Old Testament Law, prophecy, wisdom literature, etc. Third, the Old Testament bears witness to Jesus Christ, and this witness begins with Moses, one of the two central figures of Jewish faith and practice. Finally, the good news proclaimed to Abraham through the promise of blessing is ultimately the good news of the gospel itself revealed in Jesus Christ (Gal 3:8; John 8:56). Understanding these four fundamental truths is essential to preaching the Old Testament as Christian Scripture.

Since evidence from both the Old and New Testament demonstrates support for Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament, faithful Bible teachers must develop a legitimate path to Jesus Christ from the Old Testament with exegetical integrity. The Apostolic hermeneutic disclosed in the New Testament suggests the connections to Jesus Christ in the Old Testament are neither shallow nor artificial.

Chapter 3 examines the exegetical tools necessary for identifying legitimate paths to Christ-centered interpretation to equip lay Bible teachers to interpret the Old Testament Christocentrically. In addition, chapter 3 explores how Christ-centered interpretation strengthens the interpreter's grasp on biblical theology, which is necessary for canonical unity.

Finally, Christ-centered application of the Old Testament promotes robust, gospel-shaped, life-transforming application of the Old Testament. No longer should Old Testament readers struggle to reduce Old Testament application to legalistic moralism and gospel-less character studies that implore the reader to "Be like David! Be like Esther!" It is undoubtedly true the Bible points to biblical characters as examples to follow, learn from, or reject (1 Cor 11:1; Jas 5:10-11, 17). In fact, Paul sees the entire Old Testament as exemplary and Israel particularly (1 Cor 10:1-11). However, whatever example disciples of Jesus are commanded to heed must also be followed in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ as the obedient Son and representative head of all redeemed sinners.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR EQUIPPING BIBLE TEACHERS TO INTERPRET THE OLD TESTAMENT CHRISTOCENTRICALLY

What is the end goal of biblical interpretation? In chapter 2, the biblical and theological justification for Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament was examined. Both the Old and New Testament reveal and affirm Jesus Christ as the interpretive key to understanding the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. In other words, Jesus Christ is the theological center of the Bible. He is the central theme revealed through the kingdom of God. Who Jesus is, what he has done, and what he will do lay the foundational goal of biblical teaching: Christocentric, life-transforming application of the Bible. Jay Adams addresses the importance of application for preaching:

Application is the present consequence of scriptural truth. Without application the preacher has no reason to preach because truth without application is useless. This means that at its heart preaching is not merely the proclamation of truth, but it is truth applied.<sup>1</sup>

How, then, are lay Bible teachers equipped to forge legitimate textual links between redemptive-historical exegesis and Christ-centered application?

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<sup>1</sup> Jay Adams, *Truth Applied: Application in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 39.

## The Unifying Theme of Scripture

Before an exegetical path towards Christ-centered application is explained, a fuller understanding of what it means that Jesus Christ is the unifying theme of Scripture must be clarified. Contemporary scholars highlight the reluctance among theologians to identify a controlling theme in Scripture.<sup>2</sup> Scholarly reluctance may be attributed to the fear of imposing an inappropriate philosophical or theological lens upon Scripture. However, as long as the unifying theme arises out of Scripture itself rather than being imposed upon it, and as long as the theme is broad enough to include the distinct contributions of various parts of Scripture, any biblical theme presents the viable possibility of serving as a theological controlling idea.<sup>3</sup>

Some scholars appear content to appeal to canonicity alone as the fundamental basis for unity, what Graeme Goldsworthy calls an “anthology of religious writings.”<sup>4</sup> But Goldsworthy is correct in arguing “the unity of the Bible is a matter of theological conviction and faith because of the testimony of Jesus and the nature of the Gospel” which is nothing less than the “one word of God about salvation through Jesus Christ.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, the unity of the Bible depends not only upon canonicity, but also upon the divine message itself.

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<sup>2</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 22-25. See also Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 51.

<sup>3</sup> Vaughn Roberts, *God’s Big Picture: Tracing the Storyline of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 20-21.

<sup>4</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 51.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

Goldsworthy does not share the reticence of many theological scholars concerning identifying the theological center of the Bible. He contends that the “kingdom of God is the key concept . . . [and] controlling theme” of the Bible.<sup>6</sup> Vaughn Roberts also embraces the kingdom of God as the unifying theme of the Bible, though he also accepts that other themes such as “covenant” have theological merit as well. However, he would argue these two approaches are complimentary rather than contradictory.<sup>7</sup> Bruce Waltke also affirms the kingdom as the controlling theme of Scripture when he says,

God is establishing his kingship over a hostile world to establish his glory. The bond that unites the testaments is the sense of God’s divine activity in revelatory history in progressively establishing his rule in heaven on earth from the creation of the cosmos (Gen 1) to his creation of the new cosmos (Rev 21-22).<sup>8</sup>

The broadness of the kingdom theme ultimately lacks theological precision. In similar fashion, scholars such as Michael Barrett<sup>9</sup> and Willem VanGemeran,<sup>10</sup> who contend that Jesus Christ alone is the controlling theme of the Bible, encounter an analogous problem. Like the kingdom theme, using Jesus Christ alone as the theological

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<sup>6</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, 51. Goldsworthy defines the kingdom of God as “God’s people in God’s place under God’s rule” (Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom* [Exeter: Paternoster, 1981], 47). See also Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 21.

<sup>7</sup> Roberts, *God’s Big Picture*, 21. Roberts rightly contends that God’s covenant promises are kingdom promises. The themes of “kingdom” and “covenant” compliment one another in ways that other controlling themes such as “the mission of God” or “glory of God” do not.

<sup>8</sup> Bruce Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 45.

<sup>9</sup> Michael P. V. Barrett, *Beginning at Moses: A Guide to Finding Christ in the Old Testament* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador-Emerald International, 2009), 13. Barrett says “The revelation of [Jesus] Christ should be the grand and predominant theme of the Scripture.”

<sup>10</sup> Willem VanGemeran, *The Progress of Redemption: The Story of Salvation from Creation to New Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988), 27. VanGemeran says, “The center of the Bible is the incarnate and glorified Christ, by whom all things will be renewed. All the acts of God, all the revelation of his promises and covenants, all the progression of his kingdom, and all the benefits of his salvation are in Christ.”

center of Scripture is too ambiguous. D. A. Carson correctly observes that arguing for Jesus Christ as the center of the Bible with no qualification is to “say everything and almost nothing at the same time.”<sup>11</sup>

As has been established, all of Scripture, from beginning to end, is uncompromisingly pointing toward the person and promise of Jesus Christ. In this sense, it is true that Jesus Christ is the theological center of the Bible. However, clarity on what Jesus has accomplished in his person and promise in relationship to the kingdom of God is critical. For this reason, David Prince appropriately contends that the theme of the kingdom of God “lacks eschatological orientation grounded in the concept of the kingdom of Christ.”<sup>12</sup> In other words, the kingdom of God is only revealed clearly in and through who Jesus is (person) and what Jesus has accomplished and will accomplish in the future eschaton (promise). Therefore, it is the contention of this doctoral project that the unifying theme of Scripture is the kingdom of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

### **Christ-Centered Exegesis**

A legitimate path toward Christocentric interpretation of the Bible depends upon sound grammatical-historical exegesis of Scripture. The canonical text itself, the inspired and authoritative Word of God, is the source of the truth that faithful expositors of Scripture seek to present. If Jesus is the sole mediator between God and people, then Jesus must mediate the meaning of Scripture as God’s Word to men and women. As a

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<sup>11</sup> D. A. Carson, “New Testament Theology,” in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, ed. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 810.

<sup>12</sup> David Edward Prince, “The Necessity of Christocentric Kingdom-Focused Model of Expository Preaching” (PhD diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011), 48.

result, Christ-centered hermeneutics must be guided by exposing the intended meaning of the text for the hearer, both in the past and for today, in light of the person and promise of Jesus. Bryan Chappell reaffirms the necessity of Christ-centered exegesis leading to gospel-centered application when he says, “The exposition of Scripture remains incomplete until the preacher explains the duty God requires of man.”<sup>13</sup>

The clarity of Scripture is paramount in biblical interpretation, and no more so than by maintaining a clear understanding of what all of Scripture, and particularly the Old Testament, says about the person and promise of Jesus Christ. As receivers of God’s Word, both the incarnate Word revealed in the person of Jesus and the inscripturated Word authored by Spirit-inspired men revealing the promises of God, disciples of Jesus accept that Christ was the true receiver and interpreter of the Father’s Word.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the ability to understand the Bible hinges upon the hearer’s union with Christ by faith.<sup>15</sup> Goldsworthy explains,

If the biblical story is true, [Jesus] Christ is the only saviour [sic] for humankind and there is room for no other way to God. If the story is true, Jesus Christ is the interpretative key to every fact in the universe and, of course, the Bible is one such fact. He is thus the hermeneutic principle that applies first to the Bible as the ground for understanding, and also to the whole of reality. Interpreting reality is a by-product of salvation. Thus we must assert that the person and work of Jesus Christ are foundational for evangelical hermeneutics.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Bryan Chappell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 200.

<sup>14</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics* (Nottingham, England: Apollos, 2006), 34.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 48.

Nothing in the Bible, nor anything in heaven and earth, can be rightly understood apart from Jesus Christ.

The centrality of the person and promise of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament has been well-established previously in this doctoral project. Nevertheless, the question of how to identify a justifiable path toward Christ-centered biblical interpretation remains. What exegetical process guides Christocentric hermeneutics in the Old Testament?

The process begins by determining the author's primary intention in composing the text. The key question in step one is: what is the main point of the passage?<sup>17</sup> This process includes identifying and understanding the literary, historical, and biblical context of the selected Old Testament passage. The literary context reveals the genre of literature. The author's flow of thought and argumentation become clear by observing syntax and grammar. The historical context tells the interpreter something about the author's personal background, the purpose of the book, and the geographical, historical, and political issues which illuminate the meaning of the text.

Once the literary and historical contexts are established, the placement of the text within the broader biblical context reveals the progression of the text within redemptive history. Michael Lawrence calls this the epochal horizon. The epochs represent the key foundational movements of God in redemptive history: creation, fall,

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<sup>17</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 32-50. Robinson offers perhaps the most helpful and lucid analysis for identifying and articulating the main idea of a selected biblical in print today.

flood, patriarchs, Exodus, conquest, monarchy, prophecy, exile, and return.<sup>18</sup> Vaughn Roberts expands on this language by explaining how the various founding movements in salvation history relate to the kingdom of God.<sup>19</sup> Exegeting the text within the biblical or epochal horizon enables the interpreter to understand how the selected text relates to the rest of Scripture.

Context is king in every phase of exegesis, revealing clues to the author's intended meaning. Understanding the meaning of a text requires a close and careful reading of the selected text within its biblical, historical, and literary context. Reading the selected texts in these three contexts enables the interpreter to identify the main point of the passage.

The second step in biblical interpretation involves identifying a valid path to interpreting the text in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ. The key question in step two is: how does the main point of the passage witness to or find its fulfillment in Jesus? Even though every text should be interpreted in Christocentric light, the interpreter wants to be careful not to force any Scripture to say something that it does not say.

Six paths enable the lay Bible teacher to discern whether or not an Old Testament passage witnesses to or finds its fulfillment in the person and promise of Jesus

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<sup>18</sup> Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 62-64.

<sup>19</sup> Roberts, *God's Big Picture*, 23-25. Roberts identifies eight major epochs in redemptive history: (1) the pattern of the kingdom – creation; (2) the perished kingdom – fall; (3) the promised kingdom – the protoevangelium in Genesis 3:15; (4) the partial kingdom – God's promises are partially fulfilled in Israel; (5) the prophesied kingdom – the prophets foretell promised restoration after exile through Messiah; (6) the present kingdom – the kingdom has come in Jesus, the promised Messiah; (7) the proclaimed kingdom – the kingdom spreads through God's people proclaiming the gospel; and (8) the perfected kingdom – Jesus will return to conquer every enemy and establish his eternal rule with his redeemed people.

Christ. These are the paths of (1) Promise,<sup>20</sup> (2) Progression,<sup>21</sup> (3) Instruction,<sup>22</sup> (4) Need,<sup>23</sup> (5) Type,<sup>24</sup> and (6) Theme.<sup>25</sup> Chapter 4 explains in more detail how these exegetical tools should be used to read the Old Testament Christocentrically. For now, it is sufficient to note a general description how these paths should be implemented in exegesis.

If the interpreter sees a promise or prediction of salvation in the text, the path of promise may be used to interpret the text in light of Jesus. If the promises of God are threatened in the passage, the path of progression towards Christ should be used. If the text reveals a Law or command or wisdom (all of which Jesus fulfilled), the path of instruction reveals how the command is confirmed, modified, or nullified in light of the person and promise of Jesus. If the interpreter identifies a problem or need that occurs as revealed by man's sinful rebellion and inheritance of a sinful nature, the exposure of man's spiritual poverty is disclosed by the path of need. If the text reveals a theological shadow of salvation that finds its substance in Jesus (e.g., Adam, David, temple, special days, etc.), the path of type leads the interpreter to Christ.

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<sup>20</sup> Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 206-11. See also Edmund Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 65-90.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 203-5. Additional resource includes Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995).

<sup>22</sup> Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 19-222.

<sup>23</sup> Chappell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 201.

<sup>24</sup> Greidanus, *Preaching Christ in the Old Testament*, 212-19.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 222-23.

Finally, if a saving action or attribute of God is on display in the passage, the path of theme exposes God's greatest act of redemption in the person and promise of Jesus Christ. These paths represent six ways to identify how the main point of an Old Testament passage witnesses to or finds its fulfillment in Jesus. It must be stated that these paths must not be taken as axiomatic. It should be understood that there will likely be regular overlap in the suggested paths to Christ-centered interpretation. This overlap enables the interpreter to understand the selected passage in a Christocentric light while protecting authorial intent.

The third step in biblical interpretation moves the interpreter toward application. A key question must be asked in this final stage of exegesis: is the main point of the passage confirmed, modified, or nullified in light of the person and promise of Jesus? The reader must always be concerned to respond and apply the text in relationship to the kingdom of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. If the fulfillment of the passage in Jesus confirms the Old Testament truth, the New Testament believer can comply in obedience to the truth of the passage without any modification. Examples of this principle include biblical teaching on justification by faith (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:22-25) and sexual ethics (Num 25:1; 1 Cor 10:8).

If the truth of an Old Testament passage is modified by the person and promise of Jesus Christ, then the reader must determine how the Old Testament truth is modified in a Christocentric light. For example, the Old Testament teaches circumcision as the initiatory rite for God's covenant people (Gen 17:10). However, in light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the New Testament identifies baptism as the initiatory new covenant sign for the sons and daughters of God in Jesus Christ (Matt 28:19). The initiatory sign for

identification as God's people has been modified from circumcision to baptism as the new covenant sign.

Finally, if the Old Testament truth has not been confirmed or modified by the person and promise of Jesus Christ revealed in the kingdom of God, the reader must ask if the person and promise of Jesus Christ nullifies the Old Testament truth. For example, what Jesus accomplished in his life, death, burial, and resurrection abolishes Old Testament practices and ceremonies including dietary restrictions (Lev 11:1-2; Mark 7:19), sacrificial offerings (Lev 1-7; Heb 7:27), and observance of special days of worship (Lev 23; Col 2:16).

Occasionally the interpreter will discover that questions related to confirmation, modification, and nullification in Jesus Christ overlap as exegesis moves towards application. The point of the three-step exegetical process is not to place things neatly into well-defined categories. Rather, it is to use the categories to assist in accurately understanding the Old Testament passage in a Christocentric light.

### **Biblical Theology**

The main presupposition of Christian theism is that God reveals truth to his people in such a way that truth can be understood (even if not exhaustively), and that God has spoken through words recorded by divinely inspired men in the sacred text called the Holy Bible. This presupposition undergirds the Christian assertion that Scripture is “the ultimately authoritative communication from God to the world for all time.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Biblical-Theological Foundations and Principles* (Nottingham, England: Apollos, 2006), 67.

Consequently, the concern of faithful biblical interpretation necessitates employing hermeneutic principles that enable the interpreter to extract the Spirit-inspired meaning of the biblical text. A crucial presupposition of this doctoral project is that the Spirit-inspired, God-intended meaning of the Old Testament is in full harmony with the purposes of the Triune God as revealed in the New Testament as they climax in the person and promise of Jesus Christ. By reading and interpreting the Bible with the person and promise of Christ in view rather than reading the Scriptures strictly from a chronological or canonical point of view, the unique emphases and perspectives of the biblical text become clear through progressive revelation.

Additionally, one of the challenges of biblical interpretation is accepting the unity of the Bible as expressed in a diverse collection of different writings. The Bible contains sixty-six books written by forty human authors over the span of approximately 2,000 years. It is composed in two main languages (Hebrew and Greek) and contains a mixture of types of literature (history narrative, poetry, prophecy, apocalyptic, Law, Gospel, and epistles). As the threads of promise and blessing in the Old Testament are woven together, readers are confronted with the reality that the promised blessings always fail to reach their pledged heights. Graeme Goldsworthy explains the key to reconciling how the true blessings of God will be reconciled in Jesus.

The Old Testament, then, can be represented as a manifestation of promise and blessing reaching a high point in David's Jerusalem as the focal point of the land of inheritance, in Solomon as David's heir, and in the temple representing the presence of God to dwell among and bless his people. After Solomon's apostasy it is history primarily as a manifestation of judgment that is overlaid with the prophetic promises that the Day of the Lord will come and bring ultimate blessing and judgment. The story may seem to end in failure, especially as the four hundred years between the Testaments perpetuates the scenario of judgment with Israel's fortunes at a low ebb.

It takes the person of Jesus, his teaching and the proclamation of his apostles to restore hope in the original promise of God.<sup>27</sup>

In the end, all roads in the Bible lead to the kingdom of God as revealed in the person and promise of Jesus Christ. Since the Old Testament finds its full explanation in Jesus Christ, and the New Testament explains or interprets the significance of Christ, biblical theology is uniquely qualified for the task of identifying and communicating the intended meaning of the biblical text within the context of progressive redemptive history.

A Christ-centered vision of the unity of Scripture strengthens biblical theology as it traces the various symbols, themes, and patterns in Scripture and seeks to understand how these symbols, themes, and patterns help complete the puzzle of the big picture of redemptive history.<sup>28</sup> Said another way, Michael Lawrence argues that biblical theology demonstrates “that the Scriptures are not an eclectic, chaotic, and seemingly contradictory collection of religious writings, but rather a single story, a unified narrative that conveys a coherent and consistent message.”<sup>29</sup>

Since the Bible is ultimately one story about God’s one plan of redemption revealed in the person and promise of Jesus Christ, every symbol, theme, and pattern finds its eventual fulfillment in Christ. This fact is why Goldsworthy prefers “a biblical theology investigation of any theme or subject to begin with the gospel (i.e., the person

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<sup>27</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Christ-Centered Biblical Theology: Hermeneutical Foundations and Principles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 51.

<sup>28</sup> James M Hamilton Jr., *What Is Biblical Theology? A Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishers, 2014) provides a concise, easy-to-read summary of the primary symbols, themes, and patterns in the storyline of Scripture.

<sup>29</sup> Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*, 26.

and promise of Jesus Christ), because it is through Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the life, that we are put in touch with truth and ultimate reality.”<sup>30</sup> If truth and ultimate reality are revealed through Jesus Christ, then it stands to reason that interpreting the Old Testament Christocentrically strengthens a biblical theology necessary for canonical unity by assuring theological interpretation based on the whole Bible. In short, biblical theology is Christocentric by nature.

Critically, one must consider whether or not a Christocentric interpretation of the Old Testament compromises the historical-grammatical approach to exegesis. In response to this criticism, it should be noted that practitioners of a biblical-theological interpretation of the Bible do not neglect traditional tools in the process of biblical interpretation. Analysis of the historical-grammatical context, literary genre and original languages, study of culture, and the like must be carefully employed. The use of biblical theology in interpretation does not ignore the historical-grammatical necessities in biblical interpretation, but rather understands them within the broader context of the unity of Scripture. Walter Kaiser highlights this necessity:

The Bible is to be read with an appreciation of its wholeness, its unity, and its concept of a divine plan that is both being enacted in immediate historical fulfillments and in a final, climatic fulfillment in the last days. Modernity has placed far too much weight on the particularity and the details of the text and has devoted hardly any time to the unity of the Bible.<sup>31</sup>

Additionally, an interpreter of a biblical text who demonstrates no regard for how God’s story of redemption is progressively revealed until it culminates in the person

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<sup>30</sup> Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*, 68.

<sup>31</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 26.

and promise of Jesus will undoubtedly find the path to Christ obscured and hidden in Old Testament exegesis. The kingdom of God revealed in Christ may be concealed by the fact that, as historically progressive revelation, not all elements of revelation are completed or even completely understood when a particular text is isolated from the broader contextual horizon of the entire Bible.

Moreover, the interpreter must always remember that God's revelation in his holy Word never loses focus on Jesus. An eye towards Jesus is most certainly what Peter had in mind when he says the revelation given through prophets was by the "Spirit of Christ in them," a word from God not fully understood by those who spoke it (1 Pet 1:10-11). Nevertheless, the prophets understood that greater fulfillment was to come in God's promised Messiah. Though Kaiser denies the exegetical plausibility of *sensus plenior*,<sup>32</sup> he affirms the unity of the Bible when he identifies the "promise-plan" of God announced and anticipated by the prophets:

We conclude, therefore, that the messianic doctrine is located in God's single, unified plan, called in the New Testament his "promise," which is eternal in its fulfillment but climactic in its final accomplishment, while being built up by historical fulfillments that are part and parcel of that single ongoing plan as it moved toward its final plateau.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward An Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1981), 109-10. Additional resource includes Raymond E. Brown, "The *Sensus Plenior* in the Last Ten Years," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25 (1963): 269-71. Brown describes *sensus plenior* as the "fuller sense" of "that meaning of his [author's] text which by the normal rules of exegesis would not have been within his clear awareness or intention but which by other criteria we can determine as having been intended by God." The "other criteria" biblical interpreters should have in mind is the broader contextual horizon of the entire Bible as revealed through biblical theology. The "fuller sense" suggests there may be a divine intention in the text that the original author may not know consciously. The point is that there are things in the Old Testament that lack clarity apart from the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

<sup>33</sup> Kaiser, *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 31.

A potential pitfall to employing biblical theology in Old Testament interpretation is abstracting what Jesus would say about issues or matters that he has not spoken clearly about in the New Testament record of his life and ministry. Such lack of clarity or ambiguity leaves the interpreter vulnerable to error. Jesus spoke directly about many Old Testament practices commanded or informed by the Law including Sabbath, dietary restrictions, marriage, and wealth. Biblical interpreters can draw very clear lines of demarcation for how Jesus confirmed, modified, or nullified Old Testament imperatives on issues he addressed specifically in his ministry. For example, in Numbers 15:32-36, Yahweh commands the stoning of a Sabbath breaker. Jesus modifies this command when he clarifies the will of God the Father with regard to Sabbath by declaring himself as Lord of the Sabbath (Luke 6:1-5).

Today, many liberal theologians, as well as a growing number of mainline and even evangelical scholars and theologians, argue that because Jesus does not directly address homosexuality in his teaching, his silence indicates tacit approval. The fact that Jesus does not directly address same-sex attraction and conscious same-sex coupling leaves many uniformed Bible students left to speculate about Jesus' true convictions about homosexuality. As a result, speculation abounds about how Jesus would respond to same-sex sexual behavior, especially in a committed, monogamous relationship, based on how he responded to similar situations in the Gospels. The danger, of course, is that if one's interpretation of Jesus is flawed, the interpreter will inevitably superimpose this flawed understanding of Christ's teaching on other texts.

How does Christ-centered biblical theology guard against the danger of drawing speculative conclusions about Christ's teachings? Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

serve as a test case on God's view of homosexuality.<sup>34</sup> The main point of these texts is homosexual behavior is a detestable sin deserving of death. These texts reveal man's need for a Savior because the acts described in the text highlight an effect of the Fall: unnatural sexual relations lead to God's judgment of death. In addition, though Jesus does not speak specifically about the sin of homosexuality in the New Testament, he does address all forms of sexual immorality (Matt 15:19; Mark 7:21) as (1) coming from within man's heart; (2) as actions that defile men; and (3) as actions that separate image-bearers from their Creator. Comparing Scripture with Scripture is a sound interpretive practice, and thus it is also relevant that Paul speaks about homosexuality in pejorative terms in 1 Corinthians 6:9,<sup>35</sup> 1 Timothy 1:10,<sup>36</sup> and Romans 1:26.<sup>37</sup> Even though Paul never quotes the Law on this issue, it is clear that the Law has informed his understanding of same-sex behavior as sinful.

Applying a Christocentric biblical theology enables the interpreter to decide how the person and promise of Jesus Christ confirms, modifies, or nullifies the clear

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<sup>34</sup> "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination" (Lev 18:22); "If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them" (Lev 20:13).

<sup>35</sup> "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor 6:9-10).

<sup>36</sup> "Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike fathers and mothers, for murders, the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted" (1 Tim 1:8-11).

<sup>37</sup> "For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error" (Rom 1:26-27).

teaching from Leviticus that homosexual behavior is sinful and deserving of the punishment of death. In light of both Old and New Testament teaching, including Jesus' own teaching on all forms of sexual immorality, a Christ-centered interpretation of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 leads to the following conclusions: (1) Jesus confirms the command of Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 because he suffered the just punishment of all sin in his sacrificial death, including the sin of homosexuality; (2) Jesus modifies the death penalty associated with same-sex sin by paying the penalty on behalf of same-sex offenders. No longer must people who engage in same-sex behavior suffer corporal punishment for their sin, and by seeking refuge in Jesus Christ by faith, they may also escape eternal punishment for their sin; and (3) Since Jesus has inaugurated the kingdom, and "today" is the day of repentance as the good news of the kingdom is proclaimed to all nations, the Church must pursue ways to love, encourage, and support people who both struggle with and embrace same-sex attraction in hopes that they will find freedom in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As the interpreter extracts a portrait of the person and promise of Jesus from all of Scripture, and not just the Gospels, Christ-centered biblical theology enables the interpreter to arrive at exegetically faithful conclusions about Jesus and his teaching, even when Christ has not specifically addressed the immediate contemporary issue of the day. In studying Jesus' life, message, and ministry, the interpreters' understanding of Scripture is informed. At the same time, all of Scripture informs the interpreters' understanding of Christ, and enables the interpreter to draw focused, faithful conclusions about Christ and his teaching from Bible without compromising prejudice and distorted cultural presuppositions.

## **Gospel-Shaped Application**

The idea of law-covenant is pervasive in the Old Testament. The Law of God plays an important role in Yahweh's communion with Israel in Mosaic times. According to Richard Hays, the Law had the "primary responsibility of defining God's elect people, the Jews."<sup>38</sup> The Law of Moses was a temporary administration set up between God and his people to regulate their lives and reveal their sin until the promise of the Law was fulfilled in the Messiah. Additionally, the Law (i.e., Mosaic Law, Sinai Covenant, Mosaic Covenant) is the ratification and filling out of what God promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 as a people, a land, and a conduit of blessing to all nations.

In response to God's promise, he stipulates total and exclusive fidelity by his covenant people. The way God's people could demonstrate loyalty was by adherence to his commandments, statutes, precepts, and laws. In other words, the path to life was secured by total obedience to the Law. According to Leviticus 18:5, the promise of life was offered through law-keeping.<sup>39</sup> In other words, the idea of law-covenant demands that people do something to find life, that a condition, namely obedience to the Law, must be met in order to experience spiritual life.

The problem with law-covenant is that Israel's history reveals the Law to be a dead-end rather than a way to life (Rom 3:20; 4:15; Gal 3:10). The promise of the Law fails to deliver. This failure presents a conundrum in biblical interpretation and

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<sup>38</sup> Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013), 45.

<sup>39</sup> "So you shall keep my statutes and my judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD" (Lev 18:5, NASV).

application. What is the real intent or purpose of the Law? Is it intended to lead to righteousness, such as it appears to promise in Leviticus 18:5?

The New Testament reveals that the Law is never intended to lead to righteousness. It only reveals righteousness as grounded in the character of God. Righteous saints live and are justified by faith (Gen 15:6; Hab 2:4) through grace alone. Salvation has always been by faith, not works.

The relevance of salvation by faith rather than works is exceedingly significant for the way the Scriptures are both interpreted and applied to life. Much of the Old Testament is written in the shadow of the Mosaic Law. For many people who read the Law and the Prophets under this shadow, the response to the Law is one of rules to obey. But the imperatives revealed by the Law must be interpreted in light of the intent of “the Law of Moses and the Prophets.”<sup>40</sup> All of Scripture points to Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of Scripture. In other words, in light of the person and promise of Jesus, the Law does not contain rules to obey, but rather something to fulfill.<sup>41</sup> Brian Rosner says virtually the same thing in a different way: “There is a sense in which the Law as Mosaic covenant is abolished, but the Law as Scripture has ongoing value for Christians.”<sup>42</sup>

Therefore, all of Scripture, including every imperative, must be interpreted in a Christocentric light through Jesus as the One who has abolished the Law as Law-

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<sup>40</sup> In Matt 5:17-20 Jesus states that he came not to “abolish the Law or the Prophets,” but rather to “fulfill them.” Here “the Law and the Prophets” means the entirety of Scripture, not the Law as law-covenant. In other words, Jesus has come to fulfill Scripture, and Jesus’ point is that the Old Testament is still relevant to all believers in Christ as Scripture, not as law-covenant.

<sup>41</sup> Edmund P. Clowney, *How Jesus Transforms the Ten Commandments* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2007), 7.

<sup>42</sup> Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 30.

covenant (Eph 2:15). Jesus fulfilled the Law, therefore negating the Law as a condition to be met to inherit life. The obligation to obey the Law has been brought to completion. Jesus as the fulfillment of the promise of the Law, is the obedient Son none of the sons of Adam can be. He brings the just demand of the Law to completion in us (rather than by us) through faith in Christ (Rom 8:3-4). The fulfillment and transformation of the Law does not abdicate the responsibility Christ-followers have to pursue the righteousness revealed by the Law. The Law as Scripture is still relevant for the New Testament Christian. The disciple's justified status as a child of God leads to a new way of living, in love as the fulfillment of the Law.<sup>43</sup>

Understanding how Jesus transforms the Law is critical for gospel-centered application. Understanding the Law as imperatives to obey rather righteousness to fulfill causes Old Testament application to drift towards legalism and moralism. As a result of misunderstanding the purpose of the Law, as God's old covenant people narrate God's story of redemption in the shadow of the Law, it may become difficult for the reader to discern anything more than an effort-driven, moralistic, duty-bound example to follow. Edmond Clowney speaks to the importance of grounding the moral imperatives of the Old Testament in the person and promise of Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures are full of moral instruction and ethical exhortation, but the ground and motivation of it all is found in the mercy of Jesus Christ. We are to preach the riches of Scripture, but unless the center holds, all the bits and pieces of our pulpit counseling, of our thundering at social sin, of our positive or negative thinking – all fly off into the Sunday morning air. . . . Let others develop the pulpit fads of the passing seasons. Specialize in preaching Jesus.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 121-23.

<sup>44</sup> Edmond P. Clowney, "Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures," in *The Preacher and Preaching*, ed. Samuel T. Logan, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986), 191.

There is no doubt that the Bible sets apart biblical characters as examples to follow, learn from, or reject (1 Cor 11:1; Jas 5:10-11, 17).<sup>45</sup> When Paul says, “Now these things [Israel’s history] happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come” (1 Cor 10:11), it is clear he sees the entire Old Testament as exemplary, with particular emphasis on Israel especially. But whatever examples followers of Jesus are instructed to emulate must be done in light of the redeeming, justifying, and sanctifying work of Jesus Christ as the representative head of all redeemed sinners.

How does a Christ-centered hermeneutic inspire gospel-centered application? It begins by recognizing there is a way of dwelling on obedience to the Law of God that causes other important ideas about the Christ-follower’s relationship to God to evaporate.<sup>46</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy argues that ethical exhortations without the gospel are legalistic. Preaching encourages this legalistic tendency when obedience to God is emphasized in a way that suggests obedience and love for God can be achieved by the human will alone. Goldsworthy laments,

If we ever give the impression that it is possible to do this [love and obey God] on our own, not only do we make the gospel irrelevant, but we suggest that the Law is in fact a lot weaker in its demands than it really is. Legalism demeans the Law by reducing it to the level of our competence. There is a hopelessly misleading adage that one hears from time to time, and from people who ought to know better, that

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<sup>45</sup> “Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ” (1 Cor 11:1); “As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful. . . . Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth” (Jas 5:10-11, 17).

<sup>46</sup> Daniel M. Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001), 279.

God does not require of us anything that we cannot give. This implies that either that either God requires less than perfection, or that perfection is less than perfect because we can achieve it.”<sup>47</sup>

Bryan Chappell also warns about the dangers of imperative-driven application that is not sufficiently anchored to the indicative of Jesus’ work in the gospel.

We must also be careful not to fall inadvertently into a self-help gospel in regard to application. When preachers tell their congregants to love their neighbors as themselves, but do not point to the spirit who alone makes that this [sic] love possible, then people may assume that this love is something they can stimulate in themselves. Too many applications are simply human-centered exhortations to do better in the power of the flesh...if preachers can neglect to mention divine dependence, why should they be surprised that the people forget to seek divine enablement?”<sup>48</sup>

Goldsworthy sharply concludes his argument without mincing words about the dangers of failing to appropriately account for the enabling power of Jesus Christ’s work in the gospel which empowers the believer’s obedience to divine imperatives in sermon application.

Any sermon, then, that aims to apply the biblical text to the congregation and does so without making it crystal clear that it is in Christ alone and through Christ alone that the application is realized, is not a Christian sermon. It is at best an exercise in wishful and pietistic thinking. It is at worst demonic in its Christ-denying legalism.<sup>49</sup>

When a sermon exhorts adherence to the Law in a way that misappropriates the believer’s relationship to God in the gospel, the sermon nullifies the importance of the mediating

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<sup>47</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 118-19.

<sup>48</sup> Bryan Chappell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 210

<sup>49</sup> Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture*, 124.

work of Jesus Christ in obedience to God. Every aspect of sermon application must point to this gospel reality: the power to do what God requires resides in God.<sup>50</sup>

Another risk to the Christ-follower's understanding of his relationship with God occurs when moral imperatives are divorced from gospel indicatives: a loss of consciousness of one's actual need for a Savior. If the proclaimed Word of God leaves the hearer with the impression that behavior modification is possible without Jesus Christ, the gospel has been compromised. Michael Fabarez addresses the importance of keeping the person and promise of Jesus Christ as the focal point of preaching, but especially in application.

Behavioral reform has a place in the biblical equation, but God's objectives for men and women are much broader and more profound than simply exchanging sinful activities for righteous ones. God's transforming and sanctifying works are predicated upon the helplessness of our sinful state and our reconciliation to our holy Creator. . . .Therefore, Christ is the focal point of all Christian preaching. God is the Source, Reason, and Enabler for all that is prescribed."<sup>51</sup>

Gospel-centered application is grounded in the understanding that God has redeemed us and given us His Spirit and a new nature to obey His will through faith in the person and promise of Jesus Christ. As such, the task of biblical interpretation is not only to extract the authorial intent of the text, but also to connect the application of the text to the enabling power of the Savior promised in the text. Bryan Chappell explains, "Exegete the Scripture with an eye not only for what acts of devotion and avenues of

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<sup>50</sup> Chappell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 210.

<sup>51</sup> Michael Fabarez, *Preaching that Changes Lives* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005), 111-12.

discipline it advocates, but also for what means of dependence it suggests or supports that enable the application.”<sup>52</sup>

Gospel-centered application is also compromised when the motivation given for gospel obedience is gratitude. It must not be inferred that gratitude to God is inherently wrong. Gratitude is one of the Christian’s highest duties; gratitude is commanded by God.<sup>53</sup> Piper explains,

Gratitude is a beautiful thing. There is no Christianity without it. It is at the heart of worship. It should fill the heart of every believer. But when it comes to spelling out the spiritual dynamics of how practical Christian obedience happens, the Bible does not say that it comes from the backward gaze of gratitude, but that it comes from the forward gaze of faith.<sup>54</sup>

Daniel Doriani suggests gratitude can inadvertently create an atmosphere of indebtedness. He explains, “It is oppressive to proclaim Christ as the Lawgiver to whom we owe a vast debt, as if we must somehow repay him – repay God! – for his gifts to us.”<sup>55</sup>

It is quite common for Christians to be told that because Jesus has done so much for them, they should devote their lives to paying God back for his gift of salvation, even though the debt is impossible to repay. But talking about obedience this way suggests the free gift of salvation is like a loan to be repaid or advance wages to be

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<sup>52</sup> Chappell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 210.

<sup>53</sup> “Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!” (Ps 100:4); “The one who offers thanksgiving as his sacrifice glorifies me; to the one who orders his way rightly I will show the salvation of God!” (Ps 50:23). It is clear that gratitude is the biblical response of the heart to the grace of God.

<sup>54</sup> John Piper, *Future Grace: The Purifying Power of the Promises of God* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2001), 42. Piper presents a full treatment of the dangers of the debtor’s ethic motivated by gratitude for gospel obedience in chap. 2, “When Gratitude Malfunctions”.

<sup>55</sup> Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 280.

earned. John Piper warns about the danger of this mentality: “The gratitude ethic puts you in the position of a debtor instead of a son. And that is slavery. . . . Christ does not want you to relate to him as a debtor who uses the Law to make installment payments on an unending loan.”<sup>56</sup>

The Bible “rarely, if ever, explicitly makes gratitude the impulse of moral behavior, or ingratitude the explanation of immorality,”<sup>57</sup> argues Piper. The motivation most commonly given for obedience to God’s commands in the gospel is the promise of reward – the reward of God himself expressed in faith. Christian obedience is called “the work of faith” (1 Thess 1:3; 2 Thess 1:11) and Christians are commanded to “walk” or “live” by faith (2 Cor 5:7; Gal 2:20). Additionally, Jesus teaches his disciples that obedience to God is also motivated by love.<sup>58</sup> But as has been stated, gratitude is not commended in Scripture as an unambiguous reason for gospel obedience.

Gratitude serves to remind the Christian disciple of God’s faithfulness. This reminder serves to bolster confidence that God will faithfully grant the promise of reward. Consider the following promises: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt 5:8); “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:23); “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces character, and

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<sup>56</sup> John Piper, “For Freedom Christ Has Set You Free,” Desiring God Ministries, accessed October 15, 2014, <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/for-freedom-christ-has-set-us-free>.

<sup>57</sup> John Piper, *Future Grace: The Purifying Power of the Promises of God* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2001), 30

<sup>58</sup> “Jesus answered him, ‘If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear it not mine but the Father’s who sent me’ (John 14:23-24).

character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 5:3-4). In each example, the promised reward is some aspect of God Himself as manifested through His presence or His love.

A Christ-centered hermeneutic also brings the human condition into focus through gospel-centered application. The presence of the Law in Scripture makes plain man's need for moral guidance.<sup>59</sup> As has been stated, the Law as law-covenant has been abolished, but the Law remains as Scripture. According to Doriani, every command in Scripture in some way reflects the Father's character, the Son's work, or the Spirit's ministry.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, every Scripture exposes the helplessness of the human condition to reflect the Father's character, the neediness of all people for the mediating work of Jesus Christ for reconciliation to the Father, or the necessity of the enabling power of the Spirit to walk in obedience to divine imperatives.

Chappell calls interpretive attention to the human condition the *Fallen Condition Focus*.<sup>61</sup> He argues that focusing on the human condition in application enables the interpreter to understand the meaning of the text in its historical-grammatical context, while at the same time illuminating its meaning for the modern hearer.<sup>62</sup> Gospel-centered application derived from a Christocentric interpretative lens forces the preacher to deal faithfully with the text and the hearer. It obligates the interpreter to guide the

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<sup>59</sup> Doriani, *Putting the Truth to Work*, 262.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>61</sup> Chappell, *Christ-Centered Exposition*, 201.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

hearer's response to the text in light of the hearer's need for the gospel. It requires both the preacher and the hearer to wrestle with "what you must do about the problem, need, or fault on the basis of what the passage means."<sup>63</sup> In other words, it centers application on the priorities of the text.

Finally, gospel-centered application emphasizes the work of the Spirit in preaching as necessary for initiating life transformation in the lives of the hearers of God's Word. The Word and the Spirit form the dual catalysts serving as the theological foundation for gospel-centered application. Fundamentally, the Bible is "not primarily a God-breathed manual for piloting our way through life successfully . . . [but] is a book that is concerned to make known the plight of humanity and the purpose of God to save humanity through His Son."<sup>64</sup> The Bible tells God's story of redemption as Christ is proclaimed. But the Bible alone cannot effect life change. The preached Word needs the accompanying work of the Holy Spirit to change lives.

The Bible and the Spirit share the objective of magnifying the person and promise of Christ, which then amplifies man's need for a Savior. In addition, the Spirit magnifies Christ by pointing to Jesus' redeeming work as sufficient for man's need.<sup>65</sup> Greg Heisler describes how the Word and Spirit work together: "The Word of God and

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<sup>63</sup> Chappell, *Christ-Centered Exposition*, 202.

<sup>64</sup> Arturo G. Azurdia III, *Spirit Empowered Preaching* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1998), 51.

<sup>65</sup> Azurdia, *Spirit Empowered Preaching*, 51. Azurdia identifies three specific ways the Holy Spirit reveals and glorifies Jesus Christ. The Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ by making people aware of their need for a Savior. The Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ by pointing to the sufficiency of Christ's work on the cross to redeem and save people from their sin. The Spirit glorifies Jesus Christ by progressively showing Christ-followers the splendor and satisfaction of the person and promise of Jesus Christ.

the Spirit of God . . . share the same goal – the Christological witness to Jesus Christ.”<sup>66</sup>

As the Word is preached, the Spirit authenticates the Word as He points to Jesus Christ. Because the Scriptures are Christ-centered (John 5:39; 20:30-31; Luke 24:77) and the Spirit is Christ-centered (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13-14), the Word and Spirit work together to magnify Jesus Christ as the sufficient redeemer for sinners.

The witness of the Spirit to Jesus is absolutely essential in facilitating life transformation as the Word of God is applied to the life of the hearer. The Spirit delights to place all focus and attention on Jesus Christ as Lord. The Spirit shows the hearer Christ and confronts all who hear God’s Word with the power of the gospel while exposing man’s need for the gospel. Heisler explains, “The Spirit hears and applies to us Jesus. The Spirit reveals and glorifies Christ by magnifying Jesus’ teaching, Jesus’ gospel, and Jesus’ work as the grand fulfillment of God’s redemptive plan.”<sup>67</sup>

In other words, the Spirit is constantly doing two things: reminding the hearer of God’s Word, and then pressing the truth of God’s Word to the heart of the hearer. Both of these acts are necessary for spiritual transformation to take place.<sup>68</sup> Without the cooperative work of the Word and the Spirit, faith remains an abstract ideal.

### **Conclusion**

The goal of teaching the Bible is not merely a transaction of knowledge. Biblical faith is about more than understanding biblical facts. God’s Word lacks

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<sup>66</sup> Greg Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit’s Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2007), 54.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>68</sup> Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 122.

relevance for the hearer when Bible teachers fail to confront hearers with how one must respond to what has been taught. Bryan Chappell argues, “If we do not place the proclamation of gospel truth in a present world it will have no continuing meaning.”<sup>69</sup>

In this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate a general methodology for teaching and applying the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. In addition, I have endeavored to show how a Christ-centered hermeneutic bolsters biblical theology and encourages gospel-centered application. Chapter 4 explains the process by which lay Bible teachers have been equipped to interpret the Old Testament in a Christocentric light.

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<sup>69</sup> Chappell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 204.

## CHAPTER 4

### ELEMENTS OF THE MINISTRY RESEARCH PROJECT

The ministry research project was a ten-week seminar designed to equip lay Bible teachers to interpret the Old Testament from a Christocentric perspective. The seminar was titled “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament.” The elements of the project consisted of a pre-course and post-course questionnaire, an expert research panel, and a ten-week seminar on Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament.

The seminar aimed to accomplish four goals: (1) Identify what current and prospective lay Bible teachers believed about the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament; (2) recruit at least 15 lay Bible teachers to participate in the ten-week seminar titled “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament”; (3) create and develop curriculum demonstrating Jesus Christ as the primary focus of the Old Testament; and (4) teach principles enabling lay Bible teachers to interpret the Old Testament Scripture in view of the person and promise of Jesus Christ as the central focus of the Old Testament.

#### **Project Schedule**

The ministry research project began on April 1, 2014, and was completed on August 3, 2014. A timeline for the elements of the research project consisted of the following:

1. April 1 – Began recruiting focus group

2. April 1 – Expert panel reviewed and evaluated seminar curriculum, recommending appropriate revisions
3. April 15 – Secured commitments from prospective seminar participants
4. May 4 – Administered pre-test questionnaire
5. May 18 – Led lay Bible teachers in seminar on interpreting Jesus in the Old Testament
6. July 27 – Ended seminar
7. August 3 – Administered post-test questionnaire
8. August 3 – Administered post-seminar written interview

The total duration of the research project was 18 weeks.

### **The Focus Group**

The focus group consisted of current and prospective lay Bible teachers from various age groups, life stages, and teaching experiences at Concord Baptist Church. Additionally, lay Bible teachers who teach various age groups, including children and youth, were targeted. Forty-three current and known prospective Bible teachers were personally invited to participate in the “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament” seminar.

Focus group participants expressed a desire to improve their ability to interpret Jesus Christ from the Old Testament. A desired enrollment measurement for the seminar was at least 15 lay Bible teachers as a minimum requirement for the seminar. The age demographic of the project participants included (1) 9 participants ages 20-30; (2) 10 participants ages 31-40; (3) 2 participants ages 41-50; (4) 9 participants ages 51-60; (5) 8 participants ages 61-70; and (6) 5 participants ages 75 years old or older. In addition, regular attendees and church members at Concord Baptist Church interested in learning

how to better interpret the Old Testament in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ were invited and encouraged to attend the Sunday evening seminar.

Each of the identified lay Bible teachers was emailed an invitation detailing the requirements for the seminar: participation in a pre- and post-seminar questionnaire and commitment to attend every seminar or, in the event of an absence, listen to the audio recording of sessions missed, which were posted online within twenty-four hours of the completion of the seminar. In addition, participants were given the option to provide written feedback through a post-seminar exit interview indicating whether or not the seminar strengthened their ability to interpret the Old Testament in Christocentric light.

By April 15, 44 lay Bible teachers and church members had committed to participate in the ten-week seminar. I discovered that all of the participating church members had at least minimal experience teaching the Bible in classroom settings. Seminar participants answered the pre-seminar questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gauge a general understanding of the fundamental issues and attitudes associated with interpreting Christ from the Old Testament. I administered the same questionnaire upon completion of the seminar to measure if any quantifiable change had occurred in the seminar participants understanding of the fundamental issues related to preaching and teaching Jesus Christ from the Old Testament.

### **Expert Panel Review**

The expert panel consisted of 3 local pastors who regularly preach and teach the Old Testament in a Christocentric light. The primary task of the expert panel was to evaluate the effectiveness and clarity of the seminar curriculum in presenting Christ-centered hermeneutic principles, biblical faithfulness, and a contextually appropriate

exegesis process suitable for lay Bible teachers. Since one of the primary aims of the seminar was to equip lay Bible teachers with appropriate exegetical tools for reading and interpreting the Old Testament in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ, it was critical for the curriculum to present a reproducible process for biblical interpretation accessible to non-seminary trained Bible teachers. The expert panel reviewed the curriculum using an evaluation rubric (see appendix 2) and made recommended changes prior to the recruitment of the focus group and the presentation of the seminar. The input of the expert panel helped focus the content of the seminar and strengthened the overall presentation to the seminar participants.

### **The Pre-Seminar Questionnaire Administered**

The pre-seminar questionnaire was composed of 47 questions with the answers measured by a 6-point Likert scale. (A copy of the questionnaire is included in appendix 1). The questionnaire was designed to measure the basic presuppositions and perceptions of lay Bible teachers with regard to interpreting the Old Testament in relationship to the person and promise of Jesus Christ.

Part 1 of the questionnaire asked several basic questions of the class participants assessing the following criteria: (1) age; (2) years lived as a follower of Jesus; (3) how long the lay Bible teacher has taught God's Word in corporate and classroom settings; (4) how regularly they teach from the Old Testament; (5) whether they look forward to teaching the Old Testament; (6) whether they struggle to find contemporary relevance in the Old Testament; and (7) whether they struggle to understand how Jesus relates to the Old Testament.

Part 2 of the questionnaire focused more specifically on the presuppositions and perceptions each lay Bible teacher imports into the interpretation of the Old Testament in light of Jesus Christ. For example, statement 10, “The Old Testament does not have value to the new covenant believer in Jesus Christ for Christian living,” was designed to measure the participants understanding of the relevance and importance of the Old Testament to the contemporary Christian. Statements 12 through 17 were intended to measure how highly the participant viewed the profitability, inspiration, authority, infallibility, sufficiency, and effectiveness of Scripture. These statements were intended to measure whether the individual viewed the Old Testament (and the entire Bible) as authoritative as the Word of God. The remaining statements pertained to various genres of Scripture, including poetry, wisdom, prophecy, historical narrative, apocalyptic, Law, epistle, and gospel, and how the participant interprets and teaches these various genres in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ.

The pre-seminar questionnaire was administered two weeks prior to the first seminar on May 4. Every lay Bible teacher received the questionnaire through email. The questionnaires were completed and submitted on the first day of the seminar.

### **Synopsis of Seminar**

The seminar was titled “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament,” and conducted on Sunday evenings from May 18 through July 27 at five o’clock in the evening. Each seminar lasted two hours, with the teaching times divided into thirty to forty-five minute segments with regular breaks in order to serve those with diminished attention spans.

In Paul’s letter to Timothy, Paul wrote, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that

the man of God may be equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). When the Apostle Paul penned these words to Timothy, he had in mind the “sacred writings,” what Christians now call the Old Testament (2 Tim 3:15). In order for Scripture to be “profitable” and accomplish the purpose of equipping disciples of Jesus for every good work, the interpreter of Scripture must begin with the right approach to understanding the Bible. Timothy’s dedication and devotion to the “sacred writings” would have yielded very little return without properly reading, understanding, and applying the entire Bible in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ.

### **Seminar 1**

The first seminar introduced the necessity of interpreting the Old Testament in a Christocentric light. The subject matter addressed reasons why many Christians neglect or misunderstand the Old Testament, including laziness, ignorance, moralism, ethical dilemmas, irrelevance, liberalism, and bad examples of Old Testament preaching and teaching.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the character of the Bible as progressive revelation reveals the unique historical nature of God’s redemptive plan, demonstrating important clues about the relationship between the person and promise of Jesus Christ and the Old Testament.

With respect to the nature of divine revelation progressively revealed throughout redemptive history, one sees how Jesus completes the Old Testament story. Matthew’s Gospel opens with these words: “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” (Matt 1:1). By drawing clear lines connecting Jesus’ genealogy to Abraham’s, Matthew demonstrates Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ

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<sup>1</sup> David Murray, *Jesus on Every Page* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 6-7.

promised in the Old Testament (Matt 1:16). In other words, Matthew wants the reader to understand the impossibility of understanding Jesus' story without first understanding the much larger story going back for many centuries and leading up to Jesus. Conversely, Matthew's use of Jesus' genealogy reveals how the old, old story of the Hebrew Bible cannot be properly understood except in relationship to Jesus Christ. In short, the Old Testament tells the story which Jesus completes.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, Jesus Christ fulfills the Old Testament promises. The Gospel of Matthew goes to great lengths to make sure the reader is able to identify Jesus as the Christ of Old Testament Scripture. Matthew clearly links Jesus to the fulfillment of Old Testament promises by regularly using Old Testament quotations that are not obvious predictions of the events recorded in light of Jesus. For example, in Matthew 2:13-15, Matthew quotes Hosea 11:1, which was a reference to God having brought Israel, his son, out of Egypt in the Exodus. Matthew references a past event, yet his use of this quotation suggests he understands the past event as ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. Matthew seems to be suggesting something more than just that predictions had come true. He understands Hosea 11:1 in relationship to Jesus as a promise being fulfilled. Matthew is disclosing how Jesus relates to the Old Testament as the promised Messiah. So, in a deeper sense, Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament promises.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, it is critical that Bible teachers read and teach Jesus in the Old Testament because the Old Testament is ultimately about Jesus.

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<sup>2</sup> Christopher J. H. Wright, *Knowing Jesus through the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: IVP, 1995), 28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

## **Seminar 2**

The second seminar focused on a biblical-theological justification for Christ-centered interpretation. The argument for a Christocentric perspective of the Old Testament is revealed as the New Testament presents the birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of God's covenant promises, resulting in both Jesus and the Apostles teaching and preaching the Old Testament as Christian Scripture. Key texts used as the basis for this thesis included: Luke 24:25-27; John 5:39, 46; Matthew 5:17-20; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Corinthians 3:12-16; and 1 Timothy 2:5.

## **Seminars 3 and 4**

The third and fourth seminars equipped lay Bible teachers with basic tools for interpreting the Old Testament in a Christocentric light. The exegetical process for a Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament consisted of a three-step method. In step one the interpreter should ask the question, "What is the main point of the passage?" Determining the main point of the passage involves exegeting the text in light of the author's original intent by examining and accounting for the literary, historical, and biblical context.

Once the main point of the selected text is identified, the next step is to ask, "How does the main point of the passage witness to or find its fulfillment in Jesus Christ?" In order to answer this question, it is imperative for the interpreter to identify a viable path to discovering how the person and promise of Jesus Christ relate to the text. The paths to discerning whether a passage witnesses to or finds fulfillment in Jesus include the paths of (1) Promise (does the passage make a promise of prediction of salvation?); (2)

Progression (how is the passage important in the flow of salvation history leading to Jesus?); (3) Instruction (does the passage instruct through law, command, or wisdom, all of which Jesus followed?); (4) Need (does the passage demonstrate our need for a Savior by highlighting an effect of the fall such as sin, suffering, failure, or death?); (5) Type (does the passage present a theological shadow that finds its substance in Jesus?); and (6) Theme (does the passage highlight an act or attribute of God, all of which Jesus would later reveal in the flesh?).

The third and final step in the exegetical process asks, “Is the main point of the passage confirmed, modified, or nullified in light of Jesus?” Determining whether the fulfillment of the passage in Jesus confirms the Old Testament truth means if the interpreter can apply the truth of the passage to his or her life as a New Covenant believer without any modification, then the truth is confirmed and should be obeyed as is. Examples of the person and promise of Jesus Christ confirming Old Testament truth would include sexual ethics, rejection of idolatry, and caring for orphans and widows.

If the truth of the passage is not confirmed in light of Jesus Christ, the interpreter must then determine if the good news of Jesus Christ has modified the truth in some way. Examples of how the person and promise of Jesus Christ have modified some Old Testament truths include the transition of worship in a sacred place (Exod 25-30) to worship in a sacred way (John 4:21-24), participating in the Passover as a covenant meal (Exod 12), a meal now repurposed in light of the New Covenant (Luke 22:14-20), and baptism as the replacement of circumcision as the initiatory rite for God’s covenant people (Gen 17:10; Matt 28:19).

Finally, if the Old Testament truth has not been confirmed or modified, the interpreter must ask if the fulfillment of the passage has been nullified in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ. Examples of how Jesus Christ has nullified Old Testament commands include the abolishment of dietary restrictions for God's covenant people (Lev 11; Mark 7:19), the end of the Old Testament sacrificial system in light of the once and for all sacrifice of Christ (Lev 1-7; Heb 7:27), and the observance of special days for worship (Lev 23; Col 2:16). Asking these questions will help bring the application of the passage into focus in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ.

### **Seminar 5**

The six remaining seminars focused on practical demonstrations for how lay Bible teachers could implement the six paths to finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. These paths were explored through various key themes and genres of literature in the Bible.

Seminar 5 examined typology as a legitimate path for interpreting the Old Testament in a Christocentric light. Typology presents difficulties for at least two reasons. First, the abuse of typology, and its confusion with allegory, has discouraged many interpreters from utilizing typology as a viable tool for biblical interpretation. But it must be noted that typology and allegory are not the same thing. Allegory typically moves beyond the literal, historical meaning of the text in an effort to find the supposed deeper, spiritual sense. But typology seeks to maintain the integrity of the literal, historical meaning of the biblical text while identifying the pattern of God's working in history, thus seeking the fulfillment of the pattern in the anti-type. Sidney Greidanus suggests an important axiom of typology: "God as the Lord of history works out his

redemptive plan in history.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, as we read the Bible, we see authors rehearsing God’s redemptive patterns revealed in the use of language.

In order to prepare seminar participants to effectively use typology for Christ-centered Old Testament interpretation, I suggested David Murray’s five-step process for identifying types in the Old Testament:<sup>5</sup>

1. Picture – Is there a person, place, object, or event that pictures (typifies) God’s activity to redeem people?
2. Principles – What are the essential theological truths (principles) contained in the type?
3. Practice – What role or place did the Old Testament type have in the lives of Old Testament believers?
4. Progress – How does the progressive revelation of the Bible help the reader understand the fulfillment of the type?
5. Perfection – Do the type and anti-type reveal a meaningful connection with God’s acts in redemptive history?

The five-step process for identifying types in the Old Testament was put into practice during the seminar by studying various Old Testament texts as a class. One of the primary texts for consideration and study was Exodus 15:22-27.

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<sup>4</sup> Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1999), 213.

<sup>5</sup> David Murray, *Jesus on Every Page* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 138.

## **Seminar 6**

Seminar 6 explored how to understand Old Testament characters in light of Jesus Christ. Since a significant portion of the Old Testament is biographical narrative providing windows into the struggles and triumphs of God's people, it is important to learn how to discover glimpses of Jesus' story in the spiritual biographies of Joseph, David, Ruth, and others in a Christ-centered way. If one fails to read the biographies of Old Testament characters in light of the larger redemptive story revealed in Jesus, Old Testament teaching will commonly be reduced to moralistic stories to follow, learn from, or reject.

This warning against considering Old Testament characters primarily as examples to follow, learn from, or reject is not intended to suggest that the Bible criticizes learning from or rejecting the biographical examples seen in Scripture. Indeed, in 1 Corinthians 10:1-11, Paul points to Israel as an example of what not to do. But the interpreter must remember the goal in examining Old Testament characters is to keep God rather than man in the foreground. Whatever it is that we might learn from Old Testament characters, we learn from them realizing that Jesus' grace is needed to obey any moral requirements Old Testament characters commend, and forgiveness should be pursued when we fail.

## **Seminar 7**

Seminar 7 concentrated on reading and interpreting the Old Testament prophets in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ. Apart from some well-known Old Testament verses that clearly predict Jesus, the Prophets remain largely uncharted territory for Christ-centered biblical interpretation. At least two reasons pose challenges

to reading the Prophets in a Christocentric light. First, culture and chronology present huge gaps in understanding the Prophets. In addition, it is often difficult to discern what in the Prophets was fulfilled and applied in its immediate historical context, and what may still remain unfulfilled. To say it another way, it is not always clear how the promise-fulfillment doctrine applies to Old Testament prophets.

Keeping the unity of the Bible in focus is critical to unlocking the Old Testament prophets. The language of promise is the key to understanding the nature and character of God in relationship to man. The thread of promise begins in Genesis 3:15 with the *protoevangelium*, a promise woven throughout every page of Scripture. All of the promises of God are interrelated, and though we see many promises in Scripture, the promise of redemption is tied to them all. In a very real sense, God's promise is singular. God gives his promise at one stage of redemptive history and brings it to fulfillment in subsequent stages.<sup>6</sup> Even fulfilled promises, such as the obvious immediate fulfillment of God delivering his people from captivity in Egypt in Hosea 11:1, can still point to the future. The Old Testament acquaints the reader with the concept of multiple fulfillments or progressive fulfillment, that is, the initial fulfillment may hold the promise of further fulfillment, what is otherwise called promise-fulfillment.<sup>7</sup>

Promise-fulfillment was one of the major themes of Jesus' ministry, and we should read the Prophets in light of that theme. In the Prophets, and especially Moses, it becomes clear that the office of the Old Testament prophet was designed, instituted, and developed by God to prepare his people for Jesus Christ, the ultimate and final prophet

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<sup>6</sup> Greidanus, *Preaching Christ in the Old Testament*, 206.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

(Deut 18:15-19; Acts 3:22). Therefore, when reading Old Testament prophets, the reader should look for aspects and features of the prophetic office or ministry that predict the person and promise of Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup>

Seminar 7 examined how to identify the aspects and features of the prophetic office leading to the ultimate prophet, Jesus Christ.<sup>9</sup> For example, the prophets were sent to God's people because of their need.<sup>10</sup> They stood between God and sinners to speak God's Word in God's place. Prior to Jesus' entrance onto center stage in redemptive history, Moses was considered the greatest prophet, but even Moses knew his work pointed forward to a greater prophet to come as revealed by his words in Deuteronomy 18:15, "The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers – it is to him you shall listen."

Some Old Testament scholars argue that Deuteronomy 18:15 is a reference to Samuel. Yet none of the prophets whom God raised up after Moses would measure up to what Moses promised, not even Samuel. Later in the book of Acts, both Peter and Stephen point out that the prophet greater than Moses is Jesus (Acts 3:22; 7:37). Jesus' ministry proved so unique and authoritative it compelled people to ask if he was the promised Prophet of God (John 6:14; 7:40). The inherent deficiencies of every prophet raised up after Moses until the time of Christ suggests that in some way, every Old

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<sup>8</sup> Murray, *Jesus on Every Page*, 116-19. Murray suggests seven aspects and features which, when understood properly, present a legitimate path to reading the Old Testament prophets in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ. These aspects and features include (1) human need; (2) divine calling; (3) varied descriptions; (4) divine revelations; (5) covenantal roles; (6) rejection; and (7) the perfect prophet.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Testament prophet reminds us of our need for a prophetic mediator and anticipates the provision of God's ultimate prophet, Jesus Christ.

## **Seminar 8**

Seminar 8 focused on deciphering how the Old Testament covenants direct our attention to Jesus Christ in light of the kingdom of God. The idea of God's kingdom is all over the Bible. Tom Schreiner helpfully summarizes the thematic prominence of the kingdom of God in Scripture by emphasizing its three-fold dimension: (1) God as King; (2) Human beings are the subject of the King; and (3) The universe as the place where His kingship is worked out.<sup>11</sup> Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum show support for Schreiner's affinity for identifying the kingdom of God as the unifying theme of Scripture when they wrote, "The idea of the rule of God over creation, over all creatures, over the kingdoms of the world, and in a unique and special way, over his chosen and redeemed people, is at the very heart of the message of the Hebrew scriptures."<sup>12</sup>

From beginning to end the Bible speaks about the kingdom of God, but the kingdom can only be fully understood in light of Jesus.<sup>13</sup> Jesus is the lens that brings everything into focus in the Bible, helping the reader unlock the meaning of the Bible in

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing Groups, 2013), xv. Various Scriptures support the idea that the theme of the kingdom of God dominates the Bible. God as King is supported by Israel's rejection of him as King (1 Sam 8:8), Ps 10:16 proclaims, "The LORD is king forever and ever," and Ps 24:8 extols, "Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!" Ps 22:28 weds the idea of God's kingship and human servitude to his rule and reign, and the stage for God's rule: "For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations."

<sup>12</sup> Peter J. Gentry and Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishers, 2012), 592.

<sup>13</sup> "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ and he shall reign forever and ever" (Rev 11:15).

light of the person and promise of Christ. George Ladd identifies the Christological nature of the kingdom of God when he writes,

The kingdom of God is at the same time the kingdom of Christ (Eph. 5:5); for the kingdom of God, the redemptive reign of God, is manifested among men through the person of Christ, and it is Christ who must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet (1 Cor. 15:25).<sup>14</sup>

The concept of the kingdom of God as revealed in the person and promise of Christ is identical to the kingdom of Christ as described in the New Testament (John 18:36-37; Col 1:13; Eph 5:5; 2 Pet 1:11; Rev 11:15).

The means by which God establishes his kingdom in Jesus is through divine covenant.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, in order to make sense of the Bible's story, we need to know what a divine covenant is and how God's use of covenants finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Though the Old Testament speaks of multiple covenants (e.g., creation, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New), all of these covenants are part of the progressive revelation of one plan of God fulfilled in the New Covenant. In other words, seen in light of the unity of the Bible revealing God's plan of redemption, there is ultimately one covenant: Kingdom through covenant.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> George Eldon Ladd, *The Gospel of the Kingdom: Scriptural Studies in the Kingdom of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 115.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 594.

<sup>16</sup> The thesis that God reveals his kingdom through covenant is the basis for Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum's excellent theological work titled *Kingdom through Covenant*. Gentry and Wellum's contributions in providing a rich resource for biblical theology and exegetical faithfulness should not be overlooked.

## Seminar 9

Seminar 9 examined poetry as a genre of literature that presents unique challenges to Christ-centered biblical interpretation. Poetry challenges the logical analysis of Scripture because it is filled with metaphors and symbols not often intended to be interpreted literally. Due to time constraints, the seminar on poetry primarily focused on the Psalms. I presented the thesis that Psalm 1 and 2 introduce and summarize the entire book of Psalms. Psalm 1 reveals the way of blessing found in delighting in the Word of God. Psalm 2 identifies the path of blessing as found by humbling oneself before the kingdom's Son. As we read the New Testament, we discover from John's Gospel that the Eternal Son is the Eternal Word of God (John 1:1, 14). In other words, when we read the Psalms in light of the Apostle John's declaration about Jesus the Son of God, we discover the way of blessing is found by delighting in the Son Jesus Christ as revealed by the Word of God.

The Psalms date as far back as the exodus and the majority were composed during the reigns of King David and King Solomon. While it is clear the Psalms were composed over the whole period of time in which the Old Testament was written, it is often difficult, if not impossible, to date many of the psalms. However, Tremper Longman III has suggested using the titles of the Psalms as a viable path to dating the Psalms. Longman wrote, "The titles introducing the individual psalms give information about the author, the historical occasion which prompted the writing, the melody, the psalm's function, and occasionally other matters."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Tremper Longman III, *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1988), 38.

The authorial and historical titles attribute the largest portion of the Psalms to King David. Even though many modern scholars agree that psalm titles are late additions to their original composition, there is no legitimate reason to doubt David wrote the psalms credited to him.<sup>18</sup> These same titles also provide evidence to the early composition of some of the psalms, including a poem as early as Moses (Ps 90) and songs that reflect the Israelite experience upon returning from exile (Ps 126:1-2).

The aforementioned thesis proposing Psalms 1 and 2 as in introduction and summary of the entire Psalter depends on accepting that the Psalms as we have them today are based upon a post-exilic compilation and edit. The date of compilation is pertinent because it means the Psalms were arranged strategically at a time when there was no king in Israel. In short, the Psalms anticipate the greater fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, meaning every psalm anticipates Messianic hope ultimately found in the person and promise of Jesus Christ. If true, when the Psalms are read today (or perhaps more accurately stated, sung today), contemporary readers sing *to* Jesus *with* the Psalms, *of* Jesus *in* the Psalms, and *with* Jesus *in* the Psalms.<sup>19</sup> Class participants explored how to use the prescribed exegetical process to read Old Testament poetry in a Christocentric light by examining Psalm 16 and Song of Solomon 1:1-17.

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<sup>18</sup> Longman, *How to Read the Psalms*, 39.

<sup>19</sup> Gordon Wenham, *The Psalter Reclaimed: Praying and Praising with the Psalms* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishers, 2013), 99.

## Seminar 10

The concluding seminar concentrated on Old Testament Law and its relationship to Jesus Christ.<sup>20</sup> The Law played an important role in God's communion with Israel in Mosaic times. In addition, many Christians today consistently struggle to reconcile the role of the Law in the Old Testament to living as a follower of Jesus.

The Law of Moses was a temporary administration set up between God and His people to regulate their lives and reveal their sin until the establishment of the promise of Jesus, the Messiah. Additionally, the Law of Moses (i.e., Mosaic Law, Sinai Covenant, Mosaic Covenant) is the ratification and filling out of what had been promised to Abraham: a people, a land, and a conduit of blessing to all nations (Gen 12:3). Obedience to God's Law brought with it the promise of blessing, but disobedience led to curses coming upon God's people.

An apt summary of the promise of law-keeping, or insight into understanding the Law as law-covenant, is found in the Pentateuch: "So you shall keep my statutes and my judgments, by which a man may live if he does them; I am the LORD" (Lev 18:5). In its original context, Leviticus 18:5 is a call to obey the Law of Moses with a promise of the reward of life. The Law of Moses was given by God to Israel to show His people how to live in covenant relationship with Yahweh, setting forth the path of righteousness leading to life. In short, obedience to the Law promised life and blessing under the stipulations of the covenant. Yet, even the conditional elements of the covenant were

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<sup>20</sup> Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013). Seminar 10 was based in large part on the robust, theologically rich work of Brian Rosner. His book, *Paul and the Law*, transformed my understanding of Jesus' relationship to the Law and how Christ-followers should relate to the Law in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ.

strictly and exclusively contingent on God's initiative and grace. Every command of God is grounded in the provision of His grace.

The problem, however, is the Law was not able to deliver on its promise because God's people demonstrated a perpetual inability to keep the Law. The Law was a dead end. Even if God's people experienced blessing through a season of obedience, they eventually betrayed and abandoned their covenant vows in disobedience. Paul addresses the impotency of the Law in Galatians when he writes, "For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law" (Gal 3:21). Paul's understanding of the promise of life is expressed through his usage and interpretation of Leviticus 18:5 in his letters to Galatia and Rome. Paul use of Leviticus 18:5 suggests this text summed up the theology of the Mosaic covenant, and as such, its importance to a Pauline understanding of the Law can hardly be exaggerated.<sup>21</sup>

Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5 on two occasions: Galatians 3:12 and Romans 10:5. In both occurrences his treatment of Leviticus 18:5 is negative, citing the reference to show that the Law does not lead to life because of human disobedience. In addition, the question of the promise of life through obedience to the Law emerges in Luke's Gospel. Jesus' response to the lawyer who asks what he must do to inherit eternal life in Luke 10:28 hints at a reference to Leviticus 18:5.<sup>22</sup> In his Gospel, Luke uses a term he often

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<sup>21</sup> Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 61.

<sup>22</sup> "And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How do you read it?' And he answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have answered correctly; do this and you will live'" (Luke 10:25-28).

employs to depict salvation: “life”.<sup>23</sup> The point being that Jesus’ use of “life” suggests an eschatological meaning more than a covenant blessing meaning alone.

Paul’s negative use of Leviticus 18:5 and Jesus’ interaction with the lawyer raise questions about the influence and application of Leviticus 18:5 in first century Judaism.<sup>24</sup> Preston Sprinkle argues that *The Damascus Document* and the *Psalms of Solomon* are the best options for comparison and contrast with Paul’s usage in Galatians and Romans.<sup>25</sup> Sprinkle argues that these texts reveal a transformation of the Jewish interpretation of Leviticus 18:5, whereby the idea of a lengthy earthly life of favor and blessing from Yahweh transforms to the idea of eternal life. Though it is clear the Old Testament never explicitly suggests the promise of life in Leviticus 18:5 is the promise of *eternal* life, it seems possible, perhaps even likely, that some first century Jews believed eternal life was found in obedience to the Law. This understanding appears to drive the lawyer’s query to Jesus in Luke 10:28. In addition, Paul’s letters to the church in Galatia and Rome demonstrate a clear misuse of the Law among Jews and born again Gentiles. In practice, this possible first century Jewish interpretation and misunderstanding of the Law is not so different from the works-based righteousness at the heart of almost every religious tradition except Christianity.

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<sup>23</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 428.

<sup>24</sup> Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 62. Scholars who have considered the influence and application of Leviticus 18:5 on early Judaism from extra-biblical resources include E. P. Sanders, James D. G. Dunn, N. T. Wright, Simon Gathercole, Francis Watson, and Preston Sprinkle.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* *The Damascus Document*, otherwise known as the Zadokite Fragments, is one of the most important surviving works of the ancient Essene community of Jews of the Qumran community. Though a precise date for composition has eluded archaeologists, it is believed to have been composed prior to the Jewish revolt of AD 66-70. The *Psalms of Solomon* is a pseudepigraphal work containing 18 non-canonical psalms originally written in Hebrew, but with surviving manuscripts in Greek and Syriac alone.

In reality, the Law was never intended to lead to righteousness, and any argument that it does suggests a clear misunderstanding what the Bible teaches about the purpose of the Law. The Law only revealed righteousness as grounded in the character of God. In this way, the Law serves as moral instruction, enlightening believers as to what is pleasing to God, guiding followers of Jesus in the righteous paths of God.

As has also been stated previously, even the conditional elements of the Law expressed as covenant stipulations between God and Israel were grounded in God's initiative and grace. The Law helps us see and understand the God who stands behind its instruction, showing us, as Christopher Wright states, "the God of grace and the story of grace."<sup>26</sup> The Law continues to serve a meaningful purpose among New Covenant Christians as it reveals how "sin might be shown to be sin" (Rom 7:13). In other words, the Law functions like a mirror, reflecting the character of God, but also illuminating human sinfulness. But the Law must be rejected as a viable alternative to achieving righteousness before God. The righteous live and are justified by faith alone through grace alone in Christ alone (Gen 15:6; Hab 2:4).

Jesus abolished the Law as law-covenant, fulfilling the righteous requirement of the Law through his substitutionary death (Rom 8:3; Eph 2:15). Jesus, through the power of the Spirit, fulfilled the Law for disciples of Jesus, and also fulfills the righteous requirement of the Law through Christ followers (Rom 8:3-4; Gal 5:14). Though Christians should never relate to the Law as law-covenant (i.e., a condition to be met to

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<sup>26</sup> Murray, *Jesus on Every Page*, 89.

experience life), as has been stated, this does not mean the Law has no purpose for believers in Jesus.

The Law has a prophetic function by witnessing to the righteousness revealed to all people in Jesus.<sup>27</sup> As such, the Law points Christians to Jesus as the only human being capable of perfectly obeying and fulfilling the Law; yet the Law remains as a useful guide in wisdom for living. In the New Covenant, God anticipates the problem of the human heart as the motivating deterrent to obedience to God. He resolves the problem anticipated and predicted in Deuteronomy by writing His law on our hearts and giving believers a heart of flesh capable of obeying God's righteous decrees.<sup>28</sup>

The final seminar provided an opportunity for lay Bible teachers to apply what they learned about the relationship between Old Testament Law and the person and promise of Jesus Christ by interpreting two Old Testament Law passages using suggested exegetical model taught in the seminar. The two passages selected for the learning lab were Leviticus 27:30-33 and Leviticus 18:22; 20:13.

### **The Post-Seminar Questionnaire Administered**

The post-seminar questionnaire was exactly the same as the pre-seminar questionnaire. (A copy of the questionnaire is included in appendix 3.) Designed to measure the basic presuppositions and perceptions of lay Bible teachers with regard to interpreting the Old Testament in relationship to the person and promise of Jesus Christ,

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<sup>27</sup> Rosner, *Paul and the Law*, 153.

<sup>28</sup> Deut 4:30 anticipated "the latter days" when the people of God will return to God after disobedience to His Law. The prophets also speak of these "latter days" (Jer 23:20; 30:24; 48:47; 49:39; Ezek 38:16; Dan 2:28; 10:14; Hos 3:5). Paul understands that those he is ministering to are those "on whom the end of the ages has come" (1 Cor 10:11).

the desired results from the post-seminar questionnaire targeted a positive measurable change toward a more Christ-centered approach to biblical interpretation and teaching among lay Bible teachers.

### **Written Exit Interviews**

Following the conclusion of the seminar, I invited class participants to participate in a voluntary written exit interview designed to provide more specific feedback on whether or not the seminar had achieved the aims of (1) equipping lay Bible teachers with reproducible exegetical tools for interpreting the Old Testament in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ; (2) providing practical categories designed to focus a Christological lens for interpretation; and (3) bolstering confidence for interpreting the Old Testament in a Christocentric light. Seven lay Bible teachers submitted written responses to the exit interview questions.

Overall, the feedback provided in the exit interviews was encouraging with regard to the three aims of the seminar. When asked to measure their confidence level about teaching from Old Testament with a Christocentric hermeneutic based on the exegetical tools demonstrated and categories provided to bring Christ into focus in the Old Testament, the response was overwhelmingly positive. One seventy-year-old Sunday school teacher with more than forty years of experience teaching the Bible said, “This seminar has helped me to better understand how to study, teach, and apply the Old Testament in light of seeing the main point, how it was fulfilled in Jesus, and in applying what I have learned to my life and to those that I teach.” An elder at Concord said, “I feel more confident in teaching the Old Testament Christocentrically because of the teaching on the paths to Jesus (promise, progression, type, theme, instruction, and need). These

[paths] help me to understand how to get from the writer's intent to how the text talks about and points to Jesus [and] the Gospel.”

Three participants expressed a low confidence level in applying the exegetical process despite growing in their conviction that all of Scripture points to Jesus. One fifty-three-year-old Sunday school teacher rated her confidence level as “low to moderate, not in that I do not believe Christ is central, but my skill set to flesh it [the exegetical process] out is weak.” When asked about his confidence level teaching the Old Testament Christocentrically, an eighty-year-old Sunday school teacher with almost fifty years of teaching experience said, “It will take some time and more study before I feel totally confident.” However, it should be noted that his lack of confidence had to do with exegetical practice rather than conscientious disagreement with the proposed hermeneutic. A fifty-five-year-old deacon said, “It will take some time actually working with the various Old Testament texts to become more adroit, but I do feel a much greater confidence about teaching the Old Testament in a way that consistently points to Christ.”

Participants were asked to describe one significant benefit of the seminar for their teaching ministry. While the responses to this question were predictably varied, all gave meaningful weight to the impact of the seminar. One respondent said, “I can now understand more clearly how to avoid teaching that moralizes and instead points to Christ in my Old Testament teaching.” Since one of the primary pitfalls in Old Testament interpretation and application is the reduction of the main point of the text to moralizing or character studies, I found this participant's feedback heartening.

A fifty-three-year-old children's Sunday school teacher who regularly teaches from the Old Testament using *Desiring God* curriculum noted the impact that the

“Reading Jesus in the Old Testament” seminar has had on her approach to teaching the Bible:

I do not think I will ever read or prepare to teach again without thinking through and using the tools I have learned . . . I will always build every lesson, or at least end every lesson, with Jesus as the central point: Scripture pointing to Him, our need for Him, our joy in Him, [and] our salvation in Him. My desire is that children will not leave my class at the end of the year without having a heightened understanding of who Jesus and what He has done for them personally.

Her teaching partner said the most significant benefit of the seminar to her teaching ministry was simple: “It is all about Jesus!” Indeed, it is. When we read the Old Testament in light of the person and promise of Jesus Christ, we see Jesus on every page.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, I believe the ministry project “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament” served the lay Bible teachers at Concord Baptist Church well. While I discuss areas for improvement in the seminar curriculum and presentation in chapter 5, the feedback given by project participants suggests the ministry project successfully aided and equipped lay Bible teachers to more consistently read the Old Testament in a Christocentric light.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF PROJECT

Chapter 5 concludes the presentation of the ministry research project. This final chapter reflects on the usefulness and effectiveness of the ministry project titled “Equipping the Bible Teachers of Concord Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Interpret the Old Testament Christocentrically.” The chapter begins by analyzing and assessing the research data, purpose, and goals of the project. Next, an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the project occurs, which includes what modifications I believe are necessary to make to the project more effective when the curriculum is taught again in the future. Additionally, theological and personal reflections provide an evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the project on the participants, as well as the personal impact of the project. Finally, the chapter concludes with closing comments about the fruitfulness and merits of equipping lay Bible teachers to teach the Old Testament in a Christocentric light.

#### **Evaluation of Research Data**

In appendix 5 and appendix 6, the responses of the ministry research project participants to the pre- and post-seminar questionnaires are recorded. The questionnaires were identical and consisted of 47 questions related to teaching experience, teaching preferences, presuppositions about the Old Testament, and various genres of Old Testament literature. Changes in both perception and practice with regards to Christ-

centered interpretation of the Old Testament reflect a net change in the responses. A positive shift in responses from the pre- to post-seminar questionnaire determined whether or not the ministry project succeeded in convincing lay Bible teachers of the necessity of preaching and teaching the Old Testament in a Christocentric light.

The purpose of the pre-seminar questionnaire was to establish a baseline of perceptions and interpretive presuppositions each lay Bible teacher brings to the Old Testament during normal preparation for teaching and preaching the Old Testament. The questionnaire measured these perceptions and presuppositions by asking lay Bible teachers various questions about different genres of Old Testament literature and how these genres relate specifically to the person and promise of Jesus Christ. The questionnaire used a 6-point Likert scale where numbers with higher values indicated strongest agreement, and numbers with lower values indicated strongest disagreement.

Normal scoring required participants to respond to each statement where 1 represented “Strongly Disagree,” 2 represented “Disagree,” 3 represented “Disagree Somewhat,” 4 represented “Agree Somewhat,” 5 represented “Agree,” and 6 represented “Strongly Agree.” The seminar consisted of 44 regularly attending members; therefore, the highest possible score for each statement was 264.<sup>1</sup>

In preparation for the ministry project I postulated that many lay Bible teachers at Concord did not eagerly look forward to teaching from the Old Testament. This assumption was based upon several factors. First, personal observation over twelve years

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<sup>1</sup> Reverse scoring was used for questions 9, 10, 18, 24, 26, 29, 30, 33, 34, 35, 36, 42, and 43. Reverse scoring required participants to respond to each statement where 1 represented “Strongly Agree,” 2 represented “Agree,” 3 represented “Agree Somewhat,” 4 represented “Disagree Somewhat,” 5 represented “Disagree,” and 6 represented “Strongly Disagree.”

of ministry demonstrated an obvious preference for teaching the New rather than the Old Testament. When asked what books of the Bible lay Bible teachers find most beneficial to their Christian walk, most teachers pointed almost exclusively to the New Testament. When asked a related question about what books of the Bible they would prefer to teach, these same teachers consistently expressed a preference for New Testament texts.

Additionally, general conversation and feedback from previous training seminars indicated that many lay Bible teachers regularly struggle to find contemporary gospel-centered relevance in the Old Testament. Most lay Bible teachers had a clear grasp on the moral implications of Old Testament Law and wisdom literature, but they lacked insight into how Old Testament commands, character examples, wisdom literature, poetry, and the Prophets were relevant to the person and promise of Jesus Christ.

Finally, previous formal observations of lay Bible teachers in the classroom setting demonstrated that many of Concord's teachers consistently fail to understand the varied ways the Old Testament points to Jesus Christ. In light of my assumptions and observations, a personal pastoral goal for the ministry project was quite primitive: I simply wanted lay Bible teachers who often dreaded to teach from the Old Testament to grow in their appreciation and desire to teach the Old Testament.

According to the average response to statement 5 in the post-seminar questionnaire, 61 percent of the project participants eagerly looked forward to teaching the Old Testament prior to the ministry project. I found this number surprisingly high given how imbalanced the overall focus of the teaching ministry at Concord has been over the years between the New and Old Testaments. This high level of eagerness and

anticipation about teaching the Old Testament suggests the imbalance between teaching the Old and New Testament in discipleship ministry may have more to do with curriculum choice and the scope and sequence of the curriculum than personal preference. Even so, the post-project results suggest the ministry project positively impacted attitudes about teaching the Old Testament. At the conclusion of the ministry project the number of participants who eagerly looked forward to teaching the Old Testament increased to 71 percent (see table A48 in appendix 6).

Moreover, the ministry project positively addressed the difficulty seminar participants expressed in unlocking the relevance of the Old Testament to contemporary life in Christ. Prior to the “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament” seminar, 9 percent of participants stated they struggled to find contemporary relevance in the Old Testament, 11 percent stated they did not struggle to find contemporary relevance in the Old Testament, and 80 percent indicated they sometimes struggled to find contemporary relevance in the Old Testament depending on literary genre (see table A48 in appendix 6). At the completion of the seminar these numbers increased significantly.

According to the post-seminar responses to the questionnaire, 7 percent indicated they still struggled to find contemporary relevance in the Old Testament. This represented a decrease of 4 percent. 36 percent indicated they no longer struggled to find contemporary relevance in the Old Testament. This increase represents a noteworthy positive statistical increase. At the completion of the seminar, only 57 percent of participants indicated they “Sometimes” still struggled to find contemporary relevance in the Old Testament, a decrease of 23 percent (see table A48 in appendix 6).

The most critical component to the ministry project related to how lay Bible teachers understood Jesus Christ's relationship to the Old Testament and how their understanding of that relationship shaped and informed the way they taught the Old Testament. Prior to the ministry project, only 4 percent of lay Bible teachers said they struggled to understand how Jesus relates to the Old Testament, while 25 percent said they had no difficulty at all understanding how Jesus Christ relates to the Old Testament. However, 71 percent indicated that they sometimes struggled to understand how Jesus relates to the Old Testament (see table A49 in appendix 6).

The survey results at the conclusion of the seminar indicated a dramatic change in how the lay Bible teachers at Concord now understand the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament. While the results suggested a slight anomaly, with a 3 percent increase among those who indicated some confusion about how Jesus related to the Old Testament from pre-seminar data, the post-seminar survey yielded a 23 percent increase among those who no longer struggled to understand how Jesus relates to the Old Testament, and a 30 percent decrease among those who prior to the seminar indicated they "sometimes" felt confused about how to relate Jesus Christ to the Old Testament (see table A49 in appendix 6).

It is clear the ministry project participants were influenced towards adopting a more Christ-centered approach to interpreting and teaching the Old Testament. For example, I taught the participants the importance of understanding God's covenant with man as progressively revealed as the central idea to embracing the unity of God's redemptive plan ultimately disclosed in the person and promise of Jesus Christ. Statement 19 read, "God's covenant with man is progressively revealed." The pre-seminar survey

results indicated 25 percent strongly agreed with this statement. However, the post-seminar results saw the number of lay Bible teachers who strongly agreed with this statement more than double at 52 percent (see table A61 in appendix 6).

Another example demonstrates how lay Bible teachers adopted a more Christ-centered approach to interpreting and teaching the Old Testament. Statement 20 read, “The purpose of Scripture is to guide men to God, and since the only way to God is through faith in Jesus Christ, the revelation of Jesus should be the predominant theme of Scripture.” I asked this question knowing that many of the lay Bible teachers at Concord interpreted the Old Testament with a theocentric hermeneutic that made very few allowances for Christ-centered interpretation except where reference to the person and work of Jesus was explicitly stated in the biblical text. As a result, a common observance over the years found lay Bible teachers teaching the Old Testament with no reference to Jesus Christ at all. To be fair, most teachers at Concord place a premium on teaching the authorial intent of the text. Consequently, if they do not see a clear or obvious path to Christ in the text, they are not likely to seek one.

The pre-seminar survey results indicated that only 18 percent of lay Bible teachers agreed with the statement that Jesus Christ was the predominant theme of Scripture and 48 percent strongly agreed. While these results were favorable to a Christocentric approach to the Old Testament prior to the seminar, the post-seminar responses yielded even more positive results. By the end of the seminar, 84 percent of participants strongly agreed with the statement that Jesus Christ should be the predominant theme of Scripture (see table A62 in appendix 6).

Though the crude data suggests the ministry project participants were influenced towards adopting a more Christocentric approach to reading, understanding, and applying the Old Testament, the ministry project required I conduct a paired sample two-tailed t-test to determine whether or not the results were statistically significant. I established a degree of risk with an alpha of .05, which provided a 95 percent level of confidence that any statistical difference would not be by chance alone. The null hypothesis was that there would be no significant difference between the pre- and post-seminar project questionnaire. Therefore, the research hypothesis was that there would be a significant difference between the pre- and post-seminar questionnaires. The t-test resulted in a  $p$  value of 4.36010E-10, which allowed me to reject the null hypothesis and accept the research hypothesis. Since the  $p$  value (4.36010E-10) is significantly less than the risk value (.05), the possibility that the statistical difference is merely by chance is unlikely. Fortunately, the project seminar to the select group of project participants made a statistically significant difference resulting in the increase of their knowledge of Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament ( $t_{(9)} = 8.253, p < 4.36010E-10$ ).

### **Evaluation of the Project Goals**

My ministry research project had four primary goals: (1) Establish what lay Bible teachers at Concord Baptist Church believed about the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament, (2) recruit a minimum of 15 current and prospective lay Bible teachers to participate in the ten-week seminar titled “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament,” (3) create and develop a ten-week seminar titled “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament,” and (4) equip lay Bible teachers at Concord Baptist Church to interpret the

Old Testament Christocentrically by teaching the ten-week seminar titled “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament.”

The evaluation of the goals of the project is based on the enrollment of the minimum number of seminar participants and scoring their biblical interpretation knowledge by the completion of a pre- and post-seminar questionnaire. First, the pre- and post-seminar (appendix 1 and appendix 3) questionnaire provided a clear measurement of movement throughout the duration of the project. Clearly, the data suggests positive changes towards a Christocentric hermeneutic for interpreting the Old Testament. A general non-statistical assessment of the data implies positive statistical change. This assessment was also confirmed by the t-test for dependent samples which indicated the intervention made a statistically significant difference.

I accomplished the second goal of the project with the enrollment of at least 15 lay Bible teachers in the ten-week seminar titled “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament.” The response to the seminar was both surprising and overwhelming. The final enrollment for the seminar was 44 participants. From the outset of the project I was concerned that the two hour time commitment over a ten week period would present a significant obstacle limiting participation. In an effort to eliminate competing alternatives to the seminar, the pastoral leadership team at Concord offered the seminar as our primary congregational gathering on Sunday nights. Additionally, in an attempt to accommodate short attention spans and enhance the comfort level of the teaching environment, breaks were offered every 30-45 minutes, as well as refreshments.

Another potential obstacle for participants was the timing of the seminar. Since the seminar was held from May through July, I was apprehensive that interested

participants would be unwilling to commit to the seminar due to summer vacations and family outings. To address this concern, the seminar was recorded and the audio was posted online on Concord Baptist Church's website within 24 hours of each seminar. The online resource provided an opportunity for participants to stay on track with the seminar even when their physical attendance was interrupted by vacation, work-related absences, and family obligations.

I accomplished the third goal of the project with the creation and development of a ten-week seminar titled "Reading Jesus in the Old Testament." The idea for the ministry project was based in large part on David Murray's excellent book titled *Jesus on Every Page*. In his book, Murray skillfully shows how and where the person and promise of Jesus is present in the Old Testament. He provides the best, most practical help I have found for the average Christian who desires to discover Jesus as he is promised in the Old Testament. Murray's book wasn't required reading for my course work, but when I came across this book I discovered very quickly that *Jesus on Every Page* is a must-have resource for those who seek to equip lay persons to interpret the Old Testament in a Christocentric light. I found Murray's approach to Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament provided an entry-level guide for non-seminary trained students of God's Word to interpret all of Scripture in light of Jesus. As a result, Murray's book provided the inspiration for the ministry project.

In addition to David Murray's work, the seminar curriculum was also strengthened by significant contributions from many other reputable scholars, including Graeme Goldsworthy, Sidney Greidanus, Christopher Wright, and Bryan Chappell. My goal in writing the curriculum was to distill the main ideas and principles presented in the

writings of various biblical scholars on Christ-centered hermeneutics and develop an exegetical process accessible for lay Bible teachers.

I accomplished the fourth goal of the project by teaching the seminar titled “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament.” Overall, I believe my efforts to equip lay Bible teachers with an honest, biblically faithful, reproducible exegetical method for interpreting the Old Testament in light of the person and promise of Jesus was successful.

One seminar participant stated,

This seminar has helped me to better understand how to study, teach, and apply the Old Testament in light of Jesus, as well as embrace a more Christocentric view of the Old Testament. I now feel better equipped to identify the main point of the text, understand how the main point of the passage is fulfilled in Jesus, and apply what I have learned to my life and those I teach with respect to the gospel of Jesus Christ. I now have the tools to help me better determine how the Old Testament points to Jesus.

Another Sunday school teacher mentioned that the seminar had improved her ability to apply Scripture in a practical way: “My interpretation and application has been enhanced significantly because of this class.”

I was heartened to learn the seminar strengthened the interpretive method of not only lay Bible teachers, but also several seminary trained pastors who attended the seminar as well. One of our pastors, a graduate with a Master of Divinity degree from Southwestern Theological Seminary noted,

The seminar gave more structure to the exegetical process I was working from, and it gave me new questions to ask of a text, so as to rightly understand and apply the Bible’s teaching. I now have the tools, vocabulary, and better understanding of how the truth of God’s Word should be presented. I better understand the Messiah as testified to in the Old Testament. As a result of this seminar, I have a more robust and true grasp of who our wonderful Savior is, and therefore, how I can worship, submit to, and live for him all the more with joy.

## **Strengths of the Project**

The ministry research project was, above everything else, an exceedingly practical, hands-on learning experience for lay Bible teachers. I was motivated to develop this research project because, while many books and articles have been published to help pastors with preaching and teaching Jesus from the Old Testament, very few of those resources are accessible to the untrained lay person. The average Christian needs a simple, functional, reproducible, entry-level guide for interpreting the Old Testament in light of the person and promise of Jesus. I am convinced this seminar met that objective. One woman, a Sunday school teacher for more than 30 years said, “I am so grateful to have been a part of this seminar. Using these tools will make lesson preparation and personal study even more meaningful as I continue to grow in knowledge, understanding, and application of God’s Word.” Another Sunday school teacher commented, “I have always believed that Jesus is present in the Old Testament as part of the Trinity. However, now that I have completed this seminar, I see that I have not always seen all Old Testament teaching in light of Jesus. This is both an exciting and challenging concept. The training I received in this seminar will definitely help me determine how Old Testament texts are to be understood and applied in relationship to Jesus Christ.”

Another strong point of the project was it equipped participants to share the gospel from the Old Testament. In the written exit interview participants were asked, “Could you have used the Old Testament to share the gospel with an unbeliever?” Most participants expressed that they would not have used the Old Testament to present the gospel because they believed the Old Testament was “inferior to the New Testament in its ability to witness to Christ.” However, attitudes about the usefulness and

appropriateness of the Old Testament for sharing the gospel changed post-seminar. As it relates to using the Old Testament in evangelism one deacon noted, “My understanding of how the Old Testament points to Jesus all the way through the Bible has deepened, and I see the story of redemption more clearly than ever before.”

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

One of the aims of the seminar was to increase the confidence level of those who desired to interpret and teach the Old Testament Christocentrically. Christ-centered preaching and teaching is characteristic of the pulpit ministry and Word-based disciple-making strategies and structures at Concord Baptist Church. Most teachers and members at Concord recognize the importance and value the pastoral staff places on Christocentric hermeneutics, but as the survey results demonstrated, a very low percentage of lay Bible teachers indicated a high level of confidence in interpreting the Old Testament in a Christocentric light in practice. Prior to the seminar, 17 percent of seminar participants expressed strong agreement with confidence in interpreting the Old Testament in a Christocentric light, 7 percent agreed, and 23 percent agreed somewhat (see table A70 in appendix 6). That means that more than half of the seminar participants lacked confidence in interpreting the Old Testament in light of Jesus.

However, it seems the seminar effectively bolstered confidence levels in preaching and teaching the Old Testament in light of the person and promise of Jesus. One participant remarked, “I feel much more confidence now to teach the Old Testament Christocentrically. I have more of a desire to do deeper study in the Old Testament now.” Not only does personal opinion attest to the effectiveness of the seminar to bolster confidence in interpreting and teaching the Old Testament Christocentrically, but 89

percent of project participants indicated an increased level of confidence (see table A70 in appendix 6).

Nevertheless, more confidence to examine the Old Testament in a Christ-centered light did not automatically make seminar participants more effective Christ-centered interpreters and teachers. One Sunday school teacher commented, “I would say that my confidence level [to teach the Old Testament from a Christocentric perspective] is low to moderate, not in that I do not believe Christ is the central theme of Scripture, but that my skill set to flesh it [Christ as the governing theme of the Bible] out is weak.”

This comment reflected the general sentiment of many seminar participants, highlighting a necessary modification for teaching the seminar in the future. Seminars yet to come on the subject of Christ-centered hermeneutics should include more hands-on exploration of various Old Testament texts where seminar participants can put the tools they have learned into practice. Each lesson focused on a specific genre of Old Testament literature and explored the genres unique impact on biblical interpretation. The lesson ended with an examination of one or two texts from that specific genre. The seminar participants read the selected passage together and then examined it by using the three-step exegetical process they were trained to use in the seminar. It was immediately evident that the practicality of this exegetical exercise reinforced the ideas that were being presented. Regrettably, I did not anticipate how beneficial this would be, and consequently, I did not allot enough time for exegetical practice and discussion in each seminar. One participant said, “This seminar was definitely meaningful for us as teachers, but we undoubtedly need more practice employing the process you have presented in the course.”

Concord Baptist Church is currently developing Growth Groups, which are strategic seminars designed to train and equip followers of Jesus Christ for Christian maturity and gospel growth. My intention is to incorporate the ministry research project seminar into the Growth Group curriculum. In order to strengthen the curriculum, I mean to expand on the ministry project seminar by incorporating a learning laboratory into the Growth Group curriculum. The learning laboratory will provide a controlled environment for class participants to practice interpreting the Old Testament Christocentrically using the three-step exegetical process under the oversight and guidance of the seminar teacher. Providing more textual examples for class participants to work through will reinforce the concepts introduced and allow class participants to use the tools they have been given for biblical interpretation. The learning laboratory would also provide a context for lay Bible teachers to suggest specific texts they would like to discuss and interpret. Building the learning laboratory into the ministry research project will require lengthening the seminar by 10 to 12 hours.

An additional weakness of the ministry research project was that the pre- and post-seminar questionnaire was not written with uniformity in mind. Each question should have been designed with the same desired trajectory response (i.e., movement from disagreement to agreement). In other words, each question should have indicated a “positive” response by moving higher on the scale. However, not all of the questions were written in this way. Several questions were composed so that the “positive” response moved lower on the Likert scale. Consequently, the questionnaire contributed to a fair measure of confusion by the seminar participants. Failing to standardize the

trajectory of the questions may have also compromised the statistical analysis of the project.

The project would have been strengthened by mandating that all class participants provide feedback in the post-seminar written exit interview. Every seminar participant was required to attend or listen online to twenty hours of teaching. Due to the extensive time investment asked of each participant, I was hesitant to obligate class participants to provide written feedback regarding the benefits and weaknesses of the ministry research project because I anticipated that by the time the seminar was complete, many class participants would be weary. While this decision was pastorally sensitive to the time demands placed on the seminar participants, it hampered my ability fully assess the impact of the seminar on the broadest scale. The written exit interviews provided a much more personalized assessment of the benefits, practicality, and critiques of the ministry research project.

### **Theological Reflections**

Reflecting on participant testimonies praising the practical benefits and personal impact of the ministry research project has been a tremendous blessing. I have no doubt the impression the “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament” seminar made on the participants occurred largely because the project presented a strong biblical-theological justification for a Christ-centered interpretation of the Old Testament. I explored texts from both the Old and New Testament to support the thesis that all of Scripture points to the person and promise of Jesus Christ. The seminar was saturated with textual example after textual example of canonical testimony reinforcing the idea that all of Scripture points to Jesus. A post-seminar statement from a seminary graduate who serves as an

elder at Concord confirmed the impact of a robust biblical-theological argument for a Christocentric hermeneutic:

I believed the Old Testament was given to show us our sin and need for a Savior, so I understood that it always pointed to the Gospel in a general way. However, I did not always comprehend how all of the Law and the Prophets pointed towards Christ and the Gospel. I did believe there were texts that taught us about God and his righteousness, but [those texts] did not directly lead us to the Gospel. This class has caused me to re-think some of the ways I look at the Old Testament because I did not previously understand that all of the Old Testament was written in a way that explicitly points forward to Jesus Christ. I think Aaron made his case...that all of the Old Testament is about Jesus very strongly, and I find myself in agreement with his teaching as a result of what I have learned in this seminar. In the future I will examine texts that I at one time believed to be about God only in the Trinitarian sense (His actions, attributes, etc.), and now intend to teach them in light of the Messiah who was to come.

The effect of the biblical-theological defense for a Christ-centered approach to the Old Testament was not merely external in its scope and reach. Developing and implementing the seminar “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament” reinforced Jesus as the central character in the redemptive storyline of the Old Testament in my own heart and mind. With every hour spent in the Bible exploring the Christocentric threads that weave throughout every page, I was able to more readily identify the divine unity of the story of redemption as it progressively unfolds in salvation history, ultimately revealed most clearly in the person and promise of Jesus Christ. These hours of study were personally enriching and edifying. But more importantly, my studies have been formative, further deepening my personal ability to interpret the Old Testament in light of Jesus Christ, in addition to fortifying my convictions about the necessity of Christ-centered biblical interpretation.

After teaching the “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament” seminar, I am more convinced than ever that the equipping ministry at Concord Baptist Church is

unbalanced. Our teaching and preaching ministry is commendable. It is Christ-centered, expositional, and practical. In fact, the teaching and preaching ministry is probably one of the main reasons visitors come back to Concord and members remain committed to our fellowship. However, from a pastoral perspective, our leadership team has done a poor job creating opportunities for people to reproduce the hermeneutic modeled from them on a weekly basis.

People need an opportunity and context to put what they learn into practice. The ministry research project magnified the need to provide supervised opportunities for students to work through the exegetical processes and methodologies our leadership teaches and models. A continual theme emerged in the post-seminar evaluation: every participant echoed the need for more practice in a supervised setting where they could receive immediate feedback on how they applied a Christocentric exegetical process.

Upon reflection, I have come to more deeply appreciate the need to provide hands-on learning experiences and training for our lay Bible teachers. I have been guilty of imparting a lot of information without providing an appropriate context for teachers to put the tools I am giving them into practice. Theology is certainly shaped by what we believe, but it is expressed by what we do in response to what we say we believe. This axiom is just as true in biblical interpretation as it is for Christian orthopraxy.

### **Personal Reflections**

My involvement in the ministry project and Doctor of Ministry program at The Southern Theological Baptist Seminary has impacted me in several ways. From a practical perspective, the ministry project revealed that many of our lay Bible teachers are far too dependent upon curriculum in preparation to teach. Being overly reliant on

curriculum is not necessarily a surprising revelation, but the reality of this problem provides me with a new sense of perspective and motivation in pastoral ministry. The ministry project provided a context to confirm my suspicions, but also helped me identify a path forward for equipping lay Bible teachers more effectively in the future. I already mentioned this in the biblical-theological reflection section, but lay Bible teachers will not be weaned off of curriculum dependence through knowledge of how to interpret the Bible alone. They also need opportunities to put what they learn into practice under the supervision and oversight of experienced Bible teachers.

However, the fact that many of Concord's lay Bible teachers are heavily reliant upon curriculum in their teaching ministry does not diminish their obvious love for and commitment to God's Word. Many of the seminar participants have taught the Bible for decades. In fact, 12 percent of seminar participants have been teaching the Bible in corporate or classroom settings for 11-20 years, while 33 percent of seminar participants have been teaching the Bible in corporate or classroom settings for 21 years or more. This ministry project demonstrated how eager the lay Bible teachers at Concord are to grow in their ability to interpret the Bible as faithfully as possible. Forty-four participants prioritized meeting together for 2 hours of teaching and instruction on Sunday nights for ten weeks during a time when our church does not ordinarily meet. I deeply appreciate their commitment to learn how to interpret the Bible in light of Jesus.

One aspect of the ministry project that astonished me about the commitment of Concord's lay Bible teachers to the Word of God was how many of our older adults participated in the ministry project. Concord has a cross-generational balance among regular attendees. In fact, about 65 percent of the congregation is divided relatively

equally among 30-40 year olds, 40-50 year olds, and 50-60 year olds. As a result, I was somewhat surprised that more than 56 percent of the participants were 51 years old or older.<sup>2</sup> Due to the time commitment and demands of the seminar, I anticipated that the majority of the seminar participants would be 50 years old or younger. My assumption was that those who had been teaching the Bible for a long time would not feel the need to learn what may have been a new way to approach biblical interpretation. It is a true blessing to serve a congregation with such a high view of the authority, inspiration, and relevance of Scripture demonstrated by their eagerness to sit under the instruction of God's Word.

As I draw near to the completion of my Doctor of Ministry requirements, I have come to appreciate how the program has impacted and benefited me in at least three ways. First, I am grateful for the friendships forged among my cohorts. I attended seminary at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama from 1998-2001, and to say that my seminary experience was busy would be an understatement. Each semester I took a full complement of classes while working more than 40 hours per week. During my first year at Beeson I worked in retail while also serving a rural church about an hour from Birmingham. In my second and third years at Beeson I joined the staff of Green Valley Baptist Church as the Student Pastor. As a result, I had very little time to develop meaningful friendships with other students. The Doctor of Ministry program provided me an opportunity to establish significant gospel-centered relationships with several other men in pastoral ministry. These men have encouraged, challenged, prayed for, and

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<sup>2</sup> Twenty-one percent of the ministry project participants were ages 51-60, 23 percent were ages 61-70, and 12 percent were 71 years old or older.

edified my faith in Jesus Christ. The time and financial sacrifices that accompany the pursuit of this degree have been worth the fruit of these relationships.

I suspect the second insight I gleaned from this ministry research project is common to almost every Doctor of Ministry student, but it holds true nonetheless. I need a more consistent work/rest rhythm to my life. The time commitment required to complete the Doctor of Ministry program put a tremendous amount of strain on my ability to manage my schedule well. As much as I did not want to live as a slave to the demands of the program, the reality is I never felt free from its requirements. There was always another chapter to read, paragraph to write, or rough draft to edit. Frankly, it was not until late in the project that I hit the proverbial wall and was forced to take some time away from the project just to maintain my sanity.

But the blessing of this experience is that it has helped me see that even once I earn this degree, I will always feel the tension and demands of something. There are always things grappling to enslave me: culture's expectations, my family's hopes and desires, my church's expectations, and even my own insecurities. The Spirit used the Doctor of Ministry program to show me how unhealthy the work/rest rhythm of my life was even before I added the pursuit of this degree to my responsibilities and obligations.

The pursuit of this degree has shown me how much I need to grow in my practice of following God's work/rest rhythm and pattern in creation. To put it simply, I work too much. I am growing in my trust in God's providence. I am realizing more and more every day that God keeps the world running even though there are days where I work like everything depends on me.

Ultimately, having to tackle the learning curve of academic life after more than twelve years of being out of school, as well as being subject to grades and regular critiques from professors and cohorts, has helped me remember how important it is to rest in Christ for my justification. Regardless of the outcome of this academic experience, my justification is secure in the finished work of Jesus. I cannot earn my salvation, and this academic journey has reminded me of how often I try to find my identity in my accomplishments rather than Christ alone.

A final personal benefit of the Doctor of Ministry program and this project has been a renewed passion for life-long learning. Reading has been a regular habit of mine, but this program has helped sharpen my critical thinking skills. Additionally, my personal Bible study habits have been strengthened as a result of the expansive list of books I've been exposed to and read on the subjects of expositional preaching and Christ-centered preaching. My participation in the Doctor of Ministry program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has been, by far, the most enriching educational experience in my life.

Honestly, even six months prior to enrolling in the Doctor of Ministry program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, I had no interest in pursuing an advanced degree. The catalyst for me enrolling in the program was my growing desire to serve the local church as Senior or Lead Pastor and my awareness that not having a Master's degree from a Southern Baptist seminary would limit any potential candidacy at churches requiring a post-graduate degree from a Southern Baptist theological institution. Despite my reticence to pursue a Doctor of Ministry, and I cannot stress this point enough, I have

found this experience to be more rewarding than I could have possibly imagined at the beginning of this journey.

### **Conclusion**

My motivation for pursuing this ministry project was birthed primarily out of a desire to share what I have learned through the Doctor of Ministry program with others. The stated goal of the Doctor of Ministry program at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is to “sharpen leaders, strengthen churches, and impact the world through the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” There is no doubt this program has honed my preparedness as a leader and a pastor. Undoubtedly, my pursuit of this degree has required personal sacrifice, but it has also required corporate sacrifice by the members of Concord Baptist Church. The family of redeemed sinners at this blessed congregation have allotted for time away from my pastoral duties for both study and writing. They have allowed me to experiment and flesh out the ideas presented in my course reading through the preaching and teaching ministry of this embassy for Christ called Concord. But the greatest blessing and sacrifice the people at Concord have made for me for the sake of my maturity in Christ is they have allowed me to teach them what I have learned. I can think of no greater gift that they could give me than their eager pursuit of strength and growth in Christ found in sitting under the teaching and preaching of God’s Word with Jesus as the central theme of Scripture.

## APPENDIX 1

### SURVEY FOR THOSE WHO TEACH THE OLD TESTAMENT

This survey was used to measure the participant's perceived understanding of how to interpret Christ in the Old Testament.

SURVEY FOR THOSE WHO TEACH  
THE OLD TESTAMENT

Personal Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your understanding of the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament. John Aaron Martin is conducting this research for the purposes of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will indicate your beliefs or convictions about the various issues and challenges related to interpreting and applying the Old Testament based on your experience as a lay Bible teacher. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this survey for those who teach the Old Testament, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Directions: Please answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing an “X” next to the appropriate response.

**Part 1**

1. To what age group do you belong?  
 A. 20-30  
 B. 31-40  
 C. 41-50  
 D. 51-60  
 E. 61-70  
 F. 75+
  
2. I have been a Christian for:  
 A. 1-5 years  
 B. 6-10 years  
 C. 11-20 years  
 D. 21+ years
  
3. I have been teaching God’s Word in corporate or classroom settings for:  
 A. 1-5 years  
 B. 6-10 years  
 C. 11-20 years  
 D. 21+ years

4. How often do you teach from the Old Testament?  
 A. 10 times annually  
 B. 20 times annually  
 C. 30 times annually  
 D. 40+ times annually
  
5. Do you eagerly look forward to teaching the Old Testament?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No
  
6. Do you struggle to find contemporary relevance in the Old Testament?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No  
 C. Sometimes depending on the literary genre
  
7. Do you struggle to understand how Jesus relates to the Old Testament?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No  
 C. Sometimes depending on the literary genre

**Directions:** Respond to the following statements. These questions require you to give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; DS = disagree somewhat; AS = agree somewhat; A = agree; SA = strongly agree; please circle the most appropriate answer.

**Part 2**

- |  |    |   |    |    |   |    |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 8. I find the Old Testament easy to understand.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. The Old Testament is outdated.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. The Old Testament does not have value to the New Covenant believer in Jesus Christ for Christian living. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 11. The Old Testament applies as much to Christians today as it did in antiquity.                            | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 12. All Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

13. I have a high view of Scripture, believing in the inspiration, authority, infallibility, sufficiency, and effectiveness of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. By authority, we mean that the Bible is the absolute standard for truth (matters of faith) and the absolute rule for living (matters of practice).	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. Infallibility means the Bible is free from error, the standard by which all matters of theology, history, and science are to be judged.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. Sufficiency means the Bible is all that is needed to direct us in how to know and please God.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. Effectiveness means there is inherent power in God's word to accomplish what it says.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18. The old covenant and New Covenant are two different covenants.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. God's covenant with man is progressively revealed.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20. The purpose of Scripture is to guide men to God, and since the only way to God is through faith in Jesus Christ, the revelation of Jesus should be the predominant theme of Scripture.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. Texts that prepare the people of God to meet God are deficient unless they ultimately are understood in relationship to the person and work of Jesus Christ.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22. If a text neither plainly predicts or prepares for Jesus' redemptive work, it is appropriate for the interpreter to explain how the text reflects the gospel.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

23. We can only fully understand Jesus in light of the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24. It is okay to teach an Old Testament text with no reference to Jesus.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25. A textual message can advocate biblical behavior and still remain sub-Christian.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
26. Biblical texts with moral imperatives that contain no explicit reference to Christ should be taught without any explicit reference to Jesus in order to faithfully teach the authorial intent of the text.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
27. I regularly read and study the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28. I feel comfortable determining how Jesus relates to and gives light to the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
29. Old Testament characters are primarily moral examples to emulate or avoid.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
30. Old Testament ceremonial practices are relevant to modern Christ-followers.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
31. All Old Testament prophecy finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
32. Explaining the human flaws of biblical characters is a justifiable means for Christ-centered teaching.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
33. Teaching conditional commands for divine approval is an appropriate Christian message.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

34. The Ten Commandments are still binding on New Testament Christians in the same way they were for Old Testament believers.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
35. The gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be presented from Old Testament wisdom literature.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
36. Some Old Testament prophecy finds its fulfillment in the Old Testament alone.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
37. Old Testament typology is an appropriate way to teach Jesus from the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
38. All Old Testament types point to Jesus and find New Testament correspondence.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
39. Jesus came not only to obey the Law, but to transform the Law.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
40. Christ-followers are not required to obey the law, but to fulfill the Law.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
41. Fulfilled Old Testament promises can still point forward to the future (i.e., multiple or progressive fulfillment).	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
42. Old Testament believers were saved by God through works and law-keeping.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
43. There is more evidence of grace in in the New Testament than the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
44. Pre-incarnate appearances of Jesus appear in the Old Testament and are legitimate means of pointing to the gospel in the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

45. It is appropriate and biblically faithful to look for a path to Jesus Christ in every Scripture passage.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
46. The Old Testament must be interpreted in light of what we learn about salvation and redemption in the New Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
47. The gospel is present in the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

## APPENDIX 2

### CHRISTOCENTRIC PERSPECTIVE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

The curriculum evaluation rubric assessed the exegetical merit of the proposed Christ-centered hermeneutic principles, biblical faithfulness to the redemptive historical narrative, appropriateness of teaching methodology, and contextual usability of the teaching model within the prescribed local church.

## CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

Directions: Please respond to the following statements. The questions require you to give your opinion using the following scale: 1 = insufficient; 2 = requires attention; 3 = sufficient; 4 = exemplary. A comment section is provided for additional feedback.

<b>Christocentric Perspective of the Old Testament Curriculum Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>Curriculum Evaluation</b>					
<b>1 = insufficient 2 = requires attention 3 = sufficient 4 = exemplary</b>					
Criteria					Comments
The curriculum is clearly relevant to equipping bible teachers to discover Jesus in the Old Testament.					
The curriculum is faithful to demonstrate how various Old Testament literary genres point to the person and promise of Jesus Christ.					
The curriculum demonstrates a legitimate exegetical path to the person and promise of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.					
The curriculum addresses key issues and concerns related to Christocentric interpretation and application.					
The curriculum demonstrates a coherent biblical-theological approach to redemptive historical interpretation.					
The curriculum demonstrates a reproducible, practical Christocentric methodology.					
The curriculum demonstrates an approach to application that grounds biblical imperatives in the indicative of the person and promise of Jesus Christ.					
The thesis of each lesson was clearly stated.					
The main points of each lesson support each lesson's thesis.					
Each lesson thoroughly covered the material.					
The lessons were clear, practical, and contextually appropriate for a local congregation.					

### APPENDIX 3

#### SURVEY FOR THOSE WHO TEACH THE OLD TESTAMENT

This survey was used to measure the participant's growth in understanding of how to teach a Christocentric perspective of the Old Testament.

SURVEY FOR THOSE WHO TEACH  
THE OLD TESTAMENT

Personal Identification Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your understanding of the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament. John Aaron Martin is conducting this research for the purposes of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will indicate your beliefs or convictions about the various issues and challenges related to interpreting and applying the Old Testament based on your experience as a lay Bible teacher. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this survey for those who teach the Old Testament, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

Directions: Please answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing an “X” next to the appropriate response.

**Part 1**

1. To what age group do you belong?  
 A. 20-30  
 B. 31-40  
 C. 41-50  
 D. 51-60  
 E. 61-70  
 F. 75+
  
2. I have been a Christian for:  
 A. 1-5 years  
 B. 6-10 years  
 C. 11-20 years  
 D. 21+ years
  
3. I have been teaching God’s Word in corporate or classroom settings for:  
 A. 1-5 years  
 B. 6-10 years  
 C. 11-20 years  
 D. 21+ years

4. How often do you teach from the Old Testament?  
 A. 10 times annually  
 B. 20 times annually  
 C. 30 times annually  
 D. 40+ times annually
  
5. Do you eagerly look forward to teaching the Old Testament?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No
  
6. Do you struggle to find contemporary relevance in the Old Testament?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No  
 C. Sometimes depending on the literary genre
  
7. Do you struggle to understand how Jesus relates to the Old Testament?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No  
 C. Sometimes depending on the literary genre

**Directions:** Respond to the following statements. These questions require you to give your opinion using the following scale: SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; DS = disagree somewhat; AS = agree somewhat; A = agree; SA = strongly agree; please circle the most appropriate answer.

**Part 2**

- |  |    |   |    |    |   |    |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 8. I find the Old Testament easy to understand.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 9. The Old Testament is outdated.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 10. The Old Testament does not have value to the new covenant believer in Jesus Christ for Christian living. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 11. The Old Testament applies as much to Christians today as it did in antiquity.                            | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 12. All Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness. | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

13. I have a high view of Scripture, believing in the inspiration, authority, infallibility, sufficiency, and effectiveness of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
14. By authority, we mean that the Bible is the absolute standard for truth (matters of faith) and the absolute rule for living (matters of practice).	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
15. Infallibility means the Bible is free from error, the standard by which all matters of theology, history, and science are to be judged.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
16. Sufficiency means the Bible is all that is needed to direct us in how to know and please God.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
17. Effectiveness means there is inherent power in God's word to accomplish what it says.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
18. The old covenant and new covenant are two different covenants.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
19. God's covenant with man is progressively revealed.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
20. The purpose of Scripture is to guide men to God, and since the only way to God is through faith in Jesus Christ, the revelation of Jesus should be the predominant theme of Scripture.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
21. Texts that prepare the people of God to meet God are deficient unless they ultimately are understood in relationship to the person and work of Jesus Christ.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
22. If a text neither plainly predicts or prepares for Jesus' redemptive work, it is appropriate for the interpreter to explain how the text reflects the gospel.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

23. We can only fully understand Jesus in light of the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
24. It is okay to teach an Old Testament text with no reference to Jesus.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
25. A textual message can advocate can advocate biblical behavior and still remain sub-Christian.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
26. Biblical texts with moral imperatives that contain no explicit reference to Christ should be taught without any explicit reference to Jesus in order to faithfully teach the authorial intent of the text.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
27. I regularly read and study the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
28. I feel comfortable determining how Jesus relates to and gives light to the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
29. Old Testament characters are primarily moral examples to emulate or avoid.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
30. Old Testament ceremonial practices are relevant to modern Christ-followers.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
31. All Old Testament prophecy finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
32. Explaining the human flaws of biblical characters is a justifiable means for Christ-centered teaching.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
33. Teaching conditional commands for divine approval is an appropriate Christian message.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

34. The Ten Commandments are still binding on New Testament Christians in the same way they were for Old Testament believers.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
35. The gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be presented from Old Testament wisdom literature.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
36. Some Old Testament prophecy finds its fulfillment in the Old Testament alone.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
37. Old Testament typology is an appropriate way to teach Jesus from the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
38. All Old Testament types point to Jesus and find New Testament correspondence.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
39. Jesus came not only to obey the Law, but to transform the Law.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
40. Christ-followers are not required to obey the law, but to fulfill the Law.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
41. Fulfilled Old Testament promises can still point forward to the future (i.e., multiple or progressive fulfillment).	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
42. Old Testament believers were saved by God through works and Law-keeping.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
43. There is more evidence of grace in in the New Testament than the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
44. Pre-incarnate appearances of Jesus appear in the Old Testament and are legitimate means of pointing to the gospel in the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

45. It is appropriate and biblically faithful to look for a path to Jesus Christ in every Scripture passage.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
46. The Old Testament must be interpreted in light of what we learn about salvation and redemption in the New Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
47. The gospel is present in the Old Testament.	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA

## APPENDIX 4

### POST-SEMINAR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions were asked to class participants after they completed the seminar “Reading Jesus in the Old Testament.” The interview revealed changes the participant made regarding his or her approach to teaching a Christocentric perspective of the Old Testament.

## POST-SEMINAR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your understanding of the relationship of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament. John Aaron Martin is conducting this research for the purposes of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research you will provide your opinion about the effectiveness of the seminar in accomplishing its stated goals. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or your name identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

By your completion of this post-seminar interview questionnaire for those who teach the Old Testament, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this project.

1. Describe your attitude about the Old Testament prior to this seminar.
  - What would you have said is the primary purpose of the Old Testament?
  - What was the value of the Old Testament to your Christian walk?
  - How did the Old Testament contribute to your Christian maturity?
  - Could you have used the Old Testament to share the gospel with an unbeliever?
  
2. Describe your attitude about teaching from the Old Testament prior to this seminar.
  - Did you regularly teach from the Old Testament?
  - Would you have described your teaching ministry as balanced between Old and New Testament texts?
  - Did you feel that the Old Testament was generally inferior to the New Testament in its ability to point to the gospel of Jesus Christ? If so, in what way?
  
3. Describe your confidence level about the relevance of the Old Testament in light of Jesus Christ generally now that the seminar is complete.

4. Describe your confidence level about teaching from the Old Testament Christocentrically now that the seminar is complete.
5. How did you generally interpret and apply the Old Testament prior to this seminar?
  - Was your teaching primarily moralistic?
  - Was your teaching about Old Testament characters primarily point to examples to follow or reject (i.e., “Be like David. Don’t be like Saul.”)?
6. How are you using the interpretative tools demonstrated in this seminar in your current study in preparation to teach the Old Testament?
7. Can you describe one significant benefit of this seminar to your teaching ministry?

APPENDIX 5

AVERAGES OF THE SURVEY FOR THOSE WHO  
TEACH THE OLD TESTAMENT

Table A1. Average responses to question 1

Question 1						
To what age group do you belong?						
Pre-Test	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71+
	8	10	2	9	10	5
Post-Test	8	10	2	9	10	5

Table A2. Average responses to question 2

Question 2				
I have been a Christian for:				
Pre-Test	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	21+ years
	0	1	9	34
Post-Test	0	1	9	34

Table A3. Average responses to question 3

Question 3				
I have been teaching God's Word in corporate and classroom settings for:				
Pre-Test	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	21+ years
	21	4	5	14
Post-Test	21	4	5	14

Table A4. Average responses to question 4

Question 4				
How often do you teach the Old Testament?				
Pre-Test	10x's annually	20x's annually	30x's annually	40+ annually
	27	13	4	--
Post-Test	27	13	4	--

Table A5. Average responses to question 5

Question 5		
Do you eagerly look forward to teaching the Old Testament?		
Pre-Test	Yes	No
	27	17
Post-Test	31	13

Table A6. Average responses to question 6

Question 6			
Do you struggle to find contemporary relevance in the Old Testament?			
Pre-Test	Yes	No	Sometimes
	4	5	35
Post-Test	3	16	25

Table A7. Average responses to question 7

Question 7			
Do you struggle to understand how Jesus relates to the Old Testament?			
Pre-Test	Yes	No	Sometimes
	2	11	31
Post-Test	3	23	18

Possible Responses to Questions 8 through 47:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Disagree Somewhat
- 4 = Agree Somewhat
- 5 = Agree
- 6 = Strongly Agree

Table A8. Average responses to statement 8

Statement 8	
I find the Old Testament easy to understand.	
Pre-Test Average	2.89
Post-Test Average	3.95
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A9. Average responses to statement 9

Statement 9	
The Old Testament is outdated.	
Pre-Test Average	1.25
Post-Test Average	1.14
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A10. Average responses to statement 10

Statement 10	
The Old Testament does not have value to the new covenant believer in Jesus Christ for Christian living.	
Pre-Test Average	1.18
Post-Test Average	1.14
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A11. Average responses to statement 11

Statement 11	
The Old Testament applies as much to Christians today as it did in antiquity.	
Pre-Test Average	4.43
Post-Test Average	5.41
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A12. Average responses to statement 12

Statement 12	
All Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.	
Pre-Test Average	5.91
Post-Test Average	5.95
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A13. Average responses to statement 13

Statement 13						
I have a high view of Scripture, believing in the inspiration, authority, infallibility, sufficiency, and effectiveness of scripture from Genesis to Revelation.						
Pre-Test Average						5.77
Post-Test Average						5.95
1 = SD	2 = D	3 = DS	4 = AS	5 = A	6 = AS	

Table A14. Average responses to statement 14

Question 14						
By authority, we mean that the Bible is the absolute standard for truth (matters of faith) and the absolute rule for living (matters of practice).						
Pre-Test Average						5.93
Post-Test Average						5.93
1 = SD	2 = D	3 = DS	4 = AS	5 = A	6 = AS	

Table A15. Average responses to statement 15

Statement 15						
By infallibility, we mean that the Bible is free from error, the standard by which all matters of theology, history, and science are to be judged.						
Pre-Test Average						5.89
Post-Test Average						5.89
1 = SD	2 = D	3 = DS	4 = AS	5 = A	6 = AS	

Table A16. Average responses to statement 16

Statement 16						
By sufficiency, we mean the Bible is all we need to direct us in how to know and please God.						
Pre-Test Average						5.70
Post-Test Average						5.82
1 = SD	2 = D	3 = DS	4 = AS	5 = A	6 = AS	

Table A17. Average responses to statement 17

Statement 17						
By effectiveness, we mean there is inherent power in God's Word to accomplish what it says.						
Pre-Test Average						5.73
Post-Test Average						5.86
1 = SD	2 = D	3 = DS	4 = AS	5 = A	6 = AS	

Table A18. Average responses to statement 18

Statement 18						
The old covenant and new covenant are two different covenants.						
Pre-Test Average						3.84
Post-Test Average						3.14
1 = SD	2 = D	3 = DS	4 = AS	5 = A	6 = AS	

Table A19. Average responses to statement 19

Statement 19						
God's covenant with man is progressively revealed.						
Pre-Test Average						4.77
Post-Test Average						5.45
1 = SD	2 = D	3 = DS	4 = AS	5 = A	6 = AS	

Table A20. Average responses to statement 20

Statement 20						
The purpose of Scripture is to guide men to God, and since the only way to God is through faith in Jesus Christ, the revelation of Jesus should be the predominant theme of scripture.						
Pre-Test Average						5.30
Post-Test Average						5.82
1 = SD	2 = D	3 = DS	4 = AS	5 = A	6 = AS	

Table A21. Average responses to statement 21

Statement 21						
Texts that prepare the people of God to meet God are deficient unless they ultimately are understood in relationship to the person and work of Jesus Christ.						
Pre-Test Average						4.95
Post-Test Average						5.52
1 = SD	2 = D	3 = DS	4 = AS	5 = A	6 = AS	

Table A22. Average responses to statement 22

Statement 22	
If a text neither plainly predicts or prepares for Jesus' redemptive work, it is appropriate for the interpreter to explain how the text reflects the gospel.	
Pre-Test Average	3.86
Post-Test Average	4.93
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A23. Average responses to statement 23

Statement 23	
We can only fully understand Jesus in light of the Old Testament.	
Pre-Test Average	4.34
Post-Test Average	5.36
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A24. Average responses to statement 24

Statement 24	
It is okay to teach an Old Testament text with no reference to Jesus.	
Pre-Test Average	3.32
Post-Test Average	2.50
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A25. Average responses to statement 25

Statement 25	
A textual message can advocate biblical behavior and still remain sub-Christian.	
Pre-Test Average	4.27
Post-Test Average	5.18
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A26. Average responses to statement 26

Statement 26	
Biblical texts with moral imperatives that contain no explicit reference to Christ should be taught without any explicit reference to Jesus in order to faithfully teach the authorial intent of the text.	
Pre-Test Average	2.48
Post-Test Average	1.89
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A27. Average responses to statement 27

Statement 27	
I regularly read and study the Old Testament.	
Pre-Test Average	4.48
Post-Test Average	4.57
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A28. Average responses to statement 28

Statement 28	
I feel comfortable determining how Jesus relates to and gives light to the Old Testament.	
Pre-Test Average	3.48
Post-Test Average	4.66
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A29. Average responses to statement 29

Statement 29	
Old Testament characters are primarily moral examples to emulate or avoid.	
Pre-Test Average	2.70
Post-Test Average	2.02
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A30. Average responses to statement 30

Statement 30	
Old Testament ceremonial practices are relevant to modern Christ-followers.	
Pre-Test Average	4.16
Post-Test Average	3.25
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A31. Average responses to statement 31

Statement 31	
All Old Testament prophecy finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus.	
Pre-Test Average	4.50
Post-Test Average	5.52
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A32. Average responses to statement 32

Statement 32	
Explaining the human flaws of biblical characters is a justifiable means for Christ-centered teaching.	
Pre-Test Average	3.95
Post-Test Average	4.66
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A33. Average responses to statement 33

Statement 33	
Teaching conditional commands for divine approval is an appropriate Christian message.	
Pre-Test Average	2.95
Post-Test Average	1.91
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A34. Average responses to statement 34

Statement 34	
The Ten Commandments are still binding on New Testament Christians in the same way they were for Old Testament believers.	
Pre-Test Average	4.48
Post-Test Average	2.48
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A35. Average responses to statement 35

Statement 35	
The gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be presented from Old Testament wisdom literature.	
Pre-Test Average	2.16
Post-Test Average	1.66
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A36. Average responses to statement 36

Statement 36	
Some Old Testament prophecy finds its fulfillment in the Old Testament alone.	
Pre-Test Average	4.18
Post-Test Average	3.57
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A37. Average responses to statement 37

Statement 37	
Old Testament typology is an appropriate way to teach Jesus from the Old Testament.	
Pre-Test Average	4.05
Post-Test Average	5.11
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A38. Average responses to statement 38

Statement 38	
All Old Testament types point to Jesus and find New Testament correspondence.	
Pre-Test Average	3.86
Post-Test Average	4.27
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A39. Average responses to statement 39

Statement 39	
Jesus came not only to obey the Law, but to transform the Law.	
Pre-Test Average	3.89
Post-Test Average	3.95
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A40. Average responses to statement 40

Statement 40	
Christ-followers are not required to obey the Law, but to fulfill the Law.	
Pre-Test Average	2.61
Post-Test Average	3.68
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A41. Average responses to statement 41

Statement 41	
Fulfilled Old Testament promises can still point forward to the future (i.e., multiple or progressive fulfillment).	
Pre-Test Average	5.05
Post-Test Average	5.23
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A42. Average responses to statement 42

Statement 42	
Old Testament believers were saved by God through works and law-keeping.	
Pre-Test Average	2.45
Post-Test Average	1.41
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A43. Average responses to statement 43

Statement 43	
There is more evidence of grace in the New Testament than the Old Testament.	
Pre-Test Average	2.91
Post-Test Average	2.16
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A44. Average responses to statement 44

Statement 44	
Pre-incarnate appearances of Jesus appear in the Old Testament and are legitimate means of pointing to the gospel in the Old Testament.	
Pre-Test Average	4.45
Post-Test Average	5.70
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A45. Average responses to statement 45

Statement 45	
It is appropriate and biblically faithful to look for a path to Jesus Christ in every Scripture passage.	
Pre-Test Average	4.00
Post-Test Average	5.14
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A46. Average responses to statement 46

Statement 46	
The Old Testament must be interpreted in light of what we learn about salvation and redemption in the New Testament.	
Pre-Test Average	4.52
Post-Test Average	5.34
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

Table A47. Average responses to statement 47

Statement 47	
The gospel is present in the Old Testament.	
Pre-Test Average	4.64
Post-Test Average	5.57
1 = SD    2 = D    3 = DS    4 = AS    5 = A    6 = AS	

APPENDIX 6

PERCENTAGE RESULTS OF THE SURVEY FOR  
THOSE WHO TEACH THE OLD TESTAMENT

Table A48. Average responses to question 5

Question 5: Do you eagerly look forward to teaching the Old Testament?				
Pre-Seminar			Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	27	61%	31	71%
No	17	39%	13	30%

Table A49. Average responses to question 6

Question 6: Do you struggle to find contemporary relevance in the Old Testament?				
Pre-Seminar			Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	4	9%	3	7%
No	5	11%	16	36%
Sometimes	35	80%	25	57%

Table A50. Average responses to question 7

Question 7: Do you struggle to understand how Jesus relates to the Old Testament?				
Pre-Seminar			Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	2	5%	3	7%
No	11	25%	23	52%
Sometimes	31	71%	18	41%

Table A51. Average responses to statement 8

Statement 8: I find the Old Testament easy to understand.				
	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	--	--	--	--
Agree	7	16%	7	16%
Agree Somewhat	21	48%	26	59%
Disagree Somewhat	12	27%	9	21%
Disagree	4	9%	2	5%
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A52. Average responses to statement 9

Statement 9: The Old Testament is outdated.				
	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	--	--	--	--
Agree	--	--	--	--
Agree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree Somewhat	1	2%	--	--
Disagree	9	21%	6	14%
Strongly Disagree	34	77%	38	86%

Table A53. Average responses to statement 10

Statement 10: The Old Testament does not have value to the new covenant believer in Jesus Christ for Christian living.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	--	--	--	--
Agree	--	--	--	--
Agree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree	8	18%	6	14%
Strongly Disagree	36	82%	38	86%

Table A54. Average responses to statement 11

Statement 11: The Old Testament applies at much to Christians today as it did in antiquity.				
	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	15	34%	22	50%
Agree	16	36%	16	36%
Agree Somewhat	5	11%	--	--
Disagree Somewhat	5	11%	4	9%
Disagree	3	7%	2	5%
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A55. Average responses to statement 12

Statement 12: All Scripture is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	40	91%	42	96%
Agree	4	9%	2	4%
Agree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree	--	--	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A56. Average responses to statement 13

Statement 13: I have a high view of Scripture, believing in the inspiration, authority, infallibility, sufficiency, and effectiveness of scripture from Genesis to Revelation.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	39	89%	42	96%
Agree	5	11%	2	4%
Agree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree	--	--	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A57. Average responses to statement 14

Statement 14: By authority, we mean that the Bible is the absolute standard for truth (matters of faith) and the absolute rule for living (matters of practice).				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	41	93%	41	93%
Agree	3	7%	3	7%
Agree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree	--	--	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A58. Average responses to statement 15

Statement 15: By infallibility, we mean that the Bible is free from error, the standard by which all matters of theology, history, and science are to be judged.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	41	93%	41	93%
Agree	2	5%	2	5%
Agree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree Somewhat	1	2%	1	2%
Disagree	--	--	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A59. Average responses to statement 16

Statement 16: By sufficiency, we mean the Bible is all we need to direct us in how to know and please God.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	34	77%	37	84%
Agree	7	16%	6	14%
Agree Somewhat	3	7%	1	2%
Disagree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree	--	--	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A60. Average responses to statement 17

Statement 17: By effectiveness, we mean there is inherent power in God's word to accomplish what it says.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	34	77%	40	90%
Agree	8	18%	2	5%
Agree Somewhat	2	5%	2	5%
Disagree Somewhat	--	--	--	--
Disagree	--	--	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A61. Average responses to statement 18

Statement 18: The old covenant and new covenant are two different covenants.				
	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	6	14%	4	9%
Agree	11	25%	10	23%
Agree Somewhat	14	32%	3	7%
Disagree Somewhat	2	5%	5	11%
Disagree	5	11%	15	34%
Strongly Disagree	6	14%	7	16%

Table A62. Average responses to statement 19

Statement 19: God's covenant with man is progressively revealed.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	11	25%	23	52%
Agree	12	27%	17	39%
Agree Somewhat	15	34%	4	9%
Disagree Somewhat	4	9%	--	--
Disagree	--	--	--	--
Strongly Disagree	2	5%	--	--

Table A63. Average responses to statement 20

Statement 20: The purpose of Scripture is to guide men to God, and since the only way to God is through faith in Jesus Christ, the revelation of Jesus should be the predominant theme of Scripture.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	21	48%	37	84%
Agree	8	18%	6	14%
Agree Somewhat	16	36%	1	2%
Disagree Somewhat	1	2%	--	--
Disagree	--	--	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A64. Average responses to statement 21

Statement 21: Texts that prepare the people of God to meet God are deficient unless they ultimately are understood in relationship to the person and work of Jesus Christ.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	39%	27	61%
Agree	6	14%	15	34%
Agree Somewhat	18	41%	1	2%
Disagree Somewhat	3	7%	--	--
Disagree	1	2%	1	2%
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A65. Average responses to statement 22

Statement 22: If a text neither plainly predicts or prepares for Jesus' redemptive work, it is appropriate for the interpreter to explain how the text reflects the gospel.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	5%	11	25%
Agree	10	23%	26	59%
Agree Somewhat	19	43%	2	5%
Disagree Somewhat	9	21%	4	9%
Disagree	1	2%	--	--
Strongly Disagree	3	7%	1	2%

Table A66. Average responses to statement 23

Statement 23: We can only fully understand Jesus in light of the Old Testament.				
	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	32%	25	57%
Agree	6	14%	14	32%
Agree Somewhat	12	27%	3	7%
Disagree Somewhat	8	18%	--	--
Disagree	1	2%	2	5%
Strongly Disagree	3	7%	--	--

Table A67. Average responses to statement 24

Statement 24: It is okay to teach an Old Testament text with no reference to Jesus.				
	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	5%	1	2%
Agree	6	17%	5	11%
Agree Somewhat	13	30%	4	9%
Disagree Somewhat	11	25%	8	18%
Disagree	8	18%	12	27%
Strongly Disagree	3	7%	15	34%

Table A68. Average responses to statement 25

Question 25: A textual message can advocate biblical behavior and still remain sub-Christian.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7	16%	13	30%
Agree	15	34%	28	64%
Agree Somewhat	6	17%	1	2%
Disagree Somewhat	14	32%	2	5%
Disagree	2	5%	--	--
Strongly Disagree	1	2%	--	--

Table A69. Average responses to statement 26

Statement 26: Biblical texts with moral imperatives that contain no explicit reference to Christ should be taught without any explicit reference to Jesus in order to faithfully teach the authorial intent of the text.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	--	--	--	--
Agree	1	2%	--	--
Agree Somewhat	6	17%	--	--
Disagree Somewhat	10	23%	7	16%
Disagree	23	52%	24	56%
Strongly Disagree	4	9%	14	32%

Table A70. Average responses to statement 27

Statement 27: I regularly read and study the Old Testament.				
	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	6	17%	8	18%
Agree	17	39%	17	39%
Agree Somewhat	15	34%	13	30%
Disagree Somewhat	4	9%	4	9%
Disagree	2	5%	2	5%
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A71. Average responses to statement 28

Statement 28: I feel comfortable determining how Jesus relates to and gives light to the Old Testament.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	6	17%	7	16%
Agree	3	7%	21	48%
Agree Somewhat	10	23%	11	25%
Disagree Somewhat	18	41%	5	11%
Disagree	7	16%	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A72. Average responses to statement 29

Statement 29: The Old Testament characters are primarily moral examples to emulate or avoid.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	2%	--	--
Agree	1	2%	2	5%
Agree Somewhat	14	32%	3	7%
Disagree Somewhat	7	16%	3	7%
Disagree	10	23%	19	43%
Strongly Disagree	11	5%	17	39%

Table A73. Average responses to statement 30

Statement 30: Old Testament ceremonial practices are relevant to modern Christ-followers.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	5%	3	7%
Agree	12	27%	7	16%
Agree Somewhat	13	30%	13	30%
Disagree Somewhat	10	23%	4	9%
Disagree	4	9%	9	21%
Strongly Disagree	3	7%	8	18%

Table A74. Average responses to statement 31

Statement 31: All Old Testament prophecy finds its ultimate fulfillment in Jesus.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	32%	28	67%
Agree	9	21%	12	27%
Agree Somewhat	8	18%	3	7%
Disagree Somewhat	11	25%	1	2%
Disagree	2	4%	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A75. Average responses to statement 32

Statement 32: Explaining the human flaws of biblical characters is a justifiable means for Christ-centered teaching.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	11%	12	27%
Agree	9	21%	19	43%
Agree Somewhat	13	30%	4	9%
Disagree Somewhat	13	30%	5	11%
Disagree	4	9%	3	7%
Strongly Disagree	--	--	1	2%

Table A76. Average responses to statement 33

Statement 33: Teaching conditional commands for divine approval is an appropriate Christian message.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	7%	--	--
Agree	3	7%	1	2%
Agree Somewhat	10	23%	3	7%
Disagree Somewhat	7	16%	4	11%
Disagree	15	34%	19	43%
Strongly Disagree	6	14%	17	39%

Table A77. Average responses to statement 34

Statement 34: The Ten Commandments are still binding on New Testament Christians in the same way they were for Old Testament believers.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	30%	8	18%
Agree	10	23%	2	5%
Agree Somewhat	10	23%	2	5%
Disagree Somewhat	7	16%	6	14%
Disagree	4	9%	19	43%
Strongly Disagree	--	--	7	16%

Table A78. Average responses to statement 35

Statement 35: The gospel of Jesus Christ cannot be presented from Old Testament wisdom literature.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	--	--	--	--
Agree	2	5%	1	2%
Agree Somewhat	2	5%	2	5%
Disagree Somewhat	6	14%	2	5%
Disagree	24	55%	15	34%
Strongly Disagree	11	25%	24	55%

Table A79. Average responses to statement 36

Statement 36: Some Old Testament prophecy finds its fulfillment in the Old Testament alone.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	3	7%	5	11%
Agree	17	39%	12	27%
Agree Somewhat	13	30%	5	11%
Disagree Somewhat	7	16%	7	16%
Disagree	3	7%	11	25%
Strongly Disagree	2	5%	4	9%

Table A80. Average responses to statement 37

Statement 37: Old Testament typology is an appropriate way to teach Jesus from the Old Testament.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	7	16%	11	25%
Agree	14	32%	27	61%
Agree Somewhat	12	27%	6	14%
Disagree Somewhat	6	14%	--	--
Disagree	--	--	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A81. Average responses to statement 38

Statement 38: All Old Testament types point to Jesus and find New Testament correspondence.				
	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	2	5%	7	16%
Agree	10	23%	17	39%
Agree Somewhat	15	34%	8	18%
Disagree Somewhat	14	32%	6	14%
Disagree	3	7%	5	11%
Strongly Disagree	--	--	1	2%

Table A82. Average responses to statement 39

Statement 39: Jesus came not only to obey the Law, but to transform the Law.				
	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	18%	18	41%
Agree	11	25%	15	34%
Agree Somewhat	5	11%	4	9%
Disagree Somewhat	12	27%	2	5%
Disagree	4	9%	2	5%
Strongly Disagree	4	9%	3	7%

Table A83. Average responses to statement 40

Statement 40: Christ-followers are not required to obey the Law, but to fulfill the Law.				
	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	4	9%	9	21%
Agree	2	5%	10	23%
Agree Somewhat	4	9%	6	14%
Disagree Somewhat	10	23%	73	7%
Disagree	11	25%	10	23%
Strongly Disagree	13	30%	5	11%

Table A84. Average responses to statement 41

Statement 41: Fulfilled Old Testament promises can still point toward the future (i.e., multiple or progressive fulfillment).				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	5	11%	17	39%
Agree	22	50%	21	48%
Agree Somewhat	14	32%	5	11%
Disagree Somewhat	6	14%	1	2%
Disagree	2	5%	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A85. Average responses to statement 42

Statement 42: Old Testament believers were saved by God through works and law-keeping.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	2%	--	--
Agree	2	5%	1	2%
Agree Somewhat	9	21%	1	2%
Disagree Somewhat	11	25%	1	2%
Disagree	4	9%	9	21%
Strongly Disagree	18	41%	32	73%

Table A86. Average responses to statement 43

Statement 43: There is more evidence of grace in the New Testament than the Old Testament.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	2%	1	2%
Agree	4	9%	2	5%
Agree Somewhat	17	39%	4	9%
Disagree Somewhat	2	5%	5	11%
Disagree	9	21%	16	36%
Strongly Disagree	11	25%	16	36%

Table A87. Average responses to statement 44

Statement 44: Pre-incarnate appearances of Jesus appear in the Old Testament and are legitimate means of pointing to the gospel in the Old Testament.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	6	14%	17	39%
Agree	14	32%	19	43%
Agree Somewhat	19	43%	5	11%
Disagree Somewhat	4	9%	1	2%
Disagree	1	2%	2	5%
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A88. Average responses to statement 45

Statement 45: It is appropriate and biblically faithful to look for a path to Jesus Christ in every Scripture passage.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	6	14%	15	34%
Agree	11	25%	21	48%
Agree Somewhat	8	18%	7	16%
Disagree Somewhat	17	39%	1	2%
Disagree	1	2%	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A89. Average responses to statement 46

Statement 46: The Old Testament must be interpreted in light of what we learn about salvation and redemption in the New Testament.				
Possible Responses	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	8	18%	19	44%
Agree	16	36%	22	50%
Agree Somewhat	14	32%	2	5%
Disagree Somewhat	5	11%	1	2%
Disagree	--	--	--	--
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

Table A90. Average responses to statement 47

Statement 47: The gospel is present in the Old Testament.				
	Pre-Seminar		Post-Seminar	
Possible Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	32%	30	68%
Agree	8	18%	11	25%
Agree Somewhat	16	36%	2	5%
Disagree Somewhat	4	9%	--	--
Disagree	2	5%	1	2%
Strongly Disagree	--	--	--	--

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## ABSTRACT

### EQUIPPING THE BIBLE TEACHERS OF CONCORD BAPTIST CHURCH, CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE, TO INTERPRET THE OLD TESTAMENT CHRISTOCENTRICALLY

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The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015

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The ministry research project explores what current and identified prospective lay Bible teachers at Concord Baptist Church understand about how to teach the Old Testament from a Christocentric perspective. The project seeks to equip lay Bible teachers with helpful exegetical tools to discover and apply Jesus Christ from the Old Testament; to provide practical categories for Christ-centered biblical interpretation; and to bolster confidence in lay Bible teachers so they can confidently teach the Old Testament with the gospel in view. Chapter 1 presents the purpose, goals, context, rationale, definitions, and limitations of the project.

Chapter 2 discusses biblical and theological justification for developing a Christocentric perspective of the Old Testament. Specifically, this chapter will explore various New Testament texts that defend and demonstrate a Christ-centered hermeneutical approach to the Old Testament.

Chapter 3 explores theological and practical support for equipping lay Bible teachers with a Christocentric perspective of the Old Testament. This chapter demonstrates sound exegetical tools for biblical interpretation that maintain the integrity of canonical unity that results in life-transforming biblical application.

Chapter 4 details the creation and implementation of the training seminar designed to equip lay Bible teachers with the interpretive skills necessary for Christocentric interpretation of the Old Testament.

Chapter 5 provides an evaluation of the project goals, strengths and weaknesses of the project, what changes need to be made to increase the benefit of the project to the local church, as well as personal and theological reflections on the success or failure of the project. This project claims that a Christocentric perspective of the Old Testament is necessary to preach and teach a Christian message from the Old Testament Scriptures.

## VITA

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Diploma, Lexington High School, Lexington, South Carolina, 1992

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### MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

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