

The God Of The Old Testament – Part 1

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Now that we have made it through the Old Testament in our big picture of the Bible overview, what have we been able to see and learn about God? Are we more familiar with each book as it pertains to the historical context and subject matter? How has God been elevated in our minds? How many examples of great faith do we see as opposed to the sad examples of the failures of God's people? The ultimate goal of the study has been to draw closer to God and I hope in a small measure, that has been accomplished.

The apostle Paul wrote, "For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope." (Rom. 15:4.) The early church used the Old Testament scriptures to learn about the hope they had and even today, studying these scriptures brings great value. Without the Old Testament, folks lack a major part of what God gave to teach about Himself. Not only that, people miss what God taught about mankind, sin, and forgiveness. And they fail to have an adequate knowledge about the glories of His kingdom under Jesus Christ. God saw it in glorious terms and God's people will miss those glories if all they know is the New Testament. The church, God's kingdom, won't mean as much.

But I can already hear objections being raised. Many will say they have tried to read the Old Testament and they would rather go get a root canal at the dentist. People start reading in Genesis but die in Leviticus. To be sure, there are parts of it that are tedious at best. We may get bogged down in the dimensions and descriptions of the tabernacle and ark of the covenant. We may fog over when reading about the boundaries of the twelve tribes in the promised land. And don't get started on all those genealogies list therein. All that figurative language is also a problem.

Nevertheless, it is God's written revelation to us human beings. Mark Twain once said, "It's not the parts of the Bible that I don't understand that bother me, it's the parts that I do understand." So, we read and read and study. We keep doing it and learn more each time. The more we read it, the more God comes into clear focus. Hopefully, our "bird's eye view" trip through the entire Old Testament has laid a good foundation for future studies of the great treasures found therein.

Paul said it. The things written before in the Old Testament bring hope. If there is anything the world needs, it is hope. The fact that the world needs hope ought to suggest to folks that hope is not to be found in the world. Or else, hope would already be achieved. The fact is, only in God, will hope be found. In the Old Testament, the world was a mess. The Jews were a mess. Selfishness among all people ruled the day. Sin ran rampant. And God ran through periods of judgment and restoration.

And through it all, one gets a sense that God was building toward something. From the beginning, God promised someone would bruise the head of the devil. Malachi spoke of a messenger to prepare for the Lord to come out of His temple. From Genesis to Malachi, God was working out His plan and building toward something spectacular. And it was a plan to benefit all nations and peoples, although God did much of His working through the Jews. They had much to look forward to in serving God. And while God was doing His work, He revealed Himself in a mighty way. We can know the Almighty God.