

# THE BELL

June 2022

Gather, Love, Serve, Impact

## Jesus's Bible

It has always been an amazement to me the number of people within the church who ignore almost completely the Old Testament. John MacArthur, who has been preaching at Grace Community Church in Sun City, California for almost fifty years, has preached through every verse of the New Testament. Consider these numbers: MacArthur has preached 3,468 sermons and of those sermons 181 of them come from the Old Testament. So, the most prolific preacher of the last 40 years has devoted .05% of his time and effort to the Old Testament. While MacArthur is unique and this is an extreme example, I would argue that his tendency to ignore the Old Testament in favor of the New is a common practice within the church today. This practice has contributed to the level of biblical illiteracy that we face within the church community today.

Now I know that there are people as well as pastors in the church who argue that the Old Testament is not important to believers today because now, we have the New Covenant and the New Testament, and our focus should be on them. We would all agree that a new believer, someone who is new to the church should get a firm grasp on the New Testament as soon as possible to strengthen their faith. The problem is the majority rarely venture out of the New Testament for the Old. Yes, we all grew up learning the stories in Sunday School of Gideon, Moses, Joshua, Samson, Daniel, and many others, but those were stories tied simply to moral teachings and the like. Some would argue that Jesus in His own words says that he "completed, or fulfilled, the Old Testament," so there is no reason to bother reading a book that has been superseded by the New Testament.

So, in light of this, I wanted to spend a little time explaining why the Old Testament is important to the church today.

First, the sheer volume and space devoted to the Old Testament should speak to its importance. This is God's first special revelation to His people. It serves as the foundation and framework of the fulfillment we find in Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

Repeatedly, in the Gospels, Jesus begins a teaching with His disciples, or His opponents, by saying, "*you have heard it said,*" or "*is it not written.*" In each of those instances Jesus is referring to what they have been taught or what they have read from the Old Testament. The Old Testament was Jesus's Bible. When He speaks of scripture, it is the scriptures of the Old Testament. He continuously refers to them as the foundation upon which He stands. Here are just a couple of examples: Matthew 5:17, Luke 24:44.

Second, the Old Testament provides more explicit understanding of key teachings contained in the New Testament. Within the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, we find the covenants God made with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David described and allusions to the New Covenant. An understanding of the Old Testament is necessary to have a complete Christian Worldview. The creation narrative of Genesis 1:1-2:3 explains to believers how everything, came from nothing because God spoke it into existence. In Isaiah 40 we find a description of the uniqueness and incomparability of God. Isaiah 53 contains a simple and clear explanation of the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ for His people. Also, without the Old Testament we would have no idea what Paul meant in Ephesians 5 or Colossians 3 about "*psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.*"

The worldview of the New Testament and its teachings are built on the framework supplied in the Old Testament. If you understand the sacrificial system of the Temple in the Old Testament, then you understand why Jesus had to be crucified. There are literally thousands of quotations of and allusions to the Old Testament contained in the New Testament. To fully understand the New Testament, we have to understand the Old.

Third, Jesus did not come to overturn or negate the Old Testament (the Law), but to fulfill them in a New Covenant. Far from ignoring or setting aside the Old Testament Jesus goes out of His way to stress not only its importance but its relevance for us today. Look at Matthew 5:17-19, *“Do not think that I (Jesus) have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”*

The Old Testament maintains its relevance because it displays the character of God, it points to the perfection of Jesus Christ, and explains all the various facets of love. In Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus explains the two great commandments, *“love God”* and *“love your neighbor.”* He is simply explaining the ten commandments of the Old Testament. In Exodus 20:2-17 we see that the first four commandments are about loving God, and the final six commandments are about loving your neighbor. Moses speaking to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 30:6 describes the “heart circumcision” that Paul talks about in Romans 2:29.

Fourth, Jesus told us that all of the Old Testament points to Him. Philip told Nathaniel in John 1:45 that they *“had found the one of whom Moses in the Law and the prophets wrote.”* Jesus told His disciples in John 5:39, *“you search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me.”* In Luke 24:27, on the road to Emmaus Jesus traveled with some men *“and beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”* A proper

understanding of the Old Testament will lead one to see Jesus as the Messiah of the old covenant.

Fifth, the writers of the New Testament made clear that the Old Testament was given to Christians. Paul was convinced that the inspired OT authors wrote for NT believers, living on this side of the death and resurrection of Christ. Paul writes in Romans 15:4, *“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.”* He does the same thing writing to the Colossian church in 1 Colossians 10:11, *“Now these things happened to [the Israelites] as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come.”* This is why when he writes to Timothy, he says this in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, *“All Scripture is God breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”*

Finally, the sixth reason to embrace the Old Testament is that the Apostle Paul charged all of us, preacher, pastor, congregant, to teach the whole counsel of God’s word in 2 Timothy 4:2-4, *“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passion, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.”*

To summarize all of this it’s important to have a clear understanding of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. One helps us to understand more clearly the other. If we ignore the Old Testament and its framework that the New Testament is built upon, we run the risk of trying to make the Bible say anything we want.

It is through a full understanding of the Old and New Testaments that we truly learn about God. Through the Old Testament we see more clearly His character and our need for the Savior He sends in the New Testament.

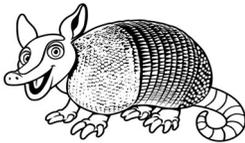
## Missions

The Mission focus for June and July is Belize Friends. Oscar Mmbali, Belize Friends Pastoral Minister, will be joining us at Yearly Meeting this year.

Belize Friends School is also the mission chose for Camp Quaker Heights summer camps this year.

\*To read more about what Oscar and the staff are doing, visit <https://mailchi.mp/fum/anti-human-trafficking-campaign-continues>

## Youth



### **Monumental VBS, Celebrating God's Love!**

Evenings at BLFC July 11-15. Starts with a free supper for kids & staff at 5:45 continues through 8:15 for kids aged 4 through those finishing grade 5. Thanks to you who have already volunteered! Following are the openings we still need to fill. Contact Margaret to ask questions or volunteer. Please keep VBS in your prayers.

- \*2 people to assist kids doing easy crafts after they eat their snacks
- \*2 people to supervise kids playing outside from 5:25-6:05
- \*1 adult to read the Friday mission talk
- \*2 teens or adults to lead/assist with elementary crews
- \*1 teen or adult to assist in the nursery

## SUMMER DEEPER

Come at 6:30 each Wednesday for snacks and the study of Strange Bible Stories. Learn what caused snakes to bite people in Numbers, and how God saved them; about an assassin in Judges; the day the earth stopped spilling; and many more weird happenings. We discuss the purpose of these stories at the time they happened and what they can teach us today. Bring a snack to share and grow deeper in God's Word as we fellowship together.

## Mystery Friend

Our Mystery Friend for June was born in Northwest Iowa. He/She has one brother and four children. This person graduated from high school in Northwest Iowa and graduated from Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. They met their spouse at Iowa State as they were drawn to the spouse's smile. After ISU graduation he/she taught in a high school for 6 years. This person has been a grain and livestock farmer and has had several jobs that involved marketing products. Favorite foods are roast pork, raisin cream pie, homemade bread, and homemade ice cream. Most people would not know that this person was a member of an Army National Guard Helicopter Unit. He/She has traveled to New Orleans, Canada, and Washington, D.C. He/She has been in 38 states. This person states that Bangor Liberty Friends is small enough to know everybody, but big enough to do special things to celebrate important Christian events. Letters in our Mystery Friend's name are:

AAAEIIOHLLMMNPSTTTW

The Mystery Friend for May was Weston Joseph Box.

## Prayers

- Shirley Davis's recovery
- Izola, Charlene's great-niece is now cancer free!
- Ron A. (friend of Scott Davis) cancer diagnosis
- Josiah, newborn with heart problems (mother is friend of Emma (Macy) Michels)
- Joyce Bishop (Matt's mother)
- Robin (Tom's daughter) with preleukemia
- Aaron, 5th grader, new believer
- Volunteers and kids at VBS
- Staff and kids at Camp Quaker Heights
- Emily Martin during her pregnancy
- Carrol Snider cancer diagnosis

## Library Ledge-Father's Day

We have several books for the men to read:

No Man Left Behind by Patrick Morley, David Delk, & Brett Clemmer about building a powerful men's ministry in the world today. The Man in the Mirror by Patrick Morley about solving the 24 problems men face. Fathers are Forever, Fathers of Influence, God's Best for Father's Success, The Kid-Friendly Dad, The Power of a Promise Kept, God's Vitamin C for the Spirit of Men, Building a Home and Kisses from the Father as well as many others. Say thank you to your father for all he does.

### REMINDER:

*PLEASE REMEMBER TO SHUT OFF LIGHTS BEFORE LEAVING THE CHURCH. IF CHILDREN ARE IN THE NURSERY DURING NON-WORSHIP TIMES, PLEASE MAKE SURE TOYS ARE ALSO PUT AWAY. THANK YOU!!*

## Liberty USFW



The Liberty USFW ladies met at Charlene Martin's home to hear about the books on the upcoming reading list from literature person, Gwen Senio. A nice meal was shared along with the Secret Sister reveals. Laughs were had all around the table. Our next meeting is the June Surprise, which will be held on June 16 at the Gutekunst Public Library in State Center at 10:30 AM. Lunch will follow at 11:30 at the Rose Creamery also in State Center.

The Liberty USFW ladies recently sent the 82 feminist hygiene pads that were sewn during a work night in March to Richmond, Indiana to be delivered to Friends girls schools in Africa. This is a joint project of the Midwest Region Group, which is made up of several Friends women's groups across the Midwest.

