

IS THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR US?

Intro: Since the new series of lessons for this Spring has to do with some Old Testament biographies and the history surrounding the lives of certain people, let us think of the answer to this question as it relates to them.

Why has the Holy Spirit seen fit to give us the biographical details that we have in the OT?

The best place to find the answer to these questions is in the NT! What does the NT have to say about this?

I. ROMANS 15:4.

We actually have two answers here:

- A. The biographies of the OT "were written for our learning."

This should always be our first purpose as we come to the Word -- for ourselves, and for those we teach. Children and adults alike need to KNOW the truth. One of the greatest of all problems (if not the greatest) in the Church is that the Lord's people do not know what they need to know.

It is hard to find a better source of knowledge than the biographies of the OT.

- B. For our encouragement -- "that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Most of our trials last a lot longer than we want them to. In fact, they last so long that we are inclined to give up. The OT is one of the greatest means we have of finding strength to continue when it seems that there is no point to it.

An illustration: Rom. 4:23-25. Both instruction and encouragement are here. Abraham encourages us to trust the Lord even though we have to wait a long time and even thought the situation looks hopeless.

But there is a third reason given in the NT for the value of the OT -- including the biographies.

II. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:11.

The purpose is to be seen in the words, "for our admonition."

This the same word that Paul uses again in Eph. 6:4 when he

instructs fathers to bring their children up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Actually it means to train by word of mouth. Its purpose is to teach, but it often takes the form of warning -- to show (in the case of biographies in the Scriptures) how others have done wrong so that we will not do the same.

An illustration: Eli's words to his sons in 1 Sam. 2:24 when he learned about their sins with the people of Israel. He said, "Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress." He was admonishing them.

For us, and for the children we teach, let us pray that the mistakes of others may serve to keep us (and them) from making the same mistakes. How different and how much happier our lives would be if we could profit from the OT in this way.

One other purpose for the OT:

III. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16, 17.

We have at least two of our preceding points in these two verses ("doctrine," or instruction, and "reproof," or warning), but these verses show how these plus "correction" and "instruction in righteousness" prepare us for a specific purpose.

It is service -- "That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

We need to know how to serve the Lord in teaching boys and girls. And boys and girls need to be taught how to serve the Lord. THERE IS NO GREAT PLACE FOR THEM TO LEARN THAN FROM THE BIOGRAPHIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT!

Concl: IS THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR US TODAY?

The answer overwhelmingly is, YES! There is no limit to the profit we can experience for ourselves, nor to the blessing the children in our classes will receive as we teach them from the lives of people of all ages in the OT who knew the Lord, learned of Him, walked with Him, and who served Him with the blessing of God upon their lives.