

Introduction: Last week we established that the Bible is God’s inspired Word.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 “And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you *wise for salvation* through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶*All Scripture is breathed out by God* and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

Transition: We’re going to start with a creedal term that every Christian needs to know. This term is shorthand for the historic Christian belief about the nature and authority of Scripture:

Sola Fidei Regula: Our Sole rule of faith

Today we’ll learn the creedal phrase: ***Centralis Christus Iesus: Jesus Christ is central.***

Jesus of Nazareth is the focal point, the subject, the central figure in all of Scripture. This point of view is called **The Christocentric View** of the Bible. Meaning, **God’s Son is the complete and integrating focus of redemptive history.**

That is to say, the Bible God’s revelation of his salvation-redemption plan in history. God revealed himself to Moses, the prophets, Kings and worship leaders of Israel—we have a record of that revelation that is this book, and Jesus the Messiah is its central figure and the consummating and integrating focus of this book. In its entirety.

To put it in shorthand—Jesus is the point.

Now, I want to forewarn you that there are some theologians who don’t agree with this point. Many scholars that I highly respect, highly value their work on the cultural world and background of biblical studies—and they wouldn’t approach Scripture this way. We’ll get into that more next week when we unpack *Christocentric Methods*—that is to say—How we interpret the Bible in the light and through lens of Jesus the Messiah and his cross. Next week we will learn about cruciform hermeneutics—but this week let’s put our flag in the ground and stake the claim the Bible is about Jesus.

Let’s just dive in...

1. The Old Testament is *Christotelic*.

Definition: *Christo-telic* means “pushing forward to Christ its completion”

- *Christos* meaning “Christ” or “the Anointed”
- *Telos* meaning “The completion, the accomplishment and end”

Examples of the OT’s Messianic Character:

- **Messianic prophecies:** “Messiah” comes from the Hebrew word “*meshiac*” and it means “*anointed one*” more specifically—it means “the anointed one.” There are 127 personal specific prophecies about the Messiah and which we may divide into 4 major categories of Messianic prophecy that foretell of Jesus’ coming:
 - **The Anointed Son and Sufferer:** (Gen. 3:15-17; Is. 53. Dan. 7).
 - **The Anointed Deliverer:** Dt. 18:15 “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.”
 - **The Anointed King:** (1 Sam. 26:16; Royal Psalms: Ps. 45; 72, 89; 17; Ps. 2; Is. 11; Ezek. 34). Promised not just an everlasting Dynasty of David, but an everlasting David. A son or heir to his throne who is the eternal son.
 - **The Anointed Priest/Sacrifice** (Is. 53:5ff)
- **Messianic Paradigms:** The OT is permeated with these messianic themes.
 - **Promised Son** who moves the story forward toward redemption: Shem, Isaac, Jacob, Samson, Samuel.
 - **Model King:** The archetype, the exemplar and he casts the die for all future kings.
 - **Foreshadowed Sacrifice:** Instances of self-sacrifice in the OT e.g. Moses offering himself to die for the sins of Israel, or Abraham’s willingness to give the life of his only son in obedience to God’s command. Judah offering himself to Joseph as a slave in place of Benjamin, or David, offering God his very own life if he would just save the life of his child. Jesus said “there is no greater expression of love than this: that a person would lay down their life for a brother.”
 - **Commissioned Deliverer:** The most pervasive theme of all, is this notion of a deliverer who comes to set the captive free from darkness, enslavement, and ultimately sin which is rebellion to God. Again, Moses does this for Hebrews, the judges of Israel do this for the nation, Samuel is an anointed deliverer from a corrupt priesthood, and David is an anointed King who delivers the people from the hand of the Philistines and surrounding marauding nations.
- **Messianic Expectations:**
 - **The Qumran Community** (1QS 9:11; 1QSa 2:11-22; 4Q 174; 4Q 175) the Jewish community that gave us the Dead Sea Scrolls—copies of the Old Testament and Community Rules) and their disciples believed the Messiah would come as two people bearing that title—one a priestly Messiah to take over the temple system of worship; and the other a prophet called “the Teacher of Righteousness” who would lead and guide the people back to covenant fidelity.

- **Apocrypha/Jewish Propaganda (1 Enoch; 2 Ezra; 2 Baruch; Ps. of Solomon)** we learn that there was pronounced but divergent views of who the Messiah would be and what his role should be. But all agreed he should be a Messianic deliverer in the tradition of Moses, David, or the high priest. This literature between the OT and the NT was designed to reach recapture the Jewish peoples' attention and to bring them back to faithfulness.
- **New Testament (Mt. 2:4; Mt. 16:13; Mt. 22:42; Ps. 2; Lk. 2:26; Lk. 3:15)** Herod asked "where the Messiah would be born"; **Mt. 16:13** Peter confesses "you are the Messiah the son of the living God"; **Mt. 22:42** "What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?" **Ps. 2; Lk. 2:26** expectation of scribes "he would not die before he saw God's Messiah"; **Lk. 3:15** "The people were waiting expectantly and all of them were debating whether John was the Messiah."

We see from all of these passages and many, many more we could cite that Messianic expectancy was high in Jesus' day, and that the people were debating what kind of Messiah would come: either an anointed Son, sufferer, Mighty Warrior, Priest, or King—but all of them agreed that the Messiah would deliver the people of God from their captivity to the dark forces of the pagan world.

This widespread belief in the Judaism of Jesus' day was because they had been taught their Scriptures and they could see clearly that the OT was *Christo-telic*; it was aimed and pushing forward to a Christ/Messiah—anointed son who would bring deliverance.

The entire character of the Old Testament, Hebrew Bible is that there's a beginning, a middle and no end. No fulfillment. It is a story that inherently anticipates its own fulfillment.

It predicts a Messiah who would deliver humanity from sin and the curse, and portrays that theme of deliverance through a Messianic/anointed figure through multiple, temporary enactments.

It is prophetic in nature, it is Messianic in character, and it is an unfolding and unfinished story.

Until we get to Jesus...

2. Jesus had a high view of the Old Testament.

- **Jesus quoted from all major divisions of the OT** (Moses, the Poets, and the Prophets) Mt. 22:29, 43; 24:15; Lk 16:16).
- **Jesus cited OT stories as historical events** (Mt. 19:4-5 “made them male and female”; Mt. 24:37; Lk. 17:27; “Noah”).
- **Jesus upheld the authority of the OT** (Jn. 10:35; Mark 12:36; Ps. 2; Mt. 26:54; Luke 4:16; Mt. 4:4, 7, 10) **Jn. 10:35** “the Word of God”; **Mark 12:36** “David, inspired by the Holy Spirit” when he quotes **Ps. 2; Mt. 26:54 Luke 4:16** “the Scriptures are fulfilled”; **Mt. 4:4, 7, 10** “It is written” stressing the authority of Scripture. In short, Jesus believed that the Old Testament was authoritative, reliable, sufficient, final, enduring, factual, free of error, and an infallible witness in all that it purports to say and teach. And in his darkest most desperate hour as he hung dying for the sins of humanity on a Roman cross—it was the words and thoughts of Scripture that came rolling out of him Ps. 22:1 “*Eloi Eloi lama sabacthani*”; Ps. 31:5 “Into your hands I commit my spirit.”

Jesus’ view of the OT was more inclusive than the Sadducees who only held to the Books of Moses as official Scripture.

And it was more restrained than the expansive tendencies of the Rabbis and Pharisees who created ancestral traditions and Oral Laws to supplement, explain, and modify God’s Written Word in the Hebrew Bible.

Jesus chastised the Sadducees for their limited view of OT Scripture, and he confronted the Pharisees for adding to God’s Word and then putting those extra-biblical onerous religious demands on the people.

Jesus was a man of the Word, God’s written word.

3. Jesus saw himself as the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

His self-referential statements:

- **To Fulfill the Scriptures:** Mt. 5:17-18 ^{“17} “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ 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.”
- **To Interpret the Scriptures:** Mt. 5:21-48 “You have heard it said...but I say to you...” Jesus assumed a singular authority to quote and interpret the Scriptures for them. He spoke as if he were the decisive arbiter of truth on these matters. A singular and proprietary authority that no other rabbi would have assumed in Jesus’ day. **Rabbinic Scholar Jacob Neusner wrote a book called *A Rabbi Talks with Jesus*.** In that book he imagined himself on the hillside listening to Jesus’ teaching. He states that he would have been happy with most of it, until he hears the rabbi blasphemously assume a singular authority to interpret or amend Moses.

Quote: “I would have been astonished. Here is a Torah-teacher who says in his own name what the Torah says in

God's name. It is one thing to say on one's own how a basic teaching of the Torah shapes the everyday . . . It is quite another to say that the Torah says one thing, but I say . . . then to announce in one's own name what God set forth at Sinai . . . I am troubled not so much by the message itself, though I might take exception to this or that, as I am by the messenger. The reason is that, in form these statements are jarring. Standing on the mountain, Jesus' use of language, 'you have heard that it was said, but I say to you' contrasts strikingly with Moses' language at Mount Sinai. Jesus speaks, not as a sage nor as a prophet but as God." (Jacob Neusner, 46, 47).

We can see here that Jesus' attitude toward his own teaching and authority was astonishing for his fellow Jews. Jesus taught, not as a mere prophet or spokesman of God, but he stood in the place of God, wielding the power of God, proclaiming the Word of God—which was his own Word.

Next we see that Jesus is...

- **As the focus of all Scripture** Luke 24: 25-27 "And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in **all the Scriptures** the things concerning himself. . . 44 Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms** must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem."
 - Two uses of the phrase "in all the Scriptures" here is referring to the whole book as a revelation of God's redemption plan in Christ. The second is in verse 44. "everything written about me in the Law, Prophets, Poets" these are likely specific prophecies regarding his life, death and resurrection.
 - The Holy Spirit had to enlighten their minds. And once that switch is flipped—once that light turns on—it's clear to see Christ in the story, how he fulfills the story, and you can never unsee it again.
- As the completion of Scripture: Romans 10:4; and Hebrews 1, 2, 3.

Romans 10:4 "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."

- Paul is telling the Romans in this passage that his heart's desire is for his fellow Jews to come to salvation. Their zeal, Paul states, is not based on enlightenment in the Holy Spirit for they have rejected their Messiah—the suffering Son. ³ For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes

Hebrews 1:1-4 "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power."