

Week of April 1-7

TeNaK

Scripture Reading: Read Luke chapter 24

Are you a biblical Christian or are you just a New Testament Christian? It's a question you may not have considered. As a church, we affirm that the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is inspired by God. The Scripture is His revelation of Himself to us. God's Word provides believers with an authoritative rule for faith and conduct.

While this may be true in doctrine, it isn't always true in practice. Many believers struggle with reading their way through the Old Testament, much less applying it. Oh, they're OK with the narratives of Genesis and the history of the deliverance in the early part of Exodus. However, you begin to lose them when the sacrifices are introduced, the tabernacle is described, the laws of unclean and clean are presented, etc. Interest picks up again in the history of Joshua through Esther. You lose them again in Job, find them wandering in Psalms and Proverbs, and then say goodbye through the rest of the OT prophets until they come up for air in Matthew. Once there, they say goodbye to 2/3 of our inspired Bible and seem content just to hang around with the gospel writers, the history of Acts and the epistles. In effect, they're just New Testament Christians.

It may come as a shock, therefore, to many to learn that the only Bible the early church had at its start was what we call the Old Testament, along with Jesus' teaching. It wasn't until years later that the first epistle was written and it wasn't until the end of the first century that the final book of the New Testament, Revelation, was written.

The Old Testament was what Jesus used to defeat the devil's temptations in Matthew 4, describe his ministry purpose in Luke 4 and refute the teachers of the law in Mark 12. It was what he used to describe his trip to the cross in John 3. It was what Matthew used to show that Jesus was the King of the Jews. It was what Peter used to describe what happened when the Spirit was poured out at Pentecost. It was what Philip used to preach the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch. And we could go on and on.

In Luke 24:44, Jesus refers to the Old Testament using the standard threefold Jewish division: the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms, commonly known by the abbreviation, TeNaK. The "T" stood for the Torah (the first five books of Moses). The "N" stood for the Nevi'im ("Prophets") and "K" for the Ketuvim ("Writings" – of which Psalms was the first and largest of this section). Much of Luke 24 reveals how Jesus gave his disciples a lesson on the ways the entire Old Testament pointed to him, to his work and to the kingdom of God that was to be preached to the nations.

If we are to be believers like the early church, it's important that we include both the Old and New Testaments in our reading and in our application. Both point to the same Jesus and teach the same message albeit in different ways. Let's not miss out.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Take some time today to reflect on how the Old Testament points to Jesus and then develop a simple plan on how you could use the OT to lead someone to Christ. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see truth and grace in the New Testament AND in the Old Testament.

Take-away: *Don't knock the TeNaK since both the Old and New Testaments are God's inspired Word.*