John 5:39-47; Luke 24:44-49; Jesus Christ in the Old Testament I. The Books of the Law II. The Prophets III. The Wisdom Writings

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, why do we still have the OT in our Bibles today? Do we still need all these books when the NT clearly reveals who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for our salvation? As you have likely heard before, the OT is Christ concealed, and the NT is Christ revealed. So how vital is the person and work of Christ when it comes to our OT reading? Well, there are almost 300 direct OT quotes in the NT- but the entire framework and context of the New is found in the Old. For example, the entire concept of Prophet, Priest and King only makes sense after you see these unfold in the NT. Our text from John 5:39 sets the stage for us. Here Jesus says, the Scriptures bear witness about me. Now remember that these Scriptures were the OT at this time- so the OT book- the 39 book of our Old Testament- are said to bear witness about Jesus. Jesus is saying that you cannot understand the OT part from Jesus. Jesus is the lens by which you can clearly discern the point of the entire OT. Jesus is the culmination- the focal point of the entire Bible. Just as Jesus is the one through whom and for whom the entire creation exists as Col. 1 put is- it is also true that Jesus is the one about whom the OT speaks. But John 5:39 is making another point as well. Only as you see Jesus in the OT will that book come to life- and give life! Studying the Bible alone does not give life- only as that Book brings you to Jesus do you have life! Apart from Jesus- outside of the Son of God- the Bible remains a dead letter. Without Jesus, the Bible remains powerless to save! But in Jesus Christ, the Bible becomes clear and powerful! The way to eternal life is revealed as Jesus comes to focus in the OT- and as you believe the testimony and witness of the OT. So then, Jesus is the key to understanding the entire OT. Jesus is not just some addition that is affixed to the OT- not just a helpful insight - He is the core of it! Without Jesus, the OT makes no sense and has no power! He is the gravity that holds it all together! So today we are going to consider Jesus- to see how the OT reveals the person and work of Jesus Christ! These Scriptures bear witness about Me- Jesus says in John 5:39. Our other reading this morning came from Luke 24 where Jesus opened the eyes of the disciples to see how the Law of Moses, Prophets and the Psalm had to be fulfilled. Jesus came to fulfill what was promised about Him in the OT. So in Luke 24 we find the 3 sections of the OT- the Law, the Prophets and the Wisdom books or the Psalms. These 3 sections will be our 3 points this morning. Now our theme is this; Jesus Christ reveals Himself as the central point of the Old Testament.

**I. The Books of the Law**

In our first point we will consider how Jesus is spoken of and His work revealed in the first 5 books of the OT- the books of the Law or the books of Moses. Gen. 1 opens with the creation account- and John 1 clarifies for us that Jesus is the Word by which all things have been made. Even the tree of life in the garden pointed forward to the coming work of Jesus- as His blood would be the fruit by which the nations would be healed- and from His side would flow the healing waters that would give life to lost mankind. Even more specifically, in Gen. 3 we find the seed of the woman who would come and crush the head of the serpent. Jesus is the lion of the tribe of Judah- the one from whom feed the scepter would never depart. Jesus would be the promised seed of Abraham- the blessed child through whom the nations would be blessed. In the book of Exodus we read of a Passover Lamb- the one whose blood would need to be shed in order to cause the destroying angel to pass over. No death would enter the house of those who were under it- who had been covered by the blood of this Passover Lamb. Jesus would be seen in the heavenly manna- the bread from heaven sent from God Himself- the bread that would be the source of eternal life to all those who partake by faith. In Leviticus, we find a great High Priest who would minister to God’s people. In Lev. 16 there is ceremony of the scapegoat- a goat would be set aside who would carry away the sins of the people. In the book of Numbers, God provides water for His thirsty people- water in the wilderness. A cloud of glory and a pillar of fire would lead and protect God’s people as they traveled from the land of slavery to the promised land. And finally, in the book of Deuteronomy, we read of a prophet whom God would raise up- a great prophet raised up from among His brothers. God’s people are to listen to Him! And in Dt. 21 we read that someone who is hung on a tree is under the curse of God- and that cursed is everyone who does not abide by all these words of the Law is in Dt. 27. So already in the first 5 books of the OT we find various themes and specific promises that reveal the coming messiah. Jesus said this very thing in our text- John 5:46- if you believe what Moses wrote you would been Jesus! For Moses wrote of Jesus. Indeed- even father Abraham longed to see Jesus- and rejoiced to see the day of Jesus coming even though it was far off as John 8 reveals. So the Books of the Law speak of the Messiah who would come and remove the curse by the shedding of His blood!

**II. The Prophets**

But we must press on- were do we find Jesus in the books of the prophets? Well, lets start with Isaiah who is called the OT gospel writer. In Isaiah, we find many clear references to the coming Savior. Perhaps the most well known is Isaiah 53 where we find the suffering servant- by His stripes we will be healed. He will be a man of sorrows- one from whom men hide their face. He carries our burdens and bore our sins- and He will make many to be accounted righteous. Additionally, Isaiah reveals that His name will be called wonderful, counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father and prince of peace. Isaiah 11 says that a branch will shoot from the stump of Jesse. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him. And as Isaiah 7 says- a virgin will conceive and bear a son and His name will be Immanuel. Let’s consider a few more examples of how the prophets reveal the coming Christ. The sign of Jonah will be fulfilled- as Johah was 3 days and nights in the belly of the fish, so Jesus will be 3 days in tomb. Daniel speak of a rock that is not cut out by man’s hand- and this rock will crush all the kingdoms of this world. Micah reveals that the promised child will come forth from Bethlehem. Zechariah reveals that this one will be a lowly and gentle king- who rides into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey- who will also be pierced by the hands of man. Haggai says that He will be the desire of the nations. And finally in Malachi 4 we find that the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in His wings. But as beautiful as these prophesies are, they each only give us a part of the picture. Only when all of these prophesies are put together does the full picture of Jesus Christ and His work come into view. In fact, Matthew 13:17 says that the prophets longed to see what the disciples of Jesus day would see. They longed to see Jesus and their prophesies fulfilled, but they did not in their own day. I Peter 1:12 says that these prophets were writing for our benefit- they were serving not themselves but us! They wrote for our good- to add color and depth to the good news that is now preached in our midst! Such is the blessing that we have- as we look back at these OT prophets we can see with greater clarity the meaning and purpose of the words they themselves wrote! What a blessing we have to live in the age of the Spirit and in the New Covenant! As Acts 3:18 summarizes, what God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer, he thus fulfilled. Therefore, repent that your sins may be blotted out!

**III. The Wisdom Writings**

And yet, there is one more section or division of the OT to consider. We saw the books of the Law, the books of the Prophets and now the wisdom literature or wisdom wrings. Prominent here are the Psalms. Psalm 1 speaks of a blessed man who does not walk in the way of the wicked- rather this man delights in the Law of the Lord. Who is this blessed Man? Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Psalm 2 speak of a Son sitting at the Father’s right hand- a Son who is king. You must kiss this son- lest you be terrified when He visits you in wrath. Psalm 110 speaks of this same King who sits at the right in glory- a King who rules over all and has his enemies placed under Him. A king who is also a priest in the order of Melchizedek. Perhaps the most well-known Psalm- Psalm 23- speaks of a good shepherd who leads His people in paths of righteousness. So many of the Psalm clearly speak of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Other Psalm are the songs of the church- as they cry out for help or plead for the comfort and presence that only Jesus can give. And still others are the very words of Jesus- like Psalm 22- my God, my God, why have you forsaken me- which Jesus spoke from the cross. The book of Proverbs speak of wisdom- even wisdom incarnate as wisdom what with the Father in the beginning. Jesus is the ones to gives truth and teaches wisdom- Jesus is both the greatest son of David and one greater in wisdom than even Solomon as Matthew 12 says- someone greater than Solomon was here. As Prov. 30:5 reads- every word of God proves true, he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. In the Song of Solomon, Jesus is the groom who marries his bride the church- rejoicing over His people with love. In Ecclesiastes, Jesus is the meaning of life! Everything is vanity and meaningless apart from Him.

As we close, the OT is a treasured resource that continues to deliver gems of truth today. The OT foretells of Jesus, His words and His works. In these books you will find promises that Jesus is the answer to- types and patterns that He fulfills. If the OT is like an engagement ring, the NT is like the wedding band. United, the OT and NT assure us of God’s love and our welcome into His home! Searching the Scriptures and not seeing Christ is like looking at a mirror and not seeing your own face. The whole reason we have the OT is to point us to Christ! Without Christ, the OT is just a bunch of history stories that have no purpose or power. But in Christ, the Scriptures reveal our need for and gift of salvation. Jesus Christ reveals Himself as the central point of the Old Testament. So when we read the OT, let us not neglect so great a salvation revealed! Let us learn to see Christ- for these words bear witness about Him!