

# Teaching Messiah from the Scriptures: Genesis

## Lesson 01: Have We As Evangelicals Read the Bible Correctly?

*An Essay by Andy Witt (September 2008)*

For the last few hundred years, evangelical Christianity has carried with it several presuppositions about the nature and message of the Old and New Testaments. In this lesson I plan on not only uncovering those presuppositions and showing the results of them on our ways of reading and understanding Scripture, but also on how a Paul or a Jesus might respond to them. What we will find is that the current legacies of a traditional evangelical view of Scripture are inadequate. They will need to be modified if evangelical Christianity intends to remain evangelical in its view of Scripture and the Gospel. The current legacies often serve to undercut rather than build up the claims of Christ. At the end of the study I will be offering my own suggestions as to how to modify them.<sup>1</sup>

### The Legacies of a Traditional Evangelical View of Scripture

There are three main legacies of a traditional evangelical view of Scripture:

- 1) Prophecy in the Old Testament contains a genuine view of the future.
- 2) The New Testament is the key to unlocking the messianic intention of the Old Testament.
- 3) Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament is at best fragmented throughout the Old Testament with no apparent order.

**Prophecy in the OT.** The first legacy is that prophecy in the OT contains a genuine view of the future. This is a great presupposition for the evangelical Church to have. It is mainly concerned with the predictive nature of prophecy, and it largely is used apologetically. In other words, it is often used to indicate the validity and truth of Scripture. One Scripture verse often used in this way is Isaiah 7:14, which predicts the virgin birth of Messiah

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<sup>1</sup> I am severely indebted to the work of other scholars in this area of study. Particularly, I am indebted to my former professor, Dr. John Sailhamer, especially his article in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44/1 (March 2001), entitled, "The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible." This article unquestionably changed the course of my academic studies, and consequently, my life. Many of the ideas in this essay originated with his insights in that article. Other resources that have contributed much are: John Behr, "The Way to Nicaea" (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001); Brevard Childs, "Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture" (Fortress, 1979); Stephen Dempster, "Dominion and Dynasty" (InterVarsity, 2003); the introduction to John Goldingay, "Old Testament Theology: One – Israel's Gospel" (InterVarsity, 2003); and also being able to sit under and learn from professors Drs. Robert Cole and Steven McKinion.

several hundred years before Jesus was actually born. This not verifies the veracity of the Old Testament, but also helps to prove the divinity of Jesus himself.

**The New Testament as the Key.** The second legacy of the evangelical Church is that the New Testament is the key to unlocking the messianic intentions of the Old Testament. Here, Christians are quick to admit that the Old Testament is very mysterious – its true intentions are often implicit or hidden from the reader’s eyes. To read it on its own would not take us very far. But thankfully, God gave us the New Testament to help in solving the enigma of the Old Testament. One of the purposes of the New Testament is to ‘shed light’ on the Old Testament. In this way, the New Testament is seen as the ‘messianic searchlight’ for the Old Testament. It is the key to unlocking the messianic meaning of the Old Testament. Without the New Testament, readers of the Old Testament are not equipped to see Jesus there. He is hidden from view. Two illustrations might help to explain this better.

The first illustration is of *deer spotting*. I have several uncles that enjoy to hunt deer, and I have always remembered warmly the nights I went out with them on their four-wheelers to ‘spot’ deer. We would take these million candlelight strength spotlights with us, drive through open fields, and look for deer. When we spotted eyes in the distance we would quickly try to go after the deer to see where they were laying. To apply the analogy, the New Testament is much like our spotlight. We use the New Testament to spot Jesus in the Old Testament. Without the New Testament, then, we are left with the dark field of the Old Testament. Jesus might be there, but we simply cannot see him without the right light.

The second illustration is a Christmas tree. Every year my family had the tradition of getting the fake tree down from the attic, putting it together, bringing down all the Christmas decorations, and then spending the day putting the lights and decorations on the tree and on the outside of the house. Though pretty and nostalgic, these decorations were hidden once the sun set or the lights were turned of in the room. The only way for them to become illuminated was if they were plugged into the wall outlet. They needed a little electricity to light up. In much the same way, the Old Testament needs to be plugged into the wall outlet of the New Testament in order to see the lights of Christ light up on the Old Testament tree. Without being plugged into the New Testament, the Old Testament, though decorated with the lights and ornaments of Christ, remains dark.

**A Scattered and Fragmented Jesus.** The third legacy of evangelical Christianity is that the messianic prophecy in Old Testament is at best fragmented throughout the Old Testament with no apparent order. This is easily illustrated by some of the verses the New Testament quotes as prophetic about Jesus. When we go back to read

the Old Testament passage, it seem to have little to nothing to do with Jesus or the eschatological future. I am thinking of passages like Matthew 2:15 and Hosea 11:1, or Hebrews 2:6-8 and Psalm 8. In these passages we have difficulty figuring out exactly how the New Testament writers are reading the Old Testament. But, since they are apostles (or at least approved by the apostles) we trust their interpretation, even if it means re-interpretation of the Old Testament in light of Christ. It is in this sense that we often think about the Old Testament as a road that is seemingly going nowhere – if only we had a roadmap to make sense of its direction. The New Testament serves as that guide and roadmap. The New Testament helps us navigate the tricky waters of the Old Testament ocean.

A helpful illustration is a jigsaw puzzle.<sup>2</sup> When we open a jigsaw puzzle box, we usually dump all the pieces on the floor, scattering them in all directions. The more difficult the puzzle, the more we want to use the box top to help us in putting all the same colors together in the hopes of solving the puzzle to display the proper image. If we think of the puzzle pieces as the scattered prophetic statements about Jesus in the Old Testament, we have a good analogy. The New Testament helps us by providing a way to put the scattered pieces together in an intelligent manner. Without the box top of the New Testament, however, the scattered pieces are impossible (or seemingly impossible) to put together.

**Summary.** These three legacies of evangelical Christianity are somewhat foundational in how we all come to the Scriptures for meaning and understanding. In many ways these legacies have taken us to where we are today, some for good, others maybe not so good. What I would like to do is try to summarize current views of the Old Testament stemming from these legacies, then show how some of the results of our legacies do not seem to paint an accurate picture of what the Text of Scripture actually says. Finally, I want to make some suggestions for modifying our legacy (which is only a tradition) to paint a more accurate picture of the Old and New Testaments.

## **The Results of Our Legacies**

The results of these legacies, as far as I can tell, have been two-fold. First, there has tended to be a bifurcation of the two testaments in the way evangelicals understand the Bible. Often, the text of Scripture is seen to teach one thing in the Old Testament, and quite another in the New Testament. Evangelicals, however, are philosophically opposed to such bifurcation, remembering well the ancient heresy of Marcion, who claimed that there were two gods: the god of the Old Testament, and the god of the New Testament. Somehow there must

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<sup>2</sup> Sailhamer, “The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible,” 7.

be unity between the two testaments. To find such unity, evangelicals have looked *through* the text of Scripture to the history which undergirds it. Using the text, evangelicals trace the 'progress of revelation' along historical lines, reaching revelatory climax in the event of the death and resurrection of Jesus. Unity, then, is found *through* the text, not *in* the text. Further explanation may be helpful.

**The Bifurcation of the Old and New Testaments.** In many ways, evangelicals today have a hard time finding the Gospel in the Old Testament. This is by and large due to the fact that many evangelicals understand the Old Testament as teaching Judaism, while the New Testament teaches Christianity. If not Judaism, evangelicals will usually see the Old Testament as providing the historical background to the life of Jesus or as describing the history of God's dealings with the nation of Israel. In either case, the Old Testament is seen as a 'pre-Christian' text. In other words, it was written in a time before Christianity existed (and hence, the Old Testament documents did not teach Christianity).

Instead of Christianity, the Old Testament is seen as a history book, albeit a book of 'theological history'. Nonetheless, it is history, regardless of divine providence. Admittedly, much of the Old Testament recounts the various acts of God in delivering the Israelites from the hands of their enemies, or how individuals wrestled with the promises of God. It is full of fun and interesting facts, often leaving its readers with moral examples of godly or ungodly living. We pull theological lessons from the Old Testament about the God who creates, the God who grants mercy, the God who provides atonement, the God who is there, etc. We often, however, leave the Old Testament wondering what exactly it has to do with the Christianity presented in the Gospels and in the letters of Paul, Peter, and John.

Insofar as the Old Testament teaches Judaism, it also teaches Law (as opposed to Gospel). This, at least, is how evangelicals have typically understood it. The Old Testament is synonymous with the Sinai covenant, the Law; the New Testament, however, is associated with the New covenant, which means Jesus, grace, salvation, and, above all else, freedom from the Law (Old Testament). Appeal is often made to several New Testament passages to ground this claim (e.g., John 1:17 or Romans 9:30ff). With this view, the main purpose of the entire Old Testament (LAW) was to teach the people of Israel the Sinai covenant, and to bring them under it. The New Testament, however, is often at odds with this purpose (e.g., Galatians 3:10-12; Ephesians 2:13-16). Therefore, a bifurcation of the testaments. The Old Testament is seen as somehow inferior to the New Testament, and almost as a preparatory document for the New Testament. Now that we have the New Testament, what use is the Old Testament other than apologetics (see legacy #1)? So, we print Bibles that only consist of the New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs. Outside of Psalms, Proverbs, and maybe Genesis 1-3, we really are clueless with the OT. I do not think Paul (Acts 28) or Jesus (John 5:46; Luke 24:44-48) would be too happy with us.

**The Gospel as an Event.** Most evangelicals are uncomfortable with this division between the Bible. We philosophically have to have the two testaments united, and so there must be some way the Gospel can ford this river. Evangelicals by-and-large accomplished this goal by locating the Gospel in history rather than in Scripture.<sup>3</sup> Stated differently, the whole of the past is to be understood historically. This means that we have typically understood the Old Testament as progressively revealing more and more about the Gospel, narrowing in on the final revelation, which we do not get in the Old Testament era, but in the New Testament era, with Jesus' death and resurrection. The Old Testament, then, has become synonymous with the history of events from the creation of the world until the return from exile. What we do is read the account of the events in Scripture, map out those events on a historical timeline, and then interpret that history to see the message of Gospel being progressively revealed throughout time. Adam and Eve, it is understood, knew nothing of the Gospel until the cursing of the serpent (Gen 3:15), the *proto evangelium* (first Gospel presentation). Abraham knew more of the Gospel, Moses even more, Isaiah and David even moreso, and finally, with the appearing of Jesus into the world, with his life, death, and resurrection, the *complete* Gospel was now in the world. Revelation had reached its climax in Jesus' death and resurrection. The different texts of the Bible are not seen as books, but as glimpses into the historical past. Passages are freely re-arranged, reading plans are made, to fit a more chronological scheme.

In this view, then, the focus is not so much on Jesus as Person, but on Jesus as the climax of revelation. The event of Christ is more emphasized than the person of Christ. Graeme Goldsworthy states it this way, "The gospel is God acting...through the history of Jesus."<sup>4</sup> Often, theologians will go to passages such as Hebrews 1:1-2, 1 Peter 1:10-12, or Ephesians 1:7-10 to prove this. A great way to illustrate this idea is to think about the Old Testament as a historical road that slowly makes its way to the event of the cross. In the Old Testament era, the cross is always just over the horizon, barely out of sight. The following diagram may be helpful in visualizing it:

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<sup>3</sup> I want to be careful at this point. I did not say that the Gospel was not historical, it most assuredly is: Jesus died on the cross, was buried, rose again on third day, and ascended into glory where he awaits his return to judge the living and the dead. That is not what I am addressing. What I am addressing is that evangelicals have somehow equated the *historicity of the death and resurrection* with the message of the Gospel in Scripture. Though the historicity of Jesus' death and resurrection surely supports and validates the message of the Gospel in Scripture, they are not one and the same thing.

<sup>4</sup> Graeme Goldsworthy, "Gospel and Kingdom" (Paternoster, 2003), 18. I see this as contrasted with the Gospel as *the message* of salvation by faith through grace, grounded on the work of Messiah Jesus on the cross to forgive sins, and his resurrection to conquer death.



In this diagram, there are signs of the Gospel along the road of the Old Testament, which are not the Gospel itself, but signs directing us toward the Gospel, which would take place years later and beyond the horizon. The Old Testament, then, points us in the right direction and prepares us for the Gospel, which we encounter in the New Testament.

In the end, the results of the evangelical Christian legacies have divided the testaments from one another, only providing unity within the Bible by looking at how God has been at work providentially through history.<sup>5</sup> The Old Testament, as we usually see it, is, at best, the historical background of the New Testament, necessary in only how it point to the coming of the Messiah.

### **My Response to these two Results of our Legacy**

These results trouble me. They unnecessarily divide Scripture and redefine the how we look at the Gospel in order to bring unity into our philosophy. In reality, we should work the other way around. The Scriptures, divided or not, should inform our philosophy, not our philosophy the Scriptures. If the Scriptures really are divided, then Christianity is false and we need a new worldview. Paul says this as much in 1 Corinthians 15 – we are of all men most pitied if the Gospel proves untrue. Paul was referring to the doctrine of the resurrection, but he could have equally done so with the unity of the testaments. If such unity fails, the Gospel fails. Jesus is only the Messiah when he is interpreted according to the Scriptures (Old Testament). Divide the Old Testament

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<sup>5</sup> I have not addressed the evangelical concept of multiple fulfillment of prophecy because I simply think it is a dead end. It, above all, undercuts the messianic intention of the Old Testament. This view understands the basic meaning of the Old Testament to be historical, not prophetic. Isaiah 7:14, though ultimately pointing to Christ, was intended by the human author (Isaiah) to refer to some other child in the sixth century B.C. Since Scripture has “two authors”, God and the human author, the divine intention is sometimes obscured until later revelation (the New Testament). Thus, Old Testament texts may have more than one meaning. There are several problems with this view. First, it assumes *a priori* that the New Testament authors are correct in their interpretation simply because they were apostles (or approved by the apostles). Rather than changing the way we read the Old Testament, we make up a multiple meaning for the Old Testament text. Second, we assume that the Divine intention in the Text is different and separate from the human author’s. This again, is a mistake, and leads to a bifurcated Bible.

from Jesus and he is only a rebellious Jewish troublemaker, a common criminal crucified along with thousands of others during the first century. We cannot afford to take our legacies lightly.

What I plan on doing for the rest of this essay is respond to the results of the traditional evangelical legacies, showing that the Bible teaches Christianity, from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, and that the Gospel is more concerned with the person of the Messiah than the event of the death and resurrection of Jesus. After this, I will modify the traditional evangelical legacies to more accurately reflect the teaching of Scripture.

**Moses the Christian.** Simply stated, Christianity began with Moses, not Jesus. The Old Testament teaches Christianity. Any interpretation of the Old Testament leading to anything other than Christianity (Messianic Judaism) is simply false, and we can prove it without using the New Testament; the Old Testament is able to stand by itself. Ignatius of Antioch, an early Christian apologist and interpreter, during a debate with Judaizing Christians, even went so far to say that “Christianity did not base its faith on Judaism, but Judaism on Christianity.”<sup>6</sup> By this, he meant that Christianity was not preceded Judaism. It did not grow out of Judaism. Rather, Moses and the prophets after him spoke of Christianity.

The Old and New Testaments, then, teach the same Gospel message and faith. Several Scripture passages help to show us this. First, there is Acts 28:23, “When they had appointed a day for [Paul], they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.” This verse recounts the evangelistic efforts of the apostle Paul in house arrest in Rome. Using only the Old Testament, he was able to teach them the Gospel. Interestingly enough, the book of Romans, which systematically shows how Paul did that, is bookended by appeals to the Gospel in the Old Testament.

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for **the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son**, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship **to bring about the obedience of faith** for the sake of his name **among all the nations.**” (Romans 1:1-5)

“Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to **my gospel** and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but **has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations**, according to the command of the eternal God, **to bring about the obedience of faith.**” (Rom 16:25-26)

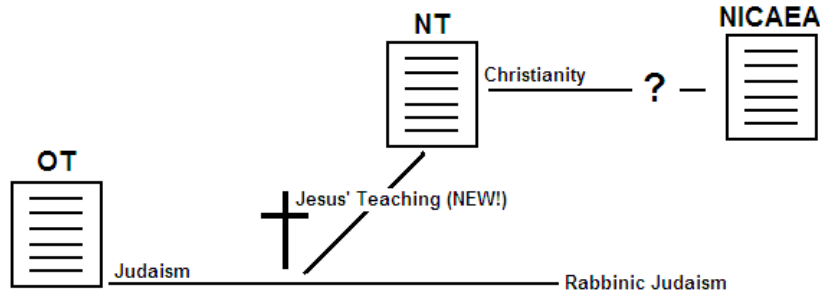
In these passages, Paul makes a clear appeal to the Gospel as it was found in the holy Scriptures, the prophetic writings: “the gospel of God...he promised in his holy Scriptures...concerning his Son...to bring about the obedience of faith...among all the nations.” We know from Romans 4:1-4 that Paul is especially thinking about

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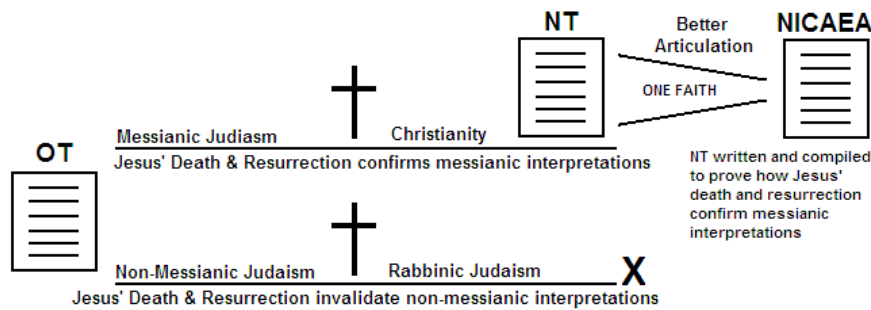
<sup>6</sup> Ignatius, *Letter to the Magnesians*, 10.3. Quoted in John Behr, “The Way to Nicaea,” 88n13.

that kind of faith which brings about justification. Interestingly enough, Paul uses Abraham as his example of proper *Christian faith*. For Paul, Abraham's faith and our faith are the same.

Jesus, likewise, made his appeal to the Old Testament to show that he was indeed the Messiah (c.f. Luke 24:25-32, 44-48). His claims of Messiah ran counter to the Pharisaic Judaism of his day. Time and time again he would appeal to the teaching of Scripture over against their traditions or misinterpretations of Scripture to prove the true intention of Moses. Again, a few diagrams may help to illustrate this more clearly:



In this diagram, we have a fairly traditional understanding of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism, between the teachings of Christ and the teachings of Moses. Before the teaching of Christ there was the Old Testament and Judaism. In this view, the proper response to the Old Testament was Judaism. Jesus, then, brings a new teaching, and a new religion to the world when he is crucified and raises from the dead. This new religion, Christianity, rises out of Judaism, and, in a sense, picked up where Judaism left off. It completes the Old Testament message. Rabbinic Judaism, then, just missed the boat. They got everything right until Jesus came, but somehow missed him when he arrived on the scene. This view is contrasted by a more accurate picture:



Here, there are two faiths which rise up in the wake of the message of the Old Testament: messianic Judaism and non-messianic Judaism. Messianic Judaism is representative of the Old Testament prophets and saints (c.f. Hebrews 11), as well as those who were waiting in the temple when Jesus was born (c.f. Luke 2). Such understood the Old Testament to be clearly teaching Messiah and justification by faith in Messiah. Naturally, this faith led to Christianity, and was confirmed when Jesus was crucified and was raised from the dead. These later events verified the proper interpretation of the Old Testament, which existed prior to Jesus' birth. Non-messianic Judaism, represented by the Pharisees in the Gospels, the Judaizing Christians in Paul's letters, and

those who killed the prophets in the OT times (c.f. Hebrews 11), thought that men could be justified by doing the Law. This was Paul's belief before his Road to Damascus experience, and was condemned throughout the New Testament (c.f. Matthew 5; Galatians 3; Romans 9:30-10:10).

**The Gospel as a Person.** A second response to the previous results is that the Gospel deals more with the person of Christ than the event of Christ. That is, the Gospel is revealed to man through a book and its message, not through an event in history. For instance, 1 Corinthians 1:18 asserts, "For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." The cross, then, is not the Gospel, the *message/word* of the cross is the Gospel. It is not 'God acting through the history of Jesus', but *the message* of salvation by faith through grace, grounded on the work of Messiah Jesus on the cross to forgive sins, and his resurrection to conquer death. Paul makes this even clearer when he appeals to the Gospel in the Old Testament in 2 Timothy 3:15, "From childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through in Messiah Jesus." The Scriptures, then, teach us the Gospel.

Not only this, but the Gospel is not so much concerned with an event as it is with a Person. The good news of the Gospel is not that Jesus has died and has been raised from the dead, but that *since* Jesus has died and has been raised from the dead we are able to have a relationship again with God. The death and resurrection were important to set up the Gospel, but are not the Gospel itself. To quote a recent book title, God is our Gospel. He is our treasure; we wait for Him.

**Summary.** The emerging picture from these responses is a Bible that teaches one message: salvation through faith in Messiah. The entire Bible, as it stands today, is a Christian text, beginning with Genesis 1:1. To our surprise, even, the Old Testament may have more to say about Jesus than we ever could have imagined. For instance, by the end of the book of Genesis we arrive at a the following description of the 'seed' of Eve: in the last days he will rise up to be a kingly priest from the tribe of Judah, crushing the enemies of God and ruling over his creation in an everlasting kingdom, striking down the seed of the serpent, having been roused as a Lion, and from him blessing will flow to all the families of the earth – those who bless him will be blessed, and those who curse him will be cursed.

These descriptions are only the beginning. Throughout the rest of the Bible they are further clarified and specified. This unified and carefully articulated description of Messiah is what unites the two testaments together. The Old Testament begins this description of him, with the New Testament simply continuing on the conversation, identifying Jesus as the Word made flesh, the son of David, the son of Abraham (c.f. Matthew 1:1; John 1).

## A Modified Legacy

With this different look at the Bible, it is time to re-evaluate our evangelical legacies. Do they accurately reflect a careful reading of Scripture, or do they need modified? It is our opinion, in view of the preceding discussion, that they are in need of some modification.

**Prophetic visions are FOR the future.** The first legacy posited that prophetic visions in the Old Testament were visions ‘of the future’. We discussed how these visions served a largely apologetic role. That is, they helped to validate and verify the veracity of the Scriptures. The prophets of the Old Testament predicted the future quite well, and this helps to show that the accounts of the Bible are reliable and to be trusted. But more than this, the prophetic visions in the Old Testament are *for the future*. They do not simply point to the destination, but also reveal to us the roadmap for how to get there. That is, they not only predict the future, but identify and explain it as well. The roadmap for the Old Testament is the Old Testament, not the New Testament.

We know that this is true because of the accounts in the Gospels of people waiting in the Temple at Jerusalem for Jesus when he was born (c.f. Luke 2). Mary did not need an explanation of what was happening to her, and her Magnificat only helps to testify to her rich theology of the Old Testament prophetic hope in the Messiah and the salvation that was to come from God. The great implication of this modification is that it removes the need to re-interpret the Old Testament in order to make it messianic. Already, before Jesus could even walk, there were people waiting for him. This helps to prove the inherent messianic intent of the Torah, Prophets, and Writings. This also helps to show that there is no need for a concept of multiple fulfillment when we read prophecy in the Old Testament; we can prove textually that the text itself, as it stands in the Old Testament, looks to the eschatological future and to the coming of the Messiah.

**The Old Testament as the Key.** We have seen that instead of viewing the New Testament as the messianic ‘searchlight’ of the Old Testament, we should rather see the Old Testament as the necessary prerequisite to the New Testament. We often have this idea that the New Testament stands alone, but that is simply not true. It is the Old Testament which stands alone, and the New Testament builds off of an already messianic Old Testament. In one sense, the New Testament would not even exist without the Old Testament. The Old Testament predicts, identifies, and expositis the Messiah, while the New Testament tells us that he is Jesus. In this regard, the following quote from John Sailhamer has been rather helpful:

“To say that the Pentateuch is about the Messiah is not yet to say that it is about Jesus. Those are two separate and equally important questions. We must first ask whether the Pentateuch is about the Messiah and then ask whether Jesus is the Messiah. The Pentateuch (and the rest of the Hebrew Bible)

tells us there will be a Messiah. The NT tells us that Jesus is the Messiah spoken of in the Hebrew Bible. It does so by identifying Jesus as the one about whom the Hebrew Bible speaks. This means that, in my opinion, there is an important apologetic value to the identity of Jesus as the OT Messiah. By identifying Jesus as the OT Messiah, the NT makes the claim that Jesus is the true Messiah.”<sup>7</sup>

What Sailhamer has noted here is crucially important to have a correct view of Scripture. The Old Testament, rather than the New Testament, is the messianic searchlight into the New Testament era. To quote Sailhamer again, “It is only when the OT casts its light onto the pages of the NT that we see the meaning of the life of Jesus.”<sup>8</sup> Without the Old Testament, Jesus would only be a carpenter from Palestine who grew up to be a revolutionary Jewish criminal. With it, he is the Messiah, the Savior of the World, the Son of God, the King.

**An Intelligently Composed View of Messiah.** The last modification to the evangelical legacies concerns the presentation of Messiah in the Old Testament. Earlier we said that evangelicals typically see Jesus as a scattered vision in the Old Testament, almost like a shuffled jigsaw puzzle. Now, however, it would be more accurate to describe the messianic vision in the Old Testament as a stain-glassed window. There is a pattern and an order in how the Old Testament writers brought up the subject of the last days and the Messiah in their books. Like all good authors, their books were intelligently composed. They knew what they were doing, and they knew how to communicate a message in the books. Having said this, though, like a stained-glass window, the Messiah in the OT needs to be viewed as a collective whole for each little piece of prophetic glass to make sense. When viewed up close, the pieces of glass do not make much sense, but as a whole they show an intelligent design, a great work of art.

**Summary.** Hopefully this lesson has been provocative in how you view the Bible, especially the relationship between the Old and New Testaments. The modified list of evangelical legacies looks like this:

- 1) Old Testament prophetic visions are not just *of the future* (prophetic), but are *for the future* (they also identify and explain)
- 2) The Old Testament is the key to understanding the messianic intention of Jesus of Nazareth
- 3) Messianic intention is not a scattered vision in the Old Testament, but is organized intelligently by the Old Testament authors

In the end, we need to be careful of our presuppositions, always checking ourselves to make sure we have not hidden the true intent of the Bible.

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<sup>7</sup> John H. Sailhamer, “The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible” (JETS 44/1, March 2001), 18f23.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.