

Traditional Evangelical Legacies for Understanding the Old and New Testaments

Three Legacies:

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

RESULTS OF THESE LEGACIES:

The Bible Teaches Two Religions

- The OT teaches either 1) Judaism, or 2) the history of the Jews; it was a “pre-Christian” text; Christianity begins with Jesus and the NT
- The purpose of the OT was to teach Israelites the Law, the NT went beyond Law, freeing people from it and teaching a Gospel of *grace*
- The OT, then, is the cultural background to Jesus, and is filled with scattered glimpses of Jesus in the form of typology and promises

The Gospel as an Event: The Cross

- The whole of the past is to be understood historically
- Progressive revelation throughout history, culminating in the Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ
- Everything is seen in light of Jesus’ death and resurrection
- The Gospel is not in the OT; rather, OT is the path which has the Gospel (NT) as its goal; it’s the road, with signs, pointing to Gospel

BIBLICAL RESPONSE TO THESE RESULTS:

The Bible Teaches One Religion

- The OT and NT are both about the Gospel and faith (Rom 16:25ff)
- Both testaments say a lot of the Law and history, but both equally teach faith in the Messiah (Gen 15:6; 26:5 = Romans 4)
- The OT looks forward to a New Covenant, not back to Sinai (Jer 31)
- Christianity begins with Moses, not Jesus (John 5:46)
- Judaism in the NT stemmed from a misinterpretation of the OT
- The OT and NT follow closely the identity of the seed of Abraham
- The OT does this by viewing history prophetically

The Gospel as a Person: Messiah Jesus

- The Gospel is revealed through Scripture, not history (1 Cor 1:18)
- History must be interpreted, and has been by God (2 Tim 3:15ff)
- Messiah is “word made flesh”, not “climax of sacred history”
- The unity of the Bible is not a historical event (the cross), but the coming of the Messiah (Jesus)
- The NT, then, is not the climax of salvation history, but is the continuing theological reflection on the Messiah, who has come
- OT describes Messiah, the NT identifies him (Matt. 1:1-18)
- The Gospel begins in Gen. 1:1 (cf. John 1:1), not Gen 3:15

Three Legacies *Modified*:

- 1) OT prophetic visions are not just ‘of the future’ (that is, predictive), but are *for* the future (identify and explain)
- 2) The OT is the key to understanding the messianic intention of Jesus of Nazareth (and, thus, the NT)
- 3) Messianic intention is not a scattered, fragmented vision in the OT, but is organized intelligently by the OT authors