

The Bible 20/20 Week 33: "Eyes of Faith" (8-23-20)

Reading this week: Nahum-Zechariah **Focus Today:** OT re-cap and looking ahead to the NT scriptures

1) Looking Back - The Importance of the OT

a) **OT is the Word of God** - Offers Truth about God, the world, and our place in it.

Some examples of Jesus verifying the OT as the Word of God (From Bible 20/20 kick-off in Jan):

- 1) He used titles for the Bible (OT) that showed its authenticity:
 - "The Word of God" (Mark 7:13; John 10:35)
 - "Scripture" (Luke 4:21; John 5:39, 10:35)
 - "The Commandment of God" (Mark 7:8)
- 2) He accepted the persons and events mentioned in the Old Testament as historical:
 - Adam and Eve (Matthew 19:4-5) "Have you not read"
 - Noah and the flood (Matthew 24:37-39) "Days of Noah"
 - Jonah (Matthew 12:38-41) "As Jonah, 3 days, great fish"
- 3) He used scripture as conclusive evidence in answering His critics:
 - John 10:35, quoting Psalm 82:6
 - Matthew 22:32, quoting Exodus 3:6, 15
 - Matthew 22:42-44, quoting Psalm 110:1
- 4) He used the authority of scripture to refute Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4:4,7,10)

b) **OT is Reliable** - Accurate prophecy validates it!

Examples of Prophecy Fulfilled:

Nahum - accurately predicts the fall of Assyria (Israel's enemy) at the hands of Babylon

Zephaniah - accurately predicts the fall of Judah at the hands of Babylon

Jeremiah - accurately predicts the length of exile (70 years)

c) **OT reveals the nature of God** - God is unchanging!

Example: God reveals his character to Moses . . .

Exodus 34:6-7 (ESV)

(6) The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, (7) keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

Malachi 3:6 (ESV)

For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

Malachi 3 - the Lord will refine us (purify), and there will be judgement and justice for those who refuse him!

This is the same God that Jesus reveals!

- God doesn't change, and we don't progress beyond the OT to the NT
- The NT is synchronized with the OT - it is the natural continuation and ultimate conclusion!

Transition to point 2: **OT reveals our need for God . . .**

2) Looking Ahead - The need for a Messiah!

God's People and all of humanity need to be reconciled to God!

We see this in the first pages - Adam thru Noah, then repeated thru Abraham and the nation of Israel

Genesis 12:1-3 (ESV)

(1) Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. (2) And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Note: God planned to bless all the nations though Abraham's family which became the nation of Israel

a) OT - God's people need a Savior

No matter the circumstances of God's people, even as his representatives, they needed saving . . .

- Blessed thru Abraham - and saved from famine
- Rescued from Slavery - a nation is born!
- Protected in the Wilderness - brought to a promised land!
- Led by God appointed leaders - Judges, Prophets, and Kings
- Taken Captive - and returned from Exile

In all of these seasons (circumstances both good and bad) God's people failed!

Their lack of Righteous Living was regularly called out, repentance demanded, judgment predicted:

- Widow, Poor, and Foreigner neglected
- Greedy, Prideful, Forgetful, apathetic, selfish - worshipped half-heartedly (outward only)
- Sexual Sin & Worship of Idols

b) OT - Humanity needs a Savior

Israel was meant to be a light to the nations, but that was rare. Usually they were influenced instead!

- **Cultural Influence** - Israel drawn into pagan culture: idolatry, sexual immorality, even child sacrifice
- **Political Influence** - Israel aligned with foreign nations for power, protection, & economic success

The Fallout: They were used, abused, and even destroyed, as judgment came at the hands of pagan nations!

Rare examples of hope: Rahab & Ruth - a picture of God's redemptive plan for all, even in the line of Christ!

The unfulfilled Redemption spoken of so often available to God's People and all Nations is coming thru Jesus

OT prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus:

- **1st coming** - Jesus in the Gospels is God with us as the suffering servant - **The ultimate Sacrifice!**
Example Zechariah: 9:9 (riding donkey), 12:10 (Jesus pierced), 13:7 (Shepherd struck, sheep scatter)
- **2nd coming** - Future “Day of the Lord” to rescue the faithful, and bring justice - **The eternal King!**
Example - Zephaniah speaks of the coming day of the Lord through out his book . . .

Zephaniah 3:17-19 (ESV)

(17) The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. (18) I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. (19) Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

The Story of the OT - The struggle of God’s People, and the need for all people everywhere to be reconciled to God. And the OT gives a clear vision of our need for the coming Messiah . . .

3) Clear Vision - Living by Faith

One of the final takeaways from the OT points to the message of the NT fulfilled in Jesus:

Will we catch God’s Vision of Hope & Redemption and put our faith in Him?

Habakkuk 2:2-4 (ESV)

(2) And the LORD answered me: “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it. (3) For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end—it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay. (4) “Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the **righteous** shall live by his **faith**.”

Note: Will we see what God has written, and put our faith in him? That’s the only way to live.

This connects both OT & NT . . .

Abraham trusts God’s promise in Genesis 15:1-6

Genesis 15:6 (ESV)

And he **believed** the LORD, and he counted it to him as **righteousness**.

Paul quotes Habakkuk several times in NT (Romans, Galatians, Hebrews). Here is an example . . .

Romans 1:16-17 (ESV)

(16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (17) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Conclusion: God is up to something - in your life and throughout human history!

Jesus is the needed Messiah - let’s see him for who He really is and place our faith in Him!

Let’s Pray!

Discussion Questions:

- How can we trust that the OT is reliable and why does that matter? How can old testament prophecies impact our lives today?
- Why does it matter that the OT is still relevant to us today and not outdated? Have you ever struggled with that? How does the way Jesus sees the OT effect how we can view it now today?
- Have you ever struggled with seeing God in the OT as the same God we see in Jesus? If yes, why? Why do you think Jesus was able to see Him differently?
- What can we learn about our own walk with God as we see Israel's struggles to be faithful throughout the OT? Is there anything you feel like God is showing you now that He wants to change in your life?
- What role does faith play in our relationship with Jesus? How does that affect our salvation? How does that affect our daily walk with Him as we persevere and wait for His return? What can we learn from Abraham & Habakkuk's examples about faith in our own lives?