

Unfolding Unveiling: Studies of Christ Revealed in the Types of Joshua, David, and Solomon

Introduction

The Scriptures are more than just good moral stories. They are more than a record of historical facts about those from whom we can learn a lesson. They are far more than a record of Jesus' forefathers. All of this is true because the Bible is historically accurate, but the Scriptures are more than a history book. If they are not, then all we need to do is get degrees in history because in essence we are relegating the life of the believer to simply having a good grasp of biblical history. But the life of the believer is far more than knowing a lot of facts; the life of the believer is Christ.

This leaves us with the question: What purpose do the Old Testament Scriptures hold for the New Testament believer? Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles has much to say concerning the purpose for the Old Testament and how to properly interpret it for our benefit. I Corinthians 10:1-11 gives us precedence to use Israel as a type for Christians as the people of God and their various experiences as types of spiritual realities that find their center in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:3). Believing this interpretation of only one part of Israel's history – the wilderness – to be a precedent for the proper interpretation of the entire Old Testament, I set about to search the historical books with this principle as my measuring stick and boundary.

The Old Testament records a series of experiences that take place in time and space: the tabernacle, the offerings, the Land, the history, the people. But we as the Israel of God are spiritual, not earthly. All of Israel's experience must be applied to us in our spiritual existence rather than in the earthly realm. This is an invisible reality and cannot be experienced or understood by the five senses or the mind that is governed by them. Our beginning is found only in the new creation; carnal things have passed away and now all is new (cf. II Cor. 5:17). Therefore if we interpret the Old Testament as good stories with natural lessons to be learned about good behavior, we will fall miserably short of the Christ whom God desires that we see, and who is the glory of God.

Seeing Christ in the Scriptures

What is the importance of interpreting the Scripture in light of Christ revealed in a spiritual corporate man? Is this a method that is so spiritual that it is no earthly good? Let us again refer to Paul's mind on the matter, for by virtue of the Scripture that he left behind, God's apostle to the Gentiles still speaks to us today:

“Seeing, then, that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech; and not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished, but their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless, which it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the

Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

II Corinthians 3:12-18

According to this passage, there are two ways that one can read the law of Moses:

1) with a blinded mind due to the veil that is naturally upon the heart. It is the veil of Jesus’ flesh according to Hebrews 10:20, which by the blindness of the person relegates all that God desires us to see to the natural realm, or

2) with an unveiled face. According to II Corinthians 3:14, the veil is done away in Christ. Those who abide there are those who can behold with an unveiled face. What do these see? They see God’s glory and are instantly changed into that which they see.

The Scriptures are the mirror in which we behold God’s glory; but as long as we look through eyes of flesh, we will see nothing but flesh: men, history, victories and defeats, good lessons and stern warnings.

Again, my intention is not to belittle the importance of the historical accuracy of the Bible. After all, for God to relate spiritual realities by a series of fabricated stories that claim accuracy would be inconsistent with God’s character. Truth being foundational to His character, any claim that truth can be extracted from a book of myths would be a slap in His face and a mockery of all that He is. But to say that all the Bible is, is an historical account from which we may derive good moral stories is to settle far below the Lord’s intentions and desire for us to be intimate enough with Him that He might reveal to us His mind and heart.

Jesus had a few words for the ever-present, ever-educated, ever-critical Pharisees about the proper interpretation and use of the Scriptures:

“You search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me that ye might have life. I receive not honor from men.”

John 5:39-41

The Pharisees searched the Old Testament Scriptures. They committed huge portions of Scripture to memory and applied the law to themselves in great detail. But even in their zeal, their hearts were far from God, for Jesus pointed out that though they were diligent in their studies, they would not come to Him. They were mistaken in that they thought the Scriptures – the written Word – contained eternal life, while rejecting Him who was the Word before ink and paper existed. It is in this Word that we find life (cf. Jn. 1:4), not in studying the written Scriptures apart from coming to this One.

John 5:41 says that the Word does not receive honor from men. All the interpretations of the Scriptures that men can conceive in their hearts, whether they come from the Pharisees of the Jewish community during Jesus’ day or the Pharisees of the Christian community in our own day, is only honor from man, for that which is flesh is flesh. God does not receive the testimony of the flesh concerning the Son as valid testimony. Only

the Spirit can open our eyes to see Him and only this testimony is valid, for “that which is Spirit is Spirit.”

The Scriptures testify of Christ. We should go there to learn Him. If we go to the Scriptures for other purposes, misinterpretation is unavoidable. Only the Holy Spirit can teach us Christ, and we must allow Him to do His job. When we see Him, we will be changed into His image.

Forever Joined

That the Scriptures testify of Christ is an accurate yet oversimplified statement. They testify of the Christ who has joined us to Himself in his death and resurrection, so that His fullness is seen in His body, and His body cannot be seen apart from Him. The types in the Old Testament, then, can only be understood in light of the Cross that forever bound the Lord to His people. Just as Jesus cannot be seen apart from His body today, even so in the Scriptures the Lord cannot be understood apart from Israel.

This brings us to a point that has troubled believers throughout the centuries: How could this God who is love, this God who showed us such mercy and grace at the Cross show so much anger and judgment toward Israel? How can a God of love and grace be revealed in the animal sacrifices, in the death of the Israelites in the wilderness, in their bondage to the inhabitants of the Land during judges, in the rejection of Saul as king of Israel, and in the deaths of 70,000 Israelites when David numbered Israel? We become uneasy when reading the Old Testament because we know that we stumble often and are in constant need of the grace of God. Why did He not show Israel the same grace that we need today? What is to keep Him from treating us the way He did Israel?

Again, the answer lies in the Lord being forever joined to His people. Throughout the Scriptures, there are individual Bible characters who typify Christ. But the Old Testament itself points out, “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt,” (cf. Hos. 11:1). Israel was a type of the resurrected Christ who has both a head and a body. Israel’s history, then, would be limited to that which pointed to the true of which they were only a pattern. Everything that happened to them was a pattern of spiritual realities, spiritual order, and even Christ Himself. Their calling in the earth was to point to the glory of God, which would in turn draw the nations to Himself. Sometimes this could be accomplished by great blessing and victory; other times it could only be accomplished by judgment and death. Is it not true that to only know the Lord in His glorious resurrection is to overlook the very nature of God? He is the Lamb who was slain from before the foundation of the world. He was born for suffering and sorrow. Israel could not represent a complete picture of Christ without typifying the sin that He became and the judgment that He bore for it. Israel was called to be a complete picture of Christ, whether that meant life or death for the individuals.

The Progressive Nature of the Historical Books

The Old Testament Scriptures, then, are an unfolding revelation of one complete work, and the New Testament Scriptures declare that this work was completed in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Ephesians 2:10 says that we are His workmanship created in Christ. II Corinthians 5:17 says that all things are of God in the New Creation and old things are passed away. The New Testament Scriptures also declare, however, that there is much work left to be done in us as God's people. Paul says in Philippians 3:10, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." Finally, II Corinthians 3:18 says, "we all... are changed into that same image..." As we see this finished work and new creation, we are changed by conforming to it.

God's desire is to conform us to the image of His Son, to bring His plan to fruition, which is that God might be known by and through His people. This book is a layout of the progression by which God intends to complete His plan in His people. In Christ, the plan was complete when He sat down at the right hand of the Father, the Son having completed the work that His Father had given Him to do. The remainder of the work lies in the hearts of God's people. As we abide in Christ, in Him who is our completion, the Holy Spirit continues His labors in us to bring about the Father's desired work.

There is a progression in this work. The Holy Spirit does not reveal Christ in an arbitrary or haphazard manner. He brings us through certain stages of revelation through which each believer must pass on his way to spiritual maturity. The steps are marked by greater unveilings of Christ, but the work is not to teach us deep knowledge; no, the Scriptures say that we are His workmanship. We are what the Holy Spirit is working on. He is drawing us, breaking us, molding us, planting us, building us, doing whatever is necessary to make us living stones that fit together in His temple. The work is in our hearts, to bring them to a right condition that will behold Him, and allow His reality to become ours.

In the historical books, we can see an unfolding revelation and apprehending of the one complete work. That the work of Christ is complete and that He is now seated at the right hand of the Father, we cannot leave for one moment, nor do we throughout the course this book. However, the emphasis of this book is that there are many unveilings of the One Christ in the believer's experience (though in truth there is only one unveiling), and each unveiling brings a greater apprehension and a deeper identification in Him.

A Threefold Type of Christ

This progression of revelation is laid out in the Scriptures in the threefold type of Joshua, David, and Solomon. Each of these men is a picture of Christ revealed, and the components of each of their eras point to how the believer sees Christ at that time. As the reality of Christ that each of these men personifies is worked into the hearts of Israel, it becomes the foundation for the next stage in their history. This order is laid out in clear stages through the historical books of the Old Testament, and while this comprehension must take place in the mind and heart of each believer, it must finally be realized in

God's people corporately, which will ultimately lead to God's people manifesting His final purpose for them.

This is God's order as seen in the historical books:

- 1) To possess the Land – Joshua – Making the change from the earthly to the heavenly.
- 2) To be gathered in One – David – The people of God stop identifying individually and start being gathered in the One.
- 3) To be established – Solomon – The people of God are built together as one habitation for the living God. The nations see the glory of God.

Under Joshua, Israel crossed the Jordan, entered into the Land for the first time, and possessed the Land as a nation. They had left the wilderness of a carnal understanding of the Lord and entered into Christ who is seated in the heavenlies. But after Joshua's time was finished, the Scripture says, "So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance," (cf. Josh. 24:28). They all had an individual inheritance in the Land, but nobody gathered in One. Instead, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 21:25).

This is the importance of having a king. To have a king means to gather the entire kingdom into himself (David), so that all are identified in the One. In that One, all those who are gathered can be established (Solomon). It is not enough for us to take the Land as a people and then each of us lives in his own inheritance. If we stop at that view, we have the potential of lapsing into a period of Judges. It is necessary to "anoint the king" [(cf. II Sam. 2:4; 5:3) though he was already anointed (cf. I Sam. 16:13)] and be gathered In Him.

It is not even enough to be gathered; we must be established. The establishing of the kingdom took place during Solomon's reign (cf. II Sam. 7:12, I Ki. 2:12, 46). The glory of God flowing through His people was not seen by all the nations of the earth until the kingdom was established under Solomon (cf. I Ki. 2:26, 4:29-34, 9:15-10:13) and the temple (God's people) was built. God's glory was not seen by the nations under Joshua, during the Judges, or under David. God's glory was seen when the kingdom was established in Solomon.

The nations will not marvel at the glory of the Lord until we are established in Christ and we allow the prince of peace to reign. Solomon's reign was carried out in peace from beginning to end. It is in the reign of peace and rest that we must be established, not individually with individual inheritance, but corporately in One. Solomon is the type of the corporate new man who begins his reign in rest. This view is not of Jesus as an individual, for Solomon's reign began at resurrection. We must be established as a corporate body. Our being seated in Christ begins in rest. This kingdom knows neither strife nor war.

The historical books, then, I will explore by the following principles:

- 1) The Old Testament testifies of Christ, which testimony is not limited to the redemptive element of His work;

- 2) Only the Holy Spirit can reveal Christ;
- 3) The historical books teach us how this revealing unfolds as God deals with His people as a whole;
- 4) This progressive unveiling is not a “new work” or “move of the Spirit” but the seeing of the One and the true and complete work of Christ that was accomplished in His death, burial, and resurrection;
- 5) Natural events, people, places, and things are manifestation and types of spiritual realities and condition that are applicable to Christ’s spiritual body today.

What this Book is Not

This book is not meant to be a code-breaking device or an impersonal laundry list of “this-means-that’s”. If God gave us His mind in code form, then whoever is sharp and witty enough to crack the code would be closest to God. Nor is this book meant as a substitute for searching the Scriptures for oneself. It is not meant to be used as a crutch by those who do not trust that the Holy Spirit can and will bring any believer into knowing the Lord. Any attempt to understand God’s Word on an intellectual basis alone will only push the believer into the old, familiar trap of self-deception which mistakes the possessing of facts and ideas for a knowing that comes about by the relationship whose beginning is Christ unveiled by the Holy Spirit.

This book will not explain the meaning of every verse, or even every Bible story from Exodus to II Chronicles. Instead, this book is an exposition, a setting forth of principles that span entire books of the Bible. To see spiritual reality in such huge sweeps requires us to view our subject from a high point, much like viewing a mountain range from the window of an airplane. But in pursuing such a viewpoint, however, it is unavoidable that the observer will lose many of the finer details. Still, there is much of the Lord to be seen in the smallest and most overlooked phrases of Scripture. When it serves our purposes, we will “zoom in” on some points that will be of interest to us, so that we will not lose their clarity altogether.

Many who are reading this book may be familiar with the message of the Cross and will understand the basis upon which this book proceeds. These readers will follow much of what I say with little or no trouble. There may be others, however, who have never even heard that there is such a thing as the revelation of Christ. It was with these precious believers in mind that this introduction was written. I pray that the Holy Spirit will open the eyes of your heart to the Lord in ways you have never imagined, and that you will delight yourself in the good things He brings out of the storehouse of Christ.

In all probability, the author has most likely failed in her attempt to bring before the reader a fully developed, properly balanced, clearly communicated body of writing that is altogether free of error even though this was her goal at the outset. Nevertheless, her desire is that Christ be lifted up, and she humbly entreats the reader to look past the earthen vessel to the treasure that is as pure and true as it ever was.