

Word on Worship

John 5:39-40

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

As the speaker, Jesus is referring to what we now call the Old Testament. Today, many assume that because we have a New Testament that the *Old* one is nullified or at best a historic curiosity and at worst a mythical depiction of a vengeful, almost sadistic God. Indeed, there are Christian groups and denominations that say they would not follow or want a God who would tell the Jews to slaughter the inhabitants of the land of Canaan. They only want a God of LOVE. And that love is defined by their limited understanding and desires, not necessarily as defined by God and revealed in the scripture Jesus is addressing.

However, Jesus gave validity to the Old Testament. He quoted the scriptures of the Old Testament a multitude of times, referring to them as absolute truth from God the Father. The problem is not that the scriptures are out of date, as some suggest. The problem is many don't study the Old Testament, and don't know the scriptures well enough to see the truth clearly. What they see they discount because it does not fit their preconceived notions. Also, they believe false assessments and interpretations of those who are advancing another gospel cleverly disguised as truth by their language or sincerity. The truth is that God the Father has revealed his plan for man's salvation throughout the Old Testament.

This revelation is purposely deep enough to prevent a casual reader, curiously interested in the intellectual and informational content only, from grasping God's deep truths. Yet, the revelation is simple enough for the sincere seeker to see the completeness and unity of God's plan for the redemption of mankind throughout both Testaments. The plan remains unchanged from the God who is the same, yesterday, today and tomorrow. And Jesus makes it clear in John 5:39 that the scriptures testify about him – as the redeemer of mankind. As Jesus often said, "let he who has ears hear and he who has eyes see."

Today, we have an advantage – we see the Old Testament through the magnifying glass of the New Testament. We can more easily see Jesus and his redemption through his sacrifice in the pages of the Old Testament. For example, in Isaiah 9:6,7 we see the prophesied miraculous birth of Jesus the savior and his reign as king in his kingdom forever. In Genesis Chapter 5 we see God's complete plan of salvation of man explained by joining the root meaning of the succession of names in the chronology from Adam to Noah.

In the Genesis account of Abraham and Isaac we again see God's salvation plan in an innocent willing to be sacrificed. Through Abraham and Isaac, we see the miraculous birth of a son, followed by a father willing to sacrifice this only son, the providing of the real sacrifice by God himself and finally the choosing of a willing and perfect bride for the son. All are prophetic allegories of the purchase of the bride of Christ for salvation and new life with him. Let he who has ears hear and he who has eyes see.