

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

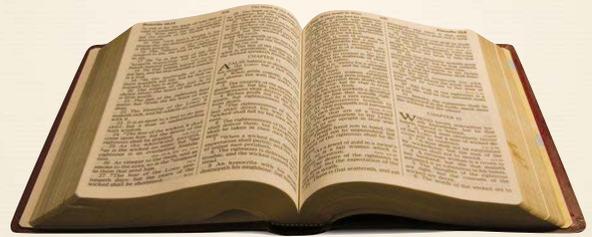
2 Peter 3:14-18

Lesson #1

The Challenge of the O.T.

01/06/2019

How to read the Old Testament



1

Why is a proper reading of the Old Testament important?

- The O.T. is the **basis** of three of the world's great religious communities - Judaism, Christianity, & Islam.
- Its narratives **shape** much of Western civilization's ethics, values, laws, and culture.
- It is the necessary **background** for understanding the Christian Gospel.
- Its **misunderstanding** is the root of many Christian doctrinal disputes, heresies, and "cults".
- It is quoted extensively as the **authenticating** basis of the identity of Jesus as the Christ and the Gospel as the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham in Genesis.

2

What's the big deal?

God said it!
I believe it!
That settles it!

But have you
really read it
and how have
you applied it?



3

Bible based parenting?

Judges 11

"³⁰ And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord, and said, 'If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, ³¹ then whoever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be the Lord's, to be offered up by me as **a burnt-offering**.' . . .

³⁴ Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah; and there was **his daughter** coming out to meet him with timbrels and with dancing. She was his only child; he had no son or daughter except her.

³⁹ At the end of two months she returned to her father, **who did to her according to the vow** which he had made;"

4

2 Timothy 2:15

"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."

1 Corinthians 13:11

"When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things."

**A breadth of perspective separates
a child's view and an adult's view.**

5

Psalm 37:4

“Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

The **understanding of the “desire of one’s heart”** as a child is quite different than that as a mature adult.

Paul described those who were under the O.T. Law as **children** (Gal.4:1-7).

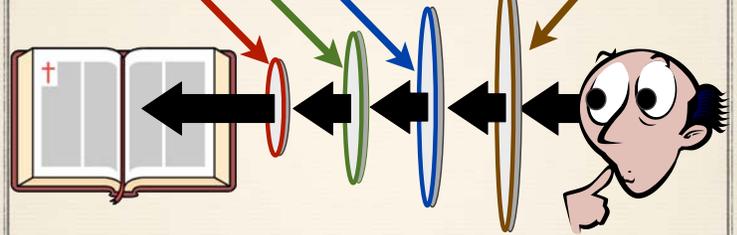
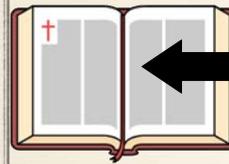


Old Testament

Gospels

Epistles

Our culture



We interpret the Scriptures through lenses.

Berean Christians want to know:

1. How are we to understand **stories that sound like ancient cultural myths** - Creation, Fall, Noah, Job, Jonah, etc.?
2. How are we to respond to the **ethical teaching** of the O.T. - vengeance, stoning wayward children, genocide, etc.?
3. The **N.T. use of the O.T.** - How did the Apostles understand the authority of the O.T.?



Examples

Are the **10 Commandments** a practical guide for Christians today?

Exodus 31:14

“Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it **shall surely be put to death**; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people.”

Some other capital offenses under O.T. Law: (extramarital sex, homosexual acts, disobeying parents, bearing false witness, contempt of court, false prophecy, blasphemy, etc.)



Examples

How **literally** are we to read the O.T.?

Hebrews 2:7 quotes Ps.8:5

(Septuagint - Greek copy of Hebrew text)

“You have made him for a little while lower **than the angels;**”

Psalm 8:5

(Masoretic Hebrew text)

“Yet You have made him a little lower **than God,**”



Examples

How **literally** are we to read the O.T.?

Micah 5:2

““But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, **too little to be** among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.””

Matthew 2:6 seems to change the text of Micah

“And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, **are by no means least** among the leaders of Judah; for out of you shall come forth a Ruler, who will shepherd My people Israel.”



Examples

How are we to understand O.T. **ethics**?

- The Lord commanded Moses to kill the Midianites as an act of **vengeance** (Num. 31:1-2).
- When it was discovered that the Israelites spared the **women and children** (31:15) Moses commanded:

“¹⁷ Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known man intimately.
¹⁸ But all the girls who have not known man intimately, spare for yourselves.”



12

Examples

What is the **God of the O.T.** like?

Job 2

“³ The Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him to ruin him without cause.”

⁴ Satan answered . . . ⁵ However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse You to Your face.”



13

Examples

How are we to understand the **meaning of terms** in the O.T.?

Ps.78:69 “the earth which is founded **forever**”
2 Pet.3:10 “the earth . . . **will be burned up**”

Jer.3:12 “I will not be angry **forever**.”

Jer.17:4 “For you have kindled a fire in My anger which will burn **forever**.”

Ex.9:6 “and **all** the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the sons of Israel, not one died.” **Where did the Egyptians get animals to pull their chariots if all were dead?**



14

Examples

How are we to understand the **vindictive Psalms** in the O.T.?

Psalm 137:9

“How blessed will be the one who seizes and dashes your little ones against the rock.”

(Imprecatory Psalms)
5,10,17, 35,58,59,69,70,
79,83,109,127,137,140)



15

Examples

Is it true that those who seek God will **not lack for ANYTHING good**?

Psalm 34:10

“The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; but they who seek the Lord shall not be in want of any good thing.”



16

Examples

How can we explain **logical inconsistencies**?

How could Moses have written Deuteronomy when chapter 34 records his death?

Daniel 4 seems to have been written by Nebuchadnezzar (not Daniel) as it is written in the first person (vs.4).

If all the Ninevites were converted by Jonah in 760BC why would they overthrow Jerusalem 59 yrs. later in 701BC?

17

A healthy faith will be

- ✓ **Intellectually convincing**
- ✓ **Emotionally engaging**
- ✓ **Morally transforming**
- ✓ **Socially connecting**
- ✓ **Culturally inspiring**



What we can expect from this series.

- An understanding of the **general structure and content** of the O.T.
- A familiarity with the **key passages** that shape the overall message of the O.T.
- Insight into the **stepping stones** that pave the way for the N.T. Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- A guide to the major **controversies** related to the reading of the O.T.
- Address **respectfully & honestly** the hard questions.

What we will not do.

- Answer **every question** we raise to the satisfaction of all (including me).
- Cover **every book or issue**.
- Extend the class into the next decade.