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Christ in the Old Testament

*Can Christ Be Preached From the Old Testament?
But HOW, If It Is "Done Away"?*

The famous eunuch from Ethiopia was reading from the scroll of Isaiah when Philip was sent to him. Within only a few hours, the eunuch asked to be baptized. He had learned about Christ from Philip's explanation of Isaiah's prophecies. How was this possible? Could the eunuch have received Christ as his Savior, and been saved by grace, through understanding what Isaiah wrote? Isn't the Old Testament "done away"? Is the knowledge necessary for salvation to be found in the Old Testament? Read, in your own Bible, the astonishing truth!

by Garner Ted Armstrong

He was tall, dressed in the finery that befitted his station. Gold glittered from his wrists and from the medallion that hung around his neck with its royal crest of Ethiopia.

His black head was shielded against the sun by the canopy of his elaborately carved and decorated chariot. The nose was aquiline, the lips thin, like all of his race, though he was carrying much more body fat than he would have liked.

He had given orders to halt here, in the shade of these trees, and his escort was busy seeing to their mounts, checking the wheels of their chariots, and drinking from their water skins.

As befitted his station, and the value of the precious scroll he had purchased in Jerusalem, Queen Candace had ordered a large armed guard to accompany him. The Romans had graciously assigned additional escort to this point. They would turn back now, for the sun-baked Arabah lay just ahead, and the risk of brigands was small.

With trembling hands, he unrolled the beautifully scripted scroll, admiring the heavy, engraved brass. As secretary of the treasury, he was returning to Ethiopia with what would be considered a priceless addition to the queen's coffers: the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He struggled a little with the Hebrew. Though he could understand the words well enough, much of the meaning of the lengthy passages escaped him. As he unrolled new

lines of script, his servant rolled the ones he had just read onto the opposite spindle, both of which featured a beautifully decorated cap at the top, and a tapering metal handle on the bottom. His lips moved as he read aloud to himself, eyebrows knit together in concentration. He became aware of someone standing beside the chariot. A man he had not seen before, a stranger, who was not part of his train, smiled at him and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

Taken aback, his curiosity over the passages he had just labored through overcame his momentary impulse to rebuke the stranger for intruding. There was something about the man, perhaps his dress, his manner, his precise speech—or maybe it was the friendly earnestness of his question. Certainly, he was a Hebrew, and therefore skilled in the language. "How can I," he answered, "except some man should guide me?" He beckoned to the man, who said his name was Philip, offering him a seat beside him under the shade of the canopy. Philip had been astonished when he had heard the voice from God, that of an angel no doubt (Acts 8:26), telling him to go south on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, into the desert. But he had immediately left on his journey.

When Philip saw the large caravan of animals and chariots, and easily singled out the beautifully decorated chariot with the crest of Ethiopia on the sides, he asked some of the escort who they were, and learned that the large man in the chariot was a eunuch, that he had authority next only to that of Candace of Ethiopia, and that he was responsible for their national treasury.

Philip climbed up beside the eunuch, who began reading aloud the passage he had just completed.

"He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth. He was taken away by distress, and in humiliation, fair judgment was denied Him, and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken. And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the Eternal to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin..." (Isaiah 53:7-10).

When he finished reading the entire passage, the eunuch turned to Philip and asked, "Please tell me, of whom is the prophet speaking? Himself, or some other man?"

Philip began reading the same passage exactly where the eunuch had begun to read (Acts 8:35), and began expounding the meaning.

First, he made very clear to the eunuch the full meaning of each verse itself, each word. Then, he quoted many other passages of Scripture. He recited verses from the other prophets, from the Psalms of David, and even from the scroll of Genesis.

After all, the eunuch had come to Jerusalem as a pilgrim to worship in the Temple (Acts 8:27), and it was obvious Candace had ordered the purchase of the expensive scroll of Isaiah, so he would not take offense. Philip launched into an earnest recital of the amazing miracle of Pentecost and of his own personal experiences. The scriptures came pouring out of his mouth, as the big black Ethiopian listened to him eagerly.

Philip

Philip had been present when the astonishing miracles of that electrifying Pentecost had occurred. He had heard the rushing sound of a mighty wind; he had seen the blazing coronas of fire settling on the heads of those twelve apostles.

Inspired by their words, he had joined the lines seeking baptism. It had been the most glorious experience of his life, and he couldn't bring himself to leave. He began busily helping everyone he could. When the huge crowds gathered, many crowded forward in the food lines, and in their thoughtlessness some of their elderly women were being ignored. Steven was there, excitedly relating to people all he had seen and heard. Philip joined with him, along with Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, who was a proselyte from Antioch, and together they busied themselves carrying food, arranging seating, helping elderly women to a vantage place to see and hear.

Their service had been noted by some of the apostles, so when some of the Greeks who were there began muttering about the forwardness of some of the Jews, and their tendency to ignore the ladies during the meetings, Philip and the others found themselves singled out, called to the front.

Philip had never heard of such a thing—had never seen or heard about an "ordination" before. But the apostles had said to the crowds that they should search out from among their number seven men "of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom," and that they were going to appoint them as servers to help the people, while the apostles would concentrate on praying and preaching the Word of God (Acts 6:1-6).

Philip remembered how humbled he had felt when several of the apostles had called his name, had surrounded him and laid hands on him right in front of the crowds, and had asked God to grant him special gifts for serving those who were assembled there. The Greeks called them the diaconate, or the "servants," who took care of the physical needs of the large crowds of people.

But their service was not limited to carrying food, arranging tables and chairs, and keeping order. Philip was inspired to eagerly help people because he knew he simply had to do so, that the teachings of Jesus Christ would not let him do otherwise. Also, as he worked among them, he found it a natural tendency for them to ask him things like, "Did you see Jesus Christ of Nazareth?" or, "Were you there when the fire appeared?" or, "Have you seen anyone healed of disease?"

How could he help but speak to them?

Stephen also began speaking with such conviction and power that he invariably drew large crowds. People pressed forward, holding up their children, bringing their elderly, showing him their injuries, telling him about their sicknesses and diseases. Stephen had prayed for them, and people were healed instantly.

But some of the men from one of the synagogues had begun to attempt to entrap Stephen in his own words. They concocted the cleverest arguments they could against him, but every time they stood to challenge him, he confused them, speaking with such cold, clear logic, with such conviction over his own personal experiences, that they were defeated.

Finally, they plotted to bribe false witnesses who went to the high priests and claimed they had heard Stephen speaking blasphemy against Moses and God (Acts 6:7-15). Stephen was arrested and brought to trial.

In his defense, he so enraged his audience that a riot was incited, and they stoned him to death (Acts 7).

Philip and the others were frightened. Were they next?

The synagogues had so stirred up the authorities that the persecution became not only widespread, but cloaked with official authority. Only the apostles were able to remain in Jerusalem with impunity, and that was mostly due to the fear the religious sects harbored as a result of the miracles, signs, and wonders that had been accomplished.

Most members of the church were scattered. So it was that Philip, who fled along with the rest, went to the city of Samaria, and began telling

them about everything he had seen and heard; how Jesus Christ of Nazareth was indeed the true Messiah, the Savior of the world. Demon possessed people were brought to him by anxious families and friends, and he cast them out. People with palsy, people who were crippled, were miraculously healed when Philip prayed for them. Simon the magician pretended to be a believer, and was not exposed until Peter and John were sent by the other apostles in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1-14).

It was shortly after this, while Philip was still many miles north of Jerusalem in Samaria that God sent His angel to tell him about the Ethiopian eunuch.

Philip "Preached Unto Him Jesus"

Seeing the wide-eyed interest of this big official of the Ethiopian queen, Philip warmed to his task.

He asked that the scroll be rolled back until he came to the last lines of the preceding passage. He read to the eunuch how the Messiah was to have been beaten nearly to death, "As many as were astonished at Thee: His visage was so marred, more than that of any man, and His form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah 52:14), and then related all the events of the terrible night of Christ's arrest, His scourging, and His death.

He read, "So shall He sprinkle many nations," and reminded the Ethiopian of the practice of the priests on the Day of Atonement to sprinkle drops of blood on the altar, on the Book of the Law, the Tabernacle, all the vessels, and even on the people (Hebrews 9:18-22).

He showed how the sacrifices were but a foreshadow of the necessity for God Himself to come to die for the sins of His own creation (John 1:1-14), and how sacrifices were not originally intended (I Samuel 15:22,23; Jeremiah 7:22), but that God had instituted them to remind sinning Israel that the wages of sin was death.

He recited many of the Psalms, showing how the very things David sang and wrote about had come to pass in the life of the Messiah. He quoted, "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 'He trusted on the Eternal that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighteth in Him'" (Psalm 22:7,8), and related how Christ had been nailed to a tree trunk.

Philip related how David had prophesied, "They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue

cleaveth to my jaws; and Thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" (Psalm 22:13-18). Philip spoke feelingly, passionately, about the horrible beating and death of Jesus Christ. He told how Peter had become so emotional back there in Jerusalem when he related how he had forsaken Jesus, how Jesus had warned him he would, how vehemently he had denied even knowing him, and how bitterly he had repented later. He kept returning to the open scroll before them, reading from it.

"He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men..." Philip read. Then he related how even John had fled in the night; how John had told them how ashamed and heartbroken he was when Jesus had looked down upon him from that terrible tree, and called Mary John's "mother," and John her "son"; how he knew the Christ wanted John to take care of Mary for the rest of her life (John 19:25-27).

"She still lives with him to this day," Philip said. "And there are people in Jerusalem who are alive and well in their own homes who were resurrected from the dead the instant Christ died" (Matthew 27:52,53).

Philip had no scrolls with him. He possessed no "Bible," and of course it would be another twenty-four years before a single word of Matthew's Gospel, or Paul's letter to the Thessalonian church would be written.

But Philip was intelligent, and well-versed in the Holy Scriptures, which were replete with prophecies about the coming Messiah.

He mentioned how Daniel had seen a vision of the coming Kingdom of God, and the judgment (Daniel 7:9,10,13,14,22,27).

An Eternal Inheritance

Knowing that the eunuch would be especially concerned about some inspiring, encouraging prophecies found a little further on in the expensive scroll, Philip asked that they unroll it to that point, and then read, "Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the Eternal, speak, saying, 'The Eternal hath utterly separated me from His people': neither let the eunuch say, 'Behold, I am a dry tree.' For thus saith the Eternal unto the eunuchs that keep My sabbaths, and choose the things that please Me, and take hold of My covenant; 'Even to them will I give in Mine house and within My walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off'" (Isaiah 56:1-5).

The eunuch may well have explained how he had volunteered to become the queen's eunuch. "Many thousands volunteer, because they know they could never reach such high station otherwise. Many die as a result of the operation, but those of us who live are given many things. We have a better life than many who have children, but who are poor, and sick." Philip knew this was the case. Still, there were regrets: "Oh yes, I have thought about it. What man would not want to see his children; to see his name live on?"

Philip no doubt emphasized how God would give the man a name better than that of sons and daughters, how he would inherit the Kingdom of God.

Philip continued reading: "Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Eternal, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Eternal, to be His servants, every one that keepeth My sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of My covenant; Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer..." (Isaiah 56:6,7).

At some point, the Ethiopian official must have indicated his desire to continue their journey. Philip must have agreed to continue with them, so their discussion could have continued for several hours—long enough for Philip to have explained thoroughly the many scriptures to which he must have referred.

The name of "Jesus Christ" is nowhere mentioned in the book of Isaiah, so Philip no doubt went into detail about Christ's life; about Philip's own experiences, perhaps even having been in Jerusalem, and having witnessed Christ's death. It is obvious Philip was among the earliest converts either on or immediately following Pentecost. It is also obvious that Philip had become deeply convicted of Jesus' divinity, and knew that He was the Son of God.

Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, says Philip, though beginning in the book of Isaiah, "preached unto him Jesus." How many mainstream ministers today could do the same thing? Relatively few, no doubt. Many of them believe the Old Testament is done away, that it is only interesting as history or for its value as an archaic piece of literature. But for preaching the gospel?

Following their discussion, which must have consumed several hours, Luke wrote, "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?' And Philip said, 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou

mayest.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'" (Acts 8:36,37).

It becomes obvious that Philip had also explained the rite of baptism to the eunuch. Had Philip known John, or perhaps even been one of his disciples for a time? We cannot know. Remember, the eunuch had come to Jerusalem to worship God (Acts 8:27), and was therefore a proselyte, a "stranger," or a gentile who had been converted to the Law of Moses.

No doubt he was a keeper of the Sabbath, and of the annual holy days, for there is little doubt his pilgrimage to Jerusalem was on an annual sabbath. Therefore, there was no need for Philip to spend hours (or days, or a week or more!) explaining to the eunuch everything about God's laws; about clean and unclean and tithing.

If the eunuch had been in Jerusalem to worship, he would naturally have purchased something for a sacrifice. Philip would have explained to him about Christ's sacrifice; how the rite of baptism symbolized death, burial, and the resurrection; how the shadowy sacrifices pictured Jesus Christ and His shed blood for the sins of all mankind. This inspiring account of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch tells us a great deal about God's Word, the early church, and the power of God's Holy Spirit working in and through one human being to another.

Philip Was Not "Authorized"

Who sent Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch? We have already read it. "The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip."

Philip was not "credentialed" by some church organization. He was not sent out by an employer; nor authorized or approved by any other human being. But it was a real angel who spoke to Philip, not Philip's ego, or imagination, or spiritual pride, or secret desire to be a "minister," or his desire to "be somebody" who had a special relationship with God or wanted to be a "prophet"!

There are plenty of men and women like that around today, as there were then (Matthew 24:11).

God had prepared the mind of the Ethiopian eunuch; had intervened into his life, caused him to be sent to Jerusalem, and caused him to be traveling that road at that time. This was a miracle from God, not an accidental encounter.

Philip only lived through such an experience once, so far as we know. Following his baptism of the eunuch, he was caught away by the Spirit

(Acts 8:39), and "was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cesarea" (Acts 8:40).

This was truly "one on one." God inspired the eunuch to pause, unroll the scroll to the place he did, and then read aloud to himself. God caused Philip to be in the place he was, at the time he was.

Since Philip "began at the same scripture" and preached Christ to the eunuch from the Old Testament, it is obvious Philip knew the Scriptures. He was not a novice; a man who had never known God's word; a man who came from illiterate masses, was suddenly converted by the miracles he saw and heard on Pentecost, and then became a deacon and an evangelist. No, it is obvious, from God's Word, that Philip knew the book of Isaiah. He must have known much more, for the passage in Isaiah was only where he began to teach.

What were Philip's "credentials" for this "one on one," up close, personal teaching? Did Peter know about Philip's baptism of the eunuch? No. Did Paul? No. Paul was not even converted as yet (Acts 9 with Galatians 1). Did any of the apostles at Jerusalem know about Philip's preaching, or authorize it, or approve it, or finance it? No. Philip was sent directly by God, and not by any human leader.

Notice, however, that Philip was not preaching to the church! Some, harboring private, fantastic spiritual agendas in their own minds, would like to become a modern-day Philip. Some believe an angel has spoken to them, or believe they have seen a vision, and have a special "message," or a "calling." But most such people do not go to the world and preach the gospel. Instead, some attempt to convince various leaders of various churches of their spiritual credentials in order to gain recognition.

Philip may not have been "authorized" by human leaders, but he was sent by God. He was not sent to Peter, to tell him how God had chosen Philip to become a prophet. He was sent to a black eunuch from Ethiopia to convict and convert him.

This was an absolutely unique occurrence in history—something that only happened once. Though changes occurred with the passing of time, the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch may well have been the earliest beginning of the Christian Coptic church.

Just as God had converted thousands gathered in Jerusalem for Pentecost; thousands who departed for their far-flung nations within days or weeks afterward, and who became emissaries for the gospel, so God sent Philip to convict and baptize a high government official from Ethiopia, who

would then take his newfound knowledge back to Candace and to his people.

Nothing further is ever mentioned about the Ethiopian eunuch. He disappears from history. We are not given his name, and we know nothing of his efforts, either successful or unsuccessful, when he arrived back at his home.

It is obvious Philip knew his work was finished with the baptism of the eunuch. Philip did not attempt to enroll the eunuch on a list, or attempt to get him to "join the church" in some nominal manner, or urge him to "keep in touch," or enlist him as part of an organization. The eunuch repented, received Jesus Christ as his Savior, was baptized, and went on his way.

From that day on, he belonged to Christ, Who had paid the supreme price for the eunuch's life. From that day on, he was a newly-begotten "new creature in Christ" (II Corinthians 5:17), who would be taught through study and prayer by the Holy Spirit, apart from any human leader. What a beautiful example this is of God's great calling, His wonderful gift of salvation.

Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch had nothing to do whatsoever with the development of a human organization called a "church." It was divinely orchestrated. It was ordered by God through an angel. It was blessed of God, through opening the eunuch's understanding and bringing him to repentance. Philip was a servant, willingly going whatever distance and spending whatever length of time required, teaching, informing, inspiring, explaining, and then performing baptism when the time came. His work finished, Philip was caught away.

The eunuch continued on his way a converted man. He was now a member of the body of Christ; a member of the church Jesus said He would build (Matthew 16:18), and yet he was not attached in any manner to the apostles in Jerusalem, to any single apostle, or to any other human being in the church.

He was also the first gentile to be spoken of in particular, though there may have been gentile proselytes among the crowds in Jerusalem on Pentecost. It was yet in the future when God would show Peter he must not call any man "common" or "unclean," and reveal how the gospel must also go to the nations (Acts 10).

Humanly, from an organizational point of view, one might say Philip was "not authorized" to do what he did. Who gave him the right, a mere "deacon," to be expounding the Scriptures? Who gave him the authority to

baptize? God did. So Philip was "authorized" after all, not by man, but directly by God.

We are told he went to Cesaerea. He is never again mentioned until Paul and his company entered "into the house of Philip the evangelist [one who preaches the gospel], which was one of the seven [one of the seven original deacons (Acts 6)]; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts 21:8,9).

Obviously, Philip was either already married when he was called into Christ's service, or he married later. He settled down in Cesaerea, where he continued to preach the gospel. He must have been a very fine husband and father, for all four of his daughters were converted, inspired by God, and had the gift of prophecy.

Philip was obviously skilled in the Scriptures. He "began" at the passage in Isaiah 53 and "preached unto him Jesus." Philip's teaching could have taken quite a long time—several hours at least, for the Old Testament Scriptures are replete with prophecies, shadows, types, foretastes, and plain statements about the Messiah Who was to come.

The New Testament has about three hundred direct quotations from the Old Testament, and no other books (such as the spurious books of the Apocrypha, which were included in the Septuagint) are quoted with the exception of the prophecy of Enoch found in the book of Jude.

Today, many mainstream professing Christian churches virtually ignore the Old Testament. Yet, it was the "Scriptures" of Jesus' day; it comprised the "Scriptures" from which Peter, James, and Paul taught and wrote; it was the holy writ by which God's people were to conduct their lives, and the "Scriptures" which foretold the coming of the Savior of the World, just as Philip illustrated to the eunuch.

Paul told Timothy, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou has known the holy scriptures [the only "holy scriptures" extant were those of the Old Testament], which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:14-16).

Christ In the Old Testament

The Old Testament begins setting forth vague shadows, hints, and types which foreshadow the coming of a Messiah very early in the books of Moses.

The commentators universally recognize that the hint found in Genesis 3:15 concerning the woman which shall bruise the head of the serpent, and the serpent which shall bruise HIS (not "her") heel is a reference to the virgin birth and the coming of Christ into the world. There has been only one descendant of Eve Who was born of woman, yet was not begotten by a man.

The blood sacrifice of Abel (Genesis 4:3-5) is recognized as the earliest institution of a blood sacrifice. God accepted Abel's sacrifice, and rejected the vegetables offered by Cain.

At the call of Abraham, God promised that "all nations of the earth would be blessed" through him—not only because Abraham would become the "father of many nations" and that "kings" would come out of him, but also that "one seed" which is Christ (Galatians 3:16) would come from Abraham's family.

Study Genesis 12, 13, 17, and 22.

Study Genesis 14:18-20, and read how Abraham deferred to Melchizedek, paying tithes to him.

Melchizedek is a type of Jesus Christ. Either he was a human priest of "Salem" (the original site of Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah), or He was the One Who became Christ, manifesting Himself to Abraham.

Notice: "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem [which means "Peace"], priest of the Most High God, Who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To Whom Abraham gave a tenth part of all; being first by interpretation King of Righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of Peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God: abideth a Priest continually" (Hebrews 7:1-3).

Either this is speaking of the same Melchizedek Abraham met, or is metaphor for Christ. Several times later, Christ is called "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 7:21).

In either event, Melchizedek is clearly a type of Jesus Christ, Who IS the "King of Righteousness," "King of Peace," and has "neither beginning of days, nor end of life." As the Old Testament progresses, the vague hints

and shadows become clearer types. Eventually, the prophecies speak of one Person Who was to come.

A clear type of Christ is found in Genesis 22:1-19. God commanded Abraham, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis 22:2).

Abraham had been astonished when God promised he would have a son in his great old age (Genesis 18:9-18). He was ninety-nine when the promise was made, one hundred when Isaac was born (Genesis 21:5).

It is hard to imagine the delight, the love, the great joy Abraham and Sarah experienced when God gave them a son of their own. Isaac was the "son of promise," a son given to them by the power of God.

What must have gone through Abraham's mind when God commanded him to sacrifice his only son? The Bible example is stunning: "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him" (Genesis 22:3).

With every moment, with each task, with every stroke of the axe as the wood was chopped, Abraham had to be thinking of the terrible thing he would have to do.

Paul sheds light on Abraham's example, calling him the father of the faithful: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God: And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform" (Romans 4:16-21). This is one of the finer biblical definitions of faith.

Abraham must have thought within himself that God would either resurrect Isaac, or that He would provide another son. Abraham knew he was being tested. His example of stolid, dogged determination and patient assurance is a great inspiration to every Christian. Abraham's obedience went beyond "belief." He knew.

Read Genesis 22. Just as Abraham had finished preparing the altar, and had actually taken up the knife to slay his son, God called to him through an angel: "'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here am I.' And he said, 'Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me'" (verse 12).

God provided a ram for the sacrifice in place of Isaac, then said, "By Myself have I sworn, saith the Eternal, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, And in they seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed My voice" (Genesis 22:16-18).

Here is a clear prophecy of Christ. It is also clear that Abraham is a type of God the Father, Who "so loved the world that He GAVE His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Isaac, as Abraham's son, is a type of Christ. Mount Moriah is the same place where Melchizedek had appeared to Abraham and "brought forth bread and wine," as an early type of the Passover. Now, God provides a blood sacrifice in the same place, the site where Jerusalem would later stand, where Christ was nailed to the tree, where His death, burial, and resurrection took place.

For three days and three nights, Isaac was as good as dead, in the mind of his father, Abraham. He had resigned himself to the idea; he was doggedly determined to follow through with it.

But after those terrible three days and three nights, His son was allowed to live, as if being brought back from the dead. God provided a ram instead, and Abraham returned home with his son.

As the Old Testament progresses, the shadows and types become ever clearer. A Person begins to emerge as the coming Messiah, the future Ruler of the world.

When Jacob prophesied about all his sons, he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah [the eponymous ancestor of the Jews], nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:10).

Many Bibles include a letter P, encircled, to indicate the translators knew this was a prophecy about Christ. That "Shiloh" was to have "washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes" is an obvious reference to Christ's death. John wrote, in the Revelation, "And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19:13).

Christ As the Passover Lamb

It has been known and understood by virtually all professing Christian denominations and organizations for centuries that the Paschal lamb which was to be sacrificed at the first Passover was a symbol of Jesus Christ.

Study the entire twelfth chapter of Exodus. The lamb was to be perfect, without blemish. It was to be slain, and the blood collected in basins, then brushed with hyssop upon the doorposts and window sills of each Israelitish house.

When Jesus came to John's baptism, John said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world," and then proceeded to tell those around him how he had seen the Holy Spirit "descending from heaven like a dove, and It abode upon Him." Then he said again, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (John 1:29-36).

The apostle John referred to Jesus Christ as the Lamb many times: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads" (Revelation 14:1).

Later, he wrote, "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb" (Revelation 14:3,4). Speaking of the Day of the Lord, and God's wrath poured out upon rebellious mankind, John wrote, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb" (Revelation 14:10).

Writing of the beast, and his attempt to fight Christ at His coming, John said, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14). Analogies, metaphors, types, and symbols are used throughout the Bible. That the Lamb slain at the Passover is a symbol of Jesus Christ is inescapable.

Remember, however, that an analogy is not "the truth" per se. It is a representative comparison, an illustration, a parallel thought. An example of this is Revelation 19:7: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come...." Lambs don't marry. Obviously, this is not a real lamb, but the "Lamb of God," Who is Jesus Christ. Notice how quickly the analogy breaks down. The church is called "the bride of Christ," and Jesus spoke of Himself as the "bridegroom" (Matthew 25). Here, after having said "the marriage of the Lamb is come," John goes on to say, "and His WIFE hath made herself ready." There is no

need for us to strain at an analogy, or to force our own interpretation into the Bible.

The point is that everywhere in the Old Testament where the Paschal lamb is mentioned, it is a type of Christ!

A final scripture: "And He saith unto me, 'Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9).

No doubt, Philip must have used some, if not many, of the Old Testament references to Christ during his few hours of conversation with the Ethiopian eunuch.

***The Day of Atonement,
and a "Prophet Like Unto Moses"***

Since it is doubtless the eunuch was in Jerusalem to worship God, it is obvious this trip must have been for more than one purpose. The scroll would have been like a national treasure to Candace and her court. However, since he was there to "worship," it is obvious there were dual reasons for the trip.

If the eunuch was keeping God's annual sabbaths, and it is obvious he was, then he was without doubt familiar with the sacrifices, including the special sacrifices required on the Passover and the Day of Atonement. Would not Philip have expounded the meaning of both? Surely, he could not have omitted the Passover, since the relationship with the sacrificial Lamb on Nisan 14, and the scriptures in Isaiah 52 and 53 are so closely associated.

Each year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, one of the most solemn high day sabbaths was observed, the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27-32).

On that day, the high priest was to offer a bullock for himself and his family, then to select two kids of the goats, and cast lots upon them.

One was for "the Eternal," and the other was for "the Azazel," sometimes rendered "scapegoat." The goat upon which the lot for "the Eternal" fell was a sin offering for all the people. The goat which was called "the Azazel" was to have all the sins of the people confessed over him, then to be taken by the hand of a "fit man" who was capable of insuring the goat did not escape, and was to be taken a vast distance into the wilderness, then let go.

Since the scriptures being read by the eunuch and Philip spoke of how the Savior would "sprinkle all nations," it is very likely Philip expounded Leviticus 16, which says, "And he [Aaron] shall sprinkle of the blood upon it [the altar] with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel" (Leviticus 16:19).

Paul knew the Holy Scriptures. All of his teaching, his writings, his beliefs, like those of every one of the early apostles, were based solely upon the Old Testament Scriptures.

Of these symbols of Christ, Paul wrote, "But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once [the Day of Atonement was the only time in the year the high priest entered into the holy of holies—a symbol of heaven itself] into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament [new "will," new "legacy," new "covenant"], that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:11-15).

Paul was not remotely aware that he was writing part of the Bible when he wrote these words. He knew what God's Word said about the time when God would make a new covenant with His people; a time when He would write His holy and perfect law in their inward parts, and their hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-34).

Believe it or not, Paul spent perhaps three and one-half years with Jesus Christ personally (Galatians 1:15-19 with I Corinthians 9:1). He said he was one who was called directly of Christ (Galatians 1:1,10-12).

The letter to the "diaspora" of the Hebrews, or the scattered members of the twelve tribes of Israel, emphasized the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. It showed how the types, shadows, and symbols of the Levitical priesthood were rendered unnecessary by the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ. Because the Day of Atonement was the one holy day when the high priest entered into the "holy of holies" after the ceremonies of "sprinkling" the people, the book, and the altar with blood, it was obvious to Paul, as it was to all Christ's apostles, that the high priest was a type of Jesus Christ; that the blood of animals was a type of Christ's shed blood; that the "holy of holies" was a type of God's throne in heaven.

Notice how the Priesthood of Christ is explained:

"For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop [like a brush of a bush, which was also a cleansing agent, used like a paint brush in sprinkling the blood], and sprinkled with blood both the book, and all the people, Saying, 'This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.'

"Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission [forgiveness]. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands [as in the Tabernacle, or the Temple, on the Day of Atonement], which are the figures of the true [shadows, types, representations]; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with the blood of others; For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once [typified by the Day of Atonement] in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:12-28).

There are many places in the New Testament where we may read of the types, shadows, symbols, and representations of the plan of God which were written in the Old Testament.

These were the only Holy Scriptures which were in existence when the apostles and the early church were preaching the Word of God in the first century.

Not one of the Gospel writers, nor Paul, ever presumed they were "writing the Bible" when they wrote down their recollections, or, in Paul's case, letters to churches he served, or the young men who worked with him.

Did they receive salvation?

Did they learn of Christ?

Did they repent, and did they receive God's Holy Spirit?

Of course they did!

How? By rejecting the Holy Scriptures which they had studied, heard read and preached, and read themselves all their lives, and claiming they believed in a "Bible which was yet to be written"? They knew and understood about the prophecies concerning Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures. Why would anyone assume they thought them to be "done away," when they knew the knowledge of salvation was contained therein?

The Day of Atonement was one of the most solemn, important holy days in the year, a day of fasting (Leviticus 23:27; Acts 27:9), and the only day in the entire year when the high priest entered into the holy of holies. The high priest was a type of Christ. The shed blood of animals was a type of Christ's blood. The holy of holies was a type of heaven itself, where Christ was received of His Father as the sacrifice for the sins of the world.

It is more than merely logical, since the Ethiopian eunuch had puzzled over the passages in Isaiah's prophecies about Christ, that Philip would have explained the meaning of the types and shadows of Atonement; explained about the sacrifice of Christ; about Who Jesus Christ really was!

For centuries, the Jews had referred to the coming Messiah as "that Prophet" who would be "like unto Moses." On various occasions, false prophets rose up and claimed to be the Messiah. Their expectations were based upon Deuteronomy (the "Orations") 18:15-18, which says, "The Eternal thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him shall ye hearken...and the Eternal said unto me, 'They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him.'"

The translators provided the usual encircled letter P next to these scriptures, since it universally accepted that these verses are a prophecy about Jesus Christ.

The religious leaders during Jesus' day were continually looking for "that Prophet" who should come, the Messiah.

Notice how the religious leaders questioned John the Baptist: "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who art thou?' And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.' And they asked him, 'What then? Art

thou Elias?' [they all knew of the prophecy that Elijah was to come before the Day of the Lord: Malachi 4:5,6], And he saith, 'I am not.' 'Art thou that prophet?' And he answered, 'No'" (John 1:19-21).

John explained that he was a "voice crying in the wilderness," and they replied, "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" (John 1:25).

Following the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand from the five barley loaves and two small fish, the huge throng began discussing Jesus, Who He might be.

"Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, 'This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world' (John 6:14). It was understood by the religious leadership, and by the masses in general that the "Prophet like unto Moses" would be the Messiah, a deliverer.

Late in His ministry, on the last great day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said [the only "scriptures" that existed were those of the Old Testament], 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, 'Of a truth this is the Prophet'" (John 7:37-40).

The Jewish religious leaders knew that the Old Testament Scriptures foretold the coming of a "Prophet like unto Moses," a great Deliverer, a Messiah.

There were many dozens of scriptures in the Old Testament to which Philip could have referred as he rode along with the Ethiopian eunuch and "preached Christ unto him."

The largest number of prophecies, and the most specific, are throughout the Psalms. David himself was a type of Christ, as was Joshua. The Hebrew equivalent for "Jesus" is "Joshua." Joshua led the Israelites across the river Jordan into the promised land, just as Christ our Savior leads us out of the wilderness of this world, through death, to the resurrection to life and inheritance of His eternal kingdom.

Yes, Philip could have "preached Christ" unto the eunuch from the Old Testament. He could have done so for days upon end, and scarcely scratched the surface of all the shadows, types, symbols, and examples. He

could have spent hours on the specific prophecies concerning that ONE Who was to be called "Immanuel" (God with us—see Isaiah 7:13,14) not only from Isaiah's prophecies, but from many other Old Testament references.

The Future Kingdom of the Messiah

No doubt, Philip would have made reference not only to the saving work of Jesus Christ, His shed blood for the forgiveness of the sins of the world, but would have pointed out the many scriptures which speak clearly of the ultimate goal of salvation—inheritance of the Kingdom of God.

All Philip had to do was ask that the scroll be unrolled backward a number of chapters, and come to Isaiah the ninth chapter, and read:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and PEACE there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Eternal of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6,7).

Would he not then have made reference to God's promise to David that his throne would be an eternal throne; that there would never fail one from David's line to sit upon that throne?

Only two chapters later, he could have read, "And there shall come forth a rod [a green shoot, or stem] out of the stem [or stump] of Jesse [who was David's father], and a Branch shall grow out of his roots [the Branch is reference to Christ]: And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Eternal: And shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Eternal: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked" (Isaiah 11:1-4).

Christ did not smite the earth, nor slay the wicked during His time on this earth as the humble carpenter from Nazareth Who came to die for the sins of the world. These prophecies are dual, sometimes referring to Christ's nature and His character, and sometimes referring to His coming RULE over all the world.

"And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them" (Isaiah 11:6).

In this beautiful chapter, God's Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament reveal not only the coming of the Messiah, but the second coming of Christ as well; the establishment of His kingdom on earth, the change in the very nature of animals, and then specific prophecies concerning the regathering of the dispersed tribes of Israel.

Obviously, this is speaking of the Kingdom of God. Equally obviously, it is speaking of conditions on this earth, not up in heaven. There are no poisonous snakes, leopards, calves, or cows in heaven.

Notice: "And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' [adder] den. They [predators and poisonous snakes] shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Eternal, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse [just as we read in verse 1], which shall stand for an Ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles [the "nations"] seek: and His rest shall be glorious" (Isaiah 11:6-10).

Jesus Christ said He was not sent, but to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel" during His earthly ministry. The Ethiopian eunuch is the first gentile of note who is singled out for God's grace and forgiveness, even prior to Cornelius (Acts 10), and God's vision to Peter that he should no longer call gentiles "unclean" or "common."

This foretaste of God's kingdom shows how Jesus Christ will call and offer salvation to the gentiles during His earthly reign as King of kings and Lord of lords (Isaiah 66:19).

But Jesus Christ did not do this during His sojourn on earth. It was only because of a gentile woman's faith and her perseverance that Jesus healed her (Matthew 15:26,27) of an issue of blood. Otherwise, it is plain He would have continued on His way.

Notice how Isaiah 11 is inescapably dealing with the second coming of Christ and the establishment of His kingdom on earth: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time [this has never yet happened in history!] to recover the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from

Hamath, and from the islands [coastlands] of the sea. And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isaiah 11:11,12). Nothing of this kind has occurred yet. There are more Jews in New York City and Los Angeles than there are in the modern nation of Israel.

"The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah [the Jews] shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim...And the Eternal shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea; and with His mighty wind shall He shake His hand over the river [the Nile], and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of His people, which shall be left, from Assyria: like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt" (Isaiah 11:13-16).

Philip could have spent many hours expounding, explaining, teaching, preaching from the Old Testament Scriptures (the only Scriptures which existed then) about Jesus Christ!

He could have shown the eunuch how the dead are to be resurrected (Isaiah 25:6-9; 26:1,19); how Christ would heal the maimed, deaf, and blind (Isaiah 35:5,6); how Jesus Christ would be tenderhearted toward those who came to Him (Isaiah 40:10,11); how Christ would be the light of the world (Isaiah 60:2,20); how Joel had prophesied about the electrifying events of Pentecost (Joel 2:28,32).

Philip could have explained to the eunuch how Bethlehem was to be the birthplace of Jesus Christ (Micah 5:2-5), and how Jonah was a sign of how long Christ would be in the tomb (Jonah 1:7 with Matthew 12:40). He could have shown how Christ was referred to from Genesis right on through the prophets; how the Psalms are replete with prophecies about Jesus Christ.

He could have shown the eunuch, not only about the life, ministry, miracles, death, and burial of Jesus Christ; not only about His resurrection, and how He sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, but he could have shown him the very words spoken by Jesus Christ as He died (Psalm 22:1); how it was foretold that Christ's hands and feet would be pierced (Psalm 22:16), and how they would gamble over His clothing (Psalm 22:18).

Preach Christ from the "Old Testament"?

OF COURSE!

Every apostle, every evangelist, every pastor of every church, every deacon, and every lay member of God's early church taught, spoke, and preached from the Old Testament Scriptures about Jesus Christ and His saving work!

The first words of the New Testament were not written until about A.D. 55, about twenty-four long years after Christ had ascended into heaven.

Millions are simply deceived today. Millions of professing Christians have been told that the Old Testament is "done away," and is not for us today.

Yet, it was (and is) a major part of the Word of Almighty God, and it contains dozens of prophecies about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

If Philip were alive today, and you were puzzling over the words in Isaiah 53, Philip would "begin at the same scripture" and preach Christ to you! How strange it is that thousands of professing "Christian" ministers cannot do the same thing!

The New Testament was written, under God's inspiration, by men who knew, and believed, the Old. The only "Scriptures" which were read, studied, and used from which to preach Christ during the first century of the church were those of the "Old Testament" of your Bible.

What Did Christ Himself Say About the Old Testament?

Millions falsely assume Jesus Christ came to do away with the law. They assume His teachings nullified the law, eclipsed what they assume was a harsh, rigid set of do's and don'ts, which were impossible to keep.

Yet, Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17). He did not say "I am not come to destroy, but to destroy." He did not say "I am not come to destroy, but to render null and void," which would be the same thing.

Some have decided the English word fulfill means to "bring to an end," or "to finish." It is true that in legal language, "fulfilling" a legal obligation, such as completing a contract, can have such a meaning. But notice the complete meaning of the word: "1.a. To carry out [a prophecy, promise, etc.,] cause to happen or take place. b. [reflexively] to realize or develop fully. 2. To carry out or perform [a duty]; obey or follow [a command, law, etc.] Ruth fulfilled all the teacher's requests] 3. To satisfy a requirement of; answer [a purpose]; comply with [conditions]"

The archaic meaning is "to fill full or make full."

Plainly, Jesus Christ said we are not to think He came to destroy the law. No matter how some may puzzle over tertiary or quaternary interpretations of the English word, it is clear from all of Christ's teaching, from His example, and from the context of the Sermon on the Mount that He was lifting the law to a higher, spiritual plane, making it more binding by applying it, not just to the physical acts specified, but to the human thoughts associated with the act.

He went on to say, "For verily I say unto you, 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled'" (Matthew 5:18). Not one period, comma, or crossing of a t would fade away or pass out of use so long as the earth and heaven itself continued. Does the earth continue? So does the law, in all its points.

He said, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:17-19).

The "law" includes the "Torah" in these statements, as well as the Ten Commandments. One who would consider laws concerning landmarks, inheritances, clean and unclean meats, or the like as being unimportant might assume such points of the law were "least," while understanding that the Ten Commandments themselves represent the ten cardinal points of God's law, upon which hangs all the law and the prophets (Matthew 22:40).

One who would have considered some point of the law "least," and taught others so could still repent at some point, and receive salvation. However, he would have lost reward and station, or degree of responsibility in God's kingdom, and would be referred to as "least."

Obviously, Jesus Christ is showing how the commandments of God are far more binding in their spiritual application than in the physical application.

Previously, the death penalty was meted out for murder. The penalty was death by stoning when one was found guilty of killing a fellow human being. "But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother [any fellow human being] without a cause [the words without a cause do not appear in the most important texts] shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother 'Raca' [that is, vain, useless, worthless; said in anger and hate], shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, 'Thou Fool' [graceless wretch—an expression showing hate and contempt], shall be in danger of Gehenna fire" (Matthew 5:21,22).

This is not "doing away" with God's law, but lifting it to a spiritual plane, showing how it applies to human thoughts and not only human actions.

During His earthly ministry, Christ continually referred to prophecies concerning Himself. Time and time again, He told His disciples He was performing certain acts, accomplishing certain things, in order to fulfill Scripture.

Confronted by the religious leaders as He was walking in the Temple in Jerusalem, he spoke to them the parable of the husbandmen and the vineyard. At the conclusion of the parable, He said, "But those husbandmen said among themselves, 'This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.'"

The Pharisees knew He was speaking of them, and became furious.

Christ concluded, "And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What shall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard to others. And have ye not read in scripture; 'The Stone which the builders rejected is become the Head of the corner: This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'" (Mark 12:7-11).

He was nearly murdered in Nazareth for reading from the scroll of Isaiah, and expounding to those in the synagogue what the scriptures meant: "And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book [scroll], He found the place where it is written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.'"

He closed the scroll, handed it back to the minister, sat down, and said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:16-29). Read the entire passage, and see how Jesus showed that God had rejected that generation because they had rejected Him. They tried to cast Jesus off a cliff, and He barely escaped with His life.

In this account, he plainly said Isaiah was part of Scripture, recognizing the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament of your Bible.

There are many such examples.

Following Christ's resurrection, several of His disciples, including Cleopas, were discussing the events of the past days with Jesus, but

because their eyes "were holden that they should not know Him," and also probably because He had been so disfigured when he was scourged, they thought He was a stranger.

Notice what He said when He opened their eyes: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And BEGINNING AT MOSES AND ALL THE PROPHETS, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:26,27).

Philip "began at that same scripture" in Isaiah and "preached Christ" to the Ethiopian eunuch. Jesus Christ Himself began "at Moses and all the prophets" and preached that He was the Christ, the Savior of the world.

Christ is the living WORD of God (John 1:1-14), Who was made flesh, and Who created all things. It was the Person of the divine sovereign Godhead Who became Christ Who inspired the Old Testament.

The Old Testament, Paul said to Timothy, was able to make him "wise unto salvation which is in Christ Jesus."

Now you know, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that the Old Testament is a vital, living part of the Word of God.

In conclusion, notice some of Christ's final words:

"'These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.' Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, and said unto them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things'" (Luke 24:44-48).

And so they went out, armed with the knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, and preached repentance, forgiveness of sins, and Jesus Christ.

Philip preached all those things to the eunuch, who was brought to repentance, and requested baptism. For decades, for more than two centuries, the early church continued to preach Christ from the "Old Testament Scriptures."

Today, we have both the "New Testament" and the Old. But the scriptures eventually recognized by the developing church were not given the weight

of "inspired scripture" for centuries. At first, they were history—notes, letters, memoirs.

It has required centuries of deception for the millions today to negate the Old Testament, and to assume it is "done away," and "not for us today."

Nothing could be further from the truth. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). When Paul wrote those words, the only "Scripture" extant was the Old Testament.

-End-

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