

“HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES”

PART I

“HAD YE BELIEVED MOSES, YE WOULD HAVE BELIEVED ME,
FOR HE WROTE OF ME”

By Arlen L. Chirwood

“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.

Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:39, 40, 45-47).

God gave His Word to man in order to reveal His plans and purposes as they surround His Son and pertain to both man and the material creation upon which man finds himself. Everything which man needs to know and understand, to accomplish the end in view, is in this revealed Word. There is nothing superfluous, and there is nothing lacking. The Word is *complete* and *perfect* as given.

Man came into possession of the Word of God via supernatural means and, through this supernatural means, *order*, *structure*, and *design* can be seen throughout, from beginning to end. God is a God of *complete* and *perfect order*, necessitating that the Word which He gave possess the same inherent nature. And, in this respect, *each word* comprising God’s full revelation to man is not only said to be “pure” and likened to “silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven

times” (referring to *perfection within purity* [Ps. 12:6]), but God holds this Word in such high esteem that He has *magnified His Word and His Name above all things* (Ps. 138:2, *ref. NIV*).

And this Word, within its completeness, purity, and perfection, is *living* (Heb. 4:12). “Life,” according to Scripture, is imparted through *the breath of God* (Gen. 2:7; *cf. Ezek. 37:3-10*). And the Word of God is revealed to be “God-breathed,” and, through this means, *living* (II Tim. 3:16 [see the NIV where the Greek word, *theopneustos*, in this verse — translated, “is given by inspiration of God” in the KJV — has been more correctly translated, “God-breathed”]).

Some forty different men, over a period of about 1,500 years, recorded God’s Word “as they were moved [‘borne along’] by the Holy Spirit” (II Peter 1:21). The “Spirit” (Gk., *Pneuma*, also the word for “breath” in the Greek text) used different men to pen God’s Word, allowing each man to write within the scope of all his experiences and his own style of writing, but, at the same time, guarding him from error in that which he wrote. And the end result — whether understood by man or not — was not the word of the different men who penned this book at all, but the very Word of God, else it could not be both *living* and *perfect* (Ps. 12:6; Heb. 4:12).

Because of all this, the Word of God stands *completely and uniquely alone* among writings in man’s possession. It is not only of *Divine origin* but is also *God-breathed*, and thus *living*. All other writings are of human origin and lack life. Resultingly, this Word can be understood only through two inseparable means:

- 1) Through the guidance of the indwelling Spirit Who gave the Word (John 16:13-15).
- 2) Through allowing that which is living to interpret itself by comparing Scripture with Scripture (I Cor. 2:9-13).

Man is often quick to check the commentaries, to see what another man has to say about a matter in Scripture. But going to that which man has to say is checking that which is *lifeless* in an effort to shed light upon that which is *living*. Something of this nature

is like trying to set the celestial chronometer by the timepiece in Greenwich. Neither is done, and the inverse of both must always be the case.

It matters not what man may think about the Word or about that which it has to say. Man’s thoughts are *totally immaterial*. The only thing of *any moment whatsoever* is the Word’s own testimony about itself or about any matter with which it deals, with the Word understood in the light of itself, under the guidance of the indwelling Spirit.

This is why Paul, near the close of his ministry, in his closing remarks, told Timothy, “*Preach the word...*” (II Tim. 4:2). Paul exhorted Timothy *to proclaim that which God had to say about the matter, not that which man had to say. Proclaim that which was living, perfect, and eternal*, not that which was lifeless, imperfect, and will one day pass out of existence.

And the admonition is no different today. It is still, “*Preach the word...*” And those called to minister the Word can either heed the Lord’s instructions (resulting in their own well-being and the well-being of those to whom they minister) or they can disregard the Lord’s instructions (which will be to their own peril and the peril of those to whom they minister).

Moses and the Prophets

Scripture begins with that which the Spirit of God moved Moses to pen. The Spirit moved Moses to lay the groundwork, to set forth the basics, at the beginning of His revelation. And He then moved subsequent writers to build upon this previously laid groundwork, the previously laid basics, at later points in time.

Christ made it very clear in John 5:45-47 that Moses, 1,500 years prior to that time, had written about Him, about His person and work. And a short time later — following His death, burial, and resurrection — when opening the Scriptures to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Christ further dealt with and expanded the matter to include the remainder of the Old Testament as well.

“Then he said unto them, Oh 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 24:25-27).

Not only had "Moses" written about Christ, but so had "all the prophets." And a reference of this nature — to both "Moses and all the prophets" — would be *all-inclusive*. It would include *the whole of the Old Testament, beginning with Moses*.

(The all-inclusiveness of this statement can be seen in Luke's earlier reference to "the law [the five books of Moses] and the prophets [all the prophets]" [Luke 16:16, 29, 31]. This is simply an expression used in Scripture to refer to *all of the Old Testament Scriptures, beginning with Moses*.)

The clear statement is made that Christ "expounded unto them [these two disciples] *in all the scriptures* [in all of the O.T. Scriptures] the things concerning himself" (v. 27b). Attention was *first* called to the opening five books (Moses), *then* to all the others (the Prophets); and Christ, with all this referenced material in possession of the Jewish people — material which, in its entirety, spoke of the various facets of the person and work of the One speaking — began to draw from this material, expounding to these two disciples *the things concerning Himself*.

These things had been there all the time, they had been in possession of the Jewish people for centuries; and the Jewish people, as these two disciples, had missed them. The entire Old Testament — in their possession, and supposedly expounded by their religious leaders — from beginning to end, was about the One Whom they had rejected and crucified. The same Old Testament Scriptures in their possession had even foretold these events, and the Jewish people had not understood their own Scriptures.

One Continuous, Complete Revelation

The Old Testament is simply one continuous, complete revelation concerning all the various facets

of the person and work of Christ. The Christ of the New Testament is the Christ of the Old Testament. He is seen in the Old Testament *first*, for Moses and all the Prophets wrote about the One Who appeared to Israel and was rejected by the nation centuries before the New Testament writers were even born.

And *everything* about the person and work of Christ was set forth in the Old Testament before He ever appeared to Israel the first time. In this respect, *nothing* is seen in the New that does not have its roots someplace in the Old.

(Note that it would be impossible for anything to appear in the New that did not have its roots in the Old. This can be clearly seen in the timing of Christ's incarnation and birth.

The Word [the O.T. Scriptures] became flesh [the O.T. Scriptures manifested in another form] before a single book of the N.T. had been written. If anything exists in the N.T. that does not have its roots in the O.T., then the Word which became flesh would have been incomplete at the time of Christ's birth. That is to say, if such were the case, Christ Himself could only be seen as an incomplete person, then and now.)

Moses was chosen to write *first*, and it was through him that numerous facets of the complete story *first* began to be revealed. Then, the Prophets, writing later, simply provided necessary, additional detail for that which had *first* begun to be revealed in the five books of Moses.

And, whether in Moses or the Prophets, this revelation has to do not only with Christ's first advent but with His second as well. In fact, there is far, far more material throughout the whole of the Old Testament, beginning with Moses, which relates to Christ's second advent than there is which relates to His first advent.

Thus, if an individual desires to study about the person and work of Christ after the order in which this revelation was given, he must begin where God began when giving His Word to man. He must begin with Moses, not with the gospels or the epistles. The person of the latter is *first* seen in the former. And there is *nothing* in the latter that hasn't already been

laid out, after some fashion, in the former.

The Old Testament, beginning with Moses, is filled with word pictures depicting Christ, *from His rejection to His acceptance, from His sufferings to His glory, from His humiliation to His exaltation*. And the Old Testament also bears witness to the fact that *the very same scenes which witnessed His rejection, sufferings, and humiliation will one day witness His acceptance, glory, and exaltation*.

Kings in that day will "shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider" (Isa. 52:13-15; cf. Ps. 2:1ff). And the Jewish people in that day will go forth proclaiming the message of the One Who, in past time, was "wounded" for their transgressions and "bruised" for their iniquities, but, in that day, will sit enthroned on God's "holy hill of Zion" (Ps. 2:6; Isa. 53:1ff).

No one part of the Old Testament presents a complete picture of Christ, only a part of the picture. And each part presents something different (though within these individual parts there is usually some repetition of events from previous parts, undoubtedly to show exactly where a particular part of the picture being presented fits within the overall framework). But, though no one part presents the complete picture, the whole of that revealed in the Old Testament, when brought together, does present the complete picture — the only picture of Christ in existence and the one picture which God would have man fix his eyes upon.

Thus, the Christ of the New has been presented *first* in the Old, and the whole of His person and work has been laid out *first* in the Old for all to see. Accordingly, the instructed student doesn't begin with the New, but with the Old. And he doesn't begin just anyplace in the Old. Rather, he begins exactly where God began when giving this Word and where Christ began when expounding this Word — with Moses, progressing from there to the Prophets.

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