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# Question Time: Why Should We Study the Old Testament?

--- by Elder Karl Anderson

Oftentimes we fall into a pattern of studying the New Testament, Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, while unintentionally passing over the Old Testament. This oversight may potentially create a stumbling block for us in attempting to comprehend the Scriptures. Although the Old Testament is unquestionably more difficult to absorb, at first glance anyway, it is in reality one of the most important elements of our study, and absolutely necessary in our journey toward understanding.

Unique to this first of the two testaments is the record of God's masterful revelation of Himself. These early manifestations of the great I AM- to Adam, Abraham, Noah, Enoch, Moses and the entire nation of Israel, contain the keys to the knowledge of the great Jehovah, encompassing His love and His jealousy for those with whom He made covenant.



The writers of these preliminary books stand as authentic witnesses of the demonstration and power of God's majesty- and embedded within these revelatory accounts are little gems of knowledge that unlock the understanding of the ages. The wisdom of God is made manifest in the revelation of Himself to His beloved, and the early scribes wrote of this Holy One of Israel, that diligent seekers might find Him.

Many of these early writers named their cities and noblemen prophetically, and in many instances, a short study of their meanings will provide insightful evidence. For example, a search of the names of the patriarch fathers and the name Jehovah will reveal a treasure of hidden knowledge, witnessing their prophetic missions, as well as the intended nature of their covenants.

Also, of note, is the invaluable uncovering of the prophetic sequences as portrayed by the prophets, providing insightful spiritual guidance for all times. Here, understanding may be obtained under the tutelage and mantle of the Holy Spirit, for those who search out light and truth. It should always be remembered that Jesus proclaimed in His earthly ministry, that there is but one instructor for man- the Holy Ghost. Furthermore, without Him to guide us in discerning the Word, we are left to interpret His teachings alone, which can cause misrepresentation and stumbling. So, the earnest reader, endeavoring to understand and apply the Inspiration of Heaven, should always enlist the aid of the Great Instructor before entertaining a study of the Word.

Jesus continually quoted from the prophets in His own ministry, counseling us to avail ourselves of His testimony and those of the apostles and prophets who went before. God wanted man to live out His word in covenant relationship. "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." (*Hebrews 10:16-17*) This testimony will live in us, if we allow the Holy Spirit to write it upon our hearts, and it will speak to us in times of need. John, the Apostle, reveals in his letter to the seven churches that, "the testimony of Jesus **is** the spirit of prophecy." (*Revelation 19:10*)



In conclusion, the learning of the Jews is had in Old Testament writ, and if we are to understand Jesus' teachings, it behooves us to understand His audience. So, I invite you to entertain a thorough study, as Paul encouraged Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (*II Timothy 2:15*).

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