



“ . . . the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through [faith](#) which is in Christ Jesus.” ([II Timothy 3:15](#))

by John Reiss
Forerunner, “Ready Answer,”
August 17, 2022

Do We Need the Old Testament?

An Amazon television series called *The Man in the High Castle* is an alternative history story based on the Axis powers prevailing in WWII. One of its most intriguing sub-plots centered on the Nazis seeking to erase the vanquished Americans’ history by rewriting it and obliterating any evidence of it. They even blew up the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, replacing it with a different statue that fit their twisted ideology’s version of truth.

The ancient Assyrians did something like this to their vanquished enemies. They would uproot what remained of their foes from their lands and established cultures and resettle them in far-off regions of their empire, often on its frontiers, to act as a buffer. Some they scattered and assimilated into new communities. To pour salt on their subjugated enemies’ wounds, the Assyrians would repopulate the emptied territories with other peoples. Scattered in this way, the defeated nations lost their foundations and, ultimately, their identities. The Assyrians treated the

Israelites in this manner after defeating them in the early eighth century BC (see [II Kings 17:5-24](#)). To history, they soon became “the lost ten tribes.”

Something similar to this, but on a spiritual level, happens when people say that Jesus Christ’s coming to establish the New Covenant has done away with the church’s need to study the Old Testament with all of its history, prophecies, laws, and rituals. The Old, they claim, is obsolete because Christ has established a new and living way. Such people fail to understand that, without the Old Testament, we cannot possibly understand the New. The apostle Paul tells us explicitly that the church has been “built on the foundation of the apostles *and prophets*, [Jesus Christ](#) Himself being the chief cornerstone” ([Ephesians 2:20](#); emphasis ours throughout).

By breaking the continuity of God’s Word, these “New Testament only” advocates can mold their own version of truth. For instance, they use this ploy to sideline

the Ten Commandments, specifically the [Sabbath](#), writing:

Christians were never [under the Law](#). . . . Christians aren’t under the Mosaic Law, but that doesn’t mean we have no law at all. . . . We have commandments, but they come from Jesus, and not from the Law. . . . There is no command in the New Testament to observe any sabbath days. All of the other commandments are repeated, but not that one. Why? Because, unlike the others, there is no longer any need for a sabbath. (“[The 10 Commandments in the New Testament](#),” GodWords: Theology and Other Good Stuff)

Andy Stanley, Senior Pastor of North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, Georgia, near Atlanta, claimed in a 2018 sermon series called “Aftermath: Not Difficult”:

[First Century] Church leaders unhitched the church from the worldview, value system, and regulations of the Jewish scriptures. Peter, James, Paul elected to

IN THIS EDITION:

Do We Need the Old Testament?

God's Name Is Holy

Leadership Sessions List – Practical
Workable Solutions Series

Welcome to Panoplia.

The mission of Panoplia is to help believers develop a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. It emphasises spiritual growth and leadership.

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PUBLISHER
Abimbola Adewumi Alabi

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER
Olutoyin Alabi

EDITOR
Anthony Oluyinka Adesile

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Feel free to write to us if you have comments, contributions, observations or reactions to articles published in this journal.

All correspondence should be directed to:

The Editor
Panoplia, P.O. Box 53277,
Falomo, Ikoyi,
Lagos.Nigeria.

The Editor Panoplia,
P. O. Box 110808 Cambria Heights,
New York, NY 11411.

For Free subscription
email us at :
info@destiny-empowerment.org

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unhitch the Christian faith from their Jewish scriptures, and my friends, we must as well.

Although he later tried to walk some of his comments back, saying he believes that the Old Testament is “divinely inspired,” he emphasized that the Old Testament should not be “the go-to source regarding any behavior in the church.” He added:

Jesus’ new covenant, His covenant with the nations, His covenant with you, His covenant with us, can stand on its own two nail-scarred resurrection feet. It does not need propping up by the Jewish scriptures. . . . The Bible did not create Christianity. The resurrection of Jesus created and launched Christianity. Your whole house of Old Testament cards can come tumbling down. The question is did Jesus rise from the dead? And the eyewitnesses said he did. (“[Christians Must’ Unhitch’ Old Testament From Their Faith, Says Andy Stanley](#),” *The Christian Post*, May 9, 2018).

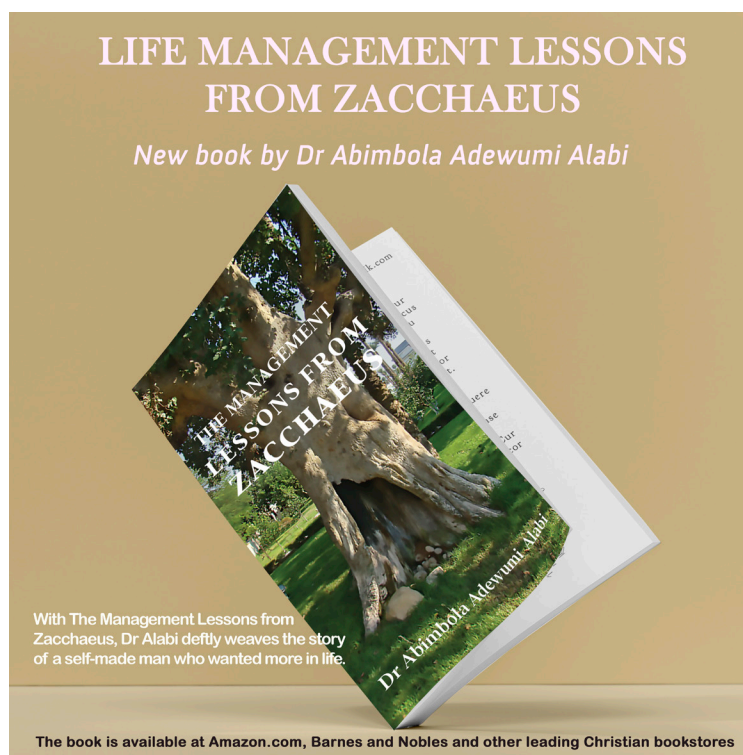
Stanley acknowledges that what he preaches may be considered “a little disturbing” to some churchgoers, but he adds that—striking at the rotten heart of the matter—for many, it is “liberating.”

Scriptures of the Early Church

The Bible as we know it was divided into the Old and New Testaments in the late second century AD by theologian and pastor Melito of Sardis. Though Jewish by birth, Melito was a Hellenist who despised Judaism, and in an [Easter](#) sermon, given—not by coincidence—on Abib 14, he even accused the Jews of deicide, the murder of [God](#). No wonder he wanted to separate the Old and the New Testaments!

Since the gospels and epistles of the New Testament were not yet written, the only scriptures the fledgling church possessed were the books that had been written centuries earlier in Hebrew and later translated into Greek (the Septuagint). To those pioneer Christians, they were “the Holy Scriptures” ([II Timothy 3:15](#)). When the prospective members in Berea “searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether [the things Paul and Silas taught them] were so” ([Acts 17:10-11](#)), they studied what we call the “Old Testament.”

It is not surprising, then, that the New Testament directly quotes the Old Testament about 250 times. Including indirect or partial quotations, the New Testament makes more than a thousand allusions to Old Testament passages. By referring to it so often, the New Testament writers clearly desired to show the continuity between God’s revelation to Israel and [the gospel](#) Jesus preached.



Researcher Roger Nicole, citing biblical scholar Carl F.H. Henry in his “[New Testament Use of the Old Testament](#),” claims that, if we include New Testament passages that allude to or are reminiscent of the Old Testament, every Old Testament book is represented in the New. In all, more than ten percent of the New Testament is comprised of either direct quotations or allusions to the Old Testament.

We can conclude that the apostles and evangelists were not trying to “unhitch” Christianity from its Hebrew beginnings. In fact, we can confidently say the opposite: They gave unqualified authority to Old Testament Scripture. In this light, this article will provide five significant reasons why we need the Old Testament.

Prophecies of the Messiah

Without the Old Testament, how would we know who God would send as a Savior? If faith is so vital to salvation, who should the called look for so they can believe?

Depending on the source, the Old Testament contains between 300 and 600 prophecies for Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. The difference in these numbers lies in how minutely each researcher divides various longer messianic passages into individual prophecies. For instance, Psalm 22 contains multiple prophecies concerning [the crucifixion](#). Some researchers, however, treat it as a single prophecy.

The following are a few examples of the Old Testament’s messianic prophecies:

- [Genesis 3:15](#): God alludes to a future Savior, who would be [born of a woman](#) (fulfilled in [Matthew 1:18](#)).
- [Isaiah 7:14](#): The Savior would be born of a virgin (fulfilled in [Matthew 1:18-23](#)).
- [Micah 5:2](#): The Savior would be born in Bethlehem (fulfilled in [Matthew 2:6](#)).
- Isaiah 53 is an extended prophecy regarding the Suffering Servant’s scourging, piercing, and crucifixion, as well as His bearing “the iniquity of us all” (verses 6, 11-12). These prophecies are fulfilled in Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 18-19; see also [I Peter 2:21-25](#).

And there are many, many more.

Mathematically, the probability that Jesus is the Christ is astronomically high. The odds of any one man fulfilling even *eight* of these hundreds of prophecies is 1:10¹⁷ or 1:100,000,000,000,000,000 (one in one hundred quadrillion)! Yet, Jesus fulfilled hundreds of them.

To visualize this, say we had 10¹⁷ silver dollars and painted one of them red. Next, we randomly threw the red coin into the pile and laid all of them out over Texas (the second largest American state, covering 268,820 square miles). Our pile of coins would cover the state in a layer two feet deep. Finally, we blindfold a man and send him out with instructions to pick up that single red silver dollar. That is the probability of one in 10¹⁷!

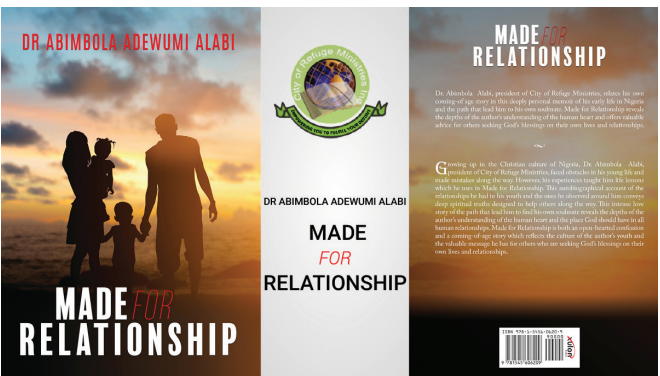
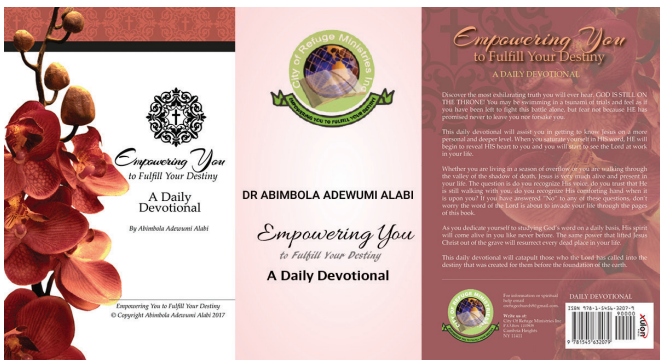
More conservatively, bumping up the number of fulfilled prophecies to 48, the probability escalates to 1:1¹⁵⁷—a 1 followed by 157 zeros! Biblical scholar Alfred Edersheim contends that Jesus fulfilled, not eight or 48, but 456 prophecies! God wanted to make absolutely sure that there would be no doubt about who He sent as our Savior, who His elect could place their faith in! [See John Ritenbaugh’s Bible Study, “[John \(Part Four\)](#),” for further information on these probabilities.]

Defining [Sin](#) and Righteousness

Without the Old Testament, which Jesus frequently quoted, how would people know what sin is? How would they know what God expected of them? Without the laws and examples in the Old Testament, people would be like the Israelites after the death of Joshua, everyone doing what was right in his own eyes ([Judges 21:25](#)).

God gave the nation of Israel the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai ([Exodus 20:1-17](#)). The rest of the Pentateuch—as well as the historical sections, the writings, and the prophecies of the remainder of the Old Testament—expands on God’s laws through additional statutes, judgments, illustrations, songs, proverbs, and personal examples.

In [Matthew 19:17](#), Jesus points to the Ten Commandments when He tells the rich young ruler to keep them if he wants to enter into eternal life. The following two verses remove all doubt about what commandments He means, citing five of the Ten Commandments. In a way, He is alluding to [Ecclesiastes 12:13](#), where Solomon advises, “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all.” Or, as the *Good News Translation* puts it, “. . . because this is all that we were created for.”



The books are available at Amazon.com, Barnes and Nobles and other leading Christian bookstores

The apostle Paul, in [1 Corinthians 7:19](#), instructs Christians about the central place of those commandments: “Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.” He writes in [Romans 7:7](#), “I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known [covetousness](#) unless the law has said, ‘You shall not covet.’” God’s law defines both righteousness—what we are to do—and sin—what we should not do.

Jesus teaches in [Matthew 5:17-18](#):

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. (*New International Version*)

The word “fulfill” is *pleroo* (*Strong’s* #4137), which means “to make full, to fill up; to fill to the full.” It carries no implication of making something obsolete or unnecessary. Rather, Jesus fulfills the commandments by making their applications more encompassing by teaching and exemplifying how they are to be kept in the Spirit. He added the spirit of the law.

As the [God of the Old Testament](#), the One who became Jesus—the Word, God who “became flesh and dwelt among us” (see [John 1:1-4](#), 14)—issued all the commandments. The Bible emphasizes that God never changes ([Malachi 3:6](#); [Hebrews 13:8](#)), which includes His approach to sin and righteousness. We need to obey Him and His law.

The Types of the Temple and the High Priest

Without the Old Testament, how could we understand the New Testament’s meaning when it speaks of the church as the Temple of God and Jesus Christ as our great High Priest? Without the descriptions of the types, readers of the New Testament could not grasp the fullness of these antitypes.

[Moses](#) provides details about the Tabernacle and its furnishings in Exodus 25-27 (see also chapters 36-40). The word for “tabernacle” in Hebrew is *mishkān* (*Strong’s* #4908), which means “dwelling place; tent.” [Exodus 40:34](#) describes how the “glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” That glory (*kābôd*) was the “presence” of God dwelling in it. In Solomon’s day, the same glory filled the Temple ([1 Kings 8:9-11](#)).

In [1 Corinthians 3:16](#), Paul informs the church that its members are the spiritual fulfillment of God’s Temple: “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” This knowledge would make little sense if we could not refer to the physical Tabernacle and Temple in the Old Testament. The apostle teaches that, just as God’s glory filled the sanctuary of Israel, God dwells in us individually and collectively through His Spirit. How much insight would we lack if we could not turn to descriptions of the ancient type?

Similarly, Hebrews 5-8 repeatedly refers to the Levitical priesthood, particularly the office and activities of the high priest. The author teaches the superiority of Jesus as High Priest over any of the earlier human high priests of the line of Aaron. Understanding the function of the Old Testament priesthood from the history of Israel provides the necessary background to Jesus and His role as our High Priest. In addition, he speaks of Jesus as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek” ([Hebrews 5:5-6](#), 10; 6:20; 7:11, 16-17, 20-22). Without the book of Genesis, where the mysterious figure of [Melchizedek](#) is mentioned, we would lack the source material for what the author meant.

Hebrews overflows with comparisons between the weakness of the Old Covenant system (note: not the weakness of the *Old Testament*) and the better, more glorious New Covenant. For instance, all the priests, including the high priest—even the good ones—died, and their influence could not continue. However, Christ, raised from the grave [after three days](#), lives forever as our High Priest ([Hebrews 7:24-25](#)). As the author says, “God . . . provided something better for us” ([Hebrews 11:40](#)).

Worship and Service

Without the Old Testament, how would we know how to [worship God](#) and serve others in the best ways? While the New Testament includes instructions on these matters, the Old provides many more types and examples than the much shorter church writings. The offerings in Leviticus show us how to worship God and serve other people within and out of the church. In particular, beyond instructing us of the need for a Savior, they teach us how to conduct our lives sacrificially.

While many Bible readers skip the instructions found in Leviticus 1-7, they provide the intricate details of each sacrifice and offering God required to be given at the Tabernacle/Temple (for more complete commentary on these chapters, please see John Ritenbaugh’s article series, “[The Offerings of Leviticus](#)”). Many of these details have added spiritual meanings when understood in light of Christ’s sacrifice and our response to it. The focus of these sacrifices was not on the animal’s death but on the giving of a life, helping us to understand that the essence of love is sacrifice, as Jesus exemplified.

The burnt offering was wholly consumed on the altar, teaching us about Christ’s total dedication to God—“the first and great commandment” ([Matthew 22:37-38](#))—and how we should emulate it. The [grain offering](#), placed atop the burnt offering, represents the fulfillment of the second great commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” ([Matthew 22:39](#)).

The [peace offering](#) pictures the blessings of living God’s way of life, particularly the fact that, in it, God, the priest, and the offerer are shown in satisfying fellowship, enjoying His providence together. Finally, in the sin and the trespass offerings, we realize



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that our benevolent Father has covered sin completely through the selfless sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

How much is missed when one neglects the teaching God provides through these Old Testament examples!

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Without the Old Testament, how could we know the breadth of the gospel of the [Kingdom of God](#)? The first sentence of [Genesis 1:26](#) reads, “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.’” This early statement is the foundation for understanding that God is in the process of creating man to become like Him, not just physically but spiritually too.

In [I Corinthians 15:49](#), Paul teaches, “And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.” The apostle John expands on this idea in [I John 3:2](#), writing:

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been [fully] revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed [at His [second coming](#), the time of the [first resurrection](#)], we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

In his article, “[What Hope Did the Old Testament Give for Death?](#)” Don Stewart writes:

From the very beginning, the Old Testament has given humanity hope for something better beyond this life. . . . The entire Old Testament looked forward to the time when the Lord would come, raise the dead, judge [the world](#) righteously, and then set up His kingdom.

He cites several Old Testament examples of its faithful heroes looking forward to life in God’s Kingdom. [King David](#) expresses his hope in [Psalm 17:15](#), writing, “As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I will be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.” Job says, “If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service I will wait, till my change comes. You shall call, and I will answer You; You shall desire the work of Your hands” ([Job 14:14-15](#)). In [Psalm 49:15](#), the sons of Korah write, “But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for He shall receive me.”

Isaiah and Ezekiel prophesy about the second resurrection. For instance, the prophet writes in [Isaiah 26:19](#), “Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in the dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.” In the well-known “Valley of Dry Bones” chapter, Ezekiel prophesies, quoting God, “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel” ([Ezekiel 37:12](#)).

Christianity’s Roots in the Old Testament

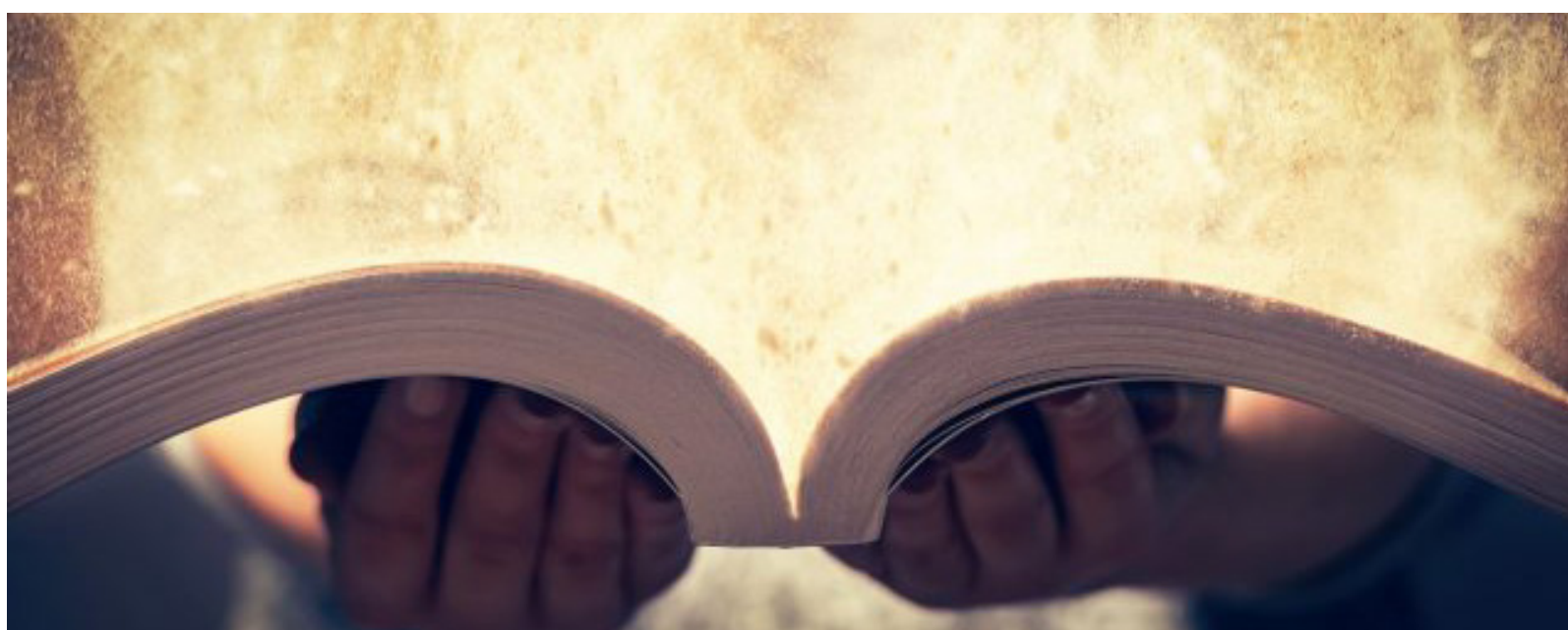
Those God called before Christ knew the rudiments of many of what we call “New Testament” doctrines, and they left a record that provides background, depth, and amazing detail to enhance our understanding of Christianity. Old Testament teachings touch on every area of a person’s life, instructing Christians about how they can live moral lives. We cannot “unhitch” our Christian faith from the Old Testament.

In the Bible, God has provided a complete package of knowledge to bring us to salvation, which we must use without alteration. God commands in [Deuteronomy 4:2](#), “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.” In the last chapter of the Bible, a similar warning appears:

For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. ([Revelation 22:18-19](#))

Perhaps Andy Stanley should pay more attention to these warnings.

Jamaican author and activist Marcus Garvey writes, “A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” A Christian’s roots are sunk deeply in the Old Testament. We need the Old Testament because it tells us who we are, how to live, what God is doing in the church and the world, and where He is leading us. It is the sure foundation of the New Covenant with its better promises. We ignore it at our peril.





God's Name Is Holy

by Abimbola Alabi

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”
Exodus 20:7. (KJV).

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.” Exodus 20:7. (KJV).

Do not take the name of God in vain.

How often do you do this?

“Pastor, why are you bringing up old testament stuff?”

Do you joke around with the name of someone you love or highly respect?

However, during a conversation, you may exclaim: “oh, my God!” or when shocked or amazed at something:

You say something like: “Jesus, what is that!” Some will even say “Jesus Christ Of Nazareth,” Not out of reverence but just for the fun of it.

Were you talking to God or to your friend?

Why do you call God or Jesus's name to something you don't mean?

When you really need to call Him:

To answer you, guide you, and intervene

Is that name still reverently called?

“We live in the time of Grace, I hear you say.”

Yes, we do but look at the perfect example we have in our Lord Jesus Christ.

He did not call God anyhow, but He answered every time He called Him.

It was a relationship of Love, respect, and mutual understanding.

True, you can call Abba Father.

He will hear you.

God is holy, omnipotent, and mighty. Fear Him with godly fear.

Don't laugh and joke using His Hallowed Name with your friends who don't know him as their Lord and Savior.

Don't be comfortable where Jesus Christ is not honored and respected.

They are drawn to His Love and care depending on how they see you handle His Name.

Sometimes you know how people value a person they love, cherish and honor through how they talk and mention the name of the person.

Let someone meet God through how you use His name.

Application to the Christian life:

Honor God.

Do not use His name in vain.

Glorify and honor His name.







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OPTIMIZING THE HARVEST

AMONG CHILDREN & TEENS

The Nigeria 4/14 Window is part of a global initiative that is rallying the body of Christ worldwide in their mission in reaching, equipping and empowering children aged 4 to 14 (and older). The goal is to support Churches and Christian ministries to reach, rescue, root and release children (and teens) into relationship with Jesus Christ and His ministry around the world.

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ACTS 10v 38

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City Of Refuge Ministries Inc,
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And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.
- 2 CORINTHIANS 8:5 NIV

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A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.
- GALATIANS 5:13 NIV