

“Written For Our Learning”

by Casey Head

Paul says in Romans 15:4, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” Again, we are told in 1 Corinthians 10:11, “Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.” As you can see, the Old Testament is there for our benefit, even though we are no longer justified by its law. It is there “for our learning,” and it was written “for our admonition.” The more we study the Old Testament, the more prepared we will be to serve God as Christians. So many lessons can be learned and applied from the stories of Abraham, Joseph, Moses and David.

The story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 tells us that we need to “exhort one another daily, while it is called today; lest any of (us) be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Adam and Eve sinned and were thrust from the garden of Eden because they allowed themselves to be deceived.

We learn in Genesis 6 and 19 that God hates sin and punishes those who live wickedly. When the world became so utterly corrupt, God was “grieved...at His heart.” (Gen. 6:6). Their vast sin resulted in the destruction of all life, save the lives of Noah and his family. Likewise, God saw the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19 and destroyed the city with fire and brimstone. The Lord does not take sin lightly, and He is a God of justice and wrath (Num. 14:18; Heb. 10:31).

Jacob’s son, Joseph, provides us with an inspirational example of overcoming temptation and remaining faithful (Gen. 39:7-12), but the story of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11 teaches us that even God’s most devoted servants are capable of the most disgusting sin when they lose focus.

In Exodus 3, the Lord appeared to Moses in a burning bush at Mount Horeb. God identified Himself to the humble Israelite and then called him to a great task- delivering the Jews from their bitter bondage in Egypt. Moses, however, felt inadequate for the task. He replied to God’s call in Exodus 3:11, “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?” God replied, “I will be with thee.” This powerful chapter teaches us that while we may feel inadequate and incapable of performing the task God has set before us, we can succeed because God is on our side!

The plagues in Egypt (Ex. 7-12) and the parting of the Red Sea (Ex. 14) confirm that God’s power is unlimited. Reading these accounts leave us with a feeling of awe and admiration of the God we serve and call “Father.”

In the wilderness, the people of Israel complained and murmured against God, never satisfied with what they had. Even after seeing the power of God time and time again, they continued to turn away from His perfect leadership. These accounts teach us to appreciate God and to be thankful for the blessings that He has so richly bestowed upon us (1 Cor. 10:9-11).

The profane fire offered by Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 10, the sin of Moses in Numbers 20 and the death of Uzzah in 2 Samuel 6 all teach us to “speak where God speaks and to be silent where God is silent.” In other words, we must respect His authority. We don’t need a “thou shalt not” to know that something is sinful.

These are only a few of the countless Old Testament stories, and as you can see, they all contain such important lessons. Those who carefully consider these stories will be more prepared to serve God today, as those scriptures of old are there “for our learning.” (Rom. 15:4) Failure to read and study the Old Testament will result in our making the same mistakes they did, and the fact is, we won’t have an excuse when we stand before the judgement seat of Christ!