

Beginning with Purpose

This series of teachings, “After My Own Heart: a Tapestry of Patterns,” is a study through the Old Testament, specifically, those many personal stories that show us the one thing God has been after for humans all the way through.

And that one thing is sharing Hheart with God.

Along with this study of God’s involvement with the heart of each character in the Old Testament, we will also apply many of these stories as metaphors enabling us to understand better the path of the gospel fulfilled through us.

For instance, the story of Gideon and his 300 is a critical metaphor for knowing our victory over the next few years.

Key Verses.

The truth is, all through my writing, I have often drawn from my knowledge of these lives and these metaphors, even when I make no mention of them.

Then, a third thing we will include in this study will be brief looks at the key verses of the Old Testament.

We will not call them “ruling verses,” for doing so would lessen the meaning of the powerful role that the ruling verses of the Bible must hold in all understanding.

Nonetheless, we will find that every one of the key verses of the Old Testament, in its primary meaning, IS a critical companion verse to one or more of those ruling verses.

The Fit Together.

I have deliberately avoided teaching much from the Old Testament before now, because the religious mind so easily turns it falsely into an overthrow of the gospel.

But when we use the ruling verses of the Bible to RULE over the meaning God intends in every line of the Old Testament, then, to our continual amazement, we find the Lord Jesus Christ written on every page.

My experience in all past Old Testament teaching has been that the verses of the Old must be twisted to force-fit them with the New, during which the New usually lost the fight.

My present experience is that every single line in the Old fits perfectly with the knowledge of Christ our only life.

A Progression of Thoughts.

I want to share with you how I arrived at choosing this particular approach and layout for this next teaching series.

By sharing the progression of my thoughts with you, I am better able to show you the central meaning for which we are searching in this study.

First, I considered doing a study of the life of Abraham or the life of David or both. And, of truth, such studies are extremely valuable in their time and place.

But just a generalized study of those two stories did not satisfy the ache in my heart to impart to you the critical things you must know in these last days.

Metaphors.

Then, I thought about a teaching of the various story metaphors and the key verses of the Old Testament.

And let me make a simple distinction. The primary metaphors of God in the Old Testament are the Tabernacle of Moses, the Feasts of Israel's year, and the journey of Israel from Egypt to Solomon's temple.

Except for a few individual stories inside Israel's journey, I am excluding those three larger metaphors and focusing on the many smaller metaphors found in the stories of individual people.

But metaphors and key verses still were not reaching my desire to impart to you the LIFE you must have.

The Real Meaning.

Then, I thought to myself, “What is the real meaning I want to impart to you through a study of Abraham and David?”

And then the one verse in the Old Testament that comes close to what I mean by a “ruling verse” came to mind, except we will use Paul’s rendition, for it is better.

“I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My desire” (Acts 13:22).

A man after My own Heart – truly among the most wondrous of phrases in the Bible.

And then I realized that, of truth, that is all God ever wanted between Himself and every person in the Bible.

A Heart Relationship.

God's ruling definition of the Old Testament stories, then, is the heart relationship each one shared with Him and He with them.

And then we see that Moses and Jeremiah had the same heart relationship with God that David did, as well as so many others.

And different ones give us a different portion or facet of God's Heart now given to us.

We could call this study, "Differing facets of God's Heart given to us as shown by many of the men and women in the Old Testament, in their own relationship with God."

The Stories of Many.

Approaching this study in this way, then, not only allowed me to reduce the lives of Abraham and David to their most important meanings for us right now, but it also allowed this study to expand to include the stories of many others.

At least eight women will also feature in this study, with five being the primary element in their segments, Rebekah, Ruth, Abigail, the Shulamite, and Esther.

I had forty-five lessons penciled out initially, but I have just added two more, and thus I will leave flexible how many lessons there will be in all.

Let me give a brief layout of some of the topics in this study.

Adam through Gideon.

After looking briefly at pre-fall Adam, then Able, Enoch, and Noah, we will spend at least four lessons on Abraham.

Indeed, Abraham's story shows us the critical importance of Covenant at the heart of a real relationship with God.

We will see in Jacob the place of contending with the Almighty and in Joseph, the importance of storing up word in our hearts.

Moses gets at least four lessons as well. Moses shows us how a man of humility is absolutely bold in the presence of God for the sake of others.

Joshua shows us confidence and Gideon victory.

David through Kingdom.

For David I have penciled in seven lessons. Samuel is featured in one of those and Abigail in another. David **shows us the meaning of God's heart in a man.** At the same time, we will match a psalm David wrote with each critical event in his life.

Solomon has two lessons, but the second one is much more about the Shulamite.

I have also penciled in four chapters (to fit in somewhere) **that fall under the topic of "A Tapestry of Patterns."** I want to discover the weave of the pattern of Word all through the Old Testament as well as the patterns of Spirit, Covenant, and Kingdom.

Elijah through Malachi.

Elijah shows us decision, and Elisha shows us confidence, just like Joshua did.

Isaiah is a bit different. To him I have given three lessons, Isaiah and God, and Christ, and the Church. Then a lesson on Hosea and the Church.

Jeremiah has two lessons, first frustration and then tears.

With Ezekiel it is judgment and with Daniel, devotion, just like Ruth. Esther shows us compassion, not towards humans but towards God.

Our study will include the restoration, from Haggai to Malachi, with purpose and in-dwelling among the patterns.

Patterns or Models.

Why, then, would it be of importance to us to study these things inside the present times?

Consider these words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 10.

I do not want you to be ignorant... that our fathers were all... immersed into Moses... And all of them... drank the same spiritual drink... drinking out of the spiritual rock accompanying them, and that rock was Christ.

Nevertheless, God was not well-pleased with most of **them; for they were scattered in the wilderness... These** things happened to them now as patterns or models, and were then written towards our admonition, to whom the completion of the ages have come (Rough JSV).

The Rock of Christ.

First, we are the ones upon whom the completion of this age has come. And God has given us His entire Bible because we NEED it and every truth in it, to carry us in victory through the next several years.

I have never tolerated the absurd idea that God gave us the Bible, but that He did not mean for us to know the fulfillment of every word in it in our present lives.

But then, look at these words – “that rock was Christ.”

“That rock” was a stone barrier that Moses struck hard to break it. And when it broke, the water behind it gushed out.

How, then, was that rock “Christ?”

Flee from Idolatry.

That rock was “Christ” in that it, and the story surrounding it, are “patterns or models” of our own relationship with God through Christ.

And it is a pattern or model of our own hearts, for Christ lives inside of our hearts through faith.

Of course, Paul is using some of what happened back then as a pattern of things we should not do, and thus, one of his conclusions is that we “Flee from idolatry.”

And we will, on occasion, look at the Old Testament characters set by God to show us what it is that we “flee,” but only in contrast to those who show us Christ.

Placing the Key Verses.

Let's now consider the “key verses” of the Old Testament and how they fit.

First, only one verse in the Old Testament is a “ruling” verse, and that is Genesis 3:1 & 5.

And that is the single “verse” that rules absolutely all Nicene thinking, with its core as – *God is; you ought.*

All the other key verses in the Old Testament we will place as important companion verses for the ruling verses.

And, in fact, we have used Genesis 1:26-28 many times in order to understand Romans 8:28-30.

Ephesians 3:17 then means – Christ is; I am.

The Arc of the Holiest.

Let's place the ruling verses into the Holy of Holies diagram.

Filled with All the Fullness of God.
Love One Another

Symmorphosed with Jesus
Share Heart with (Know) God

Inside of Jesus
Inside of Us.

Walk in Confidence;
Led in Triumph.

A Bold
Entrance

Already
Complete

Synergeo
with God

Rivers of Spirit.

Cast Down
Accusation

Christ our Life;
No other Life.

Set Creation Free.

Union – Fellowship – Expression.

I do like patterns.

And we can see how some of the ruling verses contain parts that span the Union – Fellowship – Expression Arc.

Drinking of Jesus is union, whereas Rivers of Spirit are expression.

Glorious liberty is fellowship, whereas setting creation free is expression. And setting creation free does not actually leave the Holiest, rather, it extends the Holiest out over all.

And the first extension of the Holiest is the Church, drinking of one Spirit, members of one Body, joined and knitted together.

The Reproduction of Life.

I have said that the Tabernacle of Moses is the most important metaphor in the Old Testament and concerning the gospel, but it is not the largest overall metaphor.

The largest and most important metaphor in the Bible and in creation is the reproduction, the bringing forth of LIFE.

Even the purpose of love is to bring forth new Life.

In actuality, the Tabernacle is just one more picture for the bringing forth of God-Life, and thus is essential inside this larger metaphor.

We will include, in this study, how different people, key verses, and smaller metaphors fit this largest of patterns.

The Ruling Verses.

I do not like to stray far from the ruling verses of the Bible, for it is my task to show them to be absolute throughout the Bible, throughout the universe, in all of God, and in all of us, and to continue in their unending expansion.

What I mean to say, then, is that this study of the key people, metaphors, and verses of the Old Testament gives us critical insights into this Arc of the Holiest, and this Arc of Union – Communion – Expression enables us to understand everything God means in the Old Testament.

Here are three key verses fitted into this Arc. Abraham believed God (union) – There I will meet with you (communion) – The just shall live by faith (expression).

A Perfect Fit.

Daniel and Ruth show us union; Jeremiah and Moses show us fellowship; and Joshua and Elisha show us expression.

David, of course, is all over the place; David shows us the entire Arc, but especially the center – heart.

I cannot express how beautiful this perfect fit between Old Testament and New inside of Jesus is to me.

Daniel and Ruth bring tears to my eyes. Jacob gives me heart never to let go. Jeremiah and Moses break my heart with the grief and love of God. Joshua and Nehemiah give me courage to stand, to build, and to win.

God's Word is perfect in all joy and wonder.

A Man after My Own Heart.

Every person and episode in this study, however, will give us a specific bit of understanding regarding the central wonder of our lives – Sharing Hheart with God.

Every example of Christ in the Old Testament is a messed-up human, stumbling along the way, but every example of anti-Christ is one who reaches for control over others.

David ran into the Holiest because he would not do anything with his sin except place it upon God; Uzziah snuck into the Holiest because he wanted to appear superior in the eyes of his subjects.

- Christ written upon human hearts of flesh.

The Ekenosis.

“He humbled Himself” is the Ekenosis of God.

We do not want this to be a study on “how we should approach God.” Instead, it is how God shows Himself through those who love and regard Him.

Here is one way I described this teaching earlier in the lesson. “Differing facets of God’s Heart given to us as shown by many of the men and women in the Old Testament, in their own relationship with God.”

The Ekenosis is God showing Himself through humans, many humans, both as individuals and as all of us together.

We study these humans in order to know God.

Next: The Riddle.

And that is where we must begin, this incredible riddle that God has so clearly set in His Word.

We know God by knowing humans, including ourselves; we know humans, including ourselves, by knowing God.

If either one is excluded in our knowing, so also is the other. We must know both together; we know God only by heart.

One problem with a study such as this is that many of the Old Testament texts in which these stories are found are long; whereas this study must be compact to fit the time.

For that reason, we will assign reading at the end of each lesson. For next time, then, read Genesis Chapters 1 & 2.