

SALVATION BEFORE THE CROSS

Enemies of the Cross

- **Attacks on the gospel**
- Genesis 3:1: ... "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

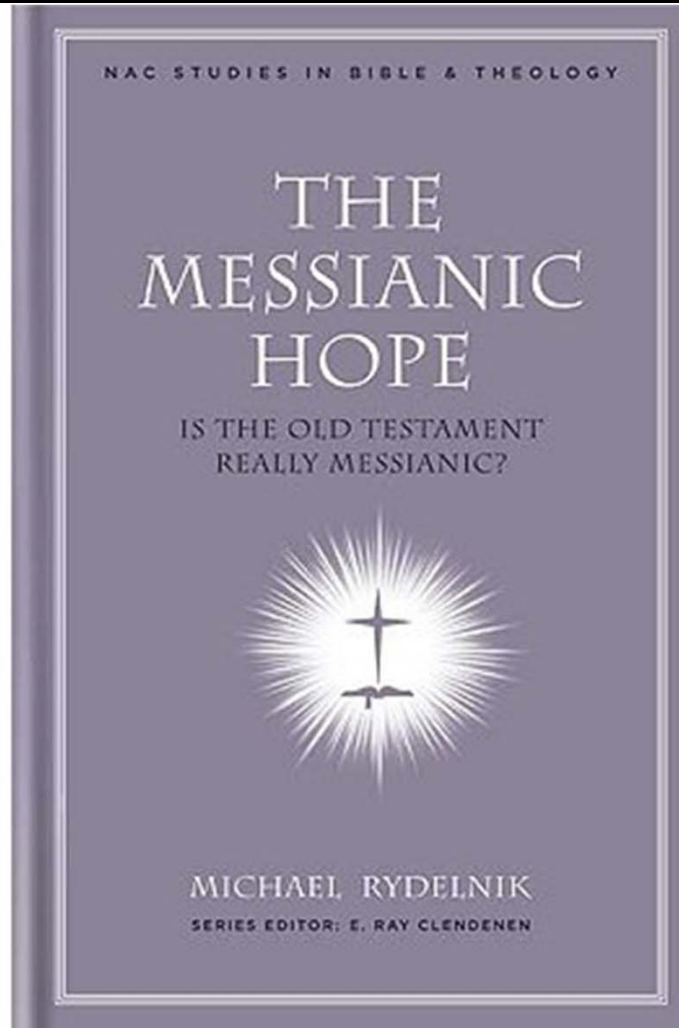
2 Peter 3:16

- as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.*

Galatians 1:6-7

- I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.

The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic? (B&H Publishers, 2010)



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- Genesis 3:15: snakes and women
- Isaiah 7:14: unmarried contemporary woman
- Isaiah 9:6: not about the son, but a long name for God
- Job 19:25: Job's redeemer is a contemporary who will deliver in the end.

Old Testament Salvation

- Four Views
 - 1. Keep the Law/ do good works
 - 2. Covenant Theology
 - 3. Dispensational Theology
 - 4. Modified view of OT salvation

Not by works

- Hebrews 10:4 *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*

Covenant Theology

- **Men of the Old Testament looked forward and accepted the propitiation through Christ on faith while those of the New Testament era accept the finished sacrifice.**
- William E. Cox, *Amillennialism Today* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1966), 30.

Covenant Theology

- **The Old Testament women and men looked forward to Christ. We look back.**

James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 256.

Covenant Theology

- ...the Redeemer is the same under all dispensations. He who was predicted as the seed of the woman, as the seed of Abraham, the Son of David, the Branch, the Servant of the Lord, the Prince of Peace, is our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh. He, therefore, from the beginning has been held up as the hope of the world, the SALVATOR HOMINUM.

Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Reprinted 1989), 2:370.

Covenant Theology

- **Abel's faith was, in substance, faith in the atoning work of Christ, the promised Redeemer.**

James Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 2:185.

Dispensational Theology

- **Salvation in the Old Testament was by faith in God and not by faith in Jesus Christ.**

- The traditional dispensational view states that salvation is always based on the death of Christ and that the requirement for salvation is always by faith. Where they differ from covenant theology is in saying that the content of faith for salvation changes with the new revelation of successive dispensations (Gal. 3:23; 1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Dallas Theological Seminary

Doctrinal Statement, Article V

- We believe that it has always been true that “without faith it is impossible to please” God ([Heb. 11:6](#)), and that the principle of faith was prevalent in the lives of all the Old Testament saints. However, we believe that it was historically impossible that they should have had as the conscious object of their faith the incarnate, crucified Son, the Lamb of God ([John 1:29](#)), ...

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- and that it is evident that they did not comprehend as we do that the sacrifices depicted the person and work of Christ. We believe also that they did not understand the redemptive significance of the prophecies or types concerning the sufferings of Christ ([1 Pet. 1:10–12](#));

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- therefore, we believe that their faith toward God was manifested in other ways as is shown by the long record in [Hebrews 11:1–40](#). We believe further that their faith thus manifested was counted unto them for righteousness (cf. [Rom. 4:3](#) with [Gen. 15:6](#); [Rom. 4:5–8](#); [Heb. 11:7](#)).

Charles Ryrie

- “The *basis* of salvation in every age is the death of Christ; the *requirement* for salvation in every age is faith; the *object* of faith in every age is God; the *content* of faith changes in the various dispensations.”

Ryrie, *Dispensationalism Today*, p. 123.

Charles Ryrie

- ...the covenant viewpoint is a **historically impossible anachronism.**

Ryrie, C. C. (1963). *The grace of God* (p. 45).
Chicago, IL: Moody Press.

Charles Ryrie

- **Jesus the Son of God, who is the fullness of grace, was not revealed in the Old Testament.**

The grace of God (p. 55)

Charles Ryrie

- ... there are several specific statements which show the ignorance of Old Testament saints regarding salvation through Christ—John 1:21; 7:40; 1 Peter 1:11. The Johannine passages show how confused the Israelites were about the entire matter, and this makes it difficult to see how one can say that Old Testament saints exercised personal faith in Christ.

The grace of God (p. 49)

- He cites John 7:40 as proof that the Old Testament believers did not have Christ as a conscious object of faith, but that passage says the opposite:
- (Jn 7:40-41) *Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." 41 Others said, "This is the Christ."*

Charles Ryrie

- Regarding **1 Pet 1:11**, Ryrie says that this verse indicates that people in the Old Testament were ignorant regarding salvation through Christ. But, in fact, the verse says the opposite; they were not ignorant.
- *1 Peter 1:11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.*

The grace of God (p. 49)

Charles Ryrie

- Job 19:25–26: *For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; ²⁶ And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God*
- Ryrie says, “If this is to be used to prove that there was conscious faith in Christ, “Redeemer” must be equated with the Second Person of the Trinity. This is impossible to do, for when Job appeals to his Redeemer, he does so without even remotely comprehending that He is the Second Person of the Trinity. To say that he did would **be an anachronism of the wildest sort.**

The grace of God (p. 50)

L.S. Chafer

- ...God has assigned different human requirements in various ages as the terms upon which He Himself saves on the ground of the death of Christ.... Nevertheless, when the various human requirements of the different ages are investigated it is found that they come alike in the end to the basic reality that faith is exercised in *God*.

Bibliotheca Sacra 102, no. 405 (1945): 2.

L.S. Chafer

- ...though the specific object of faith—Isaac in the case of Abraham and Jesus Christ in the case of those becoming Christians—varies, both have a promise of God on which to rest and both believe God. It does not follow that men of all ages may be saved by believing any promise of God; it is only such promises as God has Himself made to be the terms upon which He will save.

Bibliotheca Sacra 102, no. 405 (1945): 2–3.

J. Dwight Pentecost

- Everyone in the Old Testament was saved by believing something different.
- He added that he couldn't find any Christological content in the faith of anyone in the Old Testament.

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[transcription of class notes, 1984, DTS
course on Pentateuch]

J. Dwight Pentecost

- There are numerous Old Testament passages which promise salvation to Israel. It should be borne in mind that, while the emphasis is placed on the national salvation, that national salvation must be preceded by individual salvation. Paul himself (Rom. 9:6) restricts the “all Israel” of Romans 11:26 to the saved individuals.
- **Thus, in the Old Testament any promise of salvation must include both aspects.** (Jer. 30:7; Ezek. 20:37-38; Dan. 12:11; Joel 2:31-32; Zech. 13:1, 8—9).

Things to Come

John S. Feinberg

- The people of the Old Testament era did not know that Jesus was the Messiah, that Jesus would die, and that His death would be the basis of salvation.

“Salvation in the Old Testament” Tradition and Testament. Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg. Chicago: Moody Press, 1981. pp. 55

- **Since dispensationalism is not about whether Christ was the revealed content of faith in the Old Testament, a dispensationalist can certainly hold that He was the object for faith, without having to surrender his dispensationalism**

- Faith in God is not sufficient for salvation:
- **Isaiah 48:1** "Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are named Israel And who came forth from the loins of Judah, Who swear by the name of the LORD And invoke the God of Israel, *But not in truth nor in righteousness.*"

QUESTION:

- **If people in the Old Testament could be saved without knowledge of a savior, why would it be different in our day among people who have not heard of Jesus Christ?**

Progressive (or perhaps better, cumulative) revelation

- Of course one must recognize that God's revelation of His salvation plan is cumulative. More and more details were added as time went on. But does this mean that Messiah was unrecognizable in the Old Testament as some say?

- Is it the New Testament that allows us to see the Messiah in the Old?
- Is it because we see the historical Jesus that we are able to see the Messiah in the Old?

- Some have said that the New Testament is the searchlight that allows us to see Messiah in the Old Testament. But in a real sense this is backwards. It is the Old Testament that allows us to see Jesus for who he really is.

- It is the searchlight of the Old Testament that allows us to identify Jesus as the Messiah. We have failed to search diligently to find the Messiah. It is the Old Testament that is the Messianic searchlight.

Jesus and the Message of the Old Testament

- **Luke 24:25** Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in **all** that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and **all the Prophets**, He expounded to them **in all the Scriptures** the things concerning **Himself**.

Jesus and the Message of the Old Testament

- **Luke 24:44** Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **all** things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms **concerning Me.**" ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "**Thus it is written,** and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,

- He did not say, “O poor men of faith, you could not understand what the prophets wrote about me because they had not yet been given their full sense of meaning, their sensus plenior, as I am explaining them to you!”

- **“Jesus found himself in the Old Testament, a thing that some modern scholars do not seem to be able to do.”**
- A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures (Luke 24:27)

Peter and the Old Testament

- **Acts 3:18** But those things which God foretold by the mouth of **all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer**, He has thus fulfilled.
- **Acts 3:24** Yes, and **all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow**, as many as have spoken, **have also foretold these days.**

- **Acts 4:8-12** ⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: ⁹ "If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, ¹⁰ "let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. ¹¹ "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' ¹² "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
- **So Peter interpreted Psalms 118 as Messianic.**

Stephen and the Old Testament

- **Acts 7:52** Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those **who foretold the coming of the Just One**, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers,

Paul and the Old Testament

- **Acts 17:1-3** Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths **reasoned with them from the Scriptures,** ³ explaining and demonstrating that **the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead,** and *saying,* "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ."

Paul and the Old Testament

- Before Agrippa and Festus, Paul maintained that in his testimony about Jesus he was “saying nothing else than what the prophets and Moses said would take place—that the Messiah must suffer, and that as the first to rise from the dead, He would proclaim light to our people and to the Gentiles” (Acts 26:22–23).

- Apollos was an eloquent preacher who evangelized the Jewish people by using the Old Testament to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah (Acts 18:24–28).
- **Acts 18:28** for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Intertestamental rabbis

- The rabbis of the intertestamental period found references to the Messiah in many more passages of the Old Testament than the prophecies about Christ that we often cite. They refer to more than 450 passages as being messianic.
- Rydelnik has a complete list in his book on Messiah.

- If we cannot see Messiah in so many passages, perhaps it is because we are not doing careful inquiry and searching.



- **1 Peter 1:10-12** ¹⁰ Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come to you,* ¹¹ *searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.* ¹² *To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven -- things which angels desire to look into.*

Can we reproduce the exegesis of the New Testament?

Unhesitatingly, the reply is yes, although we are not allowed to claim for our results the infallibility of the Lord and His apostles. They are reliable teachers of biblical doctrine and they are reliable teachers of hermeneutics and exegesis. We not only can reproduce their exegetical methodology, we must if we are to be taught their understanding of Holy Scripture. Their principles, probably taught them by the Lord in His post-resurrection ministry, are not abstruse and difficult. They are simple, plain, and logical. The things they find in the Old Testament are really there.

S.L. Johnson, *The Old Testament in the New: An Argument for Biblical Inspiration*, 93–94. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.

A Third Option

- There is a third view which sees Old Testament salvation based on faith in the One God promised to send who would be a savior. The revelation of this One increased as time went on, and the requirement for salvation was faith in this deliverer as He was revealed at any given time.

- So, they could have faith in a "seed" that was promised, faith in a Messiah, faith in Yeshua, and yet not believe in Jesus specifically, for Jesus had not yet been revealed.

- "Most of the believers who came to faith before NT times are those who give evidence that their faith was based on the God who disclosed himself in the Seed of the Woman."
- Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Is It The Case That Christ Is The Same Object Of Faith In The Old Testament? (Genesis 15:1-6)"
Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society 55:2 (2012)

Conclusion

- People before the time of Christ did not have a full picture of the Savior and the cross. However, they did have an adequate picture that was sufficient for salvation. God has always revealed His plan of salvation and that revelation has always been sufficient to bring man to salvation.

John 5:24

- *Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*
- So, salvation in the Old Testament was not by some generic faith in God, but by faith in the God who would send the Savior. Faith in a god who is not sending the Savior does not save.

- The ultimate object of faith is God, as the classic dispensationalists contend. However, faith in God which saves is faith in the God who promised the Messiah, the redeemer, the savior.

- How were people in the Old Testament saved? By faith in the salvation promised by God! This salvation is a Person, the promised Seed of the woman, the promised Seed of Abraham, the promised Seed of David, the promised Deliverer, Yeshua.

Isaiah 62:11-12. Salvation in a Person

- Indeed the LORD has proclaimed To the end of the world: "Say to the daughter of Zion, 'Surely your salvation [Yeshua] is coming; Behold, His reward *is with Him, And His work before Him.*' " ¹² *And they shall call them The Holy People, The Redeemed of the LORD.*
- **He** is coming. **His** reward is with Him; **His** work is before Him. This is Yeshua, Jesus.