

“History we shouldn’t overlook”

Acts 13: 13-22

“From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵ After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, ‘Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation¹ for the people, please speak.’

“¹⁶ Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: ‘Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! ¹⁷ The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; ¹⁸ for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; ¹⁹ and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance.²⁰ All this took about 450 years. After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. ²¹ Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years.

¹ (παρακλήσεως)

²² After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: “I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.””



Biblical Archaeological Society map

Through a direct mailing campaign by the Hollywood Church of Christ, an elderly guitar instructor and his wife began attending Bible classes and services.

Because I had given them free Bible lessons, the husband said he wanted to give me guitar lessons.

He planned to retire so I'd be his last student.



Many screeching wrong cords tested Norma’s patience, but I enjoyed the lessons and my times with the old gentleman.

His wife later developed dementia and her behavior became increasingly unpredictable.

On one occasion, she opened the door and ran down the street sans all her clothing.

Following this incident, he tried to stay with her every moment.

As they left their modest house one day, he let go of her hand so he could lock the front door.

She tried to bolt off the front porch.

In desperation, he grabbed her frail wrist causing some bruising.

Shortly after, a county social worker called on them and noticed the marks on the wife’s wrist.

The social worker accused the old gentleman of abusing his wife and warned that he’d be charged and go to jail if she suffered further injury.

I had been in their home many times, Norma and I had spent time with them, and observed their interactions.

We felt then and still think the social worker reached that conclusion without knowing the full story.

In fact, I’ve seen recent tendencies to unfairly blame the man in all situations.

**Norma and I think the husband got a “bum rap.”
Why do I bring up this incident involving our old friends?**

In verse 17 of today’s text, Paul began reviewing *Old Testament* history for his listeners.

For a long time, the *OT* has been falsely accused.

- Some claim it’s full of myths.
- Others that it’s outdated.

The *OT* is not familiar territory to many modern church goers,

Yet by not knowing the *OT*, we might make a worse mistake than that LA County social worker.

I’m sure I told you that a newspaper publisher who attended one of my studies for years called the *OT* “the fat part of the Bible.”

In one of my Bibles, the *OT* is 733 pages; the *NT* only 209.

That’s why our friend termed the *NT*, “the skinny part.”

This “fat” *OT* is a strange world to most people.

I grew up in churches that emphasized knowing Scripture, yet I often heard people say,

“We don’t go by the ‘old Bible’ anymore.”

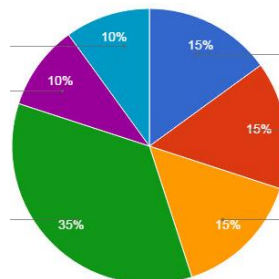
By “old Bible,” they meant the *OT*.

Did you know that if you heard every *OT* reading in the Lectionary for three years, you’d hear less than 15% of the total *OT*?²

The term *testament* itself misleads us.

Soap operas, law, and crime programs sometimes show a reading of a deceased’s “last will and testament.”

Why do they say both “will” and “testament”?³



If you come across a long English word, the term likely has a French origin.

After the Normans defeated the Saxons at the Battle of Hastings (1066), many words of Norman or French origin became part of the English language.

In any case, the expression *will* is of Brit or Anglo origin, and *testament* was there for the Normans (French) in Merry Old England.

The term *Testament* misleads us in two ways.

1. First, the term covenant better describes the biblical idea.

² According to a Catholic website by Fr. Felix Just, S.J., the Sunday and weekday Lectionaries contain: 13.5 percent of the Old Testament (not counting the Psalms);

54.9 percent of the non-Gospel New Testament;

89.8 percent of the Gospels;

71.5 percent of the entire New Testament.

³ Source: *Creative Writing* by Kathryn Lindskoog.

A) In English, the word *testament* often connotes a will as in “last will and testament.”

In a few instances, the Bible uses it that way.

B) But in the Bible, *testament* usually refers to a covenant or agreement—a contract.

(See Jeremiah 34:18).

2. What we call the *OT* actually contains several covenants, e.g.

- The Lord established a marriage covenant between a man and a woman; He’s never altered that covenant (Genesis 2).
- God made the rainbow covenant with Noah (Genesis 9).
- God made a covenant to bless everyone through a descendant of Abraham (Gen. 12).
- God made a covenant with the nation of Israel in Moses’ time, but they broke it (Exodus 20).
- On the cross, Jesus ratified the Abraham covenant (Galatians 3:6-4:7).

What we call the *OT* includes these various covenants and more.

The *OT* also contains lots of wise advice.

And very important, the *OT* gives examples of “How to” and “how not to do things.”

In addition the *OT* contains those Psalms and spiritual songs, which superbly praise God.

It's a worship source for Christians.

I think you'd agree that it's illogical to call the Bible's fat part "old."



Jesus didn't consider the *OT* outdated.

Speaking to the Apostles in **Luke 24:27 NIV:**

"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he (Jesus) explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."

What we call *OT*, Jesus called Scripture—God's Word that's applicable and helpful.

Much of what we call the *OT* prophesied about him and contained laws for the Israelite nation.

The Mosaic laws included timeless sanitary and civil regulations, which create stable societies.

This country could use many of them today.

The quality of life in this country is disintegrating because folks disregard those basic regulations.

The Mosaic sacrifice ritual is obsolete, but many important *OT* principles remain in effect.

The Apostle Paul compared life to an Olympic Games type of race.

The prize is resurrection from the dead and everlasting existence with God.

Are you running well in that race?

In 1 Corinthians 9 Paul amazes us with observations of his own race performance.

Paul said that he continually disciplined himself so that after helping others win the prize, he himself wouldn't be disqualified.

At the beginning of 1 Corinthians 10, Paul pointed out numerous *Old Testament* examples of Israelites who should have easily won their race, but instead miserably failed.

In **10:6**, Paul told why he included *OT* examples: "Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did."

Citizens of this country often argue about whether this is a Christian nation.

"Should public schools allow prayers and Bible reading?"

1 Corinthians 10:6 alludes to a more crucial issue. Suppose you argue convincingly that the U.S. is a Christian nation.

If your heart isn't right with God, winning your argument won't matter, will it?

God established Israel as a godly nation, but the people forgot God in their daily activities.

This leads back to the original point:

Reading only part of the *OT* can lead us to dangerous assumptions.

The Lectionary includes **1 Kings 3: 3-14.**

This famous *OT* passage relates young King

Solomon's prayer for wisdom.

God commended Solomon for his unselfishness and also granted him wealth.

The Lectionary also includes Solomon's prayer, when he dedicated the first Jerusalem Temple.

For many that's the end of the story.

Folks recall Solomon's wisdom and his superb dedication prayer.

They also joke about the king's many wives.

Those who designed the Lectionary didn't include how Solomon's wives led him away from God.

He built altars so his wives could worship their own gods and idols.

One of Solomon's wives worshiped Molech; devotees offered their children as fiery sacrifices.

The Lectionary doesn't include 1 Kings 11: 9-11:

"The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰

Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. ¹¹ So the LORD said to Solomon, 'Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates.'"

This is typical of verses the Lectionary avoids.

It appears to me that the Lectionary rarely covers behavior, which the Lord forbids and passages that tell how the Lord punishes evil.

It also avoids matters of church organization and the Apostles teaching.

The Lectionary includes barely half of the Epistles.

I pray that you will spend time reading the Bible and become acquainted with God's Word.

Our Creator provided it so:

- **We can avoid the traps that ensnare people;**
- **We'll find real life and love in Christ;**
- **And enjoy maximum eternal joy.**

I pray that we can all be heaven for eternity praising, honoring, and thanking God for His mercy.



True wisdom honors God.

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