

We have a promise, that in the shaking of all else, the words of Jesus will remain (31), a saying which is used of the words of God himself in the OT.

"35 Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for light by day And the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night, Who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar; The LORD of hosts is His name: 36 "If this fixed order departs From before Me," declares the LORD, "Then the offspring of Israel also will cease From being a nation before Me forever." 37 Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured And the foundations of the earth searched out below, Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel For all that they have done," declares the LORD." Jeremiah 31:35-37, NAS95.

Kohlbrugge writes somewhere : "We are never worried that the stars will fall from heaven. Somehow we know and trust that God will keep them running in their appointed circuits. But when it comes to trusting that same Creator for our daily bread or our salvation, we are often afraid that He will forget us".

That is because we are not trusting in His promises in the Words of the Living Word. Not to trust the Words we read on the page of our bibles is not to trust Christ, the Living Word.

Jesus as the Word incarnate, the living and true Word, the final spokesman of all things concerning God is written about in this way:

"1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high," Hebrews 1:1-3, NAS95.

The apocalypse, the cataclysmic and cosmic events of the end are going to come but Christ the Living Word and His spoken words will never perish.

So we come back to our text, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (v.31). There had been a time when God communicated by his prophets to the world, but now in these last days God is speaking to us by his Son, and Jesus got it right, always. There was no failure in the message; no breakdown in

communication between God and us. We have exactly what God has to say to us because God has put it all in the hands of his Son. If you hear Jesus speaking then you can hear what God is saying to the world.

Just as the work of the cross will never pass away, the message of the cross in the words and life of Jesus will never pass away.

Have you noticed how the world without Christ looks at its future? Many see an environmental catastrophe, the loss of fossil resources, the pollution of the land, sea and atmosphere, global warming leading to millions of environmental refugees in the next hundred years. Look at the world's worry as it thinks of the impact of a comet from one of the 2,000 asteroids whose orbits cross the path of the earth and then the resulting epic disaster. Look at the world considering the death of the sun; in 4.5 billion years all its available hydrogen fuel will be expended and it will begin to swell as a red giant and it will absorb the earth. Look at the world considering the expansion of the universe by some type of material or force called 'dark energy' so that the universe expands into 'heat death' and it becomes a cold, lifeless place full of dead stars. Look at the world considering the future and it just despairs. It is all going to pass away. Nobel prize-winning physicist Steven Weinberg thinks it is all utterly futile, "The more the universe is comprehensible the more it seems pointless."

Atheist Bertand Russell said that, "the world which science presents for our belief is even more purposeless, more void of meaning . . . that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast depth of the solar system, and the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins - all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy that rejected them can hope to stand" (Bertrand Russell, "Why I am Not a Christian," George Allen and Unwin, 1957, p.107).

But here is this teacher Jesus Christ who tells us of what is going to last for ever, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." Believe it, for

his life endorses it, his resurrection confirms it, the change he has worked in millions of people of all kinds who had lacked any hope in their futures, encourages you to take it so seriously. His people live by these words, and die in the hope of their greater fulfillment in his presence.

Before there was anything, there was everything. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Psalm 33:6 "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth."

Hebrews 11:3 "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command (His Word), so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."

Colossians 1:16 "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."

"In the beginning was the Word..." The "Word" here is speaking of the person of Jesus Christ. The "Word" is His name...

Revelation 19:13 "He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God."

Some have questions like.... Where was Jesus in the Old Testament, if Jesus didn't come on the scene until 2000 years ago, what was He doing all the years before that?

Colossians 1:15-17 "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

(16) For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. (17) He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Life comes from the Eternal Word. Jesus is the Eternal Word... the giver of life.

1 John 1:2 "The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us."

Continuing on....

John 1:1-2 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was with God in the beginning."

Basically, what John is saying to us in his introduction into this Gospel account is this...

"This account is not like all the others... I'm not going to tell you one parable... rather

after reading this account, you will know more than the teachings of Jesus, you will know Jesus Himself as the Living Word who is God.

Earlier in our study this passage, we discussed that Jesus alluded to OLD Testament Scriptures when He was portraying the future destruction of Jerusalem and the apocalypse of the future.

So then, what Does Jesus Think of the Old Testament?

“Jesus drives us back to the Old Testament to examine it through Christian eyes, teaching that it leads us back to him. In doing biblical theology as Christians, we do not start at Genesis 1 and work our way forward until we discover where it is heading. Rather we first come to Christ, and he directs us to study the Old Testament in the light of the gospel. The gospel will interpret the Old Testament by showing us its goal and meaning.” Graeme Goldsworthy, According to Plan, p. 55

Jesus says the OT is the trustworthy word of God. Jesus says the OT is historically reliable. Most importantly, Jesus says the OT points to him.

So, why do we trust the bible? We trust the Bible because we trust what Jesus teaches about it.

But if all this hinking we hear about the New Covenant is so important, Why study the OT? Well about about 75 percent of the Bible is the Old Testaent and from Genesis to Revelation it is all about Jesus.

Yet, Ssome say we shouldn't (Example: Marcion's heretical Antithesis denied any connection between the God of the OT and the God of the NT)

Jesus said:

Matt. 5:17: 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. “

We study the OT because Jesus and the NT writers say we should.

So it seems pretty obvious that Jesus knew how to interpret the bible, especially since all there was then was the Law and the Prophets.

1. Jesus says the OT is the trustworthy word of God.

Jesus believes that scripture is as trustworthy and free of error as its author, God himself. No one models obedience to God's Word more faithfully than Jesus.

Jesus submits to God's Word in: Matt. 4: Meeting Satan by citing Deut. 6 and 8.

Matt. 26: Jesus, expecting betrayal, quotes Zech. 13:7 Luke 24:25: The resurrected Christ shows obedience to Scripture

2. Jesus teaches that the OT is a historically accurate record.

References to: Abel (Luke 11:51), Noah (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26,27), Abraham (John 8:56), the institution of circumcision (John 7:22; cf. Gen. 17:10-12; Lev. 12:3), Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. 10:15, 11:23,24; Luke 10:12), Lot (Luke 17:28-32), Isaac and Jacob (Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:28), Moses (Matt. 22:24-32, Mark 7:10-13; 12:19-27), manna in the desert (John 6:31,49, 58), David as an author of the Psalms (Matt 22:43; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42), Solomon (Matt. 6:29, 12:42; Luke 11:31, 12:27), Elijah (Luke 4:25,26,32), Elisha (Luke 4:27), Jonah (Matt. 12:39- 41; Luke 11:29,30,32), and Zechariah (Luke 11:51).

What Does This Mean for Us? 1 Cor. 10:11: The OT is the record of a real God who acts in history, and who made a record of events for us.

"11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." 1 Corinthians 10:11, NAS95.

3. Jesus says the OT points to him.

John 5:39, 40: You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

See also Luke 4:16-21, Luke 24:25-27, and Matt. 5:17, 18.

"It is, in other words, that all the law and all the prophets point to Him and will be fulfilled in Him down to the smallest detail. Everything that is in the law and the prophets culminates in Christ, and He is the fulfillment of them. It is the most stupendous claim that He ever made." D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, on Matt. 5:17, 18

So then, how do we interpret the bible? Or let me say it another way. How do we understand the text, the printed page that we hold in our hands in light of who Christ is as the Living, Eternal Word of God.?

If we understand that Jesus is the Living Word and that means that He is the Word incarnate, then we can understand that the first way to understand Scripture is to understand Christ because that is the priority of Scripture from Genesis to The Revelation. If we do this we can say that the text we read was lived by Him. So, what we read about Him all through Scripture as God, as Jesus, and as The Holy Spirit, reveals to us His completeness as a person with all of His attributes and as we understand that and how He has acted before He was incarnate and how He lived as the God/man then we can more easily understand the things He says with His words because His life and His words are indicative of who He is and the imperatives- the commands He gives us - once we are in Him, are rooted or established first in Him and who He is then in us and who He has made us to be. We have the Living Torah, The Living Word, the Inscription of God. When we read Romans 12:1,2 this should give us a better understanding of why and how we understand the Word of God.

“1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:1, 2, NAS95.

For us the will of God in essence is growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord.

Romans 12:1-2 can be seen as some may say a way, some the means of doing this.

In the first verse, Paul speaks of a call to worship that all Christians will and must embrace to some degree or there is no work of the abiding Holy Spirit and a changed heart.

Paul speaks of the literal human body as a sacrifice unto God. Instead of taking a lamb to slaughter as a sacrifice for God, as Israel did before Jesus died on the Cross, Paul offers up visual imagery to allow the reader to better understand that Christians should

offer their bodies unto Christ. This use of sacrificial language by Paul is important to mention. Literal sacrificial worship at this time was very vivid in the minds of most ancient religions, including Judaism. Using metaphors to describe this sacrificial act of worship were vastly understood by the Roman culture that he originally wrote the book of Romans to (Moo 73). Therefore, this usage of language was not foreign to the people that he wrote this specific letter to. This mention of a so-called spiritual sacrifice is considered an act of worship. Paul displays this sacrificial speech in symbolic and cultic terms in these verses (Moo 750). Instead of a literal slaughter of the human body, Christians should offer the body to be used by God for his discernment and will. The word “urge” or beseech in this verse is a translation of the Greek word *parakaleo*. This word is designed to deliver the correct meaning and usage of the word, which has moral undertones within it. The word *parakaleo* was often used when signaling a shift in conversation in the Greek language (Moo 73). Therefore, when a slight subject change was to be noted in text, this is a common word to include in usage to signal this change in conversation. This verse is designed to ask for dedication from Christians unto God, without demanding this act. Because the act of giving the body to Christ is an act of worship, this act cannot be forced but one who is truly regenerated does not need to be forced because we possess the desire to do so, albeit the conflict of the remnant of the old man may at times cause a struggle within us. . This worship is, however, a worship that not only involves the mind, the heart meaning the total being of who we are in Christ.

The second verse of this passage speaks of God’s ability to transform an individual. The transformation is a life long enterprise as we are seeking the prize and the goal of Christ our Lord. Paul here is not referring, although some tend to believe so, to the church to stop conforming to the world, but is saying be continually being transformed into the likeness of Christ, into who you are. This is a direct reference to the theology of Romans chapter 5-8. Not being conformed to the world, the age that produces what we were. Here in Romans 12, because of the work that has been accomplished for us by Christ from justification to sanctification to the indwelling of the Spirit we are

now to be who we are according to the renewing process that keeps transforming us into the likeness of Christ. To be transformed is having the mind of Christ in a growing way, in a maturing way, in knowing the Living Word and His words and walking in the Spirit. Knowing the will of God does not first come from obeying some external standards of law like the Decalogue. We are bound to the Law of Christ which includes all that Jesus has taught us and that which has been taught us by His apostles, all that is Jesus' teaching preserved in the teaching of the NT writers (This was Jesus' own plan: John 16:12; John 14:25, 26; John 15:26, 27; 16:12-15). This includes how they interpreted the Old Testament Scriptures in light of Christ, which then gives us the proper understanding of how to understand the Old Testament Scriptures as they are fulfilled in Christ. In this way we know that all Scripture is given to us by Christ and therefore is inspired and we learn what is for teaching by way of illustration from the Old Testament and what can be applied in light of Christ in the New Covenant. For example, we do not follow the dietary laws of the Old Covenant but they teach us about the holiness of God's people and how they were meant to be set apart as different. We see in all the sacrifices, which we do not make, that they pointed to Christ and are all fulfilled in Him. This informs and instructs us but we don't do those things.

But the Law of Christ is Christ Himself and His law is written on our hearts. That Law is there because by His Spirit, His Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ we are internally driven to outwardly show who we are and a means of that is the desire to obey the imperatives-the commands- the written laws that reveal the standard of Christ for His New Covenant people. We are not shaped by the imperatives but by what Christ has made us to be and is making to be. I am not who I am in Christ because of what I do I do what I do because of who I am, even though in this life it will be imperfect.

We should not be saying, as Steve Fuchs has written that: 'Jesus is the guy we need to obey and imitate.'

We should be saying that 'Jesus is causing us to act RIGHTLY'. It's no longer about obedience to codes, but anticipation for being fully ruled.

It's about taking our eyes off of what we need to do in sanctification, fixing them instead on what we are/are becoming by his sanctifying work and fixing them on the glory of what is in store for us and longing for Him to speed up the procession being excited to be ruled (driven) entirely by Him in every act and thought.

We are still under a Law, but it's a law of a different nature. His nature is Spirit, not code. Codes tell, but Spirit causes. This Spirit who causes us to think and act righteously is not conforming us to the list of imperatives in the NT anymore than to the Decalogue alone or the whole of Law and Prophets

This Law of Christ is everlasting in the forward AND backward sense.

He existed from the beginning even while He was only revealed in the shadows of Law and Prophets. He was always the true substance of Righteousness.

The True Covenant didn't change so much as His substance became fully visible and exposed the shadows to be mere shadows (Col 2 uses the word 'mere').

None-the-less, among the shadows the faith of OC believers trusted that He would perfect them by ruling their very thoughts and desires with His own Spirit.

Our hope should not long for how much we'll obey codes.

Our hope should be fixed on the Righteousness He is fulfilling in us...ruling our thoughts and desires to be perfect as the Father is perfect.

As the living Word is eternal and as His people we are eternal then His words and the result of them will never pass away.