

Why We Can't Ignore the Bible Jesus Read

In his book *The Bible Jesus Read*, best-selling author Phillip Yancey observes that Yeshua did not have a New Testament in His Bible.

The New Testament had not yet been written. But neither did His Bible have an Old Testament. No one thought of God's eternal Word as an "Old Testament." In the days of Yeshua, the Old Testament was simply called the Scriptures.

Today, some Bibles are printed without the Old Testament. They begin at the Gospel of Matthew. Even when our Bibles do contain the Old Testament Scriptures, they are not always read. Those books are typically regarded as a long introduction to Matthew. Though Christians study it in Sunday school and enjoy reading select stories, few regard the Old Testament as relevant for how to live the Christian life.

How sad to think that today's followers of Yeshua today rarely read the Bible He read. We have surprisingly little interest in the Scriptures that shaped His life and teaching. We regard the Bible of Yeshua as irrelevant. But is it really?

Yeshua didn't think so. He said that those Scriptures testified about Him. He quoted them in order to correct and rebuke people. He interpreted them to give His disciples guidance. He quoted verses from Deuteronomy to defeat the devil in head-to-head spiritual warfare. His first recorded words after His baptism are quotations from the Torah of Moses and His last utterance from the cross was a quotation from the Psalms of David.

Yeshua spent the day of His resurrection discussing those old Scriptures with His disciples. He showed them the things written about Him in "in the Torah of Moses and the Prophets

and the Psalms.” There is certainly a lot of “Old Testament” in the New Testament.

The Bible itself refers to neither the Hebrew Scriptures (the ones we call “old”) nor the Apostolic Scriptures (the ones we call “new”) as old or new. These traditional appellations are actually counterproductive to seeing the Scriptures as God intended us to see them. If anything, we should be amazed at how the Hebrew Scriptures and the Apostolic Scriptures seamlessly connect into one continuous revelation.

Paul once wrote to his student Timothy, saying, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16–17). But Timothy did not have a New Testament; his Bible was the Hebrew Scriptures. Could Paul really have expected believers to be taught, rebuked, corrected, trained, and equipped for good works from the Old Testament?

Yeshua and Paul and all the ‘New Testament’ writers regarded the Hebrew Scriptures—particularly the five books of Moses—as the bedrock on which they built their teaching. To them, those books were the only Scriptures. Paul did not know that his epistles would one day be collected as Scripture. He did not imagine himself writing new books of the Bible. He did not even live long enough to see the written gospels produced. As far as Paul knew, the Hebrew Scriptures were the only Scriptures.

How odd for us to imagine that those Scriptures are not relevant to believers today. They were certainly relevant to Yeshua and Paul. They didn’t just use them for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness; they lived their lives by them. Near the end of his life Paul declared himself fully obedient to the Torah of Moses. Yeshua, of course, never broke a commandment of the Torah. As followers of Yeshua and students of Paul, perhaps we should

emulate their attitude toward the Old Testament.

In fact, we should probably consider using the term “Hebrew Scriptures” to describe the Old Testament. While they certainly are old, they contain the eternal, living words of God. Containing scrolls first committed to writing some 3,400 years ago, the Hebrew Scriptures are truly ancient; but they are by no means obsolete. They are “living oracles.” They reveal the person of Messiah. They contain the glory of the new covenant. They are the standard of righteousness for which we are to train. They equip us to perform the good deeds we are called to do. They comprise the Bible Jesus read.

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Excerpted from **Daniel Thomas Lancaster's** book Restoration, published by First Fruits of Zion, which you can order for free [here](#).