

# GENESIS TO JESUS

## Lesson 2: THE OLD & THE NEW



What is a critical component of the Bible for each of us, in that no other book can even begin to fulfill it? We do not passively observe Sacred Scripture. Instead, we share in its dynamic movement; partaking in the stream of Scriptural history, God wants it to unfold in our lives as we encounter His presence through the pages of the Bible. St. Paul tells us that “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tm 3:16-17). In the ancient Church, before the printing press facilitated spreading God’s Word, monks and priests laboriously ensured that every parish had a Bible; it had to be chained to the church pulpit to make the Word available to all Catholics. The Bible is valuable as it was inspired by God for the sole purpose of assuring our salvation. In it, God comes to our human level so He can raise us up to His heavenly level, as He shows us through Scriptures how to get there.

Can we envision purchasing a new car, and ignoring the operator’s manual that accompanies it? Consistently reading, listening to, sharing, studying, and memorizing God’s Word are some ways to keep God’s “operating manual” in our hearts. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD ; and you shall love the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your being, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Dt 6:4-7).

St. Paul also exhorts us to worship and obey the law: “So, then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter” (2 Thes 2:15). We need both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition to keep us from misinterpreting the Bible, as it is further stated in Ephesians 4:11-14: “And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.” There needs to be unity of faith in interpreting the Bible and building

the Church up in love.

The Pope and supporting bishops comprise the Magisterium, who faithfully preserve and proclaim the Word of God, composed of the Bible and Sacred Traditions of the Church, which hands down the message of Christ in the liturgy over the centuries until the present time.



*St. Peter* (detail) / Peter Paul Rubens / 1611

God has so designed the world that He prepared us for His great redemption by providing us with smaller signs of what was to come. For example, the Exodus prefigured Jesus’s saving us by His death and resurrection; and savior figures like Noah, Moses and David foreshadowed Jesus. “The people and events of the Old Testament signify in a unifying and prophetic way the Redeemer and the saving mysteries of the New Testament” (Study Guide).

“*Typology*” reveals to us that the people and events of the Old Testament follow a “gradual but dynamic movement toward fulfillment” of Jesus’ work of salvation in the New Testament (Study Guide). For example, the Old Testament Passover was celebrated with an unblemished lamb, just as sinless Jesus was sacrificed in the New Testament as our Paschal Lamb.

The Old and New Testaments proclaim the central theme of Old and New Covenants. Five covenants with Old Testament leaders culminated into the final New Testament Covenant of salvation by Jesus. We read the succeeding books of the Bible in light of each other, as we realize God’s New Covenant plan to unite the world and redeem it through Jesus Christ.

Through study of the divine covenants, we develop a deeper understanding of God’s fatherly relationship with us, and we share in the life of the Holy Spirit, for which Jesus died for us. “This is why God has revealed Himself—AND STILL SPEAKS TO US—in the Sacred Scriptures, so we might come to know, love, and imitate Him, as the covenant Father that keeps all of His sworn promises” to us eternally. How can we live by God’s “life manual” if we don’t make it a priority to ask the Holy Spirit to help us read, understand, and learn the Scriptures?

## AN APOLOGETIC EXPLANATION OF **TYOLOGY**

*What is typology?*

**Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. (Rom 5:14)**

**Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living soul”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (1 Cor 15:45)**



Many figures, themes, and events contained in the Old Testament point to someone or something that appears in the New Testament. These typologies, or “types,” illustrate how, in the words of St. Augustine, “The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is revealed in the New” (*Quæst. in Hept.*, 2, 73: *PL* 34, 623; cf. *DV* 16). This has been recognized since the beginning of the Church (cf. 1 Cor 10:6, 11; Heb 10:1; 1 Pt 3:21).

Sacred Scripture comprises two testaments, but it is all one act of Divine Revelation, one Word of God. the Old and New Testaments possess a unity in their sweeping narrative of salvation history and the richness of God’s deepening self-Revelation to man, a Revelation that culminates and is completed in Jesus Christ, who is the fulness of God’s Revelation. This unity between the two testaments is made most evident through *typology*, i.e., those persons and events in the Old Testament (types) that prefigure Christ and his salvific mission in the New Testament (antitypes).

In the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (cf. Lk 13:13-35), the disciples did not understand these typologies except in retrospect, when Christ explained how his life, Death, and Resurrection fulfilled the Old Covenant. It is yet one more way that “God may be everything to everyone” (1 Cor 15:28). As Christians, we read the Old Testament in light of the New Testament, with its Gospel accounts of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. Even so, the Old Testament has a value all its own: it is the Revelation of God ultimately fulfilled in Christ. (Cf. CCC 129)

*What do we mean when we say, for example, that Adam is a “type” of Christ?*

It is through typology that St. Paul sees Adam as a prefiguration of particular aspects of Christ, who is the first man of the New Creation. Even the snake raised up on a staff by Moses to heal the people is seen as a type of Christ (cf. Jn 3:14). There are various links to the Sacraments and other New Testament realities as well; for example, it is through typology that scholars and Church Fathers often find Old Testament references to water that prefigure [the Sacrament of] Baptism.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* addresses this question in paragraphs 128-130.