



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE CONFIDENCE SERIES

How the New Testament Uses the Old Testament

A beginner's guide to promises, patterns, quotations, and fulfillment

The short answer

The New Testament does not discard the Old Testament. It shows how God's earlier promises, patterns, people, and events reach their fullest meaning in Jesus and continue within God's one unfolding story.

“Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Luke 24:27 WEB

Simple · Clear · Scripture-grounded



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WELCOME

This guide is meant to send you back to the Bible

This Companion was not written to replace your Bible. It was written to help you fall in love with it. Every page is intended to send you back into God's Word with greater confidence, deeper understanding, and a clearer picture of Jesus Christ. If, after using this Companion, you spend more time reading your Bible than reading these pages—then it has accomplished its purpose.

Foundational truth

The Bible is not merely a book to be understood. It is God's self-revelation, given so that people may know Him through Jesus Christ.

What you will learn

01

Read the Old Testament passage first

Learn what the passage communicated in its own book and historical setting.

02

Notice the kind of connection

Ask whether the New Testament points to a promise, a repeated pattern, a theme, or a direct quotation.

03

Follow the connection to Jesus

Let the New Testament show how Jesus fulfills, completes, or brings greater clarity to what came before.

The goal

Not to discover secret codes, but to read both Testaments carefully and recognize the unity of God's Word.



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BEGIN HERE

One Bible. One unfolding story.

The Bible contains many books written by many human authors across many centuries. Yet those books tell one unified story because God is the ultimate Author of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21).

The Old Testament prepares the way. The New Testament announces that Jesus has come, explains His saving work, and shows how God's earlier words fit within the larger story.

Think of it like a growing picture

A seed and the mature plant are not competing objects. The plant reveals what the seed was always becoming. In a similar way, later Scripture often gives fuller clarity to earlier Scripture without erasing its original meaning.

Three truths to hold together

- An Old Testament passage had meaning for its first hearers.
- That passage also belongs to the Bible's larger, God-directed story.
- The New Testament has authority to show how that story reaches its goal in Jesus.

A helpful habit

Whenever the New Testament quotes the Old Testament, pause and read the Old Testament paragraph—or the entire chapter—before drawing a conclusion.



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FOUR HELPFUL CATEGORIES

Not every connection works in the same way

These labels are tools, not rigid boxes. A passage may involve more than one kind of connection.

01

Promise and fulfillment

God gives a promise that later reaches its intended fulfillment. Example: the promised Davidic King and Jesus (2 Samuel 7:12–16; Luke 1:31–33).

02

Pattern and fulfillment

God establishes a real person, event, or institution that becomes a pattern fulfilled more fully in Jesus. Example: Passover and Christ (Exodus 12; 1 Corinthians 5:7).

03

Quotation and explanation

A New Testament writer quotes an Old Testament text and explains its continuing significance. Example: Amos 9 in Acts 15:15–18.

04

Echo and shared theme

New Testament wording recalls an earlier passage or theme without always introducing a formal quotation. Example: new-creation imagery throughout Revelation 21–22 recalls Genesis 1–3 and Isaiah 65–66.

Keep this guardrail

A resemblance alone does not prove a biblical connection. Look for Scripture's wording, quotation, storyline, or a clearly established pattern.



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THE MOST IMPORTANT FIRST STEP

Begin with the Old Testament passage

Before asking how the New Testament uses a verse, first ask what that verse was doing in its original setting. This protects us from making the Bible say whatever we want.

01

Read around it

Read the paragraph, chapter, and—when possible—the larger section of the book.

02

Ask what was happening

Who was speaking? To whom? What problem, promise, judgment, or hope was being addressed?

03

Notice the kind of writing

Narrative, law, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, and apocalyptic imagery communicate in different ways.

04

Summarize before connecting

Write one sentence describing what the passage meant within its Old Testament book.

05

Then read the New Testament use

Notice what the writer quotes, what surrounds the quotation, and what point the writer is making.

Beginner memory anchor

Original context first. New Testament context second. Then consider the connection between them.



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WORKED EXAMPLE 1

“Out of Egypt I called my son”

Read the Old Testament setting

Hosea 11:1 looks backward: God loved Israel, called Israel His son, and brought His people out of Egypt. In Hosea's own chapter, this is not introduced as a future prediction. It remembers the exodus and then describes Israel's unfaithfulness.

Read the New Testament setting

Matthew 2:13–15 describes Joseph taking Jesus to Egypt and later returning. Matthew says this fulfills Hosea 11:1.

See the pattern

Israel and Jesus

Israel, God's son by covenant, came out of Egypt but repeatedly failed to obey. Jesus, God's unique Son, also comes out of Egypt and faithfully walks the path Israel failed to walk. Matthew presents Jesus as reliving and completing Israel's story.

- This does not erase Hosea's historical meaning.
- Matthew recognizes a God-directed pattern within the biblical story.
- Jesus succeeds where Israel—and all humanity—failed (Matthew 3:15–4:11).

Why this matters

Fulfillment can mean more than a prediction coming true. It can also mean that a pattern reaches its fullest, God-intended expression in Jesus.



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WORKED EXAMPLE 2

“The virgin will conceive”

Read the Old Testament setting

Isaiah 7 occurs during a political crisis. King Ahaz fears enemy kings, and God offers a sign connected to the survival of David’s royal house (Isaiah 7:1–17). The passage must first be read within that eighth-century BC setting.

Read the New Testament setting

Matthew 1:18–23 describes Jesus’ conception by the Holy Spirit and quotes Isaiah 7:14. Matthew identifies Jesus as Immanuel—“God with us”—in the fullest sense.

Near setting and greater fulfillment

Isaiah’s words addressed Ahaz’s immediate crisis while also standing within God’s larger promise to preserve David’s line. Matthew, guided by the Holy Spirit, shows that the sign’s fullest significance is realized in the miraculous birth of Jesus.

Read carefully

- Do not ignore Isaiah 7–8 when reading Matthew 1.
- Do not reduce Matthew’s use to a vague similarity.
- Hold the historical setting and the Christ-centered fulfillment together.

Why this matters

God’s promises unfold across history. Later revelation may show a depth and completion that the first hearers could not yet see fully.



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WORKED EXAMPLES 3 AND 4

Restoration and the suffering King

Amos 9 and Acts 15

Amos closes with hope after judgment: God will raise David's fallen shelter and restore His people (Amos 9:11–15). In Acts 15:13–18, James quotes Amos while explaining why Gentiles do not need to become Jewish in order to be saved.

The connection

Through Jesus, the Son of David, God is restoring David's rule and gathering people from the nations. James does not detach Amos from Israel; he shows that Gentile inclusion belongs within God's promised restoration plan.

Psalms 22 and the crucifixion

Psalms 22 is a prayer of a righteous sufferer who feels forsaken yet ultimately praises God. Jesus quotes its opening words from the cross (Matthew 27:46), and the Gospel accounts echo details such as mocking and divided garments (Psalm 22:7–8, 18; Matthew 27:35, 39–43).

The connection

The Gospel writers present Jesus' suffering through the language and pattern of Psalm 22. The psalm's movement from suffering to vindication helps readers understand the cross within God's earlier revelation.

Why these matter

The New Testament often invites us to read more than one isolated verse. The surrounding Old Testament passage supplies meaning, language, and hope.



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A REPEATABLE PROCESS

Seven questions to ask every time

01	Where is the Old Testament passage? Find the exact reference and read beyond the quoted line.
02	What did it mean there? Summarize the original situation, message, and literary form.
03	Where is it used in the New Testament? Read the New Testament paragraph and identify the writer's main point.
04	What wording is repeated? Notice exact quotations, key phrases, images, people, events, or institutions.
05	What kind of connection is this? Promise, pattern, quotation and explanation, echo, or a combination?
06	How does it relate to Jesus? Does Jesus fulfill a promise, complete a pattern, reveal God more fully, or accomplish salvation?
07	What response fits both contexts? Let faithful interpretation lead to worship, trust, repentance, obedience, or hope.



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COMMON QUESTIONS

What if the connection surprises me?

Did the New Testament writers take verses out of context?

They sometimes use Scripture in ways unfamiliar to modern readers, but they were not careless. They read individual passages within the whole story of God's covenant promises and believed those promises reached their goal in Jesus (Luke 24:44–47; Romans 15:4).

Can I make the same kinds of connections they made?

We should follow the connections Scripture establishes and imitate the apostles' Christ-centered reading. We should not claim new inspired meanings or invent patterns based only on imagination.

Does every Old Testament verse point directly to Jesus?

Not every verse is a prediction or coded reference. Yet every passage belongs to the biblical story that reveals humanity's need, God's character, His covenant purposes, and the salvation accomplished through Jesus.

What if faithful Christians explain a passage differently?

Some connections involve genuine interpretive questions. Read humbly, compare Scripture with Scripture, consult trusted teachers, and distinguish central gospel truths from conclusions faithful Christians hold with different levels of confidence.

What about “He will be called a Nazarene” in Matthew 2:23?

No single known Old Testament verse contains those exact words. Matthew says this was spoken through “the prophets” in the plural, which may signal a summary of a broader prophetic theme rather than a direct quotation. Suggested connections include the Messiah's despised status (Isaiah 53:3; compare John 1:46) and possible wordplay involving netser, the Hebrew word for “branch” in Isaiah 11:1. Interpreters differ, so the faithful response is to distinguish the biblical text from reasonable proposals and avoid claiming more certainty than Scripture gives.

A safe response

Slow down, read more context, and remain willing to say, “I do not understand this yet.” Careful questions are part of faithful study.



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WANT TO DIG DEEPER?

A few important ideas for growing readers

This section is optional

The beginner guide is complete without this page. Continue when you are ready for intermediate and advanced ideas, and return later if these terms feel overwhelming.

The apostles read from the Greek Old Testament

Many New Testament quotations reflect the Septuagint, an ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament. That is one reason a quotation may not match the wording of your English Old Testament exactly. The difference does not automatically signal an error.

Typology is not free-form allegory

Biblical typology recognizes God-established patterns that develop through Scripture and reach fulfillment in Christ. Free-form allegory assigns hidden meanings to details without clear textual support. The first is disciplined by Scripture; the second can become speculation.

Divine authorship allows an unfolding fullness

Human authors communicated real meaning in their own settings. Because God also authored Scripture, those texts participate in a larger story whose fullness may become clearer through later revelation. Christians explain this relationship in different ways, but later meaning should grow from—not contradict—the earlier text.

Already and not yet

Some promises begin to be fulfilled through Jesus' first coming but await completion when He returns. For example, Jesus has inaugurated God's kingdom, yet believers still pray for that kingdom to come in its fullness (Matthew 6:10; 12:28; Revelation 11:15).

Deeper-study guardrail

Technical terms should help us read Scripture more carefully, never make us dependent on a system or teacher. Keep opening both Testaments and checking every claim in context.



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PRACTICE PAGE

Trace one connection for yourself

New Testament passage

Reference: _____

What point is the New Testament writer making? _____

Old Testament passage

Reference: _____

What was happening in its original setting? _____

The connection

☐ Promise and fulfillment ☐ Pattern ☐ Quotation and explanation ☐ Echo/theme

What wording or storyline connects the passages? _____

Jesus and faithful response

How does this deepen my understanding of Jesus or God's saving work? _____

How should I respond? _____

One-sentence memory anchor

Read the Old Testament in context, read the New Testament in context, and let Scripture itself show how the whole story leads to Jesus.

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THE MOST IMPORTANT PLACE TO BEGIN

Would you like to begin with Jesus?

The Bible's message is good news. God created us to know Him, but every one of us has sinned and fallen short of His glory (Romans 3:23). Sin separates us from God, and we cannot repair that relationship through good works, religion, or effort.

God did for us what we could not do for ourselves. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived without sin, died for our sins, and rose from the dead. Through Him, God offers forgiveness, reconciliation, and eternal life as a gift of grace (Romans 5:6–8; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4; Ephesians 2:8–9).

How do we respond?

01

Turn toward God

Repentance means turning from sin and self-rule toward God. It is not becoming perfect before you come to Him (Acts 3:19).

02

Believe in Jesus

Trust that Jesus is Lord and that His death and resurrection are sufficient to save you (John 3:16; Romans 10:9–10).

03

Call on Him

Speak to God honestly. Confess your need, place your trust in Jesus, and ask Him to forgive you and lead your life. "Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13 WEB).

A prayer can express your faith

Jesus, I know that I have sinned and cannot save myself. I believe You died for my sins and rose again. I turn to You, ask for Your forgiveness, and trust You as my Savior and Lord. Help me follow You and grow in Your Word. Amen.

A prayer is not a magic formula—the words themselves do not save us. Jesus saves everyone who truly comes to Him in faith. If you have trusted Christ, begin reading His Word, tell another faithful Christian, connect with a Bible-believing local church, and learn about baptism and discipleship (Matthew 28:18–20; Acts 2:38–42).