

B. Themes of the Old Testament

Generally it must be observed that the great themes of the Bible are found in the Old and New Testament together and no subject is fully treated that does not take into account both parts of the Bible. Specific themes that are limited to one portion or the other are far fewer in number. I will mention something of both.

1. Great themes bracketing both Testaments:

a. Redemption: In some ways it includes every other theme as the Bible records the fall of man and the means appointed by God to bring about redemption. The key words are blood and power with each term having a covenantal connotation in each testament.

b. Providence: A continuing theme of God's intervention in behalf of mankind in the ordering of the world. The Providence that made Joseph a success in prison is the same providence that released Peter from his imprisonment.

c. Justice: The absolute righteousness of God in His dealings and presentments. This is not totally exclusive from "b" above but has some ramifications of its own.

d. Love: True in both Testaments in a powerful way and, as noticed earlier, not exclusive from the others. It is, in fact, the theme that makes the others fit together.

e. Restoration: The continuing ideal that God will bring an end to the program of sin and restore the world and fallen man to the place God intended from the start.

2. Some "unique" Old Testament themes:

a. The blessings of the land...there is a great concentration on God's hand on Israel in a land that is theirs...a property given them in consequence of His promise to their fathers. With this is the worked in theme of blessing and cursing after the Deuteronomic covenants.

b. The structured society...the formal expression of life in a theocratic state. It has some parallels in the New Testament but they are less formal. You can see the difference if you contrast priesthood, prophetship, etc., in the testaments.

And with these are many sub-themes...a good many of which we will comment on as the quarter grows. It must be remembered that the facts of the Old Testament become our chief "hunting ground" while the interpretation of those facts becomes an area of vital interest.

C. Sources for the Old Testament

Dr. Vannoy treats this material with considerable thoroughness so I will just add a word or two at this point. It seems to me the primary sources are these: