*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

August 26 - 31

*The New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament*

**Monday, August 26 Matthew 5:17-19**

*“To fulfill the purpose of the Law and the Prophets”*

 While affirming the continuing relevance and authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, Jesus introduces a new level of interpretation. Jesus himself is the fulfillment of the revelation or self-disclosure of God. He says that he did not come to destroy the Law or the Prophets but to fulfill them; that is, to make their meaning full, or complete. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5 through 7) we discover what it means for Jesus to “fill full” the meaning of the Old Testament.

 While the whole Bible is the Word of God written, our task still remains to understand and interpret it in a manner consistent with its own claims. To do so means that we recognize the nature of God’s unfolding revelation and see its fulfillment in Christ. All that the Old Testament says about God is revealed more clearly in Christ. The Bible is God’s Word written and Jesus Christ is God’s Word personified, actualized, for “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

*We praise you, Jesus, for teaching us the complete meaning of God’s Law. Amen.*

**Tuesday, August 27 Matthew 15:1-9**

*“Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you”*

 As the scribes and Pharisees accused the disciples of transgressing “the traditions of the elders,” Jesus in turn accused them of transgressing the commandments of God! The Pharisees’ criticism had to do with ritual uncleanness, but Jesus’ criticism had to do with moral uncleanness. The commandments of God required honoring one’s father and mother, meaning to look out for their well-being, and helping them financially. But the Pharisees had developed a program to amass economic wealth at the temple which permitted a churlish son to evade his duty to his parents by saying that instead of using a particular sum of money to support his parent, the money would instead be dedicated to the temple.

 Jesus calls them “hypocrites” and quotes Isaiah’s words of God’s judgment on persons guilty of lip worship, or words without deeds, and/or words which actually excuse the deed. Religion, to perpetuate itself, has often developed “commandments of men” and presented them as though they were actually the Word of God.

*May my heart be close to you, Lord, that my worship may be true. Amen.*

**Wednesday, August 28 Luke 24:13-48**

*“Jesus explained the things concerning himself”*

 We know that the Jewish faith pondered how to put the Old Testament revelation together when it came to how God would finally deliver his people and bring his rule back to earth. There were passages of hope that the end would produce a great prophet, a great king, a great figure who received authority from God, a servant figure who would proclaim God’s hope and yet suffer, and a salvation where God would be present in the life of the community with an intimacy that meant the law written on the heart. The Jews struggled to determine how many end-time figures there might be and what their relationship to each other would be.

 Into this world Jesus stepped, claiming that the Old Testament promises were unified in him. He was the prophet like Moses, the Son of David, the Suffering Servant, the Messiah, and the Son of Man all wrapped together in one person. His career involved both suffering and triumph, with the bridge between the two being his resurrection. These were the things Jesus talked about as he walked the road to Emmaus with two of his followers.

*The more I know your Word, Lord, the more I know you. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

August 26 - 31

*The New Testament’s Use of the Old Testament*

**Thursday, August 29 Acts 28:23-31**

*“He spoke to them using the Law of Moses and the prophets”*

 All day long, Paul explained and testified to the true meaning of the kingdom of God and the fulfillment of the prophets and Moses in Jesus as Messiah. Luke uses the verb *exetitheto,* “expanded,” to indicate the exhaustive detail and care Paul used in explaining the Scripture. He began with the kingdom of God, that is, God’s rule and reign over all history. Then he told them about Christ, the Messiah, king of that kingdom. Verse 24 tells us of the mixed response. Some were persuaded, but others did not believe.

 Before they departed, Paul, grieved by their disbelief, repeated a passage from Isaiah 6:9-10, quoting God’s words to the prophet about Israel. The implication was that Paul believed that the passage described his listeners. This same passage had also been used by Jesus in response to the disbelief of the Jews (John 12:40). Paul’s point was to show the leaders that they had come to the dreadful stage of religious dullness. They heard words but did not understand; they saw truth but would not respond.

*May my study of your Word, Lord, expand my understanding. Amen.*

**Friday, August 30 2 Timothy 3:14-17**

*“All Scripture is inspired by God”*

 To Paul and to Timothy, the Scriptures were the writings contained in the Old Testament, very likely the same collection of thirty-nine books in our Bible today. As to the nature of the Scriptures, Paul states that they are all inspired by God. The word that Paul uses here is a compounding of *theos* (“God”) and *pneustos* (“breath” or “spirit”). Scriptures are here said to be breathed by God. Paul does not go beyond this simple but profound statement. How God did this, we don’t know.

 The greater concern of Paul is to state what the Scriptures are able to do. They are able to bring us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Without them, we would have little significant – and certainly no saving – knowledge of Jesus. All our teaching must be grounded in them, as they are the standard by which our ideas must be measured. Further, they confront us when we sin, pointing out that which is wrong, and they correct us so that as we go forward we may do so without continuing in our sin. Lastly, they instruct us in our relationship with God and with others.

*Your Word, Lord, prepares and equips me to do your good work. Amen.*

**Saturday, August 31 2 Peter 1:12-21**

*“The prophets spoke from God”*

 Peter establishes the trustworthiness of the prophecies of the Word of God in contrast to the “cunningly devised fables” being propagated by the false teachers whom he will expose and refute in the second chapter of this letter. He urges paying attention to the words of the prophets for they help Christ’s light to shine in our hearts. In order for that to happen, we need God to reveal truth to us through the prophets in the same way in which he revealed truth to them originally, that is, through the Holy Spirit.

 True prophecy comes not from people, but from God. The Holy Spirit is the source and sender of the communication; the writers of Scripture were merely the human vehicles through whom God chose to communicate truth. In the same way, it is important that no prophecy or Scripture be of merely personal interpretation. Prophecies come from God and in order to properly interpret and understand them, we need the same Holy Spirit who revealed the prophecies originally to reveal their truth to us.

*As I read your Word, Holy Spirit, I pray that you reveal its truth to me. Amen.*