

THROUGH THE BOOK QUARTERLY

Winter 2026

The Old Testament
and the Gospels

Rehitching our faith to the
Old Testament

From Abraham to the Great
Commission

Love God, Love Others:
Recovering the Meaning of
the Greatest Commandment

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Read Through
The Book

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Reading to know and make Him known

ReadttBook.org 1Q 2026 Reading Plan

January

1/1	Mt 1
1/2	Mt 2
1/3	-
1/4	-
1/5	Mt 3
1/6	Mt 4
1/7	Mt 5
1/8	Mt 6
1/9	Mt 7
1/10	-
1/11	-
1/12	Mt 8
1/13	Mt 9
1/14	Mt 10
1/15	Mt 11
1/16	Mt 12
1/17	-
1/18	-
1/19	Mt 13
1/20	Mt 14
1/21	Mt 15
1/22	Mt 16
1/23	Mt 17
1/24	-
1/25	-
1/26	Mt 18
1/27	Mt 19
1/28	Mt 20
1/29	Mt 21
1/30	Mt 22
1/31	-

February

2/1	-
2/2	Mt 23
2/3	Mt 24
2/4	Mt 25
2/5	Mt 26
2/6	Mt 27
2/7	-
2/8	-
2/9	Mt 28
2/10	Mk 1
2/11	Mk 2
2/12	Mk 3
2/13	Mk 4
2/14	-
2/15	-
2/16	Mk 5
2/17	Mk 6
2/18	Mk 7
2/19	Mk 8
2/20	Mk 9
2/21	-
2/22	-
2/23	Mk 10
2/24	Mk 11
2/25	Mk 12
2/26	Mk 13
2/27	Mk 14
2/28	-

March

3/1	-
3/2	Mk 15
3/3	Mk 16
3/4	Lk 1
3/5	Lk 2
3/6	Lk 3
3/7	-
3/8	-
3/9	Lk 4
3/10	Lk 5
3/11	Lk 6
3/12	Lk 7
3/13	Lk 8
3/14	-
3/15	-
3/16	Lk 9
3/17	Lk 10
3/18	Lk 11
3/19	Lk 12
3/20	Lk 13
3/21	-
3/22	-
3/23	Lk 14
3/24	Lk 15
3/25	Lk 16
3/26	Lk 17
3/27	Lk 18
3/28	-
3/29	-
3/30	Lk 19
3/31	Lk 20

1Ch/Day + 5 Days/Week + 52 Weeks = Whole NT in a Year

Bible Study Tips

The Gospels

- Read an overview/ introduction before reading each book
- Always remember the overall purpose of the Gospel writer
- Highlight/Underline as follows to keep track (color code):
 - **Setting changes**
 - New location
 - New audience
 - Etc.
 - **Teachings of Christ**
 - Draw a **◇** beside parables
 - **Miracles of Christ**
- Keep track of the setting/context as you read each day (you may have to look back a few days to remember, this is where the color coding helps).
- Remember: ALWAYS remember the overall purpose of the Gospel writer
 - For example, Matthew's purpose is to show Christ is the long promised Messiah. Every word and sentence supports this overall purpose.

Rehitching the Gospels to the Old Testament

When we survey the state of the church today, we find a solemn reality: many believers lack a clear understanding of our primary calling as disciples of Christ—to make disciples (Matt. 28:18–20). Look more closely and the issue becomes even more concerning. The church is producing very few disciple-makers—men and women bold enough to share the gospel, walk with those who repent and believe, and teach them to obey everything Christ commanded.

Why is this happening? Our lack of boldness has two primary root causes:

1. A lack of understanding of our God-given purpose.
2. A sense of inadequacy or unpreparedness when it comes to sharing our faith and helping others grow toward spiritual maturity.

Yet both of these deficiencies can be strengthened—if not entirely mended—through intentional discipleship: mature believers investing in younger believers, teaching the commands of Christ, grounding them in the

"Jesus taught in a distinctly Jewish context, and His words were inseparably rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures."

Scriptures, and equipping them to live out their purpose.

Volumes of books have been written on discipleship, many of them helpful works by faithful brothers in Christ. Most focus on the methods of Jesus, which is certainly where we should begin. After all, it is His command we are obeying, and His authority that sends us. But I wonder if in our focus on methods we often overlook a simple but crucial truth: Jesus taught in a distinctly Jewish context, and His words were inseparably rooted in the Old Testament Scriptures.

He did not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill them. Ignoring this reality is not a small mistake—it is a vital one. The Old Testament formed the theological, cultural, and linguistic foundation

of Jesus' teaching. His listeners—first-century Jews—were acquainted with the OT Scriptures, and Jesus spoke in a way that assumed this understanding.

In other words:

We cannot fully comprehend the teachings of Christ without understanding the Old Testament context from which He spoke.

After all, it was Christ—together with the Father and the Spirit—who gave us the Old Testament Scriptures in the first place.

In recent years, one well-known evangelical pastor suggested that in order to avoid offending the culture, we should “unhitch” the gospel from the Old Testament. My argument would be the exact opposite: If we desire to train our people to be effective disciple-makers, we must rehitch the words of Christ to the Old Testament context He assumed.

This is not a call to become Judaizers or to require adherence to ceremonial laws that Christ fulfilled through His sacrifice. Rather, it is a call to become biblically informed, recognizing that the Old Testament provides the theological soil from which the teachings of Jesus grow.

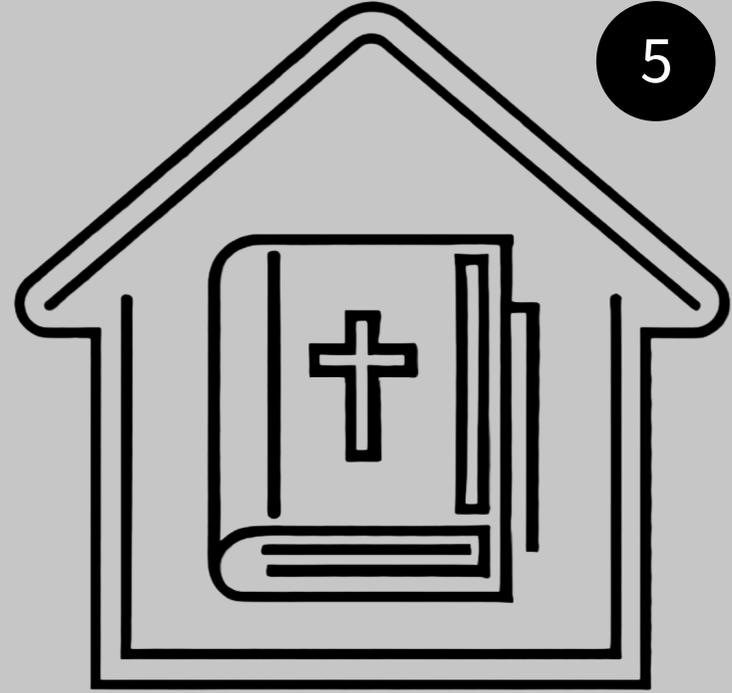
In the following article, we will take a closer look at one of the foundational

teachings of Christ: the Greatest Commandment. We will examine the Old Testament passages He quoted, explore their original context, and consider the weight those words carried for His original audience—and for us today.

In doing so, we will see that rehitching the words of Christ to their Old Testament roots enriches, clarifies, and strengthens our understanding of His commands.

"We cannot fully comprehend the teachings of Christ without understanding the Old Testament context from which He spoke."

Love God, Love Others: Recovering the Meaning of the Greatest Commandment



“Love God, Love Others.” It makes for a catchy mission statement. It is a simple summary of Christ’s words concerning the greatest commandment in Matthew 22.

We must admit, however, that it can sound a little vague. It leaves many questions unanswered. It allows room for a wide range of interpretations. The statement itself does not explain what love is, how we are to love, or who the “others” are that we are called to love.

Even when we turn to the passage itself, Christ’s words—taken at face value—may seem to offer limited guidance. So did Christ, or Matthew who recorded this exchange, leave us with a vague answer open to interpretation? Or is there far more here than first meets the eye?

The Greatest Commandment: The Passage

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a

lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

—Matthew 22:34–40

I submit that there is much more here than meets the eye. Christ did not give us a vague platitude; He gave us the living Word of God. If we are to truly understand His answer—or Matthew’s faithful recording of it—we must examine the context of this passage.

When we do, we find that Christ’s words carry far more objective instruction than a surface-level reading suggests. These insights are

not hidden; they are plainly visible to those who are willing to look. And that is what I invite you to do as we walk together through this passage.

The Context of the Gospel According to Matthew

The first step in studying any passage is to consider the context of the book in which it appears. This is why book overviews are so valuable when beginning a new book of Scripture.

Matthew's primary purpose is clear: to present Jesus Christ as the long-promised Messiah—the One who fulfills God's covenant with Abraham and David to bless the nations through their offspring (singular). Every word and argument in Matthew aligns with this purpose.

Some key background details help frame our reading:

- Written by Matthew, a former tax collector
- One of the Twelve, making him an eyewitness
- Written primarily to a Jewish audience (or those well-versed in the Old Testament)
- Likely written in the late 50s to early 60s AD

Context of Matthew 22: Rising Tension

Leading up to Matthew 22, we see mounting tension between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders:

- Jesus enters Jerusalem and receives a king's welcome (Mt 21:1–11)
- He cleanses the temple and drives out the money changers (Mt 21:12–17)
- His authority is challenged by the religious leaders (Mt 21:23–27)
- He tells a series of parables that condemn those leaders (Mt 21:28–22:14)
- The leaders seek a way to arrest Him but fear the crowds (Mt 21:46)



"If we are to truly understand His answer—or Matthew's faithful recording of it—we must examine the context of this passage."

Matthew tells us plainly that they withdrew and devised a scheme to “entangle” Jesus in His words (Mt 22:15). This scheme results in a series of questions designed to discredit Him publicly or produce grounds for arrest.

A Crucial Observation

Matthew—a Jewish man—is writing to a Jewish audience. Jesus is questioned by a Pharisee lawyer (an expert in the Law) in Jerusalem, before a Jewish crowd. All involved share a deep familiarity with the Old Testament.

When Jesus answers, He quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18b. Everyone present would immediately recognize not only these verses, but their broader contexts. If we are to understand Christ’s words as they did, we must also understand those contexts.

Love God: Deuteronomy 6

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

This verse was not randomly selected. Deuteronomy 6 is known as the Shema, the central confession of Judaism, recited daily and forming the heart of Jewish worship.

When we read Deuteronomy 6 in full, we see that God does more than command His people to love Him—He explains how to love Him:

- 6–7: Treasure and teach His Word
- 7–9: Center His Word in daily life and the home
- 10–12: Remember God’s salvation and deliverance
- 13: Fear and trust the Lord
- 14–15: Remain faithful; avoid spiritual adultery
- 16–19: Obey His commands
- 20–23: Testify to God’s saving work to future generations
- 24–25: Teach obedience as righteousness

God never commanded love without instruction. Love for God begins with treasuring His Word, obeying His commands, teaching His truth, and remembering His saving grace. This is the context Jesus invokes, and it must inform our understanding as well.

If we love God, we will treasure His Word, obey Him, teach our children and grandchildren, and testify to the deliverance from sin He has graciously provided.

"If we are to understand Christ’s words as they did, we must also understand those contexts."

Love Others: Leviticus 19:18b

The lawyer asked for one commandment, yet Jesus gave two:

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Leviticus 19:18b serves as a summary of a broader section (Lev 19:9–18) addressing how God’s people are to treat others. These commands include care for:

- The poor
- The sojourner
- Neighbors
- Workers
- Both the rich and the vulnerable

While not exhaustive, the message is unmistakable: treat everyone with love. Treat others as you would want to be treated.



Jesus’ Repeated Emphasis in Matthew

This is the third time Jesus quotes Leviticus 19:18 in Matthew’s Gospel. The first two appear in the Sermon on the Mount:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...” (Mt 5:43–44)

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Mt 7:12)

In Matthew 5, Jesus corrects the religious leaders’ sinful addition—“and hate your enemy.” That phrase appears nowhere in Leviticus 19 and directly contradicts its message. Jesus’ conclusion is striking: those who truly love this way show themselves to be children of the Father.

In Matthew 7 and again in Matthew 22, Jesus ties loving others to the fulfillment of “the Law and the Prophets.”

Love God = Love Others

The context is impossible to ignore. Jesus is questioned by a Pharisee—part of the very group that distorted

God's command to love others. That man would have confidently claimed to love God, yet Jesus repeatedly teaches that genuine love for God transforms a person to love others. "On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

The religious leaders claim to love God, but the way they treat others does not show their love to be true. They have distorted His Word to justify themselves. Jesus strips away their self-justification and exposes them. They are not truly followers of the God they claim to love because they do not love and treasure His Word and have not been transformed by it.

Love God and Love others. No one is saved by keeping these commandments, but those who have experienced God's grace will desire to live them out. We do so by treasuring God's Word, obeying it, teaching it in our homes, testifying to God's saving work, and loving others—not just those who are easy to love, but everyone.

We only arrive at this understanding through rehashing the words of Christ in the New Testament to the context of the Old Testament. To serve the connection is to disconnect our understanding of Christ's Words from His intended meaning.

“***On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.***”



Rehitching the Gospel to the God of Judgement

In our recent articles, we've been talking about the need to rehitch the Gospels to the Old Testament. One reason some have sought to distance Christianity from the Old Testament is the belief that its passages about God's wrath and judgment are a major obstacle for modern readers. And in one sense, that concern isn't misplaced—God's wrath often causes skeptics to question His goodness.

But those questions are not answered by avoiding the parts of Scripture that make us uncomfortable. When we do that, we do not present the God of the Bible. Instead, we present a diminished and distorted version of Him. The one true God has revealed Himself fully in Scripture, and we are not free to edit His character for the sake of cultural acceptance.

This approach also fails when we look

closely at the words of Christ. Jesus did not shy away from warnings of judgment. In Matthew 7:13–14, He speaks of two gates: one wide and easy, the other narrow and difficult. The wide gate, He warns, leads to destruction. The word used here—ἀπώλεια (apōleia)—refers to destruction that consists of eternal misery in hell.

Jesus immediately follows this warning with another: trees that do not bear good fruit are cut down and thrown into the fire. Later, in Matthew 11, He pronounces woes on unrepentant cities, declaring that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for Sodom—utterly destroyed when fire and sulfur rained

"The one true God has revealed Himself fully in Scripture, and we are not free to edit His character for the sake of cultural acceptance."



down from heaven (Genesis 19)—than for those who reject Him.

In Matthew 13, while explaining the Parable of the Weeds, Jesus describes people being thrown into a fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. These are not isolated statements. Jesus refers to “weeping and gnashing of teeth” six times in Matthew (8:12; 12:42; 13:50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30), and He speaks of the fire of hell ten times throughout the Gospel (3:10; 3:12; 5:22; 7:19; 13:40, 42, 50; 18:8; 18:9; 25:41).

There is no question that Jesus brings the message of God’s love into flesh. But we cannot separate that love from His equally clear warnings about God’s wrath against unrepentant sinners. To do so is not faithfulness—it is avoidance.

Unhitching the Gospels from the Old Testament in an attempt to shield skeptics from the full nature of God does not succeed. The New Testament reveals the same holy God as the Old. While we no longer see cities

'we cannot separate that love from His equally clear warnings about God’s wrath against unrepentant sinners. To do so is not faithfulness—it is avoidance.'

immediately destroyed because of their sin, we are repeatedly warned of a coming judgment that is certain, final, and dreadful for the wicked.

More importantly, we cannot introduce people to only the aspects of God that their sinful nature finds appealing. That is not how salvation works. The Gospel call is to repent and believe. If we obscure God’s holiness and justice, what are sinners repenting of—and who is it they are truly trusting?

Conclusion

Rehitching the Gospels to the Old Testament is not about making Christianity harsher; it is about making it honest. The same God who judges sin also provides salvation from it. Only when we present Him as He truly is—holy, just, loving, and merciful—can the Gospel be rightly understood and genuinely believed.



From Abraham to the Great Commission

Matthew's Gospel opens by tracing a deliberate line from Abraham, through King David, to Jesus Christ. It closes with the risen Christ commissioning His followers to go and make disciples of all nations. This is not a literary coincidence—it is a theological statement. From beginning to end, Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfillment of God's ancient promise to bless the nations through Abraham's offspring.

God promised Abraham that “in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 22:18). Paul later makes clear that this offspring is singular—Christ Himself (Galatians 3:16). Matthew shows us that Jesus, the Son of David and Son of Abraham, is the long-awaited fulfillment of that promise. Having been given all authority in heaven and on earth, Christ now commissions His church to carry this blessing to the nations, ensuring that people from every tribe and tongue will worship God for all eternity.

The Great Commission, then, is not a new plan devised after Israel somehow failed. It is the intended climax of God's redemptive purpose. From the beginning, God's plan was global in scope, and Israel's role was never an end in itself. Through Israel came the Messiah—the true and final blessing the world desperately needed.

Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, stands at the center of this plan. Through His life, death, and resurrection, God's promise to bless the nations has been decisively fulfilled. And now, by His authority, Jesus commissions the church to proclaim this good news to the ends of the earth.

From Abraham to the Great Commission (from Genesis to Revelation), Scripture tells a single, unified story of God's faithfulness. What God promised long ago, He has fulfilled in Christ. And what Christ has accomplished, He now calls His church to proclaim. The mission of the church is not an afterthought—it is the continuation of God's promise, carried forward by the authority and grace of the risen King.



Reading to know and make Him known

ReadttBook exists to equip and encourage

*“In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you....
1 Peter 3:15”*

followers of Christ to read the Bible for the purpose of knowing Christ and making Him known. In 1 Peter 3:15, the Apostle Peter instructs us to always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Our hope is in Jesus Christ - revealed through the Word of God. We know Christ through the Bible, so our ability to defend the hope we have in Him is tied directly to our understanding of the Word. ReadttBook offers bible reading plans and study resources aimed at meeting this call of 1 Pt 3:15.

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