

CATHOLIC

Q & A

Volume 3 Issue 9

September 2004

How do the Old and New Testaments relate to each other? What does Sacred Scripture reveal to us about our Blessed Mother?

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the Church accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and New Testaments, whole and entire, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Second Vatican Council instructs us to be especially attentive to the content and unity of the whole of Scripture.

The Church, since its inception, during apostolic times and constantly throughout her Tradition, has shown the unity of the Old and New Testaments through typology. This method of reading Sacred Scripture involves seeing some event or story in the Old Testament as a prefigurement or precursor to something that will occur later as evidenced by the New Testament.

For example, In the Old Testament we see in the Book of Exodus that Moses had been sent by God to free the Israelites from captivity in Egypt. After seeing 9 plagues afflict his country and people, the King of Egypt still would not let the Israelites go free. Moses then told Pharaoh that unless he set the Jewish people free, every firstborn in the land of the Egyptians would die. Moses then instructed the Israelites to take a lamb without blemish, a male, of one year and sacrifice it, take the blood and put it upon the doorposts and finally eat the lamb that had been slain. By following these divine instructions, the people of Israel were saved from the death that the Egyptians suffered and were set free from captivity.

This Old Testament event is a prefigurement of Christ as the unblemished lamb without stain of sin whose blood is spilt on the wood of the cross, who sets us free from the enslavement of sin and who gives himself to us to eat in the Blessed Eucharist.

The Old Testament is filled with these prefigurements. St Augustine said that the Old Testament is hidden in the New, and in the New the

Old becomes clear. Just as God desires man to discover scientific truths in the natural world so also does God desire man to discover veiled theological truths in studying Sacred Scripture.

In the third chapter of Genesis, after the fall of Adam and Eve, God said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and your seed and her seed: she will crush your head, and you will lie in wait for her heel” (3:15). In the New Testament book of Revelation “And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars”(12:1). Early in the book of Genesis we are made aware of the prefigurement and mission of Mary that foretold the salvation of mankind. In the book of Revelation we see Mary as the “woman” in royal majesty exalted over the created universe, both heaven and earth

In the Old Testament Book of Esther, we see a Jewish girl of great beauty, whose family had been exiled during the Babylonian captivity, be chosen as Queen by the King of Persia. Soon after, all of Esther’s people were condemned to death through the schemes of an enemy. She alone is exempt from this condemnation. Esther then manages to foil the schemes of the enemy and saves her people from death through her intercession with the King. Our Blessed Mother is exempt from original sin (Immaculately Conceived) and continually intercedes for us before the heavenly throne.

In the book of Exodus, we see the cloud of God’s presence overshadowed the Ark of the Covenant, while the glory of God filled it from within. In Luke’s Gospel “The power of the Most High will overshadow you. And so the child will be holy and will be called the Son of God.” The same idea seems to be taken up in the episode of the visitation, a story told in reference to the transfer of

the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem in 2 Samuel. As the Ark makes its way to Jerusalem, King David is leaping and dancing before the Lord who is present in the Ark. When Mary visits Elizabeth, John the Baptist leaps for joy because God is present within Mary.

The Ark lies at the center of the Old Covenant and its continuation into the New Covenant in the person of Mary leads one to meditate on the Marian role in the mystery of salvation.

Source: Mary in Scripture- ewtn.com

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