

Chapter 17

THE CHRISTO-CENTRIC PRINCIPLE

I. DEFINITION

That principle by which Scripture is interpreted in relation to its center — Christ.

II. AMPLIFICATION

The basis for this principle is the fact that Christ is the central Person of the Bible. The entire written Word revolves around He who is the Living Word. His person and work is the theme of God's written revelation. In the wheel of divine revelation He is the hub, and all truths are as spokes relating to Him Who is The Truth. The truth of this is best expressed in the following verses:

- Hebrews 10:7 "... in the volume of the book it is written of *Me* . . ."
- John 5:39 "Search the Scriptures . . . they are they which testify of *Me*."
- Luke 24:27 "... He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning *Himself*."
- Luke 24:44 "... all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning *Me*."
- Acts 10:43 "To *Him* give all the prophets witness . . ."
- John 1:45 "We have found *Him* of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write."

NOTE ALSO: John 1:1, 14; 5:46, 47; Matthew 5:17, 18; Acts 3:18; John 14:6 with 17:17

All of these Scriptures attest to the fact that the Bible is Christ-centered; He is the living embodiment of the Written Word.

In that God is the author of Scripture He was able to center all of its subjects around the person and work of His Son: "that in all things *He* might have the pre-eminence" (Colossians 1:18). We will now illustrate this in each of the major divisions of Scripture:

- The Old Testament Historical Books
- The Old Testament Poetical Books
- The Old Testament Prophetical Books
- The Gospels
- The Acts
- The Epistles
- The Apocalypse

A. Christ in the Old Testament Historical Books

Genesis	The Creator	Colossians 1:16
	The Beginning	Revelation 1:8
	The Seed of the Woman	Matthew 1:23
	The Ark of Salvation	Luke 2:30
	Isaac, Only Beloved Son	John 3:16
	Joseph, Beloved Son	Matthew 3:17
Exodus	The Deliverer	Acts 5:31
	The Mediator	Hebrews 8:6
	The Lawgiver	Hebrews 8:10
	High Priest	Hebrews 2:17

	Passover Lamb	I Corinthians 5:7
	Tabernacle of God with men	John 1:14
Leviticus	Sacrifice and Oblation	Hebrews 10:12
	Holy High Priest	Hebrews 7:26
	The Atonement	Hebrews 9:14
	Way of Approach to God	Hebrews 7:25
Numbers	The Tabernacle	John 1:14
	Sanctuary in Wilderness	Ezekiel 11:16
	The Nazarite	Hebrews 7:26
	The Son of Man/Serpent of Brass	John 3:14
	The Smitten Rock	I Corinthians 10:4
	The Star out of Jacob	Matthew 2:2
Deuteronomy	The True Prophet	Deuteronomy 18:15-19; Acts 3:22
	The Rock	Deuteronomy 32:4, 18, 31; I Corinthians 10:4
Joshua	Joshua (Jehoshua)	Hebrews 4:8
	Captain of our Salvation	Hebrews 2:10
	The Man with the Sword	Joshua 5:13-15; Ephesians 6:12-18
	Inheritance Giver	Hebrews 4; Ephesians 1:3, 14
Judges	Judge/Deliverer/Saviour	Matthew 1:21-23
Ruth	The Mighty Man	Ruth 2:1
	Lord of the Harvest	Ruth 2:14-17
	Kinsman Redeemer	
I Samuel	Anointed Prophet/Priest/King	
	Intercessor	
	Sceptre/Throne/Kingdom Holder	Luke 1:31-35
II Samuel	The Son of David	Matthew 1:1
I Kings	King of Peace and Glory	
	The Wisdom of God	I Corinthians 1:30
	Temple Builder	Ephesians 2:20-22
	Greater than Solomon	Matthew 12:42
	The Prophet of God/Word	John 1:14
	King of Kings/Lord of Lords	Revelation 19:16
II Kings	The Righteous King	II Kings 3:12
	The Man of God	John 1:14
	The Word of the Lord personified	
I Chronicles	The Greater King David	Matthew 1:1
II Chronicles	Prophet/Priest/King Temple	
	Cleanser	Hebrews 9:10, 11
	Reformer	Hebrews 9:10, 11
Ezra	Governor/Priest	Hebrews 5:1-5; Matthew 2:6
	Scribe and Restorer	Isaiah 58:12
Nehemiah	Governor of Judah	Matthew 2:6
	Man of Prayer and Work	John 17; Matthew 16:18
Esther	The Great King and His Bride	Revelation 19:7

B. Christ in the Old Testament Poetical Books

Job	Patient Suffering Priest	Hebrews 5:1-5
Psalms	The Beloved Shepherd/King	John 3:16; Hebrews 13:20
	The Sweet Singer	Hebrews 2:12

Proverbs	The Wisdom of God	I Corinthians 1:24, 30; Colossians 2:3
Ecclesiastes	The Preacher in Jerusalem The Son of David The Wisdom of God The King "from above"	Ecclesiastes 1:1 I Corinthians 1:24 Galatians 4:26
Song of Solomon	King of Peace Beloved Bridegroom Lover	Ephesians 5:32
C. Christ in the Old Testament Prophetic Books		
Isaiah	The Holy One of Israel Our Salvation Our Righteousness Our Comfort The True Judge	Mark 1:24 Matthew 1:21 I Corinthians 1:30 John 14:16, 18 John 5:22
Jeremiah	The Appointed Prophet The Righteous Branch, the King The LORD our Righteousness	Jeremiah 23:4-6
Lamentations	The Weeping Prophet The Man of Sorrows	Luke 19:41-44; Matthew 23:37, 38
Ezekiel	The Son of Man The Shekinah Glory	John 1:51 Ezekiel 43:1-4;
Daniel	The Son of Man The Crushing Stone The Kingdom of God personified King of Kings/Lord of Lords	Daniel 7:13 Daniel 2:34-45; Matthew 21:42-44 Daniel 7:27 Revelation 19:16
Hosea	The Prophet of Law and Love	Acts 3:22, 23; Matthew 5:17, 18; John 3:16
Joel	Jehovah-God, Promiser and Baptizer with the Holy Spirit	Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33; John 1:31-33
Amos	Burden-bearer Judge and Punisher of Nations Builder of David's Tabernacle	Isaiah 53:12 II Thessalonians 1:7-9 Matthew 16:18, 19; Acts 15:15-18
Obadiah	Servant and Worshipper Executor of Divine Wrath	Hebrews 2:12 II Thessalonians 1:6-10
Jonah	The Greater than Jonah	Matthew 12:39-41
Micah	Heavenly Micah "like God" Rejected King of the Jews Establisher of His House	Hebrews 1:2-4 Micah 5:1; John 19:15 Micah 4:1, 2; Hebrews 3:6
Nahum	Prophet of Comfort and Vengeance	John 14:16; II Thessalonians 1:8
Habakkuk	The Judge of Babylon The Rewarder	Revelation 17, 18 Hebrews 10:38; 11:6
Zephaniah	The Jealous God	Zephaniah 1:18; II Corinthians 11:2
	Executor of God's Wrath	Romans 2:5, 6
Haggai	Prophet/Priest/Prince Builder of the Lord's House	Matthew 16:18; Hebrews 3:5
Zechariah	One whom Jehovah Remembers The Branch Jehovah's Servant	Zechariah 3:8; Matthew 2:23 Zechariah 3:8; Philipians 2:7

Malachi	The Smitten Shepherd King-Priest and Temple Builder King over all the earth	Zechariah 13:7; Mark 14:27 Zechariah 6:9-12; Hebrews 5:5, 6 Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 19:16
	The Messenger of the Covenant Refiner/Purifier/Cleanser of the Temple	Matthew 26:26-28 Malachi 3:1-3; Matthew 3:11; John 2:13-17; Matthew 21:12-14

D. Christ in the Gospels

Matthew	King/Lawgiver	Matthew 2:2; Isaiah 33:22
	Anointed, Son of David	Matthew 3:16, 17; 1:1
	Fulfiller of Law and Prophets	Matthew 5:17
Mark	The Son of God/Son of Man	Mark 10:45
	Suffering Servant who became Lord	Mark 16:19
Luke	Son of Man, Anointed Preacher, Saviour	Luke 4:18, 19; 19:10
John	The Word, the Eternal Son	John 1:1; 3:16
	The Life and the Light	John 1:4, 5
	The "I AM"	John 8:56
	The Way, The Truth, The Life	John 14:6

E. Christ in the Acts

Acts	Head of the Church, Baptizer in the Spirit	Acts 2:1-4; 1:5-8
-------------	---	----------------------

F. Christ in the Epistles

Romans	The Salvation and Righteousness of God	Romans 10:3-4
	The Propitiation/Mercy Seat	Romans 3:25
I Corinthians	The Power and Wisdom of God	
	Righteousness, Sanctification	I Corinthians 1:24-30
	Wisdom and Redemption	I Corinthians 13
	The Love of God	I Corinthians 15
II Corinthians	The Resurrection and the Life	
	Comforter/Apostle	
	Sin-offering	II Corinthians 5:21
Galatians	The Glory of the New Covenant	II Corinthians 3, 4
	Faith, Righteousness, Life	
	Redeemer, Seed of Abraham, New Covenant Mediator	Galatians 3
Ephesians	Fullness of God	Ephesians 4:9-16
	Head of the Church	Ephesians 4:16
	The Bridegroom	Ephesians 5
	Giver of the Ministries	Ephesians 4:9-16
	Grace and Peace of God	Ephesians 1:2-3
Philippians	Our Joy, Life, Mind, Goal and Strength	Philippians 2, 3, 4
Colossians	The Pre-existent, Pre-eminent, The Creator, Ruler, Redeemer, Head of the Body, Fullness of the Godhead Bodily	Colossians 1:19; 2:9

I Thessalonians	Our Sanctification Our Coming Lord	I Thessalonians 5:23
II Thessalonians	The Avenger and Coming Lord	II Thessalonians 1:6-10
I Timothy	Elder, Deacon, Teacher who fulfills His Charge	II Timothy 3
II Timothy	Saviour, Seed of David, Righteous Judge Lord of the Heavenly Kingdom	II Timothy 4:1
Titus	Saviour, Grace of God, and Redeemer	Titus 1:3; 2:14
Philemon	Intercessor, Advocate	
Hebrews	Angel of Jehovah The Last Adam The Prophet, the High Priest, Minister and Sacrifice, Author and Finisher of our Faith	Hebrews 1-13
James	Lord of Glory The Judge The Lord of Hosts The Husbandman	James 2:1 James 4:11, 12 James 5:4 James 5:7
I Peter	The Foreordained Lamb The Chief Cornerstone The Stone of Stumbling and Rock of Offence The Example, The Chief Shepherd and Bishop	I Peter 1:19-20 I Peter 2:6 I Peter 2:8 I Peter 5:4
II Peter	The Beloved Son The Daystar and Coming Lord	II Peter 1:17 II Peter 1:19; 3:10
I John	The Word, the Son, Advocate, Propitiation, Christ who is Love, Light and Life	I John 1, 2, 3
II John	The Truth, the Son of God, the Christ	II John
III John	The Truth	III John 4, 8
Jude	The Coming Lord, Judge and Only Wise God our Saviour	Jude 14, 25

G. Christ in the Apocalypse

Revelation	Head of the Church, the Lamb Lion of the Tribe of Judah The Jehovah Angel The Bridegroom The Word, King of Kings and Lord of Lords	Revelation 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Revelation 5:5 Revelation 7:1-3 Revelation 19:5-8 Revelation 19:11-16
-------------------	---	--

Thus in writing Scripture God utilized the literary method of "central theme" in centering His written revelation around Christ.

The literary *method of making Christ the central theme* used in writing Scripture gives rise to the *Christo-centric Principle* of interpreting Scripture.

III. QUALIFICATION

A. The interpreter must recognize that the ultimate purpose of the written Word is to bring him to Christ, the Living Word.

B. This principle can be used only when the verse or passage under consideration speaks of Christ either:

1. Characteristically
 - a. Typically
 - b. Symbolically
2. Prophetically
3. Historically
4. Doctrinally

C. A verse should never be applied directly to Christ unless it possesses Christo-centric characteristics.

D. This principle should never be used when the resultant interpretation violates the actual and literal sense of Scripture. In desiring to unveil the glories of Christo-centricity some have sought to relate every verse of Scripture *directly* to Christ, and in so doing have violated and missed the actual truths of those verses which do relate to Christ *indirectly*.

E. The Old Testament Scriptures which contain Christo-centric characteristics must be interpreted in the light of New Testament clear revelation of Christ. The clear historical and doctrinal must interpret the more obscure characteristic and prophetic.

IV. DEMONSTRATION

A. **Old Testament History — Genesis 22:1-14:** The subject of this passage is the historical account of Abraham, the father, being called to offer up his only son, Isaac, for a burnt offering on Mt. Moriah. This passage contains Christo-centric characteristics which are:

1. A Father/Son relationship
2. An only Son
3. The Son intended to be a sacrifice
4. Question of God providing a Lamb
5. Three days

Because of its Christo-centric characteristics this event can be interpreted as a typical foreshadowing of the Father God offering Christ, His Only Begotten Son, for the sins of the world. (Compare Hebrews 11:17-19 with John 3:16).

B. **Old Testament Poetry — Job 19:25-27:** In these verses we have Job's confession of faith in the midst of extreme suffering. The Christo-centric characteristics of these verses are:

1. The living redeemer
2. Standing upon the earth in the latter day
3. Though flesh decays, flesh shall see God.

These verses can be interpreted as pointing to Christ, the Living Redeemer who shall stand on the earth at His second coming and bring about the bodily resurrection of the dead.

C. **Old Testament Prophecy — Jeremiah 23:5, 6:** The prophecy of these verses concerns the Lord raising up unto David a King whose name would be "the Lord our Righteousness." This prophecy contains within it these Christo-centric characteristics:

1. Raising unto David a Righteous Branch
2. A King, reigning and prospering, executing judgment
3. Judah and Israel being saved
4. The Lord Our Righteousness

These verses are unmistakably prophetic of the coming of Jesus Christ, the Son of David (Matthew 1:1), the righteous King (Revelation 19:16; Matthew 2:2), who is the Lord our Righteousness (I Corinthians 1:30).

D. The Gospels — John 6:1-65: The content of this chapter is the historical account of Christ's feeding the five thousand, followed by His teaching. The chapter is Christo-centric in that the purpose of the miracle of the multiplying of the fish and bread was to reveal by demonstration that Christ Himself was the Bread of Life.

NOTE: The four Gospels are Christo-centric in that they present to us an actual, literal, historical account of Christ's ministry in word and deed.

E. The Acts — Acts 10:34-43: In this passage we have Peter's sermon to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. The whole of the sermon is Christo-centric in that it deals with the ministry, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus.

F. The Epistles — Hebrews 4:14-5:10: The subject of this passage is the High Priestly ministry of Christ. It is clearly Christo-centric because it is setting forth the doctrine of Christ's eternal Priesthood.

G. The Apocalypse — Revelation 19:11-16: This passage presents to us Christ's riding forth on the white horse to judge. It can be seen as Christo-centric because the following names are attributed to the rider:

1. Faithful and True
2. The Word of God
3. King of Kings
4. Lord of Lords

Chapter 18

THE MORAL PRINCIPLE

I. DEFINITION

That principle by which the interpretation of a verse or passage is determined by discerning the moral it contains.

II. AMPLIFICATION

Webster's Dictionary defines the word "moral" in its noun form as "the practical lesson taught by any story or incident; the significance or meaning; (plural) principles and practice in regard to right, wrong and duty; ethics, general conduct or behaviour.

One of the chief purposes for the existence of the Bible is to instruct men in the way of righteousness. Most of its contents are written to teach man both what he should *be* and what he should *do* (II Timothy 3:16, 17). Many portions of Scripture are written as clear, concise instructions, such as in the Epistles and in the clear teachings of Jesus. On the other hand, much of Scripture contains indirect instruction and the moral of it must be drawn out (Proverbs 25:2). This can be illustrated in the following five areas of literary genre: (A) History, (B) Poetry, (C) Prophecy, (D) Proverbs and (E) Parables.

A. **History:** The historical sections of Scripture were written not only to record historical facts but also to teach spiritual lessons.

1. **The Death of Saul — I Chronicles 10:13, 14:** The life of Saul having been recorded in I Samuel, the writer of I Chronicles interprets for his readers the reason for Saul's death in an effort to exhort them not to follow his example.
2. **The Miracles of Jesus — John 20:30, 31:** After recording many of Christ's miracles, John points out that his purpose for recording them was "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Behind the miracle was a moral. Though many missed it, the miracle was recorded to communicate the moral.
3. **The Exodus into the Wilderness — I Corinthians 10:1-11:** After summarizing the historical events recorded in the book of Exodus, Paul establishes the purpose for their record by saying: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Behind each historical event in Scripture lies a moral — a spiritual lesson — which it is designed to teach.

B. **Poetry:** The poetical sections of Scripture were also written for instructional purposes. Job exclaimed, "Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book!" (Job 19:23). At least thirteen of the psalms bear the title "Maschil," which means "instruction" (Psalms 78, 88, 89). The book of Ecclesiastes concludes with the moral of its contents (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14).

The divine purpose for Biblical poetry is to communicate spiritual principles.

C. **Prophecy:** The prophetic sections of Scripture are centered around divine principles. In the prophets God at times indicated that His purposes were instructional: "I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that

thou shouldest go" (Isaiah 48:17); "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee" (Jeremiah 6:8).

The utterances of the prophets are all based on divine principles, including the moralisms of the Law.

D. **Proverbs:** Most all of the proverbs in Scripture are to be found in the book bearing that name. These proverbs are "wise sayings" containing a moral. Their instructional purpose is clearly set forth in the opening passage of the book:

The proverbs of Solomon . . . To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; to give subtlety to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion. A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings. (Proverbs 1:1-6).

E. **Parables:** Many of the parables in Scripture are found in the gospels and are taken from Christ's teaching. Though He taught in parables to conceal their truth from the proud, His purpose was also to teach the humble (Matthew 13:10-13). "And he began again to teach by the seaside . . . and he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine. . ." (Mark 4:1, 2). The moral of a parable is the key to its interpretation.

Thus, the literary *method of moralizing* used in writing Scripture gives rise to the *Moral Principle* of interpreting Scripture.

III. QUALIFICATION

A. This principle can be viewed as a system of interpretation on its own, in that it can be applied to almost all of Scripture.

B. Foundational to the use of this principle is a consideration of the literal sense of the passage. This would include an accurate discerning of such things as the facts of an event and their significance, and the interpretation of symbols and other figures of speech.

C. The interpreter must recognize that there may be more than one moral intended in a passage and that a moral may have various facets. Because of this, the moral of a passage may possibly be expressed in a variety of ways.

D. This method of interpretation must be kept in balance with others. The whole of Scripture was not intended to be only moralized. There is much more to be gained from it than just extracting lessons for our lives. A proper place must be kept for theological interpretation, which must never be contradicted by moral interpretation.

IV. DEMONSTRATION

A. **History — I Chronicles 13:7-14; 15:1-3, 13-15:** "And they carried the ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab." The ark of the covenant had been in captivity to the Philistines for several months. Because of divine judgments, they returned the ark to Israel on an ox-cart. When David became king his desire was to bring the ark out of the house of Abinadab into the tabernacle which he had pitched for it. He copied the Philistines' method by placing the ark on a new cart. For this, God brought judgment and death upon his efforts. David then searched the Law of Moses and discovered his error of not following the divine order. When he brought up the ark on the shoulders of the priests he was blessed for his efforts. The moral behind this historical event then is: God's work must be done in God's way in order to have God's blessing.

B. **Poetry — Psalms 78:** This psalm of instruction gives a panoramic view of Israel's history as recorded in the books of Exodus through I Samuel. The mercy of God was evident in the miracles He performed for them. Yet, in spite of God's blessing, they continually tempted and provoked Him with their unbelief and rebellion. This forced God to release the wrath of His judgment upon them. Thus, the cycle of events that is seen through this synopsis of history is: mercy — provocation — divine judgment. The moral that this psalm is teaching is: provoking God by despising His mercy will bring the wrath of His judgment.

C. **Prophecy — Isaiah 1:10-17:** Here the prophet denounces the empty formalism of Israel's worship. He discounts their sacrifices, oblations, incense, new moons, Sabbaths and feasts as being hypocritical. Though God Himself ordained these forms of worship, they became an abomination to Him when they degenerated into merely an external religion. Thus the moral of this prophecy is: external worship is an abomination to God when it lacks internal motivation.

D. **Proverbs — Proverbs 14:4:** "Where no oxen are, the crib is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox."

Oxen are noted in this verse for their strength and productivity, but they must be fed regularly to maintain their strength. If there are no oxen, then the grain crib can remain empty and clean and there is no work to be done around it. However, there can be no increase of harvest without using the strength of the ox. The moral of this proverb is: productivity makes work worthwhile.

E. **Parables — Matthew 25:1-13:** This is known as the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. The five wise virgins took extra oil with them in preparedness for the coming of the bridegroom. The five foolish virgins failed to take extra oil. When the bridegroom came the five virgins who were ready went into the marriage, while the five unready virgins had to go and seek to buy some oil. When they returned they were not admitted to the wedding. The moral of this parable is: believers must be prepared, watching for the coming of the Lord.