

### 03 – The Message and the Purpose of the Bible (Part 2)

The Bible is a miracle! Many try to discredit the Bible by saying that “it was written by man” or they claim that there are many contradictions and errors in it, but if you study out how the Bible came about, you’ll see that it could only be by divine inspiration and leading. The Bible is a compilation of 66 books with a total of about 611, 000 word written by 40 different authors, on three different continents, in three different languages, over a time period of 1,500 years – all with one message. God used prophets, poets, princes, kings, sailors, fishermen and soldiers to tell His story and they all in harmony with each other. Some of the books of the Bible were written in homes while others were written in prison or on ships. Many of the authors never knew each other and yet there is an overwhelming harmony and a perfect cohesion in the unified theme from the beginning to the end. The Bible is a compilation of books written by people from different cultures and different periods of time - but there is one consistent unified message from Genesis to Revelation, and it is the message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Imagine I gave 48 people a piece of paper each, and I told them to tear their pieces of paper into different shapes—but I never tell them how I’m going to use them. What is the likelihood I’d be able to take those pieces of paper and make a map of Africa out of them? What’s the likelihood that those 48 pieces of paper would perfectly fit together exactly like the 48 countries of the mainland African continent? The chances of that happening would be extremely low. That’s really the miracle of how the Bible was put together.

There are over 300 prophecies referring to the Messiah, that are all fulfilled in Christ. All these prophecies were written hundreds of years before Jesus came. If you were to give each of these prophecies the ridiculously low probability of 1 in 10 chance of coming true, you would end up with a number well over 1 in  $10^{157}$ . Scripture prophesied that the Messiah would be a descendent of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David. The prophecies also detailed that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem and born of a virgin – which is biologically impossible.<sup>1</sup> Think about it for a moment: no baby could ever orchestrate their lineage or place of



What are the chances of someone accurately predicting their own death? If you're a public figure, like Jesus, you probably have a good chance of predicting your murder, but Jesus went further and predicted that He would rise from the dead. He may have been able to arrange for His own murder, but He could have never orchestrated a real resurrection. In a future lesson, we will look at evidence that proves the resurrection of Christ.

The Bible is also accepted by historians and archaeologists as one of the most reliable historical documents in existence. There is much information available on all of this, but what this all leads to is an important question that we need to ask ourselves: How do we respond to all this evidence that verifies the accuracy of the Bible? We cannot ignore the Bible and its message to us; we cannot sit on the fence, indecisive about what the Bible communicates to us.

<sup>15</sup> You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.

2 Timothy 3:15 New Living Translation

"The holy scriptures" in this verse is referring to what we call "the Old Testament" books of Genesis to Malachi. Paul (who wrote the book of Timothy) didn't have a Bible like you and I, so when he (and any of the Biblical writers) refer to "the scriptures" they are always referring to Genesis to Malachi. The purpose of the scriptures is to give the reader the wisdom that is necessary to receive salvation that comes by faith in Jesus Christ.

<sup>26</sup> the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations (from Genesis to Malachi), but now has been revealed to His saints. <sup>27</sup> To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:26-27 New King James Version – brackets mine

The Bible is one book with one message. Although we have divided it into Old Testament and New Testament, it is one book with one unified message: it

contains the mystery and the revelation of the mystery; the promise and the fulfilment of that promise. When Jesus or any of the writers of the gospels or the epistles (letters) refer to “the scriptures”, they are always referring to Genesis to Malachi - which contains “the mystery”, or the prophecy and promise of God. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, together with Acts, are eye-witness accounts of the fulfilment of the scripture in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, together with the birth of the church (recorded in Acts). They are historical records of what was seen and heard (Luke 1:1-4). The letters or epistles of the apostles are the explanation and revelation of the mystery contained in the scriptures of Genesis to Malachi. The scriptures (Genesis to Malachi) find their fulfilment in, and the mystery of them is explained in, what we would call “the New Testament”.

The Bible is more than a history book and it is more than an instruction manual – it is one message from beginning to the end, which transcends culture and time, and is as relevant today as it was when it was written.

<sup>44</sup> Then He said to them, “These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses (Genesis to Deuteronomy) and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me.” <sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

<sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> And you are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Luke 24:44-49 New King James Version – brackets mine

Jesus and the writers of the Gospels and epistles used the Hebrew scriptures of Genesis to Malachi like a textbook; they taught from the scriptures and explained what the scriptures meant. Did you know that about over one-tenth of Jesus' recorded words were taken from the scriptures of Genesis to Malachi? That's about 180 quotes or references.<sup>4</sup> Paul quotes from the scriptures 131 times in his letters. He quotes from the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) 45 times, from the prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, Joel, Malachi, Zechariah) 53 times, Psalms 23 times, and other books (Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, I Kings, 2 Samuel, Job, 1 Chronicles) 10 times<sup>5</sup>.

Knowing these facts, we cannot help but value the entire Bible. If Genesis to Malachi was important to Jesus and the writers of the gospels, Acts and the epistles, then they should be as valuable to us. We should also be careful to use the scriptures in the same manner: to reveal that Jesus was the Messiah, who suffered, died and rose from the dead to make possible the fulfilment of the promise of salvation.

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> The Messiah would be a descendent of Abraham (Genesis 12:3; Matthew 1:1), Isaac (Genesis 17:19; Luke 3:34), Jacob (Numbers 24:17; Matthew 1:2) and David (Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 1:1). The prophecies also detailed that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:4-5, 7) and born of a virgin – which is biologically impossible (Isaiah 7:14; Luke 1:26-27, 30-31).

<sup>2</sup> Prophets accurately predicted that the Messiah would be betrayed by a close friend (Psalm 41:9; 55:12-13; Luke 22:47-48) for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:14-15) and that the silver would be used to buy a potter's field (Zechariah 11:13; Matthew 27:6-7). It was accurately predicted that the Messiah would be "pierced" and "hung on a tree" describing the crucifixion (hanging on a tree), and this was hundreds of years before crucifixion was invented (Deuteronomy 21:23; Zechariah 12:10; Psalm 22:16; John 20:25-27; Galatians 3:13). The prophets also accurately predict an impossible victory: that He would rise from the dead (Psalm 16:10, 49:15; Isaiah 25:8; Hosea 13:14; Mark 16:6-7; Acts 2:29-32).

<sup>3</sup> Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Josh McDowell.

<sup>4</sup> Willmington, Harold, "Old Testament Passages Quoted by Jesus Christ" (2017)

<sup>5</sup> [Bible.org/article/old-testament-paul](https://www.bible.org/article/old-testament-paul)

Recommended resources for further study:

Evidence that Demands a Verdict by Josh McDowell (book)

How Accurate is the Bible?

[https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm\\_send/410](https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/webfm_send/410)

Why 66 books?

<https://answersingenesis.org/the-word-of-god/why-66-books/>

Archaeology Proves the Bible History:

<https://www.thetrumpet.com/1912-archaeology-proves-bible-history-accurate>

**Questions – Lesson 3**

1. What stands out for you from today's lesson?
2. Read the following Old Testament verses which prophesy about Jesus and the New Testament verses which show their fulfilment keeping in mind that the prophecies were written 700+ years before Christ was born. Write down what was prophesied and fulfilled:
  - a. Genesis 12:1-3 & Matthew 1:1  
The Messiah would be a descendent of \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Jeremiah 23:5-6 & Matthew 1:1  
The Messiah would be a descendent of \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Micah 5:2 & Luke 2:4-5, 7  
The Messiah would \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Isaiah 7:14 & Luke 1:26-27, 30-31  
The Messiah would be \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Zechariah 12:10; Psalm 22:16 & John 20:25-27  
Prophecies accurately describe \_\_\_\_\_ hundreds of years before it was invented.
  - f. Psalm 16:10 & Acts 2:29-32.  
The apostle Peter quotes the passage from Psalm and comments on the passage giving us a deeper understanding of the prophecy, that Jesus would \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Hosea 6:2; Mark 16:6-7 & Luke 24:46.  
The Scriptures foretold that the Christ would suffer and \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Details concerning Jesus' birth, suffering, death, burial and resurrection were foretold hundreds of years beforehand. It is impossible for anyone to orchestrate the fulfilment of so many prophecies. Jesus Himself prophesied His own death and resurrection. How does this knowledge impact your faith?

### Answers – Lesson 3

1. **Personal answer.**

2.

- a. The Messiah would be a descendent of **Abraham.**
- b. The Messiah would be a descendent of **David.**
- c. The Messiah would **be born in Bethlehem.**
- d. The Messiah would be **born of a virgin.**
- e. Prophecies accurately describe **crucifixion** hundreds of years before it was invented.
- f. The apostle Peter quotes the passage from Psalm and comments on the passage giving us a deeper understanding of the prophecy, that Jesus would **rise from the dead.**
- g. The Scriptures foretold that the Christ would suffer and **rise from the dead.**
- h. **Personal answer.**

*This discipleship lesson is a part of a new discipleship tool currently being put together. You can download more new discipleship lessons as they are release:  
<https://gracelife.co/new-discipleship-lessons/>*