

# Discover Jesus' Bible

I used to think the Bible was about a lot of things. I thought it was about the origin and future of the world, about God's requirements for living, about human history, about judgments and blessings, about poetry and wisdom, about prophecy and what will soon come to pass ... I thought the Bible was about a lot of things.

The more I study of the Bible though, the more I find it is about fewer and fewer things. The more I study, the more I learn that the Bible contains just a few precious themes, stated over and over again, using many different ways of explaining it.

When Jesus told people what scripture was about, he said,

“[Scriptures] bear witness about me” (John 5:40).

Another time, Jesus said,

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:25–27).

Paul says that the prophets had the gospel revealed to them.

“Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed’” (Galatians 3:8).

Peter says that the prophets specifically foresaw Christ and prophesied about Him.

“[David] he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption” (Acts 2:31).

More than that, Peter says that the prophets specifically examined their prophecies, attempting to discern more about them.

“... the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories” (1 Peter 1:10, 11).

Also, the prophets knew that they served people who would come after them. People who would know and understand more about their prophecies than they themselves did.

“Many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.” “It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you” (Matthew 13:17; 1 Peter 1:12a).

So, according to what Jesus, Peter and Paul testified, the prophets knew Christ through their prophecies; the prophets knew the gospel; and they searched and inquired and longed for the day in which Christ would be revealed. So, according to Jesus, Peter and Paul, Scripture is about Jesus.

Scripture is about Jesus.

All of Scripture is about Jesus.

When we're discussing Scripture from Jesus', Peter's and Paul's perspective, we're talking about the front 2/3 of our Bible. For it was only this portion of our Bible that they had for Scripture. So, today, we're going to Discover Jesus' Bible. We're going to look into Jesus' Bible, and learn to find Jesus in the Bible Jesus read.

## Jesus in creation

When the Apostle John thought about creation, he understood Jesus to be intimately involved in the creation of this world.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:1–3).

Paul too, when he read the story of creation, read a story in which Jesus not only created, but also created *all things for himself*.

“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— *all things were created through him and for him*” (Colossians 1:16).

Now we know that there was a plan of redemption before the creation (1 Peter 2:21; Revelation 13:8). So, when the world was created through Jesus, it was being created *for Jesus*.

Imagine the thoughts of Jesus, as He looked backwards and forwards in time while creating the world for Himself. Imagine Him thinking through the life He would live on earth. Imagine Him thinking through the teachings He would give to people. Now, imagine Him planning for how He could describe the love of His heavenly Father. Imagine Him planning how He could explain why not to be anxious.

Ever wondered why there is so much creativity involved in creation? Jesus was involved in creating object lessons through which He could explain things to us. Jesus was busy making visual aids for His own ministry.

That's why He made the lily of the valley so beautiful, so He could teach God's providence. That's why He created sheep, so He could teach people about Him being the Good Shepherd. He created birds to help us live less anxious lives. He created water to to explain how the Spirit of God revives the thirsty.

Jesus didn't just happen to seize on the elements of creation during His ministry. He foreknew His ministry, and planned for it during the creation of the world.

So next time you're reading the story of creation, thank Jesus for planning a world designed from the beginning to explain the character of God to us.

## **The gospel in creation**

So too, we find the gospel in creation. Remember when the Apostle Paul read about the origin of marriage,

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24; Ephesians 5:31).

What Paul said was,

“This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church” (Ephesians 5:32).

So, Paul reads the origin of marriage like an allegory. So, I'd like you to consider this allegory.

God brought Adam into the midst of the garden. In the midst of the garden beside Him, were two trees. One tree bore life. The other bore death. Now God caused Adam to sleep. So there was Adam, sleeping between the two trees. Then, despite Adam being innocent, God wounded him in his side, bringing forth a substance. And when Adam awoke, there was his bride, Eve.

Consider how this is similar to the story of Jesus.

God brought Jesus to a place outside the city. Beside him were two trees. One tree bore life. The other bore death. Now God caused Jesus to sleep. So there was Jesus, slumped on his cross, sleeping between the two trees. Then, despite Jesus being innocent, a Roman soldier wounded Him in His side, bringing forth blood and water. And when Jesus awoke, there was His bride, the church.

The story of creation anticipates and is filled with Jesus from start to finish.

## **Jesus in His people**

You and I know that if there's anything good in you and me, it's because the Spirit of Christ is there, working in us, transforming our minds and reforming our hearts. Now what is true of us, is just as true of all the characters in Scripture. If we see good in the hearts and minds of the sinners in Scripture, it's because there is Christ, transforming their minds and reforming their hearts.

So, when we read of the faithfulness of Abraham, what we're perceiving is the faithfulness of Jesus. When we read of the goodness of Joseph, we're perceiving the goodness of Jesus in his heart. When we read of the meekness of Moses, we learn of the humility of

our God. When we read of the mercy of Aaron, we're learning of the mercy of our God. When we read of the mighty deeds of Joshua, we're seeing the Divine warrior-king shine through him. When we read of the deeds of Daniel daring to stand alone, we think of the Jesus who alone trod the path set before Him. When we read of Jonah being cast into the heart of the seas to save a crew, we think of Jesus being cast into the heart of the earth to save humanity.

Now it's true, that not everything these characters did reflects the nobility of character of Jesus. They had their faults and flaws, as do you and I. We cannot see the full glory of the Son of God in their lives. But we can see through the veil to see Jesus.

For Jesus knit together all the characters in Scripture to reveal His glory.

## Jesus promised in type

There's another way that we can see Jesus in the characters of Scripture. We can see Jesus through what they did.

Remember, people have always read Scripture to find out about Jesus, just as we do. When they read Genesis, they find a Creator. When they read Exodus, they find an Emancipator. When they read Leviticus, they find both a Priest and a Sacrifice. When they read Numbers, they find a Guide. When they read Deuteronomy, they find a Covenanter. When they read Joshua, they find a Captain of the Host. When they read Judges, they find a Judge. When they read Ruth, they find a Kinsman-Redeemer. When they read Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, they find a King. When they read Ezra and Nehemiah, they find a Rebuilder. When they read Job, they find an Innocent and a Sufferer. When they read Psalms, they find a Worship Leader. When they read Proverbs, they find Jesus presented as the Wisdom of God.

Every part of Scripture reveals to us the magnificence of Jesus.

## The presence of Jesus

When we read Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, we frequently find ourselves running into revelations of Jesus (*remember*: 1 Timothy 6:15, 16).

Abraham ate with Jesus when he feasted with three strangers (Genesis 18:1–21). He negotiated with Jesus when discussing the fate of Sodom (Genesis 18:22–33). He received the symbols of the new covenant from Melchizedek — the King of Righteousness, the King of Peace (Genesis 14:18 *cf* Hebrews 7:1–3).

Moses saw Jesus in the burning bush (Exodus 3:2). Moses heard Jesus speak from Sinai (Exodus 20:1–17; Exodus 20:22–24:2). Moses and the elders of Israel saw Jesus and ate a covenant meal with Him (Exodus 24:9–11). It was Jesus who was the Angel of the Lord — the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire (Exodus 23:20, 21). It was Jesus who appeared as the shekinah glory of the Lord, appearing on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant.

It was Jesus who appeared as a soldier to Joshua, saying:

“I am the commander of the army of the Lord. Now I have come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped and said to him, ‘What does my lord say to his servant?’ And the commander of the Lord's army said to Joshua, ‘Take off your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy’” (Joshua 5:14, 15).

Even before Jesus was incarnated, He frequently appeared. The presence of Jesus fills Scripture from front to back.

So what we do learn from these appearances? We learn that Jesus leads. We learn that He defends. We learn that He communes. We learn that He speaks. We learn that He sympathises. He learn that He commands. We learn that He anticipates. We learn that He reveals.

And this revelation guides us and prepares us for the greatest unveiling in history—the unveiling of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, God manifested in human flesh (1 Timothy 3:16).

“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power” (Hebrews 1:3a).

## **Jesus’ character revealed in His precepts**

When we read of the instructions of the Lord for holy living, we need to know that, read right, we’re reading the content of the character of Jesus Himself.

So when we read, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3), we know that Jesus had no other gods before His heavenly Father.

When we read, “You shall not make for yourself a carved image” (Exodus 20:4a), we know that Jesus never made for Himself a carved image.

When we read, “You shall not take the the name of the Lord your God in vain” (Exodus 20:7) we know He never did so.

When we read, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8) we know that it was Jesus’ delight to remember the Sabbath day.

When we read, “Honour your father and your mother” (Exodus 20:12) we know that Jesus did honour His father and mother. And we know that Jesus didn’t only honour them when they were honourable, but He honoured them when they were dishonourable.

When we read, “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13) we know that Jesus knew that meant far more than don’t kill, but He also knew it meant not to be angry (Matthew 5:22).

When we read, “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14) we know that Jesus knew that meant to not even lust after a woman not your wife (Matthew 5:28).

When we read, “When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof” (Deuteronomy 22:8) we know that Jesus always cared about the safety of the

structures he built as a carpenter in Nazareth. For He cared about protecting and preserving life.

When we read God's instructions for holy living, we know that we're reading the character of Jesus writ large. But more than that, we know that each of these specific instructions have a spiritual meaning and application far broader and nobler than explicitly stated in the Bible that Jesus read.

And when Jesus interpreted this for us, He revealed the true will of God. We know that Jesus was completely in tune with the will of God, and taught us to do the same.

The character of Jesus is revealed in His instructions for holy living.

## **Jesus' character revealed in His wisdom**

When Jesus appeared on earth, He appeared as the Word of God made flesh. Jesus gave the instructions of God hands and feet, ears and tongue. But the readers of the Bible Jesus read also had the instructions of God made illustrated to them. We find this illustration in the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs shows the instructions of God made real in daily living. Proverbs reveals how Jesus Himself lived His life. So, when we read:

“Open rebuke is better  
Than love carefully concealed.  
Faithful are the wounds of a friend,  
But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Proverbs 27:5).

We know that that's how Jesus lived His life. Proverbs reveals the holiness, wisdom, goodness, mercy of Jesus.

But more than that, Proverbs reveals Jesus as Wisdom Himself. For the Wisdom of God in Proverbs becomes the Word of God—the Logos—in the gospel of John.

## **Jesus revealed in history**

When we examine the history of Israel, we learn that what God intended Israel to be, Jesus was.

When God called His Son out of Egypt, He was talking of Israel (Hosea 11:1). Then Jesus literally lived in Egypt, and God called Him out of it (Matthew 2:15).

When God announced Israel as His servant (Isaiah 42), He was talking of the nation of Israel. Yet Jesus did what Israel never could (Isaiah 49:3 *cf* 49:5)—Jesus was the true and faithful servant who gave His life, not only for Israel, but for all the nations (Isaiah 49:6).

You can find Jesus in the history of Israel. For Jesus is the true heir of Abraham (Galatians 3:16).

## Jesus revealed in prophecy

When you carefully look at prophecy, you find that the focus of all prophecy is the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Think about Isaiah. Isaiah provided a gospel so rich and descriptive that it expands on the gospels written after Jesus was born.

Think about Daniel. Each of his major prophecies point to Jesus.

- The focus of the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream was to declare a kingdom that would never be destroyed. This kingdom would grow to fill the earth, and would have no end (Daniel 2:44, 45).
- The focus of Daniel's vision of the four beasts was the judgment in favour of the saints, and the inauguration of the Son of Man, investing in Him dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.

Think about Joel, declaring the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ in the last days.

Think about Malachi, describing how the Son would rise with healing in His wings.

Jesus is the focal point of all prophecy. Truly, it is said,

“For all the promises of God find their ‘Yes’ in him” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

## Jesus revealed in the temple

The second half of Exodus and the greatest part of Leviticus is spent describing the temple. When we look into the temple, we see in this building and these services the ministry and mission of Jesus revealed to the worshipers.

The temple sacrifices revealed the magnitude of the consequences of sin. They also revealed the magnitude of the grace of God in providing the means through which sin can be forgiven.

Jesus is revealed in every ceremony, and in every aspect of the building of the temple. For Jesus is the light of the world. He is the bread of life. He is the incense that ascends to the Father. The fabric of the veil before the Most Holy is His earthly flesh. He is seated on the throne, revealing the glory of the Lord that every eye may see, every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

## Jesus revealed in passion

Finally, when we come to the book containing the Psalms, we read the hymn book from which Jesus sang. Jesus read the Psalms. He sang the Psalms. He learned of His passion and His suffering more from the Psalms than from any other book.

When we read the Psalms, we need to remember that we're joining Jesus as a fellow worshiper. Join Jesus in singing:

"I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart;  
I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.  
I will be glad and exult in you;  
I will sing praise to your name, O Most High" (Psalm 9:1, 2).

When we read the Psalms, we also need to remember that they reveal the passion in his heart in ways that the gospels never do. The Psalms complement the gospels in unveiling Jesus' heart.

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me? ...

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;  
My heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast;  
My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws;  
You lay me in the dust of death; ...

But you, O LORD, do not be far off!  
O you my help, come quickly to my aid!" (Psalm 22:1, 14, 15, 19).

## Conclusion

When we carefully read the Bible Jesus read, we discover what Jesus discovered—we discover Jesus.

I commend to you today, to read the Scripture Jesus read in a new way. Discover Jesus on every page of the Bible.

## References

This sermon based on:

- David Murray (2013), "Jesus on every page: 10 simple ways to seek and find Christ in the Old Testament." Thomas Nelson.
- Warren A. Gage (2015), "Milestones to Emmaus." Saint Andrews House.