

The Ultimate Bible Teacher

By David Feddes

In Luke 24 we read one of the great stories of Jesus' resurrection appearances. There were a couple of men who were walking on a road from Jerusalem to the small town of Emmaus, about seven or so miles from Jerusalem, I believe. While they were making that journey and talking about what had happened in the death of Jesus and their great disappointment at that, and then also some of the rumors they were hearing of some people saying that he's risen from the dead, they were not quite sure what to make of it. A stranger joins them—and it's Jesus—and they're kept from recognizing him.

As they're talking about these things, Jesus says, "What are you talking about?" They tell him, "We had hoped he was the one to redeem Israel." Jesus said to them, "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).

After he explained that, they were walking a little further. Nighttime was coming, and they wanted to be hospitable to this helpful stranger, so they invited him to come home with them. He ate a meal with them, and as he was breaking the bread, suddenly they recognized him. In the instant they recognized him, he was gone. They were all excited and immediately got up and headed back to Jerusalem at top speed.

While they were doing that, they said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). When they got back to where the disciples in Jerusalem were gathered, they told what had happened on the road and how Jesus was known to them in the breaking of the bread (Luke 24:35).

While they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace to you!" But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it before them.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you: that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.

And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple blessing God (Luke 24:36–53).

Why be a Christian?

Why be a Christian when there are many other religions around to choose from? Why believe the Bible when a lot of people believe in other sacred books? Why trust in Jesus when many people count on other spiritual guides or people who are supposed to be able to connect them with God?

“Well, I grew up going to church,” doesn’t quite cut it as a substantial reason, because a lot of people grew up in different ways. Why follow the Bible? Why follow Jesus?

One could say, “Well, there are a lot of findings in archaeology that support and confirm statements made in the Bible.” You could talk about arguments for Jesus’ resurrection from secular sources and from various lines of evidence for the Bible or for Jesus—and those are things that are worth pursuing. But I’m not going to do that in this message.

What I’m going to do simply is to say: We should believe the Bible because it points to Jesus. And we should believe in Jesus because the Bible points to him.

You might say, “Huh? That’s arguing in a circle. Other religions have their founder and then the book that came from that founder, and so if the one seems to match the other—big deal.”

But in those cases the person produced the book while he was here on earth. You’ve got him, and you’ve got the book he wrote. But when you think of Jesus and the Bible, the Bible is actually two major sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The New Testament is 27 books that are written after Jesus and about Jesus, and explain his life and the way of salvation more fully. But there are 39 books in the older part of the Bible, the Old Testament. These were written before Jesus came, many of them hundreds of years before Jesus came. And those books, written before he ever showed up, contain all kinds of things that point to him, things that Jesus himself explained.

So it’s not really so silly to say that the Bible proves Jesus to be trustworthy and that Jesus proves the Bible is trustworthy—because a big chunk of the Bible was written before the appearance of Jesus Christ in the flesh. And when those prophecies came true, they proved the reliability of the prophecies, and they also proved the trustworthiness of the one that the prophecies spoke about.

The ultimate Bible teacher

We want to hear Jesus, the ultimate Bible teacher, and reflect on the kind of lesson that the disciples would have received on that resurrection day when he spoke to them from the Scriptures. I want to begin by saying: Jesus opens the Scriptures to us, and Jesus does something else equally important: he opens us to the Scriptures. Both of those are very necessary.

Jesus opens the Scriptures to us. He explains what's in the Bible, and his life and resurrection show the meaning of the Bible. "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself... They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:27, 32) So that's one thing Jesus does—he opens the Scriptures and shows us what's there and how it reveals him.

While he's opening the Scriptures, what's happening to them? Their hearts are getting warmer and warmer. Something's going on, even before they actually realize that Jesus is the one talking to them. The reason those hearts are getting warmer is that he's not only opening the Scriptures to them, but he's opening them to the Scriptures, so that they can receive what he's saying.

Jesus later says to a gathering of his disciples, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. (Luke 24:44-45)

The Jewish people divided the Old Testament part of Scripture into three main sections: the Torah (Law of Moses), the Prophets (which included the stories of the kings as well as what we call the prophets), and the Psalms (or also called the Writings). The Psalms is the biggest book in the Writings, but there's also Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and other wisdom writings. When Jesus is explaining the Torah, the Prophets, and the Psalms, he's taking all three major sections of Old Testament Scripture and showing what they say about himself.

Notice what else it says: "He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45). So Jesus is opening the Scriptures, and he is opening minds. So keep these key points in mind:

- In opening Scriptures, Jesus opens our minds and warms our hearts.
- Old Testament Scriptures point ahead to Jesus in many ways.
- Knowing Jesus helps us make sense of the Old Testament.

I want to look with you at some of the things that Jesus could have talked about that day. Some of you might be saying, "I wish I had been there for that Bible lesson. That must have been the best Bible lesson ever given!" And I'm sure it was. But don't spend too much time wishing. If you want that lesson, just open your Bible. Open the New Testament. The New Testament is full of the teaching of Jesus Christ, which explains how the Old Testament was pointing to him. Whether you're reading the Gospels or the epistles, you're basically getting Jesus' Bible lesson.

The apostle Paul, when he writes in his epistles, says, "I didn't make this up. I received it by direct revelation from Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12). When you're reading the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, you're getting what the Lord Jesus taught. In the gospels, you hear again and again, "As it is written," or, "Thus was fulfilled the Scripture." So you're getting a lot of Jesus' Bible lesson any time you're opening the New Testament.

Moses

When Jesus was opening the Scriptures to his disciples on the day of his resurrection, he began with Moses. How do the books of Moses point to Jesus? Here are a few examples. In the first book of Moses, Genesis, right after Adam and Eve have sinned and the serpent has misled them, God makes a promise: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15). There is this promise very early on that God is going to send a Savior, born to the human race. The serpent will strike him, but he's going to crush the evil one.

You read a little further in Genesis, and God tells Abraham to offer his only son Isaac up to him as an offering. But at the last minute, God says, “No. I know now that you'll give up anything for me, Abraham.” Then Abraham sees a ram caught in a thicket and offers it in place of his son (Genesis 22). So very early on you see that there is a sacrifice who dies as a substitute in the place of the one who would have been condemned. Jesus is the ultimate substitute and sacrifice who dies in our place.

The second book of Moses, Exodus, tells of God rescuing the people of Israel from the grip of slavery in Egypt. Jesus too is the great rescuer from slavery. In the great rescue described in Exodus, even the Israelites themselves would perish if God did not provide a sacrifice for them. But there is a lamb who dies, and they put the blood of the lamb over the doorposts of their homes. Then the destroyer does not enter their homes (Exodus 12). The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ is what saves us from the destroyer, and the power of Jesus is what saves us from slavery to sin and Satan.

The third book of Moses, Leviticus, describes Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). On that day each year, the priest representing the people would place his hands on a couple of goats. The first goat would be killed as a sacrifice, and the second goat (sometimes called the scapegoat) would be sent far out into the desert. The first goat was a symbol of a substitute's suffering and death to pay the penalty for sin. The second goat was a symbol of God removing sins from his people as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12). The two goats pointed to different aspects of how Jesus would atone for his people: he would die for our sins, and he would remove them from us.

The fourth book of Moses, Numbers, tells of a time when the people of Israel sinned and poisonous snakes were biting them. They were going to die if something didn't happen. So God told Moses, “Make a snake out of bronze and lift it up on a pole. Tell the people to look at it, and if they look, they'll be healed” (Numbers 21:4–9). Why in the world would looking at a bronze snake heal someone? God was meeting their immediate need by saving them from death, but the snake on the pole was also a symbol pointing ahead to Jesus. As Jesus himself put it, “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:14–16). So as Moses lifted up that snake for dying people to look at and be saved, God was already preparing to lift up a greater one for us to look to for eternal life.

In the fifth book of Moses, Deuteronomy, the Lord said to Moses, “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him” (Deuteronomy 18:18). Moses was a very great prophet, and some of the Jewish people who came later thought he was the greatest prophet that ever was or ever could be. But Moses himself had been told by God that the Lord would raise up an even greater prophet than Moses. That greatest of all prophets was God's own Son, Jesus Christ.

When Jesus opened the Scriptures to his disciples, he started with Moses. We've seen just a sampling from the writings of Moses that pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prophets

Jesus told how the prophets spoke of him. Let's consider how Jesus' life unfolded in light of what the prophets of Israel wrote.

Think about the birth of Jesus and some of the prophecies related to it. It seems almost impossible that they could all be talking about the same person. Isaiah wrote, “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son” (Isaiah 7:14). Virgins don't give birth, so that in itself would be a remarkable thing to prophesy. But centuries later, a virgin did give birth to a son.

Where would this virgin-born child show up? Micah wrote, “But you, Bethlehem... out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times” (Micah 5:2). Isaiah and Micah were writing about 700 years before Jesus was born. The prophet Hosea, writing centuries before Christ, says, “Out of Egypt I called my son” (Hosea 11:1). In another prophecy, Isaiah says, “In the future God will honor Galilee of the Gentiles... The people walking in darkness have seen a great light” (Isaiah 9:1–2). Don't these prophecies sound contradictory? Can't these prophets get their story straight? One says Bethlehem, another says Egypt, another says Galilee, which is at the opposite end of the country from Bethlehem. Which is it? Where will the Messiah show up?

Impossible as it sounds, it's all three! Jesus is born in Bethlehem (Luke 2). There's danger to his life from evil King Herod, so Mary and Joseph flee with little Jesus to Egypt until the danger passes (Matthew 2:13–15). Later they settle in the town of Nazareth in Galilee, where Jesus grows up (Matthew 2:22–23). It all came just as the prophets had said. It didn't look like all those prophecies could be true at the same time of the same person—until it actually happened. So you see things in the prophets coming true already in the birth of Jesus.

The prophets also spoke centuries ahead of time about Jesus' miracles. Isaiah said, “Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy” (Isaiah 35:5–6). What happens in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ? Miracles such as nobody had ever seen, except, of course, the prophets who had already spoken of them. “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor” (Matthew 11:5). All those things spoken by Isaiah seven centuries earlier are happening in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the final week of Jesus' life, a whole flood of prophecies come true. Eight hundred years earlier, in Psalm 118 (this is actually from Writings, in the Psalms): "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord... With boughs in hand, join the festal procession" (Psalm 118:25–27). On Palm Sunday, people are waving their branches and saying, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 21:9), as Jesus rides into Jerusalem. The prophet Zechariah, 500 years before Christ, wrote, "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9). Jesus rides on a donkey into Jerusalem amid the shouting of the crowds. The apostle John says of Palm Sunday that they didn't realize at the time what they were doing. They were fulfilling the prophecies about Jesus without even knowing it (John 12:16).

Crucifixion and resurrection

Then there were those terrible and yet wonderful events of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion and resurrection. Many things from the prophets and psalms were fulfilled. It was especially the prophecies about suffering, death, and resurrection that Jesus zeroed in on when he opened the Scriptures to his disciples after his resurrection. He said it had to happen this way. *It had to.* "Don't you know from the Scriptures that the Messiah had to suffer and then enter his glory?" (Luke 24:26)

Judas, his friend, betrayed him. A thousand years earlier, Psalm 41 said, "Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm 41:9).

When Jesus was arrested, all of his disciples fled (Matthew 26:56). The prophet Zechariah, 500 years before Christ, declared: "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered" (Zechariah 13:7).

Jesus had his back whipped, his face punched and spit upon. Isaiah, 700 years earlier, wrote, "I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting" (Isaiah 50:6).

Psalm 22, written by King David a thousand years before Christ, began by saying, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1). Jesus cried those words on the cross. Psalm 22 said, "They have pierced my hands and my feet" (Psalm 22:16). Crucifixion wasn't even invented at that time, but a thousand years later Jesus' hands and feet were nailed to a cross. "They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing" (Psalm 22:18). As Jesus hung on the cross, the soldiers gambled for his clothes (John 19:23–24). Psalm 22 described mockers who said, "He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him" (Psalm 22:8). That's exactly what Jesus' enemies said while Jesus was hanging on the cross (Matthew 27:43). Psalm 22 said, "My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth." A thousand years later, Jesus said on the cross, "I thirst" (John 19:28).

The criminals crucified on either side of Jesus had their legs shattered by soldiers because they weren't dying soon enough. The soldiers wanted all the crucified victims dead before the Sabbath started (John 19:31–32). But they found that Jesus had already died, so the centurion

pierced him with a spear to make sure he was dead (John 19:33–34). Centuries earlier, Exodus 12:46 and Psalm 34:20 had said, “Not one of his bones will be broken.” Zechariah had written, “They will look on me, the one they have pierced” (Zechariah 12:10).

Isaiah wrote, “He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death” (Isaiah 53:9). Seven hundred years later, Jesus was buried in the tomb of the rich man Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57–60).

Jesus’ death wasn’t just various details randomly happening. It had all been spoken of long before, and then it came true.

There were other prophecies, too, not just about his death, but ones that said he would not stay dead. Psalm 16 said, “You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay” (Psalm 16:10). Psalm 22, that psalm so full of detailed prophecies—pierced, thirsting, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”—goes on to speak of this rejoicing and bringing far-off nations to the Lord (Psalm 22:27). Isaiah 53 spoke in detail about someone suffering for our sins, but then God announced, “After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied. By his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many” (Isaiah 53:11).

So you're asking yourself, why should I believe Jesus? Why should I believe the Bible? Well, if you take big chunks of the Bible written long before Jesus and he matches them exactly, that is an amazing thing. If your faith is a little shaky in either Jesus or the Bible, that should bolster and strengthen your faith in both.

Sabbaths, feasts, temple

There are other things too, beyond the exact predictions of various events of Jesus’ life. These include spiritual practices and signs revealed in the Old Testament—in Moses, the Prophets, and the Writings.

Sabbath was big. The Sabbath day each week was very important as a marker for God’s people. It was important because God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh (Genesis 2:2–3). It was also important because when God delivered his people from slavery in Egypt, he did not want them working 24/7 (Deuteronomy 5:12–15). He made it clear: because he was the Creator and their Rescuer, why should they work seven days a week? So he gave the command to rest every Sabbath day, to express that creation rhythm as well as their rescue from Egypt, the exodus liberation.

Every seven years, there was a Sabbath year when the land would rest. The people weren’t allowed to till or plant. They rested from their labors, and whatever they had was a gift of grace for that whole year (Leviticus 25:1–7).

After 7x7 years, the fiftieth year was a super-Sabbath year, Jubilee. This was a time when all who had been slaves were set free. Everyone who owed debts had those debts canceled. People got their family land back if they had had to sell it. They could get their life back on track.

Jubilee was a do-over—you got to start fresh. This was a once-in-a-lifetime exodus for everybody (Leviticus 25:8–55).

These Sabbath signposts that were a blessing to the nation—when they observed them. But they were still only signposts.

When Jesus came, he said that he was the Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8). He showed that he was a living Sabbath walking around. The first thing he said in his hometown of Nazareth was, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me... to proclaim good news to the poor... to set the oppressed free... to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18–19). He was announcing himself to be the fulfillment of Jubilee—where prisoners are freed, debts are canceled, and everybody gets a huge do-over. So the Sabbath throughout the Old Testament was not just a rule for its own sake but a sign pointing to the living reality of Jesus Christ, in whom we rest from all our labors, and who gives us his salvation freely, not by our own works.

Then there were the feasts. Passover was a great feast celebrating deliverance from Egypt. A lamb’s blood was poured out so that people wouldn’t perish (Exodus 12). The timing of Jesus’ death came right at Passover. He died on the day that Passover lambs were sacrificed (John 19:14).

The Feast of Firstfruits came on the first day of the week after the high Sabbath following Passover. That was the day Jesus rose from the dead, as “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Seven weeks later, 7x7 days after Firstfruits, there was the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost (Leviticus 23:15–21). That was a day to celebrate the fuller harvest. Pentecost was the day Jesus poured out his Holy Spirit (Acts 2).

You see all these feasts fulfilled in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The tabernacle, and later the temple, was the place of worship, where heaven met earth, where God came near. The Shekinah glory of God, the radiant cloud, would shine there. It was a place where sacrifices were offered for sin, where people worshiped and celebrated God’s reign. It was designed to be a place for all nations to come and seek God. “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations” (Isaiah 56:7). God also said, “On this mountain... I will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples... he will swallow up death forever” (Isaiah 25:7–8). So the Temple Mount would be the place where death would be destroyed.

In Jesus Christ, heaven meets earth. “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling”—literally, tabernacled—“among us. We have seen his glory” (John 1:14). God comes near. We see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6). He is the sacrifice that covers sin. He is the one who came announcing, “The kingdom of God is near” (Mark 1:15). He is the one who makes it possible for all nations to know God. He is the one who destroyed death on that mountain. So it’s no wonder that Jesus spoke of the temple of his body: “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days” (John 2:19). He rose from the dead and destroyed death. Jesus is the fulfillment of everything that the tabernacle and the temple were pointing to.

Three figures in prophecy

- **A king**, the Messiah, Son of David, will defeat enemies and rule wisely and well.
- **Yahweh**, the Lord himself, will come as ruler and shepherd of Israel.
- **A servant**, humble and unimpressive, will suffer rejection, torture, and death for sins that others have committed.

The ancient prophecies were sometimes hard to match to Jesus in the minds of those who saw things unfolding in real time. They knew some of these prophecies, but they didn't think they belonged together.

There were three major figures that were prophesied: a king—the Messiah, the son of David—who was going to defeat enemies and rule wisely and well. He'd be a descendant of David who picked up where David left off and be a great king who would set things right again.

But there were also prophecies that Yahweh, the Lord himself, would come as the ruler and shepherd of Israel. In Ezekiel and elsewhere, God promised to do this. It's as if he was saying, "If you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself." So Yahweh is going to come and rule himself where all other leaders have failed (Ezekiel 34:11–16).

There's a third line of prophecies—especially in the servant songs of the prophet Isaiah—about someone who is humble and unimpressive, who's going to suffer rejection and torture and death for sins that other people committed. "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:3–4). The prophecies of this suffering servant didn't sound very kingly. He didn't sound like God in his great power and majesty or like a mighty king in the line of David. And so, nobody imagined that the kingly Son of David, the Messiah, and Yahweh himself, and the suffering servant could all be the same person. That's how it turned out, but nobody could see it until after Jesus' death and resurrection.

Still, on closer examination, there were indications that the three lines of prophecy (Messiah, Yahweh, suffering servant) belonged together.

Jeremiah prophesied, "'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior'" (Jeremiah 23:5–6). So Jeremiah prophesies this King, the Son of David, but then says he would be called Yahweh our Righteous Savior. So human king and divine Lord were not so easily separated after all.

Isaiah said, "The Lord will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God" (Isaiah 52:10). The prophet went on, "Who has believed our message? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1). That arm of the Lord—his power—was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, familiar with suffering (Isaiah 53:3). "He was pierced for our transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5). Even though these

lines of prophecy were separate in the minds of most people, Isaiah suggested a connection between Yahweh's mighty arm and this suffering servant.

The Messiah, the Lord Yahweh, and the suffering servant turned out not to be three separate figures but one: Jesus Christ. All these things in the Old Testament come rushing together and match up in the life of Christ. When you look at Jesus, you are seeing the Word written matching up with the Word made flesh for our salvation.

So again, if you're asking that question, "Why would I believe in Jesus and not somebody else? Why would I believe the Bible and not some other book?"—well, there is nobody else like Jesus. And there is no other book like the Bible. There is no match between any other person and any other book like there is between Jesus and the Bible.

Fullness of God, second Adam

If we go back all the way to the beginning, the first sentence of the Old Testament says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The Gospel of John builds on that: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:1–3). When Jesus was pointing out the things about himself in the Scriptures, he didn't just point to messages about a great prophet or suffering Servant or details of Palm Sunday and someone riding on a donkey. Those are all true of him, but it's also true to say that Jesus is the Word who was God. Jesus is the one who created the heavens and the earth.

He is Yahweh, the great I Am. Jesus says "I am" again and again. "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11), "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12), "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25), and, "Before Abraham was born, I am" (John 8:58).

When you read the Scriptures, you find that Jesus is the fullness of all that God is (Colossians 1:19, 2:9), and not only that, but also the fulfillment of everything humanity was meant to be.

If you read further in Genesis 1, "God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over all the earth'" (Genesis 1:26). Man—male and female—was intended to govern well on God's behalf, to bring the highest praise to God of all his creatures, and to govern all the other creatures God made. When humanity fell into sin, that made a mess of everything else too. It affected the whole creation.

But the Bible calls Jesus "the second Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45). "As in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22). "Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Corinthians 15:49).

Jesus is not only God, but he has also come to be the second Adam and to give humanity a brand-new beginning. "If anyone is in Christ—new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). It doesn't just say *he is a new creation*, as some translators have it. It says, "new creation"—everything. A redo of the whole universe is what Christ has come to bring about; not just to save individual souls, but to transform the world and the entire creation that God originally brought into being. If you

are in Christ, united to him through faith, you are united to the new creation, and of course you are yourself a new creation.

Light for all nations

In the Old Testament, God chose a people for himself, Abraham and his descendants. He chose Abram because he loved Abraham and because he intended to bless Abraham's descendants, but those weren't the only reasons God chose Abraham and his offspring. God told him, "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3). God chose Abraham and his seed—the Jewish people, the people of Israel—to bless all nations. And God said of his servant, the coming Messiah: "I will make you a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6).

Jesus picked up on that. After explaining the Scriptures that had come together in his death and resurrection, Jesus said: "Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations" (Luke 24:47).

God's great plan for the whole world has come true in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why Jesus is not just a Jewish person for Jews only. He's not a European for Europeans, as some artwork makes him look. He is the Savior of all nations.

Anybody can have him, and everybody needs him—both of these things are true. There's nobody who can't belong to God through faith in Jesus Christ. And there's nobody who already has another way to get forgiveness and eternal life without needing Jesus. "Forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations" (Luke 24:47). The good news is for everybody. "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Nobody else can do what Jesus does.

Everything I've been saying is just a sample of the kinds of things those disciples would have heard from the lips of Jesus that day: "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you: that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms"—those three great divisions of the Old Testament—"must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44).

The key that unlocks

Jesus is the key that unlocks everything. He unlocks the meaning of the ancient Scriptures about himself, and he unlocks our hearts to receive him and his truth. "Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem'" (Luke 24:45–47).

You might say, "Okay, I agree. Jesus is the Savior and the Bible is true. Thank you, Pastor—I already knew that." But some might not already know that. Some may waver and struggle and wonder, "Why should I believe in Christ? Why should I believe the Bible?" It is no trouble to me to remind you again why you should believe the Bible and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

For some this is not just a matter of nodding your head and agreeing that Jesus is who he says he is, and the Bible is true. When you stand at a grave, can you believe what God says in the Bible? Did Jesus rise, or didn't he? Much of the time, it's no big deal to spend some time at church on a Sunday and have some beliefs. But when you're at the edge of a loved one's grave, or when you're thinking about your own destiny, then can you believe the Bible? Is Jesus the resurrection and the life? Did he really, really conquer death? If you know this for sure in the most dire situation, that's when you're standing on bedrock.

This is the gospel. When the apostle Paul had to summarize the gospel, he said, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). When you're summarizing the gospel, that's it: Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. This is what unlocks everything. This is the gospel that opens the doors to eternal life. Jesus, by his Holy Spirit, is the one who opens the doors of our heart. He's the one who opens the gates of heaven.

Forgiveness of sins is proclaimed in his name (Luke 24:47). Do you want to come to the end of your life and not know where forgiveness of sins comes from? Don't you want to know that forgiveness of sins comes in his name? That's how a do-over is possible. Repentance is a do-over. You get to turn away from wickedness and turn back to God. And that's only possible because Jesus invites you to do so, because he says, "There is forgiveness of sins in my name. All that stuff in the past that messes things up? Forget about it. Leave it with me. I've taken care of it. I paid for it with my own blood." Repent and turn to God, and every day of your life, keep turning to God and keep walking with him.

Jesus is the key that unlocks the meaning of Scripture. Scripture is the key that unlocks the meaning of Jesus' life. And both Scripture and Jesus unlock, through the gospel, the gates of heaven to all who believe in him.

Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you so much for your gospel. Thank you for your marvelous saving death, the precious blood that redeems us from all evil, and your wondrous resurrection—your victory over death, the victory that is just the firstfruits, and that our own victory over death is coming as well.

Thank you, Lord, that we can look forward to seeing you face to face when we die and when our bodies are raised again. We celebrate every Sunday, your resurrection on that first day of the week, and we celebrate afresh today, as we've heard the good news of your gospel declared in advance in Moses and the Prophets and in the Writings, and come true in wonderful ways in your life. Strengthen our faith each day, that we may stand firm in you. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

The Ultimate Bible Teacher

By David Feddes

Slide Contents

- Why be a Christian rather than follow some other religion?
- Why believe the Bible when many people believe other “sacred” books?
- Why trust Jesus when many people count on other guides?

- The Bible proves Jesus is trustworthy.
- Jesus proves the Bible is trustworthy.

Jesus opens Scriptures to us

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself... They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24:27, 32)

Jesus opens us to Scriptures

“These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. (Luke 24:44, 45)

- In opening Scriptures, Jesus opens our minds and warms our hearts.
- Old Testament Scriptures point ahead to Jesus in many ways.
- Knowing Jesus helps us make sense of the Old Testament.

Beginning with Moses

- Serpent would strike Savior (Gen 3:15)
- A ram died in place of Isaac (Gen 22:13)
- Passover lamb died for firstborn (Ex 12)
- Day of Atonement (Lev 16)
- Serpent lifted up on a pole (Num 21)
- The Lord said to Moses, “I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him.” (Deut 18:18)

Prophets

- The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. (Isaiah 7:14).
- But you, Bethlehem ... out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. (Micah 5:2).
- Out of Egypt I called my son (Hos. 11:1).
- In the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles... The people walking in darkness have seen a great light (Isaiah 9:1-2).

Miracles

Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. (Isaiah 35:5)

“The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.” (Mt. 11:3-5)

Palm Sunday

- 800 years earlier: “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord... With branches in hand, join in the festal procession.” (Psalm 118:26-27)
- 500+ years earlier: “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.” (Zechariah 9:9)

Betrayal and arrest

Judas: “Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me.” (Psalm 41:9)

All disciples fled: “Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.” (Zech. 13:7)

Back whipped, face punched, spit upon: “I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.” (Isaiah 50:6; 700 B.C.)

Crucifixion and Death

Psalm 22, 1000 BC:

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

“They have pierced my hands and my feet... They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing.”

“He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him.”

“My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.”

Not one of his bones will be broken. (Exodus 12:46, Psalm 34:20)

They will look on the one they have pierced. (Zechariah 12:10)

He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death. (Isaiah 53:9)

Resurrection

You will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. (Psalm 16)

The forsaken, pierced one will live and rejoice and bring far-off nations to the Lord. (Psalm 22)

After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied. (Isaiah 53)

Sabbath Signposts

- **Sabbath day:** Every seventh day, people and animals must rest. This expressed creation rhythm and Exodus liberation.
- **Sabbath year:** Every seventh year, the land must rest. No tilling or planting was allowed.
- **Jubilee:** Every 7x7 years, a super-Sabbath year, Jubilee, was a time to free all slaves, cancel all debts, restore to each family their land, and get life back on track. This was a once-in-a lifetime Exodus for everybody.

Feasts

- **Passover:** A lamb's blood was poured out so that people would not perish. Jesus died the day Passover lambs are sacrificed.
- **Feast of Firstfruits:** The first day of the week after the high Sabbath following Passover. Jesus arose on that day as "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:20)
- **Feast of Weeks (Pentecost):** 7x7 days after Firstfruits, it was a day to celebrate fuller harvest. Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on this day, seven weeks after his resurrection.

Tabernacle/temple is where:

- Heaven meets earth.
- God comes near.
- God's glory shines.
- Sacrifice covers sin.
- God's reign is celebrated.
- All nations seek God.
- Death is destroyed.

Three figures in prophecy

- **A king**, the Messiah, Son of David, will defeat enemies and rule wisely and well.
- **Yahweh**, the Lord himself, will come as ruler and shepherd of Israel.
- **A servant**, humble and unimpressive, will suffer rejection, torture, and death for sins that others have committed.

Nobody imagined that the king, Yahweh, and the servant could be the same person.

King and Yahweh

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: Yahweh Our Righteous Savior." (Jeremiah 23:5-7)

Arm of Yahweh: ruling king, suffering servant

Yahweh will lay bare his holy arm in the sight of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God... Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of Yahweh been revealed... He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering... He was pierced for our transgressions. (Isaiah 52-53)

New Adam, new creation

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth... God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion ... over all the earth. (Genesis 1:1, 26)

In the beginning was the Word. (John 1:1).

Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Cor 15:49)

To all nations

In you [Abram] all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (Genesis 12:3)

I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth. (Isaiah 49:6)

Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations. (Luke 24:47)

Fulfilled: "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Luke 24:44)

The key that unlocks

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 24:45-47)