

The Greatest Story Ever Told

The Purpose & Power of Scripture

HOLY BIBLE

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ASCRIBE PUBLICATIONS

— Matt. 13:44-52 —

“BECAUSE I WILL PUBLISH THE NAME OF THE LORD:
ASCRIBE YE GREATNESS UNTO OUR GOD”

“The Purpose & Power of Scripture”



“Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Peter 1:20-21)

The first thing anyone desirous to search the Scriptures of the Bible must understand, is that the Scriptures were never intended to be interpreted according to each individual's private judgment. Though it is true there are many Christian denominations, founded on various different interpretations of Scripture, there is in reality only one true interpretation of Scripture, and only One true Interpreter. As it states in the verses quoted above, *“the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”*

The Holy Ghost is the true Author of the Scriptures, not the various names of holy men which appear at the heading of each book. The apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, echoed the sentiment of Peter when he said,

“For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God..” (1 Thessalonians 2:13)

Unlike the holy men of old which have long since passed away, the Holy Spirit who Authored the Scriptures, yet lives, and will ever live to guide us into the correct understanding of the Scriptures.

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.” (John 16:13)

Many attempt to understand the meaning of the Bible, but fail, because they do not sincerely humble themselves and ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance to comprehend the purpose of God. Human intelligence, regardless of how academically advanced, is insufficient to interpret the purpose of God in the design and execution of His holy word.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (2 Timothy 3:16)

The Scriptures did not come from man, on the contrary, they were “given” to man. If the Scriptures were given by God, then the Scriptures are the gift of God. But, for what purpose? According to the verse in 2 Timothy 3:16, the Scriptures were given to us “for doctrine,” which means, teaching us what is good and right in the sight of God. They were given “for reproof and correction,” which means, instructing us upon what is evil in the sight of God.

The combination of teaching what is good and right in the sight of God, and what is evil in the sight of God, is summarized in the phrase “for instruction in righteousness.” So the purpose of the Scriptures is to impart to us instruction in righteousness, by enlightening us upon what is right, and what is evil in the sight of God. This gift of the Scriptures was “given by inspiration,” by “the moving of the Holy Ghost.” But what does this mean really?

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you..” (Acts 1:8)

“The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee..” (Luke 1:35)

“The Holy Ghost” operates with “the power of God.” So that the Scriptures then are the gift of God, given to us by the power of God, for the purpose of instruction in righteousness. The Holy Ghost inspired the thoughts of holy men, and holy men expressed those thoughts in human language and vocabulary thereby producing the word of God.

One might ask, “There are many books claiming to be God inspired, what sets the Bible apart from other so-called holy writings?” God Himself gives the answer in the Old Testament this way.

“I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done..” (Isaiah 46:9-10)

Jesus in the New Testament echoes the same truth this way. *“I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.” (John 14:29)*

The Bible is unique from all other books which claim Divine Authorship, in that a large portion of the Scriptures are dedicated to outlining the history of earth in advance. The prophecies of the Bible depict a successive panorama of earth’s history from ancient times to the end of time. God, has staked His claim as God, upon this foretelling of Earth’s history. And God has issued a challenged within the pages of Scripture to any other entity that would lay claims to being a god.

“Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel...I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them...

have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any:” (Isaiah 44:6-8)

With God it is not enough to forecast random events, which could apply to any time or place. God says “declare in order the things that are coming, and shall come.” This is God’s way of saying, when He foretells history, He will set it in order, “this is coming, and after that, this shall come” in perfect succession without fail. God is very bold in His challenge to other would be gods, and to those who worship them. He invites them to come together, and counsel together, or in other words, to unite their forces and combine their wisdom, and prove themselves to be His equal.

“Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen...declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods:...Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooses you...Behold, they are all vanity; their works are nothing: their molten images are wind and confusion.” (Isaiah 41:21-24,29;)

“Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together.. they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” (Isaiah 45:20-22)

The true purpose of Bible prophecy is brought to light in the verses quoted above. All the foretelling of earth's history in perfect order, is to draw the attention of humanity to the one true God as the only source of salvation. That through a knowledge of God we might be saved from the sin which results in death, and that we may obtain the Divine gift of righteousness that leads to eternal life. Jesus Christ Himself echoed this connection between prophecy and salvation when He lived and taught among humanity.

“Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.” (John 13:19)

“Be it known unto you all...that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:10-12)

So whereas the apostle Paul speaking by inspiration of the Holy Ghost taught that the Scriptures were given for “instruction in righteousness,” we find that both the Old and New Testament Scriptures point us to Jesus Christ our Lord as being our Righteousness.

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth...and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness.” (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

“Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.” (Philippians 1:11)

The Scriptures were given for instruction in righteousness, and that instruction that leads to righteousness, leads to Jesus Christ. God has used His unique ability to perfectly foresee the future in order, to set Himself, and His word apart. He has ordained the word of prophecy as a light to guide sincere souls through the mystifying array of “spiritual” beliefs that darken the understanding. Yet the ultimate purpose of God’s prophetic word is to lead His lost children to accept the righteousness and salvation found only in Jesus Christ our Lord.

In fact, the very first Scripture quoted at the beginning of this discourse, which lays down the rules of how to interpret the inspired prophecies of the Bible, is preceded by a verse which outlines what the ultimate purpose of prophecy is.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” (2 Peter 1:19-20)

And what is this “Day Star” that is to arise in our hearts? Or rather who?

“I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things...I am...the bright and morning star.” (Revelation 22:16)

So Jesus testifies of Himself, He is the bright and Morning (Day) Star, which according to the words of Peter, “will arise in our hearts” as we “take heed” to the “sure word of prophecy.” Paul also writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, repeats the same sentiment using different language, by which he brings more clarity to the thought.

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:6)

According to this verse, the “light of the knowledge of the glory of God” that is to “arise in our hearts,” is seen in the “face of Jesus Christ.” And how does the book of Revelation describe the “face” of Jesus Christ?

“And He (Christ) had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and His countenance (face) was as the sun (Day Star) shineth in His strength.” (Revelation 1:16)

Though there are prophecies throughout the Scriptures, the books of Daniel and Revelation contain the most clear chronology of earth’s history, from ancient time to the end of time. The same history is repeated several times using different illustrations that elaborate and magnify the details of key points.

In the book of Daniel, four world empires are foretold beginning from the time in which Daniel lived. Babylon being the first of these world empires would be conquered. Each successive kingdom would rise and fall until the fourth kingdom. The fourth kingdom though it would be weakened and lose its former dominance, was to continue in a new form, with a new element until the end of time, when a confederacy of “all nations” would be formed and darken the earth with wickedness. (Daniel chapters 2, 7, 8, 11-12) But to what are these prophetic events leading to?

The climax of earth’s history, when the “Day Star” Himself, Jesus Christ shall appear in all His glory, the event famously known as the second coming of Christ.

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (Matthew 24:27)

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” (2 Thessalonians 2:8)

Between now and that time the invitation of pardon is offered to every human soul who will believe the word of God. The wickedness and sin that keeps us in bondage to different levels immoral behavior is to be broken. The heart is to be changed, and the mind renewed. The severed relationship between each soul and God is to be re-established, and our weakness to sin is to be overcome. How are these impossible changes to be accomplished?

“Where the word of a king is, there is power..” (Ecclesiastes 8:4)

“The word of God is quick, and powerful..” (Hebrews 4:12)

God who is the King of everything, has more than simple authoritative power when He speaks His word. According to the Biblical account in Genesis chapter one, the word of God has literal creative power. That simply means His word has the power to produce from nothing, something that was not there prior to His word being spoken.

But what are the Scriptures of God’s word designed to produce in those who are led by God’s Spirit to investigate its pages?

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17)

The word of God is intended to produce belief, faith, and trust in the heart of every human being, willing to take God at His word. This belief however is not static and unchanging. God speaks of His word by the illustration of a seed that is ever increasing in strength, producing growth, and developing fruit in the lives of those who receive it, and continue in it.

“Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.” (Luke 8:11)

“So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; ...and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” (Mark 4:26-28)

The word of God produces and strengthens the faith and relationship between God and every believer. Like a plant that grows from the tender blade to the full fruit, so does righteousness appear in the children of God, from the first sign of true genuine belief, to the full fruit of perfect obedience to the will of God.

And what does that first blade of righteousness look like in the experience of the true Christian?

“The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:8-10)

Like a seed in the natural world germinates under ground producing roots before the blade is seen on the surface, so does the word of God germinate in the heart

producing faith and love towards God with repentance before the blade of confessing the Lord Jesus appears from the mouth. That repentance and confession, which is produced in the heart by receiving the seed of God's word, is a literal miracle of Divine power at work in the life of the one that realizes their need of salvation. This is why such an event is the cause of celebration in the courts of heaven.

"I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke 15:10)

Anyone who has every planted a garden knows the joy of seeing that first blade break through the surface, but if the seed did not develop beyond that point and bear the expected fruit, there would be much disappointment. So it is with the first blade of faith in Christ as the Savior of the world. If our belief does not grow to produce the expected fruit of obedience, our lives will prove a disappointment.

In the natural world the blade must continue to grow or die. It must continue to appropriate the elements necessary for its growth, such as the showers of rain and light from the heavens, and the vivifying air that moves upon it when the wind blows. In like manner, so must the blade of our first belief either grow or die. It must continue to appropriate the elements for its growth.

"Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it." (Isaiah 45:8)

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven... watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I

please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” (Isaiah 55:10-11)

“The entrance of thy words giveth light..” (Psalm 119:130)

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” (John 3:8)

The word of God which first plants the seed of righteousness, is also the light and rain from heaven that maintains and strengthens the blade of righteousness once it is produced. The Holy Spirit is the vivifying wind that guides us in our DAILY study and assimilation of God’s word morning and evening. He it is that brings to our remembrance the promises of God’s word, that we may ask God to fulfill those promises to us during our DAILY prayers morning and evening. It is Him who gives us what to speak when we are called to witness for our faith. The true Christian is never alone.

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (John 14:26)

“..for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us... And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” (Romans 8:26-27)

“But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that

hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.” (Mark 13:11)

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” (John 14:16-18)

“...how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13)

You the reader, all of heaven is waiting in anxious suspense to see how you shall treat the word of God. Will you give God the opportunity to prove Himself worthy of your love and devotion?

Will you take the simple step of asking God to give you the Holy Spirit to guide you into all the truth of the Bible, and investigate if the things you have just read are true?

Yes? _____

“These were more noble...in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11)

Or No? _____

“Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34)



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