

# The Greatest Bible Study Ever

The Key to Unlocking Scripture

**23** and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.

**24** Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”

**25** And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

**26** Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”

**27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

**28** So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther,

**29** but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them.

**30** When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them.

**31** And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

**32** 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?”

**33** And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,

**34** saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!”

**35** Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

**36** As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!”

**37** But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit.

**38** And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?”

39 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.”

40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.

41 And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”

42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish,

43 and he took it and ate before them.

44 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.”

45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,

46 and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,

47 and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

(Luke 24:23-47)<sup>1</sup>

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## How Should We Interpret the Scripture?

*How should we interpret the Scripture?* This is one of the **most practical** and **important** questions I can think to ask. As I do, hear what I’m not asking. I’m not asking if the Bible is “literal” or “allegorical” or “historical” or something like that. That’s a question that often trips people up. These are actually categories related not to the Bible as a whole, but to the subcategory of *genre*. The Bible has many genres. It’s

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<sup>1</sup> It is not self-evident why I choose this as the text, so see the two chiasm’s beginning and endings below.

not all to be taken literally, nor is it all to be taken poetically nor all allegorically, and so on. But I'm not asking that question today.

Perhaps a different way to ask the question this. “*What does the Bible mean?*” I fear that most people today, including many conservative Christians, will answer that the way a liberal answers the question of the Constitution of the United States. The liberal doctrine is called the “*living document*” view. It's the idea that the Constitution is fluid in meaning and essentially, each personal can make up whatever meaning they want and it is valid. Of course, it's not usually put that crassly, but that's the gist of it and every manner of evil has been justified through this subjective, postmodern answer. Put simply, it denies that there is a fixed meaning or, as some will say, if there was, it either changes over time or we could never figure it out anyway.

Why would I say this is how many Christians would answer the question about the Bible? It's because this is precisely how they go about *doing Bible studies*. You sit around a circle, read your passage, and then each person in turn answer the question, “*What does this mean to you?*” “*Well, to me this means ...*” and you end up with as many

different meanings as there are people in the room. I most certainly believe in a fixed and intended meaning of the Scripture and I reject this answer for the Bible (and for that matter, for the Constitution). But because that's how people answer, maybe that's still not the best way to ask the question.

How about this one. [What is the Bible about?](#) On one level, that question is like the first, because in the narrow sense, the Bible is about lots of things that other parts are not about. Genesis 1 is about Creation. Genesis 3 is about the Fall. Luke 1-2 is about Jesus' birth. Luke 3 is about his baptism. And so on.

But there is a broad way to answer it and I think this starts to get at what the other two questions should also be getting to. Can we say that as a whole the Bible is about any one thing? Is there [any subject that brings them all together?](#) My answer is, yes. Let's assume I'm right. How can we know?

Perhaps you will say, "[It's the Bible, so it is about God.](#)" I would ask, how do you know that? Can you come up with an objective answer or did you just make it up because it sounded pious? I would say that [we do have an objective](#)

answer that gets us there, and God is the answer, kind of. But “God” is actually too broad. Why would I say that? Off of what do I base my answer?

I base it off of [what the Bible itself tells me](#), because I believe the Bible answers this question very directly. That is, it tells us how to interpret it, it tells us what it means, and it tells us what it is about, it tells us what brings the whole thing together, and the answer in all cases is the very same thing. And the answer is not “[whatever I want it to be.](#)” The answer is [found in Luke 24.](#)

## Luke 24: Context and Structure

We saw last time that Luke 24 is [one long chapter](#) that begins with a formal historical overview of the events of resurrection morning ([Luke 24:1-12](#)), but then extends those events to later that afternoon, on into the night, and then finishes up some point a few days later when Christ ascends into heaven. We looked at the entire thing at once because the way Luke structured the passage, what came after the morning resurrection events actually [supported Jesus’ resurrection](#). Indeed, it was chiastically structured so that the resurrection was at the center not just of the first 12 verses, but

of vv. 13-35 and 13-53, and even 1-53. Here's one example we did not see last time.

- A.) Prophecy: The Messiah to suffer and enter into His glory (Luke 24:25-26)
- B.) He interpreted in all the Scriptures (the Law and Prophets) the things concerning Himself (27)
- C.) He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them (28-30)
- D.) Their eyes were opened and they knew Him (31a)
- E.) He vanished from their sight (31b)
- F.) Their hearts burned within them while He talked with them on the road (32)
- G.) **The Lord is risen indeed! (33-34)**
- F'.) They told about the things that happened on the road (35)
- E'.) Jesus appeared in their midst (36)
- D'.) Do not doubt, but handle Me and see that it is I Myself (37-40)
- C'.) They gave Him a piece of broiled fish and honeycomb, and He ate it in their presence (41-43)
- B'.) He opened their minds that they might comprehend the Law, Prophets, and Psalms (44-45)
- A'.) Prophecy: It was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day (46-47)<sup>2</sup>

But there is more than one structure occurring at the same time in this chapter and they work off of each other. In one way of looking at vv. 23-34, we actually find the center being **Luke 24:27**, “**And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**” This in fact played off a complicated structure where “**Jesus is Alive**” (it's beginning) was actually the *middle* of a larger one. In this way, what

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<sup>2</sup> Modified from Christine Miller, “[Luke 24](#),” *A Little Perspective* (April 5, 2016).

Jesus interpreted for his disciples becomes the context of what he looked at in the OT.

- A. Jesus is alive (23)
- B. Those with us (24)
- C. Went to tomb (24)
- D. Told a God Story (24)
- E. Not see him (24)
- F. Spiritual ignorance (25)
- G. Heart believe (25)
- H. Word-speaking (25)
- I. Christ suffers (26)
- J. Enter into glory (26)
- K. Beginning (27)
- L. All Scriptures (27)
- L'. Show Jesus (27)
- K'. Ending/evening (29)
- J'. Enter into home (29)
- I'. The bread broken (30)
- H'. Bread giving (30)
- G'. Eyes see (31)
- F'. Knowing Jesus (31)
- E'. He vanished (31)
- D'. Tell God's Word (32)
- C'. Went to Jerusalem (33)
- B'. Those with them (33)
- A'. The Lord is Risen (34)<sup>3</sup>

Another way to say this is that *Jesus*, specifically **his death and resurrection** (first chiasm), are the center of the meaning and purpose of the OT (second chiasm). Now, Jesus is God. And so OT is about God. But Jesus is more specific. He is the

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<sup>3</sup> Andrew Olsen, "[BGP Chiastic Chiasm Luke 24 Road to Emmaus](#)," *YouTube* (July 27, 2012). Also Andrew Olsen, "[BGP Chiastic Chiasm Luke 24 Road to Emmaus Poster Show](#)," *YouTube* (May 22, 2012).

way God has revealed himself to us. If we've seen him, we've seen the Father. If we do not see him, we cannot know the Father as he truly is. He says that the Scripture is about him, and specifically it is about his death and resurrection. This then becomes **the inspired biblical answer to how we should interpret the Bible**, to what the Bible means, to what the Bible is about. This is what we will look at more specifically now.

## He “Interpreted.”

Very importantly, the verse says that Jesus “*interpreted*” to them (**Luke 24:27**). This is the verb *diermēneusen*. It's noun equivalent is *hermēneuō*, and it's where we get the word hermeneutics from. **Hermeneutics** is **the art and science of biblical interpretation**. Hermeneutics is how we interpret the Bible. Jesus is *interpreting* the Bible for the disciples. It's not a dictation. It's not a test with only x number of passages. It's not some secret that only the Apostles would end up having the answer to. It's a Master Class from the Master Himself.

Luke tells us exactly how he does it. “**He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**” **The Scripture is about ME**, he is telling them. I'm its purpose.



I'm its goal. I'm its end. I'm the reason you have it. More specifically, it is about my coming to earth to suffer, die, and be raised on the third day.

Now, when it says, “**Scripture**” here, what does it mean? You can't read your situation into Luke. You say, of course the NT is about him. But Jesus isn't taking them through the NT. There **was no NT**. It means what we call the **Old Testament**. The OT is about him! The NT was in the process of being written, and of course it will follow suit. But specifically, it refers to the “**Moses and all the Prophets.**”

This was one of several ways of **summing up what the OT contained**. It contained **Moses**, who wrote the Law (what we call the Pentateuch or Torah, the first five books) and the **Prophets**. You might be saying, “**But isn't there more in the OT than that?**” And the answer is yes. But if that's true, how can it all be about him if it is only Moses and the Prophets? That's why it's so helpful to **understand Luke's structure, or at the very least, just keep reading**. He repeats the same thing later in **vs. 44**.

“**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.**” This verse adds, “**The Psalms**” to the list. You might still be thinking, but what about **Proverbs** or **history books** or something like that.

Now you need a lesson on the **Jewish ordering of the OT**. Remember, these are 39 separate books, but they are put into a very specific order. They categorize all 39 into one of **three categories**. First, there is Moses, or what they call the *Torah* meaning “**Teaching**.” These are the first five books. Next is the *Nevi'im*. This literally translates as “**The Prophets**.” It includes not only all the books you think of as prophets (Isaiah to Malachi), but also Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. Finally, there is the *Ketuvim* or “**Writings**.” This list includes everything else (Prov, Psalms, Job, Esther, Ruth, etc.).<sup>4</sup> Luke is simply using a way of ordering them that we are more familiar with because we follow him: Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. But it's the exact same thing. The point is, it's the whole thing.

Why does this matter? Let me tell you, **it couldn't matter more**. God didn't give you the Bible because it is somehow about you. It isn't about your situation. It isn't about your

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<sup>4</sup> It technically doesn't include Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, or Chronicles because they were written at a late date according to the Rabbis, but it is easy to see that those fit into the larger categories.

feelings. It isn't about your country. It isn't about your politics. And you must not miss why this matters.

Jesus gives the importance in John's counterpart to Luke. The scene is in Jerusalem (**John 5**). He has just healed a man on the Sabbath and the Jews were furious. They were **persecuting** him (**16**) and sought to "**kill him**" (**18**). Let that sink in, because this gets at the heart of not understanding what we are about to hear.

Jesus begins to prove to them that he has the right to do this. "**The Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen**" (**37**). But, he says to them, "**You do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent. You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life**" (**38-39**). Do you see what Jesus just did?

He told them all those years earlier what he now tells his disciples after his resurrection in a very different context. It's the **same thing**. The Scriptures are about him. He is their point. He is their purpose. He is their beginning and their end. To see this and to know this is, he says **life itself**. That's

what's at stake here. It is eternal life. To not see Jesus is to miss eternal life. But to see Jesus where he is at, in the Scriptures, this is life itself. And it is life that begins and then keeps growing, like physical life, throughout your life. In other words, this is not something that ever gets old or boring or tiresome. It is a well-spring of life.

It's *that old song* we used to sing in youth groups. “I’ve got a river of life flowing out of me.” Where does that language come from? It’s found in **Revelation 22:1**, “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Christ!

But John actually gets the language from the OT! *The Psalms*: “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High” (**Ps 46:4**). This speaks of Jerusalem ... from above, for there is no river that flows through Jerusalem that would match this language.

*The Prophets*: It was foreseen in Ezekiel’s square temple. “Then [the angel] brought me back to the door of the temple, and behold, *water* was issuing from below the threshold of the temple toward the east ... and it flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, and enters

the [Dead] Sea; when the water flows into the sea, *the water will become fresh*. And wherever the river goes, *every living creature that swarms will live*” (Ezek 47:1,8-9). Joel also sings of it, “And in that day the mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all *the streambeds of Judah shall flow with water*; and a fountain shall come forth from the house of the LORD” (Joel 3:18).

And **what is that river?** It is Christ himself, the Living Water (John 4:10). As the song continues, “**Makes the lame to walk and the blind to see. Opens prison’s doors, sets the captives free.**” “*Spring up, O well, with my soul.*” That’s taken from *Moses: Numbers 21:17*. The whole Scripture is about Christ.

Learning this lesson for the first time then is what it means when they said, “**Did not our hearts burn within us?**” (32). Now, this sounds similar to something probably better known in **Mormonism** than in Reformed Baptist circles. They speak of the “**Burning in the Bosom.**” It comes from their book the Doctrines and Covenants, “**But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is**

right. But *if it be not right you shall have no such feelings*, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong; therefore, you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me” (D&C 9:8-9).

You’ll find a ton of discussion of this in Mormon circles, but as with the Bible, *context is everything*. This arose because Joseph Smith, who was telling everyone he was having these visions, was communicating them to a scribe, a man named Oliver Cowdery. Bowman writes,

Apparently, Oliver also wanted to translate ancient records and tried to do some translation of his own. In response, Joseph Smith wrote out what we now have as Doctrine & Covenants section 9. Joseph Smith told Cowdery that the Lord had given him this revelation, which tells Cowdery to be content with acting as Smith’s scribe rather than doing some of the translating. In this revelation, the Lord supposedly told Cowdery that part of the inspired translation process was waiting to get *a feeling* that the translation is right. Specifically, the inspired translator’s “bosom” would “burn within” him when the translation was right. If it was “not right,” then the translator would “*have no such feelings*” and would even “forget the thing which is wrong” ... The LDS apologetics

organization FAIR defends this belief [by saying it is] the same concept as recorded in Luke 24:32.<sup>5</sup>

Is it? Read carefully. For the Mormon, it is *the feeling that confirms truth*. If you don't have the feeling, then it isn't truth. That's literally what it says. Now, it specifically applies this to knowing if Joseph's translations were correct or not, but this is precisely how Mormons apply it to everything else about their faith. In other words, *they know they are right because they have a burning in their bosom*. Sadly, I think many Christians, especially in more Charismatic circles justify whatever they believe and do on the same principle. It's right because I have *a feeling*.

Now, imagine what this does to people who grow up in it but never have the feeling? I promise you, that's many of them. But they can't admit it, because they would be ostracized. So they fake it. They lie. They don't want to be shown to their family and friends to not have the feeling. What a horrible pressure to live under. What a terrible test of truth.

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<sup>5</sup> Robert M. Bowman Jr., "[Mormons and the 'Burning in the Bosom' \(D&C 9:8\)](#)," *Institute for Religious Research* (June 30, 2011).

Now, this may very well be why us **stodgy Reformed people** never talk about feelings. But that's not right either. I can tell you from personal experience that on many occasions I get **the strangest sensations**, usually chills or shivers, but not exactly, when I start to really talk about the deep things of God. I have nothing else to compare that with than this. I truly believe that **the Holy Spirit can and often does give Christians feelings** that they can't explain. Paul talks about it in prayer, with groans that words cannot express. That's part of being in a real, vital relationship with him.

But again, the problem is, what if I don't *feel* that? Wouldn't that mean I'm not a Christian? Why, yes, it would mean that, *if truth was rooted in the feeling*. But that isn't what Luke says at all. **Joseph** got this, as so many other things, **exactly backwards**. It isn't true *because* I have a feeling. The feeling comes because it is true. But God is no under no obligation to give such feelings to anyone. He did it here for our sake. So that we might know that ***truth grounds the feeling***, not feeling that grounds the truth.

But **it isn't just "truth" generically** that Luke actually has in mind. It is specifically *the truth about Jesus Christ having been predicted to die on the cross and rise on the third day according to the*



*Scriptures*. In other words, it is the testimony of the Word of God itself that becomes a fire. This is precisely what Jeremiah says over and over again. “Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord” (Jer 23:29). It’s the Word that is the Fire, because the Word is alive, living and active and shaper than any double-edged sword. As our confession says, we know that the Word is true, not because of a feeling, but because it is the very Word of God. “The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, depends not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God (who is truth itself), the author thereof; therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God” (LBC 1.4).

Listen to Jeremiah again. “I will make my words in your mouth a fire and these people the wood it consumes” (5:14), God tells the prophet. This doesn’t exactly thrill Jeremiah, because he knows the consequences all too well, because sometimes that word is not good news, but bad. “But,” he laments, “if I say, ‘I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,’ his word is in my heart like a burning fire, shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in, indeed, I cannot” (20:9).

You see? The reality is, the fire is not actually some emotional campfire experience rooted *in an experience* or perhaps heartburn from having too much pizza the night before. The fire is itself the Word of God burning in someone's heart. Our Confession continues, “We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church of God to a high and reverent esteem of the Holy Scriptures; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof, are arguments whereby it does abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, *is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts*” (LBC 1.5). This is not Mormonism. The Holy Spirit is not a feeling or a force. **He is a person** communicating truth to you personally. Jeremiah uses a very similar idea. He calls it “**The Name.**” And this leads me to something I want to focus on for a few minutes.

## How Is Jesus in the OT?

When I went to one of my favorite resources in Logos, David A. Jones' *Old Testament Quotations and Allusions in the New Testament*, and looked up **Luke 24:27**, it gave me three passages: **Psalm 22**; **Isaiah 53**; **Deuteronomy 18**. This was a **clever thing** to do. He chose one passage from **Moses**, one from the **Prophets**, and one from the **Psalms**.

What he chose was probably the most visible, known passages where the OT talks about Jesus *in prophecy*. **Psalm 22** is the great psalm used more than any other to talk about **Jesus' death**. **Isaiah 53** is probably the most important of all OT passages that does the same, though it also adds **the resurrection**. And **Deuteronomy 18** is the great prophecy of the **coming Prophet**, which Peter will use in his sermons early in Acts.

Thinking about Luke 24's immediate context, these make good sense. The thing is, our minds really end up doing just what Jones does here. We go to prophecies about Jesus **and then stop**, thinking that this is all Jesus was doing. But it doesn't say he was showing them prophecies. It says he was *interpreting* the Scripture. In other words, how does the whole OT testify to him? How are they about him? Yes,

prophecies, of course. And we'll throw around numbers like there's 300 prophecies of Jesus in the OT. And that's a very powerful number to hear. But that's far from the totality of how the OT is about Christ.

Again, Luke does not actually say that Jesus was just telling them about prophecies. The Luke and John passages about himself in the OT are parallel, and Jesus seems to have **something broader in mind**. That is, it isn't just that a few prophecies are there in the OT and they missed them, so let me show them to you. It's that he was teaching them **how to read the totality of Scripture itself**.

Do you see? This wasn't just, **"Now turn in your Bible to Isaiah 53 and let me show you how that's me."** **It was that** (and Luke will even show us this explicitly in **Acts 8**). But **it wasn't just that**. Listen to the all-encompassing language. **"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"** (**Luke 24:25**). OT says prophets, not prophecies; whole books, not just snippets from them. A few passages here and there? No. **All that they have spoken**. **"And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scripture the things concerning himself"** (**27**).

That this includes even **more than his death and resurrection** as he himself tells them, “**Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem**” (46-47). It now includes the entire prediction of the church and evangelism and the doctrine of salvation. This, we are told, is things about Christ! And the fact is, Luke is ending his Gospel right here, because he has another 28 chapters where he’s going to unveil this truth to you in the book of Acts.

What I’m getting at here is that both the Luke 24 and John 5 passages are teaching us something **much deeper than just a prophecy here or there** is about Christ and then shut the book and move on. It’s literally that the entire Scripture is about him. With the time that remains, let me show you through John’s Prologue, just a hint of what this means. But first, I’ll start with a couple other passages that get at what I think John is doing to be going to him.

## *Jesus is Their God*

For me, the following **journey** really began as I was reading **Jude’s Gospel** (at some moments my favorite book of the

Bible) in the ESV. After reading only the NIV for years, I was struck by what I read when I finished Jude 5. It says, “I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that *Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe*” (Jude 1:5). Wait, what? I had never read that before. Jesus saved a people out of Egypt?

I couldn't believe what I was seeing, so I went back and read the NIV and sure enough, it was very different. “*Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.*” It doesn't say “Jesus” at all, but “the Lord.” What I was seeing in the ESV was truly the first time I'd ever seen it.

This is a huge difference, because while Jesus can be the Lord, that's not usually how people think of the God of the OT when they read that term, though I've come to believe that they actually should! It turns out that there is a **very old textual variant** in the verse that reads *Kurios* (Lord) instead of *Iēsous* (Jesus). It appears that some copiest must have read “Jesus” and thought to himself, that must be a mistake. So, against his better judgment, he changed it “back” to “Lord,”

thus correcting the scribal error. The problem is, all the better manuscript traditions read “Jesus,” not “Kurios.” It was *actually him who had the problem*. He couldn’t believe that Jesus could have been what Jude meant, since Jesus wasn’t born yet. But Jesus is exactly who Jude, our Lord’s half-brother, meant.

Funny thing is, we have the exact same problem in 1 Corinthians 10. The passage begins by telling us, “*All drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ*” (1Co 10:4). So the copiest should have been prepared when he came to vs. 9, “*We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents.*” Rather than “Christ” as the ESV reads, the NIV again goes with the alternative, “*Lord.*” The point is, the NT is telling us that not only was Jesus predicted to come in the OT, *he was actually already present in the OT*. This has been so shocking to some that they have actually changed the text, without realizing it.

A couple more will demonstrate this conclusively. The Author of *Hebrews* says of Moses, “*He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt,*

for he was looking to the reward” (Heb 11:26). And importantly, for what we are about to see, the Apostle John says, “Isaiah said these things because *he saw [Christ’s] glory and spoke of him*” (John 12:41). And finally, Jesus himself says in John 8, “Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. *He saw it and was glad*” (John 8:56). The claim being made is that Jesus is there in the OT and the greatest most fundamental problem of the Pharisees was that *they missed it*. Have you?

It's into this that I want to think about John 1:9-14. It begins, “The true light, which gives *light* to everyone, was coming into the world” (9). This is John’s way of telling you that Jesus is about to be born, a thought he will famously come to in vs. 14. But not yet. For he immediately continues, “He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him” (10).

Now, most people read this and they think, “*Oh, this must be talking about Jesus having been born of Mary and growing up in Nazareth and no one knew that he was the Messiah.*” No, that isn’t at all what John is talking about. It isn’t until vs. 14 that Jesus will actually be born. He hasn’t been born yet, that’s the point of vs. 9. Yet, *nevertheless, he was already in*



the world. He made the world, but the world did not know him. This speaks to the time between creation and the formation of Israel, his people—the time between Adam and Abraham. He made the world, but the world did not know him.

So, “He came to his own...” (11). This now refers to the children of Abraham. Vs. 11 continues, “... and his own people did not receive him.” Not Abraham himself, for we just saw Jesus tell us that Abraham in fact saw Jesus’ day and was glad. But Abraham’s descendants were blind. How could they have been blamed for not receiving him if he wasn’t there to begin with? This is precisely why Jesus will later chastise the Pharisees and his own disciples.

But some did receive him. John next says, “But to all who did receive him...” (12). This isn’t talking about the disciples or something like that. It is talking about Noah, Abraham, Moses, Rahab, Ruth, David, and other OT saints. They received him. How? “They believed in his name” (12). Remember how a moment ago we saw Jeremiah say, “If I say, ‘I will not mention him or speak any more in his name...’” It’s the same thing as here. The Name.

If someone believed in his name, God “gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” (12-13). It is only at this point that John now says, “And the *Word* became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his *glory*, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (14). Remember how we have talked all morning about God’s “**Word**” being the key? John says *the Word is Christ*. In other words, it isn’t just “words” that burn the hearts of the disciples or Jeremiah, it is Christ himself, the Word of God. The burning isn’t about mere words or even something just being true or false. It is about the person and work of Jesus Christ. He is the Word.

But John is using **other terms** here that are found throughout the OT, words that are personified and often stand alone by themselves as synonymous with God himself. “**Word**” is only one of those, and it is worth looking at. John didn’t make up the idea that “*In the Beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God*” (John 1:1). For example, “*After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: ‘Fear not, Abram, I am your*

shield; your reward shall be very great” (Gen 15:1). Abraham does not “hear” the word, he “sees” the word. The word is visible. Because the Word is Christ. Later in that same chapter, he will take Abraham outside and give him a great covenant by walking between the pieces of the sacrifice. In just a couple chapters later, he will appear as the Angel of the LORD, for the Angel of the LORD is Christ and he is the Word of God.

The Word appears to Samuel when there were no frequent visions (1Sam 3:1). In the days when Eli was a priest and was nearly blind (2), the boy Samuel hears a voice (4). Thinking it is Eli, he asks him what he wants. But Eli wasn't the one calling. It happens again (6), but tells us that *the Word* had not yet been revealed to Samuel (7). A third time (8) and the blind priest finally realizes, it must be the Lord. Just then, the Lord stood in front of Samuel (10), for the Word and the Lord are the same, a person. The same thing happens to Jeremiah, the Word comes to him (Jer 1:4), reaches out his hand and touches his mouth (9). In fact, nearly all of the prophets begin their books by saying that they saw the Word of God.

A second word used in John 1:14 is “Glory.” Glory is a term used throughout the OT to refer to something that is

both God and distinct from God, just like “Word” is used. **John 12:41** says, “Isaiah saw his Glory.” This refers to **Isaiah 6:1**. “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple.” This doesn’t use the word “glory,” but listen to **the Targum** and how it interprets it, “In the year that King Uzziah *was struck with [disease], the prophet said, I saw the glory of the LORD resting upon a throne, high and lifted up in the heavens of the height; and the temple was filled by the brilliance of his glory.*”

Similarly, Ezekiel see the “likeness as the appearance of a man” (**Ezek 1:26**). In other words, he sees Christ. This is how it is described. “He looked like gleaming metal and his lower body was like fire. This was the appearance of the likeness of *the Glory of the LORD*” (28). In fact, later in the book, **the Glory is the LORD** (**Ezek 9:3-4**).

This same idea is found throughout the NT in reference to Jesus. Stephen in Acts 7 said in some translations, “He [Stephen] ... saw *the glory of God, that is Jesus* standing at the right hand of God” (**Acts 7:55**). Quoting **Isaiah 60:1**, “Arise, shine, for your *light* has come, and *the glory of the LORD* has

risen upon you,” Paul says God, “‘Let *light* shine out of darkness,’ [and] has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the *glory* of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor 4:6). “Therefore it says, ‘Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you’” (Eph 5:14). This “shining” is extremely close to what John says in vs. 9. Jesus is the “**Light**.” This also is a profoundly OT concept that the NT says has always been a reference to Christ.

Then there’s that language about **the “Name.”** Often, in the same verse, we are commanded to praise “*the LORD*” and then the “*name of the LORD*” (Ps 113:1; 135:1; etc.). Similarly, we give thanks “*to the LORD*,” and also to the “*name of the LORD*” (Ps 122:4). People are to fear “*the LORD*,” but also “*the name of the LORD*” (Isa 59:19). The LORD is great, but then the Name is great (Jer 10:6). The same goes for trusting (Isa 50:10), loving (Isa 56:6), and glorifying (Isa 24:15). Normally we praise, thank, fear, trust, and love *people*, not abstract ideas. Therefore, **the Name of the LORD takes on a kind of identity** all his own in these verses. The Name is a person.

You can perhaps see this best in **Isaiah 30:27-28**, “**Behold, *the name* of the Lord comes from afar, burning with *his***

anger, and in thick rising smoke; *his* lips are full of fury, and *his* tongue is like a devouring fire; *his* breath is like an overflowing stream that reaches up to the neck; to sift the nations with the sieve of destruction, and to place on the jaws of the peoples a bridle that leads astray.” This speaks of Christ as the Judge and he is called God’s Name.

This is what is actually in mind in the **Third Commandment**. “**You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain.**” This is so much more than just about saying curse words with “God” or Jesus in it. It is about mocking, ridiculing, being hypocritical of or even simply **failing to take notice of God’s Name**: Christ. To deny that Jesus is in the OT and is the God of Israel is at its heart a violation of the Third Commandment, because Jesus is the Name of God. To claim to be a Christian and not act as he told you to act is to misuse God’s Name: Christ.

While I could do this all day long with many other terms such as “**power**” or “**arm**” or “**shepherd**” or “**Wisdom**” or “**Son**” or “**Angel of the LORD**,” what I’m trying to do is impress upon you what I think Jesus was getting at, what John is getting at, what Luke is getting at. **The Scripture is**

all about him. He is the God of Israel. He made the prophecies, sometimes directly and always through his Spirit to the prophets about his own coming, dying, and rising again.

I don't know why the church has lost this other than we have **lost the fundamental hermeneutic** he himself taught us. It should not have been a difficult thing for the scribes or the committees in translation meetings who see "Christ" or "Lord," weigh the evidence, and then make a decision – *if they believed* Jesus' words. You must not go around any longer asking people what the Bible means to them. You should ask them what *it means*. And when they then ask you what it means, you must say with Jesus that the whole thing is about him, testifies to him, is full of him and his glory. This is how the Father in heaven glorifies his Son. This is how the Spirit illuminates our hearts and makes the Word burn inside of us.

It is through Christ, and Christ alone. Christ in the OT—Christ in the OT types and **patterns**; Christ in the **prophecies**; Christ in **person**. Christ as the God of Israel as their Rock, as their Shepherd, and their Redeemer. Christ as the Law-giver. Christ in his coming as a man in the NT. Christ in his ministry. Christ in his miracles. Christ in his

teaching. Christ in his death. Christ in his descent to hell. Christ in his resurrection. Christ in his ascension to heaven. Christ in the Holy Spirit sent to his church. Christ in his church throughout her sojourn here while he prepares mansions for us in heaven. Christ in the spiritual gifts. Christ in the union he gives through salvation and the doctrines of grace. Christ in his Second Coming. [Christ in the Gospel](#).

This is what makes our hearts burn from within. Christ and Christ alone. And our hearts burn because Jesus Christ is the living God who testifies to us the truth through his Word by his Holy Spirit. That's why Luke has given us this Gospel. It's the climax of his entire book. It's what everything has been driving us to. It is the destination, the summit, the pinnacle. It is everything. It is the Gospel according to Luke. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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