

Unity of Our Bible

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0:00] Those two disciples going to Emmaus on Resurrection Sunday.

! What did he tell them?! Remember, as he drew alongside them! and opened the scriptures to them. Luke 24, 27 says, And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.

All the scriptures talk about Jesus. And so Jesus was able to take their Old Testament, Moses and the prophets, and to explain to them everything about himself from all the scriptures, all the holy writings.

Later he did the same with the twelve that night when he appeared to all of the disciples. He opened their understanding and explained to them everything that was written about him.

Turn to John chapter 5. We have this confrontation of our Lord Jesus with the Pharisees, the religious leaders of Israel.

[1:24] And here in John 5 and verse 39, he says, You diligently study the scriptures, there's our word, the scriptures, the writings, because you think that by them you possess eternal life.

These are the scriptures that testify about me. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. So Jesus says that the scriptures have this in common.

They testify about him. And then in the same chapter, verses 45 and following, Jesus says, But do not think that I will accuse you before the Father.

Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.

But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say? In other words, what Moses wrote and what Jesus says are the same thing.

[2:35] There is this unity to the whole of scriptures. Old Testament, New Testament. It's about me, Jesus says. And if you don't believe what Moses wrote about me, you won't believe what I say about me.

A unifying theme. Look at John chapter 20. Jesus in this book gives us many statements about the scriptures that are helpful to us.

What a wonderful thing to study what Jesus believed about the scriptures. Now, here in John 20, we have a summary statement by the Apostle John that stands here toward the end of his gospel. And it reads this way in John 20, 30 and 31. And see if you can discern the practical purpose for which scripture is written.

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

[4:05] What's the purpose of these writings in John's gospel? Faith? A generic faith in God?

Proof. Proof of what? Jesus is the Christ. Faith that Jesus is the Christ. That you may believe that he is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you might have eternal life through him.

So you see, the scriptures have a very practical bent to them. These things, the aim in John's scripture writing was not to give a full biography of Jesus and to include everything that he knew that Jesus ever said or did.

No, he tells us right up front that I haven't included, Jesus did a whole lot more than what I've written about. But I've, but these things are written about that you might believe that he is the Son of God, the Christ, the promised Messiah, and that you might have life in his name.

A very practical purpose. Now, that, you say, is just true of John's gospel, but, you know, the same purpose is true of all the writings of scripture. They all speak of Christ, Christ, and they all are given to us that we might believe on him and have eternal life through his name.

[5:37] We think of Genesis, and we barely get going in the book, and we're in chapter 3, and we hear the first gospel promise in verse 15 when God is cursing the serpent. He says, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed.

He, a single male, he will crush your head and you will bruise his heel. And so, from Genesis, right on, we have Christ being revealed to us in the scriptures.

And we come to the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, and it ends with an invitation.

The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him who hears say, Come, whoever is thirsty, let him come, and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life, which if you've read John's writing, you know, is Jesus Christ and the eternal life found in him.

And so, we have this very practical purpose for which all of scriptures have been written, that we might believe and have eternal life in Jesus' name. Turn to 2 Timothy chapter 3, and we see that this very purpose was fulfilled in one man, explicitly so.

Here, 2 Timothy 3, 15, Paul's writing to Timothy, and he says, And how from infancy you have known the holy scriptures, there's our Bible again, the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

[7:19] So, before he tells us that all scripture is God-breathed, he first tells us of the purpose of scripture, is that you might come to faith in Jesus Christ. This book is able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

And it did so in Timothy, and it did so for us who know him as well. So, we're looking at the idea. Why one book?

Because all 66 books have a singular theme of Christ and the salvation that is brought to us in him. Now, you notice that the Bible has two parts, a part one and a part two, an Old Testament and a New Testament.

The Old Testament anticipates the coming of the Christ and lays the foundation, the groundwork for his life and ministry. And then the New Testament takes up where the Old Testament left off and completes the story, speaks of the coming of the Christ and builds on the foundation of the Old Testament.

We have his words, his ministry, his life, and then we have the inspired commentary on his life and ministry in the epistles that are given to us. Now, turn to Matthew 1.1 and notice the unity of part one and part two.

[8:43] Sometimes movies come out or books are written and there's a one and a two and I don't know if you've ever gone and seen or read a part two without having read part one, but if so, you miss a whole lot, don't you?

Because you're just picking up from there and going on and you miss all that's transpired. Well, it's the same way in our Bible. If you just start in Matthew, you're going to be scratching your head about a whole lot you can't even get past the first verse and you'll be scratching your head.

All right? Matthew 1.1, a record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. And right away you realize there's something that's gone before Matthew 1.

there's this guy named David and there's this guy named Abraham and whoever Jesus Christ is, I'm not going to understand who he is unless I understand him to be the son of David and the son of Abraham.

And so I need to know part one, I need my Old Testament to tell me who is this Abraham and who's this son of Abraham? Well, he's the one in Genesis 12 who was promised to bring blessing to all the nations.

[10:05] And who's this son of David? Well, he's that promised king who would have a kingdom that would never end. And so again, we're just demonstrating the unity of our Bible.

There is one theme that runs right through it. Now, that should give us a very practical tip in our Bible reading. The challenge in our Bible reading is to see how the portion that we are reading fits into the big story.

There is one big story, the grand story of redemption. And so wherever we're at in that great story, we need to not just have tunnel vision and just see the story itself, we need to appreciate its relationship to the big picture.

So, for instance, we recently finished a series in the book of Esther, a beautiful story there, the book of Esther. It does stand on its own, doesn't it?

But what, where does it fit? How does it relate to the big picture? Anyone tell me? Raj? It has everything to do with God's preservation of the nation of Israel.

[11 : 26] And why is that important? Because Christ needs to be born out of, you can follow the genealogy. If everybody was annihilated, then genealogy would be broken.

Okay. So, there was a threat to annihilate the whole Jewish race, from which would come our Messiah.

And so, if you just read Esther with just that tunnel vision, you'll miss the most beautiful thing of all, of God working out his sovereign will.

Nothing can thwart his purposes. He has a people. He has a savior to bring forth from that people who would be the savior of the world. world, and no Haman, and no foreign monarch can ever upset his purposes.

And so, again, we're seeing the unifying nature of scripture. So, one theme. Any questions or comments before we go on from that? All right, let's appreciate that as we read our Bible and look for it.

[12 : 38] How does this fit in to the one theme of scripture? Salvation through Christ Jesus. Well, then, there's one author. Behind the 40 human authors, there's just one author, God the Spirit.

And that's why these 40 different authors, writing over 1600 years with different settings, different concerns, and styles of writing, yet have one unified message.

Moses didn't know Elijah. Jeremiah didn't know John, but they all write about the same thing. And nothing that one says contradicts what another says.

Now, you get 40 people together to do some writing on religion, and that would be quite a challenge, to have what one says not to contradict what the others have said. Now, you take them over a period of history of some 1600 years, and you have no contradiction between what one and the other says, and you begin to appreciate, there's something more than these 40 men just spouting off here.

There's an author, one author behind the 40. That's the teaching of God's Word, that these 40 who wrote were not writing by their own thought, but were carried along by the Holy Spirit, so that what they wrote was truly God's Word, the expression of His mind to man.

[14 : 15] Now, is that just some theory that we believe that we hold in our hands the Word of God? Is that just some crazy fundamentalist that came up with this idea of the inspiration of Scripture?

Scripture? No, it's the view of Jesus Christ. It's the view of the apostles themselves. It's how they viewed the Scriptures.

Now, you understand then, as we begin to look at how the Lord Jesus and the apostles viewed the Scriptures, they had the Old Testament, that was their Scriptures, and so we're going to see, how did they treat the Old Testament Scriptures?

How did they view it? How did they regard it? Well, turn to 2 Timothy 3, and verse 16. 2 Timothy 3, 16.

Paul's just told Timothy that the Scriptures have made him wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, and he goes on to say, all Scripture is God breathed.

[15 : 29] That's the NIV's treatment of, I believe, the King James, all Scripture is inspired by God. But I like, I think this sticks more to a more literal rendering of the word.

Sometimes people can think of being inspired, that they were inspired by a sunset to write a love poem or something, and so the poem is inspired.

That's not what is being said here, when it says all Scripture is inspired by God. All Scripture is God breathed, is the very word, breathed out from God.

Jesus speaks in Matthew 4, 4, that we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

The word of Scripture, all Scripture is God breathed, it comes forth from His mouth. God is God what we say expresses our hearts, doesn't it?

[16 : 33] And it's the same thing with God. God is expressing Himself. He is breathing out words, and those words are the very expression of His mind and will.

And this is the thing that makes this book different from all the other books in the world, that it comes from God. it has its origin in Him.

2 Peter 1, 20 and 21. Again, we have an explanation, a word of explanation, about the Scripture, about the sacred writings.

And it's an important thing that we must know. And Peter says in 2 Peter 1, 20 and 21, above all, this is a matter of some importance, folks, above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation.

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. So, this is a divine revelation.

[17:43] It is God revealing His will to men in a book. And He so superintended what Matthew and Mark and Luke and John and Isaiah and Jeremiah and Moses wrote, that the end product was exactly what He wanted written, down to the jot and tittle, the smallest mark of the pen.

It's just what He wanted communicated, so that what we have is the Word of God. Are you familiar with C.S. Lewis' apologetic for who is Jesus Christ?

And he says, well, He's either liar, lunatic, or the Lord of all. He just gives us three choices. He can't just be a good teacher. Why not?

Well, because He says He's more than that. He says He's the Son of God. So, if He really is the Son of God, then He's a liar. Or, if He really is just a man, He's a liar because He told us He was the Son of God.

Well, maybe He's just crazy, doesn't know what He's saying, He's a lunatic. Or, He's the Son of God. But you can't have just this, He's a good teacher. He's another good human being.

[19:00] So, John Wesley used that kind of logic with the Scriptures many years before Lewis was born. And he says, we really just have three choices with the Bible. who wrote the Bible?

Well, it must be the invention either, and he gives us three choices, good men or angels, bad men and bad angels or God.

Okay? Well, think with me. First of all, is the Bible, it could be an invention of good men or angels. Many people think, you know, Matthew and Mark and Peter and Paul, these were good men and they invented the Bible.

Why can't it be the invention of good men? Okay, they said it was God's word. It could not be the invention of good men or angels, Wesley says, for they neither would nor could make a book and tell lies all the time that they were writing it, saying, thus saith the Lord, when in fact it was their own invention.

So they would be liars, and good men aren't liars. Second opportunity, it could be the invention of bad men or devils. No, it couldn't be them, Wesley says, for they could not make a book that commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell for all eternity.

[20:25] Bad men wouldn't write so disparagingly about themselves, saying that they deserve to go to hell forever. So it can't be good men or angels or bad men or bad angels.

All that's left is God himself. Now notice the way that the, now that's just a little syllogism of Wesley, but let's come to the New Testament and let's notice the different ways that the New Testament authors themselves, Jesus and the other New Testament authors refer to the scriptures when they quote it, when they quote some Old Testament scripture.

Turn to Romans chapter 10 and let's notice how they refer to the scriptures. Romans 10, and this is just a sampling that we could list many more texts, but Romans 10 and verse 5, we're seeing where Paul is going to quote an Old Testament passage, and he does so in this way.

Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law, quote, the man who does these things will live by them. So sometimes the New Testament writers, when quoting the Old Testament scriptures, do so by telling us what the human author said.

Moses describes it this way. It doesn't say anything about God. It just says Moses said this. Look at verse 20. And Isaiah boldly says, I was found by those who did not seek me.

[22:01] I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me. So he doesn't say God says. No, here he just says Isaiah says. He can quote the Old Testament by quoting the human author.

Chapter 11 and verse 9. And David says, may their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution for them as he quotes the Psalms.

David says. So he doesn't even mention God in these references to the Old Testament. That's one way the Old Testament is described. A second way is to describe what God has said through the human authors.

Look at Acts chapter 4. Dr. Luke writes this account, but here he's quoting Peter and John and the church as they're praying, probably one of them leading them in prayer.

And this is their view of the scriptures. Verse 25 chapter 4. You spoke, you, sovereign Lord, they've prayed, sovereign Lord, you spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David.

[23 : 22] And he quotes Psalm 2, why did the heathen rage? You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David. Chapter 28 and verse 25, we see a similar way that the Old Testament is quoted.

28, 25. They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement. The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said, through Isaiah the prophet.

And then he quotes Isaiah. So that's a second way the Old Testament is referred to. As what God, the Holy Spirit, said through David or through Isaiah, the human authors.

And the third way is just by saying what God said or what the Holy Spirit said. Look at Hebrews 3 and verse 7. Hebrews 3 and verse 7.

So as the Holy Spirit says, today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts. Now that's from the Psalms again. He doesn't say as David said.

[24 : 33] He could have. Paul did. But now he says as the Holy Spirit. And he doesn't even say said. He says says. In other words, what he said then he's still saying.

This word is still coming to you with all the authority of heaven. Chapter 10 and verse 15. As he quotes from Jeremiah, he doesn't even let us know it's Jeremiah.

He just says, the Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First, he says, this is the covenant I will make with them after that time. He's quoting Jeremiah.

But he tells us this is what the Holy Spirit says. So if you could put that all in a blender and put it on mix, what would you have in the end?

You'd have this is the view of Jesus and the apostles, the New Testament, view of the Old Testament, that what Scripture says, God says. But what the human author said, God says.

[25 : 39] Plain and simple. The Scriptures are prophetic in the primary sense of that word that just as the prophets in speaking were God's voice, so the biblical writers in writing were God's pen.

And the end result in both is the word of God, whether spoken or written. They can both say of the product, thus saith the Lord.

This is what God says. So one author, one author. Now there's a corollary to that, and that is if the Bible has one author is inspired by God, then it is inerrant.

It's 100% reliable. It's without error. because God who authored it is 100% reliable and without error. He cannot lie. He cannot deceive.

He's not a man that he should lie. Numbers 23, Titus 1, God who cannot lie. And if he does not lie, then his word cannot lie.

[26 : 46] So it's as reliable as the divine author. inerrancy is a result, a corollary of divine inspiration.

Calvin says, as soon as he who cannot lie has spoken, we ought to embrace and kiss his word as if the result were certain.

And so the authors of the New Testament treat Old Testament as reliable. They make their points by referring to the Old Testament scriptures. For the scriptures cannot be broken, Jesus says.

He appeals to the scripture. It is written was for them the end of the argument. As you read through Romans, Paul can seal the deal by saying it is written end of argument.

No other question. Such was their estimate of scripture that carried the authority of God the author. What gives our Bible cohesiveness and unity?

[27 : 51] It has one author. One divine author behind it. God himself. It's pretty basic stuff, isn't it?

And that's what really this whole study of God's words is. It's a basic study of important words of God.

The scriptures then. Let me just seek a few applications. Turn to 1 Thessalonians 2. We need to consider our privilege then.

That we hold in our hand a miracle as much as if you held the wine that Jesus turned into wine from water or a piece of fish that he multiplied.

We're holding a miracle in our hands. The word of God it's a book that has come to us supernaturally. It's not just the result of human authors a natural process.

[28 : 53] No, there's this supernatural that runs right through it. What if you've never heard of the Bible? What if you've never seen a page you've never seen or heard that there was such a thing as a Bible and one day you saw a long rope coming down out of heaven and on the end was the Holy Bible.

Would that affect the way that you treasured that book? To know that it's come from God. God sent this book to me. Would you want to read it? Would you want to know what's inside of it?

Well, the truth of the matter is that we do have a book from heaven. And here in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 2 And we also thank God chapter 2 and verse 13 And we also thank God continually because when you received the word of God which you heard from us you accepted it not as the word of men but as it actually is the word of God which is at work in you who believe.

And when Paul came to town and was preaching it looked like a word for man. It looked like words coming out of a man from Tarsus and most people treated it just like that.

What does this babblers have to say? But there were some whom God had prepared in advance for glory that he opened their eyes and when Paul spoke they didn't receive it as the word of man they received!

[30 : 26] it as the word of God well if it is the word of God then it should be received as such shouldn't it? How is that? How should we receive if this is the word of God how should we receive it?

It says they received it not as the word of man but as it is in fact the word of God how did they receive it? How should we receive it if it is indeed what it claims to be the word from God?

Now there's many answers let's tease out what the answer how should we receive a word from God? Joyfully and what?

And reverently okay that's two important words joyfully why joyfully? God speaking to me that's pretty awesome isn't it?

Wow why reverently same reason reverently he he has esteem for those who tremble at his word who have reverence before it who recognize it for what it is how else should we receive the word of God if it is that good a teachable spirit do you come to the word to be taught or do you come to sit in judgment on it say that can't be I don't believe that a lot of people read the Bible that way you know Ed you sent me an email about Oprah and Oprah says I grew up in a Baptist church and the preacher one day I was sitting there and he was preaching about how great God is and he's omniscient and he's omnipotent and he's omnipresent and then he said and he's jealous and she said immediately there was something in my spirit that rejected that because

[32 : 24] I knew that God was a God of love it's another religion that she's promoting and it has nothing to do with this book in fact she says as she quotes her guru that if your belief in Jesus or in God is based upon doctrine and beliefs then it's the wrong God because you can only know the God through the true God through your feelings not through beliefs and doctrines and that day she came to understand and to reject the God of the Bible because it claims that God is a jealous God and it didn't sit well with her feelings well do you come to the Bible then to be taught with a teachable spirit it was one of Calvin's prayers Lord give us the meekness that we might profit from your word just a simple prayer like that as they came to the word give us the meekness without which we cannot profit from your we come to be taught then if it is

God's word then we ought to come with meekness and teachable spirit how else ought we to come okay with a pre commitment to obey not well you tell me what you're going to say and then I'll tell you whether I'm going to do it no we we come as servants to our master speak Lord your servant is listening what would you have me to do Paul says upon meeting Christ what would you have me to do Lord we come as servants ready to obey his word and if we don't we're just deceiving ourselves in the whole process James says don't be a mere hearer be a doer deceiving yourself how else should we receive the word if it's the word of God thankfully!

anything else a hunger and thirst we we ought to come to this word with a desire to know what is you mean God has spoken to me what is he telling me we come with desire hunger thirst eagerness God is going to speak to me sense of my need we're like people walking around in the dark and the Bible is a light to our feet a lamp to our path oh thank God for the Bible we'd be walking in the dark still and heading for further darkness outer darkness but your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path and so we have a sense of need well we could go on and on with regularity with priority status this is a book from God it surely ought to be top seller with me I quoted John Wesley earlier let me just conclude with a quote from

Wesley and I think it's a fitting way to conclude with regard to the one unity the unifying theme the unifying author Wesley the 18th century evangelist said I have I thought he says I have been thinking and this is what I was thinking I am a creature of a day passing through life as an arrow through the air I am a spirit come from God and returning to God just hovering over the great gulf till a few moments hence I am no more seen I drop into an unchangeable eternity I want to know one thing the way to heaven how to land safe on that happy shore God has condescended to teach the way for this very end he came from heaven he has written it down in a book oh give me that book at any price give me the book of

God I have it here is knowledge enough for me let me be a man of one book here then I am free from the busy ways of men I sit down alone only God is here in his presence I open I read his book for this end to find the way to heaven well may the Lord help us then to receive it not as the word of men but as it is in truth the word of God to receive it hungrily with that kind of an eagerness that we might be led to Christ who is the theme to him who is the fulfillment of it to be taught to think and live and to bring glory to him and then to be brought to him at last we're dismissed