

The Key to the Scriptures

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Luke 24:44-46

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My subject today is one that I think you will find to be very interesting. I am going to speak to you on this subject, “The Key to the Scriptures.”

I hear people so often say, “I just don’t understand the Scriptures, the Old Testament Scriptures.” That is we are talking about, they key to the Scriptures, the Old Testament Scriptures.

Well, I think I will be able to help you today. So if you will just pull up a chair and sit and listen to this message on the key to the Scriptures.

Now, after our Lord was crucified and arose from the grave he appeared to his disciples, to two disciples on the road to Emmaus and then a short time later to all the apostles. He appeared to them after his resurrection and beginning at Moses, here in Luke 24 verse 27, beginning at Moses, that is Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, the writings of Moses, beginning at Moses and all of the prophets, Samuel, Isaiah, Malachi, all of the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

And then in verse 44 he said to them, now listen. “These are the words that I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses,” that is those first five books of the Bible, “in the prophets,” the major, minor prophets, “in the psalms concerning me. All of these things that are written in the Old Testament Scriptures must be fulfilled, the things concerning me,” he said.

And then down in verse 46 he said this to them. “Thus, it is written in the Scriptures, the Old Testament Scriptures that the Messiah, the Christ should suffer and on the third day arise from the dead and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, not to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles, all nations.”

And then verse 45. “Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.” And that is exactly what I am making an effort to do this morning by the power of the Holy Spirit, to open your understanding so that you can understand the Scriptures, the Old Testament Scriptures and no more say, “I can’t understand the Scriptures.”

Yes, you can if you can get hold of this key. Now he is talking about the Old Testament Scriptures. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. For the New Testament at that time had not been written.

You know, our Lord said to the Pharisees in John five, these leaders of the Jews. He said, "You search the Scriptures." And they did. They were scholars. They were men who studied the Old Testament Scriptures, the laws of Moses. He said, "You search the Scriptures, for in the Scriptures you think you have life. But they are they which testify of me."

So here I find one key here in everything our Lord is saying that Christ Jesus himself, our crucified, risen, exalted Redeemer, Christ himself is the key to understanding the Scriptures. He is the key.

The Bible, you see, is two separate parts. There's Old Testament and New Testament. But both have one single message, how that Christ Jesus came into the world to save his people, to redeem a people by the sacrifice of himself. It has one single message, Old and New Testament.

The Bible has 66 books written by 40 different men over a period of 1900 years, inspired by God. Now the Scriptures were written. God used men to write the Scriptures. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit to write the Scriptures. And God used 40 men over a period of 1900 years to write the Old and New Testament. And all Scripture is God breathed, inspired of God. And all Scripture has one central theme and that is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Someone said one time, "The Old Testament Scriptures declare that someone is coming. The Lamb of God is coming into this world. He is coming. He is going to be of the seed of woman. He is going to be a priest like Melchizedek. He is going to be a prophet like Moses. He is going to be a king like David. He is going to be the desire of all nations, the brazen serpent lifted up, the smitten rock, the Passover Lamb."

The Old Testament, all the way through, declares someone is coming. He is called the Christ. He is called the Messiah. And the four gospels, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, what's their message? He has come. He is here.

"Behold," John the Baptist said, "The Lamb of God." Behold him in the manger. Behold him on the streets of Galilee. Behold him by the sea of Galilee. Behold him on the cross. Behold him in the tomb. Behold him risen. Behold the Lamb of God. He has come. He said to that crowd in the synagogue at Nazareth, recorded in Luke four, "Today, this day, this Scripture is fulfilled in our ears, the Scripture regarding the coming Messiah."

And then what about the epistles? There are 21 epistles, Romans through Jude. And the message of those epistles is this. He is coming back. The messiah, the Christ. He said, "I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there ye may be also."

And the angels that stood on top of the mountain when he was taken up into heaven while the disciples watched him go, these angels said to those disciples, ye men of Galilee. Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go. The key to the Scriptures, Old Testament and New, the key to the Word of God is the person and redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now to help you see this, to help you see this as a person reads the Old Testament Scriptures, as he makes his way through the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi, there are three great highways that he will travel upon. This is the Old Testament Scriptures, now, Genesis to Malachi. There are three great highways. As you go through that Scripture you will travel on one is the high of promises, promises and prophecies. God's many promises throughout the Old Testament, many promises and prophecies that God gave to the nation Israel, many prophecies of deliverance, salvation, redemption the kingdom of God.

So you will go through the promises and the prophecies. And the second highway that you will travel upon is the highway of ceremonies. There are many ceremonies, feast days, holy days, sacrifices, atonement, blood shedding, priesthood, tabernacle, holy of holies, holy place. You will go through this road of ceremonies and sacrifices.

And then the third highway that you will travel upon going through the Old Testament Scriptures is you will meet men and women, faithful men and women, godly men and women just full of longing and desire for fellowship with God, to know God, to be redeemed, to have their sins forgiven, to have everlasting life. And they cried to God for a revelation of himself and that is the highway you will travel, promises, prophecies, ceremonies, sacrifices and you will meet people like Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, Moses, David who cried, "God, be merciful. According to your loving kindness blot out my transgressions. Wash me from my iniquities, purge me from my sin."

Yes, well, let's look at these highways, see if it helps us and find the key which is Christ.

Now here is the first. We come to the promises and prophecies. And we meet the promises immediately, immediately in the Genesis chapter three, right after our first parents sinned and fell and died in trespasses and sin. And God promised right then the woman's seed. God said to the serpent who tempted Eve and to whose voice Adam listened, God said to that serpent, "I am going to put enmity between you and your seed and the woman and her seed and you will bruise his heel, but the woman's seed will destroy your power. The woman's seed, one man born of woman will destroy your power and restore men to life."

That's a promise. And you meet that in the first part of Genesis, the seed of woman. Well, who is this? You are not a seed of woman, I am not a seed of woman. Woman doesn't have a seed. When he said seed of woman he is talking about somebody being born of a woman without the help of a man. That's right, virgin born. That's the promise.

You meet Christ in the first promise in the Old Testament. "I'll put enmity between thee and the woman, her seed and your seed. And he'll conquer you and bruise your head and destroy your power. And that is what Isaiah said in Isaiah 7:14, "Behold, the Lord himself will give you a sign. A virgin shall bear a son and you will call his name Immanuel, the mighty one, the mighty God, almighty God, God with us."

So that's the promise. And Christ is the fulfillment.

All right. Move to Genesis 15. God...this is in the early part of Genesis writing to Moses and this is what our Lord taught his disciples concerning himself. God called Abraham out of his land. He is 75 years old. That's...he began the Jewish nation with Abraham. Abraham was the first Jew, the first Israelite, the first circumcised man was Abraham, 75 years old, no children, married to Sarah.

And God promised him that from his loins, from his loins, his seed, not the woman's seed now, we have been talking about the woman's seed. That's the virgin born son of God. But this is Abraham's seed, from his see who was Isaac. "From your seed through an unbroken line that will go through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, tribe of Judah, root of Jesse, son of David, I promise that through you and your seed will come forth the Messiah. And he will be a blessing to all nations. Your seed will number as the stars of the sky and the sands of the seashore."

Well, who is that seed? Well, Galatians three tells us who it is. "To Abraham and to his seed was the promise made, not to seeds as many, but to seed, one which is Christ."

Jesus Christ is born a Jew, of the line...he is the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He was born of the root of Jesse. He was born of the house of David. And do you know why Mary his mother and Joseph his foster father were in Bethlehem at this time? Do you know what they were doing there? They were Jews and both of them were of the house and lineage of David. And they were in Bethlehem to pay their taxes and the Old Testament Scriptures prophesied that the Christ whose goings forth have been from of old would be born in Bethlehem and this nation will be a blessing to all nations. That is what he said to Abraham. "Your seed, I will raise up of your seed a blessing to all nations."

And he repeated that promise to Isaac, Genesis 26. He said, "Isaac, in thy seed shall all nations be blessed."

He repeated that promise to Jacob in Genesis 28, "In thy seed all families of the earth shall be blessed." And Jacob, blessing his sons in Genesis 49 before Jacob died down in Egypt, blessing his sons, each one, he had something to say about each son.

And he came to Judah. He came to Judah and he said, "Judah, the scepter shall not depart from you, your tribe, Judah, until Shiloh comes, Shiloh. And to him shall the gathering of the people be."

And to David in 2 Samuel seven the Lord said, "I will establish your throne forever."

Now you take your Bible in Matthew, the early chapters of Luke and trace the house and lineage of our Messiah and you will trace it right back to Abraham. And there is an unbroken line through Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Jesse and David right on down to the birth of the Son of God.

And then Isaiah. This is the prophet Isaiah and he talks more about the promised Messiah than most of the prophets. But here in Isaiah 7:14 let me read that...that promise again. "The Lord himself will give you a sign, an undeniable sign, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son. You call his name, listen to this now, Immanuel."

What does Immanuel mean? Well, in the next chapter, Isaiah eight verse 10, Immanuel is God with us. That is true. Our Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ is born of a woman. But that person born of that woman is also God almighty.

Now listen to me. In Galatians four Paul said, "In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are born under the law."

Christ is God. Great is the mystery of godliness Paul wrote in 1 Timothy. God was manifest in the flesh. And you are familiar with John chapter one verse one. It says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

And down in verse 14 it says, "And the Word was made flesh. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was made flesh and the Word was with God and the Word dwelt among us. And the Word was God and we beheld his glory. Jesus of Nazareth is God almighty."

It says here in Isaiah 9:6, now listen to this. Here is another promise, a promise. We are traveling that highway now. And every promise is fulfilled in Christ. He is the king. And if you can't see him, you can't understand the Scriptures. Isaiah 9:6, listen. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given."

For preachers that's saying the same thing, a child is born, a Son is given. Oh, no. A child is born, a new child, formed in the womb of a mother. But this Son, he was given. He came from heaven and inhabited that body. The Son is given. This is the Son of God. This is the only begotten Son of God. This is the Son of his love. This is the son which he said I am well pleased. The Son of God dwelt in the body of that child that was born.

And look at the next line. And the government will be on his shoulders. What government is that? That is the government of God's kingdom. It is called the kingdom of his dear Son. And his name, listen to what his name will be. Wonderful. Do you know that is what the Lord said his name would be when he talked to Manoah and his wife after the sacrifice?

They said, "What is your name?"

He said, “Wonderful, wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the prince of peace. That’s our Lord.”

And then in Isaiah 53, I am going to preach on this next Sunday. But the Messiah shall not only be a glorious king, but he is one who will suffer for sins. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Oh the many promises and prophecies of the Old Testament in all 39 books. The key to understand those promises prophecies is to see Christ Jesus.

All right, the second highway is the highway of ceremonies and sacrifices. Again, we will go back to the beginning, back to Genesis. Let’s go back to Genesis four now. We started in Genesis three and saw the seed of woman.

Genesis four there were two boys, two young men is what they were, Abel and Cain. And they came to worship God. And they both built an altar. And Abel slew a lamb and offered a blood sacrifice to his...to God. And God had respect to his offering.

So Cain, he brought the fruit of the ground and to his offering God had no respect. And the truth is immediately established. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

Noah offered a blood sacrifice when he stepped off the ark. Abraham offered a ram as a sacrifice in the stead of his son Isaac. Down in Egypt Israel slew a Passover lamb. God said, “I’m coming through at midnight to destroy the first born in every home. You...you slay a lamb and roast it with fire and eat the body, but put the blood on the door and when I see the blood I will pass over you.” That is the message all the way through the Old Testament.

Listen to Leviticus 17:11. “The life of the flesh is in the blood. I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your soul. It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.”

Moses built a tabernacle. Solomon built a temple into which daily blood sacrifices were offered, one after another and a yearly atonement was offered. Oh the many sacrifices all the way through the Old Testament.

Well, what did they mean? Paul said in Hebrews, “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin. All the blood on Jewish altars slain cannot wash away one sin or cleanse one stain.” God said that. He said, “I never had any pleasure in these sacrifices, blood offerings. The blood of an animal cannot put away the sin of a man. So what does it mean all these blood sacrifices?”

Well, it is fulfilled right here in Hebrews. Paul tells us, “Wherefore when he cometh into the world, when Christ came into the world he said, ‘These sacrifices and offerings of animals never gave God any pleasure or any satisfaction, but a body hast thou prepared

me.' So by the will of God we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

You see, every priest, ever priest...there were many of them. Christ is one. They stood daily. They never sat down. Their work was never done. Offering the same sacrifices over and over which could never take away sin. But this man...and you will run into those three words all the way through Hebrews. But this man. The God man, after he offered one sacrifice for sins forever sat down, his work finished at the right hand of God, expecting till his enemies become his footstool and by one offering, one atonement, one sacrifice he perfected forever them that are sanctified.

That is what all these sacrifices are pointing to, the death of the Lamb of God. Every lamb, every bullock, every ram, every goat that died in the Old Testament was a picture of Christ who died for our sin.

All right. We have walked on the promises road and the prophecy road and the ceremony road, the sacrifice road. Now let's listen to these people. Old Testament men and women, listen to their testimonies. Conscious of their sins, convicted of their sinful nature and inability to please a holy God, knowing they are dying creatures, there is life after death. These men and women desired, yearned, longed for forgiveness, for salvation, for fellowship with God.

Jacob said, "Lord, oh Lord, I have longed for thy salvation."

Job cried, "Oh, that I might...oh that I might know where to find him."

David wrote, "As the thirsty deer panteth for the water brooks so my soul panteth for thee, oh God."

David summed up the need of these people and the desire of these people and the longing of these people in Psalm 51. He said, "Have mercy on me, oh God. Blot out my transgressions. Wash me from mine iniquities. Cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. Purge me with hyssop."

How is he going to do this? How can he be clean that is born of a woman? How can God be just and justifier? I'll tell you how. The woman the well described it. She said in desperation, "The Messiah is coming. The Messiah is coming. And he will tell us all things, how God can be just and justifier. He'll reveal it. He'll tell us."

And Christ said to her, "I am he. I am he. I that speak to thee am he. I am the Messiah. I am the Christ. I am the fulfillment of all sacrifices and promise and prophecies."

The Son of God has come and given us an understanding that we may know him that is true. This is the true God. This is eternal life. This is it. This is the record. God hath given us eternal life and this life is in his Son.

So you take all the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament and put these three words after it, I am he. You take all the types and shadows and sacrifices of the Old Testament and write these words, "I am he, the fulfillment." That is the name he gave to Moses, God did. I am.

Moses said, "What is your name?" at the burning bush, you know. God was speaking, "What is your name?"

The Lord said, "I am that I am."

And the Lord Jesus Christ said, "I am he. And if you believe not that I am he, I am the high priest. I am the sin offering. I am the atonement. I am the fulfillment of all Scriptures. I am the way, the truth and the life. You see, Adam list three things in that garden. He lost his life. He died in sin. He lost the truth. He believed the lies of Satan. He believed Satan. He didn't believe God. He believed Satan. He lost his life. He lost the truth and he lost the way. God put him out. In Christ all three are restored. "I am the way to God. I am the truth of God and I am the life."

But he says that all the way through the New Testament, "I am. I am the good shepherd. I am the door. By me if any man enter in he shall go in and out and find pasture and he shall be saved. I am the light of the world. I am the bread of life. I am the resurrection."

Yes, sir, in him in Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily. And we are complete in him. God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

So you take that Old Testament and you read those promises and prophecies and you will see that they are fulfilled in Christ. And you watch all of those sacrifices and the slaying of lambs and the atonements and the high priest going into the holy of holies and that is Christ who went not into the holy place made with hands, but into heaven itself, not with the blood of an animal, but with his own blood and obtained eternal redemption for us. And if you have got a longing heart to know God, he says, "Come unto me, come unto me. All ye that labor and are heavy laden. I will give you rest. And you take my yoke upon you and learn of me and you will find rest unto your soul. Ho, everyone that thirsteth come to the water." He is speaking of the Holy Spirit and out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Now I hope this message will be a blessing to you and I hope that it will be used of God to open the Scriptures, to give you a key to understanding the Old Testament Scriptures. For Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Scripture. They are they which testify of me. All the prophets to him give all the prophets witness that through his blood through his perfect righteousness we have eternal life.

So you write to us if you want this message and send two dollars and we will mail it to you. And there will be another message on the other side that I will bring next week from Isaiah 53.

Next week I am going back to the Old Testament, back to chapter 53 of Isaiah and talk to you about substitution. And that is the story of the Word of God, substitution and satisfaction. So if you want the tape you write to us and we will send it to you. Until next week at this same time, may God bless you everyone.