

JESUS SAVES

DID JESUS DIE FOR A BEST SELLER

Do We Take Pride in the Bible's Popularity? We should, right? It's the best-selling book of all time, Guinness World Records says between 5 - 7 billion copies have been printed. Billions. Yet here's the question that shakes the walls of tradition: As followers of Jesus, we are told again and again, "Grab your Bible." Now let's hit pause, who originally told them to grab theirs? And so on. What if... they never did?

If every Christian throughout history had chosen to give away their Bible to save just one soul, to rescue a brother or sister from despair, from death, or from eternal separation, what kind of world might we be living in today? It is conceivable that we could have approximately 6 billion additional believers. Multiplying this number by families and generations, it would amount to roughly 30 billion more lives filled with the presence of Christ. Such a growth in the Christian faith could have increased the world's population fourfold. If the world today were guided by more Christian values, fewer unnecessary deaths would have been prevented.

For example, consider abortion: an estimated 1.5 billion babies have died from 1921 to 2024. What if these babies lives had been allowed to continue?

Can you picture it? A world where Jesus fills classrooms, courtrooms, and boardrooms. Where the light is so blindingly bright, sin has no corner left to hide. But we didn't make the exchange. We kept our Bibles. And they were lost. Is the Bible itself what matters most.

One might consider whether this widespread distribution of the Bible has trapped faithful brothers and sisters inside a book. Verse "GO" therefore, make disciples and baptize them? Reflect for a moment: did Jesus provide Bibles to His disciples or followers? Are we called to emulate Christ as He was, or to create our own version of what it means to be Christ-like today?

Imagine if God became man with the purpose of correcting and saving mankind? What if He also left behind words of love and guidance that lead us to eternal life? Surely, we would then honor such a man by listening to His words. Jesus is that man. He not only tells us the path that leads to eternal life, but also calls us to walk it. Yet too often, we merely study the map while sitting idle in the driveway at church. Jesus, however, is telling us to start the engine and go. You may ask yourself, Where do I go? That is an excellent question. Jesus, along with the apostles, through the Scriptures,

informs us how to engage with God's Word and apply it in our lives. So that we might not only follow Him ourselves, but also help others come to Jesus Christ. Let us now consider what He has to say.

Let's review the scripture interruption between the Pharisees & Scribes being religious teachers who opposed Jesus. They often attempted to trap Him in matters of Scripture in order to discredit Him as a false prophet. In response, Jesus corrected them by teaching and preaching directly from the Scriptures.

The Pharisees were regarded as wise teachers of the Law. They instructed others in how to live according to the Torah and the commandments contained within it. The Scribes, on the other hand, were devoted to carefully copying and preserving the Scriptures. They considered themselves experts, often providing additional explanations where the text seemed to be unclear, particularly concerning the fulfillment of some laws in the Torah. When Jesus arrived, He affirmed those who faithfully taught the Word of God, but He also rebuked false teachings that misled the

Jews. In doing so, Jesus revealed the proper way to interpret and apply the Scriptures.

From His example, we learn that only those gifted by the Spirit are called to preach and teach the true interpretation of Scripture. This raises an important question: What, then, should the rest of us do? A thoughtful question indeed, and one that Scripture itself answers. Now notice when Jesus first addressed the Pharisees and Scribes, He told them to "READ" the Torah. Jesus is not speaking directly to followers or disciples. Let us observe how Jesus deals with those who claim to know the Scriptures but lack the Spirit's gift of understanding. Though they possessed intellectual knowledge, they fell short because they did not have the Spirit's gift of interpretation. Let's review.

Matt 12:3-4 (1 Samuel 21:1-6)

3 But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions 4 how he entered the house of God, and they ate the [a]consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone?

Matt 12:5 (Numbers 28:9-10)

5 Or have you not read in the Law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple [a]violate the Sabbath, and yet are innocent?

Matt 19:4 (Genesis 1:27, 2:24)

4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female,

Matt 21:42 (Psalm 118:22-23)

42 Jesus *said to them, "Did you never read in the Scriptures, 'A stone which the builders rejected, This has become the [a]chief cornerstone; This came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes'?

The next scripture interruptions are directed toward the Sadducees. Who sought to trap Jesus by declaring that His teachings were false. The Sadducees were priests and political leaders who exercised significant authority in the temple. It is important to note that these passages are not addressing followers or disciples of Jesus.

Matt 22:29-31, (Mark 12:24-26, Exodus 3:6)

29 But Jesus answered and said to them,
"You are mistaken, since you do not
[a]understand the Scriptures nor the
power of God. 30 For in the resurrection
they neither marry nor are given in
marriage, but are like angels in heaven.
31 But regarding the resurrection of the
dead, have you not read what was spoken
to you by God:

Jesus now affirms that He is the Messiah. At
this point, He is speaking to a crowd of Jewish
leaders and religious groups warning them
about scripture interpretation.

Luke 24:27

27 Then beginning [a]with Moses and
[b]with all the Prophets, He explained to them
the things written about Himself in all the
Scriptures.

Luke 24:44-45

44 Now He said to them, "These are My words
which I spoke to you while I was still with
you, that all the things that are written about
Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and
the Psalms must be fulfilled. "45 Then He
opened their [a]minds to understand the
Scriptures,

So far, I believe Jesus is teaching that "You cannot truly know God on an intellectual level alone;" rather, you can only know Him on a spiritual level. True faith comes through a personal relationship with God, cultivated by prayer. As we walk with Him, the Holy Spirit produces fruit in our lives, which equips us for our "works of faith."

John 5:39–40

39 [a]You examine the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is those very Scriptures that testify about Me; 40 and yet you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.

Is Jesus implying that only those gifted by the Spirit should interpret Scripture? Could misinterpretation, even by ourselves, jeopardize eternal life?

Should we not carefully consider the danger of false prophets and relying on human interpretation without the Spirit's guidance, drawing us away from fulfilling the **Great Commission & Commandment** risking our eternal life? Remember past the gate, Jesus may say "I don't know you" than what, it's too late sadly there are no do overs?

Are you willing to risk eternal life by following today's modern Christian lifestyle, rather than living according to the example demonstrated by Jesus in His actions and teachings from the Sermon on the Mount? It is through this single, central sermon that Jesus explained how we are to live with one another in unity—so that we may enter Heaven together as one body.

"Interestingly, Christian was originally a title given to believers by non-believers, which the apostles and early Church eventually adopted. It was a man-made term. Personally, I feel others should say, "Wow he is Christ Like." Never proclaiming a religion ourselves, expect for being Jewish. The one only true religion that Jesus acknowledged.

New Testament Apostles Preach "Scripture"

The followers and disciples of Jesus were largely composed of ordinary no bodies, the poor, the sick, and the outcast. At that time, literacy was rare, and few possessed the ability to read or write. Considering the short term of this earthly life compared to eternity, perhaps reading and writing were not Jesus' primary concern. Who's was it?

Instead, He emphasized action, fulfilling the **Great Commission & Commandment** through spreading the Gospel and bearing witness. Scripture, therefore, serves as a tool for those gifted to teach the rest of us. This represents their role as members of the body of Christ. Perhaps you are a different part of the body and should therefore operate in a manner suited to your particular function. If we claim God's Word is timeless, we cannot argue that times have changed simply because literacy is now more common. Remember, the Bible itself was created and broken into chapters & verses by man; Jesus never commanded the Apostles to start printing and reproducing scripture.

Interestingly, when the Apostles interrupted Scripture, how would they then go on to teach others?

Paul writes to Timothy, who was called and gifted as a minister. This instruction was not directed to gentiles or disciples, but specifically to Timothy as a teacher gifted in scripture interpretation. Paul is mentoring Timothy, emphasizing his responsibility as one equipped to teach others.

1 Timothy 4:13

13 Until I come, give your attention to the public[a]reading, to exhortation, and teaching.

2 Timothy 3:15–17

15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is [a]inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for [b]rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man or woman of God may be [c]fully capable, equipped for every good work.

Paul now addresses the church in Rome through Phoebe, a deacon. As a gifted minister, she would read his letter aloud to the non-gifted congregation, in this case reminding them that both the strong and weak are to glorify God together as one body. In this case, one blessed to read.

Romans 15:1-4

Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength, and not just please ourselves. 2 Each of us is to please his neighbor [a]for his good, to his edification. 3 For even Christ did not please Himself, but as it is written: "The taunts of those who taunt You have fallen on Me." 4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Peter warns against personal interpretation apart from the Spirit, affirming that Scripture originates from God, not human reasoning.

2 Peter 1:19-21

19 And so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning

star arises in your hearts. 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture [a]becomes a matter of [b]someone's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Peter then affirms the authority of Paul's writings as Scripture and warns against twisting them into false doctrine.

2 Peter 3:15–16

15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which there are some things that are hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

The Bereans who verified Paul's teaching against the Scriptures were fueled solely by human intellect. By focusing on biblical intellect, as we do today. Do we risk missing true spiritual growth?

Acts 17:11

11 Now these people were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, [a]for they received the word with [b]great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

Paul encourages the Colossians, whose church had formed without direct apostolic guidance, to let Christ's word dwell among them in unity.

Colossians 3:16

16 Let the word of [a]Christ richly dwell within you, [b]with all wisdom teaching and admonishing [c]one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Now John describes the chain of revelation, from God to Jesus, from Jesus to an angel, and then to John, intended to be read aloud by a teacher and heard by the faithful.

Revelation 1:3

3 Blessed is the one who reads, and those who hear the words of the prophecy and [a]keep the things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Conclusion

Jesus often spoke in parables because Scripture cannot be fully understood. As He explains in Matthew 13:10–16, parables reveal truth to those who are given spiritual ears to hear. Should our pastors and teachers gifted by the Spirit, do likewise in guiding us today? Would the Church be more effective in fulfilling the **Great Commission and Commandment** if we depended on Spirit-led parable teaching rather than intellectual reasoning of scripture?

Matthew 28:19–20

19 [a]Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to [b]follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you [c]always, to the end of the age.”

Notice that Jesus never commanded, “Go and get your Bible.” Instead, He commanded us to go and make disciples. Scripture, when misused without the Spirit’s gift of interpretation, can resemble the Tree of Knowledge. Without Spirit-led teachers, how can one truly discern right from wrong by God’s desires? Is this not, in a sense, biting again into the forbidden fruit?

Even the Apostles, who walked with Jesus, often misunderstood his teachings. He continually corrected them. Do we know Jesus better than His best friends? Only Jesus perfectly knew the Father's will. Do we honestly think we are smarter than the apostles, because we live in today's time? Therefore, we must assume we are clueless to God's overall desires.

Over time, Scripture has been divided into chapters, verses, and translations, contributing to denominational differences and religious divisions. Yet Jesus warned that Satan would infiltrate the Church, and Scripture affirms that many within the Church will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven when He returns. This should alarm us.

If this is so, then perhaps we must admit we are not living according to Christ's original order. Radical change may be needed to return to the way of Christ rather than clinging to what our age calls "normal." For we are nothing more than servants, and always will be. No matter how educated we think we are, we simply are not!

* New American Standard Bible was used for scripture references *

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Taught in parables



In heaven will Jesus say leave? I never knew you. For both new and long-time followers who sadly believe they are going to heaven, remember this: not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it."

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1 Corinthians 9:20, Paul explains?

