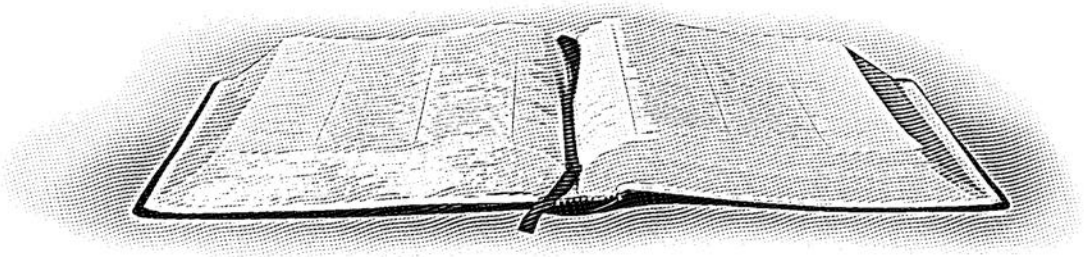


What Makes the Bible Special?



SABBATH—MARCH 28

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Deuteronomy 32:45–47; Amos 7:14; Genesis 49:8–12; 1 Corinthians 15:3–5, 51–55.

MEMORY VERSE: “Your word [the Bible] is like a lamp that shows me the way. It [the Bible] is like a light that guides me” (Psalm 119:105, NIV).



The same Spirit that helped men write the Bible helps us to understand Bible truth.

THE BIBLE has 66 books. The Bible was written more than 1,500 years ago. It was written by men who lived in Asia, Africa, and Europe. There is no other book that is as special as the Bible. And no wonder. The Bible is the Word of God!

Did you know that there are more than 24,600 copies of the New Testament? Wow! Those are a lot of copies! These copies were made in the 400 years that passed after Jesus went back to heaven. There are only seven copies of Plato's writings. Plato was a Greek thinker who lived during Old Testament times. There are eight copies of Herodotus's writings. Herodotus was a Greek writer who wrote about history during Old Testament times. So, you can see that we have many more copies of the Bible. All these copies help us to trust what the Bible says.

The Bible was the first book to be written in many different languages. Today, 95% of the people on the earth can read the Bible in their own language. The Bible is different from any other book. It shows us God's work in the past to save humans from sin. It also shows us God's future plan for humans and His everlasting kingdom. The Bible is filled with God's Spirit. The same Spirit that helped men write the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) helps us to understand Bible truth (John 14:16, 17; John 15:26; John 16:13).

THE BIBLE IS ALIVE (Deuteronomy 32:45–47)

Sometimes the most important words a person says are his last words in this life. We can see this important idea in Moses' writings. Moses sings an important song to God's people before he dies (Deuteronomy 31:30–32:43).

Read Moses' words in Deuteronomy 32:45–47. At this time, the Hebrew people are ready to enter the Promised Land. What does Moses say to them about the Bible? What does Moses tell them about the Bible's power to change their lives?

Moses' last words are powerful. He gives strong advice to God's people. Moses tells the Hebrews to follow God's words with all their hearts. The people should keep their hearts filled with God's words too. Then they will follow God's plan for their lives. God's people also must teach God's words to their children. Then every new child will grow up knowing God's plan to save His people. Do you see that Moses tells God's people not to pick and choose which words they will follow? God's people must "be careful to obey all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 32:46, NIV).

At the end of this earth's history, God will have a group of people who will be loyal to the Bible. This group will obey all God's commandments. They also will have the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12). This group will follow Bible teachings. The Bible helps us have a better life now. The Bible also helps us get ready for the home that Jesus makes for us in heaven (John 14:1–3).

Read John 1:1–5, 14 and John 14:6. How do these verses teach us about Jesus and everlasting life? Jesus became a man and lived on the earth. How does this Bible truth show us that we can trust what the Bible tells us?

Jesus became a man. Jesus lived, died, and lives again. The Old Testament promised us Jesus would. We see the Bible is right about Jesus. So, we can trust the Bible's promise about everlasting life.



The Bible helps us get ready for the home that Jesus makes for us in heaven (John 14:1–3).

WHO WROTE THE BIBLE, AND WHERE WAS IT WRITTEN? (Amos 7:14)

The Bible was written by a lot of different men from different places. This shows us that God wants Bible truth to touch as many different people as possible.

Read Exodus 2:10; Amos 7:14; Jeremiah 1:1–6; Daniel 6:1–5; Matthew 9:9; Philippians 3:3–6; and Revelation 1:9. What do these verses show us about the Bible writers?



Bible writers had different jobs and educations. Moses was raised from a baby to be a king.

Some Bible writers wrote from kings' homes. Other writers wrote from prisons. Some Bible writers were sent away to live alone. They wrote from lonely islands. Other writers wrote while they took trips to share the Good News about Jesus. These men had different jobs and educations. Moses was raised from a baby to be a king. Daniel was trained to serve in a top job in Babylon. Other Bible writers were shepherds. Some Bible writers were very young. Other Bible writers were very old. But one thing was the same about all of them. God gave them special work to do. The Holy Spirit led these men to write messages for God's people.

Some of the Bible writers saw the things they wrote about happen. Some Bible writers studied the writings of other Bible writers (Joshua 10:13; Luke 1:1–3). But all parts of the Bible are filled with God's Spirit. He led men to write down His thoughts and ideas. That is why Paul says, "Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. Those things were written so that we could have hope" (Romans 15:4, ERV).

"God chose to communicate His truth to humans. God Himself, by His Holy Spirit, gave these men skill to write His messages. He helped these men to do this work. God guided their minds. He showed them what to choose to say or write. God trusted these humans with His messages. These messages are the same as treasures. They were written by humans on this earth. But the messages come from Heaven."—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 26, adapted.

**GOD'S SPECIAL MESSAGES ABOUT THE FUTURE
(Genesis 49:8–12)**

The Bible is different from any other religious book. 30% of the Bible is prophecies. Prophecies are special messages from God about the future. The Bible shows us how God acts in history to save His people. This same God knows the future. He has shown the future before it happens to His special messengers, or prophets (Amos 3:7). The Bible is God's living Word. Yes, it shows us history. But it also shows us the future.

What do the following verses show us about the coming Savior?

Genesis 49:8–12 _____

Psalms 22:12–18 _____

Isaiah 53:3–7 _____

Daniel 9:24 _____

Micah 5:2 _____

Malachi 3:1 _____

Zechariah 9:9 _____

The Old Testament has at least 65 prophecies, or special messages, about the coming Savior. These prophecies give us exact information. Genesis 49:10 (ICB), tells us, " 'Men from Judah's family will be kings. Someone from Judah will always be on the throne. Judah will rule until the real king comes.' " Micah 5:2 tells us that the Savior will be born in Bethlehem in Judah (Micah 5:2). Isaiah 53:3–7 shows us that men will reject the Savior. They will hate Him and beat Him. They will lie about Him. But He will not say or do anything to protect Himself. Psalm 22:12–18 says that men will stab the Savior's hands and feet with nails. These men will divide the Savior's clothes. Then each man will take a part of the clothes for himself.

These Old Testament prophecies came true exactly as the Bible promised. This shows us that these prophecies came from God. Jesus is exactly who the Bible says that He is. So, we can trust the Bible. It is the Word of God.



Micah 5:2 tells us that the Savior will be born in Bethlehem in Judah.

THE BIBLE SHOWS US HISTORY (1 Corinthians 15:3–5, 51–55)

The Bible is more special than other religious books for another reason. It is a record of human history. It does not only show us some person's thoughts. The Bible is a record of God's acts in history. The Bible shows us God's plan over time to save His people. What are some of the parts of this plan? (1) God promises to send His people a Savior. (2) God promises that this Savior, Jesus, will come a second time to take His people to heaven.



Mary Magdalene saw Jesus after He woke up from the dead.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3–5, 51–55; Romans 8:11; and 1 Thessalonians 4:14. What do these verses teach us about Jesus' resurrection, or waking up from the dead? What hope does Jesus' resurrection give us personally?

Paul and the writers of the 1st four books of the New Testament tell us that Jesus died. These men tell us that Jesus was put in a grave. Then Jesus woke up from the dead and showed Himself to different people. Many witnesses laid Jesus in the grave. Later, they saw the grave after it was empty. Witnesses touched Jesus. Jesus ate with them. Mary Magdalene, Jesus' mother, and other women saw Jesus after He woke up from the dead. After that, Jesus' followers talked with Him on the road to Emmaus. Then Jesus gave His followers the command to share the Good News. Paul says, "If Christ was not raised from the dead, then what we preach to you is worth nothing" (1 Corinthians 15:14, NLV). In other Bible versions, we see that the words "worth nothing" are written as "doesn't mean anything" (1 Corinthians 15:14, NIV). Jesus' followers say, "It's true! The Lord has risen!" (Luke 24:34, NIV). The words written as "it's true" also mean "for sure." They come from the Greek word "ontos." This word means something that really happened. That is why Jesus' followers say, "The Lord really has risen from death!" (Luke 24:34, ERV).

Jesus also is "proof" that all those who died will wake up from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:20, ICB). We will wake up as Jesus woke up. We will have a body. Then "in Christ all of us will be made alive again" (1 Corinthians 15:22, ERV). The words "will be made alive" show us God's future act for His people. God will wake up from the dead everyone who belongs to Jesus "at His coming" (1 Corinthians 15:23, NKJV). "This will happen when the last trumpet blows" (1 Corinthians 15:52, ERV).

THE BIBLE CHANGES OUR LIVES (2 Kings 22:3–20)

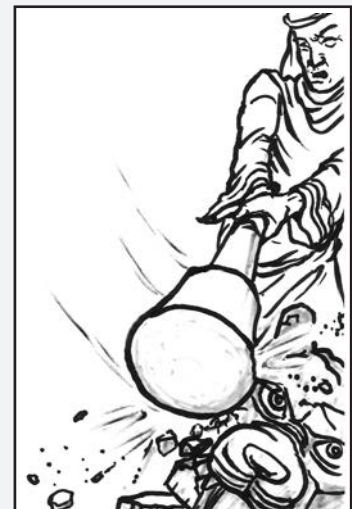
In 2 Kings 22:3–20, we see that King Josiah tears his clothes. Why does he do that? What does the king find that changes his life and the lives of everyone in Judah?

In 621 B.C., Hilkiah, the high priest, finds “ ‘the Book of the Law in the LORD’s temple’ ” (2 Kings 22:8, NIV). We think that Hilkiah found the 1st five books of Moses. Or maybe he found only Deuteronomy. Josiah is the king at the time. Josiah is 25 years old. During the time that Josiah’s grandfather Manasseh is king, this book got lost. Manasseh is very evil. He and his son Amon, the next king, worship Baal, Asherah, and other gods (2 Kings 21:3–9). Hilkiah reads the book to Josiah. Then Josiah rips his clothes because he is very upset. Josiah understands that he and his people have turned far away from God. Josiah does not wait. He starts to change things in Judah. He breaks the altars to false gods in the land. When the king is done, there is only one place left to worship in Judah: God’s temple in Jerusalem. The Book of the Law changes Josiah. It causes him to turn away from sin. God’s Word gives Josiah the power to change his life. The change starts with Josiah first. Then everyone in Judah starts to change their lives for the better too.

The Bible tells us that it has the power to change our lives and show us how to be saved. How does the Bible make these truths known to us? For the answers, please read John 16:13; John 17:17; Hebrews 4:12; and Romans 12:2.

When the Bible changes someone’s life, we see powerful proof of the Bible’s power to change us too. The Bible shows us our sins. It also shows us our need for a Savior.

The Bible is not the same as any other book. It is the **living** Word of God. The Bible has (1) history, (2) prophecy, or special messages about the future, and (3) the power to change lives. Most important, the Bible shows us Jesus. Jesus promised to send His Spirit to lead us “into all truth” (John 16:13, KJV). The Bible is God’s truth. So, the Bible teaches us important rules that help us to understand its messages. We can learn these rules when we study the Bible. We also should study how Bible writers allowed the Bible to explain itself.



Josiah breaks the altars to false gods in the land.



People heard Dr. Taylor say Psalm 51 right before the fire started and he died in the fire.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “The Scriptures a Safeguard,” pages 593–602, in *The Great Controversy*; “Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled,” pages 662–680, in *The Desire of Ages*.

Many people in the past died for their faith. One example is Dr. Rowland Taylor. Dr. Taylor was a pastor in Hadley, England. He stood against Catholic teachings and beliefs during the time that Bloody Mary was queen. The Church of England forced Dr. Taylor to leave. People made fun of Dr. Taylor because he wanted to obey the Bible. So, Dr. Taylor went to the bishop of Winchester, who was one of the top religious leaders in England. But the bishop put Dr. Taylor into prison. Then he ordered Dr. Taylor to be burned to death. Dr. Taylor died in 1555. Right before he died, he said: “ ‘Good people, I have taught you only God’s Holy Word, the Bible. I have taught you lessons from this Holy Book. Now, I come here this day to spill my blood for it.’ ” John Foxe, *The New Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, edited by Harold J. Chadwick (North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers, 1997), page 193, adapted. People heard Dr. Taylor say Psalm 51 right before the fire started and he died in the fire.

The question that many of us need to ask ourselves now is: Will we stay loyal to Bible truth? We are living in the end times. Sooner or later, the test will come. The time to get ready for the test is now, of course.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① In what way do prophecies, or special messages, show us that the Bible comes from God? How can these special messages make our faith grow stronger?
- ② Why is the proof that Jesus is the promised Savior so powerful?
- ③ Jesus and His followers showed strong faith in the Bible. How many times did Jesus talk about the Bible and say that its words will come true? (For the answer, read Matthew 26:54, 56; Mark 14:49; Luke 4:21; John 13:18; and John 17:12. So, if Jesus Himself had such strong faith in the Bible, how should we feel and think about it too?)