

# ***Sabbath School Today*** **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

## ***How to Interpret Scripture*** **Lesson 1: The Uniqueness of the Bible**

A crusty old soldier was facing a group of slightly disrespectful Boy Scouts. They listened to him as he related how a Bible he had carried in his coat pocket saved his life on the battlefield by stopping a stray bullet. Then he brought out a small packet, wrapped in soft white paper.

Silently and gently he turned it over in his hand and began carefully and meticulously to unwrap it before many pairs of young curious eyes. "There"—he pointed to some torn pages—"there is the hole meant for my chest. This Bible stopped the bullet. It saved my life. I trust this book. You trust it too." That was all he said. He wrapped up his Bible again as carefully as he had unwrapped it, then tucked it away safely.

Jesus urged people to read the Bible. He mentioned Daniel in particular, but enthusiastically urged us to read Moses and the prophets as well. He Himself studied diligently. In fact, He was "the Word ... made flesh." That means He absorbed it, as we eat our food, until the Word became Himself, as our food becomes ourselves.

And here's where the 1888 message comes in. If "God is love" or "God loves the world" then He must speak to the world. Genuine love always says something, because love is always the self-sacrificing devotion of a personal being. An impersonal "It" can never love. A "god" who merely sits in sublime, uncaring indifference to the world cannot be the God who declares Himself to be "love." Even we humans, if we truly love a person, will somehow express that love in a message. As surely as "God is love," so surely has He spoken to the world in a clear, understandable message of salvation.

Through the Bible the God of heaven addresses the entire world. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," the Lord says (Isa. 45:22). "I ... will draw all men unto me," Jesus says (John 12:32).

An old farmer answered a critic who despised his simple faith, saying: "I cannot argue with you, ... but I know this, that when I was a man of evil character the Bible got hold of me and quelled the tiger in me." Every man and woman in the world has a "tiger" inside him or her; the Bible works its miracle transforming the hearts of all races of people.

A very interesting evidence of the truthfulness of the Bible is its predictions being fulfilled. The Bible stands or falls on the issue of prophecy. "I am the Lord, ... new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them" (Isa. 42:8, 9).

Here is an example of the remarkable fulfilled prophecy:

Jesus made an astounding prediction in Matthew 24 that the huge stones of the Herodian temple of His day would all be “thrown down” (verse 2). It seemed an impossible prophecy, because no one would bother to move such enormously heavy stones, even if the temple should be burned. But when Titus and his Roman army set fire to the temple, the gold on the walls melted in the fierce heat, and ran down in the cracks between the huge stones. Yes, you guessed it! The peasants came along and pried every stone loose in order to recover what gold they could find!

Is the Bible historically true? Myths, legends, and folk-tales have no place in it. In former ages uneducated people often trusted legends, but in modern times of scientific knowledge they want solid truth that rests on the firm rock of historical reality. Thoughtful, informed people will never agree in time of sickness to entrust their life or health to someone’s imagination or folklore; they want proven medical truth.

Why should we entrust our eternal salvation to myths and legends that are the product of someone’s imagination, even though the legends may be very ancient? Time does not change legends into reality that can be trusted. Eternity is too precious to rest on assumptions. The Bible is special because when its writers tell something, they insist, “I saw it with my own eyes!” John, a disciple who knew Jesus personally, insists that that “which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life, ... that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you” (1 John 1:1-3).

Luke, a Greek physician who believed in Jesus, writes to “Theophilus, that thou mightest know the *certainty* of those things” (Luke 1:3).

The treasure of the ages is yours!

These stories clearly demonstrate that the Bible is a book of truth, inspired by your Lord and Saviour. Just as there is one sun that shines upon all nations, so there is one inspired Book that sheds light into the darkened hearts of people of all nations. There is power in it more real than the power you feel if you put your finger into a live electrical socket. It is a power that grips your heart. It may make you feel uncomfortable as it brings to you a conviction of wrong. Touching a hot stove makes you feel pain, but the pain is beneficial because it saves you from disaster.

Ask God to awaken your heart as you read His Word. He will answer the prayer; you will know there is power there that comes from heaven.

“The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where soul and spirit meet, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of man’s heart” (Heb. 4:12, *Good News Bible*).

It solves that problem of selfishness that is such a curse everywhere. Thus the truth that it teaches is the most valuable treasure in existence.

—*Paul E. Penno*

**Notes:**

Pastor Paul Penno's video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7iYufF531tq>

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