

Introduction:

- A. Quote from M___’s letter
What will my friend see as he learns to read and consider Scripture? It is sort of like that he will soon see the Grand Canyon for the first time, or stars through a telescope, or be united with a family and heritage he never knew he had
- B. We’ve begun reading the NT together; Luke & Acts.
Perhaps the first thing we need to know as we read the NT is that it stands on the broad, strong, platform of the OT.
Everything that happens or is taught in the NT has a back story—a heritage, a promise, song or symbol of some kind—that holds up what we read in the NT.
- C. Today I want to show you that especially from Luke & Acts.
 When Luke wrote he especially had Gentiles—non-Jews—in mind, people who probably didn’t know much about the Old Testament Scriptures. Yet he takes his readers again and again back to what he will call **Moses and the Prophets.**
- D. We’re going to use our Bibles a lot today. Instead of putting verses on the screen we’re going to take time to look up and see passages in our own Bibles. So *“swords ready!”* To begin, turn to Luke 4

I. LUKE SHOWS THAT RIGHT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING EVERYTHING ABOUT JESUS FULFILLED OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

- A. Luke begins in **1:1...** *“fulfilled”*
- B. There are many OT promises that Jesus fulfilled that, humanly speaking, he would have had no control over.
1. The **birth of John the Baptist** who fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecies of a forerunner for the Messiah: **1:16-17; 3:3-6**
 2. **Mary’s virgin birth**
 3. **Mary’s song** (1:46-55) – with over 20 OT quotes, all showing her understanding that her son was the

Messiah God had promised. Same with Zechariah's song (1:67-79).

4. **Jesus' own birth in Bethlehem, the town of David,** because he was of the house and line of David. (2:4,11)
 5. Jump to **3:23-37**, Jesus' genealogy, showing his legal descent—through Joseph, his step-father—back to David, Abraham, and even back to Adam (v.37) "*the son of God*", i.e. the only other human whose "biological" father was God himself.
 6. Those kind of prophetic details continue to come up in the Gospels. Jesus betrayal, for example, that he would be falsely accused and crucified with criminals, that he'd be given vinegar to drink, that the soldiers would gamble for his clothes, and that his hands and feet would be pierced.
 7. **What are the chances that one person could fulfill all these uncontrollable details?** How could that possibly happen unless God himself was controlling everything over all the centuries of Scripture?
- C. Jesus fulfilled Scripture in another sense, too: he obeyed everything—not just the letter of the Law, but the spirit. When Jesus' enemies brought charges against him one of their very real problems was that they could not find a single legitimate charge to bring against him. In our vernacular we'd say, "*Not so much as a parking ticket!*" **Luke 4:1-13** gives us a particularly vivid example of this in Jesus' temptation in the wilderness...
1. This story as an OT back story—Israel in the wilderness, disobeying God and refusing to trust him at every turn. Here is Israel's *do-over* through their "agent" Jesus.
 2. He meets every powerful temptation with Scripture. He *fulfills* Scripture. He completes it by obeying it heart and soul.
 3. It's really amazing how many times Jesus refers to Scripture in all kinds of contexts in the gospels. **Jesus**

was the first and only human being who lived out Scripture in every way—not only its commands, but its wisdom, hope, and heart.

- D. **Luke 4** continues with the story of Jesus returning to his hometown, Nazareth. **4:14-21....** Here is Jesus fulfilling Scripture at the most profound level. **The OT is built around the mega-promises of God—covenants.** For one thing, God regarded his relationship with his people Israel as a **marriage covenant**. He made these deep, history-making promises pointing toward the Messiah, the Anointed One:
1. **Covenant with Abraham:** Gen 12:1-3; 15:5
 2. **Covenant with Moses:** All the law prepared a people to be holy and ready for God’s Messiah and reign.
 3. **Covenant with David:** 2 Kings 7:12-13
 4. **All the prophets:** Psalm 2:1-2; Isaiah 9:6-7; 53; and 61:1-2, which Jesus quoted in Nazareth.
- E. What will it be like for my friend M to discover all these things? Luke tells us at the end of his Gospel, when he tells the story of the two disciples returning to their little town of Emmaus after the resurrection. **Luke 24:13ff...**

Then Jesus appeared to all the disciples and again pointed to Scripture.

Look at what Peter said about these prophets in **1 Pet 1:10-12... 2 Pet 1:19-21...**

When Luke turns his attention to the early days of the church in Acts, guess what we see? The OT Scriptures time after time.

II. THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES ENABLE PEOPLE TO COME TO FAITH IN CHRIST AND TO GROW IN THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST

- A. Luke at Peter’s first sermon on Pentecost—the day the Holy Spirit descended on believers. Just look at the references to the OT...
- B. The same happened in his next sermon in **Acts 3:18, 24ff...**

- C. In **Acts 8** the poster boy for a Gentile converted to Christ through fulfilled prophecy is the Ethiopian official. Philip came upon him reading **Is 53**: *“He was like a sheep led to the slaughter...”* *“Tell me, please,”* the official said to Philip, *“who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?”* Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. [8:30-35]
- D. When Peter preached to the Roman commander, Cornelius, he pointed him to the prophets. The same when he met with the ruler, **Agrippa**. And when we come to the very end of Acts, Paul is in Rome awaiting trial. **Acts 28:23-24** says, *“Large numbers came to the place where he was staying, and Luke writes, “He witnessed to them from morning till evening, explaining about the kingdom of God, and **from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to persuade them about Jesus**. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.”*
- E. All the New Testament writers link what they saw and taught back to the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. For example, **16 times Matthew** says something like, *“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophets”* [1:22]. Paul wrote in **1 Cor 15:3-4**, *“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”*

Conclusion

We study the Bible because it is the Word of Life. The Bible opens to us a whole new life—the kingdom of God, our heritage as God’s people, our Triune God—Father, Son, Holy Spirit, our rock-solid hope of Jesus Second Coming and our life in his Kingdom forever. No one can persevere in their faith without the Bible. The one thing the persecuted church pleads for is Bibles. The one thing every new believer must have is a Bible. **2 Tim 3:16**

For those who aren't believers, what will you do with the Bible? This is not like any other book, nor any other scriptures or religious lore. These prophecies are not mere fortunetelling or clairvoyance. God never makes a prophecy that isn't fulfilled. So God expects us to regard fulfilled prophecy as proof demanding our response. In fact, **God tells us that his ability to foretell the future is what sets him apart from all other so-called gods.** He says in **Is 42:8-9,**

*"I am the Lord; that is my name!
I will not yield my glory to another
or my praise to idols.
See, the former things have taken place,
and new things I declare;
before they spring into being
I announce them to you."*

When **Ezekiel** prophesied God said, *"When this happens, you will know that I am the Sovereign Lord."* ^{24:24} **Luke 1:37, "No word from God will ever fail."**

No one is ever expected to put their faith in Christ blindly. No one need sacrifice logic or reason to believe in Jesus. In fact, the Bible makes the case that you have to suspend logic to *disbelieve* him. How can you explain the Old Testament prophecies, both explicit and vast, fulfilled in Jesus?

We love the Bible because the Bible excels at leading people to Jesus. Sharing our faith is not only a matter of telling people how Jesus touched our lives. To share our faith we need to draw people to the Bible.

We have small New Testaments in the foyer. Take as many as you want and give them away. If someone you know needs a full Bible, ask and we'll let you give them one from you and the church for free. Invite them to join our Community Bible Experience. You can do the Book Club with them. One reason our church supports the Gideons is because we believe, along with them, that God uses the Bible to bring people to Jesus.

Illus.: Do you remember hearing the story of how Dan North, one of our recent seminary grads, came to faith? This is what he wrote...