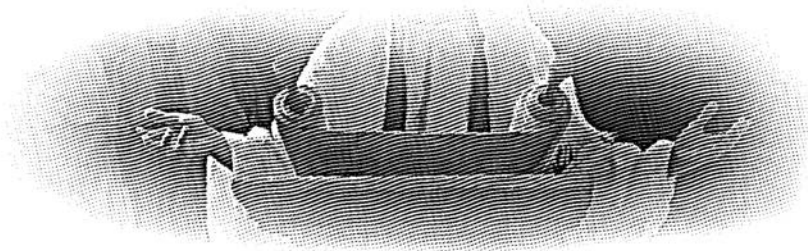


# What Did Jesus and His Followers Think About the Bible?



## SABBATH—APRIL 11

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Matthew 4:1–11; Matthew 5:17–20; Luke 24:13–35, 44, 45; Matthew 12:3, 4; Acts 3:8.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Jesus answered, ‘It is written in the Scriptures [the Holy Bible], ‘A person does not live only by eating bread. But a person lives by everything the Lord says’ ’ ” (Matthew 4:4, ICB).



**As Seventh-day Adventists, we reject the idea that the Bible no longer has any real meaning for our lives.**

**SADLY**, today in our modern times, some people say that the Bible has no real meaning for our lives. These thinkers doubt that God led holy men to write the Bible. So, these modern thinkers believe that the Bible cannot teach us truth. They think that the Bible was written by people who cannot understand our way of life today. These thinkers do not believe in the Bible's miracles. They believe that the Bible is a book that has no life or power. For them, the Bible is not God's ideas about man. No, for them the Bible is only man's ideas about God. So, for many people in our time, the Bible no longer has any real meaning for our lives.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we reject this view. In the New Testament, we see rules that show us how to understand the whole Bible. We learn these rules when we study how Jesus and His followers understood the Old Testament. That was the only Bible they had at the time. How did they feel about the people, places, and things that happened in their time? How did they decide what the Bible meant? This week, we will look at the answers to these questions.

**IT IS WRITTEN (Matthew 4:1–11)**

Jesus' work for God on earth started when John the Baptist baptized Jesus. After that, the Holy Spirit led Jesus to the desert in Judea. There, Jesus did not eat any food for 40 days. After 40 days with no food, Jesus felt very weak. Then Satan came to Jesus and tried to get Jesus to sin.

**Read about Satan's attack on Jesus in Matthew 4:1–11. How does Jesus fight against Satan in the desert? What does this story teach us about the Bible?**

Satan tries to get Jesus to turn stones into bread. But Jesus says, "It is written in the Scriptures [the Holy Bible], 'A person does not live only by eating bread. But a person lives by everything the Lord says'" (Matthew 4:4, ICB). Jesus' safety is trusting in the Bible. The Bible is God's living Word. When Jesus answers Satan with Bible verses, Jesus shows us the Bible's power. Next, Satan also offers Jesus this earth's kingdoms for a price. Jesus must bow down and worship Satan first. Jesus says to Satan, "Get away from me, Satan! The Scriptures [the Bible] say, 'You must worship the Lord your God. Serve only him'" (Matthew 4:10, ERV; read also Luke 4:8). Jesus shows us that true worship is about God and no one else. True worship also means we must obey God's Word, the Bible. Finally, Satan tries to get Jesus to sin by showing off His power. Satan takes Jesus up to the top of the temple in Jerusalem. Then Satan tells Jesus to prove that He is God by throwing Himself off. But Jesus says, "The Scriptures [the Bible] also say, 'You must not test [put God's power to the test] the Lord your God'" (Matthew 4:7, ERV).

In all three tests, Jesus answers with the words, "The Scriptures [the Bible] say." Jesus goes straight to God's Word to answer Satan's attacks and lies. This should be a powerful lesson to all of us. The Bible, and only the Bible, is the reason and the foundation for everything we believe.

Yes, Jesus is God. But in His fight against Satan's attacks, Jesus uses only the Bible. The Bible is not man's ideas. For Jesus, the Bible has the highest power. He starts His work for God with the Bible. He continues to build His work on the Bible. Jesus trusted God's Word. We should do the same.



**When Jesus answers Satan with Bible verses, Jesus shows us the Bible's power.**

## JESUS AND THE LAW (Matthew 5:17–20)

Read Matthew 5:17–20; Matthew 22:29; and Matthew 23:2, 3. What is Jesus saying in these verses?

Jesus teaches His followers to obey God’s Word, the Bible, and the law. There is no hint that Jesus doubted the Bible’s power. Jesus always said the Bible showed God’s plan for humans. Jesus told the Sadducees, or Jewish teachers, “ ‘You are so wrong! You don’t know what the Scriptures [the Bible] say. And you don’t know anything about God’s power’ ” (Matthew 22:29, ERV). Jesus also taught that it was not enough to know about the truth. You also need to know the Lord who is the truth.

What does Matthew 22:37–40 tell us that Jesus thought about the law of Moses?

Jesus answers the lawyer’s question. Jesus’ answer shows what the Ten Commandments are all about. Jesus Himself gave the Ten Commandments to Moses nearly 1,500 years earlier. In Jesus’ answer, we see that Jesus gives the highest respect to the Old Testament. Many Christians have thought that Jesus gave a new law here. They think that Jesus replaced the Old Testament law with the Good News from the New Testament. But that idea is false. Jesus’ teaching comes from an Old Testament law. Jesus shows more fully what that law really means. He shows that the 1st four Ten Commandments are about the love and worship we owe to God. The next six commandments are about the love we must show other people. Jesus explains that “ ‘all of the law and the writings of the prophets take their meaning from these two commands’ ” (Matthew 22:40, ERV). Do you see that Jesus names the Old Testament “ ‘the law and the writings of the prophets [special messengers]’ ”? In Jesus’ day, the writings of the Old Testament also were known as the law, the prophets, and the writings. So, by using this name, Jesus honors all the Old Testament.

“Jesus showed that the Bible had power that no human should doubt. We should teach other people this same truth. We must show them that the Bible is God’s Word. God has no limits. So, His Word can end all disagreements. It is the foundation of our faith.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 39, 40, adapted.



“God’s Word can end all disagreements. It is the foundation of our faith.”

**JESUS AND THE BIBLE (Luke 24:13–35, 44, 45)**

**Read Luke 24:13–35, 44, 45. How does Jesus use the Bible to teach His followers about the Good News?**

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After Jesus dies, His followers are confused and filled with doubts. They do not understand why Jesus died. They do not know what His death means. In Luke 24, Jesus shows Himself two times after His death to His followers. First, Jesus shows Himself to two of His followers on the road to Emmaus. Then later, Jesus shows Himself to more of His followers. Both times, Jesus explains how the Old Testament tells about His life and death before they happened. “Then he began [started] to explain everything that had been written about himself in the Scriptures [the Bible]. He started with [explained] the books of Moses and then he talked about what the prophets had said about him” (Luke 24:27, ERV). Again, in Luke 24:44, 45 (ERV), “Jesus said to them, ‘Remember when I was with you before? I said that everything written about me must happen—everything written in the Law of Moses, the books of the prophets [special messengers], and the Psalms.’ Then Jesus helped the followers understand these Scriptures [the Bible] about him.”

Do you see that Jesus depends on the Bible to explain truth? He shows how the things about Him were written many hundreds of years earlier. Jesus also shows His followers an important rule. Jesus wants His followers to use the Bible to help people to understand the Good News too.

Now look at what Jesus says to His followers in Matthew 28:18–20 (ICB): “All power in heaven and on earth is given to me. So go and make followers of all people’ ” everywhere. Then Jesus says, “ ‘Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have told you.’ ” All Jesus’ teachings come from the Bible. He comes in answer to the Bible promises. He does what the Bible says He will do. He obeys His Father exactly as the Bible says He will.

**Jesus accepts the Bible. Why must we do the same?**



**Jesus wants His followers to use the Bible to help people to understand the Good News.**



## JESUS AND THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE (Matthew 12:3, 4)

Jesus teaches that the Bible is God's Word. The Bible comes from God. So, it shows us God's plan for every part of our life. God works in history to show us His plan to save humans. We can see that plan in the Bible.

Let us look at an example from Jesus that shows God's plan for our lives. In Matthew 19:4, 5 (NLV), Jesus talks about a verse that Moses wrote in Genesis 1:27. Jesus says, "Have you not read that He Who made them in the first place made them man and woman? It says, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will live with his wife.' " Do you see that Jesus does not say "The Bible says"? No, Jesus simply says, "He Who made them in the first place." Why does Jesus do this? Because He wants to show that God is the real writer of the verse that Moses wrote. Yes, Moses wrote it down. But the truth came from God.



**Jesus uses Noah's story to warn us about how bad things will be in the end times (Matthew 24:38, 39).**

**Read the verses below. What does Jesus think about the people who lived in Old Testament times? Does Jesus think that they are real people?**

**Matthew 12:3, 4** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mark 10:6–8** \_\_\_\_\_

**Luke 4:25–27; Luke 11:51** \_\_\_\_\_

**Matthew 24:38** \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus shows us that He believes that Old Testament people, places, and happenings are real. Jesus talks about what happened in Genesis 1 and 2 as real. Jesus talks about Abel (Genesis 4) as a real person too. Jesus also talks about David eating showbread as something that really happened. Showbread was a special bread in God's house. Only the priests were allowed to eat it. Jesus talks about Elisha as a real person too. Jesus also talks about how much God's special messengers suffered during Old Testament times (Matthew 5:12; Matthew 13:57; Matthew 23:34–36; Mark 6:4). Jesus talks about Noah. Jesus uses Noah's story to warn us about how bad things will be in the end times (Matthew 24:38, 39). The Bible shows us that Jesus believed that Noah's story really happened in history.

**THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH LEADERS  
AND THE BIBLE (Acts 3:8)**

The New Testament writers think and feel about the Bible the same way that Jesus does. For the New Testament writers, the Old Testament is God's Word. The Old Testament taught God's truth and showed humans how to behave. We do not see anything in the New Testament that shows that its writers doubted any part of God's Word.

**What do the verses below teach us that the New Testament leaders believe about God's Word, the Bible?**

**Acts 4:24–26** \_\_\_\_\_

**Acts 13:32–36** \_\_\_\_\_

**Romans 9:17** \_\_\_\_\_

**Galatians 3:8** \_\_\_\_\_

Do you see in these verses how the Bible is the same thing as God's own words? In Acts 4, Jesus' followers praise God for letting Peter and John go free. Jesus' followers also praise God for the special messages about Jesus that God gave to David long ago. Jesus' followers show that David's words are really God's words. In Acts 13:32–36 (ERV), Paul also says words that David wrote. Do you see in Acts 13:32 that Paul says that David's words come from God? Paul says: "We tell you the Good News about the promise God made to our ancestors [early fathers]."

In Romans 9:17 (ICB), Paul talks about God again. But Paul does not say "God." No, Paul uses the words: "the Scripture [Bible]." Paul says: "The Scripture says to the king of Egypt." We also can write this verse as: "God says to the king of Egypt." In Galatians 3:8 (ICB), Paul also writes "the Scriptures" in place of "God." Paul wants us to see that the Bible is tied very closely to God Himself.

New Testament writers believed that the Old Testament was God's Word. There are hundreds of Old Testament verses in the New Testament: 400 from Isaiah, 370 from the Psalms, 220 from Exodus, and so on. The New Testament is filled with special messages from the Old Testament too. Some examples are Matthew 2:5; Mark 1:2; Mark 7:6; and Luke 3:4. All of this shows that the Old Testament is the foundation for everything that Jesus and His followers taught.



**The Old Testament is the foundation for everything that Jesus and His followers taught.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** Read Ellen G. White, “As a Child,” pages 68–74, and “The Temptation,” pages 114–123, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“Men think that they are wiser than the Bible. They think they are wiser than God. They do not judge everything by God’s Word, the Bible. The Bible is the foundation for truth. But many men judge the Bible by their own ideas about science and nature. What if the Bible does not agree with their ideas about science? Then these men throw out God’s Word.”—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, March 27, 1884, page 1, adapted.

“The Bible teaches us about God’s wisdom and plan for our lives. When we learn these Bible truths, we will become good workers. Our minds will grow strong. Jesus is the mighty Teacher. . . . He gave His people the truth. As Jesus’ followers, we must make God’s truth known to everyone on the earth. We cannot be made holy without the Bible. The Bible is God’s truth. So, it is important that everyone understands what the Bible says!”—Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 432, adapted.



**When we learn Bible truths, our minds will grow strong.**

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Many modern thinkers do not believe that the Bible is God’s Word. But Jesus, the New Testament writers, and Paul taught that the Old Testament was God’s Word. What should their views tell us about why many modern ideas about the Bible are wrong?
- ② Many modern Bible experts reject important Bible teachings. They reject the teaching that God made the earth in six days. These Bible experts do not believe that Adam was real. They do not believe in a worldwide Flood. Some experts think that Abraham did not live at all. They think the story of the Exodus did not happen. These experts do not believe that Jesus’ miracles happened. They do not believe He woke up from the dead in a real body. Some of these Bible experts do not believe the Bible’s special messages about what will happen in the future. This is what happens when people start to doubt God’s Word. How can we help doubters to understand the truth clearly?