

UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES

LUKE 24:44-45 • TV114A

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Luke 24:44-45

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.”

I have a very special subject today that I want to share with you. The title of this message is, **“UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES.”**

And we are going to turn to the book of **Luke chapter 24, verses 44 and 45**. That’ll be my text and I would like for you to turn in your Bible to this passage of Scripture and just keep it open while I bring the message today, **Luke 24, verses 44 and 45**.

Jesus Christ said unto them: *“These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses.”*

Now we are talking about the first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy; these are the writings of Moses: *“All things written in the, the law of Moses, (book of the law) and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me.* Now we are talking about Isaiah, Jeremiah, and all of these prophets through Malachi, and in the Psalms.

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And then the text says: *“Then he opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures.”* Now, when our Lord spoke these words He had fulfilled all that He came to earth to accomplish with a mighty cry from the cross of Calvary, He declared, *“It’s finished!”*

“Oh what pleasure do these charming words afford; heavenly blessings without measure flow to us from Christ our Lord. *‘Finished, it is finished.’* All the types and shadows of the ceremonial law are finished; all that God had promised from this, we all our comforts draw.”

Christ had risen from the grave and was speaking to His disciples. He was sending them forth to preach the Gospel. He said to them: *“All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and preach the gospel to all nations.”* *“Preach the Word of God.”* He sent them forth to preach the Word.

Now, some of them would be commissioned to write some Scripture, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter; these men wrote the New Testament as they were inspired and led by the Holy Spirit.

But the Scriptures that Christ sent them to preach and the Scriptures which he opened to their understanding, the Scriptures that He’s talking about here in **Luke 24:44 and 45**; these are not the New Testament writings but rather the Old Testament writings. We are talking about Moses, David, Isaiah, and all of the Old Testament prophets.

So, our Lord was sending His disciples forth to preach the Scriptures and He was opening their understanding before sending them forth to preach. He was revealing to them what the Scriptures were saying.

We are talking about the Old Testament. We are not talking about the New Testament at all; we are talking about the Old Testament.

Christ is the key to the Old Testament. Christ is the message of the Old Testament and Christ is the theme of the Old Testament. The Old Testament is Christ in promise. The Old Testament is Christ in prophecy, Christ in picture, Christ in type and symbol.

So, here our Lord had finished the work the Father gave Him to do. He had been crucified, buried, and raised again. He was speaking to His disciples and He said: *“Now these things are fulfilled according to what I taught you before. These are the things that I’ve been saying to you.”*

And then He took the books of Moses and the writings of David in the Psalms and the writings of the prophets and He opened their understanding to understand what was written in these Scriptures concerning Christ.

One time years ago in a little church in Wales a young preacher brought a message. And when he had finished his message he stepped down from the pulpit and one of the old fathers of the church, a white-haired gentleman, came by and shook hands with him.

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The young man asked him, he said; “How did you like my message?” The old man hesitated a moment and then he turned and looked full into the face of this young man and he said, “Well, it was a mighty poor sermon.”

And the young man said, “But sir; I don’t understand.” He said, “I studied; I studied hard and prepared that message. It took me a long time and the old man said: “I could see that you have studied and I could tell that you had prepared but it was still a poor sermon.”

The young man said, “Well, was it poorly delivered? I thought I delivered it quite well.” The old man said, “Oh your delivery was excellent; you’d prepared and you delivered it well.” And the young man said, “Well, what about my illustrations and my stories; were they not applied well to the Scripture?” The old man said, “Oh, your illustrations were excellent, your antidotes, and all of the stories were fine.”

The young man said, “Well, if I’ve prepared well and preached it well, and the illustrations were well presented, why do you say it was a poor sermon?” The old man said: “Because there was no Christ in your sermon.”

The young man said, “But sir, Christ was not in the text.” The old man replied, “Son, Christ is in every text, Christ is in every text. And your business as a preacher is to find that road in that text that leads to Calvary and get on that road just as quickly as you can.”

And this is what Christ is saying to His apostles before He sends them out to preach. They are going out to preach the Scriptures, Genesis through Malachi, not Galatians and Ephesians and Philippians.

We preach these Scriptures (Galatians, Ephesians and Philippians) but these men wrote those Scriptures led by the Holy Spirit. They were going out to preach, and the Scriptures they were going to proclaim were the Old Testament Scriptures. We also preach from the Old Testament because the Old Testament is Christ and I’m going to show you that.

In the book of **Acts chapter 10:43**, the Scripture says: “*To him, (to Christ) give all the prophets witness,*” all of them, all of the prophets, Malachi, Jeremiah, and all of these prophets are writing of Christ.

Christ said, “*Moses wrote of me.*” Those religious people in His day said, “*We have Moses.*” And he said, “*If you would have believed Moses you would have believed me; Moses wrote of me. Abraham saw my day and was glad.*”

In the Scriptures, the Old Testament Scriptures, Christ is the theme, Christ is the message. Here our Lord said: “*All things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, in the prophets, in the Psalms, concerning me.*”

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Now, if this is what our Lord saw in the Old Testament, it better be what we see. If this is what our Lord taught about the Old Testament, this is what we better teach.

And I'm going to take you through some of the Old Testament Scriptures today and I want you to listen as I show you how that Christ is revealed in these Scriptures.

First of all: Now, take the book of **Genesis**. In **Genesis chapter 3:15**, Adam and Eve had sinned, they had fallen and death had come upon them and God came to them with a promise, a promise of life, a promise of hope, and a promise of deliverance!

In this promise the Lord God spake to the serpent and He said, *"I'll put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed. He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel."*

Now, who is this? Who is this woman's seed? You are not the seed of woman, I'm not the seed of woman, and no human being ever born is the seed of woman. We are the seed of man.

But, in this first Scripture here, talking about redemption, talking about the destruction of Satan, the destruction of his power, *"bruising his head,"* that's the government; the head is the government and Christ is going to destroy the government and power of the prince of this world.

At the same time Satan would *"bruise his heel;"* that's the lowest part of the human nature. But who is the woman's seed? *"I'll put enmity between thee and the woman between her seed and your seed."*

Her seed is Christ, the virgin-born Son of God. Christ is the virgin's seed. He's the seed of woman. He had no human father. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit in the virgin's womb.

He did not partake of Adam's sin. He was the seed of woman and the only person who ever lived on this earth of which it could be said, *"he's the seed of woman."*

All right; take **Genesis 3:21**: When Adam and Eve fell; before they fell they were naked. When they fell they knew something they never knew before; they knew shame and fear. They knew all of the covetousness desires; they knew all of these things, of anger, fear and shame. They never knew these things before. But now shame, they realized they were naked.

And so God slew an animal or two animals (I don't know how many) but he slew an animal. And He took the skin of those animals and covered the nakedness of Adam and Eve. They tried to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. That's a picture of our self-righteousness. That's a picture of our efforts to hide our sin.

But God slew an animal. There had to be death to cover sin. There had to be death of the innocent to cover the sins of the guilty. And that's a picture of redemption all the way through the Bible.

Christ died and covered our sins. Christ Jesus shed His blood and God covered us with His righteousness. We don't try to cover our sins with our fig-leaf-aprons of self-righteousness. It's the righteousness of Christ that covers us.

Then, take the two boys, Cain and Abel. This is all in Genesis. Cain brought the fruit of the field. They were to bring an offering. And everybody is religious by nature; Cain was religious just like Abel was religious. Everybody today is religious.

And these boys were instructed to bring an offering before the Lord, a sin-offering. So, Cain brought the fruit of the ground. He brought the fruit of his own efforts. He brought the products of his own doings.

He brought fruits and vegetables and all of these things. It made a beautiful altar with all of these things piled up that he had made. The Scripture says, "*Abel, brought the firstling of the flock, a lamb without blemish or spot.*" He brought blood. He brought a blood sacrifice and this is a picture of Christ.

And God had respect to Abel's offering because it was a blood sacrifice. "*It's the blood that maketh atonement for the soul. Without the shedding of blood, there's no remission of sin.*" "*The wages of sin is death,*" and before sin can be forgiven there's got to be death for sin.

And this is the picture. We see the two religions right here at these two altars. We have Cain coming on the basis of his merit and Abel coming on the basis of the blood and God receiving the blood sacrifice and rejecting the merits of men.

And you know, this first warfare, do you know why there was this first conflict between those two boys; Cain killed Abel, why, because he was jealous. He was angry with Abel because of what Abel believed because of the blood sacrifice.

There's been more bloodshed on this earth because of religion and the conflicts over religious principle, I suppose, than any other single cause.

Well, let's go on: In **Genesis 22:8**; do you remember God came to Abraham and said: "*Take your son Isaac and sacrifice him on mount Mariah.*" And a three day journey he took to that mountain.

And when they came to the foot of the mountain he turned to the servants and he said: "You stay here with the animals and the boy and I will go up yonder and offer a sacrifice to God, a sin-offering to God and we will come back."

And they started up the mountain and Isaac was carrying the wood. He was about 15 or 16 years old then. He was carrying the wood on his back and they had the fire you know. They didn't have matches; they had the fire on a certain stick, a stick that was prepared to burn.

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And on the way up the mountain Isaac turned to his father and he said: *“Father; here’s the wood and here’s the fire but where is the lamb?”* Isaac had been taught well by his father that there’s no coming to God without a sin-offering; there’s no coming to God without the shedding of blood.

And Abraham said, *“My son, God will provide himself a lamb.”* Do you see Christ there? God provided Christ and God provided Himself the lamb. God is our sacrifice for sin and He provided the Lamb for Himself. He provided Himself as the Lamb and a Lamb to Himself. The sin-offering of Christ was to the Father.

The debt that Christ paid was not to the sinner. The offering was not to the sinner. The effort was not toward the sinner but toward God. All of these Old Testament sacrifices were before the Lord, unto the Lord, to reconcile the Lord and Christ died to reconcile us unto God.

You know, when he started to slay Isaac on the altar the voice of God came unto him and said, *“Abraham; touch not thy son, I know that you fearest God (believe and love God).* He turned and behind him was a ram caught by his horns in the thicket. He took that ram, took Isaac off the altar, and put the ram in his place and that ram died in the stead of Isaac.

That’s a picture of Christ. He took our place. The Lamb of God took my place under the wrath of God, took my place and died as a sin-offering. He took my place and justified me. I go free and Christ died, *“the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God.”* The sinless became sinful that the sinful might be sinless.

Let’s go to the book **Exodus**. You all are familiar with the book of **Exodus**. One of the first things you meet in **Exodus** is the Passover Lamb. Israel was down in Egypt; they had been there 400 years and God determined to deliver them.

And He sent Moses down to deliver them. You know the conflict that took place. There were 7, 8, 9, plagues that came upon Egypt and Israel. Finally, the last one and God said to Moses, *“Now you tell Israel; you tell the people of Israel to slay a lamb, to first of all, put the lamb up and observe it for so many days. Make sure it’s not diseased; make sure it’s a perfect lamb without spot or blemish.”* And our Lord, He was observed through His life. He was a tried-Lamb, tried by men, tried by Satan, and tried by the law. He was observed for 33 ½ years.

“Then, you take that lamb and slay it. Kill the lamb and take the blood and put it on the doorposts, on the doorpost and on the lentil.” And God said: *“When I see the blood I will pass over you:*

“I’m coming through the land of Egypt tonight.” Notice that He didn’t say: *“I’m going to send a death angel.”* He said, *“I’m coming through and when I see the blood I will pass over you.”* My friend, Paul said, *“Christ is our Passover.”*

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And you know, the Jewish people kept that Passover Feast every year commemorating their deliverance from Egypt? And you and I; we don't keep the Passover by slaying a lamb; our Lamb has been slain. The blood has been shed and the sacrifice has been made.

But we take the unleavened bread which represents our Lord's broken body and the wine which represents our Lord's shed blood. And we take that bread and that wine and Christ said: "*As often as you do it, you show my death until I come.*" You see, we picked up right where the Passover left off.

All right, take for example the manna. Do you remember as they were out in the wilderness and the bread, the manna came from heaven, and the people picked it up and ate it? Christ said: "*Moses gave you not that bread from heaven.*" They ate that bread and they died.

But He said: "*I am the bread of life. If a man eat of me he will never die.*" You see, that bread is a picture of Christ. He was sent from heaven to earth and He's sufficient for every need.

And then you take the smitten rock. When the Israelites were thirsty and Moses came to God and said, "*The people have no water.*" And the Lord said, "*Well, smite the rock.*" And the rock was in the wilderness and Moses smote the rock and water came from the rock. Paul tells us in **1 Corinthians 10:4**: "*That rock was Christ.*"

My friend, when our Lord was hanging on that cross and He was smitten of God and afflicted and from Him flowed the cleansing blood that justifies us and water that sanctifies us. From the wounded side of the Lord Jesus Christ, blood and water flowed; that's the fulfillment of the rock in the wilderness.

When Moses smote that rock he was showing us how Christ would be smitten and we would drink of the water of life that flowed from Immanuel's veins. "*He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath everlasting life.*"

But, you know; something else happened over there in the book of Exodus. The people were thirsty again and Moses came to God again and he said: "The people are thirsty." The Lord said, "*Speak to the rock.*"

Do you notice the difference? The rock's only smitten once. The next time you want water you speak to it. But Moses got angry with the people, (not with God) but with the people and he showed himself.

And instead of speaking to the rock as he was told he smote the rock and God came to him after the people had drunk and He said, "Now Moses; I told you to speak to that rock and you smote it." Moses destroyed the type and the picture of Christ crucified one time!

You see, Christ is never to be smitten but once. Christ is not offered but once. "*Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*"

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The reason I don't observe Mass is because Christ is not to be sacrificed again. He's already been sacrificed the "*one sacrifice for our sin.*" We don't go through that again. We receive Him by faith and that Rock is Jesus Christ.

All right; go to the book of **Leviticus**. The blood of Christ is typified in **Leviticus in 17:11**; He said, "*The life of the flesh is in the blood. I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls. It's the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.*"

This is all in the book of **Leviticus**. Out yonder in the wilderness God had them build a tabernacle. That tabernacle was about 15 feet wide and 15 feet high and about 45 feet long. In that tabernacle was a Holy Place and back here behind the veil was a Holy of Holies.

Now every one of these pieces of furniture of the tabernacle meant something; you had the altar out front and then you had the laver where the priest washed his hands and inside you had the table of showbread and you had, the candlestick and you had the altar of incense (which is the intercession of Christ) and then that thick veil.

And they had a priesthood, they had a high priest and they had many other priests. Once a year the high priest, (nobody else but the high priest), would go under that veil into the Holy of Holies, into the awesome, majestic, immutable, awful, presence of God.

There in the presence of God was the Ark of the Covenant. Inside that Ark was the broken law, the smashed tables of law that Moses brought down from the mountain.

Over the top of that Ark of the Covenant was the Mercy Seat. And that great high priest once a year with the blood of the animal would come and put that blood on the Mercy Seat and that would make atonement for the people's sins.

Now you can't preach that Old Testament story without going to Calvary and preaching the fulfillment of it.

Now here's the difference in Christ and those priests; there were many of them, but Christ the only one. They had a limited priesthood for they were born and they died. Our Lord has an everlasting priesthood, like that of Melchisedec, neither beginning nor end of days, neither mother nor father.

They offered many sacrifices, Christ just one. They offered the sacrifice of the blood of animals, Christ, His own precious blood. The blood of animals could never put away sin. "*Christ perfected forever them that are sanctified.*"

They offered their sacrifices in an earthly tabernacle, on an earthly Mercy Seat, and Christ offered His blood before the Father, the Mercy Seat of glory and He redeemed us. And when He died on that cross something happened that you ought to know about and you ought to study and you ought to think about and ask the Holy Spirit to tell you why.

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“That veil in the temple was torn into from the top to the bottom,” not a little piece down here, not rent from the bottom to the top as if some man had done it but that awful, thick veil, was rent into from the top to the bottom signifying that because Christ died there was to be no more offerings, no more sacrifices, no more lamb slain, no more bloodshed.

And that every believer is now a priest, everyone, every believer can come into the presence of God, *“Having boldness brethren, to enter the presence of God through the blood of Jesus because we have a high priest.”*

He’s not down here on earth. He’s not dressed like a woman down here on the earth. Our high Priest is at the right hand of God and every believer is a priest, every believer. *“He hath made us kings and priests unto God.”*

And what sacrifices, you say, do we offer, the sacrifice of praise, faith, thanksgiving, and love? There are a lot of sacrifices but no blood, no crucifixion of Christ again. He is our Great, High Priest.

Then **Numbers**; what about the book of **Numbers**? There are many types, but one you are especially familiar with, *“the brazen serpent.”* Our Lord referred to that Himself in **John 3**. He said, *“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so, must the Son of man be lifted up.”*

That’s what was happening when the Israelites murmured against God and the fiery serpents had bitten them and they were dying like flies. Moses said, “God help us!” God said, “All right, you make a brazen serpent in the likeness of those fiery serpents, make it just like them, and you put it upon a pole, and whosoever looketh shall live.”

It’s flesh that’s destroying us. Flesh is the cause of our sin and Christ came down here and was made in *“the likeness of sinful flesh”* (just like that brazen serpent), which was made like those serpents that had caused the death. Our Lord was made in *“the likeness of sinful flesh.”*

And He was lifted up on a cross and hung between heaven and earth under the judgment of God for our sins and everybody that looks and believes shall live. There’s the Gospel right there. This is what our Lord is saying.

When He sat these disciples down, He’s going to give them an understanding of the Scriptures. And He’s not going to teach the Bible from a historical viewpoint or a scientific viewpoint or a philosophical viewpoint or the Bible as a book of law or a book of love but a book of redemption. Christ is the theme!

All right, take **Deuteronomy**: Moses died. Moses couldn’t lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land, do you know why? Moses represented the law.

Who was the one who lead them into the Promised Land? Joshua! What’s Joshua’s name? What’s Joshua’s New Testament name? Jesus! That’s what the word Joshua means, Jesus and

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Saviour. Joshua is the Jesus of the Old Testament. And Joshua represents the grace of God. He led the people into the Promised Land.

The law can't take you to glory. The law can't take you to the presence of God but our Joshua can, our Saviour can, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me show you some more examples throughout the Scriptures:

In the book of **Joshua**; you read about Rahab the harlot and throwing the scarlet line over the wall in Jericho; that's the blood of Christ. In **Ruth**; who is the kinsmen redeemer? It's Boaz; he's the kinsmen redeemer. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Kinsman Redeemer.

Then, in the book of **1 Kings**, our Lord is the King of kings and Lord of lords. In **Ezra** He's the defender of the law. In **Nehemiah** He is the great restorer. In **Esther** He's the provider of the people. In **Job**: *"I know that my redeemer liveth."* How many times have you heard that Scripture?

In **Psalms**, there are many Messianic Psalms but I want you to take **Psalm 22** sometime and read it. In **Verse 1 in Psalm 22**: *"My God, my God; why hast thou forsaken me?"*

Who is that? Is that David speaking? It's David writing, but David is writing about the Son of David. Down here in **Psalm 22:16**: *"They pierced my hands and feet."* Who is that, Christ? **Psalm 22:18**: *"They divided my garments and cast lots;"* that's Christ.

In the book of **Proverbs** He's wisdom. In **Ecclesiastes** He's true satisfaction. In the **Song of Solomon** He's the bridegroom. In **Isaiah**; who is He in Isaiah? *"He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him."*

In **Lamentations** He's the sufferer. In **Ezekiel** He's the glory of the Lord. In **Daniel** He's the Beloved. In **Hosea** He's the forgiving husband. In **Joel** He's the giver of the Spirit. In **Amos** He's the judge of all nations.

In **Obadiah** He's the deliverer of Israel. In **Jonah** He's the sovereign Saviour. *"Salvation is of the Lord"* Jonah cried. In **Habakkuk** He's the faithful one. In **Micah** He's Bethlehem's infant. In **Zephaniah** He's the universal governor.

In **Haggai** He's the desire of all nations. In **Zechariah** He's the foundation stone and in **Malachi** He's the messenger of the Covenant.

God never has had but one way of saving sinners and that is through Christ. And everybody who lived before Calvary, Moses, Abraham, Joshua, Joseph, Jacob, Isaac and David all of them; they looked to Christ. They looked to the coming Messiah, the coming Redeemer.

Every blood sacrifice they brought said, "We are waiting on Christ." And we who live after Calvary will look back to the cross of Christ and believe!

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