

**THE B I B L E****Larry Murdock**

Whether you are reading the newspaper or reading your Bible you will interpret as you read. Will you interpret what you are reading correctly? One of the most important principles of interpretation is to consider the writer's purpose for writing. When we know the purpose for which it is written we have a better chance of interpreting correctly the written message. Have you ever wondered: **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE?**

I once had a graduate course in Family Therapy. The textbook was a typical family therapy textbook until the last chapter of the book! In the last chapter the authors began to write like so called "new age" writers! It made me wonder what the real purpose for that book was. Was it just to inform students about Family Therapy, or was there a hidden agenda? God and His Holy Spirit are the authors of the Bible. Why did they write it? What is the purpose of the Bible?

The English word "Bible" never appears in our English translations, except on the cover! But the meaning of the word is quite visible at many places in the Bible. The Greek word literally means "book". We are told that the word Biblos was originally the name of the inner part of a stem of the papyrus plant. The inner substance of that plant was removed, dried and attached to others in order to make paper, which provided a surface that could be written upon with ink. Pretty soon the paper itself was called Biblos, or book. We find this Greek word many times in the scriptures. Notice the following instances of the word:

In Matthew 1:1 Matthew starts off by telling his readers about the contents of his writing: Matthew called it "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Within that verse we also get a glimpse into the purpose of Matthew's book. He wanted people to read about the generation of Jesus Christ, that is, the lifetime of Jesus Christ on the earth, what He did and what He said. Matthew tells us about Jesus' miraculous birth and ends the book with Jesus' miraculous ascension back to His heavenly Father. Matthew wanted us to hear the teaching of Christ so that it could change our lives, so that the

readers could be like a man who built his house upon the rock, instead of sand. Matthew quoted Jesus as saying,

<sup>24</sup> "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." (Matt 7:24-27, ESV.)

Matthew also wanted his readers to know that Jesus' life was the subject of prophets who had lived hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Jewish prophets predicted Jesus' coming. They wrote their predictions in that collection of books called the Old Testament. Several men predicted many things about Jesus' life including His suffering, His death, and His resurrection. Those prophets also foresaw Jesus' second coming, which is still in our future. Those prophets who predicted these things about the life of Christ wrote the prophecies down, so that readers could believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. The apostle John said this about the prophet Isaiah: "Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him. (John 12:41, ESV.)

Jesus himself spoke about the "books" in the Old Testament. Jesus was talking about the resurrection of the dead when he said: "And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, *I am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?" (Mark 12:26, KJV.) Jesus was referring to Moses' book that we call the book of Exodus. Jesus said that that reference in Exodus proved that God will raise the dead! That's right! God used the present tense when he spoke to Moses and said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Jesus concluded that since God is NOT the God of the dead, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still alive somewhere, and since they are alive, they will be reunited with a resurrected body when Jesus comes again. Friends, don't you know that the reason God preserved that book of Moses was because it would open the eyes of people in later generations about the eternal spirit in mankind. There was a purpose why Moses was inspired to write. In the book of Philippians we read of another book.

<sup>2</sup> I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. <sup>3</sup> Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. Phil 4:2-3 (ESV)

Evidently this book of life contains a list of names of people who have believed and obeyed Jesus, the Son of God. This book is mentioned twice more in the book of Revelation:

<sup>5</sup> He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. Rev 3:5 (KJV)

<sup>15</sup> And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Rev 20:15 (KJV)

If you are to be saved from the lake of fire, friends, your name must be recorded in the “book of life.”

In all of these instances where we read of books, the purpose of the book is suggested in its name. The word “book” indicates the medium by which the purpose is accomplished. Example: Mt 1:1, Matthew’s purpose in writing was to tell about the “generation” or lifetime of Jesus Christ on the earth.

Gather all the Holy Scripture into one book and call it THE BOOK, the BIBLE. Is there one grand theme, one grand purpose, for the writing of the Bible? What is the purpose of this great Book?

The apostle Paul encouraged Timothy by saying,

<sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it <sup>15</sup> and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:14-17 (ESV)

Do you want to be a man or woman of God? This is the purpose of Scripture. This is the purpose of the Bible. Salvation is necessary because sin is in the world, and in us! That's right! All scripture is breathed out by God because He wants the people of the world to be saved from the consequences of their sins. The only way that God could justify forgiving mankind is by the sacrifice of His own son on our behalf. Just as by the one act of Adam's disobedience we all were turned away from the tree of life, by Jesus' one act of righteousness on the cross we can now have access to God's eternal life.

The apostle John gave the reason for His book as follows:

<sup>30</sup> And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: <sup>31</sup> But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. John 20:30-31 (KJV)

The Bible tells you what to do to be saved by Jesus Christ.

Believe in Jesus as the Christ. Jesus said, "Unless you believe that I am he, you shall die in your sins."

Repent of your sins – Jesus said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Confess your faith – <sup>32</sup> So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, <sup>33</sup> but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven." Matt 10:32-33 (ESV)

Be baptized – Jesus said to his disciples, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Mark 16:15-16 (ESV)

Friends, are you ready to fulfill the purpose of the Bible? Are you ready to become a Christian? Obey the gospel of Christ while you have breath and life. Obey today!