

The Unity Of The Bible

"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." (Luke 24:27)

God Is God Of Order

From the very beginning, when we read of God creating all things, we see that God is orderly. Though the earth was at first a sort of shapeless blob, God very quickly set it in order, gave everything its place, and did it all with a purpose. God does not work in a disjointed, chaotic way. *"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."* (1 Corinthians 14:33) This verse is very relevant to our study, as God is not one who introduces discord and disorder. If God is the author of peace in His churches, certainly we can have confidence that His Word will reveal this in the order and unity that exists within it. If not, then we have the problem of chaos, and that is not of God.

The very nature of God as truth also informs us of the unity of the Bible. *"He is the Rock, his work is perfect: For all his ways are judgment: A God of truth and without iniquity, Just and right is he."* (Deuteronomy 32:4) God does all that He does perfectly. There is no error and untruth mixed in with what He does; and that includes Scripture, which is breathed out by Him (See 2 Timothy 3:16). Truth is coherent. It is united. It does not conflict with itself. We are told this in God's Word (See 1 John 2:21). This being so, we can expect to find that the Bible is a coherent book from Genesis through Revelation.

God Has An Eternal Plan Revealed In His Word

Another reason to expect the Bible to be united from beginning to end is the fact that it tells us that God's plan is an eternal plan. Paul speaks of God's *"having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he had purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:"* (Ephesians 1:9-10) This tells us that God's plan is an eternal plan in which He intends to redeem His creation. We also read the words of Paul saying, *"of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."* (Romans 11:36) In other words, God made everything, and everything returns to God's eternal glory and honor. Again, this shows us that God has an eternal purpose for all that He does, and He has made that known to us in His Word. John also saw a vision in which he learned, *"In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."* (Revelation 10:7) This passage tells us that God's eternal purpose, as revealed in His Word, is coming to its culmination.

The above verses speak to us of God's eternal purpose. They tell us of the reason for which God made the world. They also demonstrate to us that God has the singular purpose of getting honor from the demonstration and enjoyment of His glory in this world. From one age to the next, God has been working with one mind, and His Word reflects that, not only in that it presents us His purpose, but also because the books of Scripture are united in teaching us of His eternal plan.

Creation An Example Of The Unity Of The Bible

The best way to teach the unity of the Bible is to demonstrate it, so here I shall use creation as an example of this unity.

Scripture tells us that God created all things in the beginning (See Genesis 1:1-2:25), and this theme permeates the Scriptures. After mankind's fall, there was one promised who would overcome the serpent introduced mankind to sin (Genesis 3:15). After God's destruction of the earth in the flood, we find that in a sense God re-created the earth (Genesis 8:1-22). From there God began to create for Himself a people through whom He would bring the Savior into the world, and thus He called Abraham, justified him by faith, and promised Him that all the earth would be blessed in his seed (Genesis 12:1-3;15:1-6;22:18). This promise continues to be seen and fulfilled in the history of Israel, and the prophets looked forward to the day that God would overcome sin and redeem this earth (See Isaiah chapters 63-66). The Old Testament ends with the promise of a new creation, saying, *"For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; And all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: And the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, That it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise With healing in his wings; And ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet In the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, Which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, With the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, And the heart of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse."* (Malachi 4:1-6) From Genesis to Malachi, the Old Testament bears witness to the creative work of God and the promise of the new creation.

This thematic unity continues in the New Testament as the creation motif continues in John's introduction of Jesus: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men."* (John 1:1-4) This continues as we see that Jesus was born, died, and rose again as the promised seed who would conquer the serpent (See Galatians 4:1-5;Romans 14:9;Hebrews 2:14). We also find that He makes us new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17;Ephesians 2:8-10), and gives us His Holy Spirit to promise and assure us that He will keep His promise, made in the Old Testament, to create a new world (Isaiah 32:14-20;Ephesians 1:13-14). Finally, we find the New Testament ending with the vision of the promise being fulfilled, as the prophet writes, *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he*

that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” (Revelation 21:1–7) This creation theme demonstrates that, from beginning to end, the Bible is a book of unity.

Practical Applications

What does this mean to us? First of all, we must recognize the duty of believing and obeying the Scriptures. Understanding the unity of the Bible should give us confidence in the Scriptures. Since the Bible is not a disjointed, self-contradictory book, we can be assured that it is trustworthy in what it says. If we have confidence in the Scriptures, we can then go forward in believing the Word of God and obeying it.

Understanding the unity of the Bible should also have a great influence on how we interpret and understand the Bible. Too many times we try to interpret and understand the New Testament in isolation from the Old Testament. This is virtually an impossibility. The unity of the Bible means that the New Testament builds upon the Old Testament. It means that the discontinuity that many people think exists between the Old and New Testaments does not exist. Many times the New Testament tells us that Jesus came and fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures (See Romans 15:8; 2 Corinthians 1:20). For example, as we look back on the example of the creation theme in the Scriptures, we find that the Genesis account of the creation and fall of man gives us much insight into the promise of a new creation, and it also helps us understand the imagery of that new creation as it is presented to us in the Revelation. This understanding should cause us to study the New Testament knowing that there will be many things that will be better understood if we interpret study and interpret them in light of the Old Testament Scriptures.