



## **Orthodox Outlet for Dogmatic Enquiries**

**Bible**

### **A Prophecy of Christ Revealing More Than 66 Books in the Bible**



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**In the Old Testament, let us take a look at an impressive prophecy about Jesus Christ. Years before Jesus was ever born, the Holy Spirit inspired one of His prophets to tell the future, and to write down some things which had not happened yet.**

**In this prophecy, we hear about someone who claims to be the Son of God, and who is tortured, and is condemned to a shameful death. This prophecy is written from the perspective of those who condemn Christ. Many years before they are even born, we get to hear the internal thought processes of the Pharisees.**

**Here is the prophecy itself, word-for-word from the Old Testament:**



*Let us lie in ambush for the righteous man, because he is useless to us and opposes our deeds; he denounces us for our sins against the law and accuses us of sins against our upbringing. He claims to have knowledge of God, and he calls himself a child of the Lord. He has become for us as a refutation of our purposes; even seeing him is a burden to us, because his life is unlike that of others; for his paths go in a different direction. We are considered by him as a hybrid, and he avoids our ways as something immoral.*

*He considers the last things of the righteous as blessed and pretends that God is his Father. Let us see if his words are true, and let us put these last things to the test at the end of his life; for if the righteous man is a son of God, He will help him, and deliver him from the hand of those who oppose him.*

*Let us test him with insult and torture that we may know his gentleness and test his patient endurance. Let us condemn him to a shameful death, for there shall be a visitation because of his words.*

*- Wisdom of Solomon 2:12-24*

This is one of my favorite prophecies of Jesus, because of its incredible clarity. It is almost as if we have secretly wiretapped a meeting place for the religious leaders of ancient Israel, and are actually listening in on the Pharisees as they plot the murder of Jesus. Written many years before Jesus was even born, this striking prophecy predicts that the Messiah would claim to be the Son of God, that he would chastise the religious leaders for their lawlessness and hypocrisy, and that the religious leaders would condemn him to a shameful death.

This prophecy includes some of the specific thought processes which the Pharisees display in the New Testament. Consider the following passage from the book of Matthew: *"Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'"* This passage can be found in Matthew 27:41-43. And it is a very specific fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy we looked at earlier. In the prophecy, the Pharisees say, *"For if the righteous man is a son of God, He will help him, and deliver him from the hand of those who oppose him."* They are focusing on Jesus' claim to be God's son, and they suggest that God should save him from death if his claim is true. Likewise, in Matthew 27, the Pharisees mockingly say that God should deliver Jesus from death, since Jesus claimed to be the Son of God.

These sorts of prophecies demonstrate the fact that the Scriptures are inspired by the Holy Spirit. On his own, man is not able to predict the future like this. So when we read prophecies like this one, written many years before the actual events ever took place, we are able to see the very signature of God.

In Scripture, God announces that He stands alone in the universe. He alone has the ability to declare what will come to pass in the future. In Isaiah 46:9-10, we read the following:

*I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is none like Me,  
Declaring the end from the beginning,  
And from ancient times*

*things that are not yet done,  
Saying, "My counsel shall stand,  
And I will do all My pleasure"*

In prophecies such as the one we read earlier, we can clearly see the fingerprints of God:

1. Years before the birth of Jesus, how could anyone have known that the Messiah would chastise the religious leaders of Israel, and that they would be the ones to condemn him to a shameful death?

2. How could anyone know that the Messiah would claim to be the Son of God?

3. Many years before the events ever happened, how did the author of this Old Testament prophecy write down something that would eventually be fulfilled in the 27<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Matthew?

There is no reasonable explanation for this, except for the inspiration of Scripture. There is no way to explain this, except to submit to the majesty of our omniscient God, who knows all, and who declares the end from the beginning.

Prophecies like this help strengthen our confidence in the Scriptures, as we recognize that the words of the Bible are the very words of God. God left His signature on Scripture, setting it apart from all other books in the world.

With all of this in mind, think about your own home. Imagine that just across the street, in easy walking distance from your own front door, a grand, beautiful, magnificent new church is built. Before you even leave your own front yard, you are in awe of this incredible architectural work of art. The very sight of this new church fills you with wonder, and lifts your thoughts to Heaven.

Intrigued, you decide to investigate this church for yourself. You want to find out whether this church is as impressive on the inside, as it is on the outside. You barely make it through the front doors of the church, and you are nearly swarmed with friendly people. This is not the work of a professional greeter- a guy who stands near the door greeting you because that's his job-this is person after person simply being friendly. One after the other, they walk up to you with a smile, shake your hand, introduce themselves, and they show a genuine interest in getting to know you better. This is definitely the warmest, friendliest church you have ever visited in your life!

You take your place in the pew, and you wait to see what the worship service is like. You are blown away by the sheer majesty and beauty of the music. The singers and musicians are all extremely talented, and are very impressive. Yet they perform in such a way that they don't draw attention to themselves individually. The music is beautiful, and it is all directed to the glory of God. When you hear the music, and when you sing along, your thoughts and your heart are again drawn up into Heaven itself. The sermon is just as impressive. The pastor's voice is pleasant, his stories hold your attention, and you agree wholeheartedly with the message itself. He does such a good job that you decide to get a CD copy of the sermon, so you can listen to it again, and then pass it along to your friends.

After the service, you get up to leave, expecting everyone to race out the door in a hurry. But one of your new friends in the congregation stops you, and invites you to the most delicious Sunday luncheon you have ever attended. The sheer variety of mouthwatering food makes you feel like you have stumbled into the banquet of a great king. There are tender roasts, perfectly seasoned hams, casseroles, stews, soups, and some of the richest chocolate desserts you have ever tasted. You ask what the special occasion is, and your friend tells you, "We enjoy this same sort of fellowship meal every single week, right after church."

Truly, to say this church has impressed you would be an understatement. Everything seems almost too perfect. Everything about this church, from the people, to the music, to the sermon, to the banquet, all make you want to come back again for more.

Over the next several weeks, you continue attending, and you are not disappointed. With a regularity that amazes you, this wonderful church consistently provides you with what you feel is the perfect worship experience. Your every desire is fulfilled. Every Sunday, without fail, you love the music, you love the food, you love the sermon, and most of all,

you love all the friendly people.

But then one Sunday you have a very strange experience. At this otherwise perfect church, you encounter something which is so bizarre, that you never even dreamed it would have needed investigation.

That morning, you had been in a hurry, and you accidentally left your Bible at home. Initially, it seemed to be no problem, since there are Bibles available for everyone at church. After walking into the church and saying hello to a couple of your friends, you pick up one of the Bibles, and you take your seat. While the pastor is preaching, you flip open to the passage he is talking about, and you read along. The sermon is impressive as usual, and for the moment, you don't notice anything strange.

But then after the service is over, you decide to flip over to read one of your favorite passages of Scripture. The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm comforts you every time you read it. *"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. . . ."* But as you turn the pages of this Bible, you become very confused. You find the book of Job, and the book of Ecclesiastes, but in between them, there is no book of Psalms, and there is no book of Proverbs! Your first thought is that some kid tore out the pages. But when you look closely, you don't see any evidence that the book has been damaged in any way. Then you think, *"Maybe this Bible doesn't put books in the same order as usual . . . maybe it's ordered chronologically, or something like that."* So you flip over to the table of contents, to figure out where the Psalms are. To your amazement, you discover that the book of Psalms is not listed anywhere in the table of contents either. Neither is the book of Proverbs. It is as if all the Psalms and all the Proverbs simply disappeared from the Bible, without leaving a trace!

You start flipping through this unusual Bible to see whether it is missing anything else. Thankfully, the book of Genesis is intact. It would be odd indeed if the first book of the Bible was missing. Exodus is also there. But as you continue turning pages, you discover that the book of Psalms is not the only book of Scripture which is missing from this Bible. You find that the books of Joshua and Judges are there, but the book of Ruth is missing. You remember it is the story of a beautiful Moabite woman who became a widow and almost lost everything, but then married a kind and wealthy landowner named Boaz, and they became the great-grandparents of King David. This book contains one of the most beautiful and romantic stories in all of Scripture, and you are saddened to discover that it is missing from this Bible.

You turn further, and you are shocked to see that the book of Isaiah is missing! This really bothers you, because you know that many of the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus are in the book of Isaiah. Then you look for John 3:16 — your favorite verse in the Bible — and your jaw drops when you see that the Gospel of John is missing too. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are there, but not John. You are happy to see that the book of Acts is there, but the book of Romans is gone. You turn further, and find that most of the books are still there, but several are missing. Even the book of Revelation is gone! All those prophecies of Christ's return, all those magnificent descriptions of the incense, robes, and singing in Heaven . . . gone without a trace. What in the world is going on?!

At this point, you are convinced that there must have been some sort of enormous, unbelievable printing error. There must have been some massive, inexplicable computer error at the publishing company, and they must have released a defective Bible by sheer accident. Surely, all their Bibles could not have been printed the same way, or else everybody in the church would notice! The solution was obvious . . . just throw away this bad Bible, and use one of the others.

So, you pitch that bizarre Bible in the trash where it belongs, and you get a couple others. And this is where you really start scratching your head, because both of these Bibles match the first one! The Psalms and Proverbs are missing. So are the books of Ruth, Isaiah, the Gospel of John, Romans, Revelation, and two other books. Altogether, there are nine books that are missing from these Bibles, and there is no explanation that you can imagine. Why in the world were all these incomplete Bibles printed, and how in the world did they end up in this church?

Frustrated and confused, you find one of your new friends at the church, and you explain what you have discovered. You ask, *"Why are these Bibles incomplete? Scripture says that it is a sin to take away from God's Word, so why are there 9 books missing from all these Bibles? What happened?"*

Your friend smiles, laughs, and doesn't act surprised at all. But you are shocked by what you hear. Your friend's response is this: *"We had those Bibles printed that way on purpose. At our church, we do not believe that those particular 9 books are Scripture at all. They are good books, but they are not the Word of God. We believe that there are only 57 books in the Bible. That's why we left out those other books."*

At this point, you are reeling, and you almost feel dizzy. You feel warm blood rushing to your head, and you start to feel angry. How could anyone deny that the book of Isaiah is part of the Bible? It contains so many prophecies about Jesus! How could anyone leave out the book of Proverbs? What about John, Romans, and Revelation? How could you call a book "the Bible" if it is missing all these books? How could God possibly be pleased by this?

Now please think carefully for a minute. Imagine that all of this actually happened to you. Imagine that you had been faithfully attending a beautiful church with magnificent music, excellent preaching, and friendly people. Imagine that you enjoyed everything about the church, and that you had no complaints at all. As far as you can remember this is the most perfect church you have ever attended in your life. But then you discover these incomplete Bibles. After some investigation, you find out that all the Bibles in this church are missing 9 books. If you become a member of this church, you will have to agree that Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, Ruth, John, Romans, Revelation, and two other books are not the Word of God. You will have to get rid of your old Bible, and you will have to get one of these new Bibles that only has 57 books in it.

If this happened to you, what would you do? Would you keep going to this church? Would you get one of these new Bibles? Would you be willing to lose 9 books of Scripture?

If you are like many people, you would leave this church quickly, and you would never return. No matter how beautiful the church building is, no matter how incredible the music sounds, no matter how much you enjoy the sermons, and no matter how friendly the people are, you would not be willing to sacrifice your Bible. No matter how much you love that church, you would not go there, if they forced you to tear 9 books out of your Bible. You cannot bear to pretend that these books are not Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit. No matter how good this church seems to be in other ways, you just cannot accept its incomplete Bible. It is just not worth it.

This may surprise you, but there are many churches which are just like the one described in this story. On the outside, they seem wonderful. The architecture is beautiful. The people are friendly. The music is excellent. The preaching is exciting. And even the food is good. But once you open up a Bible in one of these churches, you will find that many Scriptures have disappeared.

The Psalms and Proverbs are still there. So is Ruth, and so is the book of Isaiah. These Bibles are not missing the Gospel of John. The book of Acts is still in place, and nobody has forgotten about the book of Revelation. But other books are missing.

Remember the amazing Old Testament prophecy we read earlier? That prophecy was written in the century before Jesus was born, and it includes many specific details about His life. This prophecy tells us that Jesus would claim to be the Son of God, that Jesus would criticize the religious leaders for being hypocrites, and that they would condemn Him to a shameful death. An important part of the prophecy is a direct prediction of what the Pharisees said in the New Testament, in Matthew 27:43. This particular part of the prophecy is important, because *it is the only prediction of Matthew 27:43 which can be found in the entire Old Testament.*

But if you walk into most churches in America, and you check their Bibles, you will not find this prophecy anywhere. *It has been erased.*

This prophecy of Jesus can be found in the Old Testament, in the book of Wisdom, chapter 2, [verses 12-20](#). For the first 1,500 years of the Church, it was easy to find this prophecy, because the book of Wisdom was widely accepted as Scripture throughout the worldwide Church. From the time of the apostles, until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the book of Wisdom was understood to be a part of Scripture, inspired by the Holy Spirit. When people considered the prophecy of Christ that is contained in the book of Wisdom, they recognized it as the signature of God . . . every bit as much as the prophecies of Christ which are contained in the book of Isaiah, or

the Psalms.

But then something tragic happened during the Protestant Reformation. As Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and other early Protestants fought against the sins of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Catholic Church, they threw out the baby with the bathwater. Even though there were some abuses in the Catholic Church which needed to be corrected, the Protestant Reformers made the enormous mistake of removing several books from the Bible, which had been considered Scripture since the time of the apostles.

Over the next century, most Protestants still included these books of Scripture in their Bibles. Even the original 1611 King James Version of the Bible included the book of Wisdom, the book of Tobit, the book of Baruch, and several others.

The first Protestant Bible ever printed with 66 books was the 1599 Geneva Bible. For 1,598 years, the worldwide Church was content to recognize the signature which God had placed on books such as Wisdom, Tobit, and Sirach. But then in the year 1599, Protestants decided it was time to try something new. At the last minute, they instructed the publisher to leave several of the books unprinted. The result was the 1599 Geneva Bible, which included 66 books, and also included scores of blank pages, where the other books were originally intended to be printed. I wish that Protestant Bibles were still printed this way . . . at least the blank pages would serve as a reminder that something has been taken away from us.

Thankfully, not all churches have been willing to accept this shortened Bible. Even today, there are many churches you can attend where the Bibles are not missing all these books.

For example, consider the Old Testament book of Wisdom. If you walk into an Orthodox Church, or into a Catholic Church, you will find Bibles which still contain this book of Scripture. And on the Protestant side of the fence, you can also find a number of Anglicans who realize that the book of Wisdom bears the very signature of God. The prophecies of Christ contained therein cannot be the product of mere men.

If you want to know where your church stands, simply open up one of its Bibles. See whether it contains the following nine books:

- Tobit (*Tobias*)
- Judith
- 1 Maccabees
- 2 Maccabees
- 3 Maccabees
- Wisdom of Solomon (*Wisdom*)
- Wisdom of Sirach (*Ecclesiasticus*)
- Baruch
- Epistle of Jeremiah

If your Bible contains all of these books, then you can breathe a sigh of relief. But if that Bible is missing some of its books, then run away. Run fast. You need to own a Bible that contains all the books of Scripture. You need a copy of the Bible which still bears the full *signature of God*.

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