

SBC – April 20, 2025

“Behold the Living God!”

The Old Testament is largely framed in the context of what is called the Mosaic Law, which is commonly called the “Sacrificial System”. Paul called it “the ministry of death”. The Jews knew about the sacrificial system, but they did not know much about resurrection. None of the OT sacrifices ever came back to life. Neither were they sufficient to take away sin. They were pictures of Christ’s sacrificial death that God honored for a time, but the PERFECT God accepted sacrifice awaited the coming of Christ.

And what made Christ’s sacrifice unique is that it was a once-for-all sacrifice that permanently paid for sin with the affirmation of the resurrection.

The word “gospel” means good news! It is all about Jesus and what He has done for us. The gospel is not what we do for God but rather what Jesus did for us. And He did it all! In His dying breath He said “It is finished!” (Jn. 19:30). You can’t add anything to what is finished! “Jesus paid it all – all to Him we owe!” (cf. Heb. 10:14)

In 1 Cor. 15:3-4 Paul summarized the gospel in this way...

Slide # 1

1 Corinthians 15:1, 3-4 (NKJV)

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you **the gospel**

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He **was buried**, and that He **rose again the third day** according to the Scriptures,

Christ as our sin-bearer – as our Savior – died for our sins. Burial is proof of death and His resurrection is proof that God accepted His payment for sin.

But I want to zero in on the phrase “according to the Scriptures” this morning. Note it is so important that Paul repeats it twice in his definition of the gospel.

Slide # 2

1 Corinthians 15:3–4 (NKJV)

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins **according to the Scriptures,**

4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day **according to the Scriptures,**

Everything about Christ's gospel ministry was "according to the Scriptures". This involved God fulfilling prophecy in a way that perfectly harmonized and orchestrated a myriad of events and circumstances to a perfectly coordinated end.

In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son (Gal. 4:4). Perfectly orchestrated was the arrival of the prophesied forerunner named John the Baptist. In perfect accord with prophecy, Jesus was officially presented to Israel as her King at the end of the 69th week of Daniel as seen in the Triumphal Entry (Dan. 9:25; Lk. 19). Exactly as Jesus predicted He as the Messiah was crucified exactly on Passover (Mt. 26:2). As Paul said, "Christ our Passover, was sacrificed for us." (1 Cor. 5:7)

God now only knows the future, but He also controls it! This is why God can tell us the future. This is God's glory alone. He prophesies what is going to happen and then He brings it to pass. And the emphasis of Scripture is that God does this preeminently in relation to His Son – the Lord Jesus Christ – the true Messiah.

In Isaiah there are what are called the "Servant Passages" which prophesied of the special Chosen One who would come as a Savior and a Ruler over God's people. The first of these "Servant Passages" is found in Isaiah 42. And in reference to the coming Messiah here is what God says:

Slide # 3

Isaiah 42:8–9 (NKJV)

8 I am the LORD, that is My name; And **My glory I will not give to another,** Nor My praise to carved images.

9 Behold, the former things have come to pass, And **new things I declare; Before they spring forth I tell you of them.**"

This is the glory of God – to predict the future (especially in relation to the Messiah) and then bring it to pass. No other religion can boast such a thing as being a prophetic faith that is proven in history. That is unique to the God of the Bible as proven in Jesus.

This is what it means that Christ died for our sins and was buried according to the Scriptures. This was the fulfillment of Isaiah 53 which was declared 700 years before the time of Christ. Christ rose again the third day according to the Scriptures which was a fulfillment of Psalm 16:10 which was stated 1000 years in advance.

This orchestrating and perfectly coordinating of events to bring about the fulfillment of prophecy involves an innumerable number of variables and moving parts.

Scholars estimate that Christ fulfilled at least 109 specific OT prophecies at His first coming. Statisticians claim that the odds of one person fulfilling just 8 of these prophecies is one in 10 to the 17th power. That is a 10 with 17 zeros after it (i.e., 100,000,000,000,000,000).

Slide # 4

Ten to the Seventeenth Power

100000000000000000

The equivalent of this would be to fill the state of Texas with 2 feet of silver dollars. Mark one of them with an X and then thoroughly mix. The odds of having a blindfolded man pick out the X-marked silver dollar is one in 10 to the 17th power. Yet Jesus fulfilled not merely 8 specific prophecies, but over a hundred of them! And they involved perfect timing – such as His death on Passover.

How, does one coordinate history like that? That is a total God thing proving He is the LIVING GOD!

The whole world basically recognizes the concept of a person's God as that of being a HIGHER POWER! Thinking through the lens of the Bible, God ALONE is shown to be the Most High God (cf. Dan. 5:18). All the other supposed "gods" in the world are shown to be not only lesser gods, but actually "false gods".

The difference between false gods and the One true God is LIFE! The one true God is **THE LIVING GOD**. The truth of being the living God is seen in the knowledge of God, the power of God, and the movement of God.

Living things move! God is all knowing and He is all powerful, and the reason we know this is because He moves and reveals Himself in human history. He is active in the affairs of mankind.

“Look! It’s moving. It’s alive...it’s alive, it’s alive, it’s alive!” Those highly charged words from the classic 1931 horror film *Frankenstein* reflect a basic awareness about living things – they move! Obviously, that single quality is not sufficient to define life, but it does identify a major component and, at the same time, exclude many other “things” in our universe from the category of living creatures.

Obviously, animal and human life are different from plant life. In fact, the Bible uses the Hebrew word *chay* (life) and its derivatives 763 times in the Old Testament, never applying that term to plants or vegetation. ...the descriptive terms that the Creator applied to living creatures was “movement.” The Hebrew word [for movement] is *ramas*, used 17 times in the Old Testament – never about plants or vegetation of any kind. Living things move. – **Henry M. Morris III**

Slide # 5

Genesis 1:28 (NKJV)

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every **living** [Heb. *chay*] thing that **moves** [Heb. *ramas*] on the earth.”

The Bible uses this same word “***living***” (Heb. *chay*) to describe God as the ***LIVING GOD*** (cf. Deut. 5:26; Josh. 3:10; 1 Sam. 17:26; Ps. 42:2; Dan. 6:26; etc.). The one true God, as the ***LIVING*** God, is a God of movement. He interacts and intervenes in the affairs of mankind.

The whole of the creation experience is characterized by the movement of God behind it all.

Slide # 6

Genesis 1:1 (NKJV)

1 In the beginning God **created** the heavens and the earth.

BEHOLD THE LIVING GOD!

Our God moves – He is the living God and as God He does whatever He pleases (Ps. 115:3). Historically, some theologians have referred to God as “***The Unmoved Mover***”. The idea is that God is **the source of all motion in the universe**. He is the being that moves everything else, but is Himself not moved or changed by anything else. This is true!

BEHOLD THE LIVING GOD!

Outside of creation week, the greatest cluster of miracles – of divine intervention in the OT is seen in connection with the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt.

When Pharaoh refused to let the children of Israel go God proceeded to bring 10 plagues down on Egypt culminating in the climactic 10th plague which was the death of the firstborn.

Slide # 7

Exodus 12:12 (NKJV)

12 ‘For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and **against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment**: I am the LORD.

The various plagues on Egypt represented plagues against their various idolatrous gods. Pharaoh himself was considered to be a god of sorts. But plague after plague showed the sovereign supremacy of Israel’s GOD over all these false gods. They were helpless. They didn’t move! When Pharaoh’s army all drown in the Red Sea the Jews celebrated saying...

Slide # 8

Exodus 15:11 (NKJV)

11 “Who is like You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, Fearful in praises, **doing wonders?**

God’s miraculous movements made Him unique over all other supposed gods!

Slide # 9

Deuteronomy 4:34 (NKJV)

34 Or did God ever try to go and take for Himself a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, **by signs, by wonders**, by war, by a **mighty hand** and an **outstretched arm**, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

Signs, wonders, mighty hand, outstretched arm all signify the POWER MOVEMENTS of God! What He did for Israel in the Exodus was unprecedented!

BEHOLD THE LIVING GOD!

Now jump ahead to the ministry of the prophets in the OT. They foretold of a special coming One (the Messiah) through Whom God would do POWERFUL miracles.

Slide # 10

Isaiah 53:1 (NKJV)

1 Who has believed our report? And to whom has **the arm of the LORD been revealed?**

Realize that Isaiah 53 is the KEY chapter on the Messiah in the OT. It prophetically tells of His person, His death, burial, and resurrection. For the Jews, it is a “***forbidden chapter***”. It is so powerfully Messianic and so clearly portrays the Lord Jesus Christ that in their readings, they routinely skip over it. They don’t want to deal with it! But it has probably been used to win more Jews than any other portion of Scripture.

It begins with two rhetorical questions. The first question is “***Who has believed our report?***” The sense here is rhetorical and prophetic. As a rhetorical question, it brings out that what would characterize the Jews is their unbelief. To this day most Jews don’t yet believe in Jesus as the true Messiah!

Horror of horrors, almost no one believed the message of the prophets. Horror of horrors, they as a people have largely missed the Messianic truth of the message of the prophets. Plaintively, the prophet says: “***Who has believed our report?***”

The second question, “***And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?***” is again rhetorical, with the implied answer being: ***It was clearly revealed to the Jews in the person of the Messiah!***

The Jews were the ones who saw the ministry of Christ up close and personal. The gospel goes first to the Jew – then to the Gentile (Rom. 1:16). God’s dealing with Israel was direct and personal in the person of Christ.

The “**arm of the LORD**” is literally the arm of YHWH. God’s arm symbolizes His power. God’s power being illustrated through the metaphorical use of “arm” is traced back to the Exodus in the book of Exodus (cf. Ex. 6:6; 15:16).

Note the issue here was YHWH’s power “**revealed**” – that is put on display. The word LORD is YHWH – the most sacred name for God. This is talking about a display of LORDSHIP power in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

The NT directly applies this to Christ. This was the emphasis in the ministry of Christ as seen in the gospel of John – the gospel of belief which presents the miracle-working signs that Jesus did so we might believe (cf. Jn. 20:30-31).

This revealing of YHWH’s arm is what Jesus did! This is why the Jews have no excuse.

“**The arm of the LORD**” signifies His intervening miracle power – His POWER movements!

Jesus put on display right in front of all Israel the arm of God in doing powerful kingdom miracles. Jesus, in unparalleled fashion, did unprecedented miracles over demons, disease, nature, and even death.

To whom was the arm of the LORD revealed? It was to Israel front and center. There was no excuse, and yet they missed it. They should have believed the message of the prophets about Jesus because through Him the power of God was uniquely and undeniably put on display in a huge way. In Jesus’ ministry, the arm (power) of God was revealed!

Isa. 53:1 is quoted in the NT, emphasizing the stubborn resistance of the Jews to the gospel.

Slide # 11

John 12:37–38 (NKJV)

37 But although He had done **so many signs** [miraculous POWER movements] before them, they did not believe in Him,
38 that the word of **Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled**, which he spoke: “***Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?***”

BEHOLD THE LIVING GOD!

Unbelief never has enough evidence! No matter how many miraculous signs Jesus did in fulfillment of prophecy, it never satisfied the unbelieving Jews. They couldn't deny His miracles, so they attributed them to the power of Satan. Jesus said this sin was unforgivable.

Still they clamored for more signs, and Jesus said this:

Slide # 12

Matthew 12:38–40 (NKJV)

38 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.”

39 But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and **no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.**”

40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Here, Jesus said He would give them ONE more final and climactic sign – the sign of the RESURRECTION, as portrayed in the experience of Jonah back in the OT.

These religious leaders never forgot this. After the crucifixion of Christ, they gathered before Pilate with this request.

Slide # 13

Matthew 27:63–65 (NKJV)

63 saying, “Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, ‘**After three days I will rise.**’”

64 Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the last deception will be worse than the first.”

65 Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.”

The challenge was on! Would the unmoved MOVER move? Early on Resurrection Sunday morning, there was a great earthquake as seen in Matthew 28. An angel of the Lord rolled back the stone from the door and sat on it, waiting for the excitement to begin!

The guards shook in fear and became like dead men. They were terrified out of their wits. Then the women came early in the morning and the angel said to them...

Slide # 14

Matthew 28:6 (NKJV)

6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

The Lord was not there! He was risen! All that remained was the grave clothes that He left behind in an orderly fashion.

God moved in resurrection power! (Rom. 1:4)

BEHOLD THE LIVING GOD!

The gospel is that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again in fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures.

Appropriately, Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life.” (Jn. 11:25).

Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” (Jn. 14:6).

The resurrection proved it!

The tomb is still empty. They never did find the body!

The resurrection could not have been maintained in Jerusalem for a single day, for a single hour, if the emptiness of the tomb had not been established as a fact for all concerned. – **Paul Althaus**

All saw the empty tomb, but only true believers who were followers of Christ saw the risen Christ following His resurrection. At one point He was seen by more than 500 people at one time (1 Cor. 15:6). The disciples became emboldened and willingly became martyrs for the truth of Christ.

The Church in short order was founded (Mt. 16:18)— which is a historical reality that can't be denied.

There is far more manuscript evidence for the NT truth than for any other literature of antiquity. No one else ever fulfilled prophecy like Christ did. From His birthplace to His ministry and character to His death, burial, and resurrection, there are scores of specific prophecies we find fulfilled in Him to the letter.

A lawyer, Frank Morison, set out to refute the evidence for the resurrection. He thought that the life of Jesus was one of the most beautiful lives ever lived, but when it came to the resurrection, he thought someone had come along and tacked a myth onto the story of Jesus. He planned to write an account of the last few days of Jesus. He would, of course, disregard the resurrection. He figured an intelligent, rational approach to Jesus would completely discount the resurrection. However, upon approaching the facts with his legal background and training, he had to change his mind. He eventually wrote a bestseller, *Who Moved the Stone?* The first chapter was titled, “*The Book That Refused to Be Written*,” and the rest of the chapters deal decisively the evidence for Christ's resurrection.”

– **Josh McDowell** in *More Than A Carpenter* – p. 97-98

Who Moved the Stone?

BEHOLD THE LIVING GOD!

Slide # 15

Romans 10:9–10 (ESV)

9 because, if you confess with your mouth that **Jesus is Lord** and believe in your heart that **God raised him from the dead**, you will be saved.

10 For with the **heart one believes and is justified**, and with the **mouth one confesses and is saved**.

Have you, from your HEART, believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord? Have you openly confessed Him?

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved!

BEHOLD THE LIVING GOD!