

## HOW DO WE EXAMINE THE TAPESTRY OF GOD'S WORD?

### E. Methods Used in this Study

#### E4. Perspective: Threading the Pearls

Many times in the Bible, the writer will refer to other Scriptures to help explain the concept being presented. Often, the speaker in the Bible will quote other passages to illustrate, or develop, the topic. For example, Jesus quotes from Genesis to explain marriage<sup>i</sup>. Stephen also uses passages from Genesis to develop his commentary of the Chosen people's history<sup>ii</sup>. Paul uses Scripture as a support of his warning in 1 Corinthians 3:18-20,

“Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. <sup>19</sup>For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. *For it is written*, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness" [JOB 5:13]; <sup>20</sup>*and again*, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile" [PSM 94:11].”

Thus, stringing thoughts, or concepts, together through the Scriptures helps us to understand the subject at hand more accurately. When we search the Scriptures, we find little treasures<sup>iii</sup>, little pearls, throughout the Bible here and there. Then, we only need to string these pearls together to better comprehend the matter being studied.

Jesus uses the idiom of a pearl as signifying something that is holy, when he says in Matthew 7:6,

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<sup>i</sup> MARK 10:6-9, from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.'<sup>7</sup>For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,<sup>8</sup>and *the two shall become one flesh*'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup>"Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

<sup>ii</sup> ACTS 7:2-3, he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran,<sup>3</sup>and said to him, '*Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.*'"

<sup>iii</sup> PRO 2:3-5, Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, <sup>4</sup>If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures;<sup>5</sup>Then you will understand the fear of the Lord, And find the knowledge of God.

“Do not give what is holy to the dogs; *nor cast your pearls before swine*, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.”

The word of God is holy<sup>iv</sup> and powerful<sup>v</sup>. Therefore, to heed the adage that Jesus gave us, we ought to take great care in how we handle the word of God! Since all Scripture is God-breathed, it is profitable<sup>vi</sup> for us to study; we should digest each word<sup>vii</sup>, each phrase with careful thoughtfulness to the details. Following the concepts in detail through the Bible, we gain a richer appreciation for God’s word. In our study of Revelation we will follow each concept from there, searching the Scriptures to find similar descriptions, circumstances, situations, or discussions relevant to the topic. Then, we can return to our concept in Revelation with new insights, new connotations, and possibly with some subtlety of perspective that we had not previously considered.

To demonstrate this process of threading pearls, or similar concepts together, let us consider a description given of Jesus in Revelation 1:16,

“He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and *His countenance was like the sun* shining in its strength.”

What could this mean, “*countenance was like the sun*”? Searching the rest of the Bible for the words ‘countenance’ or ‘sun’ may reap some reward. However, we are more interested in other examples of when Jesus appeared as the Sun. With guidance from the Holy Spirit we remember the description of Jesus at the mount of transfiguration in Matthew 17:1-2,

“after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; <sup>2</sup>and He was transfigured before them. *His face shone like the sun*, and His clothes became as white as the light.”

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<sup>iv</sup> JER 23:9, My heart within me is broken Because of the prophets; All my bones shake. I am like a drunken man, And like a man whom wine has overcome, Because of the Lord, And because of *His holy words*.

<sup>v</sup> HEB 4:12, *the word of God is living and powerful*, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

<sup>vi</sup> 1TIM 3:16-17, *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

<sup>vii</sup> EZE 3:1-3, He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." <sup>2</sup>So I opened my mouth, and *He caused me to eat that scroll.* <sup>3</sup>And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.

Interestingly enough, we notice that one person, John the apostle, was a witness at both of these instances. Another time that Jesus appeared as the Sun was on the road to Damascus. Saul of Tarsus was blinded for a time by what he saw there, he describes this in Acts 26:13-15,

“along the road *I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun*, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. <sup>14</sup>“And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ <sup>15</sup>“So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.”

A similar incident as happened to Saul had occurred before to the prophet Daniel. We read in Daniel 10:5-7,

“I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! <sup>6</sup>His body was like beryl, *his face like the appearance of lightning*, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude. <sup>7</sup>And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.”

Is this an appearance of the pre-incarnate Jesus? The similarities in the description of him are enough to make it an intriguing study on its own. For now, we will just note that it may be a possible explanation of this vision in Daniel. Continuing in our search, we are lead to Revelation 21:23,

“The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. *The Lamb is its light.*”

Mixing two metaphors quite brilliantly: Jesus the Lamb, and Jesus the Light of the world. Indeed, the Sun in our sky today will be gone during this time, as the Son will be all the illumination needed. When will this happen? For that answer, we read in Malachi 4:1-3,

“For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,” Says the Lord of hosts, “That will leave them neither root nor branch. <sup>2</sup>But to you who fear My name *The Sun of Righteousness shall arise*

With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves. <sup>3</sup>You shall trample the wicked, For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet On the day that I do this," Says the Lord of hosts."

Is this a pun given to us by the Holy Spirit? Of course it is! The world is currently lit by the Sun, but only one meets the requirements to be called the Sun of Righteousness. And on that day, he will return as the Light of the world, burning up the wicked!

If we still wanted this thread of pearls could continue, we may include a more subtle description of Jesus, found in Hebrews 1:2-3,

"in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; <sup>3</sup>who *being the brightness of His glory* and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."

This ties nicely into Revelation 21:23, "*the glory of God illuminated it*", giving us a more complete picture to help us envision the post-Redemption earth<sup>viii</sup>. Clearly, the exercise of stringing pearls together helps us to realize that all of God's word will be fulfilled, perfectly. As Jesus said in Luke 21:33,

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but *My words will by no means pass away.*"

We also notice from this exercise that the collection of books we call the Bible is one book. The Old and New Testaments are woven tightly together, so that one is not complete without the other. The Old Testament ends waiting for the Messiah. The New Testament begins with the Messiah who fulfills the word of God perfectly. Again, Jesus said in Matthew 5:17-18,

"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. *I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.* <sup>18</sup>"For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled."

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<sup>viii</sup> ROM 8:20-21, For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; <sup>21</sup>because *the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty* of the children of God.

Without the Old Testament, the New Testament has no background, no basis for its methods, no reason in its means. As an example, without knowing the insufficiency of the Levitical sacrifices, the sacrifice of Jesus loses its full depth of meaning<sup>ix</sup>.

Without foreknowledge of his sacrifice<sup>x</sup>, one might even presume that Jesus dying on a cross was a sorrowful tragedy. No, it was a triumph of the power of God<sup>xi</sup>!

Jesus said not to cast our *'pearls before swine'*; so, we should treasure them, and keep His word close to our heart<sup>xii</sup>. As we study Revelation, we will string the pearls we find together into clear lines of thought. By this process, we will grow in our knowledge and assurance of God's word. As is written in Isaiah 28:9-10,

“Whom will he teach knowledge? And whom will he make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? Those just drawn from the breasts?  
<sup>10</sup>For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, *Here a little, there a little.*”

Indeed, we find here a little pearl, and there a little pearl. Stringing them together makes the connections that are crucial for our edification, our understanding of God's plan from the beginning. Further, by stringing pearls together, we may even edify fellow believers<sup>xiii</sup> in the knowledge of the Son of God. Blessing others as we have been blessed. For, Jesus prayed that we become one<sup>xiv</sup>, unified in God; and, Paul concurs by exhorting us to come to the unity of faith<sup>xv</sup>. Thus, we have one

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<sup>ix</sup> HEB 9:11-14, Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. <sup>12</sup>Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup>For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, <sup>14</sup>*how much more shall the blood of Christ*, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

<sup>x</sup> ISA 53:3-6, He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. <sup>4</sup>Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup>But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. <sup>6</sup>All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And *the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

<sup>xi</sup> 1COR 1:18, the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but *to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*

<sup>xii</sup> ROM 10:8-9, what does it say? *"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"* (that is, the word of faith which we preach): <sup>9</sup>that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

<sup>xiii</sup> EPH 4:11-12, He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup>for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, *for the edifying of the body of Christ.*

<sup>xiv</sup> JOHN 17:11, "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, *that they may be one as We are.*

<sup>xv</sup> EPH 4:13, *till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.*

book, one gospel, one faith, and one teacher to guide us to all Truth: who is one,  
God.