

# Compare to the Rest of Scripture

By Jim Wicker

## Pre-Session Assignments

One week before the session, participants will take the following assignments.

### Assignment One

Jesus grew up observing the Jewish law, and that meant He obeyed the dietary restrictions. Prepare to share your answers to the following: read Leviticus 11 and list four clean animals and four unclean animals, describing why they are clean or unclean. Then, read Acts 10:9-16 and explain what God changed about the dietary laws.

### Assignment Two

The Old Testament is full of prophecies Jesus fulfilled. David wrote Psalm 22 about 1000 BC. Prepare to share your answers to the following: list five prophecies in Psalm 22 that Jesus fulfilled nearly 1,000 years later at His crucifixion (see Matthew 27:28-54).

### Assignment Three

People who claim to be prophets today have an accuracy rating of only about 6%. However, God's prophets in Scripture were 100% accurate (Deuteronomy 18:18-22). Prepare to share your answer to the following: what damage can false prophets do today? (Hint: cults often have false prophets).

## Scripture to Memorize

*"Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."* Acts 17:11

## Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will understand the importance of using the rest of Scripture to help interpret a specific passage of Scripture.

**Jim Wicker** is professor of New Testament and director of Web-Based Education at Southwestern Seminary. He came to Southwestern after spending nineteen years as a senior pastor in three different Texas Baptist churches. He and his wife, Dana, have three grown children. Jim and Dana are active members of First Baptist Church of Dallas, where Jim teaches Sunday school and Discipleship University. He is also one of the Bible study teachers for Wednesday prayer meeting. He has written numerous book reviews and articles and presented eight scholarly papers on Bible-related issues as well as on using technology in teaching.

Jim enjoys presenting gospel and comedy illusion shows at churches, fire-eating, juggling, unicycle riding, and performing comedy nunchucks. He annually leads tour groups to Israel or other Bible-related lands in Europe and the Middle East. Contact him at [jwicker@swbts.edu](mailto:jwicker@swbts.edu).

## It's in the Book

30 minutes

### Real-Life Scenario

An active member of a youth group told her youth pastor that it was fine for her to smoke marijuana recreationally. "The Bible says so," she confidently claimed. Then she quoted: "The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good." (Genesis 1:12). According to this teenager, she was putting something good that God had made into good use.

However, this young person was misguided. Proper interpretation of the passage she read involves comparing that passage to the rest of Scripture.

### Introduction

No Scripture passage should be studied in isolation. A proper interpretation compares the passage with the rest of the book in which the passage appears as well as with the other 65 books of the Bible. This lesson will show how the following can help you interpret a passage:

1. Comparing a New Testament quotation or reference to an Old Testament passage
2. Examining similar words in other passages
3. Comparing similar theological teachings in other passages

Since God inspired the entire Bible, one should make use of all relevant Scripture passages.

### Jesus Was Reared as a Good Jew

Read Luke 2:21-24 out loud.

#### Studying the Passage

These four verses mention three Old Testament laws Joseph and Mary observed at Jesus' birth.

**Verse 21. At the end of eight days.** This was eight days after Jesus' birth. **When he was circumcised.** God instructed the Jews in the law about male babies, "On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" (Leviticus 12:3). Traditionally, that is also when they gave a baby a name. **called Jesus.** His name means "God saves." **given by the angel.** In the previous chapter is the account of the angel Gabriel telling Mary, "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus." (Luke 1:31).

**Verse 22. the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses.** The Old Testament law said the purification lasted "for 33 days" (Leviticus 12:4) after the first seven days. **brought Him up to Jerusalem.** Thus, on the fortieth day, the parents were to make two offerings. Joseph and Mary kept the purification law.

**Verse 23. every male who first opens the womb.** Jesus is the "firstborn," and this Old Testament reference affirms that being firstborn makes Him special. **shall be called holy to the Lord.** *Holy* means "sanctified" or "set apart," and every firstborn Jewish child was special to God. This quotation combines phrases from Exodus 13:2 and Numbers 3:13; 8:17. Again, Joseph and Mary kept the law of the presentation of the firstborn to the Lord.

**Verse 24. a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.** Joseph and Mary gave the offering the Law specified for a poor person, “But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD . . . two turtledoves or two pigeons” (Leviticus 5:7). Jesus grew up obeying the Jewish law. You must read and comprehend the relevant Old Testament passages to fully understand this New Testament passage.

### **Assignment One Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week can now report on the Jewish dietary restrictions and when they changed.

### **Discussion Question**

Why was it important for Jesus to be obedient to the Jewish law? (Hint: Read Matthew 5:17.)

### **On Your Own**

The Old and New Testaments shed much light on each other. For instance, Jesus’ death and resurrection made many Jewish practices obsolete. List three of these in the space below. If you need help, see Leviticus 7–9.

## **Jesus Fulfilled Prophecy**

Read Luke 2:25–35 out loud.

### **Studying the Passage**

**Verse 25. righteous and devout.** Simeon observed the Jewish law and lived a life pleasing to God. **waiting for the consolation of Israel.** This means he was watching for the salvation of Israel. This had been foretold by prophets such as Isaiah, “To bring good news to the poor . . . To proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor” (Isaiah 61:1-2).

**Verse 26. revealed to him by the Holy Spirit.** God the Holy Spirit had given Simeon a special message. **he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.** The Holy Spirit promised Simeon that he would see the Messiah prior to his death. Now this day had come!

**Verse 28. took Him up into his arms.** Simeon held Jesus—the Messiah. **and blessed God.** He gave God a blessing for this special privilege.

**Verse 30. For my eyes have seen Your salvation.** Simeon affirmed that Jesus is the Messiah—the Promised One to bring salvation to man.

**Verse 32. a light for revelation to the Gentiles.** This quotation captures an oft-repeated theme in Isaiah, “I will also make you as a light for the nations” (49:6, see also 9:2; 42:6; 51:4; and 60:1–3). Those prophecies were all made about 740 BC. Jesus fulfilled prophecy and came for all people!

**Verse 34. this Child is appointed.** Jesus fulfilled God's plan to bring salvation to all who would believe in Him.

### **Assignment Two Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Two** during the week can now report on prophecies in Psalm 22 that Jesus fulfilled.

## **Jesus is the Redeemer**

**Read** Luke 2:36–38 out loud.

### **Studying the Passage**

**Verse 36. there was a prophetess, Anna.** A prophet foretold the future, but also did forth telling: speaking God's message to the present day. A prophet of God spoke for Him: "I will put My words in his mouth" (Deuteronomy 18:18). The prophet was 100% accurate (Deuteronomy 18:22). Prophetesses were rarer than prophets. Moses' sister, Miriam, was a prophetess (Exodus 15:20). Deborah was, as well (Judges 4:4).

**Verse 37. She did not depart from the temple.** She was devoted to serving God. **with fasting.** This is a devotional practice of going without food for a specific period of time in order to focus more clearly on God.

**Verse 38. give thanks to God.** Like Simeon, Anna gave thanks to God for sending Jesus, the Messiah. **the redemption of Jerusalem.** *Redemption* means "to buy back that which was taken away." Jesus' payment on the cross brings salvation to everyone who believes on Him—to the Jews first ("Jerusalem") and then to the Gentiles (see Romans 1:16).

### **Assignment Three Feedback**

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on the damage false prophets and teachers can do today.

### **On Your Own**

Write down three ways the testimonies of Simeon and Anna affirmed that Jesus is the Messiah. How does our study of the Old Testament help us understand their testimonies?

### **Heart and Hands**

8 minutes

Read again the **Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session.

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

### **Since Last Week**

5 minutes

### **Grace-Filled Accountability**

5 minutes

### **Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service**

5 minutes

### **Prayer**

7 minutes

## At Home: Nail It Down

Let's look back at "Marijuana Mary" in the **Real-Life Scenario**. You can help her arrive at a proper interpretation of Scripture by comparing other Scriptures. First, did something change historically after this passage in Genesis 1:12? Yes. The fall of man occurred in Genesis 3:1-7. Sin came into the world, and the earth experiences the ravages of sin.

Second, what does Genesis 1:12 actually say was good? God made the plants, they produce after their own kind and they are helpful for God's creation. This does not mean we should eat every plant. Some plants are bad for us. Eating poisonous mushrooms can result in death. On the other hand, brussels sprouts tastes like death but are good for you!

Third, is every use of any plant necessarily good since we live in a sinful world? No. Scripture has examples of people using something that is good for a bad purpose. A reed (a type of plant) has good uses, but Roman soldiers used one for evil, "to beat Him [Jesus] on the head" (Matthew 27:30). What is *done* with an object is good or bad. One can use stones for good, such as "four rows of stones" (Exodus 28:17) that represented the 12 tribes of Israel in the high priest's breastplate. Yet stones were put to bad use when unbelieving Jews killed Stephen, "Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him" (Acts 7:58).

Fourth, since smoking marijuana does not appear in Scripture, does the Bible mention a similar practice? Yes. "And do not get drunk with wine" (Ephesians 5:18) speaks against a close equivalent: doing something that causes one not to be in control of his or her faculties.

In order to correctly interpret a passage of Scripture, wise disciples turn to other passages that shed light on it.

### **Follow up Question:**

*Can you share with me an example of using one passage of Scripture to shed light on another passage?*

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.