

WEEK OF PRAYER

MARCH 19 - 26 2022



I WILL
GO

THE PRESENT TRUTH:
GOD'S MESSAGE
FOR TODAY

General Conference

Gcyouthministries.org



SERMON 1

The Whole Truth in One Book

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

INTRODUCTION

L*upin* was one of the most watched TV series in 2021. Its plot tells the story of Assane Diop, the son of an immigrant from Senegal who had come to France to seek a better life, but his father, Babakar, is framed in the theft of an expensive diamond necklace by his employer, the rich and powerful Hubert Pellegrini. Assane Diop's father is captured by the police and sent to prison, so, embarrassed, he decides to take his own life in his cell, leaving the teenager Assane an orphan. Twenty-five years later and inspired by the book *Arsène Lupin* that his father had given him on his birthday – about the life



of a thief knight– Assane decides to take revenge on the Pellegrini family, using his charisma and everything he has learned through this book.

Assane Diop does things that seem impossible, but thanks to good contacts, cutting-edge technology, and subtle traps, he almost always gets away with it; even if he is wrong, he has an ace up his sleeve to get out of complicated situations. But none of these strategies are entirely his, as they were all learned from Arsen Lupin's adventure book.

In short: *Lupin* is the story of a young man whose life is impacted by reading a book! And let me tell you that it is not an exceptional case, there are books that really have that power!

Dear young man and young woman, in this first message I would like to show you a book that has the power to change your lives. Do you know which book I'm referring to? The Bible: the most important book in history. The one that is above all other books and the one that contains the whole truth.

In this series of messages, we will be studying the present truth or, rather, the truth for the time in which we are living. However, I think it is important, first of all, to lay the foundations that will serve as a platform for each of the messages that we will be presenting during this week. Therefore, we must answer two important questions in relation to the Bible:

First, what evidence do we have to believe that the Bible is unique as the inspired Word of God?

Second: As young people, what benefits can we gain from reading and studying the Bible?

DEVELOPMENT

Let's begin by answering the first question: *What evidence do we have to*

believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God? There are at least four pieces of evidence that testify that the Bible is the Word of God.

EVIDENCE #1: WONDERFUL UNITY

The Bible is a collection of books, written by 40 authors who lived in a period spanning approximately 1,500 years. These people came from different countries and many of them did not know each other.

Just think of the fact that the writers of the Bible came from all kinds of backgrounds; for example, *Moses* was a political leader and judge, educated in the universities of Egypt; *David* was king, poet, musician, shepherd, and warrior; *Amos* was an animal herder; *Joshua* a military general; *Nehemiah* a cupbearer for a pagan king; *Daniel*, a Prime Minister; *Solomon* was king and philosopher; *Luke*, physician, and historian; and *Paul*, a rabbi.

But the writers of the Bible not only came from different backgrounds and places, they also wrote in different contexts: *Moses* wrote while in the wilderness; *Jeremiah*, in prison; *Daniel*, in a palace; *Luke*, while traveling; *John*, banished on the island of Patmos.

Likewise, the Bible is written in different styles and in three different

languages and, despite everything, it presents a wonderful unity. We can see that:

- The Bible has one theme: salvation.
- The Bible has a hero: the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The Bible has an evil one: the devil.
- The Bible has a purpose: Revealing the truth about life and God's character!

EVIDENCE #2: MIRACULOUS SURVIVAL

The Bible has been the most hated, persecuted, and attacked book in history; no other book has received more attacks than the Bible! It has been attacked by emperors, philosophers, scientists and even by believers themselves; and as we can see today, despite all the attacks, the Bible remains. Let me give you an example:

The famous French unbeliever Voltaire, who died in 1778, declared that one hundred years after his death Christianity and its Bible would disappear. And what do you think happened? Just 50 years after his death, his press and his home in Geneva were being used to produce piles of Bibles.

The enemies of the Bible come and go, but the Bible remains. Jesus was right when He said, *"Heaven and earth*

will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Mark 13:31).

EVIDENCE #3: HISTORICAL ACCURACY

It is said that the English archaeologist and historian William Mitchell Ramsay (1851-1939), an atheist and son of atheists, set out to prove that the Bible was not a trustworthy document and that all the historical claims he made were false.

So, he turned to the two books of Luke: The Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, since in these books of the Bible many places, proper names and dates are mentioned, which can be easily corroborated or denied by secular historical sources.

To achieve his goal, Ramsay personally toured the biblical lands and devoted himself to research for twenty-five years. It was surprising for him to see – through archaeological excavations – that 32 countries, 54 cities and 9 islands mentioned by Luke in his second book were real places.

Instead of proving the Bible false, Ramsay found dozens of reliable proofs that confirmed its historical veracity. The world was astonished when William Ramsay converted to Christianity and, moreover, a defender of biblical truth.

Young people, the Bible is not fiction, it is historical reality!

EVIDENCE #4: THE FULFILLMENT OF PROPHECIES

Additional evidence testifying that the Bible is the inspired Word of God consists in the exact fulfillment of its prophecies. The Bible is the only religious book that contains prophecies that have been fulfilled exactly in history; the Old Testament alone contains more than 2,000 prophecies that have been fulfilled.

I could give you many examples of fulfilled prophecies but let me show you only those related to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Scholars say that Jesus fulfilled more than 300 Old Testament prophecies. Of Jesus Christ was prophesied:

- The years of his ministry and death (Daniel 9:25-27).
- The place of his birth (Micah 5:2).
- His miraculous birth (Isaiah 7:14).
- The star that would announce his appearance (Numbers 24:17).
- The betrayal of which he would be a victim (Zechariah 11:12).
- His death and burial (Isaiah 53:9-12).
- His resurrection (Psalm 16:9-11).

Each of these Bible prophecies and many, many more have been fulfilled, and we are sure that those that remain to be fulfilled will be fulfilled. Praise be to the name of our God! The fulfillment of prophecies is evidence that the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

Since we have enough evidence to show that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, let's answer our second question: *What benefits does Bible reading bring to us as young people?* There are many benefits that will come into your lives through reading and studying the Bible, but today, with this message, I only wish to present three of them to you:

BENEFIT #1: READING THE BIBLE ALLOWS YOU TO KNOW GOD

Knowing about God is not the same as knowing God. In order to know someone, you need to dedicate time to them, emulate their behavior and live with them; God can be known through the Bible. By reading the Bible you will be able to have reference to his Person, his character, his justice, his mercy and his love. *"Now this is eternal life," Jesus said, "that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent"* (John 17:3).

BENEFIT #2: READING THE BIBLE GIVES YOU WISDOM

Watching a lot of morning news as you get ready to go to work or school, filling up on app notifications, or watching health shows doesn't make you wise, it just gives you the basics you should know; it's just general culture. It doesn't matter how many books you've read about science, literature, philosophy, or law; that won't make you wise. Wisdom does not come from the human intellect!

Instead, the Bible shows us how to find wisdom, apply it, and enjoy it. It comes from the knowledge of God, from reverence for Him and His Word; it is a fruit of the search for His Presence. The Bible is clear, precise, and gives us wisdom for daily living. Notice what the following two verses say:

- *The unfolding of your worlds gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. (Psalm 119:130).*
- *For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:6).*

BENEFIT #3: READING THE BIBLE LEADS YOU AWAY FROM SIN AND TO AN ABUNDANT LIFE

Saturating ourselves with the Word of God and understanding our dependence

on Jesus Christ will allow there to be less opportunity for the exercise of sin in our hearts and in our lives. Reading the Bible will make us dissatisfied with what we know and will make us go further to know the redemptive work of Jesus and His grace, thus resisting all kinds of temptation.

Notice what the following verses say to you: *How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. (Psalm 119:9, 11).*

Jesus said, I have come that they [and you!] may have life, and have it to the full! (John 10:10).

CONCLUSION

Dear young people, *the Bible is the inspired Word of God that has the power to change your lives.* Some time ago I had the opportunity to listen to the story of Juan Briceño. From a young age he thought that humans could live without God, so with this thought in mind John lived as he wanted; at first glance everything was fine: he worked, had fun, and always enjoyed life, but inwardly he felt an emptiness.

In his attempt to fill this hole he turned to drugs. Juan expressed that he

immersed himself so much in the world of drugs that had him enslaved 14 years. And not only did he consume them, but he even went so far as to distribute them as well. What a pity!

John's relatives lost all hope of change. They had done everything humanly possible to help him, but unfortunately it was all in vain.

One day John attended a friend's birthday party and saw a group of well-dressed young men whose behavior and talking points were very different from other boys his age. After a while, John realized it was a group of Adventist youth.

Then and with dissimulation, John approached them with some fear, thinking that they were going to reject him; but to his surprise those young people received him with love. They talked to him, prayed, and at the end of the meeting gave him a Bible.

"I had never had a Bible in my hands," John said, "but that day, when I left the birthday party, I began to read God's Word. Then, from that day on, my life began to change."

It's been 13 years since that night John began reading the Bible. Today, John is not a man tied to drugs but a free man, who lives happily with his wife and children. God's Word performed the

miracle in his life and transformed him! Praise be to the name of the Lord!

Young people, I invite you to study your Bible daily. Set aside a regular time of day to hear God's voice. I assure you that if you make this a habit, your life will never be the same. And please never forget that: *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

REFLECTION AND STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What evidence do we have that testifies that the Bible is the inspired Word of God?
2. How many prophecies did our Lord Jesus Christ fulfill in His life and ministry?
3. What did William Mitchell Ramsay discover regarding the historical accuracy of the Bible?
4. What benefits do we, as young people, gain from reading and studying the Bible?
5. What does 2 Timothy 3:16-17 teach us?