

# EXPLORATION: BIBLE

By Chip Thompson

## THE MYSTERY OF THE “SCARLET THREAD”

**IMPORTANT:** This article lays the groundwork for future “SCARLET THREAD” articles, one each month, that will be published in 2021. The story of Jesus in the Bible comes to life when you understand the Scarlet Thread that weaves its way through the biblical narrative. In this series of articles, we will not be examining the Bible in light of world history; we will examine world history in light of the Bible. From beginning to end, from creation to eternity, world history has been and will be shaped by God’s eternal plan, which centers around one person, JESUS CHRIST.

Luke’s gospel, chapter 24, records multiple eyewitness accounts of the resurrected Jesus appearing to his disciples. You should read this chapter before continuing.

In verses 13-35, the resurrected Jesus joined two of his disciples as they walked along the road to a village called Emmaus. These two disciples had heard reports of the empty tomb, which amazed them, yet they doubted. When Jesus appeared to them, He said, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” **And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”**



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**These are the ancient ruins of the biblical town of Emmaus Nicopolis.**

Later in the same chapter, in verses 36-48, when all the disciples had gathered in Jerusalem, Jesus suddenly appeared to them. He rebuked their unbelief and said, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that **all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.**” **And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.**

During his earthly ministry, Jesus taught, “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 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” (Matthew 5:17-18). Jesus came to fulfill all that had been prophesied about the Jewish Messiah, about himself, in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Consider the first three verses in the Gospel of John, “In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word was with God**, and **the Word was God**. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” This Person, “The Word,” was in the beginning with God, was God, and was the Creator of everything. Any question as to His identity is cleared up in verse 14 when John writes, “And **the Word became flesh and dwelt among us**, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”



**Jesus is "the Word" in John 1:1-3.**

Why did John call Jesus the Word? Why not just say, “In the beginning was Jesus...” It is because the Apostle John wanted to draw our attention to the fact that Jesus was the fulfillment of the entire “Word of God” (the Bible). John understood the mystery of the Scarlet Thread.

So, what exactly is the Scarlet Thread? Think of the Bible as an intricately woven tapestry. Woven through the tapestry of the Old Testament stories is a Scarlet Thread that supernaturally prefigures the coming Jewish Messiah. There are places where the Bible does actually specify a scarlet thread or a scarlet rope in the narrative. It is the color, however, that is symbolic – scarlet is a deep red, the color of blood. The Scarlet Thread points to sacrifice and the blood of atonement. This thread connects the blood sacrifices from beginning to end, from the Garden of Eden where God provided animal skins to cover Adam and Eve’s sin and shame, all the way to the cross where Jesus shed his blood for the sins of the world. The Scarlet Thread was ordained by God to direct us to the final sacrifice, the blood of redemption shed by Jesus on the cross.



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**This 1st Century Roman tunic fragment has scarlet, blood red, thread woven into the fabric from top to bottom.**

Over the next year, we will study the most significant Scarlet Thread stories in the Old Testament. These stories are stunning proof that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, the Savior of the World. I hope you will join us on this AMAZING journey as we follow the Scarlet Thread from the beginning of human history all the way to Jesus and on into eternity.

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