

Should One Consider Parts of the Bible to Be Myths?

by Heath Rogers

Did God really make the world in six days? Did Noah really build an ark and escape a global flood? Did Jonah really spend three days in the belly of a great fish? One would expect every Christian to answer these questions with a confident “yes!” However, some churches teach that the miraculous events recorded in the Old Testament are only myths or fiction.

While opinions on this subject may vary, the Bible itself speaks very clearly on the validity of the events recorded in the Old Testament.

For instance, Jesus spoke of Noah as a real man and the global flood as a real event. *“But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be”* (Matthew 24:37-39). If the account of Noah and the flood is just a myth, so is the Second Coming of Christ.

Jesus spoke of the account of Jonah and the great fish as if it were a real event. *“An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 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”* (Matthew 12:39-40). If Jonah did not really spend three days and nights in the belly of the great fish, then Jesus did not really spend three days in the tomb.

Paul spoke of the forty years that the Children of Israel wandered in the wilderness as a real event and used it as a warning for the Christians of his day (1 Corinthians 10:1-12). Notice especially verse 11 – *“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come”* (emphasis mine - HR). While some people would tell us that some Old Testament stories were made up to make people fear and obey God, the inspired apostle said that these events really happened.

There are some serious consequences to believing that parts of the Bible are fiction. First, it denies the statements that Jesus and His apostles made concerning the historical accuracy of these events. Second, such a belief weakens the integrity of the Word of God. Consider how worthless Hebrews chapter eleven becomes if some of the events in that chapter never really occurred. How can the Bible claim *“The entirety of Your word is truth”* (Psalm 119:160) when it contains fiction? Third, a denial of the miraculous events of the Old Testament simply opens the door for a denial of the miraculous events recorded in the New Testament. Many so-called Christians have already walked through this door, denying such fundamental truths as the Lord’s virgin birth and His resurrection. Once a man has been convinced that the miraculous events in the Old Testament are not true, why would he believe that the miracles recorded in the New Testament are true? If any part of the Bible is false, all Scripture is then suspect, even the promises of eternal life!

One will gain the best understanding of the Bible when he allows the Bible to speak for itself. The Bible does use parables and figures of speech, however the Bible often tells us when these figures of speech are being used. Unless we are told otherwise, we should understand the words that we are reading in the Bible to be literal accounts of historical facts.