Question:
In 2 Samuel 1:17–18 (NKJV), we read:
“Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, and he told them to teach the children of Judah the Song of the Bow; indeed it is written in the Book of Jashar.”
What exactly is this *Book of Jashar*, and what can we learn from its mention in Scripture?

Understanding the Book of Jashar

The *Book of Jashar* (also spelled *Jasher*) is an ancient Hebrew literary work that is mentioned in two places in the Old Testament:

1. Joshua 10:13 (NKJV) –
   “So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the people had revenge upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar?”

2. 2 Samuel 1:18 (NKJV) –
   “…Indeed it is written in the Book of Jashar.”

The Hebrew word “Yashar” (יָשָׁר) means “upright” or “righteous.” So, the Book of Jashar literally translates to “The Book of the Upright” or “Book of the Righteous.” It appears to have been a

collection of poetic songs or heroic accounts about significant events and notable figures in Israel's history. Though the book itself is not part of the biblical canon, its mention within the Bible implies it was a respected and widely known historical source during that time.

Why is it Important?

Theological insight into the *Book of Jashar* helps us understand several key truths:

1. God Works Through History

The Bible is not only a book of spiritual truths and prophecy—it is also rooted in real, historical events. By referencing external sources like the *Book of Jashar*, the Bible confirms that the faith of Israel was grounded in reality. Just as Luke 1:1–4 shows that early Christians valued eyewitness testimony and accurate records, so too did the Israelites.

2. Scripture Doesn't Hide Other Sources

God inspired the authors of Scripture to acknowledge other documents when necessary—not to validate Scripture itself, but

to confirm the authenticity of shared history. As 2 Corinthians 13:1 says, *“By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established.”*

The *Book of Jashar* acts as one of those witnesses, just as modern theologians may reference historical documents, church fathers, or archeological findings to support biblical truth.

3. Not All Ancient Books Are Inspired

It’s important to note that just because the Bible references another book doesn’t mean that book is divinely inspired or should be included in the canon. For example:

- Numbers 21:14 (NKJV) mentions *the Book of the Wars of the Lord*.

- 1 Chronicles 29:29 (NKJV) references records by Samuel, Nathan, and Gad.

- 1 Kings 14:29 (NKJV) refers to *the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah*.

These books served a historical function but were not preserved as part of the inspired Word of God. As 2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV) reminds us: *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God…”*—and only those books recognized by God’s people and affirmed by Jesus and the apostles fall into that category.

Modern Parallels and Confirmation

Interestingly, even outside the Bible, certain truths are echoed by other religious texts. For example, the Qur’an, while not considered inspired by Christian doctrine, acknowledges:

- Jesus was born of a virgin (Qur’an 3:45–47),

- He was sinless (Qur’an 19:19),

- And He will return again (Qur’an 43:61).

This doesn’t validate the Qur’an as divine, but it does reinforce the historical presence and uniqueness of Jesus—even in non-Christian traditions. As Philippians 2:10–11 (NKJV) declares: *“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”*

Final Reflection: Why Does This Matter?

Some may say, *“I don’t believe the Bible. I think stories like the virgin birth or Jesus’ return are myths.”* But the existence of multiple independent sources—biblical and extra-biblical—confirming key events should challenge that skepticism.

God has not left Himself without witness. The *Book of Jashar*, though lost to us today, stands as evidence that God’s acts in history were public, memorable, and recorded even outside of Scripture. But God’s greatest witness is His Son.

John 14:6 (NKJV): *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

Acts 17:30–31 (NKJV): *“God… now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained…”*

Jesus is coming again. The door of grace is still open, but not forever.

Repent and believe. Jesus is the only hope.

Be blessed.

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