

YOU CAN BELIEVE THE BIBLE

BY

Dr. Willis C. Newman
(B.A., M.Ed., M.Div., Ph.D., D.Min.)

© Copyright 1994, Polynesian Missions;
© Copyright 2008, Willis & Esmeralda Newman.

Published by Newman International, LLC
Tacoma, WA USA

Scripture taken from the New American Standard Bible,
© 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977
by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	4
Foreword	4
Comments/endorsements	4
Introduction	5
About the author	5
Dedication	6
Acknowledgements	6
Update (2008)	6
How to be saved	7
 CHAPTER	
1. General background information/Introduction.	9
Purpose of the Bible	10
Structure of the Bible	11
Old Testament books	16
New Testament books and emphasis	16
Relationship between the Old and New Testament	18
2. Sequence of God's communication to humanity	20
Sequence of God's communication process	20
Central importance of Bible teaching/preaching	23
12 reasons to preach/teach the Bible	24
3. Proofs for Bible as God's revelation	32
The Bible claims	33
The nature of the Bible	37
The Bible's transforming power	38
The internal witness of the Holy Spirit	39
4. Proof for the Bible (continued)	41
Fulfilled prophecy proves the Bible	41
Does God exist?	43
Daniel's prophesy of 70 weeks	45
Old Testament predictions of Christ	48
5. Proofs for the Bible (continued).	51
Historical accuracy of the Bible	51
Reliability of the New Testament documents	54
The testimony of Jesus Christ	59
6. Proofs for the Bible (continued).	63
The miracles of the Bible	63
Christ's Resurrection	64

The influence of the Bible	71
The indestructibility of the Bible	71
The alternative possibilities	72
The character of God	72
One final consideration	73
7. Revelation from God	75
Methods of revelation	75
The Bible as God's revelation	77
End of revelation	82
8. The inspiration of Scripture	93
Inspiration defined	93
Theories of inspiration	93
Verbal plenary view of inspiration	95
Theories evaluated	98
Selection of writers	99
Process of inspiration: 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Luke 1:1-4	100
9. Inerrancy and infallibility	104
Inerrancy and infallibility defined	104
Dealing with alleged discrepancies	106
The Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy	115
10. The Canon of the Bible.	120
The Canon of Scripture defined	120
Key consideration of Canon	120
The tests of Canon	120
The formation of Canon	122
The Apocrypha and Canon.	122
11. Various Church documents on the Bible	126
Westminster Confession of Faith	126
The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England	128
Methodist Articles of Religion, 1784	129
Suggested readings.	131
Author index	133
Subject index	135
Selected Scripture verses	138

PREFACE

It has been my privilege to know Dr. Newman and to know the burning desire he has for people to know the truth. In this book, Willis outlines the truth which can only be based on the inerrant, infallible, Word of God, the Bible. I recommend this book to all who are seeking the truth and pray that it will lead you to a deeper and personal relationship with our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The Hon. Kinikinilau Tutoatasi Fakafanua, B. Com, LLB, LLM (Hon).
Minister for Labour, Commerce, Industries & Tourism, Kingdom of Tonga

FOREWORD

It is my honor to introduce this book and its author. I have known Dr. Willis Newman for many years. I have also lived with his family on the great mission field of the South Pacific.

Dr. Willis Newman is a modern pioneer in missions, writing, and theological education. Led by God to Tonga, he has excelled in all three areas. Polynesian Missions has moved from dream to reality largely through his perseverance. The same is true for Tonga Bible College and Faith Seminary, now training scores of students from many Pacific islands. The testimony is clear: the gospel is for everyone. Of course, Dr. Newman is quick to give God the glory for any accomplishments.

This book will be a blessing to the work of evangelism and training. The introduction on How to be Saved shows where the author's heart is. Dr. Newman has written a thorough defense of the absolute reliability of Scripture. He has also pointed the material toward the South Pacific audience in a most appealing way. Many readers from afar will also profit from this refreshing approach. The book will be a permanent resource manual for many Christian leaders. May it also serve to hold fast the historic Christian faith in a rapidly changing world.

Don B. DeYoung, Ph.D. (Physics)
Scientist. Grace College, Winona Lake, Indiana (USA), Fall, 1994

COMMENTS

I know Dr. Newman both as a friend and teacher. I highly recommend this book to be read by everyone.

Rev. Dr. T. Feke Mafi
Director of Youth & Sunday School Dept., Church of Tonga

This book is quite clear, informative and written in a simple, easy to understand style. It speaks directly to the needs of the South Pacific. I have found the book very helpful in personal studies and recommend it for all to read.

Rev. Dr. Liufau Saulala
President, Tokaikolo Christian Church

INTRODUCTION

This book is a small, compact overview of the Bible. It is more a book on what the Bible is, rather than what the Bible says. We live in a day when this great Book is considered a relic of the past, irrelevant or in some cases a danger to society.

Contrary to the opinion of many, however, we believe the Bible to be The Book from God, a source of information that tells us how to prepare for the next life and how to live in this life. We believe the Bible is from God, without mistake, up to date, a joy to study and a treasure of timeless truths.

Our understanding of the Bible is vital, for from its charming yet authoritative pages flow all the other grand doctrines of the Christian Faith. Our view of the Bible, then, is fundamental, and the starting place for all religious study.

This little book is designed to give the reader an overview of the nature of the Bible and its place in society. Many reasons, based on solid evidence, are listed demonstrating why we can take the Bible at face value.

The objective of this work is to challenge the non-believer to take the Bible seriously and to give a boldness and confidence to the believer. We can proclaim the Bible with assurance that it is truth from God to the human race. We can trust the Bible with decisions in our own personal life. It is a Book that we can use to form the foundation of our life, family, society, and nation.

From *Halley's Bible Handbook* we offer the opinions of some great men of history regarding the Bible.

Napoleon: "The Bible is no mere book, but a living Creature, with a power that conquers all that oppose it."

Queen Victoria: "That book accounts for the supremacy of England."

Immanuel Kant: "The existence of the Bible, as a book for the people, is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced. Every attempt to belittle it is a crime against humanity."

To these words we heartily agree. One more thing: the central Person of the Bible is Jesus Christ, and it is our desire that He be glorified by this labour of love to the peoples of the south Pacific.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I was born and raised in America on a cattle ranch in central Idaho. I was saved in 1965. An ordained minister, I am a graduate of the University of Portland (B.A., M.Ed.), Multnomah School of the Bible (Certificate), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary

(M.Div.), California Graduate School of Theology (Ph.D.), and Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary (D.Min.).

I pastored for eight years, taught a number of years at International College and Graduate School of Theology (Hawaii), and am presently adjunct Professor of Theological Studies at Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary (USA). I was guest lecturer for International School of Theology – Asia (Campus Crusade for Christ in Manila). I was Principal and Professor of Theology of Tonga Bible College, and was the Director of Polynesian Missions.

DEDICATION

This book I dedicate to Rev. Mel Erickson who went home to be with the Lord in the summer of 1994. This dear man brought me the gospel of Jesus Christ, led me to a saving faith in our Saviour then grounded me in the most precious Faith. I will be eternally grateful for his faithful witness to me.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I give thanks to Dr. Don DeYoung and the Honourable Kinikinilau Tutoatasi Fakafanua for reading the manuscript and offering helpful suggestions. My appreciation goes to my wife for her proof reading and help. My gratitude goes to Esmie Newman for sifting through the details and making the indexes. Of course, I take full responsibility for any mistakes in the final product.

UPDATE (2008)

Much has happened in the past 14 years since I wrote this book. My good friend, the Hon. Fakafanua (Tasi), has gone home to the Lord. His passing was a great loss. After his encouragement to me in this book, he was appointed by the King to be Minister of Finance for Tonga. Dr. Feke Mafi is now President of the Church of Tonga. I had the wonderful privilege of leading him to Christ in the summer of 1994. Dr. Saulala is still President of the Tokaikolo Christian Church. He has started a university in Tonga. Dr. DeYoung is still with Grace College, and writing books on creation and science.

I moved away from Tonga in 1998, and now teach at a local community college and Faith Evangelical Seminary in Tacoma, WA. Faith dropped the word, “Lutheran” from their name to reflect a more interdenominational stance. The seminary is still going in Tonga, and I have the delight to return every year to teach a module. Hundreds have received training at the school. Dr. Uili Fukofuka is the director of the teaching site – and also the Director of Education for Tonga.

My Filipina wife, Esmeralda (Esmie), and I have started Newman International LLC, which is taking advantage of the Internet. We are building an online Bible Academy. We travel to the Philippines yearly to conduct seminars and workshops – and to promote

our mission work. Esmie graduated from the University of Washington, and is presently the financial comptroller and office manager for a small business in Tacoma. She also is co-leading a Christian woman's group.

The contents of this book are still relevant today. I have smoothed out and revised some sections. Our prayer is that its usefulness expands far beyond the South Pacific, and onto the entire world – wherever there exists the Internet and people have a computer. And, as long as the Lord also gives me strength – in a few months I will pass the 70 year mark.

Willis C. Newman, Tacoma, WA, 2008.

HOW TO BE SAVED

The Bible gives us the message (gospel) of how to be saved. By this we mean how to gain forgiveness for our sin and how to gain eternal life. Summarized below are the steps for salvation as presented in the Bible. We invite you to receive Christ as Savior.

1. Agree in your heart with God that you are a sinner in need of His salvation, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
2. Know in your heart that there is a penalty to your sin, "for the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a).
3. Believe in your heart that Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay the penalty for your sins and to give you eternal life, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

"Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

4. By faith pray to God. Tell Him you believe the above in your heart and ask Him to save you through Jesus Christ. Remember that God is more concerned with the attitude of your heart rather than your exact words.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one would boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses resulting in salvation" (Romans 10:9, 10).

“Behold, I (Jesus) stand at the door (of your heart) and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20).

“But as many as received Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12, 13).

The following is a suggested prayer:

Heavenly Father, I admit to you that I am a sinner in need of your salvation. I believe that Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay for my sins and go give me eternal life. I believe that only through Christ can I be saved. I ask for and accept by faith your free gift of salvation. Please come into my heart and be my Savior and Lord. Thank you for doing so. In Jesus' name, amen.

SANCTIFY THEM IN THE TRUTH; THY WORD IS TRUTH (John 17:17).

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

The Christian Bible consists of 66 individual books, written by over 40 authors during a period of about 1,600 years on three continents and in two languages. It claims to be uniquely inspired by God in a different sense than any other literature in all history. It claims, in fact, to be without error or mistake.

The Holy Spirit is the ultimate single Author and thus draws the 66 separate books into one unified book that gives God's plan and purposes for time and eternity. There are two major divisions: the Old Testament with 39 books, and the New Testament with 27. Its central person is Jesus Christ who became God in the flesh, and the central theme is God's salvation provided by His grace through faith in Christ.

The Bible speaks to the great issues that confront humanity. For example, our creation, ultimate destination, present life, death, sin, personal relationships, evil – and all the great questions people have asked down through time. The Bible has that ability to satisfy the deepest needs of the human heart.

It tells us how to view the world we live in, and the events that take place in our lives. For example, the Bible has much to say about marriage, divorce, family life, sickness, disaster, abortion, failed crops, crime, drinking, women's issues and anything else that touches us where we live. It explains correction, guidance, hope, and forgiveness.

There is no other book like it – anywhere. The Bible speaks with authority and power where the gods and priests of the ancient Polynesians stayed speechless and helpless in their confusion and ignorance.

This little book you have in your hand teaches not so much what the Bible says, but what the Bible actually is. In order to meet this objective, we will progress logically through the several major issues. These issues are so important that our understanding of them will determine how we view life, death, heaven, hell, salvation, God, Jesus Christ – all of life.

For example, how we view the Bible determines how we view the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ and salvation through faith in Him. How we view these issues determines whether we will spend eternity in heaven or hell. So you see, the Bible is very important! Now we turn to our first lesson.

We begin our study of the Bible by learning important background information. Specifically, we need to look at the Bible's purpose, structure, and the relationship between the Old and New Testament.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE

The purpose of the Bible is to bear witness of one God who is the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. This witness is through Jesus Christ, the Messiah of the Old Testament, and the Redeemer of sinful humanity. The story of the Bible is a step by step unfolding of one central theme: the provision of redemption for sinful, fallen humanity through the Person and work of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, who is the God of the universe in human form.

The Old Testament tells of the preparation for Christ; the New Testament tells of the presentation and explanation of Christ. The Bible tells the plans and purposes of God for time and eternity.

A more detailed look shows that the Bible was given for many more reasons.

1. To reveal God, that He is one God, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe (Isaiah 40:1-44:8; Deuteronomy 6:4; Genesis 1:1).
2. To reveal humanity's sinful condition before God and need for salvation (Romans 3:9-19).
3. To hold humanity accountable to God, and to establish a standard of judgment against the unsaved at the final judgment (Romans 3:19; John 12:48).
4. To reveal knowledge and truth to humanity (Romans 2:20).
5. To reveal and prove (through fulfilled prophecy) to humanity God's promise of only one provision for salvation. His salvation was to be through Christ, a truth set forth in history prophecy, type, and symbol (Romans 1:1-4; 15:8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Isaiah 53; John 14:6; Acts 4:12).
6. To lead humanity to salvation through faith in Christ (2 Timothy 3:15; Galatians 3:22-24).
7. To produce saving faith and spiritual growth in humanity (1 Peter 1:23-2:2; Romans 12:15-17; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Psalm 119).
8. To be God's instrument to accomplish His purposes in the world (Isaiah 55:8-11).
9. To give hope to the nation Israel (Romans 11:25-27; Isaiah 60).
10. To announce judgment upon the world (Isaiah chapters 24-27).

11. To announce to Israel promises of blessing for obedience and punishment for disobedience (Leviticus 26).
12. To control very wicked people (1 Timothy 1:8-10).
13. To give examples and hope in our Christian living (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11).
14. To announce God's purpose in saving humanity: to have a society of redeemed people holy unto their God and zealous for good works (Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 1:9, 10).
15. To give humanity an orientation of God's plans for humans throughout eternity – a sense of identification and purpose in this life and the next. Simply put, the Bible was given to answer humanity's questions: where did we come from, why are we here, and where are we going after this?

Now that we have an understanding of the purpose of the Bible, we can turn to the basic structure of the Old and New Testament.

STRUCTURE OF THE BIBLE

We look first at the Old Testament (OT). This document is the story and history of redemption, the preparation of the world for the, "fullness of time" (Galatians 4:4), when Jesus Christ came to this earth. Its emphasis is on God's preparation for the Incarnation, which was God taking human form in the Person of Jesus Christ. This preparation was accomplished through God's divine dealings with Israel in which the climax was to be the coming of God manifest in the flesh (John 1:14-18). Jesus Christ is the central Person of the entire Bible.

Covenants

The most basic division in the Bible is the Old and New Testament. To understand the central distinction between these testaments, we must become acquainted with three fundamental concepts: covenant, unilateral and bilateral. For our purposes here, in the OT sense a covenant was a legally binding obligation with the particulars to be worked out by the participants.¹

One of the ways a covenant could be devised may be called a "bilateral" agreement. This obligation is where each party assumes mutual duties that are legally enforceable. Both parties grant to each other equal standing.

An illustration is that of buying a car. One person agrees to release a car into the ownership of a second person provided the second person will pay a certain amount of value (money, etc.) to the first party. If the buyer fails to pay what they agreed, then the contract is broken and the agreement becomes void and ends. Conditions are

¹ J.B. Payne, "Covenant (in the Old Testament)," *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Merrill C. Tenney, ed., 5 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), 1:1001.

committed to by both parties. If those conditions are not met, the contract is void. This is a “bilateral” contract, or covenant. “Bi” means two.

A common formula found in the Bible to demonstrate a bilateral contract is God saying, “If you will do such and such, then I will do such and such.”

A second way a covenant could be devised may be called a “unilateral” promise. “Uni” means one. Unilateral means only one party is legally bound to perform the obligations. This relationship normally came about when the parties are of unequal standing, and when an arrangement is imposed or guaranteed by a superior party such as a king with absolute rule. The conditions are only on the side of the superior party.

This arrangement is like one person promising to purchase a car, and then giving it to a second person at no cost to the recipient. The legal obligation to perform is on the first person. The only thing the second person needs to do is to accept the car and drive away.

A common formula found in the Bible to indicate a unilateral promise is God saying, “I will do such and such.” There are no conditions to be fulfilled by the one receiving. They only need to accept or reject the promise.

Now that we have reviewed the important features of covenants that relate to our present discussion, we turn back to the Bible. There are several important covenants mentioned. Since I am attempting to explain the basic reason why one covenant is called old and the other new, I will limit my discussion to three of these covenants: Abrahamic, Mosaic, and the New Covenant.

Abrahamic Covenant

God’s dealings with humanity through Israel is based on the most important covenant ever made between God and people, the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:17-18; 17:1-2). From this covenant, we are told, all of God’s redemptive dealings with humanity would flow, and that those dealings would come through the life and history of this one nation – Israel (John 4:22).

This covenant consisted of individual promises to Abraham, national promises to Israel, and universal blessings to the rest of humanity. It teaches that individual salvation would come by grace through faith based upon the coming of the Messiah who would be a Savior that would arrive through Israel and by whom all nations would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3; 18:1-8; Acts 3:13-15, 18, 21; 4:10-12; 13:44-48; Romans 1:16; 15:9-12; Romans chapter 4).

This covenant is permanent and eternal (Genesis 17:7). More importantly, this arrangement is unilateral: the promise and the legal obligation to provide and deliver are on the part of God only. Humanity can only receive. To give more specific details of the Abrahamic Covenant, we read it consisted of three groups of unconditional promises given by God to Abraham. These promises are still in effect today.

1. There was the promise of land for a nation (Genesis 12:1; 13:14-15, 17; 17:8). The nation, when it was later formed, was called Israel. This involved promises dealing with this earth.

2. There was the promise of redemption both for Israel and the rest of humanity (Genesis 12:3; 22:18; Galatians 3:7-9, 16). This promise deals with spiritual blessings (salvation) made possible through Christ, the Messiah. This salvation was to be obtained by grace through faith, “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘All the nations shall be blessed in you’” (Galatians 3:8).

3. There was the promise of multitudes of descendants, which would form a great nation (Genesis 12:2; 13:15-16; 17:2-6, etc.). This includes the physical descendants of Abraham through Israel, and those spiritual descendants – or those who receive Christ as Savior by faith (Romans 9:1-8; 11:1, 2; 28-31).

The Mosaic Covenant

The Mosaic Covenant was an agreement made between God and Israel, through God’s representative, Moses; thus, it is called the Mosaic Covenant. This includes the Ten Commandments and several hundred other laws (Exodus 20ff.). The Mosaic Covenant was instituted 430 years after the Abrahamic Covenant, but it did not nullify God’s promise and unilateral covenant with Abraham.

The Mosaic Covenant was a constitution of moral, social and civil laws written for the nation Israel. Its duration was until the Messiah, or Christ, came (Hebrews 7:12; Galatians 3:16, 19, 24, 25). It was also the first codified form of God’s will for humanity. It revealed God’s basic principles of holiness.

The Covenant was a standard of living for those already under the Abrahamic Covenant. It was to function as a restriction and correction to hold Israel within the boundaries of that which was good for them. The Mosaic Covenant is what is referred to as the Old Testament, or Covenant. It is contrasted with the New Covenant (Testament). It is written, “When He said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first (Mosaic Covenant) obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear” (Hebrews 8:13).

The Mosaic Covenant was bilateral, that is, certain legal obligations or conditions were required by both parties to keep the covenant intact. In other words, both God and Israel agreed to reciprocal actions. God promised to bless; Israel promised to obey. Israel, however, failed in keeping their obligations (Galatians 3:10, 11; Romans 9:30-32).

This agreement is recorded in Exodus. God said to Israel through His representative, Moses, “Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine... These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel... And all the people answered

together and said, 'All the Lord has spoken we will do!' And Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord" (Exodus 19:5-8).

The Mosaic Covenant was never given as a means of salvation, but as conditions for personal and national blessing, "So you shall keep His statutes and His commandments which I am giving you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may live long on the land which the Lord your God is giving you for all time" (Deuteronomy 4:40; cf. Deuteronomy 30:9ff.).

In fact, as a means of salvation, all humanity fails the demands of the Mosaic Law. If we are trying to be saved by keeping the Law of Moses, we are doomed forever. Why? Because if we break only one of the laws a tiny bit, the eternal penalty or curse of the law falls upon us, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the law, to perform them" (Galatians 3:10).

For example, one commandment says we should not steal (Exodus 20:15). If we ever steal anything even just once, that is enough to send us to hell. We must keep all the law all the time, if that is the way we are trying to get to heaven.

This discussion gives you the reason of why the Old Testament has its name. Next, let me give you an overview of this major division of the Bible. Then, I will take up the New Testament, and contrast it with the Old Testament.

Old Testament Divisions

Considering the names and arrangement of the 39 OT books, Christ referred to them as, "the scriptures" as did His followers (Matthew 21:42; Mark 14:49; John 5:39; Luke 24:32; Acts 18:24; Romans 15:4). Paul called them, "the sacred writings...the holy scriptures...oracles of God" (2 Timothy 3:15; Romans 1:2; 3:2).

Jesus also described the OT following the formal Hebrew arrangement as, "the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms" (Luke 24:44). The OT is summarized as, "the law and the prophets," or simply, "the law" (Matthew 5:17; 11:13; Acts 13:15; John 10:34; 12:34; 15:25; 1 Corinthians 14:21). In the Christian Bible, the OT books are the same as the Hebrew, but arranged in a different order.

A few details regarding the language of the Bible will be helpful. The OT was virtually all written in Hebrew. The exceptions are Aramaic in Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Daniel 2:4-7, 28; Jeremiah 10:11). The Hebrew language started with Abraham during the time he moved to Canaan (Modern Israel), from Ur, which is in modern Iraq. The language is a dialect of the Canaanite language, acquired by Abraham after he settled in that region.²

² Canaanite is a Semitic language, which is that grouping of ancient languages of west Asia and east Africa. The Canaanite language was also used by the Moabites, Phoenicians and probably the Philistines.

Hebrew started to fall out of common usage after 500 B.C. but continued to be used by Jewish scholars and was periodically revived during Jewish uprisings against Rome.³ The OT was translated into Greek (280-150 B.C.), and that translation is known as the Septuagint, or LXX.

According to history and archaeology, writing itself began at least 5000-6000 years ago, arising almost at once in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Indus Valley.⁴ Writing, however, existed probably in the days of Adam, and certainly before and at the flood (Genesis 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1). The OT itself was written between the years of about 1425-400 B.C.

The first writer was Moses, who wrote the first five books of the OT. The last writer was Malachi. One possible exception is Job. Some believe that book to have been written before Moses. The known number of OT writers is 31, and the geography was Israel, Egypt, and modern Iraq.

The history of the OT covers from creation (probably about 10,000 or 20,000 B.C., but undetermined) until about 400 B.C. The prophetic sections, however, tell of events to happen that are still future to us today. The history can be divided up into ten major periods. The following dates are all B.C., and I have also indicated where the history is generally found in the OT.

1. The beginnings: creation until @ 2,200; Genesis, chapters 1-11.
2. The patriarchs: @ 2,200-1,880; Genesis, chapters 12-36.
3. Time in Egypt: @ 1880-1441; Genesis 37-Exodus 15.
4. Time of the wilderness wandering after the Jewish exodus from Egypt: @1880-1441; Exodus 16-Deuteronomy 34.
5. Time of Israel's settlement in Palestine: @1401-1388; Joshua 1-24.
6. Time of the judges: @1389-1050; Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel 1-7.
7. Time of the united kingdom under Saul, David, and Solomon: @1050-930; 1 Samuel 8-1Kings11; 1 Chronicles 10-2 Chronicles 9.
8. Time of the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah: @931-587; 1Kings 12-2Kings 25; 2 Chronicles 10-36; also in the poetic and prophetic books of that period.
9. Time of Jewish captivity: @721-536; Daniel and Ezekiel.
10. Time of restoration from captivity back to Palestine: @536-400; Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

There is another way of looking at the OT. I have mentioned it is a collection of 39 individual books, and those books can be organized in a way that reflects their chief content.

³ Gleason Archer, "Hebrew Language," *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*, Charles F. Pfeiffer and Howard F. Vos, eds., 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 1:771.

⁴⁴ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 24.

LIBRARY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

		PENTATEUCH		
Genesis	Exodus	Numbers	Leviticus	Deuteronomy
		ISRAEL'S HISTORY		
Joshua	Judges	Ruth	1, 2, Samuel	1,2 Kings
1,2, Chronicles	Ezra	Nehemiah	Esther	
		BOOKS OF POETRY		
Job	Psalms	Proverbs	Ecclesiastes	Song of Solomon
		MAJOR PROPHETS		
Isaiah	Jeremiah	Lamentations	Ezekiel	Daniel
		MINOR PROPHETS		
Hosea	Joel	Amos	Obadiah	Jonah
Micah	Nahum	Habakkuk	Zephaniah	Haggai
Zechariah	Malachi			

New Testament Divisions

We now take a leap forward to the New Testament (NT). The Title indicates a contrast between the “New” and “Old” Testament. The OT was the Sacred Scriptures inherited from Judaism by the church. The actual term new testament (or new covenant) was first used by Jesus when He instituted the Lord’s Supper, “the new testament in my blood” (Luke 22:20); “This is My blood of the new testament” (Matthew 26:28).

The NT is referred to as the “new covenant” in sharp contrast with the first or old covenant (Hebrews 9:15; 2 Corinthians 3:14). This unilateral covenant is that of an arrangement legally and eternally established by God. This new covenant, grounded in the Abrahamic Covenant, was ratified by God (Genesis 15:17, 18; Galatians (3:17).

Further, the covenant cannot be altered. It is permanent. There are no obligations or conditions placed on humanity. Individuals, however, can only accept or reject the promise of God.

Regarding the salvation portion of the new covenant, the way of acceptance is by faith alone, “Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness...those who are of faith...are sons of Abraham...God would justify the Gentiles by faith...those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer” (Galatians 3:6-9).

The New Testament fulfils and replaces the Old Testament by its provision of a blood sacrifice sufficient to erase all sin (Hebrews 9:11-15). Another benefit is that it provides

an inner motivation for worship and service as opposed to the regulation by various laws of humanity's conduct (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 10:14-25).

The old Mosaic Covenant (Exodus 19:5-8) with the Law at its core was abolished at the perfect sacrifice of Christ who met all the demands of the Law. Christ perfectly obeyed the Law of Moses plus He paid the penalty for man's breaking the commands in the Old Covenant. Following the work of Christ on the cross, believers are swept under the New Covenant with Christ at its core (2 Corinthians 3:11, 13; Ephesians 2:15).

The Old Covenant could never save anyone from sin and guarantee them a place in Heaven. It was compiled of laws that no one could keep – it brought a curse upon humanity (Galatians 3:10-13).

Another contrast: under the OT the Mosaic Law was the standard for living. Under the New Covenant, Christ is the standard for our living, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29).

Believers in the OT were saved by faith, that is, believing God's promise to save them if they would simply trust Him for their salvation. Salvation was by believing God's promise to provide salvation as symbolized in the Passover lamb. The believed and trusted in the promises of God as best they could understand them.

Three other features of the New Covenant might be mentioned. First, it is grounded in the Abrahamic Covenant. In that sense it is not really "new." Second, to further emphasize, since it is rooted in the covenant with Abraham, the New Covenant is "unilateral." This means it is unconditional. There are no conditions or obligations placed on individuals that must be kept for our salvation. The only thing we can do is accept by faith the offer and promise in the New Covenant.

The terms of the New Covenant state that Christ has purchased our salvation on the cross by paying the penalty of sin on our behalf, and that all we need to do to receive the benefits of that provision is to accept it by faith. Salvation is a gift, offered solely out of the grace of God, and received by faith alone. God has used this method of salvation for all ages of humanity. The following verses document this truth of salvation by faith.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

The third feature of the New Covenant is that it still has special future application to the nation of Israel (Jeremiah 31:31-40; Romans 11:25-27; Acts 15:14-18, etc.).

The terms Old Testament and New Testament have been used since the second century to distinguish the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

New Testament facts and structure

General facts about the NT include the following. The time line covered is from the birth of Christ until the new heavens and earth. Of course, there are many references to past events. For example the role of Christ before creation (John 1:1). It was written between the years of @ A.D. 50 to @ A.D. 95.

There are 27 individual books authored by eight men: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, James, Peter, Jude – and the unknown author of the book of Hebrews. Actually, the literature contains separate and individual letters, autobiographical, historical documents, and some maintain the book of Revelation is of apocalyptic genre.

The books were written in Italy, modern Turkey, and Palestine The language of the NT was Greek, which was the common everyday language of that day throughout the Roman Empire. The collection can be organized into the following outline. The centerpiece is Jesus Christ: His Person, words and work.

- The presentation of Jesus Christ: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.
- The history of the primitive church: the book of Acts.
- The explanation of Christ's teachings by Paul: Romans – Hebrews.
- The explanation of Christ in the general letters: James – Jude.
- The Return of Christ: the book of Revelation.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

Now that we are familiar with the purpose and structure of the Bible, I turn to the unique relationship between the OT and NT.

To understand the unique relation between these two marvelous documents, you must first understand the place of Jesus Christ in the Bible. The OT is a testimony to Christ (Luke 24:27, 44; Matthew 1:1; John 1:45; 5:39, 46; Acts 10:43). It looked forward to Christ. As the Messiah, Christ is the central figure in the OT (Acts 3:13-15, 18, 21, 24-26; 4:10-12; Acts chapter 7).

The Messiah was to be a political savior and would rule Israel as an earthly (but supernatural) King. The Messiah was to come from David, based on the Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:16). Christ is the fulfillment of that covenant, and will assume that throne at His second coming (Acts 1:6; 15:14-18; Jeremiah 23:5, 6; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Luke 1:32, 33; Matthew 2:2, 5, 6; 25:7; 2 Samuel 7:12-16).

In addition, the Messiah was to be a suffering savior to save His people from their sin (Psalm 22:6; Isaiah 53; Matthew 1:21, 23; 17:11, 12; Mark 9:11-13; Acts 2:22-36; 3:18; John 1:29). Christ is revealed in the OT as the central figure in God's redemptive story. He was anticipated in prophecy (e.g. Isaiah 7:14; 9:6, 7; Chapter 53; Acts 3:18; Zechariah 11:12, 13; 13:6; Psalm 22; 16:9, 10).

Christ was foreshadowed in the Old Testament types and symbolized in the sacrificial system (see the book of Hebrews). As a special note, Christ was rejected as Israel's Messiah at His first coming.

The NT, in comparison, sets forth Christ as the fulfillment of all the OT pictures, predictions, and preparations for the coming Messiah (Matthew 1:18-23). Put another way: the OT anticipated Christ's coming as Messiah; the NT is the realization and explanation of Christ as Messiah.

Both Testaments are of equal inspiration and authority; however, the OT is written specifically to the Jew, yet Christians benefit from its contents. The NT, in contrast, is the document written specifically to Christians and the church. The same God wrote both Testaments, and both explain each other.

Thus, we end our first chapter and lesson on understanding the Bible. I have explained the Bible's purpose, structure, and the relationship between the Old and New Testament. In chapter two I will expound on the sequence of God's communication to humanity. In other words, how does it get from the mind of God to where you and I live? I will show you.

CHAPTER TWO:

SEQUENCE OF GOD'S COMMUNICATION TO HUMANITY

In order to understand how God communicates to us, I will expound on the nine step process by which the Word of God is given to humanity. The steps are selection, revelation, inspiration, transmission, translation, illumination, interpretation, application, and proclamation.

In this chapter I will also tackle the importance of proclaiming the Word of God. Some of the individual steps will be treated in more detail later in this book, but the focus is on the overall process of nine steps by which God' communicates to us.

THE NINE STEPS

Selection of authors

The first step in getting His will communicated to humanity is to select human writers. God carefully selected and prepared those who were to be the human instruments who would, under the leadership and supervision of the Holy Spirit, be the human authors of the Bible. They would receive and record the Word of God. You will be given more detail and explanation of this in later chapters.

Special revelation

This refers to God disclosing or revealing Himself to humanity with specific information within the flow of world history. The writer of Hebrews states, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2).

Special revelation means God has given humanity particular, objective, propositional, absolute information about Himself and relations to His creation. Humanity could not know this information in any other way except that God Himself should disclose that knowledge. Later I will discuss the different kinds of revelation: general and special.

Inspiration

This step refers to the process of God giving us special revelation in the Bible. It means that God governed, or superintended, the recording of revelation into the Bible. He used specially selected human authors. Without God overruling their unique personalities or styles, the writers wrote and recorded God's exact and complete thoughts to humanity. The resultant communication was without error in the words of the original autographs of the Old and New Testament.

Whereas revelation has to do with receiving the Word of God, inspiration deals with recording that Word without any error.

Transmission

Transmission of Scripture is the next step. This refers to God's supervision of the passage and preservation of the Bible down through the centuries. The original documents were worn out and copies were made to replace them. Soon many copies abounded. This process repeated itself over the centuries.

At present there are over 5,000 copies of early NT manuscripts in the Greek dating from about A.D. 125 to the invention of printing (A.D. 1438). Textual criticism is the science that determines by careful systematic analysis, evaluation and comparison of the available texts what the pure original text actually said. From this careful study, scholars have now assembled the entire NT in a handful of single volumes.

Scholars tell us that the Greek texts we have now are virtually the same as the original manuscripts, and certainly the correct original is included among the variations we now have.⁵ None of the variations among the multitude of available texts critically affect a point of duty or article of faith.

Geisler & Nix say that according to a Westcott and Hort estimation, the Greek text we use today is 98.33% pure. This is whether one uses the Textus Receptus, Majority Text, Nestle-Aland Text, or an eclectic text of the Greek New Testament.⁶ They also cite the great scholar of the Greek language, A.T. Robertson, as coming up with a text that is 99.9% pure.⁷

It is a truly amazing miracle that a virtually pure text can be constructed from so many hand written manuscripts! The closest comparable ancient book is Homer's *Iliad* of which there are 643 copies. The *Iliad* has only a 95% pure text; thus, according to the Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia, our Christian Bible has the most precisely preserved and accurately transmitted content of any book from the ancient world!⁸

Concerning the OT, the original copies were written on either leather or papyrus from about 1450-400 B.C. The Jews buried the old worn out texts so that until 1947 the oldest copy was dated A.D. 895. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we now have (excluding Esther) a copy of all the OT books dating back to about 200 B.C. A comparison between the two texts has demonstrated an amazing accuracy in the Masoretic text of A.D. 895.

Translation

The translation of the Bible involves putting the original language into various language of the world. The process is to express in a target language, while retaining the original sense, that which is preserved in the parent Greek and Hebrew text. Some noteworthy translations include the Hebrew into Greek in about 200 B.C. (called the Septuagint,

⁵ Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, revised edition (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986), p. 474. Every serious Bible student should have a copy of this resource book.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 474.

⁸ Norman Geisler, "Bible Manuscripts," *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*, Charles F. Pfeiffer and Howard F. Vos, eds., 2 vols. Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 1:257.

LXX), and the Latin Vulgate by Jerome (c. A.D. 383-405). The first Bible to be printed into a modern European language was the German Bible of A.D. 1466.

The first complete English translation was associated with John Wycliffe, and appeared about A.D. 1384.⁹ The English translation was brought to the South Pacific by the missionaries of the London Missionary Society in 1797. First to be translated into a South Pacific language was the Tahitian Bible in 1838.

The Hawaiian Bible was next in 1837-39. The NT was completed in Maori in 1837, Fijian in 1847, and Samoan in 1850. Thomas West and Thomas Adams completed the Tongan Bible in 1860. By 1985 the entire Bible had been translated into 293 languages.¹⁰ At least one book of the Bible has been translated into roughly 2,000 of the world's some 6,000 languages.

Illumination

This concept refers to the Holy Spirit making clear the meaning of the written revelation in the Bible. Sometimes this concept is confused with inspiration. By illumination, the Holy Spirit is not to give us new revelation or truth, or to give guidance in unknown matters, but rather to clarify the meaning (illuminate) of the truth God has already revealed in the Bible.¹¹ (See also John 16:12-15; 1 Corinthians 2:9-3:3).

Interpretation

This step refers to extracting and clarifying the true meaning of Scripture as expressed in the original language. The key concept is to use a plain, literal, straightforward method of interpretation. Let the interpretation be that which arises naturally out of the Bible.

One must be careful to take into consideration the historical and cultural context of any portion of the Bible. A careful analysis must be made of the grammar in the sentences and paragraphs. Special consideration is made for figurative language and special kinds of literature such as parables, poetry and prophecy. In Bible colleges and seminaries this science and art is called exegesis, hermeneutics and/or Bible study methods.

Application

Application means to make the Scripture relevant to our attitudes, behavior, feelings, relationships, belief systems and course of life. Biblical truth is not to remain just in our heads as another philosophy or historical data, but it is to permeate our entire lives, how we view the world, and how we grow and express our faith.

Proclamation

Now I come to the final stage of God's communication sequence to humanity: proclamation. Once we apply the text to our own lives and life situations, then we must

⁹ J.D. Douglas, ed., *New 20th-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), p. 80.

¹⁰ Douglas, p. 83.

¹¹ Bernard Ramm, *Protestant Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970), p. 18.

proclaim God's message on to others. Paul told us, "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). At this point of instruction by Paul, let's transition into a more detailed discussion of how to proclaim.

CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF BIBLE TEACHING & PREACHING

I start this section with the words of Jesus, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20a). Our Commander and Chief told us to go preach and teach His Word. So, how should we do that task? Here are some guidelines.

How to teach the Bible

The manner of how we communicate the Bible is important. We earnestly proclaim the Word of God with loving concern, compassion, enthusiasm, feeling, firmness and authority. We must take Bible teaching seriously, be prayerful, persuasive, consistent, and accurate.

Bible teaching and preaching should be life related, and filled with life application, illustrations and practical ways of applying Bible truth to how we live out our journey through this world. You start with Bible interpretation, and then advance to life application; from theology to practice.

It is well to remember we are teaching God's Word, not our own ideas or opinions; thus, our need for prayerful humility and sincerity as we carefully and correctly handle God's Word. We do not sternly "beat" the people with Bible truth, like beating a dog with a stick to get it to mind. It is better to feed, led, teach, and prayerfully persuade the listeners with great patience – and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We speak the truth, but in love – not meanness and pride. Yelling preachers who preach like they are angry and mad at the people are a contradiction to the Christian Faith. James said, "for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God" (James 1:20).

Of course, we must teach and preach with warm, personal conviction, and sincere passion – not in a dry-as-ashes, ho-hum, sleepy manner. In order to make the Bible real to the people, it must be real to the life of the teacher and preacher. We don't proclaim the Word of God out of reluctant obedience to our Master, but with genuine belief that the Bible really is the Word of God, and will make a difference in the lives of people. We serve with willing, eager, faithful obedience to our Master.

Now we can ask the rhetorical question, “Why should we carefully proclaim the Bible to the world”? Good question. Come with me, and we will look at 12 very important reasons.

12 REASONS TO PREACH/TEACH THE BIBLE

Stricter judgment

We are told there is a stricter judgment to the teacher/preacher; thus, God must consider the teaching of the Bible to be of vast importance, “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment” (James 3:1). This is a very solemn warning that we are to teach accurately what God has so plainly written in His Bible.

We dare not teach our own opinions or those of other people, but carefully stick to an honest, forthright presentation of the Bible. We must let God be God and not redefine the Bible or twist its teachings to fit the notions of modern, secular humanity. God will also call to account those cults and religions that reject historic Christianity and pervert Christian teachings to fit their own peculiar doctrines.

What do I mean? Today there are many hostile forces hostile against the Bible. These forces create their own world view, then judge the Bible through the lens of their world view. For example, those who promote homosexuality, abortions, cult beliefs, evolution, Marxism, and the radical feminist movement all have their way of viewing the world in which we live. Then, they bend the Bible to fit into their world view.

Through various pressures they then intimidate Christians to adapt and change what the Bible says about these issues (and others) to agree with their own self-constructed world view. Too many times the Christian surrenders, or is beguiled by those cultural forces. For example, for several years I have taught in an American state college. My subject matter includes a wide variety of psychology and sociology courses. I have yet to stumble across in any of the text books where the Bible is actually taken seriously.

Another example of the hostility against Christianity and the Bible was the confrontation in 1994 in the United Nations. The International Conference of Population and Development was held in Cairo, Egypt. The goal was to change the UN’s policy toward controlling the increasing population of the world.¹² Back then the popular hysteria was overpopulation of the world.

The key strategy to control population was to enhance the status of women. That sounds well on the surface. The catch in the plan; however, was to provide abortion on demand on a worldwide basis. The atrocity is that the population was to be controlled by killing millions of innocent, unborn babies.

¹² Eugene Linden, “Showdown in Cairo” *Time*, September 5, 1994, pp. 46, 47.

Of course, there are other vital issues that impact society as a result of the radical, Marxist feminist agenda. Such issues include the breakup of the traditional family structure, changing unique cultural patterns of living and survival, and the imposition of Western values on the rest of the world. Today, the struggle is over same sex marriages.

The crisis in the UN was of such proportions that the Roman Catholic Pope and the Muslim world (even the radical groups located in Iran!) joined hands to oppose the secular, humanist, radical feminist agenda! When two arch enemies join together to fend off those violent forces opposed to religion, the issue must be desperate!¹³ In fact, a deputy foreign minister from Tehran said the next world war would be fought between religion and materialism.¹⁴ Looking from the vantage point of 2008, and the wars in that region, he might be right.

To come back to the point, these illustrations highlight the need for Christian teachers to faithfully teach the Bible and not their own opinions. This does not mean that we can always understand everything in the Bible, or that godly, sincere men will always agree in every point. There are, however, many things that are very clear, and which godly, sincere Christians do agree. There are also centuries of fine scholarship on interpreting the Bible to which we can refer to help us understand the Bible.

Doers of the Word

The Bible tells us to be “doers of the Word; thus, you and I must be taught the Bible to know what to do, “But prove your selves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves” (James 1:22).

This means the Bible should be “life-related.” That is to say, its truths are to be presented to the hearer in a way that makes sense or relates to that person in their personal life. The Bible was given to govern how we treat our wives, husbands and families, and how we relate to our fellow workers and neighbors by the things we say, feel, think, and do. The Bible needs to guide our attitudes – and even govern and dictate church programs.

When the Bible says not to commit adultery, murder the unborn, steal, lie, for example, then we should not. When the Bible tells us to support our government, and be good, honest, productive citizens, then we should obey. When it tells us to care for the poor, widows, and orphans, then we should obey. Why? Because the Bible has the authority of God Almighty behind its words.

The Bible will vanish

The teaching of the Bible will die out if it is not passed on to the next generation. Paul said, “And the things that thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ “Al Azhar Joins the Vatican,” *The Economist*, August 27, 1994, pp. 34, 35.

A good example is that of those godly missionaries who brought the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Bible to the wonderful islands of the South Pacific. The Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Anglicans (and others) sacrificed greatly to establish a solid work for Christ – a work based on the Bible. People like John Thomas, John Williams and J.G. Paton, King George Tupou I, Pita Vi, Joel Bulu and many other missionaries, both islander and white, were great men of God who believed the Bible and preached Christ faithfully.

In recent years, however, liberal theology has eroded the great foundation work these gallant men and women built with their sweat, toil, money, faith, and in many cases, with their own blood. The result? The ranks of those great churches have dwindled in past decades while other groups have increased in the South Pacific. This trend is true even on a worldwide basis, according to a recent study commissioned by the Pacific Conference of Churches.¹⁵

Since the rise of liberal theology within the last 100 years or so, evangelical churches have grown while liberal churches have declined. Today in Europe and America there are 2.7 million people per year that are lost by the mainline Protestant churches. In contrast, in the past 50 years, the number of evangelical, Bible believing Christians has grown from 3% of the world's population to 10% of the world's population!¹⁶

There are those today who would say that now the theological schools in the South Pacific teach too much Bible and theology and must abandon the Bible even more by teaching a social gospel, a liberation theology with the focus on such things as economics, politics and social sciences.¹⁷ This is strange thinking since the decline of the church correlates with the decline of traditional biblical teaching.

Incredibly, today's evangelicals, who stand firmly with those mighty men and women who built the church in the Pacific, are held up as the enemy by some liberals! The truth is that evangelical theology flows from the Bible. It is firmly grounded in the historic creeds such as the Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed. It is reflected in those classic documents such as the Methodist Articles of Religion and 39 Articles of Faith of the Church of England.

Yet evangelical theology is accused of being biblically unsound, an obstacle to progress in the Pacific, oppressive with nothing to offer and actually harmful to the well being of society and those grand historic, Protestant, mainline churches.¹⁸ This attack is unwarranted and the analysis is wrong. Dead wrong. The truth is, there is good reason to believe the Bible and to take it at face value. Its truths are timeless and good for every culture at any time in history.

¹⁵ Manfred Ernst, *Winds of Change* (Suva: Pacific Conference of Churches, 1994), pp. vi, 3, 4.

¹⁶ "The Growth of the Gospel!" *Mission Frontiers*, January-February, 1994, Vol. 16, Num 1-2, p. 3.

¹⁷ Ernst, pp. 284, 288.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 283-288.

The need is urgent to preach and teach the Bible so as to leave a stable foundation in society for our children and grandchildren. It is the duty of each generation of Christians to faithfully defend and proclaim the Bible – and pass it on to the next generation.

The Bible and healthy living.

The Bible brings holy, good, healthy, successful living for individuals, marriages, families, kainga, church, and country. There is a vital connection between correct Bible doctrine and correct, healthy living (Titus 1:13-2:1; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Acts 20:32; 1 Peter 2:1, 2). The Bible deters corruption, which corrodes the institutions of culture.

We are told in Proverbs that, “Where there is no vision the people perish; but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Proverbs 29:18). Vision means prophetic revelation – in other words, the Bible.

Example of Paul

The example of Paul points out the importance of Bible teaching. During evangelization of Ephesus and Asia Minor, Paul relates he had taught, “publicly and from house to house,” and that he had declared the, “whole purpose of God” (Acts 19:10, 20).

Paul carefully and vigorously pursued a life of Bible teaching and preaching, and we are to follow his example. He believed God; so should we.

Needed to ward off heresy.

Sound, accurate Bible teaching is needed to defend the church from the certain infiltration or of heresy or false teaching. Again, Paul warns, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them” (Acts 20:28-30).

Paul instructed us to be mature in the Faith, “no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming” (Ephesians 4:14). The only way to ward off false teaching is to consistently teach and preach correct doctrine. And, be sure, false teaching about the nature, Word, and work of God has always been with us, and always will – until Christ comes again.

A unique source of information

The Bible is the only source of information from God that touches on the most important decisions we make in life. It is unique – one of a kind. It is the only source of information that tells us how to be saved and prepared for the next life. People, therefore, have a right and need to be informed because they will held responsible for their actions on this earth. Jesus emphatically insisted that only He was, “the way, and the truth, and life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me” (John 14:6). Only the Bible has the words of Jesus.

It is the privilege and duty of the Christian church to proclaim the truth of Jesus to all the world. Paul very forcefully declared in that classic missionary Scripture, “Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” (Romans 10:13-15a).

We may say, then, that since the Bible is the only record of the words of Jesus, it is imperative that we faithfully teach and preach the precious Word of God, the Bible, that people may know the way to God.

The natural inclination to drift

Unfortunately, we humans possess a natural tendency to drift away from an ardent devotion to the Bible, which is a major means of how we stay in contact with God. We get lost in our own worlds, and forget to give quality time to our families and spouses. Life keeps us busy just surviving at times. It is the same way in our spiritual life – we get complacent and indifferent. Not deliberately, but a gradual drift creeps into our life.

Consequently, there is the constant need for a constant reminder of the things of God from the Bible (cf. 1 Timothy 4:6-16) – just as there is a constant need to keep nurturing our relationships with our loved ones. This requires consistent, solid, careful, persuasive Bible teaching – both hearing it from our pastors, but also in our own personal devotional life.

The Bible and sanctification

The Bible is the most important means used by the Holy Spirit to sanctify the believer. That means God is conforming us to the image of Christ by the agency of the Holy Spirit working in our lives, and empowering us as we respond in obedience to the Word of God. God has also given Bible teachers to the church to teach and explain the Bible.

The Bible is the truth. Jesus said, “Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth” (John 17:17 – see also Ephesians 4:11; 13-15; 5:26; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 5:23, 24; 1 Peter 1:2; Philippians 1:6; 2:12, 13; 2 Thessalonians 2:13) The sum is this: trying to grow as a Christian or a church without clear, accurate, life related Bible teaching is like trying to build a wooden house without nails, boards or a plan.

Evangelism

The teaching, preaching, and communication of the Bible to the world is how non-believers are confronted with the gospel and the reality of God (John 16:8-11; 1 Corinthians 1:21; Romans 10:14-17). For effective evangelistic work, the Bible must occupy central place. Certainly, the evangelist proclaims Christ, but all we know for sure about Christ comes from the Bible.

God’s command

God has commanded us in His Great Commission that we are to be, “teaching them to observe all that I commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). This task involves long term,

comprehensive, systematic Bible teaching. If we love Him and are truly His disciples, then we will obey Him – not only in evangelism, missions, church building – but also in quality, serious Bible teaching and gospel literature ministries.

THE BIBLE AND SOCIETY

Reason number twelve involves the relationship between the Bible and secular society. Society is better off with solid Bible teaching, preaching and communication. I do not mean that the church should run the affairs of government and other social institutions. However, a society well informed and subscribing to the values and morals of the Bible will be a safer, more pleasant, prosperous, peaceful community.

The Bible promotes godliness, and certainly living as if there is no God is not a benefit to anyone. Bible values and standards promote family unity & welfare, sanctity of married life, honesty, peace, love, kindness, generosity, justice and fairness. On the negative, Bible standards stand against murder, stealing, sexual perversion, family breakup, greed, hatred, violence, and selfishness – all those dynamics that tear down people, families and society.

Through the ages and even today there are powerful forces that seek to destroy Christianity and a godly, healthy society. Each generation must deal with the assault inflicted against it. At the time of the original writing of this book (1994), the forces against the church and society came in many forms. For example, as explained before, even at the level of the United Nations, increasing pressure to make abortion on demand a worldwide reality, along with the destruction of local cultures and the traditional family.

These forces are still with us today (2008). For example, the whole definition of family is being rejected. Now it is same sex marriages demanding to be considered as a marriage and family. The left wing of the United States is almost blind in their hatred of anything biblical or Christian. The best example is the public intense hatred directed against the former vice-presidential candidate (2008), Sarah Palin, the governor of Alaska.

Homosexuality, the radical feminist movement, political correctness and evolution are four forces that tear away that which is good and godly. Even those who control the “scientific establishment” are aggressively bent against Christ and His Bible.

For example, an article in *Nature* magazine written by one British scientist, a J. Maddox, maintained that soon religion must be treated as anti-science and that creation science in particular needs to have a ferocious counter-attack.¹⁹ Ironically, Maddox claimed that main reason for the counter-attack is because there are so many who believe in creation who are also qualified scientists!

¹⁹ J. Maddox, “Defending Science Against Anti-Science”, *Nature*, March 17, 1994, Vol. 368, p. 185, cited by Carl Wieland, “Biblical Christianity? It’s the only game in town,” *Prayer News of Creation Science Foundation LTD*, August 1994, p. 1.

Indeed, Maddox's concern has ground for alarm, from his point of view. For example, in the United States alone a conservative estimate of scientists who believe in biblical creation is about 10,000 in number.²⁰ Scientists who believe in biblical creation are a fast growing minority worldwide.

For example, in Korea the Association of Creation Research had a membership of 1,000 in 1993. The majority had either a master's degree or Ph.D. in science with 100 full-ranking university professors. In one year's time in Moscow the Moscow Creation Science Fellowship increased from 10 to 120 members. One fine Christian, Professor A.E. Wilder-Smith, even has the rare distinction of holding three earned doctorates in the sciences.²¹

The best thing Christians can do to help society is to preach, teach, communicate, and live the Word of God with great clarity, passion, boldness, faithfulness and persuasion. The Bible is truth, the design and operation manual for the human race. We must defend and proclaim the Word of God, persuading people to adopt its values even if they reject Christ as personal Savior.

Not much can be accomplished by the church taking up revolution, economic or political power and force. Regardless of the political systems and cultures of people, the most beneficial value system is the ethical foundation of the Judeo-Christian ethic. Again, the key issue is the value system upon which the institution of a society rests. A culture's values, those beliefs we use to determine what is good and bad, right or wrong, is the central most important element of the survival of any culture.

Two great examples vividly illustrate the critical nature of the value system a society rests upon. First, we have the example of Russia. That society was a cruel, socialist, Marxist dictatorship that rejected God and grounded itself on atheism. That brutal system eventually collapsed, leaving in its wake the shed blood of millions of innocent people. After the breakup, the leaders of all East Europe clamored to have Christians come teach the values of the Judeo-Christian ethical system.

Second, there is the example of America, a free-enterprise democracy. Grounded on the foundational values of the Judeo-Christian ethical system, the nation flourished. It rose to great prosperity and power. It led the free world in keeping peace. In the last few decades, however, God and His values have been increasingly rejected. Christians have to one degree or another been persecuted and mocked.

²⁰ Carl Wieland, *Stones and Bones* (Australia: Creation Science Foundation Ltd, 1994), p. 3. Regarding this subject, you can consult these websites, <http://www.answersingenesis.org/>; <http://www.creationresearch.org/>; <http://www.icr.org/>; for intelligent design consult <http://www.discovery.org/>.

²¹ Wieland., pp., 3-4. For one small excellent book showing the fallacy of evolution see Philip Johnson, *Darwin On Trial* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1991). Johnson has taught law for over 20 years at the University of California at Berkeley. He is a leading legal scholar and expert in the area of logic. Many other scholarly books refuting evolution are available.

Secular, godless humanism has exalted itself to the thrones of power and influence. The result? America has descended to chilling levels of violence, immorality, family breakdown, and corruption of every kind. The descent of a post-Christian America is getting close to free-fall.

What was the key in these two vastly different societies? Regardless of the economic and political systems, the important issue was the values that formed the foundation of those respective societies of Russia and the United States.

A biblically well informed and taught laity, faithfully living and influencing others in society of the things of God will exert a might, positive influence on society. We then become the “salt of the earth,” a preserving factor in a corrupt world. The Judeo-Christian ethic is the greatest value system the world has ever known. Unfortunately, Christians have not always obeyed the ethic of Jesus, but that is not the fault of the ethic, but rather the failure of the people.

With this final comment, I close down this chapter. I have explored with you God’s communication process to humanity: selection, revelation, inspiration, transmission, translation, illumination, interpretation, application and proclamation. I also discussed the central importance of teaching and preaching the Bible. From here I turn your attention to various proofs that demonstrate that the Bible is God’s revelation.

CHAPTER THREE

PROOFS FOR BIBLE AS GOD'S REVELATION

The question arises, "How can we know for sure that the Bible is the Word of God?" Good question. In this chapter I will address the first four of 13 lines of proof that the Bible is the Word of God. They are the biblical claims, the nature of the Bible, the transforming power of the Bible, and the internal witness of the Bible.

Evangelical Christians believe that the Bible is the true and only written revelation from God to humanity. Set forth here are several reasons why the Christian believe the Bible is the written book of divine revelation. Some classify the evidence under two groups: internal and external evidence.

Internal means evidence within the Bible itself while external means evidence gathered from other sources outside the Bible. The divisions, however, are somewhat arbitrary; thus, for this study I will lump the 13 proofs all together.

Another issue I must address before you and I begin our section on proofs of the Bible. There are those who deny that the Bible is from God. They sometimes imply or state outright that those who literally believe the Bible are ignorant, uneducated people. Of course, the opposite implication is that if one is educated and bright, then they cannot possibly believe the Bible.

In order to counter this intimidation and false information, I have gone to some length to mention and give the qualifications of some experts who do believe the Bible literally. There is another accusation: some claim that those who believe the Bible are somehow dishonest deceivers who dupe ignorant people for selfish motives.

Others may hold the idea that Bible believers are somehow psychologically unsound, and out of fear and frustration they cling to the Bible to gain a blanket of security in a chaotic world. Lastly, some people don't believe the Bible simply because they don't want to, and to justify their position, they demean people who do.

So, to counter the doubts that the Bible is the Word of God, I will now start on the 13 proofs that should convince any objective, honest inquirer of the legitimacy of the Bible.

THE BIBLE CLAIMS

The Bible claims to be an accurate record of information from God. It maintains that it is a record with precise information, with no mistakes and that it will not deceive or misled humanity. The documents themselves are genuine and credible.²²

We have every good reason to carefully consider the claims of the Bible. In fact, we would be very foolish to discard the Bible's testimony about itself. Two key verses, of which I will discuss in detail later in chapter five, are 2 Timothy 3:14-17 and 2 Peter 2:20, 21. Let's now shift to more detail, and consider the claims of the OT writers.

Claims of OT writers

The OT prophets, Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel said their writings were the Word of God (Jeremiah 1:9; Isaiah 8:1, 5, 11), and even Moses said, "And the tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing engraved on the tablets" (Exodus 32:16).

According to Thiessen,²³ over 3,800 times in the OT phrases occur with a similar formula such as, "the word of Jehovah came to..." (Examples include Exodus 14:1, 15, 26; 16:4; 17:14; 24:4; 25:1; 34:27, 28; Leviticus 1:1; 4:1; 11:1; Numbers 4:1; 13:1; 33:2; Deuteronomy 32:48; 31:9, 22, 24; Isaiah 1:2; 7:3; 43:1; Jeremiah 11:1; Ezekiel 1:3; Hosea 1:1; Joel 1:1; 2 Samuel 7:4).

Christ referred to the OT as "the Scripture" as did His followers (Matthew 21:42; Mark 14:49; John 5:39; Luke 24:32; Acts 18:24; Romans 15:4). Paul called them, "the sacred writings...the holy scriptures...the oracles of God" (2 Timothy 3:15; Romans 1:2; 3:2). Jesus also described the OT, following the formal Hebrew arrangement, as, "the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms." He lumped them together as one and called them the "Scripture" (Luke 24:44, 45; cf. v. 27).

Incidentally, by identifying this grouping as "the Scripture" Jesus eliminated all other sources as being Scripture. The NT was written after Jesus spoke the words recorded in Luke 24:44, 45. In some places the OT is summarized as, "the law and the prophets," or simply, "the law" (Matthew 5:17; 11:13; Acts 13:15; John 10:34; 12:34; 15:25; 1 Corinthians 14:21).

Claims of NT writers

The point here is that the NT writers claim their writings to be the Word of God. Let me explain below by giving 11 examples.

²² F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963). See also Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*. E.M. Blaiklock, *Who Was Jesus?* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974). The late F.F. Bruce was one of the world's outstanding NT scholars. He was Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis in the University of Manchester. Geisler holds a Ph.D. from Loyola University and has taught at several leading evangelical seminaries. Nix holds a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. The late E.M. Blaiklock was Professor of Classics at the University of Auckland.

²³ Henry Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), p. 90. The late Thiessen held a Ph.D., and for many years was the chairman of the faculty at Wheaton College. He wrote a systematic theology and NT introduction.

The words of Jesus

1. I start by observing the words of Jesus who, before He left this earth, predicted and authenticated (i.e. made valid or proved genuine) forthcoming Scripture. This body became what we call the New Testament. In John 16:13, Christ said that when the Holy Spirit came, He would guide the disciples into all the truth which was a reference to the NT, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."

This new information was to include historical matter, "bring all things to your remembrance" (John 14:26). Second, the Holy Spirit would reveal doctrinal teachings or the interpretation of the historical facts, "teach you all things" (John 14:26; 16:14). Third He would reveal prophetic information, "show you things to come" (John 16:13).

A careful survey of the NT shows that these three categories comprise the content of the NT. The Gospels and Acts are predominantly history; Romans-Jude are basically doctrine; Revelation is prophecy. This is not to say that there is not overlap in these basic categories, but it simply points to the basic, dominant information in each division.

It is also significant to note that Jesus, at the end of His revelation (the New Testament), said nothing should be added or taken away from this revelation (Revelation 22:18-20). Thus, the NT was completed by about A.D. 96, and no further propositional revelation will be given until Christ returns.

Paul's words

2. As we consider the Apostle Paul, we see that He called scriptures the, "word of God...oracles of God...sacred writings" (Ephesians 6:17; Romans 3:2; 2 Timothy 3:15). Of his own writings, Paul said they were the commandments of God to be received as the word of God on which men's salvation depended (1 Corinthians 14:37; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 1:8). Paul said his revelation was superior to the OT revelation (Ephesians 3:5), and he told Timothy to proclaim Paul's teachings with all authority.

Paul connected his teachings and the gospel to his apostleship and the authority given to that office by Jesus. In other words, Paul maintained that his teachings and the gospel had the full authority of Jesus behind them. Paul also claimed that his teachings were received by direct revelation from Christ (1 Timothy 4:11; Titus 2:15; Galatians 1:1, 11, 12). He further stated that anyone not adhering to his teachings should not be associated with (2 Thessalonians 3:14).

I let Paul speak for himself, concerning where he obtained his information, "For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12).

Luke's words

3. Luke wrote the Gospel after his name and the sequence that we know as the Acts of the Apostles. Paul links a quotation from Deuteronomy 25:4 and Luke 10:7 together and calls them both Scripture; thus, Luke's writings are elevated to the status of Scripture (1 Timothy 5:18). Luke's writings also gain apostolic authority because of his close association with Paul. Paul and Luke were close companions and co-workers; thus, they had a constant flow of communication over the contents of the books.

As to Luke's accuracy of his writings, Luke states that the reason he wrote was that the reader (Theophilus), "might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught" (Luke 1:4).

John's words

4. John wrote that his words were the testimony and witness of God, "for the witness of God is this..." (1 John 5:9; cf. vv 9-11). John is also grouped with the prophets (Revelation 22:9, 18).

Peter's words

5. Peter wrote that the commandments of Christ came through the Apostles; thus, Christ's authority was in the Apostles, "you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles" (2 Peter 3:2).

Book of Hebrews

6. The writer of the book of Hebrews declares the apostolic message to be from God. He also places Hebrews on a par with the OT and other NT writings. The writer refers to both testaments as being "unalterable" (Hebrews 1:1, 2; 2:1-4). Finally, he considers that, "the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, or both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

It is of special note to observe the nature of the Bible as expressed by the writer of Hebrews, "For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable," (Hebrews 2:2). This reference is to the Mosaic Law (Psalm 68:17; Acts 7:53). In Judaism of later times it was held that angels actually delivered the Law. The important word to note is "unalterable," or the Greek word, "*Bebaios*".

This word refers to something that is reliable, sure and valid. It is valid in the sense of being actual, effective and forceful. Further, according to Kittel, the word is closely related to the commercial idea of a sale, as something that confirms a sale as being valid – a legal guarantee.²⁴

²⁴ Gerhard Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Translated and edited by Geoffrey W. Bromily, vol. I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76), p. 602. This multi-volume work is considered an authority on the Greek words of the New Testament.

We are told, then, that the Bible is reliable, sure, certain, firm – and is valid, a legally binding, guaranteed document from God to humanity. The One who guarantees is God Himself; therefore, to question the Bible is to question God.

Peter about Paul

7. Peter teaches that Paul's writings are Scripture, "also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom give him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:15b-16).

The NT circulation

8. The books of the NT were to be circulated, read in churches and collected; thus, they became the authoritative, foundational documents for the church (2 Peter 3:15, 16; Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27). They were accepted by the church as Holy Scripture.

Divine authority

10. Every NT book claims to be a product of Divine guidance, a claim for Divine authority.²⁵

Apostolic authority.

11. Considering the authority of James (the writer of the epistle) and Mark, we note the following: they wrote with Apostolic authority. James was a leader of the Apostles, though not one of the Twelve, who handed down apostolic decision as a leader of the church at Jerusalem (Acts 15:13, 19; 12:17; 21:18, 19; Galatians 2:9, 12; 1 Corinthians 15:5-7). Mark was the interpreter of Peter, thus having apostolic authority behind his Gospel.

Papias (A.D. 30-13-) is quoted by the church historian, Eusebius (A.D. c. 265. 339): "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ...Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them. For he was careful on one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them falsely."²⁶

We may conclude, then, that the Bible itself claims, through the witness of its human writers, to be the true Word of God, without error and was considered such by the early church fathers. We have plodded through the claims of the Bible, so we now turn to the nature of the Bible.

²⁵ Geisler & Nix, pp. 94-97.

²⁶ Cited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. I, 2nd series. 1890-95. Reprint (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 172, 173.

THE NATURE OF THE BIBLE

As I take up this section, let me focus our attention on the nature of the Bible, and how that indicates it is a supernatural book in three ways.

Authoritative

The Bible speaks with authority and gives evidence as coming from God in that the contents are about God, His nature, character and work. It tells of creation, explains the origin and end of evil, salvation, after life, the purposes and plan of God, and future events. The evil deeds of wicked men are told in an inoffensive manner, yet in such a way as to insure their condemnation.

Even the sins of the heroes of the Bible are spoken of in remarkable frankness, yet not in a way as to appeal to our sinful desires. Only God would talk about those kinds of matters with such authority. Further, if the Bible was a book written by the Jews only, they would have portrayed their heroes in a favorable light. They would have glossed over the bad in their Jewish heroes and exaggerated the bad in those enemies of the Jews. Yet the Bible is fair with all concerned.

Timeless

As was mentioned earlier, the truths of the Bible are timeless, and do not need to be changed to adapt to different times. For example, God's pattern for marriage and family, the rules governing the relationships of society, the condemnation of sexual perversion all remain as valid today as when the Bible was written.

It is true that some things in the Bible apply to the times and cultures of the day in which they were written. Careful, honest attention must be given to the historical, grammatical and cultural context of particular biblical texts to determine what is relative to that culture, and which principles are timeless, universal, and absolutely binding in all cultures and times of history.

As an example, the Ten Commandments contain principles that are universal, and not negotiable. They are not talking points or suggestions, but absolute guides to human and religious relationships. On the other hand, we are not required to sacrifice bulls every time we go to church.

Unified

The intertwined unity of all the material contained in the Bible is remarkable. Consider that the Bible is a collection of 66 different books written by more than 41 authors over a period of 1,600 years, using several languages, having hundreds of topics, in many different cultures and countries, and on three continents.

In spite of this wide diversity of sources and material, the context of the Bible is coherent, harmonious, complementary, consistent, and unified. The Bible is logical and accurate in its doctrinal system, moral values, program of God, theme, life and world view. It is precise in information regarding matters of history, geography and culture.

To illustrate the unity of the Bible, one can see there is one problem, sin, with one solution, the Savior. Evil is the most perplexing problem the world faces. How do you explain the constant warfare, poverty, plunder, rape – the list goes on? Trying to explain the reason and origin of evil leaves one baffled. However, the Bible does give a logical, consistent explanation of the source and eventual cure for evil.

There is a steady, consistent progression and unfolding of God's plan in history, climaxing in the grand revelation of Jesus Christ.

In contrast, other religious books are fragmentary collections of different material loosely put together – with no beginning, middle, end, story or theme, plus contain factual error. For example, the Old Testament scholar, Gleason L. Archer, documents several historical mistakes in the central books of major religions, including the Book of Mormon.²⁷ I don't mean to pick on the Book of Mormon out of any vindictive motivation. But, there is no religious book that rises to the level of the Bible.

According to the famous cult expert, the late Walter Martin, the Book of Mormon has scientific and archeological evidence against it, it has been correct many times, contains contradictions and errors and plagiarizes the King James Version of the Bible.²⁸ There is no literature in all history that resembles the astounding character and nature of the Bible. This remarkable unity clearly points to the fact that there is but one Author of the Bible, and that Author is God.

THE BIBLE'S TRANSFORMING POWER

The transforming power of the Bible is evidence of supernatural origin. Many who have lived wicked, sordid lives have been saved through the Bible and then lived godly, productive lives. For example, the notorious sea captain and slave trader, John Newton, live a life of violence, immorality, corruption and failure, yet was converted to Christ and became a minister of the gospel. He wrote the famous hymn, Amazing Grace.

The Apostle Paul was a murderer and savage opponent of Christians; yet, he was converted and died a martyrs death for the cause of Christ (e.g. Galatians 1:13, 14; Philippians 3:4-7; see Hebrews 4:12; 1 Peter 2:2; Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:15-17).

To this, I would add my own personal experience with the Bible. Before my conversion my life was a shambles. I was addicted to alcohol and led a very sinful life. I was a part time bartender, construction worker, logger, construction worker, rodeo rider, and lived

²⁷ Gleason L. Archer, *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), pp. 498-504. Archer is a well qualified authority, having degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary, Suffolk Law School and a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He has a distinguished teaching career at Fuller Seminary and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

²⁸ Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cult*, revised ed. (Minnesota: Bethany House Publishers, 1985), pp. 180-189. The late Dr. Martin founded Christian Research Institute which is not the largest cult watching organization in the world. It is now headed by Hank Hanegraaff.

a very wild life. This is in no way a bad reflection on construction workers, loggers and cowboys; I only wish to point out my background.

I had managed to scrape through high school, but higher studies held no interest for me. I hated Christians and mocked them without mercy. I held the church and Bible in contempt. I viewed the Bible as containing a hopeless jumble of incoherent contradictions, myths, and irrelevant teachings. Frankly, I could not understand it, and did not believe it worth my time to try.

Eventually, through a faithful pastor, I received Christ as my personal savior. Suddenly, overnight, my life changed through the impact of the Bible ministered to me by the Holy Spirit. I lost my addiction for alcohol. I quit the bar scene – not because I had to, but because they no longer held any interest to me. My marriage and family stabilized.

Suddenly, I loved Christians and went to church every Sunday – again, because I wanted to, not because someone forced me. I fell in love with the Bible. I found out in my personal experience that the Bible was true and very relevant to my life. The contradictions went away. Even today, after over 45 years as a Christian, the Bible still warms my heart, brings courage to my soul, hope for the future – and brings tears to my eyes, because I love it. It told me how to be saved, have my sins forgiven, how to have eternal life, peace with God and myself.

The Bible brought a change in direction to my life. After my conversion, I would read the Bible sometimes all weekend, and several hours per day. I read other books about the Bible. The desire to advance my education began to emerge in my heart. I started college, eventually graduating with a bachelor's degree (with honors), two master's degrees, and two earned doctor's degrees.

I have pastored two churches, taught in college and seminary, and written books about the Bible. For almost more than 45 years my life has been consumed with, revels and delights in that which I once hated and held in contempt – the Bible. I have made mistakes and sinned after becoming a Christian. God has permitted me to encounter some very dark moments and humiliating failures in my life. But, always the Holy Spirit through the encouragement, instruction and comfort of the Bible has delivered me and made me a better person in the end.

What made the difference? Without question, it was the Holy Spirit impacting my life through the Word of God and life's circumstances. God has promised that hard times would sometimes fall upon His children to refine our character and faith (1 Peter 1:6, 7). He also promised to discipline His children, but for the purpose of making us stronger (Hebrews 12:5-11). The great part is that He will never desert nor forsake us, and nothing can separate us from His love (Hebrews 13:5; Romans 8:31-39).

THE INTERNAL WITNES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The internal witness of the Holy Spirit confirms the Bible. This witness, or awareness, confirms to the believer the certainty that the Bible is the Word of God. The Holy Spirit

working through and with the Bible gives us the quiet, inward assurance that the evidence and truths of the Bible are certain (1 Corinthians 2:4-11; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6; 3:1-11; 1 John 1:10; 2:14; 5:20; Colossians 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:15, 16; John 8:47).²⁹

Jesus explained the witness this way in a figure of speech. “But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice...I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me” – underlines mine (John 10:3, 4, 14).

The “voice” of Jesus equals the words of the Bible. The true believer is able to recognize that the Bible is the voice of Jesus. Paul explained the witness this way, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16). The vehicle the Holy Spirit uses to bring that precious assurance to our hearts is the Bible. He impresses that truth home in our mind and hearts by making the Bible real.

Let me illustrate this experience. Recently I was talking with one of my graduate students who has been a Christian for many years, but who had no formal Bible or theology training. He had been well educated in western secular universities – and even held a master’s degree in law. When discussing the nature, authority, inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, he related to me that since he became a Christian years before he intuitively “knew” all these matters about the Bible were true. After formal training in theology, however, he could then confirm objectively what he instinctively knew to be true about the Bible. This was the Holy Spirit “witnessing” to his spirit that the Bible was the “voice” of Christ.

From this chapter, we have examined four proofs that the Bible is God’s revelation to humanity. Those four proofs were: the biblical claims, the nature of the Bible, the transforming power of the Bible, and the internal witness of the Bible. From here we jump the proof of fulfilled prophecy.

²⁹ R.C. Sproul, “The Internal Testimony of the Holy Spirit,” *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984,) pp. 337-354. Sproul holds a doctorate from the Free University of Amsterdam and an honorary doctorate from Geneva College.

CHAPTER FOUR PROOFS FOR THE BIBLE (continued)

FULFILLED PROPHECY PROVES THE BIBLE IS TRUE

Prophecy is a miracle

Predictive prophecy is a supernatural miracle of knowledge and power. When we find evidence of historical events being predicted and fulfilled, then there is clear evidence of the supernatural character of the prophecies. Only God can predict the future and make certain the event comes to pass. The question is whether or not the Bible contains such occurrences. The answer is yes.

According to scholars, 27% of the Bible deals with predictive prophecy with over 1,800 predictions recorded.³⁰ Concerning predictions given up to the present day, no unconditional prophecies have gone unfulfilled. Hundreds of predictions have been fulfilled with some given hundreds of years in advance. Some predictions include the destruction of Edom (Obadiah chapter one), the curse on Babylon (Isaiah chapter 13), the devastation of Tyre and Nineveh (Ezekiel chapter 26; Nahum chapters 1-3), and the return of Israel to Palestine after their exile (Isaiah 11:11).³¹

I think it is fair to conclude that since the Bible accurately records predictions and their future fulfillment, then it must be of God. The Bible is of supernatural character. God predicted through His prophets.

To develop more the record of fulfilled prophecy, consider the book of Daniel. It was completed about 530 B.C. by Daniel who was living in Babylon. The book contains amazing detailed predictions concerning the unfolding of world powers in history whose time was yet future to Daniel's writing. The predictions of the breakup of Alexander's empire (Daniel 11), for example, are accurate in minute details.

Liberal theology and the supernatural

This brings us to a problem that must be addressed. There are many Christian scholars who do not believe in prophecy, miracles or the supernatural intervention in the affairs of humanity. Relating this problem to the book of Daniel, we discover that because of the clarity and accuracy of his many predictions and their fulfillment, these liberal scholars insist the book was written in Jerusalem about 166 B.C.³²

Another example is the radical scholar from Australia, Barbara Thiering, who maintains that the Essenes wrote Daniel in about 166 B.C. in order to revise their chronology of

³⁰ J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1973), p. 681. Payne, who holds a Doctor of Theology degree, is an evangelical scholar who has taught at prestigious evangelical schools such as Wheaton College and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He has contributed to many scholarly works.

³¹ For a detailed analysis of 12 specific prophecies see Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Arrowhead Springs: Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1972), pp. 277-335.

³² For example, W.W. Sloan, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957), pp. 307-309.

Jewish history.³³ Others say someone wrote Daniel to encourage the Jews against their adversities.

The fundamental reason these types of scholars maintain this position is that they do not believe in miracles or predictive history – in other words, that the super-natural occurs in history. They automatically dismiss the possibility from consideration from the start of research. They assume miracles are impossible; therefore, since prophecies and their fulfillment are miracles, then they are impossible. Note well: they rest their case on mere assumptions or presuppositions, not the fair understanding of the facts of history.

The profoundly influential Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) is a key figure in modern liberal theology and philosophy. He was so bold as to say, “Man’s knowledge and mastery of the world have advanced to such an extent through science and technology that it is no longer possible for anyone seriously to hold the New Testament view of the world.”³⁴ Bultmann’s assessment, I believe, is wrong. Why? It is not based on evidence, but rests upon the shaky assumptions of those who do not want to believe in God in the first place.

The main flaw of this type of thinking is that it is based on the unproven and mistaken assumptions of a secular philosophy known as Naturalism.³⁵ Consequently, liberal theologians reject miracles outright, explain them away, or simply ignore them.³⁶ Liberal scholars believe the accounts of special Divine appearances to men and intervention on man’s behalf are simply instructive myths.³⁷

I need to make a qualification. When I use the word, liberal, I am lumping several theologies under that label for convenience. There have been many different theologies through the centuries that vary in particulars, but have one thing in common: the rejection of the Bible as the plain, propositional, revelation of absolute truth accurately conveyed straight from the mind of God. Some names include Neo-orthodox, Liberation Theology, Process Theology, Theology of Hope, and Open Theology. Probably the most recent trend of philosophy that calls into question the Bible is Post-modern

³³ Barbara Thiering, *Jesus the Man* (London: Corgi Books, 1993), p. 224.

³⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, “New Testament and Mythology,” *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, ed. Hans Werner Bartsch, trans. Reginald H. Fuller (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1961, reprint ed.), p. 4. See also John B. Cobb Jr. and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), pp. 8, 53, 60, 110; Schubert M. Ogden, *On Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), p. 145.

³⁵ See Johnson, *Darwin on Trial*; Arthur C. Danto, “Naturalism,” *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Paul Edwards, ed., 8 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. & The Free Press. S.v., 1964), 5:448-450; Harry J. Fuller and Oswald Tippo, *College Botany* (New York: Henry Holt, 1954), p. 25.

³⁶ See Wesley S. Ariarajah, *The Bible and People of Other Faiths* (New York: Orbis Books, 1985); Randolph C. Ross, *Common Sense Christianity* (New York: Occam Publishers, 1989), p. 41; Schubert M. Ogden, *On Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986,) p. 145; Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. II (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 6, 29.

³⁷ Richard N. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, second edition (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), pp. 148, 149. See also Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 115-118).

thought. The modern theological expression is found in the emergent church. Basically, at its heart is the idea that absolute truth cannot be known; consequently, the Bible does not contain propositional, absolute truth.

Here is another qualification. I have insisted that liberal theologians rely on assumptions. Well, evangelical Christians rely on a few assumptions as well – but we do have better facts on our side. Here is what I mean. If we use miracles and fulfilled prophecy as a proof for the Bible, then we must assume that God exists. This we do by faith.

Does God exist?

There are basically two ways Christians have used in dealing with the problem of “proving” God’s existence. First, we just assume God exists. That leaves Christians on the same footing as the atheist who just assumes God does not exist. Both positions rest upon a commitment of faith. The Christian, however, has much more objective, solid evidence to demonstrate God’s existence that the atheist has to disprove His existence. Paul put it this way, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen” (Romans 1:20). Indeed, the atheist, or agnostic, must take a giant “leap of faith” to believe God does not exist. And, the atheist is quick to confess they cannot prove God does not exist.³⁸

Second, in dealing with the problem of whether or not God exists, Christians have used various rational proofs and evidence to show that it is very reasonable to believe in God’s existence. Those arguments are powerful and persuasive. The lines of argumentation usually center on various philosophical and rational positions, debates over evolution vs. creation, archaeological and historical evidence.

I believe, along with the Apostle Paul, that in the final analysis, everyone knows that God exists whether they want to admit or not. He said, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is know about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them” (Romans 1:18, 19).

I guess that King David was the most blunt when He recorded, “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’” (Psalm 14:1a).

The Historical Critical Method

Now I must move into another area of concern that needs some special attention. It further explains why some Christians do not believe the Bible. Influenced by the anti-supernatural assumptions of secular scholars, scientists, and philosophers, liberal theologians use the method of Bible study called the Historical Critical Method (HCM).

These scholars maintain that the HCM by definition eliminates God or the supernatural as a factor that causes, influences, or interferes with history. Richard Soulen, for

³⁸ See Bertrand Russell, *The Atheist Viewpoint*, reprint ed. (New York: Arno Press & the New York Times, 1972), p. 5.

example, categorically states that the HCM, “by definition rules out the Divine as a causative factor in history.”³⁹ In sharp contrast, the Bible asserts just the opposite. Soulen is Professor of New Testament at the School of Theology, Virginia Union University and holds his Ph.D. from Boston University.

Now I can place on the other side of the issue another world class scholar who disagrees with those of the HCM school. The Professor’s name is Dr. Eta Linnemann. She states that the basic principle used in the HCM is that:

“Research is conducted *ut si Deus non daretur* (‘as if there were no God’). That means the reality of God is excluded from consideration from the start, even if the researcher acknowledges that God could bear witness of himself in his word. The standard by which all is assessed is not God’s Word but scientific principle. Statements in Scripture regarding place, time, sequences of events, and persons are accepted only insofar as they fit in with established assumptions and theories. Scientific principle has come to have the status of an idol.

“The concept Holy Scripture is relativized so that the Bible is nothing more than a religious writing like all other religious writings. Since other religions have their holy scriptures, one cannot assume that the Bible is somehow unique and superior to them. This is why it gets treated like any other book.”⁴⁰

Dr. Linnemann is considered a brilliant scholar in liberal theology and the HCM, studying under Rudolf Bultmann, Friedrich Gogarten, Gerhard Ebeling and Ernst Fuchs. She taught the HCM many years in German universities, including Philipps University, Marburg, West Germany. Now retired, she was inducted into the world’s most prestigious professional society for New Testament research, the Society for New Testament Studies.

Linnemann, however, received Christ as Savior, left her liberal roots, rejected as false the HCM (as well as liberal theology) and embraced Evangelical theology. She has

³⁹ Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, p. 88. From an evangelical evaluation of this issue of the supernatural and history, see Josh McDowell, *More Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (Arrow Head Springs: Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1975); Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976); Carl F.H. Henry, *Christian Personal Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957); Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6 vols., 1976-83); Harold O.J. Brown, *The Protest of a Troubled Protestant* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969), pp. 172, 186; John Warwick Montgomery, *Where is History Going* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1969). McDowell has a M.Div. from Talbot Theological Seminary and has collected a huge array of evidence for the evangelical cause. Henry holds the Th.D. from Northern Baptist Seminary and the Ph.D. from Boston University. Both Geisler and Henry have written major works and taught in leading evangelical seminaries. Brown holds his Ph.D. from Harvard. Montgomery holds eight earned degrees, including the Ph.D. In Philosophy from the University of Chicago and Th.D. from the University of Strasbourg.

⁴⁰ Eta Linnemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible: Methodology or Ideology*, trans. Robert W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 83, 84.

been an outspoken advocate. She taught off and on in Indonesia. Her statement is that all the teaching and writing she did before she received Christ are mere rubbish.⁴¹

Here is a subtle technique used by liberal scholars. Some liberal theologians will use words that suggest they believe God works in history, but they do not mean in the sense described in the Bible. In the final analysis, they mean God works through some form of evolutionary or pantheistic mechanism. I offered the quotes above to demonstrate exactly what they do believe.

Now I can bring our thoughts back to Daniel – a very key book dealing with prophecy. Since the reality of God working through prophetic history is excluded from the start, something the liberal assumes; therefore, Daniel could not have made the predictions because they were fulfilled after his life. In other words, the prophecies were made after their fulfillment by some other writer.

Fortunately, for the evangelical, the evidence is overwhelming that Daniel was completed about 530 B.C., and contains a great amount of prophetic material along with precise and accurate fulfillment.⁴² God does work in history. He makes and controls history according to His plan. He can plan and predict events and make them come true in the future. God can and does perform miracles. God can and does perform miracles.

From the examples⁴³ listed below, one can see that clear details predicted hundreds of years in advance came true with exact, pinpoint precision. Bible prophecy is not vague and rambling; Bible prophecy is true. The modern, liberal theologian, no matter how well meaning they may be, is simply wrong in their assumptions and conclusions. Now let me take you on an astonishing journey in the world of prophetic utterances.

Daniel's prophecy of 70 weeks

The journey deals with the little book of Daniel – the cornerstone of Bible prophecy. Perhaps the most amazing prophecy in the Bible is Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks (Daniel 9:24-27). As you recall, Daniel was a young Jewish nobleman who was taken

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 20.

⁴² Archer, pp. 377-403. Other scholarly evangelical texts supporting Daniel are Leon Wood, *A Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1973); John Walvoord, *Daniel The Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971); John C. Whitcomb, *Daniel* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985); R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1969); Edward J Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1964); Wood holds the Ph.D. degree from Michigan State University; Walvoord holds the Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary; Whitcomb holds the Th.D. from Grace Seminary. Whitcomb has written extensive scholarly works on the issues of Daniel. Harrison has a Ph.D. from the University of London and was for many years professor of Old Testament at Wycliffe College, University of Toronto. Young received his Ph.D. from Dropsie College and taught Old Testament for 32 years at Westminster Seminary. All hold evangelical views.

⁴³ For a more detailed listing see McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*; Henry Thiessen, *Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology*; Payne, *Encyclopedia of Bible Prophecy*. For interpretations of Bible prophecy see Paul Lee Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy* (Rockville: Assurance Publishers, 1974); J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958). With the exception of McDowell all the men listed hold earned doctorates.

captive to Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar overran Jerusalem in 605 B.C. This bright, godly youth grew into a powerful government leader under several administrations. He wrote this book from Babylon in about 537 B.C.

Daniel, in the prophecy, was told by an angel the future history of Jerusalem, Israel, the date of Messiah's coming and crucifixion. He records the future destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Follow with me step by step as we unravel Daniel's prophecy. The first step is to place the prophecy before us. Daniel wrote of what an angel told Daniel of future events.

“So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined” (Daniel 9:25, 26).

There are several views regarding the interpretation of this prophecy, which are concisely summarized by Feinberg.⁴⁴ The details of the analysis are beyond the scope of this work, and are impossible to summarize simply and shortly. The lengthy calculations and analysis I will shortly introduce have been done by others.⁴⁵ By taking, however, the most literal interpretation of this passage and other biblical data, scholars have arrived at the most remarkable conclusions. I summarize them for you below. I proceed.

First, the time of Messiah's coming and Jerusalem's A.D. 70 destruction is calculated by starting with the date of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem (Daniel 9:25). Prior to Daniel's prophecy, Jerusalem had been destroyed when Judah was taken into captivity to Babylon in 586 B.C. The decree to rebuild was given by Artaxerxes Longimanus on March 14, 445 B.C. (Nehemiah 2:1, 5-9). Some scholars date the decree at 444 B.C.

Second, according to the context, the “week” (Daniel 9:25-27) refers to a week of years, or seven years. How do we know this? Well, the term “week” refers to a cluster involving seven of something with the context determining to what the something is being referred.

In this case, the context indicates that Daniel had years in mind, “in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as

⁴⁴ Paul d. Feinberg, “An Exegetical and Theological Study of Daniel 9:24-27,” in John Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg, eds., *Traditions and Testament: Essays in Honour of Charles Lee Feinberg* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), pp. 189-220. Feinberg holds a Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary and the Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

⁴⁵ Sir Robert Anderson, *The Coming Prince* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1895); Alva J. McCain, *Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1940). For others see the bibliography and notes of John Whitcomb, *Daniel* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985); John F. Walvoord, *Daniel the Key to Prophetic Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971).

the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years” (Daniel 9:2). Daniel wrote there would be 69 weeks (of years) involved before the Messiah would be “cut off,” indicating a violent death.

Third, multiplying the 69 weeks of years by seven the answer comes to 483 years. Now we have to decide how many days are in these years of which the angel was speaking. We need to make a decision, because different calendars have different numbers of days in the year. It makes sense to use the Bible for our calculations.

There is something in the Bible called the “prophetic year” that consists of 360 days. Examples can be found in Genesis 7:11, 24; 8:24; Daniel 7:24, 25; 12:7; Revelation 11:2, 3; 12:6, 14; 13:5. Let us use this definition. Remember that we are trying to discover what is in the mind of God and the angel who talked to Daniel – not some invention by a culture in history. Now when we multiply 69 by 483 we get 173,880 days. Things begin to get exciting from this point.

Fourth, we can add the days to the starting date, making allowances for leap year. Get ready for a mind boggling surprise. What is the date we end up with? When we stop counting the days we arrive at the date of April 6, A.D., 32, or March 30, A.D. 33. This date depends on which starting date one uses: 445 B.C. or 444 B.C. Both, or either, of these dates could fall on Palm Sunday, the very day Christ rode into Jerusalem to offer Himself as Messiah! At least the date falls within the boundaries of the possible dates of Christ’s crucifixion! Amazing!

One week later, after the conclusion of the 69 weeks, He was crucified, or “cut off” as Daniel stated. Incredible as it is, scholars tell us that Christ’s crucifixion occurred at sometime between A.D. 29 and A.D. 34! The exact date is unknown.

Daniel stated that the city and sanctuary would be destroyed after the Messiah was cut off. On that fateful Palm Sunday, He offered Himself as Messiah (Luke 19:38-44). He wept over Jerusalem. Christ was aware of His coming rejection and death, and predicted the dreadful destruction of that city, “For the days shall come upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank before you, and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another because you did not recognize the time of your visitation (Luke 19:43, 44).

Before the week was out, the crowds were calling, “crucify Him” (John 19:14, 15). They did. He was cut off. Just a few years later in A.D. 70 Jerusalem and the temple was destroyed by Titus and the Roman armies. Jesus, we then conclude, linked Himself to Daniel’s prophecy. Jesus was the Messiah who was cut off, and He further affirms Daniel’s prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

This greatest time prophecy in the Bible, given some 500 years in advance of its fulfillment, validates beyond question the literal predictive element in prophecy. One, at least in my mind, is forced to adopt the literal method of Bible interpretation in the areas

of history, miracles, direct supernatural intervention in the world – and any future prophecies.

Old Testament predictions of Christ.

To offer more evidence of fulfilled prophecy, I will catalogue several regarding the events surrounding the first Advent of Christ. Over 300 OT prophecies deal with this profound and remarkable event of history.⁴⁶ Below is a partial listing of 44 prophecies.

Event Prediction	OT Location	Fulfillment
The seed of the woman	Genesis 3:15	Galatians 4:4; Revelation 12:5
Messiah of human generation	Genesis 12:3; 18:18; 49:10; Isaiah 11:1	John 1:45; Acts 3:25; 13:23; Galatians 3:8
Time of His advent	Daniel 9:24, 25	John 1:41; 4:25, 26
Born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:3	Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:26-35
Descendant of Shem	Genesis 9:27	Luke 3:36
Descendant of Abraham	Genesis 12:3; 18:18	Matthew 1:1, 2; Luke 3:34; Acts 3:25.
Descendant of Isaac	Genesis 17:19; 21:12	Matthew 1:2, 2; Luke 3:34; Acts 3:25
Descendant of Isaac	Genesis 17:19; 21:12	Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34; Romans 9:7
Descendant of Jacob	Genesis 28:14; Numbers 24:17	Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34
Of the tribe of Judah	Genesis 49:10; Micah 5:2	Matthew 1:2; 2:6; Revelation 5:5
Of the house of David	Isaiah 9:7; Jeremiah 23:5	Matthew 1:1, 6; Luke 3:31; John 7:42
Birthplace	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1-6; Luke 2:4; John 7:42
Son of God	Psalms 2:6, 7	Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5
Massacre of innocents	Jeremiah 31:15	Matthew 2:17, 18
Flight into Egypt	Hosea 11:1	Matthew 2:15
Announcement of ministry	Isaiah 40:3	Matthew 3:1-3
Ministry in Galilee	Isaiah 9:1, 2	Matthew 4:15, 16
Christ a prophet	Deuteronomy 18:15	John 1:45; 6:14; Acts 3:22; 7:37
Priest like Melchizedek	Psalms 110:4	Hebrews 5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21
Purification of temple	Psalms 69:9	John 2:17
Rejected by Jews, Gentiles	Psalms 2:1	John 6:66; Acts 4:25, 26
Spiritual graces	Psalms 45:7; Isaiah 1:2	Luke 4:18
Entry into Jerusalem	Isaiah 62:11; Zechariah 9:9	Matthew 21:1-10; John 12:14-16

⁴⁶ See McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, pp. 147ff.

Betrayal by a friend	Psalm 41:9	Matthew 26:15; Mark 14:10, 21
Betrayal 30 silver pieces	Zechariah 11:12, 13	Matthew 26:15; Mark 14:10, 21
	HIS ATONEMENT	
Silence against accusation	Psalm 38:13; Isaiah 53:7	Matthew 26:63; 27:12-14
Condemned	Isaiah 53:8	John 19:14-16
His innocence	Isaiah 53:9	1 Peter 2:22; John 18:38
Vicarious suffering	Isaiah 53:4-6, 12; Daniel 9:26	Matthew 8:17; Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Hebrews 9:28
Death with criminals	Isaiah 53:9-12	Matthew 27:38; Luke 23:40-43
Pierced hands and feet	Psalm 22:16; Zechariah 12:10	John 20:27
Insults, mocking	Psalm 109:25; 22:6, 7	Matthew 27:39; Mark 15:29
Offer gall, vinegar	Psalm 69:21	Matthew 27:34, 48; John 19:29
Lots cast for clothing	Psalm 22:18	Mark 15:24; John 19:24
Cry on the cross	Psalm 22:1	Matthew 27:46
Not a bone broken	Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20	John 19:36
His nakedness	Psalm 22:17, 18	Luke 23:34, 35
His thirst	Psalm 22:15; 69:21	John 9:28
Side pierced	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34, 37
His sacrifice	Isaiah 53:5-11	John 19:18, 33
Burial with the rich	Psalm 16:9; Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
No corruption	Psalm 16:10	Acts 13:35-37
Three days in grave	Jonah 1:17	Matthew 12:40; 16:21; 1 Corinthians 15:4
His resurrection	Psalm 16:10	Acts 2:31; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Matthew 28:6
Ascension to Heaven	Psalm 68:18; 110:1	Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9; Ephesians 4:8-10; Hebrews 1:3

Bible prophecy is true

Someone may object and say these prophecies happened by chance. It may be true that perhaps one or two vague predictions and fulfillments could happen by chance. It is not, however, reasonable to believe that hundreds of precise, detailed predictions and fulfillments could come true by chance. The probability of only a handful coming true would be maybe one in a trillion, but in the case of the Bible, the probability of just the predictions mentioned above coming true by chance is virtually non-existent.⁴⁷

It would be like a mulberry tree getting hit by lightning and turning into tapa cloth! Another example: it would be like a typewriter factory exploding and the pieces falling together to produce a brand new computer. Or maybe like turning a rat loose in a room with a typewriter and it typing out a Tongan dictionary! Impossible!

⁴⁷ See McDowell, Evidence that Demands a Verdict, p. 331.

The sum of the matter is this: multitudes of Bible prophecies were given in clear, minute detail and they did actually come true with absolute precision. Only God could control the events of history to ensure the fulfillment of those predictions; thus, one is forced to accept the fact that the Bible is from God. Frankly, there is no other honest explanation of the facts.

Finally, by using miracles and fulfilled prophecy as a proof for the Bible, we follow the same method as the Apostles. Paul wrote, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried and He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” – underlines mine (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; cf. Romans 1:1, 2; 1 Peter 1:10-12; Acts 2:24-31; Matthew 1:22, 23).

But there is more evidence that indicates that the Bible is the Word of God. I present that in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROOFS FOR THE BIBLE (Continued)

In this chapter I continue to offer various proofs that the Bible is the Word of God. Specifically, I bring focus on the historical accuracy of the Bible, the reliability of the documents, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF THE BIBLE.

The accuracy of a particular document cannot prove divine inspiration, but it can lend credibility and demonstrate genuineness and integrity regarding that document. Accuracy can also counter those who charge that a document is historically inaccurate. Archeology is one field of science which has bearing on the Bible. The Bible was written in a historical, geographical and cultural context, and that is the context to which archeology relates.

Though the spade of the archeologist cannot “prove” the accuracy of Bible doctrine, or that it is from God, it certainly can confirm the Bible’s accuracy in matters of history, culture and geography.

We must interject another issue at this point. Those who do not believe in the Bible consistently seek to find evidence to prove that the Bible is inaccurate. They cast doubt on the Bible and hold archeology as the standard of truth. In other words, they judge the truth of the Bible in light of archeology. The manner of measurement should be the other way around. The Bible should be used to determine the validity of archeology.

There is good reason to judge the findings of archeology in the light of the Bible’s historical, cultural and geographical record. The Bible is a genuine, accurate, ancient document that can throw a great deal of light on the very incomplete findings of archeology.

We must keep in mind that the conventional secular view of history is not built on an unshakable foundation.⁴⁸ History is always written and is interpreted with a bias. The people who left the evidence were victorious generals, politicians, kings and religious leaders who wanted to leave their legacy in a good light. Like someone said: “It is the winning army who gets to write the history books.” Indeed, if Hitler had won WWII, we can be sure the history books would be different.

Archeology confirms the Bible

But now we must return to the question: does archeology confirm the biblical record? In brief, the answer is yes. There is a great deal of evidence regarding the Bible and

⁴⁸ For a scholarly discussion see John Pilkey, *Origin of the Nations* (San Diego: Masters Book Publishers, 1984); Immanuel Velikovsky, *Ages in Chaos* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1952).

archeology. For example, Dr. Charles Pfeiffer, a former Associate Professor of Ancient Literature at Central Michigan University (USA), edited an encyclopedic volume in which there are over 600 pages devoted to biblical archaeology which document the Bible's accuracy.⁴⁹

The evaluation of the world famous W.F. Albright is important. He claimed archaeology confirms the basic historicity of the Old Testament.⁵⁰ Nelson Gleuck (1900-1971) states categorically that not a single archaeological find has controverted any part of the Bible, and that many finds have, in fact, confirmed it either generally or in precise detail data recorded in the Bible.⁵¹

Feinberg also summarizes the powerful contributions of archeology to the Bible.⁵² The late legendary Emeritus Professor of Classics from the University of Auckland, E.M. Blaiklock, insists that archeology confirms the Bible in a thousand ways, underscoring the basic genuineness of the biblical record, enlightens the meaning of the text and words and establishes the integrity of the Bible text.⁵³ Blaiklock should know. He was an internationally recognized expert on the classics.

Sir William Ramsay (AD. 1851-1939) is considered as one of the greatest archeologists and classical scholars who ever lived. He started as a skeptic on the historical accuracy of the book of Acts. After many years of research he came to a very different conclusion. Ramsey came to view Luke as "among the historians of the first rank. The first and the essential quality of the great historian is truth. What he says must be trustworthy."⁵⁴

Regarding Acts as trustworthy, Ramsey concluded, "that Acts was written by a great historian, a writer who set himself to record the facts as they occurred, a strong partisan indeed, but raised above partiality by his perfect confidence that he had only to describe

⁴⁹ Charles F. Pfeiffer, ed., *The Biblical World: Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966).

⁵⁰ William F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1953), p. 176.

⁵¹ Nelson Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert: A History of the Negev* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Cudahy, 1959), p. 31. See also Howard F. Vos, "Archaeology," *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*. Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos, and John Rea, eds. 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 1:125. Glueck holds the Ph.D. and was a major Jewish scholar and biblical archeologist. Vos holds the Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary, the Ph.D. from Northwestern University and is a prominent evangelical scholar and writer. Rea, one of the editors of this evangelical encyclopedia holds the Ph.D. Of the 223 contributors to this evangelical Bible encyclopedia, 175 hold at least one earned doctorate.

⁵² Charles Lee Feinberg, "The Value of Archaeological Studies for Biblical Research," in John Feinberg and Paul O. Feinberg, eds., *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honour of Charles Lee Feinberg* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), pp 265-291. Feinberg holds a Ph.D. from John Hopkins University and a Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary. He taught many years at Talbot Seminary in California.

⁵³ Edward M. Blaiklock, 'Archeology,' *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of The Bible*. Merrill C. Tenney, ed., 5 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974), 1:282, 283, 284. The editor of this evangelical encyclopedia holds a Ph.D. from Harvard.

⁵⁴ Sir William Ramsey, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962), p. 4. Ramsey was the first professor of classical art and archeology at Oxford, then professor of humanity at Aberdeen. He engaged in extensive archeological work in Turkey.

the facts as they occurred, in order to make the truth of Christianity and the honor of Paul apparent.”⁵⁵

Ramsey came to consider Acts as “an authority for the topography, antiquities, and society of Asia Minor. It was gradually borne in upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvelous truth...I gradually came to find it a useful ally in some obscure and difficult investigations.”⁵⁶

For example, Luke mentions in Acts 32 countries, 54 cities and nine islands - and there is not one error by Dr. Luke. He himself said, regarding his Gospel, that he wrote it to Theophilus, “so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught” (Luke 1:4).

Some alleged problems

Next, let me consider with you the problem that the skeptics are plagued with. In many cases they seem driven to disprove the Bible, yet end up embarrassed when new, hard evidence turns up to prove the critic wrong. Two examples will illustrate my point.⁵⁷

For many years it was accepted dogma within liberal circles that writing was unknown in Palestine at the time of Moses, dating in the 1400’s B.C. The conclusion was that Moses then could not have written the first five books of the Bible attributed to him. In contrast to their opinions, however, archeological work later unearthed evidence that indicates reading and writing, using alphabetic writing, was practiced in Palestine even by the slave classes before 1500 B.C.⁵⁸

Further, Moses came from Egypt and received a university education in that land (Acts 7:22). Even in Ur, where Abraham (the forefather of Moses) came from, there was a large, flourishing civilization at 2000 B.C. In fact, the earliest discovered law code dates back to 2050 B.C. and came from Sumer, the same region as Ur. Since the code was fully developed, which would take many years, it can be safely said that writing of one kind or another goes back probably centuries before 2050 B.C.

Another example. The Bible mentions a people known as the Hittites (Genesis 15:19-21; Joshua 3:10; Numbers 13:29; 1 Kings 11:1; 2 Chronicles 1:17; 2 Kings 7:6-7). For many years, however, there was no record of these people from sources outside the Bible. The biblical references to the Hittites were condemned by the critics as mere fiction. As the story turns out, archeology later discovered the Hittites to be a major civilization. The Bible was right after all.

I think it is safe to conclude from this very brief citing of some of the many expert

⁵⁵ Ramsey, p. 14.

⁵⁶ Ramsey, p. 8.

⁵⁷ See Archer, pp. 165-176.

⁵⁸ See Archer, pp. 165-168.

scholars, that the Bible is accurate as to history, culture and geography. This fact is borne out from applying the normal tests of historical research and the findings of archeology.

Some lessons

There are several lessons we can also learn. First, it is very unwise to assume the Bible to be wrong as to touching historical and cultural matters. Second, if there are some areas in which there is a tension between archeology and the biblical record, then we must reserve judgment until further evidence appears - or, simply and rightly give the Bible the benefit of the doubt.

Third, the critics of the Bible cannot, or at least have not, marshaled the evidence to prove the Bible to be inaccurate. In no case has archeological findings disproven the Bible as accurate history.⁵⁹ Fourth, time and time again, archeology has confirmed the Bible as accurate history.

Finally, we may say that though the Old Testament was written in a pre-scientific time, as we now know it, it has proved entirely accurate in matters where it touches on the technical issues of hard science. For example:

1. The earth is suspended in space (Job 26:7).
2. The air has weight and pressure (Job 28:25).
3. There are many more stars than we can see (Genesis 15:5; 22:17).
4. The hydrologic cycle exists (Ecclesiastes 1:7).
5. There are ocean thermal vents, which were discovered in the 1960's (Job 38:16).
6. The earth rotates (Job 38:12-15).
7. That dinosaurs existed: e.g. behemoth, leviathan (Job 40,41).⁶⁰

RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS.

The Bible under attack

So far I have established that the Bible is accurate history. We will shortly be proceeding to the testimony of Jesus Christ and the issues of miracles. Before I move on, however, I must further establish that our evidence is accurate and trustworthy. For example, the testimony of Christ is primarily recorded in the Gospels.

There are, however, those who say that Jesus did not actually say the words in the Gospels. They maintain the Gospels merely contain words attributed to Him by later

⁵⁹ See Archer, p. 166.

⁶⁰ These examples were brought to my attention by my colleague, Don DeYoung. DeYoung, a scientist, holds a Ph.D. in nuclear physics from Iowa State University (USA) and is chairman of Physical Science at Grace College (USA). He holds a M.Div. from Grace Seminary. He is a creationist who believes in the literal Genesis record of creation.

editors of the New Testament. The New Testament is a collection of myth and legend, they say. They maintain the miracles recorded in the New Testament are merely made up stories, and not true historical facts.

For example, Bultmann states: “the New Testament is essentially mythical in character...The miracles of the New Testament have ceased to be miraculous...the New Testament presents the event of Jesus Christ in mythical terms...A historical fact which involves a resurrection from the dead is utterly inconceivable!”⁶¹ Of course, Bultmann is wrong, but nonetheless this is what he believed, taught, and he articulated what is common place, in one form or another, today in liberal theology.

For another example, the popular, at least with the media, Jesus seminar is held regularly in America and is made up of 74 liberal scholars. They meet to decide how many words of the New Testament really belong to Jesus. They have concluded that 82% of the words of Jesus recorded in the New Testament are not authentic.⁶² This is another example of viewing the Bible through the eyes of the world. It is as Jesus said to His disciples, “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you” (John 15:18).

It is in the face of this attack on the Bible that I must further establish our evidence as sound. To do this I take up two tasks: first I must demonstrate that the New Testament documents are reliable. Second, I must demonstrate that the witnesses of Jesus and His miracles are credible and have integrity. Limited by the confines of space, I will only give a summary of some of the arguments for the reliability of the documents and integrity of the witnesses.

Evidence for NT reliability

Starting with the reliability of the New Testament documents, scholars can say there is more documentation for those documents than for any other ancient book. The New Testament is authentic and is what it claims to be. It is genuine. The documents are found reliable if we use the normal rules for evidence in the court of law,⁶³ and historical investigation.⁶⁴

1. First, there are more surviving NT manuscripts than for any other book of ancient origin. About 5,300 copies or fragments exist that were copied between the second century and A.D. 1500. Homer’s Iliad, by contrast, has only 643 copies.

2. Second, the NT has the oldest manuscripts of any other book. The closer manuscripts are to the original the better quality they will be, because less corruption has crept in. Complete books of the NT exist dating to about 150 or so years from their writing. The oldest remaining fragment dates to about A.D. 117- 138 and contains John

⁶¹ Bultmann, pp. 1, 5, 34, 39.

⁶² “Jesus Christ, Plain and Simple,” *Time*, January 10, 1994, pp. 36, 37.

⁶³ Norman Geisler, *Miracles and Modern Thought* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), PP. 145.

⁶⁴ McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* pp. 43ff.

18:31-33, 37-38.⁶⁵ Most surviving ancient manuscripts of other works are dated about 1,000 years after the original document. The exception is the Odyssey which has a roughly 500 year span.

3. Third, the New Testament exhibits the most accuracy in copying in comparison to other ancient books. The New Testament is more than 98% pure, and the remaining 2% of the original text is contained within those 5,300 manuscripts. The closest comparison, the Iliad has only a 95% pure text.

4. Fourth, the witnesses or writers were credible men and eye-witnesses to what they saw and wrote. F.M. Blaiklock held the chair of Classics at the University of Auckland for twenty-one years. He taught Latin, Greek and ancient and biblical history for over 40 years and was internationally known for his writing and scholarship in the fields of religion and classics. He had this to say regarding the reliability of the New Testament documents.

“The New Testament does not and cannot contain identifiable mythology. The three small Greek books which open the New Testament must be accepted, examined and assessed as history... Whatever his choice of incident whatever from time to time the reason and motive for the selection, John was consciously writing history in the face of the tensions of the time, seeking to communicate the truth of events significant in his life and doctrine.

“The whole narrative stands the most crucial test - close examination of detail...We add, therefore, the fourth New Testament narrative to the other three and list them all as documents of history. Jesus of Nazareth was a figure of history, and we can know Him as such only as we study the accounts of those who knew Him, and set out in the grip of a tremendous conviction, to make Him known to the world in which they lived.”⁶⁶

According to a general rule in historical research, historical documents are to be presumed correct until proven to be in error. The claims of the Bible, then, should be taken as correct unless proven otherwise.

5. Fifth, there is what some call the “ancient document rule.” The rule varies from country to country. In New Zealand, the rule is that if a document is 20 year old and produced from the custody of who would naturally be expected to be the custodian, then it is presumed to be genuine.⁶⁷

The New Testament documents have been kept in custody by the church, and used by Christians everywhere. The science of textual criticism demonstrates that it is an

⁶⁵ See Norman Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, revised ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986).

⁶⁶ Blaiklock pp. 62, 68, 78. See also F.F. Bruce. *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992).

⁶⁷ J.A.B. O’Keefe and W.L. Farrands, *Introduction to New Zealand Law* (Wellington: Butterworths, 1980), p. 70.

ancient document whose transmission can be traced back to the original. The New Testament therefore, should be presumed to be genuine and authentic.

6. Sixth, we have the early dating of the New Testament. What is meant is that the NT is dated to the actual lifetime when the eyewitness to Christ wrote the documents. The most reputable of scholars attest to this fact. For example, W.F. Albright places the dates at A.D. 50-75, and Nelson Glueck not later than A.D. 80.⁶⁸

Even the liberal of the “God is dead” days, John Robinson, who wrote *Honest to God* came around to being honest with the evidence, according to Geisler, and admits the New Testament was written between A.D. 40-65.⁶⁹ For further discussion, you may consult the footnotes for evangelical books on the issue.⁷⁰

Consider the impact of this admission. The basic N.T. documents were then written starting about seven years after the actual fact, and then distributed among other eye-witnesses. If they were in error, other eye-witnesses would have objected. Those others, however, did not object, but accepted them as truth.

7. Seventh, we have the fact of the historical accuracy that has already been demonstrated.

8. Eighth, allusions to or quotes from the New Testament books appear in the works of other early writers. The Apostolic Fathers had a close acquaintance with the NT books. They lived and wrote during the time period of A.D. 90-160.⁷¹

Examples are the epistles of Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, the Shepherd of Hermas, fragments of Papias and the *Didache*. The *Didache* was written between A.D. 75-125. Clement wrote an epistle to Corinth about A.D. 96. Barnabas wrote about A.D. 100, although some date his epistle as early as A.D. 70-79.⁷²

Evidence of the NT documents may also be found in the early works of the opponents of Christianity such as the Gnostic school of Valentinus who taught in Rome about A.D. 140. Another example is the famous heretic, Marcion, who was excommunicated from

⁶⁸ Norman Geisler, *Miracles and Modern Thought*, p. 145.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁷⁰ For a discussion of the dating of the New Testament documents, see Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction*, revised ed. (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970); Everett F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament*, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971). The late Guthrie taught at London Bible College and held the Ph.D. from the University of London. Harrison held the Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary and the Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. He taught at Dallas Theological Seminary and was a founding faculty member at Fuller Seminary. These men's works are impeccable, and of the highest scholarly quality.

⁷¹ F.F. Bruce, p. 18.

⁷² J.B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, reprint ed. from 1891 ed. by Macmillan and Company, London (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 135.

the church about A.D. 144. He even made up his own canon of sacred writings which included ten epistles written by Paul that Marcion edited.⁷³

This evidence indicates three things.

1. First, the NT documents existed in the first century.
2. Second, the early church within the first century considered the NT documents to be Sacred Scripture.
3. Third, the enemies of the Bible acknowledged that Christians considered the NT documents to be Sacred Scripture, and even those enemies themselves considered the documents to be sacred to various degrees!

The sum of the matter is this: we could not have better evidence for the reliability, authenticity and genuineness of the New Testament from the application of normal rules of law and history. Regarding the evidences of law, the great Simon Greenleaf who wrote the book on evidences came to Christ by applying the tests for evidence accepted in the field of law.⁷⁴ Greenleaf (1783-1853) was long associated with Harvard Law School, and wrote a classic of American jurisprudence, *Treatise on the Law of Evidence*. After his examination of the evidence regarding the Bible, and his conversion, he wrote a book defending the Faith.⁷⁵

Eyewitnesses were credible

Next we take into consideration the credibility of the eye-witnesses themselves. I claim at the onset, they were credible. We can test them in light of the great central event of Christianity, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Were it not for His Resurrection, the New Testament would never have been written. I will say much more about His Resurrection later, but for now let me establish the credibility of those who formed Christianity and wrote those original documents.

1. First, the witnesses do not contradict each other. It is admitted that there are differences in accounts, but those are merely variations, not contradictions. In fact, the various accounts are complimentary. The writers were convinced that what they wrote was from God. Further, the difference in testimony would be expected from several different eye-witnesses. It demonstrates there was no collusion by the witnesses. The witnesses were independent.
2. Second, the number of witnesses was adequate. There were over 500 eye-witnesses to Christ's several post Resurrection appearances during 40 days before His Ascension. He appeared at least 11 times performing many feats. That many people could not have been influenced by drugs or delusion. More detail later.

⁷³ W. Ward Gasque, "Marcion," *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1974), p. 629.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

⁷⁵ Simon Greenleaf, *The Testimony of the Evangelists*. reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984).

3. Third, the witnesses were of sound character. This is determined by their writings, reputations and places of leadership. They were never proven to be frauds. A fraud would not have died for what he knew to be a lie. Their lives, however, backed up their claims, even to the point of martyrdom.

4. Fourth, their testimony was not prejudiced. That is, they had no motive to lie, and in fact were predisposed to disbelieve the Resurrection. They had every reason not to believe.

5. Fifth, the witnesses were not perjurers. They were honest men. Their several complementary accounts indicate there was neither collusion nor contradiction in their stories. Of the New Testament writers, their testimony was never refuted and was accepted by other eye-witnesses. No one ever demonstrated them to be liars. Over 3000 were converted at the first Christian sermon as a result of the influence of these men (Acts 2:41).

Consider the skeptical Thomas who fell at His feet and worshipped (John 20:28). He did not want to believe, yet was forced to by the evidence. The writers were credible men, sincere, honest and full of integrity. There was no reason for them to lie, nor can any proof be given that they did.

We may conclude from this brief summary that with a fair assessment of the evidence, the New Testament is authentic and reliable and the eye-witnesses who wrote it were credible, honest men. The Bible is true.

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

I have now demonstrated the authenticity of the documentary evidence, and can move on to consider the deeds and statements of Jesus Christ. I offer His testimony as proof that the Bible is inspired by God. In the several items listed below, you will discover that He considered the Bible to be inspired from God, and that He also confirmed the reality of the supernatural, miraculous occurrences recorded in the Old Testament. Let's look.

1. Christ set His approval on the Old Testament as true and from God: "And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures...Now He said to them, 'These are My words, which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.' Then He opened their minds to understand the Scripture" (Luke 24:27, 44, 45).

A common Jewish division of the whole Old Testament had three categories: Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms. Jesus called this grouping the Scripture. Another issue of vital importance is that in making this designation, Jesus rejected all other writings of His day.

2. The New Testament is the teaching of Jesus Christ, and He gave His authentication to this document (John 16:13, 14; 14:26; Luke 24:47-48; Mark 13:31; Acts 1:8; Revelation 22:18-20). In these verses He said that after He left this world, the Holy Spirit would guide the disciples into all the truth (the NT). The Apostles recorded that revelation. Finally, at the end of the book of Revelation He said revelation was finished (Revelation 22:18, 20).

3. Jesus said that the Bible cannot be broken and that it was accurate down to the letters of the very words, “to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)” (John 10:35). Again, “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law” (Matthew 5:18).

4. He considered as truthful and accurate the story of creation as given in Genesis. For example, in answer to some Pharisees who questioned Him about divorce, Jesus confirmed the creation of Adam & Eve as recorded in Genesis, even quoting from the point on divorce (Matthew 19:4,5; cf. Genesis 1:27; 2:24). Though Adam & Eve are not specifically named, they are assumed by the context.

“And He answered and said, ‘Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, “For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh” (Matthew 19:4,5).

5. Jesus confirmed the fact that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament (Matthew 19:7, 8; cf. 8:4; Mark 12:26; Luke 16:29, 31; 24:2, 44; John 5:46, 47; 7:19, 47). Matthew records the following: “And Jesus said to him, ‘See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest, and present the offering that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them” (Matthew 8:4).

In answering the Pharisees over the issue of divorce, Jesus continued, “They said to Him, ‘Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate and divorce her?’ He said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way” (Matthew 19:7, 8).

6. Jesus verified as accurate, literal history the miracle of Jonah being swallowed by a big fish and living to tell about it, “for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall stand up with this generation at the judgment, and shall condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here” (Matthew 12:40-41).

7. Jesus assumed as historically accurate and literal the account written by Moses concerning the miracle of the burning bush that was not consumed by fire, “But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken” (Mark 12:26, 27).

His point of proof for the resurrection rests on the premise that the occasion with Moses was literal history, an event happening just as it was recorded in the Old Testament.

You can also observe that Jesus confirms as truthful that this experience was actually God directly interacting with Moses in dear, spoken language. In other words, the experience was not a myth or folk tale with Moses simply recording his subjective religious experience (i.e. an “encounter” with God) that he merely perceived in his imagination. Incidentally, these words of Jesus again confirm the authorship of the Pentateuch by Moses.

Jesus claimed that there was a literal Moses, a literal burning bush that was not consumed by the fire. God literally spoke to Moses in literal, plain language and Moses literally wrote down what God said without any mistakes. This fact was literally confirmed by Jesus as a truthful, accurate, literal history.

8. Jesus considered as actual history the miracle of Moses raising up the bronze serpent in the wilderness by which those who had been bitten by the poisonous snakes could look by faith and be saved, “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up” (John3:14).

9. Jesus said, in His high priestly prayer, that the Old Testament was truth: “Thy Word is truth” (John 17:17).

10. Jesus taught as factual history the reality of Noah, the ark and the Genesis flood, “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:37- 39).

11. Jesus considered as true history the person and work of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. Miracles were connected with their ministry, and in particular miracles were associated with Elijah and the widow of Sidon to which Jesus refers. Also mentioned in the text is the miracle of Naaman being healed of leprosy:

“But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a peat famine came over all the land; and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syria,” (Luke 4:25-27).

12. Jesus believed and taught the great historic doctrines of the Christian Faith which are recorded in the New Testament. For example, heaven (Luke 12:33), hell (Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 11:23; 23:33), eternal life or damnation (Matthew 25:46), Satan (Matthew 12:23), miracles (Matthew 11:21), the resurrection from the dead (Mark 12:18, 26, 27; John 5:28, 29).

In summary, we can see that Jesus believed in the Old Testament as literal, authentic, accurate history, miracles as literal historical events and that God is indeed a causative agent in history. He believed that the supernatural directly works in nature and history. He also confirmed the coming of the New Testament. To doubt the literal truthfulness and claims of the Bible, and that it is from God, is to doubt the word of Jesus Christ. It is to say that Christ is a liar.

CHAPTER SIX

PROOFS FOR THE BIBLE (Continued)

In this chapter I will disclose to you much more evidence that the Bible is what it says it is: the true Word of God. Six lines of thinking will be delved into: the miracles, influence, and indestructibility of the Bible along with the alternative possibilities, the character of God – and I will close the chapter with a final consideration. Come with me. The journey is exciting.

THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE

The miracles of the Bible offer evidence the Book is from God. I have already spoken of miracles in connection with prophecy and the testimony of Christ. Here I will deal with them in a more specific manner. To do this, I must give a brief explanation of the nature and purpose of miracles, and then focus on the miracle of Christ's resurrection.

Miracles defined

A miracle is a mighty, evident act of God that He uses to confirm His Word spoken through His spokesmen. Biblical miracles consist of divine intervention by God into the normal course of events in the world. Miracles do not violate natural laws, but interrupt, modify or step outside their usual function. Miracles are unusual, an act of God or one of His agents, bring glory to God, promote good, convey and confirms spiritual truth, and have purpose.⁷⁶

Jesus performed many miracles, wonders and signs to make credible His action and word John wrote, "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30-31).

God also performed miracles to establish the word of Christ's Apostles who committed Jesus' words to writing as the writer of Hebrews explains, "how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will" (Heb 2:3- 4; John 3:2; 20:30-31; Acts 2:22).

We can also see how Paul used the miracles of fulfilled prophecy and Christ's

⁷⁶ Geisler, *Miracles and Modern Thought*, pp. 13, 117. See also C.S. Lewis, *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1947). Lewis (1898-1963) was an English novelist, poet and apologist. He taught many years at both Oxford and Cambridge. His book on miracles is probably the greatest defense of miracles written in the last century.

resurrection as proofs for Christianity, “For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3, 4).

The miracle: Christ’s Resurrection

Having in our grasp a brief definition, I now turn to the miracles themselves. Rather, however, than discussing each individual miracle listed in the Bible, we will place our focus on the greatest miracle of Christ: His Resurrection from the dead. All the other miracles are far inferior in power, and this is the most important miracle to Christianity. Without Christ’s Resurrection we have no Christianity. As Paul stated, “and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain” (1 Corinthians 15:14).

I will present Christ’s Resurrection in three ways. First, I will define what I mean by Christ’s Resurrection. Second, I will show you some samples of expert testimony of leading scholars regarding the reality of the Resurrection. Third, I will list several lines of evidence plus arguments for the Resurrection. I consider the New Testament to be a legitimate and valid source of documentation, and use it as the major source of data.

Christ’s Resurrection defined

When I speak of the Resurrection of Christ I mean that Christ rose from the dead in a literal, physical, genuine, identifiable body, the same body that went to the grave. His body was glorified, radically changed in that it would never again taste death or corruption, and it possessed marvelous powers. This view is the traditional view of the Church.

For example, the Articles of Religion for the Church of England states, “Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of Man’s nature; wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth, until he return to judge all Men at the last day (Article IV).

After Christ’s Resurrection, when Jesus met with His disciples, the Bible describes Christ in His resurrected body in this manner:

“And while they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst. But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. And He said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they still could not believe it for joy and were marveling, He said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them” (Luke 24:36-43).

Scholar's view of Christ's Resurrection

Let us now consider the expert testimony of several scholars. There are other sources outside the Bible which document the Resurrection of Christ. It would be well to note the most important of these sources, Josephus.

1. Josephus (AD. 37-post 100) was a contemporary of the New Testament times who was a Jew and friend of Rome. He was not a Christian. He was a secular historian of great stature, and testified to the fact of Christ's Resurrection. He produced his major works of history in the late seventies and early nineties of the first century.

Josephus wrote, "And when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him."⁷⁷

2. Professor Thomas Arnold (A.D. 1795-1842) was a noted headmaster of Rugby School. He laid the foundation of the modern public school system in England. He wrote the famous three-volume, *History of Rome*. He was the chairman of Modern History at Oxford and an expert of evaluating the evidence of historical events.

Wilbur Smith (1894-1976) quotes him as saying, concerning the truthfulness of the resurrection, "I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead."⁷⁸

3. A great legal mind also confirms the evidence concerning the Resurrection. John Singleton Copley (A.D. 1772-1863; also known as Lord Lyndhurst) is recognized as one of the greatest legal minds in British history. He was the Solicitor-General of the British government in 1819, attorney-general of Great Britain in 1824, three times high Chancellor of England, and elected in 1846 as High Steward of the University of Cambridge.

He held in one lifetime the highest offices which a judge in Great Britain could ever hold. Concerning the Resurrection he said, "I know pretty well what evidence is; and, I tell you, such evidence as that for the Resurrection has never broken down yet."⁷⁹

4. Simon Greenleaf (A.D. 1783-1853) was the great Royale Professor of Law at Harvard University. He was the man who caused Harvard Law School to rise to its preeminence in America. Many call him the greatest authority on legal evidences in the history of the

⁷⁷ Josephus, Flavius, *The life and Works of Flavius Josephus*, trans. William Whiston (Cincinnati: H.S. & J. Applegate, 1850), p. 364.

⁷⁸ Wilbur Smith, *Therefore Stand* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1945), p. 426. Smith was a great lover and collector of books. He was professor of English Bible at Moody Bible Institute, Fuller Theological Seminary and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 425.

world. He wrote *A Treatise on the Law of Evidence* (1842) which is a major work in the field of legal evidence.

His conclusion about the Resurrection of Christ in light of all the laws of evidence was that Christ's resurrection was a reality, a historical event, and anyone who honestly examined the evidence would be convinced of its fact.

He said, regarding the disciples, "It was therefore impossible that they could have persisted in affirming the truths they have narrated, had not Jesus actually risen from the dead, and had they not known this fact as certainly as they know any other fact."⁸⁰

5. Consider John Locke (AD. 1632-1704), probably the greatest philosopher of his century in Great Britain. Smith quotes him:

"There are some particulars in the history of our Savior, allowed to be so peculiarly appropriated to the messiah, such innumerable marks of Him, that to believe them of Jesus of Nazareth was in effect the same, as to believe Him to be the Messiah, and so are put to express it. The principal of these is His Resurrection from the dead; which being the great and demonstrative proof of His being the Messiah...Our Savior's resurrection...is truly of great importance in Christianity."⁸¹

I have submitted the considered evaluation of one great historian, two great legal scholars and one great philosopher. I could go on stacking quote upon quote from the world's outstanding scholars from every field of inquiry. What can we say about these finest minds of our species? Are they simply stupid? Shall we call them liars? No, I think it is best to call them honest, brilliant men who concluded that the historical evidence for the Resurrection of Christ is overwhelming. The Resurrection is a historical fact, or at least the best established fact of history - and it cannot be disproved. It is the grandest of miracles.

It is true that there are scholars who deny the reality of Christ's Resurrection as a literal fact of history. What should we do about them? In the final analysis, their arguments can always be driven back to their dogmatic bias against the supernatural. In other words, their complaints are based on their blind faith that only the natural world exists. Their argument rests not on evidence, but on unproven assumptions. They do not believe because they do not want to believe. It is really that simple.

27 proofs for Christ's Resurrection

I now weave several strands of evidence together, demonstrating and explaining the

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 424. For the inquiring reader interested in the evidence evaluated from a legal point of view, I suggest two little books: Norman Anderson, *A Lawyer among the Theologians* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1973); Val Grieve, *The Trial of Jesus* (Bromley, Kent: STL Books, 1990).

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 422, 423.

historical Resurrection of Christ. Some strands are directly from the historical biblical text, and some from reasoned consideration of those facts.

1. There is the fact that Christ was crucified, “They took Jesus therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between” (John 19:17-18).

2. There is the fact that Christ was dead. Hardened professional soldiers determined that Christ was dead, even thrusting a spear in His side to make sure. These Roman soldiers would easily recognize a dead body. Killing was their business. The text says,

“The Jews therefore, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water” - underline mine (John 19:31-33; cf. Mark 15:44, 45).

Furthermore, the Jews who sought Christ’s death were satisfied He was, indeed, dead (Matt 27:62-66).

3. There is the fact that Christ was buried in a tomb, which was witnessed by Christ’s friends, the Roman soldiers and the enemies of Christ, the Jews (Matthew 27:57- 61, 65, 66).

4. There is the fact that the tomb of Christ was sealed and Roman guards were stationed to keep anyone from stealing the body(Matthew 27:62-66).This was probably done by rolling a huge stone in front of the grave, then placing a cord from the stone to the grave with a wax seal attached. That way any tampering could be detected. The disciples could not have made it past the guards to steal the body, and the Romans certainly would not have stolen the body. If Christ was not dead, but revived in the tomb, He could not have pushed the stone back and made it past the guards.

5. There is the fact of the removal of the sealed stone by an angel, which was witnessed by the Roman guard. The angel also appeared to the women and informed them of the Resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10).

6. There is the fact of the open, empty tomb (John 20:1, 2). The body of Christ had been placed into the grave. On Resurrection morning the tomb was empty. If Christ’s body was still in the grave, then all anyone would need to do to prove the disciples wrong was to produce the body.

7. There is the fact of the discovery of the grave clothes which had been found undisturbed. Only the napkin that had been placed around Christ’s head was removed

and to one side. The body was gone, but the grave clothes remained. If the disciples had stolen the body, they would not have left the wraps. (John 20:2-8). The clothes also demonstrate the body had been in the tomb.

8. There is the fact of the stark panic of the Roman guards (Matthew 28:4). Only something very frightfully unusual and dramatic could have produced terror in battle hardened infantry troops. Just ordinary death and ordinary fanatic disciples would not have bothered them.

9. There is the fact of the angel's message to the women (Matthew 28:5-6; Luke 24:1-7). A message from heaven was delivered. The angels appeared. They were there. They existed. The angels actually said words that told of the Resurrection.

10. The guards reported to the chief priests that a resurrection actually occurred (Matthew 28:11). A report was actually given by the Roman guards, and discussed by those who did not want a resurrection to happen.

11. There is the fact of a conspiracy to explain away the Resurrection of Christ. An actual bribe was given to the Roman guards (Matthew 28:12-13). Money exchanged hands (Matthew 28:15). The guards knew of the fact of the Resurrection. They saw it, and the priests believed the report from the guards. If the guards had been asleep, they could not have known of the Resurrection.

12. There is also the fact of the conspiracy to circulate the lie that Christ's body was stolen (Matthew 28:15). There was neither motive nor need for the Jews and guards to lie and spread the story if the Resurrection had not occurred.

13. His body was not stolen. Two proofs are offered:

a. His enemies did not steal His body or they would have produced it to disprove the Resurrection. They had no motive to steal the body; in fact, they did everything they could to keep it in the tomb.

b. His friends did not steal the body for this reason: they would not be willing to risk and give their life for what they knew to be a lie. Many, in point of fact, actually did give their life.

14. There were eye-witness reports by hundreds of people, with over 500 people on one occasion, "To these He also presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). I list below the 14 post Resurrection appearances listed in the New Testament. Actually, the first appearance was to the Roman guards, which brings the listed sightings to 15.

a. To Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-18).

b. To women going from the tomb to find the disciples (Matthew 28:8-10).

c. To Peter on the day of Resurrection (Luke 24:34).

- d. To the disciples traveling to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-31).
- e. To the Apostles, excluding Thomas (John 20:19-24).
- f. To the Apostles one week later but with Thomas (John 20:24-29).
- g. In Galilee to the seven at Lake Tiberias (John 21:1-23).
- h. To 500 believers at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6).
- i. At Jerusalem and Bethany, to James (1 Corinthians 15:7).
- j. At Mt. Olivet at Christ's Ascension (Acts 1:3-12).
- k. To Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6).
- l. To Stephen outside the walls of Jerusalem (Acts 7:55).
- m. To Paul in the Temple (Acts 22:17-21; 23:11).
- n. To John while in exile on the island of Patmos (Rev 1:10-19).

15. The Resurrection was not a hallucination, as it has been maintained by some. There were many eye witnesses: doubting Thomas (John 20 :26-29), 500 people at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6) and others during His post-Resurrection stay on earth of 40 days (Acts 1:3). Some touched and handled His body. They recognized His voice. He ate food in the presence of some (Luke 24:36-43; John 20, 21). It is unreasonable to believe that large a number of people would be hallucinating over such a long period of time.

16. The Resurrection was not a hoax. One must sincerely consider the changed lives of the disciples from fearful cowards to bold proclaimers of Christ's Resurrection (John 20:19; cf. Acts 2). There was the conversion of many Jewish priests (Acts 6:7). Peter preached the first Christian evangelistic sermon and the central theme was the Resurrection of Christ. If it would have been a hoax, then people would have laughed at him, but about 3,000 believed on Christ and the numbers mushroomed from that point. One must keep in mind that these Jews placed their worship to Jesus Christ For them to worship a false God was horrible. They would not take lightly the turning away from Jewish religion.

17. Christ predicted His death, burial and resurrection (Mark 9:30-32). It was in Christ's stated plan, not something made up later by the disciples.

18. The Old Testament predicted His death, burial and Resurrection (Psalm 16:8-11; cf. Romans 1:1-4). This again demonstrates that the disciples did not make up a story of resurrection. It was something God planned ages before.

19. The fact of the historical start and continued, uninterrupted existence of the Christian church offers proof. The church's existence stems from that one, central, single, core truth: the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Christian church is the largest institution and religion the world has ever known, and the central belief (the Resurrection of Christ) is believed by over two billion people!

One third of the world's population is Christian. It is not reasonable to believe that one third of the world's people are stupid, beguiled, crazy, or in some other way mentally impaired so as to believe and perpetuate a lie. It is a genuine historical fact that those

followers of Christ did switch from Judaism to Christ and started the massive movement of Christianity.

20. The spectacular conversion of Paul, who was a fierce opponent of Christianity (Galatians 1:11-17; Philippians 3:4-11; Acts 9:1-8), offers more proof. Paul was a major leader and theologian of Judaism, a hater of Christianity. If the Resurrection had not been real, then Paul would not have converted and gone even to his own martyrdom for the cause of Christ. He had absolutely no motive to convert, had the Resurrection not been true.

21. The fact of the Lord's Day gives proof of the Resurrection. Faithful Jews switched to Sunday to worship. The switch to Sunday from Saturday originated with the Apostles who changed the day of worship to honor Christ's physical Resurrection. They switched days with the approval of Christ (Matthew 28:1; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Titus 3:10).

22. The fact of Easter lends evidence. Jews switched from celebrating the Jewish Passover to celebrating Easter, which commemorates the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

23. There is also the considered opinion of great scholars throughout history who confirm the reality of the Resurrection. Some of those scholars have been quoted earlier.⁸²

24. There is the fact of the New Testament, which is a result of the Resurrection. Simply put: if there had been no Resurrection, there would have been no New Testament. It is a book of the Resurrection of Christ and all that means for humanity.

25. There is also the fact of contemporary, extra-biblical sources. We have cited Josephus. There are, however, other documents extending from that time frame. There are many other Christian writings that date back as early as about A.D. 75. The *Didache*, or *Teaching of the Apostles* is one document. There are also the references to Christ by the Romans in the *Annales of Tacitus* (about A.D. 116), and a letter by a Roman official by the name of Pliny (about A.D. 111).

26. The fact of Christian art and hymns lends evidence of the Resurrection of Christ.

27. There is the reality of fulfilled Scripture which lends proof for the Resurrection, "*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*" (1 Corinthians 15:3b,4). The Apostles used fulfilled Old Testament Scripture to prove the Resurrection (e.g. Psalm 16:8ff. cf. Acts 2:31; 26:22ff.).

Here are 27 lines of evidence and reason that should lead sincere, honest men and women to conclude that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a reality of history. Most

⁸² For extensive quotations, see McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* and Wilbur Smith, *Therefore Stand*.

importantly, for our present discussion, is that the miracle of Christ's Resurrection demonstrates that His words are true – and He said the Bible is from God.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE

I have taken up much space regarding miracles as a proof that the Bible is from God – and in particular, the miracle of Christ's Resurrection. But, now it is time to move on to other considerations, which are of less importance, but nevertheless convincing. The influence of the Bible is one of those considerations. Let me explain.

No other book has been distributed more than the Bible. It has had the greatest impact of any book on the course of world history. There are about 6,000 languages in the world. By 1993, at least one book of the Bible had been translated into 2,062 languages.⁸³ This represents, however, over 85% of the world's population.⁸⁴

The entire Bible has been translated into over 337 languages and the NT into another 800 languages.⁸⁵ Billions of copies have been published - it is the world's all-time best seller. In 1993 over 18 million copies of the Bible were distributed, with a total distribution of Bibles and portions of the Bible exceeding 631 million.⁸⁶ More than any other book, the Bible has impacted for good the arts, civilization, law, architecture, literature, music, social reform, science, education and morality.

Other books have had a powerful impact on portions of society, but their influence has led to a low view of God and many times ignoring sin. Generally an indifference to life is fostered and the final product is simply a particular view of morals and conduct.⁸⁷

THE INDESTRUCTIBILITY OF THE BIBLE.

The indestructibility of the Bible indicates it is from God. Only a very small percentage of books survive more than 25 years, still fewer for 100 years, and then only a tiny amount lasts 1,000 years. Many attempts to destroy the Bible have come from various groups such as governments (e.g. Roman emperor Diocletian in A.D. 303); The old Soviet Union; religions (e.g. Islam), and infidels (e.g. Voltaire, Ingersoll).

Even today the secular press, universities and some political groups attack the Bible. For centuries the Bible has been attacked by critics, antagonists, moralists, skeptics;

⁸³ Doug LeBlanc, "Consultation aims to rescue Scripture use," *World Pulse*, June 10, 1994, p. 1.

⁸⁴ Bruce Metzger, "From the apostles to You," *Christian History*. Issue 43 (Vol. XIII, No. 3) p. 40. It must be noted that researchers differ on the percentages of people that have access to at least a portion of the Bible. 85% is a low number, some estimate as high as 97%. Many of those 6000 languages involve tiny tribal groups.

⁸⁵ LeBlanc, p. 1.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁸⁷ Thiessen, pp. 86-87.

yet, it remains the world's best seller and most read book ever printed. Today, more people than ever are convinced of its truth.

THE ALTERNATIVE POSSIBILITIES.

John Wesley gave a powerful argument for the inspiration of Scripture. I repeat it below: "The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God. 1. It could not be the invention of good men or angels; for they neither would or could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying 'Thus saith the Lord,' when it was their own invention.

"2. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils; for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity. "3. Therefore, I draw this conclusion, that the Bible must be given by divine inspiration."⁸⁸

To Wesley's possibilities could be added that perhaps crazy men wrote the Bible. But it would be impossible for dozens of crazy men over a period of 1,600 years to come up with the world's greatest book that has withstood intense scrutiny as to accuracy, quality, value - and has impacted the world more than any other book. Almost one third of the people on earth today identify with some form of Christianity.⁸⁹ That comes to well over two billion people. That many people would not accept a book nor identify with the central character (Christ) of a book that was written by lunatics! Impossible!

THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

The character of God gives powerful evidence the Bible is inspired by Him. God is holy, just, righteous, and perfect in every sense. It is impossible for him to lie or mislead anyone (Titus 1:2; John 17:3; Romans 3:4; Hebrews 4:18). We may place our full reliance upon the trustworthiness of God's character. He would not and cannot lie. If God cannot lie, then the question of the inspiration of Scripture rests upon the character of God. If one questions the Bible, then one accuses God of having a bad character. Calling God's character into question is what Satan did to Eve (Genesis 3:1-6).

Second, we would expect a perfect God to give us information and revelation, and that when He did it would be infallible, understandable and recognizable as being from Him. We would expect Him to demonstrate in some way that the revelation is from Him.

No other document in history has the marks of Divine inspiration as does the Bible, and no other document has the marks of credibility as does the Bible. God used the testimony of Christ, His Son, and backed that testimony up with mighty miracles (John

⁸⁸ Robert W. Burtner and Robert B. Chiles, eds. *John Wesley's Theology: A Collection from His Works* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954. 1982), p.20.

⁸⁹ Mark S. Hoffman, ed., *The World Almanac And Book of Facts* (New York: Pharos Books, 1991), p.610.

17:8; 20:30-31). We may conclude that, based on God's character, the Bible is from Him.

The other option is that God is a wicked, capricious, unjust God who has somehow, driven by evil motives, created the universe and filled it with sorrow, suffering and all sorts of iniquity. That would leave us all without hope. If that is the case; however, what do we do with Jesus Christ? He came to explain God (John 1:18) as a good, perfect, loving, just God (Matthew 5:43-48). Jesus rose from the dead to prove the validity of His words – a notion I will develop next. He said the problem of evil rested within the fallen human condition, and with Satan and his hordes.

ONE FINAL CONSIDERATION.

Here is one final appeal before I move to the next subject. Death is the most savage and powerful foe that mankind has ever encountered. Of all the wonderful, remarkable things that science and mankind has accomplished, humanity has never overcome or defeated death. Multitudes of graveyards filled with bones attest to this inescapable fact. Jesus Christ, however, overcame and defeated death. He rendered it powerless over Himself. He said the Bible was from God.

Now this question: if someone coming back from the dead is not sufficient evidence to demonstrate the validity of His own personal word, what kind of evidence is needed? There is no better evidence anywhere. What would it take, my friend, to convince you?

SUMMARY

With this note I conclude chapters three through six on 13 proofs for the Bible as God's revelation to mankind. In chapter three I submitted the claims of the Bible, the nature and transforming power of the Bible, and the witness of the Holy Spirit. In chapter four I presented fulfilled prophecy. In chapter five I explained the historical accuracy of the Bible, reliability of the documents, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Chapter six consisted of miracles with an emphasis on the Resurrection of Christ, the influence and indestructibility of the Bible, alternative possibilities and the character of God.

I must confess that these 13 proofs given as to God's inspiration of the Bible do not rationally prove our case beyond all possible doubt. Taken together, however, these lines of evidence demonstrate beyond every reasonable doubt that the Bible is inspired by God - and surely they would convince open and fair minded men and woman.

We must realize that there is an issue involved that moves beyond what is logical and rational. Reason cannot be relied upon as a last resort to provide proof of something. In the spiritual realm we are told by the apostle Paul regarding the Bible, "which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the

things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1 Corinthians 2:13, 14).

With this I move on to the nature of God’s revelation to humanity in chapter seven. I know there is a massive amount of detail involved in these discussions, but hang in there. Go slowly so as to understand the material. Reread and review the material, and take notes as you go along.

CHAPTER SEVEN

REVELATION FROM GOD

In this lesson I will explain the nature of God's revelation to humanity with special emphasis on the nature of the Bible as God's only written revelation to humanity. In its widest definition, revelation can be seen as the communication of truthful knowledge or information from God to humanity. The information includes truths about the Person and works of God and His relationships to His creation. The objective of God's revelation is to make man wiser by giving him information that he could not otherwise know. In this chapter I focus on the various methods of revelation, and then give consideration to the Bible as revelation from God.

THE METHODS OF REVELATION

God has revealed Himself in many ways to humanity, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son" (Hebrews 1:1, 2a).

The methods of His revelation can be divided into three divisions: general, special and the Bible. As we shall see, the Bible is a form of special revelation, but deserves individual consideration. I look first look at general revelation.

General revelation

General revelation is given to demonstrate God's existence and to provide humanity with enough information to make him responsible and to demonstrate his guilt before God. The Bible says:

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:18-20).

General revelation is given at least four ways: creation, conscience, providence, and personal experience. Let me explain each.

1. God's creation is one way humanity can see God's power and Godhead, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge" (Psalm 19:1-2; cf. Romans 1:18-20).

2. Conscience is a second method of general revelation. We humans have the work of God's law written on our heart and instinctively we have a sense of right and wrong. In

other words, we have the sense of guilt. The prompting of our conscience points to a God who made the law and will punish evil and reward good.

“For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus” (Romans 2:14-16).

I do not mean that all cultures have the same standard of right and wrong, but only that all cultures and peoples have a conscience and the notion of some standard which states what is right or wrong. To illustrate: religion is universal. It stretches across all cultures and goes back as far as humanity can be traced. This fact of religion demonstrates an awareness of God who determines right and wrong.

3. Providence is a third way God reveals Himself. Providence is God directing history. More specifically, it is that act of God by which He sustains and preserves all His creation and is active in everything that occurs in the universe and directs all things to their appointed destination. Providence also includes miracles (see Psalm 8:1ff.; 75:6, 7; Romans 8:28; 13:1; Acts 17:26, 27; Colossians 1:7; John 2:11; Isaiah 40:12-14; Ephesians 1:11). It is God’s kind and purposeful guidance throughout the entire universe.

You and I see God’s providence in the sky as all the stars and heavenly bodies stay glued together by gravity and orbit in such exact cycles that we set our watches by them. His providence is seen in the ocean which stays in its boundaries and continues regular in its cycles. God sustains life, family, culture; He provides food, air and clothes to keep warm. Everything continues in its allotted niche within the universe - that is the providence of God.

4. Personal experience is another way that is closely related to general revelation. God makes Himself known to us today in the lives and experiences of believers. He guides and directs our lives through His providential power, He answers our prayer, produces godly living in our lives, gives us assurance and an awareness of His presence. For example, “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Rom 8:16).

One must ever be cautious to judge by the Bible the validity of our experience to be sure that it is indeed of God. It is easy to be fooled by false teachers, demons, stress in our lives, feelings, and even our own imagination. Another clear distinction must be emphasized: this category does not refer to God giving new, cognitive, propositional information or revelation to His people. That function has ceased with the completion of the New Testament. More about this issue later.

Having given an overview of general revelation, I now move the second way God reveals Himself to humanity.

Special revelation

This type refers to those acts of God in which He makes Himself known through special acts in history to specific people with particular information for an intended purpose (e.g. Luke 2:10; Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8; Hebrews 1:1, 2). God initiated the revelation and communicated it to specially chosen men. Special revelation displays God's power, wisdom, glory, life, love, grace, truth and justice (e.g. Ephesians 1:19, 20; 2:8, 9; 1 Corinthians 1:24, 30; John 1:14; 3:2, 16; 12:48; 1 John 1:1-3).

Special revelation came to humanity in several ways: direct communication such as with Adam, dreams, visions, angels, inward communication with prophets, historical events, divine speech and casting lots (Genesis 2:16; 3:8-24; 6:13 - 7:24; Exodus 2:4; Numbers 27:21; 12:6; Isaiah 1:1; John 16:13; 2:11; 1:14; Galatians 3:19; Jeremiah 18:1; Acts 1:21-26). Special revelation is objective, plain, factual and contains specific accurate information.

God also revealed Himself through Christ, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him" (John 1:18; cf. verses 14-18; 14:8-10; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Hebrews 1:2). While on earth living among and teaching the people, Christ revealed God the Father. Presently, what we know of Christ and His revelation of God is written in the Bible. (This is not to deny that there are extra biblical sources that refer to Him).

Limitations of revelation.

These methods of revelation just mentioned are limited. First, they are not fully adequate to reveal all we need to know about God. In the case of general revelation, reliable knowledge is not conveyed and it is insufficient as a foundation for religion. Christ is not revealed in general revelation nor is God's love and grace. Humanity is not told how to be saved, and when, for example, in nature we see death and suffering, we might conclude that God is evil.

In the case of special revelation, Christ and the people of old are no longer with us. Unless we have some kind of record, we do not know what God told the prophets. We need some kind of accurate book or record to let us know His revelation and to understand all the other methods of general revelation. Fortunately, God did leave us a record: the Bible. It explains all the other methods of God giving information and what those revelations meant. It is to the Bible as God's special, unique revelation that we now turn.

THE BIBLE AS GOD'S REVELATION.

We define this type of special revelation as: that act of God in which He communicated

to human authors (men specially chosen and prepared by God) by the Holy Spirit that truth, known or unknown, which He wanted recorded in an inspired, written record, which is the Bible (1 Corinthians 2:10). I am talking about knowledge, or information communicated to humanity in propositional form. The Bible is God's final, complete and authoritative revelation - until Christ returns again. The Bible is that written truth that God desires humanity to have. The Bible is absolute, verbal, truthful, objective, and accurate information. The Bible has a number of characteristics and it is to those that we now turn.

Characteristics of the Bible

1. The Bible is available to man. This means that peoples representing 85-97% of the world's population have the Bible or at least a portion. The only hindrance to all humanity having the Bible is our failure to get it to all the nations and ethnic groups though translation, printing, distribution, preaching and teaching.

2. The Bible is complete and sufficient. There is nothing left out of the Bible which God wants in. The Bible does not need to be complimented with tradition, unwritten words, inner lights, or other so-called divine books, etc. Scripture does not contain every revelation God has ever given to man, but it is the only supernatural revelation God now has for man, and it is adequate for all matters dealing with our faith and practice. God's special revelation in the Bible is not on-going, but was final in Christ, and is complete in relation to God's intention for us today.

The Bible includes covers and interprets for us every other form or method of Divine revelation of God recorded in the Bible. It also judges other "so-called" forms of revelation that are not from God. The Bible shows us how the other methods He used in the Old Testament are just various aspects of revelation. The Bible includes all humanity needs to know about salvation through faith in Christ plus it tells us how to live godly (2 Timothy 3:15-17; John 20:30, 31; 2 Peter 1:3).

3. The Bible is understandable. Man can comprehend the Bible (1 John 2:20-27; Psalm 19:7, 8; 119:105,130). Humanity does not need a special, official caste of people, such as the church or priesthood, to interpret the Bible. Many things in the Bible are hard to understand, but the truths that are essential to faith and practice are clear. Understanding does require, however, hard study, prayer, the application of proper study tools and the help of the Holy Spirit.

God has also given gifted teachers to His church (Ephesians 4:11) who have passed on in written form the fruit of their study. It would be very foolish to ignore the teachings of the church that have been passed on to us either in form of works of theology, commentary or the various creeds.

4. The Bible is living, "For the word **of** God is living and active and sharper than any two edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no

creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Hebrews 4:12, 13; cf. 1 Peter 1:23; John 6:63).

Toward the unsaved it has the power to save and judge (John 5:24; 2 Timothy 3:15; 1 Peter 1:23; 2 Peter 1:4; John 12:48; Revelation 1:16; 19:15). Toward the saved the Bible has the power to sanctify, cleanse, perfect and edify (John 17:17-19; 15:3; 1 John 2:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

5. The Bible is authoritative. Christ chose certain persons to be the writers of the New Testament and gave the words of those men (when speaking or writing for him) the same authority as for His own words (Matthew 28:19; John 15:27; 16:13; Acts 1:8; 9:15-17; Ephesians 3:5; Matthew 10:14-15; Luke 10:16; John 13:20; 15:20; 17:20; 1 Corinthians 14:37).

Consequently, the Bible has the authority of Christ. Certainly, if the Bible is inspired by God it carries His authority with it.

A caution to consider is that while the entire Bible is inspired, not all is authoritative. For example, Satan’s lie to Eve is recorded by inspiration and accurate as to what Satan said (Genesis 3:4, 5). But his statement was a lie, not the truth, and does not reflect the mind of God; therefore, it is not authoritative to us. The sins and lies of many people are accurately recorded in the Bible, but since they do not reflect God’s will for us, they are not authoritative over us.

6. The Bible is genuine and credible. By this is meant that the books of the Bible are not forged, they were written by whom and when it is claimed. Credible means the Bible is not corrupt, but truthful and pure as regards the text itself.

7. The Bible is God’s final special revelation. Because there are so many religions, cults and individuals who claim to have had, or continue to receive, direct revelation from God, I devote a summary of the Biblical evidence that demonstrates the Bible is God’s final revelation until Christ returns.

I realize my position runs counter to many of my beloved Christian brothers and sisters. Many claim to receive revelations and even experience visible visitations from an angel or God who passes on to them verbal messages. Let me try to sort out the conflicting views – and do so with genuine respect and courtesy. Of course, my view will become apparent soon.

A basic position these good people have is that any precedent set in the Bible is still valid today. For example, If God spoke through an angel to Daniel, etc., then we can expect such visitations today. Consequently, God directly speaks to people with revelation – or specific information today. This position, in my opinion, is gravely flawed. For example, God spoke to Balaam through the mouth of a donkey (Numbers 22:28ff.). Should we expect such communication today? I think it wiser to stick to the Bible and the principles set forth in those hallowed pages.

My dear friends have the defense that if any revelation they receive contradicts the Bible, or in some way does not square with agreed on doctrine, then it is false. Otherwise, any revelation people receive is God directly talking to or through them. In answer to this belief, I remember one Bible teacher saying that if any new revelation does not agree with the Bible, then it is false. And, if it does agree with the Bible, then we already have the information.

If, however, one claims to have a word, revelation, vision (or whatever) from God, they need to somehow make a clear distinction between what they receive and the words of the Bible. And, such a feat is very difficult.

No new revelation

Special revelation ceased with the end of the New Testament. God has given no additional revelations beyond the Bible. Any who claim to have new visions or new revelations from God violate the biblical prohibition against such new teachings, and ignore the teachings of the church through the centuries. Well, those are dogmatic words. Let me try to back them up.

There are at least seven lines of proof that demonstrate God's special revelation to humanity terminated with the New Testament. Keep in mind that we are here talking about special revelation from God that conveys particular knowledge and information to individuals or humanity. General revelation is certainly on-going today.

Not to seek new revelation

1. First, there is a general biblical taboo against seeking new revelation (Isaiah 8:19-20; 19:3; 29:4; 47:12, 13; Leviticus 19:31; 20:6; 2 Kings 21:6; 23:4; 1 Samuel 28:8ff.). Though this does not prove that revelation has ceased, it does give a general warning against seeking new revelation. The Bible says: "Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:31).

Many today seek new revelation from God. Many books such as the Book of Mormon claim to be revelation from God. That church also claims to receive continuing revelation from God on a regular basis.⁹⁰ Pagan religions make the same claim to receive revelation through their priests. Unfortunately, many Christians seek information from God through fortune tellers or seek to communicate with the spirits and devils – or speak to the dead through séances.

As can be seen from the selected verses above, we are forbidden to seek new revelation. The reason why is easy: God said He would not give more revelation, and secondly, the demons deceive and lead many astray (1 Timothy 4:1ff.).

⁹⁰ Bruce R McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), pp. 643-651.

False prophets

2. Secondly, we have clear warning that many false prophets will come and try to add to the Bible, but that the church should carefully guard against such perversion. The idea is that since there is such a strong warning against false prophets, we should not expect new revelation and also we need to stoutly resist such alleged new revelation. The following verses document this point.

“For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect” (Matthew 24:24).

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse thing to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert... And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified” - underlines mine (Acts 20:28-32).

“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrines; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths” (2 Timothy 4:3, 4).

To summarize: we learn that many false teachers and prophets will come. They will give new “revelations” that are false and they will even try to confirm these false doctrines with signs and wonders. Their goal is to lead the people of God astray. The ultimate source of motivation for these people is Satan.

Christians are to be on guard, on the alert for such perversions and vigorously resist the constant attempt to undermine the Bible. We should not expect any new revelation. Our entire basic orientation is to defend and proclaim that revelation which was given through the Apostles, not to seek and take in new, continuing revelation.

Some ways, historically, that alleged new revelation has come from God to humanity is by religious leaders claiming that God is speaking through them and then they write those revelations down in some book.

Christ's promises

3. Third, the nature of Christ's promises of future revelation offer proof that Revelation ceased with the New Testament. He told of coming revelation that the Holy Spirit would reveal to the disciples (John 16:13, 14; 14:26). The Apostles acknowledged receiving that revelation (1 Corinthians 2:10-13). Finally, Jesus said revelation was then final (Revelation 22:18-20).

Revelation ended with the Bible

4. Fourth, there are Bible statements that indicate revelation is terminated (1 Corinthians 2:9, 10; Hebrews 1:1, 2; 2:1-4; John 17:4, 8; 15:15; Jude 3). I consider each section below.

Paul wrote, "but just as it is written, 'Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him.' For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God" underling mine (1 Corinthians 2:9, 10).

The word "revealed" in the Greek tense (aorist) is important. One commentary states, "The aorist points to a definite time when the revelation took place, viz. to the entry of the Gospel into the world."⁹¹ Regarding who received the revelation, the theologian Hodge writes, "unto those to whom this revelation was made, viz. 'the holy apostles and prophets,' Ephesians 3, 5."⁹² ("viz." means "that is").

What does all this mean? From a study of the grammar we learn that the revelation of the New Testament was given at a definite time to the Apostles and Prophets, to no one else, and that it is not continuing, but finished. The Greek has a separate tense, perfect, for actions in the past that still continue today, but that tense is not used in this Scripture verse.

I consider the next verse, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son" – underline mine (Hebrews 1:1, 2a).

⁹¹ Archibald Robertson and Alfred Plummer. "A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the First Epistle of St Paul to the Corinthians" in *the International Critical Commentary* reprinted. (Edinburgh: Y & T. Clark. 1975), p. 43.

⁹² Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 39.

The Greek scholar Robertson comments on “has spoken,” saying that it means “‘did speak’ in a final and full revelation.”⁹³ There is a powerful contrast set up between these two avenues of revelation. In the Old Testament times revelation from God was continuous, whereas in stark contrast, the revelation in Jesus Christ is full, complete, and final.

Next I place before us more evidence. In speaking to the revelation of Christ, the writer of Hebrews states, “after it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will” – underlines mine (Hebrews 2:3b, 4).

What we learn here in this context of special revelation is the revelation of Christ was confined, or limited, to those early Apostles who laid the foundation of the church (cf. Ephesians 2:19, 20). He teaches that it was confirmed to later generations by “those” (first Apostles), which refers back to a previous generation. Paul, the probable writer of Hebrews, was himself one of “them,” that is, a first generation Apostle who received the revelation. The point is that revelation is not continuing, but was confined to and completed in those first generation Apostles.

Next I invite you to consider the words of Jesus. In speaking to God the Father, He said, “I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do...for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them...for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you” (John 17:4, 8; 15:15).

From this data we learn that Jesus said He had “accomplished” (completed) the work He was sent to do. The “words” (revelation) from the Father had been given out and Jesus had given those “words” to the disciples. Jesus also said that “all” the things He had heard from the Father He had made known to the Apostles; thus, there is nothing else to be added today.

The Holy Spirit was to clarify, explain, teach, expand and bring to recall what Jesus told the Apostles (John 16:13, 15; 14:26). This total, one-time project took a few more years to be completely unfolded, and was declared completed with the book of Revelation.

Next I offer up Jude’s teaching. He told his readers, “Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” – underlines mine (Jude 3).

One trusted authority on the Greek language writes the “faith” mentioned “is not used in its primary sense of a subjective feeling of trust or belief, but in the secondary sense of

⁹³ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* 5 vols. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1932), 5:335.

the thing believed, the Truth of the Gospel.”⁹⁴ Another authority on the Greek language comments on the “once delivered” as meaning the following,

“not at one time, formerly, but once for all, so that it continues thus forever, that is liable to no changes, and that no new revelation is to be looked for. (Casuabon: ‘To contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Divine words, few in number, but rich in meaning. If rightly understood and duly obeyed, these words would put an end to all modern controversies, and restore peace to the Church. Do we desire to know what the true faith is? St. Jude here tells us – that which was once, and once for all delivered to the saints. Every doctrine which can be shown to be posterior to that faith, is new; and every doctrine that is new is false.’”⁹⁵

To summarize: what we learn from this group of widely recognized scholars and authorities of the Greek language is that the Christian Faith as given to the Apostles was complete. No more revelation was to be given. Period.

Bible is adequate

Now I turn to another class of verses to demonstrate that revelation is finished. There are Bible statements that indicate the Bible is adequate for our faith and practice, and that no new revelation is needed to help us grow in Christ, or to know His will (John 17:17, 20; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; 2 Timothy 3:15-17). As a qualification, I do not mean that just reading the Bible will bring about spiritual growth.

God uses other means as well. Examples are prayer, fellowship with other likeminded Christians, obedience, life experience, circumstances, counsel from others, etc. However, the true, pure Divine information that informs us regarding life skill principles, personal or corporate worldview, attitudes, behavior, values, feelings, and direction comes from the Bible. It is the sole authority regarding faith and practice.

Jesus

In speaking to God the Father regarding believers, Jesus stated, “Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth...I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word” (John 17:17, 20).

In His prayer, Christ declared that the “word” was the means to sanctify believers. (Sanctify means perfected, or to bring to maturity, in our Christian faith). The Bible is the word of God. He further prays that future believers will be sanctified by the words

⁹⁴ J.B. Mayor, “The General Epistle of Jude” in *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll, 5 vols. Reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 5:255.

⁹⁵ G.G.C. Fronmuller, “The Epistle General of Jude,” in *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, ed. John Peter Lange, trans., J. Isidor Mombert, reprint ed. 12 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1960), 12:13.

passed on by the Apostles. We can see, then, that the revelation given to the Apostles is sufficient for our complete maturing and growth as Christians.

Apostle Peter

To continue, consider the Apostle Peter, “seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust” – underlines mine (2 Peter 1:3, 4).

You and I learn from the mighty Apostle that everything we need in relation to living life and growing in godliness has already been given to us. That was true in Peter’s day; thus, we have no need for new revelation today to instruct us in Christian living or for salvation. All the promises and principles – the total package – Christians have ever needed down through the ages was granted in the revelation given to the Apostles.

I seem compelled to submit another qualification. I don’t mean that human wisdom and science (even social sciences) never have any good thing to say. I am not of those who say the only book you ever need is the Bible. I do mean, however, that anything offered needs to pass the test of the Bible. It is the final authority.

Apostle Paul

Now let us consider what Paul said on the matter of continuing revelation from God. He wrote to Timothy, “from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:15-17).

Paul says the Bible alone is adequate to equip and produce Christian maturity. He mentions only the Bible, nothing else is mentioned. All other sources, we may conclude, are excluded. Again, this does not mean that we cannot gain help from other books, life experience, teachers and sources to assist in our Christian growth. It does mean, however, the Bible is the final judge over all other sources of information. I keep repeating myself – but it is important.

You can also note from these verses that Paul could not have uttered them if continuing revelation down through the ages was needed for Christian teaching, reproof, correction and training. Paul was teaching that the Bible as it was in his generation was sufficient, adequate to prepare us with everything we need to fulfill all our Christian responsibilities for this life and to be prepared for the next.

It is a tremendous encouragement to know that God did not forget to tell us something in the Bible that we need for salvation or Christian growth and service. Everything we will ever need for salvation or Christian maturity and duty is recorded in the Bible.

Christians also have the fact that the foundation of the church was set in place by the prophets and apostles. In speaking of the church, Paul said it was, “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2:20, 21).

The prophets are the Old Testament prophets and the apostles are those of the New Testament. The Revelation they received formed the foundation of the church which is progressively being built upon that same foundation of the prophets and apostles. Nothing else was needed for the on-going building up of the church. For example, the foundation for a building is set once for a base, then the bricks, mortar, and wood are stuck or nailed together to form the structure. The builders don't go back and rearrange the foundation.

It is the same with the church. The foundation was the revelation of God given through the prophets and apostles. We do not go back and add more to or take away from the foundation that God has built. The cornerstone (Christ) and foundation was once set. We build on it by following the directions established by the foundation. If we change the foundation, the building will fall over.

Testimony of the church

Here we are at the sixth line of argument to exhibit that special revelation from God was terminated with the New Testament. There is the historical testimony of the church regarding the closed canon of Scripture. The canon refers to those 66 books that make up the Bible that was eventually formally recognized at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 397. Later I will go into detail how the canon was formed.

The reality of the closed canon offers evidence that the Christian church from the beginning considered the matter of revelation from God to be a closed matter with the end of the book of Revelation. That great document of the church that resulted from the Reformation, the Westminster Confession of Faith (A.D. 1647) makes the point clear.

It reads, “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men” (Chapter I, Article VI).

The Confessions of the Methodists and Church of England also agree.

New revelation is forbidden

Now I arrive at my final argument supporting the termination of special revelation with the completion of the New Testament. It is the severe prohibition and condemnation of further revelation beyond the book of Revelation, "I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God shall add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18,19).

The message could not be plainer and to the point: special revelation has ceased! There is not a clearer and stronger "the end" that the Holy Spirit could have appended to the end of His Book. God condemns, in this passage, anyone who adds or subtracts from the words of the Bible.

There are those, however, who say this warning applies only to the book of Revelation, but not to the rest of the Bible. In some cases the reasoning goes that since the warning only applies to the book of Revelation, then they can add or tamper with the rest of the New Testament. I reply two ways: one, the warning does apply to the whole Bible, because it is intimately linked to the whole Bible. Second, even if the warning applies only to Revelation, my case still holds - revelation has ceased. Let me show you.

I take up the first argument and demonstrate that Revelation is linked to the rest of the Bible. I offer several points. By examining the book of Revelation, you can see for yourself that it is chronologically, positionally and doctrinally last in the Bible.

Chronologically the book is the last in the date of writing. It is the final book written by the ultimate Author, the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; Revelation 22:17). John, the writer, was the last apostle to write a book, and only apostles were the duly authorized messengers of Christ (Matthew 10:40,20; Luke 10:16; Ephesians 3:5; Hebrews 2:3; John 14:26; 16:12-15; 17:8,20). One of the credentials to be an apostle was to have been with Jesus (Hebrews 2:3; 1 John 1:14).

By using these standards, no new revelation can be given since the Apostles are all in heaven and the Holy Spirit said He had finished His work of recording the Word of God into a document. Certainly this would require the termination of revelation, and by logical implication extend the prohibition to the entire Bible because it was written by the Holy Spirit through the apostles and prophets or those who wrote with their sanction.

Positionally, Revelation is last in the order of books. The Bible itself, though a collection of several documents, must be considered as one book written by one Author, and Revelation can be seen as the last chapter.

Doctrinally, revelation is last because it deals with God's program for the consummation of history - the last things. The book does not anticipate any further new revelation, but rather, the next expectation in history is the actual return of Jesus Christ (Revelation

22:10, 12, 20; 1:1, 3). The whole scope of history has been covered starting with Genesis, and culminates in the coming final state.

Let me show you another line of evidence: the teachings of Revelation are connected to the rest of the Bible. All the great doctrines of the Christian Faith found in the rest of the Bible are taught in Revelation. The prophecy is simply a capstone, restatement, summary or expansion of prophecy or doctrine given throughout the rest of the Bible. For example, of the 404 verses in Revelation, over 250 are quotes or allusions from the Old Testament.

Doctrines found in Revelation include the Deity of Christ, heaven, hell, resurrection of man, substitutionary atonement of Christ, the Trinity, and the Resurrection, Ascension and Return of Christ, and salvation by faith (Revelation 22:13; 21:1; 20:11-15; 20:5; 12:11; 1:5; 22:16-18; 22:12; 3:20). Revelation and the rest of the Bible, both Old and New Testament, are vitally and intimately linked and woven together – like the fibers of an opulent curtain.

Let me state it another way: adding or subtracting from the teaching of the rest of the Bible is adding or subtracting from the book of Revelation, because the vital information found in the rest of the Bible is also found in Revelation. The reverse is also true. The conclusion? If another group has doctrine contrary to the fundamental teaching of historic Christianity, then the curse of Revelation clings to them.

I now approach the issue of the curse of Revelation 20:18, 19 in still another way. Let us say for arguments sake that the prohibition does apply only to the book of Revelation. Even if I do concede that point, then other religions that vary from Christianity still stand condemned. Why? Because all we have to do is to take any new alleged new “revelation” and compare it only to the book of Revelation.

If the new “revelation” is not found in the book, then it is adding and to be condemned. If the alleged new “revelation” is found in the book, then it is not new “revelation,” but simply a restatement of revelation that has already been given. Consequently, the teachings of various groups stand condemned on the basis of using only the book of Revelation itself.

For example, consider the doctrine of the Deity of Christ. There are those who say He is merely man, or the first of God’s created beings, or just one god of many gods. Yet, the book of Revelation teaches that Christ is, “the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end...king of kings, and lord of lords...Word of God...Lamb” (Revelation 22:13; 19:16, 13; 5:13). These are terms indicating His Deity.

Also, consider Christ in comparison to the Father. In referring to Christ, the writer of Revelation states, “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Revelation 22:12, 13).

In referring to God the Father, or perhaps to Jesus, John wrote, “I am the Alpha and the

Omega, says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8). The two descriptive phrases fit both God the Father and God the Son.

Then consider the issue of worship. We learn that only God may receive worship. John records, “And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he said to me, ‘Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book worship God” - underline mine (Revelation 22:8, 9). Now flip back to the first chapter where you find John referring to his encounter with the resurrected Christ. John worshipped Jesus Who accepted that worship.

Further, Jesus also gave Himself similar titles to the ones assigned to God in Revelation 1:8. The words read, “And when I saw Him (Jesus), I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades” Revelation 1:17,18).

Again we find that a scene of worship in heaven, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever. And the four living creatures kept saying, ‘Amen.’ And the elders fell down and worshiped” (Revelation 5:13b, 14). Here we find both God the Father and God the Son (the Lamb) accepting the same worship.

These and other places demonstrate the Deity of Jesus Christ beyond any doubt. You can proceed throughout the book of Revelation and demonstrate that the other fundamental teachings of historic Christianity are also taught within the boundaries of that last book.

To focus again on the argument, we simply ask of the other religion, “Does your religion teach the Trinity, Deity of Christ, heaven, hell, resurrection of man, substitutionary atonement of Christ Resurrection of Christ, Ascension and return of Christ, salvation by faith alone, sin and final judgment - and in the same sense that historic Christianity teaches them?”

If their answer is “no,” then all we have to say is that all these doctrines are taught in the book of Revelation. That book stands as their judge.

Conclusions

What are the conclusions from all the above arguments? Whether the prohibition and curse of Revelation 22:18, 19 refers only to the book of Revelation or to the whole Bible, we are driven to the following inescapable considerations.

1. If any new alleged revelation or prophecy is not already in the Bible (or the book of Revelation, either way), then that alleged revelation is not from God and is rendered taboo by Christ Himself.

2. If any alleged prophecy or revelation is already in the book of Revelation (or the Bible), then it is not revelation or prophecy but simply a restatement of revelation we already have.

3. The verses of Revelation 20:18, 19 themselves do not distinguish between different kinds or levels of prophetic revelation, but lumps all revelation together as being of one kind.

4. The *final* conclusion is that continuing revelation or prophecy from God of any kind or nature is categorically impossible. Special revelation terminated with the book of Revelation. Remember, special revelation refers to God imparting new, propositional, verbal information to humanity.

Unfortunately, there are many Christians who are reckless with this issue of continuing revelation. I have mentioned this before. I would encourage them to carefully consider the biblical data regarding this important matter.

An example of a recent false prophecy serves to illustrate the seriousness of claiming to have revelation from God. A famous British church leader was visiting New Zealand in 1989. He made a prophetic statement based on Amos, chapter one, verse one which states: "The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he envisioned in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake."

A newspaper, the Weekly Challenge, June 4, 1992, reported that the man claimed he sensed the verse was predicting a calamity that would descend upon the area of Taupo two years from the prophecy. The hard reality is that the verse has nothing whatsoever to do with any calamity happening in New Zealand. Amos was speaking about a specific event that happened some 2700 years ago in Israel.

Did the calamity happen as prophesied? No, no calamity occurred in New Zealand, which left several people very embarrassed and one person a false prophet! What a reckless way to handle the Bible. His alleged "revelation" from God was no revelation at all, but only his imagination. One must also remember that the Bible sets down severe penalties for false prophecy. It says only one wrong prophecy makes one a false prophet and that perversion was so serious in Old Testament times that the death penalty was to have been applied to the prophet (Deuteronomy 13:1- 5; 18:20-22; 23:10-14).

Progressive vs. continuous revelation

I must address one final matter before I leave the subject of revelation. There is a distinction between "progressive" and "continuous" revelation. Many times confusion occurs because of mixing the two concepts together.

1. Progressive revelation means that God revealed Himself in a gradually developing way, unfolding His teaching from the more simple to the more complex. A good example is found in the doctrine of the resurrection. Because of the heathen ideas and practices regarding death and life after death, God did not fully reveal the doctrine of the resurrection in the early books of the Bible. To do so could have caused His people to confuse the doctrine with these heathen concepts and practices.

To be sure, there are allusions to the concept of resurrection, such as in Genesis 22. In all probability, Abraham believed that had he slain Isaac God might have raised him from the dead. Further, many date Job from the patriarchal period. In that book there is a strong allusion to the resurrection (Lob 14:14; 19:25-27).

A strong statement on the resurrection is not found, however, until Isaiah 26:19. From there, it develops more progressively until we see it fully revealed in First Corinthians chapter 15. This illustrates what is meant by progressive revelation. It is the progressive or gradually unfolding of revelation within the canonical books of the Bible. In this view, biblical revelation was closed forever when the last canonical book was written, about A.D. 96. Of course, when Christ returns I am sure we will get more instruction – and when Christians get to heaven, we will know more.

2. Continuous revelation, in contrast, means that God has continued to give revelations of new propositional truth and will continue to give revelations beyond the bounds of the canonical books of the Bible. And to those who teach this, these new revelations have as much equal standing and divine authority as the Bible. However, some make a distinction, and place new revelation on a lesser plane of authority than Scripture.

General revelation does continue today through creation, conscience, providence, and personal experience. Indeed, the Holy Spirit does dwell within believers, and prompts, teaches, impresses, and guides us through our life experience.

Final note

You might be asking why I spend a whole chapter on revelation, and so much time demonstrating that special, propositional revelation from God has ceased. Be assured, I am not trying to pick a fight with my Christian friends who believe in the charismatic gifts.

However, it is of critical importance to clearly and carefully identify that source material we can safely use to accurately tell us what and how to believe about God and His relationship with His creation. After all, that source material will serve as the basis for our eventual judgment before Him. That is why it is of vital importance to know what is truthful, accurate, absolute, and what we can rely upon.

So, we ask the question, is the source material inclusive of all other religious books that claim to be of God? Or, does the source material exclude some material, and if so,

what? We live in a time of a gaggle of voices and many books claiming to be of God, or, on the other hand, reams of information claiming that truth cannot be known. These are the issues that drive me to a degree of dogmatism regarding the Bible.

To summarize, in this chapter I have discussed general and special revelation from God, and then described how the Bible is God's unique, special revelation. I explored the characteristics of the Bible, and discussed the many reasons that we are not to seek new revelation from God outside of the canonical books of the Bible. Finally, I drew the distinction between progressive and continuous revelation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE

Whereas revelation has to do with God giving His information, inspiration deals with how God recorded that information into the Bible. In this chapter I will define inspiration, consider various theories, focus on verbal plenary inspiration, note the selection of the writers and examine the process of inspiration.

INSPIRATION DEFINED.

There are several parts to inspiration. Inspiration is that act of God whereby through the agency of the Holy Spirit and through His sovereign choice He providentially prepared certain men. Without interfering with or impairing the mind or the individuality of these men, He carefully guarded, guided and controlled them in the writing process. These authors recorded in perfect accuracy the full and complete communication of His revelation in a written record that is the very words of God in the language, style and personalities of the human authors. Inspiration means that the Bible is infallible and inerrant as recorded in the original autographs. Let me break it down.

Of this rather complex definition we can summarize it by placing focus on three key concepts: 1. God authored the Bible; 2. God used humans to write the content; 3. the end product is without mistakes in the original autographs.

In order to better understand inspiration I now examine several different theories, and give special attention to the verbal plenary view, which is how the Bible explains itself, and which is reflected in the definition given above.

VARIOUS VIEWS

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION.

1. The **Natural Genius** theory holds that the writers of the Bible possessed a natural genius similar to that of poets and writers such as Shakespeare, Tennyson, Longfellow, etc. By natural genius, therefore, the writers produced the Bible. This view is held by some liberals and secular people.

2. The **Partial theory** holds that only those parts of the Bible which deal with doctrine, salvation and the practice of our faith are inspired and thus without error. Matters relating to history, science, mathematics, etc. are not inspired. Unfortunately, there are many who hold this view and still identify with Evangelicals. Sometimes this theory is called the neo-evangelical view, and is still very popular today.

When they use the phrase: "The Bible is the only rule for faith and practice" they emphasize the part that says "faith and practice." The Bible to them is the rule for

doctrine, salvation and our living for Christ. It is without error in these areas but not in the areas relating to science, history, numbers, etc.

For example, this view believes that the Bible is wrong when it speaks of God's direct creation and the actual existence of Adam & Eve. Miracles in the Bible are considered to be myths, similar to Maui pulling up the islands in the Pacific Ocean with a fish hook.

3. The **Content theory** teaches that the Bible contains the message or Word of God, and though the Bible may have errors as it relates to science, history, etc., yet we can derive God's message as it relates to our faith and practice. The Bible is not the actual word of God, but simply **contains** the Word of God - as well as other material not of God. This view is held by the modern liberal theologians.

This theory maintains that none of the New Testament, as we have now, was written by an apostle or their disciples.⁹⁶ The norm for finding out what is the Word of God is the apostolic witness. This witness may be discovered in the New Testament, but is not identical with the New Testament.

One must strip away the errors, myths and legends recorded in the New Testament to dig down to what the apostles actually witnessed, and to discover the essence of the gospel. The Bible has neither divine authority nor infallible predictions, and was written by fallible men who made many mistakes.⁹⁷

4. The **neo-orthodox** theory believes the Bible becomes the Word of God. God's revelation to man was Jesus Christ and the New Testament is the primary written witness or record of Christ, but was written by fallible men and is full of error and contradiction. Revelation occurs when the Holy Spirit witnesses to the individual through the Bible.

The Bible is not a vehicle of direct verbal communication from God to man, they believe, but is simply one instrument by which, by way of subjective, personal encounter, God reveals Himself to a particular individual. The Bible is not revelation until that unique witness by the Holy Spirit occurs in an existential encounter to the individual in a moment of personal subjective experience.

What is revelation to one person is not revelation to another person, unless they, too, have a mystical encounter in their experience. Revelation is a personal encounter in the present moment.

They believe the words and stories in the Bible are simply the recorded subjective response of various humans who from time to time experienced divine events and recorded them. God's message is not a direct, propositional revelation itself, but merely

⁹⁶ Shubert Ogden, cited by Geisler & Nix, p. 168. Ogden is a Process Theologian and representative of many new liberal thinkers.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 168-170.

a vehicle by which God reveals Himself to individuals.⁹⁸ Representatives of this view are Karl Barth with his famous “leap of faith,” Emil Brunner and John Baillie.

5. The **Thought** theory holds that God gave the writers His revelation in thought form, and the writers then expressed God’s thoughts in their own words. The Bible is God’s thoughts but in man’s words. The ideas (concepts) maybe inspired, but not the words, which are incidental.

In this view, God suggested the ideas and general trend of the revelation then left the man to freely express the ideas in his own language and from his own cultural understanding. The key distinction is the taking of inspiration away from the words and placing it only on the general idea or revelation.

6. The **Dictation** theory has been confused with the verbal, plenary theory of inspiration, and used as a straw man by those who oppose and seek to discredit the evangelical theory of verbal, plenary inspiration. The theory holds that God has dictated the words of the Bible, one by one, to each of the writers of the Bible.

This view has never had any valid standing among scholars, even though it has many times been attributed to evangelicals as their view. On the other hand, certain portions of the Bible were dictated - for example the Ten Commandment.

Verbal, plenary view

The **Verbal Plenary** theory is that held by the Bible itself and historic, traditional, orthodox Christianity. This is the view of evangelicals. Plenary means the Bible is fully inspired in all its parts: scientific, historical, mathematical, doctrinal and practical. Verbal means that inspiration extends to every word and even the forms of the word (such as plural, singular, tense, etc.). I now present Scriptural support for this view.

1. The Old Testament writers claim inspiration extends to the very words: *“The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spoke to me”* (2 Samuel 23:2-3a).

2. The formula “Thus saith the Lord” or its equivalent assumes the view of verbal plenary inspiration. The formula occurs with great frequency throughout the Bible, in fact over 3,800 times.

3. Christ affirms this view, “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished” - underline mine (Matthew 5:17,18).

The smallest Hebrew letter is “yodh,” which looks like an apostrophe, or the glottal stop

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 171-175.

in Polynesian languages. The “stroke” is a small protrusion on some Hebrew letters that marks them off from other letters.

Again, Jesus said, “If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)” - underline mine (John 10:35).

We can see that Jesus extended inspiration down to the very words of Scripture and to the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet - plus He said God’s word cannot be broken in one place Jesus rests his argument on one word recorded in the Old Testament: “lord”.

Matthew explains: “Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, ‘What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The son of David.’ He said to them, ‘Then how does David in the Spirit call him “Lord,” saying “The Lord said to my lord ‘Sit at My right hand, until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet?’” If David then calls Him ‘Lord,’ how is He his son?” (Matthew 22:41-45).

Jesus also extended His authentication to the entire Old Testament, calling it Scripture (Luke 24:27, 44, 45).

In another place Jesus insisted on the tense of a word to offer proof of the resurrection, “But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead but of the living” - underline mine (Matthew 22:31, 32).

4. The Apostles claim verbal, plenary inspiration is true of their writings (1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:37; Galatians 1:7-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:2, 15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 12, 14). Paul once stated, for example, “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed He does not say, ‘And to as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed that is, Christ” - underlines mine (Galatians 3:16). In this case, Paul made his whole argument turn on the singular and not the plural form of the word “seed.”

5. Christ gave His authentication to the New Testament before He left this earth (John 16:13, 14; 14:26; Revelation 22:18-20). This means His confirmation and authority was imprinted on the New Testament. His action extended to the historical events (“bring all things to your remembrance” John 14:26), the doctrinal teachings (“teaching you all things” John 14:26), and the prophetical utterances (“show you things to come” John 16:13).

6. Christ chose certain persons to be the writers of the New Testament. To His chosen Apostles He said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I command you” - underline mine (Matthew 28:18,19).

Again He told them, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will

speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come” – underline mine(John 16:13; cf. 15:27; Acts1:8; 9:15-17;Ephesians 3:5; 2:20; Hebrews 2:1-4; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12).

That Jesus’ words were committed to writing can be seen from Luke, “it seemed fitting for me, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order” - underline mine (Luke 1:3).

7. Christ then gave the words of these chosen men, when speaking for Him, or writing for Him, the same authority as for His own words (Matthew 10:14-15; Luke 10:16; John 13:20; 15:20; 17:20; 1 Corinthians 14:37. For example, Christ said to the Father, “I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word” (John 17:20. Another example: Paul said “the things which I write to you are the Lord’s commandment” (1 Corinthians 14:37t).

8. It is the word of God that brings salvation and Christian growth. Paul said, “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” - underline mine (Romans 10:17). Again, “I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up” - underline mine (Acts 20:32). Peter wrote, “desire the pure milk of the word, that ye may grow by it” – underline mine (1 Peter 2:2).

If the words of the Bible are wrong or in error, then they would be useless for salvation and Christian growth, and we would all be stumbling in darkness and still in our sin. How vitally important are His actual, literal, specific, precise “words” (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:10-12; Luke 16: 17, 29, 31; Romans 15:4).

9. The tone and statements of Scripture indicate verbal, plenary inspiration, “The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times” (Psalm 12:6).

In an extended statement on the words of God, David claimed,

“The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward” - underlines mine (Psalm 19:7-11; cf. Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

10. In addition to Scriptural support, we offer a logical proof of the verbal plenary view. There can be no communication without words. For a thought to be properly, communicated, it must be accurately conveyed in precise words. The change of a few words in a sentence can convey a radically different thought from that originally intended. Words are important. They have meaning. From here let me offer a summary evaluation of the theories.

11. It is clear from the evidence given above that both God and those He chose to record the Bible believed in verbal, plenary inspiration. The resultant record was inerrant (without mistake), and was completed with the book of Revelation. Further, they were speaking of the actual words of the record, not a subjective encounter in the sense of neo-orthodoxy. The words are key, whether for salvation or for Christian growth. Perhaps an easy way to distinguish between the liberal, neo-orthodox and evangelical view is this: to the liberal the Bible contains the word of God; to the neo-orthodox the Bible becomes the word of God; to the evangelical the Bible is the Word of God.

Theories evaluated

The first five views of inspiration are inadequate for the following reasons.

1. Each theory leaves to man the right or authority to determine what is, or is not, God's inspired Word or Words. Thus, man gives to himself that right which belongs to God alone. And, God has declared that all Scripture is "God-breathed" or inspired (2 Timothy 3:16). Scripture is a product of God's creative breath (note Genesis 2:7). Furthermore, the scholars who embrace these theories cannot agree among themselves on what parts are or are not God's Word.

This disagreement among liberal scholars is in sharp contrast with the writers of the Bible. In the latter's case the writers wrote over a period of 1,600 years in different languages, continents and cultural settings; yet, there is a wonderful and exact unity and agreement in their works. That unity also points to the one Divine Mind behind the Bible, a proof of the inspiration of Scripture.

2. The theories do not do justice to either the biblical evidence or to the logical and rational view which states: one cannot have communication of thoughts without putting them into words. Thoughts and words are like the bridegroom and the bride at a wedding, you cannot have one without the other.

3. If the theories of inspiration which state that those parts of the Bible which relate to history, science, etc. are not inspired and thus may have errors, then how then can we have assurance that those parts which relate to doctrine and practice are inspired and thus without error? For example, the Resurrection of Christ is a miracle contrary to science, yet it is the core "spiritual" doctrine of Christianity.

4. If the natural genius of certain men could produce our present Bible, how then can we be sure that other men of great genius will not produce another Bible? Or, at least produce other books that add to our present Bible but would contradict God's Word and demand that we substitute these other religions for Christianity? Or, even create a new religion?

There are many other books of such a nature. The natural genius theory cannot prevent this anyone from claiming revelation from God and starting a cult or new movement. We

must conclude, then, that the only valid view of inspiration is the view that Jesus taught: the verbal, plenary view.

THE SELECTION OF WRITERS.

You or I cannot understand how the Bible can be the Word of God without realizing that it could not have come in any haphazard way, nor could it have been produced for us by just any religious writers. God in His sovereign will and by His providential control carefully selected and prepared those who were to be the human instruments who would, under the guidance and supervision of the Holy Spirit, be the authors of the Bible.

Examining the nature, purpose, and content of the various biblical books shows that certain types of men, with certain kinds of preparations and qualifications, were needed to write these books with their rich diversity of subject matter and style. The Bible covers a wide subject range including science, history, government, poetry, theology and faith.

For example, consider Genesis. This book speaks of the creation of the universe, humanity, and history. Only a man uniquely prepared as Moses could have been adequate to deal with such profound questions as addressed in Genesis. Moses was raised in Pharaoh's palace, trained at an Egyptian university whose curriculum dealt with science, mathematics, literature, etc. The Bible claims Moses "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22).

Other examples include David, Isaiah and Daniel. David was prepared to write the Psalms which deals with all the scope of life. Isaiah was of the royal line and had access to the king's court; thus, he had special training and access to write of the great political movements of his day.

Daniel was of the noble class and specially trained in the king's university. He was well prepared to write of the rise and fall of world governments and to prophecy the whole course of world history from his day to the second coming of Christ. A brilliant man, Daniel excelled in intelligence in every branch of wisdom and knowledge, and was given the best of training in the highest Chaldean intellectual circles (Daniel 1:4, 17).

The examples continue on to the New Testament. Matthew, a Jew, was a tax collector employed by Rome. Luke was the precise physician, careful with research and writing that was important to the Greeks. Luke wrote accurate history. John loved Jesus deeply and was specially loved by Jesus; thus, he was the one prepared to write of the need to love one another. Paul was uniquely and superbly educated both in the secular university of Tarsus and also at the feet of the great Jewish scholar, Gamaliel. He was the one to write the profound books of theology.

One concludes that God carefully selected, guided and prepared all of the human authors of the books of the Bible, so that when the right moment came, the Holy Spirit could superintend, supervise and carefully guide and guard them; so that the very

words of the Bible were God's words in the language, style, and personality of each separate writer.⁹⁹

THE PROCESS OF INSPIRATION.

Now I turn to the actual process itself of how inspiration took place. The Holy Spirit superintended the recording process in such a way that the human writers, using their unique styles, recorded without mistakes the very words that God wanted preserved.

Inspiration extends to the original manuscripts. There are two classic sections of Scripture that indicate the nature of the inspiration process. We consider them in detail below. We also offer a third Scripture to illustrate the process.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16, 17

The first selection is 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, which reads, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." We can learn four things from this pivotal statement.

1. "All" refers to the collective sacred writings as well as the individual passages. It means all the contents of the Bible on whatever subject, and wherever it is located. It also, by implication, eliminates all other sources as being inspired by God. The Bible is exclusive in its content and scope.

2. "Scripture" is a technical word (*graphe*) in the New Testament that is properly translated "Scripture." In this context the word "Scripture" probably refers to the Old Testament plus that part of the New Testament that had been put into writing at that point in time. The reason is that Paul used a different word for Old Testament Holy Scriptures (*hiera grammata*) when referring to Scripture in verse 16.

The conclusion is that he had more than the Old Testament in mind when he said "all Scripture." Further, he said "all" Scripture was inspired and that would include the total New Testament since its contents were established elsewhere as Scripture.

3. "Inspired" (*theopneustos*) means "God breathed" or "is the result of the breath of God." It is the breath that communicates or carries the words to others; thus, we can say the Bible came straight from the mouth of God. The primary emphasis in the passage is not on the origin of Scripture or the method of inspiration, but on the resultant character of Scripture. The character of God is perfect and without defect; consequently, so is the Bible.

⁹⁹ Adapted from William F. Kerr, "Bibliology," Unpublished Class Notes (Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, nd. held in writer's possession).

2 PETER 1:16-21:

The second key Scripture I offer is found in Peter's writings. Below I submit to you the full text while underlining key phrases, and breaking down the meaning.

"For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased' - and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word made more sure...But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." - underlines mine.

1. The first point I bring out is that the context says that Scripture is more authoritative than Peter's own eye witness, and more authoritative than the audible word the Apostles heard from heaven. It is more authoritative in the sense that it is "more sure" or accurate. In other words, in their humanity alone their eyes and ears could have played tricks on them. When the Holy Spirit was directing the writing process, however, no mistakes were made.
2. Second, the word "prophecy" is used in its primary sense of telling forth the counsel of God, not simply the foretelling of future events – but future events are also included.
3. "Interpretation" is better translated here as meaning "disclosure." It would read, then, "No prophecy of Scripture comes out of private disclosure."¹⁰⁰ Prophecy was not just the opinion of the prophet but was uttered from God Himself.
4. "Moved" (*phero*) refers to the Holy Spirit guiding, guarding and superintending the men involved in the actual writing of Scripture. The word, *phero*, means to bear, carry, to be borne along or impelled. For example, Luke uses *phero* when referring to a strong wind, "and when the ship was caught in it, and could not face the wind, we gave way to it, and let ourselves be driven along"- underline mine (Acts 27:15).
5. The conclusion is that Scripture originated from God, came through men as the instrument or channel, the Holy Spirit superintended and motivated the process, and the end product is the Bible, which says exactly what God wanted it to say in all its parts. The men were impelled by the Holy Spirit's power, not acting according to their own wills, nor simply expressing their own thoughts, but expressing the words God wanted recorded. This does not mean God dictated each word, but rather, He superintended the process so that the result was inspired by Him and was exactly what He wanted recorded.

¹⁰⁰ A.T. Robertson, vol. 6, p. 158.

LUKE 1:1-4:

The final Scripture deals with how Luke went about writing the Gospel and Acts. It is an illustration of inspiration as seen from the human side of the recording of Scripture. As usual I will place the entire text before you, and then break it down.

“Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught” (Luke 1:14).

The inspiration process is revealed in Luke’s case. From this account we see that Luke researched very carefully over a period of time He conducting personal interviews of eye witnesses, read written materials, listened to oral traditions that had accumulated, and sifted through the abundant evidence. God guided him, however, so that the result of his work was the “exact truth” written out in words onto a document that has been handed down to us today.

God superintended, guided and guarded the process so that the resultant product was recorded in the exact words He wanted - without error or any mistakes. The word used for “exact truth” is *asphaleia*, which means firmness, securely locked, certainty, and truth. It is used as a legal term for security.

I take a short digression at this point so as to not be misunderstood. I do not mean that the Apostles copied from one another as held by the liberal theologians when they speak of the “synoptic problem.”

The synoptic problem was invented by liberals, and holds that there are similarities and differences between the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. This presents a problem, they say. Their proposed solution is that the Gospel writers must have copied from one another or from another source they all had in common.

This alleged “problem” undermines the trust in the Gospels. For example, if the writers were borrowing from one another, then they were removed from independent, firsthand, direct eyewitness accounts.

The reality of the problem, according to one expert, Professor Eta Linnemann, is that there is, in fact, no synoptic problem.¹⁰¹ It does not exist. She maintains that there is no

¹⁰¹ Eta Linnemann, *Is There A Synoptic Problem: Rethinking the Literary Dependence of the First Three Gospels*, trans. Robert W. Yarbrough (Grand Rapids; Baker Book House, 1992), p. 10. Ms. Linnemann is a woman of great intellect who studied among the mightiest of minds, and was a peer among the elite. She is sometimes criticized because of her outspoken and bold approach to these issues. But, her detractors are from people of much smaller minds.

proof of such a problem, but only biased assertions and circular reasoning devoid of good evidence. The evidence supports the traditional view that the synoptic gospels are independent, first hand, eyewitness reports or else based on eyewitness reports.¹⁰²

In summary, in chapter eight I have defined inspiration, given various theories concerning inspiration, emphasized the verbal plenary theory, explained the selection of writers, and given the process of inspiration. From here I continue on to two other closely related issues: the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 12.

CHAPTER NINE

INERRANCY AND INFALLIBILITY

In this chapter I take up some special issues regarding inspiration of Scripture. I first examine the issues of inerrancy, infallibility, deal with alleged discrepancies in the Bible, then place before you the Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy.

INERRANCY DEFINED

Though inerrancy is closely related and actually inseparable from inspiration, I give special attention to the doctrine because of its vital importance. First, I make a distinction between infallible and inerrant. Infallible means that Scripture does not tend to err or to deceive, mislead or to teach error. It refers to Scripture as being a “sure, safe and reliable rule and guide in all matters.”¹⁰³

Inerrant means that Scripture is without error (incapable of error) in the original writings as they came from the hands of the authors. The conservative evangelical view believes the correct view of Scripture is total inerrancy. To present this position I will disclose an extended definition, and then summarize the views supporting inerrancy. To expand on the definition I will let an expert teach us.

“The Bible in all of its parts constitutes the written Word of God to man. This Word is free from all error in its original autographs...It is wholly trustworthy in matters of history and doctrine. However limited may have been their knowledge, and however they may have erred when they were not writing sacred Scripture, the authors of Scripture, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, were preserved from making factual, historical, scientific, or other errors. The Bible does not purport to be a textbook of history, science, or mathematics; yet when the writers of Scripture spoke of matters embraced in these disciplines, they did not indite error; they wrote what was true.”¹⁰⁴

Evidence for inerrancy

From this expanded definition, I summarize the convincing arguments for inerrancy. 1. First I offer all the reasons we used to demonstrate the verbal, plenary view of inspiration in the last chapter. This would include the testimony of the Old and New Testament writers and of Jesus Christ. I may also add all the arguments presented thus

¹⁰³ “The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy,” in *Inerrancy*, Norman Geisler, ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980), p. 500.

¹⁰⁴ Harold Lindsell, *Battle For The Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p. 30, 31. Lindsell holds a Ph.D. from New York University and has served as vice president and professor at Fuller Theological Seminary. He was professor at Columbia Bible College and Northern Baptist Seminary and for many years was editor of the influential evangelical magazine, “Christianity Today.” His work is largely credited for bringing the great Southern Baptist Convention back from the brink of liberalism.

far in this book, including the 13 proofs that the Bible is inspired by God. I also offer the logical proof for inerrancy, which was that there can be no adequate communication without words that have precise meanings.

2. Second, the church throughout history believed in inerrancy, including the giants of the church, Augustine, Calvin and Luther, according to Paul Feinberg.¹⁰⁵ Augustine (A.D. 354-430) stated: "I have learned to yield this respect and honour only to the canonical books of Scripture: of these alone do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error."¹⁰⁶

The Westminster Confession of Faith (A.D. 1647) states that the Bible is "immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are (the Bible is) therefore authentical." I let another expert explain the historic position of the church.

"The Church, then, has held from the beginning that the Bible is the Word of God in such a sense that its words, though written by men and bearing indelibly impressed upon them the marks of their human origin, were written, nevertheless, under such an influence of the Holy Ghost as to be also the words of God, the adequate expression of His mind and will. It has always recognized that this conception of co-authorship implies that the Spirit's superintendence extends to the choice of the words by the human authors (verbal inspiration), and preserves its product from everything inconsistent with a divine authorship -thus securing, among other things, that entire truthfulness which is everywhere presupposed in and asserted for Scripture by the Biblical writers (inerrancy)."¹⁰⁷

3. Third, the reality of inerrancy is tied to the very nature of the divine revelation. The Bible is inspired by God Himself. He is the Divine Author. We must conclude, then, that the Bible rests on the character and credibility of God. God has perfect wisdom and communication ability. He has full access to all the facts. He is perfect in honesty and integrity of character. He can, therefore, reveal perfect information to mankind. Since He

¹⁰⁵ P.D. Feinberg, "Bible, Inerrancy and Infallibility of," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 143. Feinberg holds a Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He was professor of biblical and systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

¹⁰⁶ Cited by Feinberg, *Ibid.*, p. 143. For other sources establishing the view that the church through history believed in inerrancy see Robert D. Preus, "The View of the Bible Held by the Church: The Early Church Through History," *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), pp. 355-382; John H Gerstner, "The View of the Bible Held by the Church: Calvin and the Westminster Divines," *Inerrancy*, ed. Norman Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), pp. 383-410. Preus holds a Ph.D. from Edinburgh University and a D. Theol. from Strasbourg University, France. Gerstner holds a Ph.D. from Harvard.

¹⁰⁷ Benjamine B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1948), p. 173. Warfield was professor of theology at Princeton Theological Seminary (1887-1921) and at the time of his death was considered as one of the world's three outstanding theologians of the Reformed Faith. He was one of America's prominent conservative theologians.

claims to have given an inerrant word, then we must believe Him. In other words, inspiration demands inerrancy, based on the character of Almighty God.

4. Fourth, I also offer what is sometimes called the “slippery slope” argument. This position holds that if one decides the Bible has mistakes, then there is no stopping the slide into saying other major doctrines are also in error. It is like starting to slip on a slippery hillside. There is no way to stop sliding. Regarding inerrancy, if one believes inerrancy to be false, there is no logical place to stop saying other doctrines are also false.

There are those who say, for example, that the Bible may be in error in matters of history, science and miracles - but that it is true in spiritual matters. What about the Resurrection? Many of those same people would say the Resurrection was not a historical fact, or that it is scientifically impossible. Yet, the Resurrection is the key, foundational doctrine of Christianity. If the Resurrection did not happen, then we are very spiritually dead!

Another problem is this: who gets to decide which parts of the Bible are in error and which parts are true? Who is wise enough to decide which is false and true? Shall we let the modern, liberal theologian who uses the Historical Critical Method? Remember, however, the HCM starts with the assumption that God does not exist! In the final analysis, those who point out errors in the Bible do so by mere guesses and personal prejudice. And, too often it is secular society’s standards that overrule what the Bible says.

Let us be serious. Who in their right mind would let little, limited humanity, who will someday grow old and die, declare that the Bible is in error regarding matters of sin and judgment and salvation? Why would you trust your eternal destiny to mortal man’s very limited opinion? Be reminded that Jesus Christ rose from the dead to demonstrate the truthfulness of His words. Who else has offered that kind of evidence?

It is far better to believe a Bible that is backed up by an enormous amount of compelling evidence than to take the word of those who by arbitrary choice decide the Bible has mistakes.

Then consider this frightening situation: those who say the Bible has errors actually call Jesus Christ a liar. Jesus taught the Bible was error free. Jesus is God. To call God a liar places the accuser’s integrity in great question. Who in their right mind would want to believe and place their trust in someone who called Jesus Christ a liar? We may conclude that the issue of inerrancy is of significant importance to our living in this life and the next. To deny total inerrancy is downright dangerous!

DEALING WITH ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES

Alleged discrepancies and contradictions in the Bible are constantly raised by the critics to “prove” there are errors in the Bible. The logic follows this pattern, “If we can prove

contradictions in the Bible, then that makes the whole Bible untrustworthy – just another book like all the others books.”

How does the Christian deal with these accusations? Harold Lindsell, Ph.D., is a man of high academic qualification and integrity. In his landmark book, *The Battle for the Bible*, he gives this somewhat frustrated summation of the entire problem.

“I do not wish with a casual wave of my hand to dismiss the questions that critics have raised about errors in Scripture. However, I do not think the problem areas constitute a threat to biblical infallibility nor do I think that there are any insoluble difficulties. This does not mean that I can provide a ready solution to every datum raised by those who oppose inerrancy. I can say, however, that a multitude of what formerly were difficulties have been solved, so that the detractors have had to back water again and again. But as each apparent discrepancy is resolved, another objection is raised. Although in hundreds of cases criticisms of Scripture have been shown to be unfounded, those who refuse to believe in inerrancy never seem to be satisfied. Why is this so? Does it not constitute a frame of mind that wants to disbelieve? ..May not the real difficulty be a want of biblical faith rather than a want of evidence?”¹⁰⁸

Since the critics do seek to disprove the Bible, I must present a solution to those alleged discrepancies. Let me pick up and evaluate several of the issues that arise from alleged discrepancies, or contradictions. The first deals with the concept of a contradiction.

Contradictions defined

First, I focus our attention on the charge of alleged contradictions in the Bible. A contradiction is something cannot be true and false at the same time and in the same sense. For example, it cannot be raining and not raining at the same time and same place.

Applied to our case, the Bible cannot be errant and inerrant at the same time. Many attempts are made to try to establish one mistake in the Bible which would then make inerrancy impossible. Normally this is done by attempting to find internal contradictions, that is, statements within the Bible that are incompatible with each other.

- Second, contradictions are sought to be established by seeking out Bible statements that are perceived as contrary to modern knowledge. The issue of creation vs. evolution is an example of the latter. The following principles need to apply to establish a valid contradiction. First, it must be shown that the alleged contradiction is actually a part of the original text, because that is where the claim of inerrancy is made.

¹⁰⁸ Lindsell, p. 161.

- Second, it must be shown that the interpretation given to the Scripture is the only one possible.
- Third, it must be shown that there are no other possible solutions to the problem that could be viable, that is, satisfactorily explain the alleged contradiction.
- Fourth, if other possibilities exist that could explain the alleged conflict, then the seeming contradiction would be removed from the area of contradiction to that of a problem. The conclusion is that while there may be problems in the Bible, there are no contradictions, and with further evidence and study the problem will clear up.

The Bible, science & history

One area of alleged contradiction is in the area of science and history. That is, for example, there are statements in the Bible that differ from the views of secular science or history. Since it is assumed that secular science is right, then the Bible must be wrong - thus in error. But why assume that secular science is right and the Bible is wrong?

For example, it has already been shown that archaeology has not refuted the Bible, but actually has confirmed its historical accuracy. In addition, in referring to the validity of the Genesis record, one scientist, David L. Willis, instructs us to, “recognize the uniqueness and majesty of the Genesis record of origins. The relevance of this historical document cannot be dismissed from consideration. It constitutes valid evidence.”¹⁰⁹

The greatest area of controversy in science deals with creation vs. evolution. Rather than give a detailed analysis of all the scientific issues, I simply summarize and pinpoint the key issue by illustrating one problem, the origin of life. I quote a most striking analysis of the problem of origins given by two outstanding scientists. These men are not creationists. The point I am making is that the Bible is not contradictory to actual scientific “facts,” but only the theories of the scientific establishment who reject the Bible on philosophical grounds. These scientists write the following.

“Some people assume, entirely as a matter of faith, a Divine Creation of living substance. The only alternative seems to be the assumption that at some time in the dim past, the chance association of the requisite chemicals in the presence of favorable temperature, moisture, etc., produced living protoplasm. In other words, if one subscribes to this theory, he admits that the first protoplasm to appear on our earth was a product of spontaneous generation. Then, if he accepts the evidence of Pasteur and others against spontaneous generation, he

¹⁰⁹ David L. Willis, “Alternative Views of Evolution,” (Unpublished typewritten paper in this writer’s possession, ab. 1973), p.20. Willis holds a Ph. D. in biology and at the time of the paper was Professor of Biology at Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon (USA).

must reverse his explanation of the origin of the first protoplasm to explain the origin of all subsequent living protoplasm from that first protoplast.

“In other words, spontaneous generation, according to these opponents of the idea of Divine Creation, worked when the first living substance was formed, but probably hasn’t worked since. Actually, biologists are still as far away as they ever were in their attempts to explain how the first protoplasm originated. The evidence of those who would explain life’s origin on the basis of the accidental combination of suitable chemical elements is no more tangible than that of those people who place their faith in Divine Creation as the explanation of the development of life. Obviously, the latter have as much justification for their belief as do the former. It is possible that the problem of life’s beginning on our planet will always remain insoluble, a philosophical question rather than a subject capable of experimental investigation and solution”
- underline mine.¹¹⁰

Getting back to Willis, the biologist, he claims: “The major point here is that the Genesis record is not incompatible with contemporary scientific evidence. We have already seen that direct scientific evidence about the origin of life is nonexistent. At this time, the problem of origins lies outside the scientific realm and is purely philosophical. One may believe that life originated by purely natural causes, but this is one’s philosophy, not science” - underline mine.¹¹¹

Dr. Willis was writing in 1973, and cited Drs. Fuller and Tippo who were writing in 1954. These university professors could not write such a thing in today’s secular academic environment, because of the evolutionist’s bias – and who rule in academia. However, their point still rings true today.

I add one more scientist, a close personal friend, who explains, “Every single conflict between the Bible and science is artificial, or man-made. Fulfilled prophecy, archaeology and science research all declare the complete reliability of Scripture. Man’s ideas and conclusions continually change; the Bible does not.”¹¹²

There are, however, some verses in the Bible which seem to be unscientific. For example, Revelation 7:1 speaks of the “four corners of the earth.” The complaint is that the earth is round, thus it could not have corners. In answer, we say there are four compass directions: north, south, east, west, and it is to this the biblical writer is

¹¹⁰ Harry J. Fuller and Oswald Tippo, *College Botany* (New York: Henry Holt, 1954), p. 25, cited by Willis, *Ibid.*, p. 16. Drs. Fuller and Tippo were formerly of the University of Illinois and their book was a widely used text book at the university level.

¹¹¹ Willis, p. 18.

¹¹² Don DeYoung, interview with this author, Nuku’alofa, Tonga, Sept. 15, 1994. DeYoung is a physicist with a Ph.D. in Nuclear Physics from Iowa State University. He is chairman of the Physical Science Department of Grace College (University), author of many books on Bible and science and is editor of the technical journal, *Creation Research Society Quarterly*. This professional society is made up of Christians who believe in creation. The 2400 members must have at least a master’s degree in a hard science before they can become members.

referring. Most such statements are not unscientific but are merely the language of appearance – or figures of speech.

Another example is the city hanging in space in Revelation 21. It seems impossible, but we do not know the complete picture. Maybe that city is literal. After all, since God can hang a universe in space, couldn't He do the same with a city? After all, we have scientists shuttling back and forth to satellite stations orbiting the earth.

A good rule in biblical interpretation to follow is this: if there seems to be problems with a particular text that we do not fully understand, then wait for more information to clear up the problem. Do not jump to the conclusion that God made a mistake.

The Bible and miracles

Another area of controversy deals with miracles and prophecy. The underlying issue concerning miracles is that many people simply assume that miracles cannot happen. Their conclusion, therefore, is that miracles do not occur because they cannot occur. Prophecy is a form of miracle, thus, prophecy in the predictive sense cannot happen, according to these people.

The key fallacy in this reasoning is that the conclusion is based on the unproven assumption, which means they assume what they are trying to prove. That is circular reasoning. Again we quote the words of one theologian who does not believe in miracles in order to show what they really do believe.

“Our belief in a loving God does not allow us to depict this Being as pulling strings to control events here on earth. Our common sense of how the universe works does not allow us to conceive of God as ‘zapping’ into the normal course of natural laws. What, then, do we say about the Biblical accounts of miracles? If God doesn't go ‘zap’ then we cannot simply accept all the miracle stories as true at face value. There are three different approaches to miracles generally used by those interpreters of the Bible who don't simply accept them or reject them outright. These alternatives, we will see, boil down to a choice between explaining miracles away or ignoring them” - underline mine.¹¹³

Ross, of course, is wrong, but he represents many liberal theologians who believe as he does. As to the proof of miracles, we offer the evidence of the greatest miracle of all, the resurrection of Jesus Christ and fulfilled prophecy, a form of miracle. These two proofs were expanded in prior chapters. If these miracles can be demonstrated as valid, then all other genuine miracles can easily be accepted as well.

Old Testament quotes

There are objections to inerrancy in quoting and interpreting the Old Testament by the New Testament writers. The New Testament writers apparently misquoted the Old

¹¹³ Randolph C. Ross, *Common Sense Christianity* (New York: Occam Publishers, 1989), p. 41.

Testament, it is charged, or did not interpret passages correctly in some cases (e.g. Romans 10:6-8; Deuteronomy 30:12-14). There are several responses to push back against these objections.

First the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the New Testament in Greek. One cannot literally translate from one language to another. The NT writers in many cases simply took the ideas expressed in the OT and rewrote them in Greek.

On occasion the New Testament writers were pointing out Old Testament types that were fulfilled in the New Testament. Sometimes they were giving credit to an earlier prophecy that was quoted at a later date by another prophet. Sometimes they quoted from a mistranslation of the LXX (Matthew 2:14 - Hosea 11:1; Matthew 27:9 - Zechariah 11:13; Ephesians 4:26 - Psalm 4:4).

In the final analysis, the Holy Spirit is the Author of the whole Bible, and as Author He has the right to quote, interpret or paraphrase as He chooses, and to guarantee that what He records through human writers is itself accurate, does not contradict itself, and is without error. No truth was changed in the quotations, which themselves are free from error.

Just because a writer does a paraphrase of an earlier statement does not necessarily make either statement in error. For example, in this book I have explained the same concept using different words for each explanation. Does that make my words in error? No. Likewise, we have the Holy Spirit saying the same thing in different words each time, but none of the words are in error.

Morals & religion

Morals and religion, mostly in the Old Testament, are said to prove error. Certain recorded events are contrary to a loving God or other teachings, it is alleged. For example, sinful acts of men were recorded - even statements by Satan. These actions, however, were never sanctioned in the Bible, though they were recorded accurately. How can the Christian respond to these charges?

Sometimes evil acts (e.g. Rahab's duplicity) seem to be sanctioned. Several answers, however, can be given. In the case of Rahab, for example, some say she was responding to the highest good, saving an innocent life by a lie.¹¹⁴ Others would say her intention or virtue of faith was approved, but not the sinful act of lying.

Sometimes God permitted wrong things (e.g. divorce) to happen in the Old Testament (Matthew 5:31, 32; 19:7-9). Some prayers (e.g. the imprecatory Psalms) and commands (e.g. to kill the Canaanites) express God's judicial indignation toward His enemies. The destruction of the Canaanites, who were deeply involved in the vilest wickedness, was

¹¹⁴ For discussion of various ethical dilemmas see Norman Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Options and Issues*, revised ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989).

necessary to save the religious life of the Hebrews so as to bring the Savior into the world.

I can also point out two further factors. God is perfect and He decides what is right and wrong. We can have, consequently, confidence that what God does is just, righteous and has perfect purpose - even though we cannot always understand God's actions. We are mortals and do not have the understanding of God.

Second, who are we to question God? Paul writes, "For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion'...who are you, o man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?" (Romans 9:20-21).

Bible numbers

Another charge by the critics against inerrancy is alleged discrepancies in numbers where different figures are given on two different recordings. The answer to this attack is that most of the time the critic's error in pointing out a so-called contradiction, which in reality, does not even exist. Second, in some cases the author used rounded figures on one occasion - which is completely legitimate. On some occasions, but rarely, there may have been scribal errors in transmission.

An example of a "number" contradiction is recorded where Paul writes 23,000 and Moses 24,000 as the number of people that died during a particular event (1 Corinthians 10:8, Numbers 25:9). Many reasonable explanations have been given, but probably the best is simply to take the text at face value. Paul said 23,000 died in one day while Moses states that 24,000 died as a consequent of the total plague, which lasted more than one day.

Reports of same event

I now respond to the concern of variant reports. Many times two separate accounts of an event are given, yet the accounts vary from one another. The Lord's Prayer is one example (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2). A careful reading, however, indicates that they were given on two different occasions. The Matthew account is in a context of rebuking religious pride and the account by Luke is given in response to a disciple's question.

The inscription on the cross is another example (Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38; John 19:19; Matthew 27:37). It is said this points to a contradiction in the Bible. In answer, none of these inscriptions gives the entire inscription, but each supplements the other. There is no contradiction. Putting them all together one gets the full inscription: "This is Jesus, of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." The key is that variant reports are complimentary, not contradictory.

Alleged contradictory verses

There are those verses in the Bible that by their own words may seem to contradict inspiration or inerrancy. We list the verses below and explain the true meaning. Here are some samples.

1. In I Corinthians 7:6 it states, "But this I say by way of concession, not of a command." Paul is simply saying that he is giving permission to marry, and not a command. He is not saying that some of Scripture is from God with Paul's personal opinions stuck in here and there. The permission is of the Lord as well.

2. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 *states*, "But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away."

At first glance Paul seems to be saying that some biblical instructions are from himself while other instructions are from Jesus. The opposite is true. Paul is repeating a commandment in substance first given by Christ (Matthew 19:3-9). In fact, he is saying that the command is actually Christ's command. To take the idea one step further, Paul's statement assumes and confirms the authority of Christ on his (Paul's) writing; thus, actually confirming the inspiration of Paul's writings!

3. I Corinthians 7:12 states, "But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away." Do we again have the problem of Paul giving some uninspired instruction while Christ's are inspired? Not at all.

Paul is saying that Christ did not give specific teaching regarding spiritually mixed marriages, but that he is, and that his (Paul's) teaching was authoritative. In other words, Paul was claiming inspiration for his word.

4. I Corinthians 7:39, 40, "A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God."

Do we have Paul giving a mere opinion? Does he just think he has the Holy Spirit? No. First, he claims his opinion is inspired by the Holy Spirit. In the second case, Paul is using modest sarcasm. There were those in Corinth who were claiming inspiration from God in the same sense as Paul, and that they were really superior to Paul. His reply? "I think I too have the Holy Spirit." In other words, he was clearly telling them his judgment was from God.

Inerrancy and original autographs

I come back to a matter which must again be emphasized. Evangelicals maintain that the Bible is without error only in the original writings. We do not claim that any particular translation is without error. Many errors have crept in through centuries of manuscript transmission. These are errors caused by the scribes and include such things as spelling and numbers.

The claim of inerrancy applying only to the original writings invites criticism. Some people say that this is simply an excuse not to have to deal with the problem of contradictions. They say that since we do not have the original writings, then we are making a claim for something that does not exist. The position is pointless, they say. There is a very simple rebuttal, however.

1. The original writings did exist at one time. They are the writings that came from each of the authors of each of the Bible books as each author was guided by the Holy Spirit. They were real.

2. The Holy Spirit is the real Author of the Bible and He is God. Jesus Christ Himself taught the inerrancy of Scripture. Thus, if the Bible has errors in it, then God's character is called into question. It is not wise to attribute wickedness to a Holy God!

3. The critics maintain that there may be some errors in the text of the Bible as we have it today. That may be true, but they go too far by saying that it makes no difference what the originals had. They fail to understand the seriousness of their allegations.

The implication is that God originally gave the documents with error. They are saying that God could not give the Bible without its being full of mistakes. To illustrate the problem: consider a set of pants that have been repaired with patches of cloth and still have many holes and tears that need repair. Would one want to say that is how the tailor originally made them? No, that would not be fair to the tailor's reputation. In fact, it would be an insult – and untrue.

Likewise, it is the same with God's reputation. If we say it is unimportant whether or not the originals had error, then we call God's ability, intent, and character into question.

4. The Hebrews were very careful in passing their texts of the OT down through the centuries, giving us a very accurate Old Testament (cf. the Dead Sea Scrolls on Isaiah with the Masoretic text). Further, with over 5,000 manuscripts on the NT scholars are able to correct most scribal errors and thus it is accurate to say that the biblical text we have today is substantially and virtually the same New Testament as the original.

Some of our NT manuscripts (for example John) are thought to be written within 50 years of the original with only one or two intervening manuscripts from the original. The conclusion? Inerrancy applied to the original documents is very important, and is not evangelicals just offering an excuse to explain away alleged mistakes in the Bible.

To repeat what I have said earlier, even though there are variances in the many manuscripts that exist, it is safe to say that the pristine original words are contained within the pool of manuscripts. As you recall from chapter two, A.T. Robertson estimated that our present text is 99.9% pure. The other .1% is present somewhere within the pool of available textual information, but cannot be identified with absolute certainty.

THE CHICAGO STATEMENT ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY.

To summarize what I mean by inerrancy I present below the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. This statement is the result of a conference held in Chicago (USA) of some three hundred evangelical scholars, pastors and laymen in 1978.¹¹⁵

A commentary was also provided that I do not reproduce here. In the articles it is helpful to note that the “affirmations” are what evangelicals believe, while the “denials” are what liberals believe. The contrasts help you to see clearly the differences between the evangelical and liberal view. Later on I also provide critical, historical statements on biblical inerrancy. I present first a short statement on biblical inerrancy by the Chicago Statement, and then give the articles of affirmation and denial.

A SHORT STATEMENT

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God’s witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God’s own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God’s instruction in all that it affirms; obeyed, as God’s command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God’s pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture’s Divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God’s acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God’s saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in

¹¹⁵ Statement taken from Norman Geisler, *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980), pp. 494-497.

any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

ARTICLES OF AFFIRMATION AND DENIAL

Article I

We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God. We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church tradition, or any other human source.

Article II

We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture. We deny that Church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

Article III

We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God. We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

Article IV

We affirm that God who made mankind in His image has used language as a means of revelation.

We deny that human language is so limited by our creatureliness that it is rendered inadequate as a vehicle for divine revelation. We further deny that the corruption of human culture and language through sin has thwarted God's work of inspiration.

Article V

We affirm that God's revelation in the Holy Scriptures was progressive. We deny that later revelation, which may fulfill earlier revelation, ever corrects or contradicts it. We further deny that any normative revelation has been given since the completion of the New Testament writings.

Article VI

We affirm that the whole of Scripture and all its parts, down to the very words of the original, were given by divine inspiration. We deny that the inspiration of Scripture can rightly be affirmed of the whole without the parts, or of some parts but not the whole.

Article VII

We affirm that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.

We deny that inspiration can be reduced to human insight or heightened states of consciousness of any kind.

Article VIII

We affirm that God in His Work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared.

We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.

Article IX

We affirm that inspiration, though not conferring omniscience, guaranteed true and trustworthy utterance on all matters of which the Biblical authors were moved to speak and write.

We deny that the finitude or fallenness of these writers, by necessity or otherwise, introduced distortion or falsehood into God's Word.

Article X

We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.

We deny that any essential element of the Christian faith is affected by the absence of the autographs. We further deny that this absence renders the assertion of Biblical inerrancy invalid or irrelevant.

Article XI

We affirm that Scripture, having been given by divine inspiration, is infallible, so that far from misleading us, it is true and reliable in all the matters it addresses.

We deny that it is possible for the Bible to be at the same time infallible and errant in its assertions. Infallibility and inerrancy may be distinguished, but not separated.

Article XII

We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Article XIII

We affirm the propriety of using inerrancy as a theological term with reference to the complete truthfulness of Scripture.

We deny that it is proper to evaluate Scripture according to standards of truth and error that are alien to its usage or purpose. We further deny that inerrancy is negated by Biblical phenomena such as a lack of modern technical precision, irregularities of grammar or spelling, observational descriptions of nature, the reporting of falsehoods, the use of hyperbole and round numbers, the topical arrangement of material variant selections of material in parallel accounts, or the use of free citations.

Article XIV

We affirm the unity and internal consistency of Scripture.

We deny that alleged errors and discrepancies that have not yet been resolved vitiate the truth claims of the Bible.

Article XV

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy is grounded in the teaching of the Bible about inspiration.

We deny that Jesus' teaching about Scripture may be dismissed by appeals to accommodation or to any natural limitation of His humanity.

Article XVI

We affirm that the doctrine of inerrancy has been integral to the Church's faith throughout its history.

We deny that inerrancy is a doctrine invented by Scholastic Protestantism, or is a reactionary position postulated in response to negative higher criticism.

Article XVII

We affirm that the Holy Spirit bears witness to the Scriptures, assuring believers of the truthfulness of God's written Word.

We deny that this witness of the Holy Spirit operates in isolation from or against Scripture.

Article XVIII

We affirm that the text of Scripture is to be interpreted by grammatico-historical exegesis, taking account of its literary forms and devices, and that Scripture is to interpret Scripture.

We deny the legitimacy of any treatment of the text or quest for sources lying behind it that leads to relativizing, dehistoricizing, or discounting its teaching, or rejecting its claims to authorship.

Article XIX

We affirm that a confession of the full authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture is vital to a sound understanding of the whole of the Christian faith. We further affirm that such confession should lead to increasing conformity to the image of Christ.

We deny that such confession is necessary for salvation. However, we further deny that inerrancy can be rejected without grave consequences, both to the individual and to the Church.

This completes chapter nine. I took up some special issues regarding inspiration of Scripture. I first examined the issues of inerrancy, infallibility, then, dealt with alleged discrepancies and contradictions in the Bible. I closed by presenting the Chicago Statement of Biblical Inerrancy.

This brings you and I to another important question, “How do we know which books are inspired, and therefore should be included in the Bible?” Good question. That is exactly the issue I tackle in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TEN

THE CANON OF THE BIBLE

Recently in Tonga (@1994) there was a decision to provide a new translation of the Bible. Much controversy arose over whether to include the Apocrypha. The issue raised was this: what books should make up the Bible? This chapter attempts to summarize the central issues; thus, we must deal with what is known as the “canon” of Scripture. We will define what “canon” means, give the key considerations, tests and formation of canon, and finally, discuss the Apocrypha and canon.

THE CANON OF SCRIPTURE DEFINED

The “canon of Scripture” refers to those writings that make up the Bible and constitute the norm for the Christian Faith. The word “canon” means a rod, or ruler, and was eventually expanded to mean any standard or model. Second, it came to mean any authoritative decision of a church council. Third, as applied to the Bible, it means those books that have been measured, evaluated and recognized as inspired by God.

The canon is the standard of measurement used to determine what books should be in the Bible. The major issues involved are: which is that revelation given by the inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16)? How is that inspiration demonstrated? How can we recognize that inspiration? More plainly, how can we tell which books are inspired by God?

KEY CONSIDERATIONS OF CANON

Before I list the exact tests the early church placed to each book, I need to highlight three central issues that are vital to our understanding. First, Scripture is self-authenticating and the church councils only “recognized” their inspiration and authority. The councils did not just take a vote and decide to “pronounce” some books inspired of God. They only recognized the inspiration of God that was inherent in each document.

Second, God guided the councils so that the canon was recognized. The Holy Spirit is still alive and well, and concerned with the Bible. Finally, the canon was closed by Christ at the completion of the book of Revelation (Revelation 22:18-20). To take this one step further, the individual books were of canon status at the time they were written. The council simply gathered and formalized what had been recognized by the church as a whole for many years.

THE TESTS OF CANON.

Below I list eight individual tests the early church applied to recognize the divine inspiration of each book of Scripture.

1. Apostolic (NT) or prophetic (OT) origin was one standard used to determine if a book was inspired by God. Was the work written or backed by a prophet or Apostle? Mark

was not an apostle, for example, but he wrote for Peter. Three things were necessary to qualify as an Apostle.

First, one had to have seen or been with Jesus and been an eyewitness to His resurrection (Acts 1:22; 1 Corinthians 9:1; 1 John 1:1-4). Second, one had to be invested with miraculous sign-gifts (Acts 5:16-16; Hebrews 2:3-4). Third, the man had to have been chosen by the Lord or the Holy Spirit (Matthew 10:1-2; Acts 1:26; Acts 9:15; 1 Timothy 1:1). Today no one can qualify as an apostle in the New Testament sense.

2. The witness of the Holy Spirit was a standard. This experience is an inner assurance, recognition or awareness given to believers when the Word of God is heard or preached. This is a part of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 10:3, 4, 16; Romans 8:16; Acts 5:32; John 16:7-15; 1 John 4:6).

3. Recognition by the Church was a standard. Was there a reception or acceptance by the early church at large? As various writings were circulated (e.g. Colossians 4:16) among the early churches, certain ones became recognized as being inspired by God (e.g. 2 Peter 3:15-16). Eventually the entire collection was brought together as a whole as we know it today.

4. The Content of a book was carefully considered. Was the book of sufficient spiritual character? Did it center on the Person and work of Christ? Did it agree doctrinally with other recognized works of canon?

5. Inspiration was a consideration. Did the book give internal evidence of inspiration? All the books of the New Testament claim to be inspired, or a product of divine guidance.¹¹⁶ This was the ultimate test.

6 . The testimony of Jesus is a further standard that could be used. He approved the Old Testament (Luke 24:44-45), predicted the coming NT (John 16:13-15), the Apostles spoke of receiving that revelation (1 Corinthians 2:10; Hebrews 2:3-4), and Jesus announced the termination of revelation (Revelation 22:18-20). Thus, we can say that anything written after the book of Revelation cannot be part of the canon of Scripture.

7. The power to changes lives was a standard. Did the content impact the lives of those who read its pages (1 Peter 1:23-25; 2:2; Hebrews 4:12)?

8. A noted biblical scholar, Angus-Green, is quoted as, "The Holy Spirit given to the Church, quickened holy instincts, aided discernment between the genuine and the spurious, and thus led to gradual, harmonious, and in the end unanimous conclusions."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Geisler & Nix, pp. 94-97.

¹¹⁷ Henry Thiessen, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1943), p. 10.

THE FORMATION OF CANON.

The Old Testament canon was settled in the 5th century B.C. Two Jewish Scholars, David Kimchi (1160-1232) and Elias Levita (1465-1549) said the Old Testament canon was finally collected and completed by Ezra and the Great Council in the 5th century. Testimony from the "Prologue of Ecclesiasticus" (c. 132 B.C.) indicates a closed canon at that time.¹¹⁸ Certainly the OT canon was completed when Malachi was written (c. 450-400 B.C.).

The final determination of the content of the OT canon is the testimony of Jesus. He spoke of righteous people being murdered from "*righteous Abel unto the blood of Zechariah*" (Matthew 23:35). That is the modern equivalent of saying "from Genesis to Revelation," thus implying the Jewish Old Testament as canon. Zechariah's death is recorded in 2 Chronicles 24:20-22, which is the last book in the Jewish arrangement of the Hebrew Old Testament.

In Luke 24:25, 27, 44, 45 Jesus said the Law of Moses, Prophets and Psalms were Scripture. This was the three-fold division of Hebrew Old Testament Scripture. (See also Matthew 21:42; 22:29).

The New Testament canon closed with the writing of Revelation in about A.D. 96. It was finally collected and settled at the Council of Carthage (AD. 397). The canonization process involved three stages. The first stage was that of apostolic authority - they claimed authority for their own writings (e.g. I Thessalonians 5:27; Colossians 4:16).

Next came the post apostolic stage. All the books were recognized with the exception of a few. Finally, by the end of the fourth century all the 27 books in our present NT canon were recognized by all the churches in the west (AD. 397). The canon was closed (with the same books) for the Eastern Church by A.D. 500.

The NT canon shaped itself. No church authority or council interfered, made decisions or decrees that certain books should be in the New Testament. The books themselves, based on their own apparent genuineness, were simply formally collected and recognized for what they were - the inspired Word of God.

THE APOCRYPHA AND CANON.

Defined, the Apocrypha is a group of 14 or 15 books written during the silent years between the Old and New Testament. They include Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Song of the Three Children, History of Suzannah, Bel and the Dragon, 1 & 2 Maccabees, sometimes 1&2 Esdras and prayer of Manasses, and Letter of Jeremiah.¹¹⁹ These books are in addition to the Hebrew Old Testament Canon.

¹¹⁸ Geisler & Nix, p. 237.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 266.

Sometimes some of the books go by different names. The early church considered them valuable for private study, edification and a source of information on the times between the Old and New Testament, but they were not raised to the status of canon.

There arose confusion in those early days over which OT books should be canonical. It arose over two different traditions of Old Testament canon. First, there was the Hebrew Bible canon which was accepted by the Jews in Jerusalem. It did not contain the Apocrypha and included only those books now found in the Protestant Bible. Only the Hebrew canon was accepted by Jesus, Josephus and Jerome.

Second, there was the Alexandrian collection. In about 250 B.C., Jews in Alexandria, Egypt, translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek and that became known as the Septuagint (LXX). This canon included 14 or 15 Apocrypha books. These additional books were never recognized by the Jews as canon, a fact even acknowledged by the great Augustine.¹²⁰ Even the powerful Jewish philosopher, Philo (20 B.C. - AD. 40), did not quote from the Apocrypha as Scripture.¹²¹ Some Christians, however, in the early church did accept some of the books as canon.

At this point we mention a major conflict between The Roman Catholic Church on one hand and the Protestant church on the other hand. The Roman Catholic Church admitted 11 or 12 of the 14 or 15 books of the Apocrypha to canon status, but not until centuries later: "Not until AD. 1546, in a polemical action at the counter-Reformation Council of Trent (1545-63), did the apocryphal books receive full canonical status by the Roman Catholic Church."¹²²

The most significant voice of the early church fathers who believed the Apocrypha to be canon was Augustine and the councils he influenced (Hippo, A .D. 393) and presided over (Carthage, A.D. 397). Even then, Augustine considered only six of the books to have the authority of canon: Tobias, Judith, 1&2 Maccabees, Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus.¹²³

However, the most powerful voice of that time, and Augustine's contemporary, Jerome, who wrote the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate Bible, vigorously denied the canon status of the Apocrypha. Further, even Augustine himself, later in life, "admitted that there was a distinct difference between the books of the Hebrew canon and the outside books."¹²⁴ Other great voices of the era who spoke against the Apocrypha were Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem and Athanasius.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Cited by Geisler & Nix, p. 269.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 272.

¹²² Ibid., p. 273.

¹²³ Aurelius Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. J. F. Shaw in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*. vol. 2, 1st. series, edited by Philip Schaff, reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Win. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), pp. 538-539.

¹²⁴ C.T. Fritsch, "Apocrypha," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick, 4 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 1:164.

¹²⁵ Geisler & Nix, p. 272.

What can we conclude from this conflict? All the arguments for using the Alexandrian grouping as canon merely boil down to the fact that the Apocrypha books were given varying degrees of status and authority within the early church, but never full status as canon until the Council of Trent in A.D. 1546.

Protestants, in contrast to Roman Catholics, do not believe the apocrypha should be included in the canon of Scripture for several reasons. However, many Protestants do read them for historical data and devotional purposes. They are certainly not to be condemned, but considered as valid literature of the time – but not inspired in the sense of the Bible.

1. The authority of the authors is questioned. They were not the work of a prophet nor were they written during a prophetic period. They were written 200 B.C.-A.D. 100. The book of 1 Maccabees, for example, claims that during the bad times surrounding the death of Judas and before (@160 B.C.) there were no prophets, “It was a time of great affliction for Israel, worse than any since the day when prophets ceased to appear among them” (1 Maccabees 9:27).

2. The quality of the books is questioned. Doctrine does not agree with the rest of the Bible. The language is fanciful and wild. Most do not claim inspiration. There are historical mistakes in many books and the ethics are inferior.¹²⁶

3. The verdict of God’s people says no. None of the Apocrypha books are quoted in the New Testament, and none are mentioned in the New Testament as authoritative; thus, they were rejected as inspired by the New Testament church.

They were not accepted by the of Jesus day. They were never accepted in Hebrew canon by the Jews and were deliberately rejected from being in the Hebrew canon at the Synod of Jamnia (A.D. 90), a teaching house of rabbis who recognized the books of the Hebrew canon.¹²⁷ We have already stated that Philo rejected the Apocrypha, as did the Jewish historian, Josephus (AD. 30- 100).¹²⁸ Even the Jewish religious Qumran community (Dead Sea Scrolls) did not accept the Apocrypha. They lived in the first century before and after Christ.

The Church of England, under Roman Catholic influence, included 1&2 Esdras. As to the rest of the Apocrypha, “the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners: but yet doth it not apply to them to establish any doctrine.”¹²⁹

The Apocrypha was rejected by the reformers (Calvin, Luther, etc.), “The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of

¹²⁶ Jack P. Lewis, “Apocrypha,” *Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia*, eds. Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos, John Rea, 2 vols. (Chicago: Moody, 1975), 1:111

¹²⁷ J. N. Birdsall, “Apocrypha,” *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. J.D. Douglas (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1962), p. 44.

¹²⁸ Cited by Geisler & Nix, p. 272.

¹²⁹ “The Articles of Religion,” Article VI.

the scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.”¹³⁰

The Church (including Jerome who wrote the Latin Vulgate) rejected the apocrypha for 1,500 years. It was accepted by Rome in reaction to the Protestant Reformation, possibly because doctrine can be found in the Apocrypha (e.g. salvation by works, prayers for the dead, etc.) that would counter Luther.

4. The testimony of Jesus is the key. He never mentioned the Apocrypha, never quoted them and He made it clear He only accepted the Scripture that the Jews of His day accepted, which excluded the Apocrypha (Luke 24:44-45). Most of those books existed during the lifetime of Jesus.

For a full discussion of the issues, the reader is referred to Geisler & Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, 1986, pp. 264-275.

In this chapter the subject was the canon of Scripture. I defined what canon means, gave the key considerations, tests and formation of canon, and finally, discussed the Apocrypha and canon. From this point I will list for you various traditional church documents regarding Scripture. This will give you an overview and sense of history regarding the issue of Canon. I present the Reformed (Presbyterian), Anglican, and Methodist confessions.

¹³⁰ “Westminster Confession of Faith,” Chap. 1, Article IV.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

VARIOUS CHURCH DOCUMENTS

For the purpose of documentation and general information, I include various creeds that are representative of the historic, traditional, orthodox belief of the Protestant church concerning the doctrine of Scripture.

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH

(Presbyterian, Reformed – (completed: A.D. 1647)

Background

This great confession of faith is the last of the classic Reformed confessions, and is probably the most influential in the English speaking world. In 1643 the English Parliament summoned many theologians to restructure the Church of England along Puritan lines. The result was this magnificent Calvinistic statement that is the standard for Presbyterian and Reformed churches.

The confession has been adopted, with some modifications, by many Congregational and Baptist churches. It governed briefly the Church of England. One famous theologian from a conservative point of view, B.B. Warfield, called the first chapter (regarding Scripture) the best single chapter in any Protestant confession. I repeat for you below that chapter.

The Confession

I. Although the light of nature, and the works of creation and providence, do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom and power of God, as to leave men inexcusable; (Romans 2:14), yet they are not sufficient to give that knowledge of God, and of his will, which is necessary unto salvation: (1 Corinthians 1:21) therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his Church; (Hebrews 1:1), and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing; (Proverbs 22:19), which maketh the holy scripture to be most necessary; (2 Timothy 3:15), whose for ways of God's revealing his will unto his people being now ceased (Hebrews 1:1).

II. Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testament, which are these: (listed are those presently in the Protestant Bible, excluding the Apocrypha – editor note). All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life (Luke 16:29).

III. The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are not part of the canon of the scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings (Luke 24:27).

IV. The authority of the holy scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, (who is truth itself,) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God (2 Peter 1:19).

V. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverend esteem of the holy scripture, (1 Timothy 3:15) and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is to give all glory to God,) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the word of God yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts (1 John 2:20).

VI. The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men (2 Timothy 3:15). Nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word; (John 5:45) and that there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the Church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed (1 Corinthians 11:13).

VII. All things in scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; (2 Peter 3:16) yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them (Psalm 119:105).

VIII. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old,) and the New Testament in Greek, (which at the time of the writing of it was most generally known to the nations,) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical; (Matthew 5:18) so as in all controversies of religion the Church is finally to appeal unto them (Isaiah 8:20). But because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto and interest in the scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, (John 5:39) therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, (1 Corinthians 14:6) that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner,

(Colossians 3:16) and, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, may have hope (Romans 15:4).

IX. The infallible rule of interpretation of scripture is the scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture, (which is not manifold, but one,) it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly (2 Peter 1:20).

X. The supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the scripture (Matthew 22:29).

**THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES OF
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
(A.D. 1563, 1571; American revision used here, 1801).**

Background

This confession arose as one of the results of the sixteenth century English Reformation. Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1533-1556, was the major force behind the articles. They are a moderate, biblical and inclusive statement of Reformation theology. These articles are the historic doctrinal standard of the Church of England and its world-wide Anglican Communion.

The document is evangelical and powerful, but unfortunately, considered as merely a venerated historical document among the liberal or broad church within Anglicanism. The evangelical and Catholic wings still regard the Articles as valid. Below I give only the article that deals with Holy Scripture.

The articles

VI. Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.

Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.

In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.

Of the Names and Number of the Canonical Books. (Listed are those books found in the Protestant Bible plus the first and second book of Esdras. They were included under Catholic influence – ed. Note).

And the other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners: but yet doth it not apply to them to establish any doctrine: such are these following: The Third Book of Esdras, the Fourth Book of Esdras, the Book of Tobias, the Book of Judith, the rest of the Book of Esther, the Book of Wisdom, Jesus

the Son of Sirach, Baruch the Prophet, the Song of the Three Children, the Story of Susanna, Of Bel and the Dragon, The Prayer of Manasses, the First Book of Maccabees, the Second Book of Maccabees.

All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive, and account them Canonical.

VII. Of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.

VIII. Of the Creeds.

The Nicene Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.

METHODIST ARTICLES OF RELIGION, 1784

Background

These articles were drawn up by John Wesley and serve as a standard for the Methodist church. They are an abridgment of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England with the Calvinistic and other features being omitted.

The articles

V. THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES FOR SALVATION.

The Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church. The names of the canonical books are –

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, The First Book of Samuel, The Second Book of Samuel, The First Book of Kings, The Second Book of Kings, The First Book of Chronicles, The Second Book of Chronicles, The Book of Ezra, The Book of Nehemiah, The Book of Esther, The Book of Job, The Psalms, The Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or the Preacher, Cantica or Songs of Solomon, Four Prophets the greater, Twelve Prophets the less. (All books of the Apocrypha are excluded –ed. Note.).

VI. OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and the rites, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity be received in any commonwealth, yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments which are called moral.

A FINAL WORD

We have taken a long journey, touching on the nature of the Bible. We must now conclude our examination of that wonderful Book. To review the course of our travels, we bring again to our mid the seven major landmarks that have guided us along the way: 1. General background information; 2. Sequence of God's communication to mankind; 3. Proofs for the Bible as God's revelation; 4. Revelation from God; 5. Inspiration of Scripture; 6. Inerrancy and infallibility; 7. The canon of Scripture; 8. Various church documents.

But before I can bring this study to a close, I must place before you again the major purpose of my labor. My purpose is that stated by the Apostle John, "Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:30, 31).

I urge you, if you have not personally received Christ as your Savior, would you do so today? Turn again to the first part of this book and read the page on "How to be Saved." All the research accomplished, the money spent, the words written was not for the purpose of just winning an argument. These words and concepts have been written that Christ might be glorified and you, dear reader, might receive Christ and be saved.

For the Christian, I present this labor of love that you might be strengthened in your faith. My prayer is that you will find a new boldness, knowing that you do not need to be intimidated by the secular intellectual world of science and philosophy – or other religions. If you believe, know and love the Bible, then you believe, know and love the truth – and Jesus Christ. Your great advantage is that you have the truth on your side, and truth always wins in the end. In the midst of life's troubles, you can trust the Bible. You can use the Bible as a foundation for your life, family, society and nation. You can believe the Bible.

SUGGESTED READINGS

The suggested readings listed below for the most part are older classics that have stood the test of time. They are solid works of scholarship. Perhaps the latest issues are not addressed (for example, the emerging church), but to be richly informed in the defense of the Bible is to be armed for the constant stream of ideas directed against the Bible. The latest arguments brought against the Bible are not really new. They are simply the old arguments dressed up with new labels in an attempt to display “new” evidence against the Bible – which is not really new at all. What these authors write is still good for today.

- Archer, Gleason L. *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1974.
- Brown, Harold O.J. *The Protest of a Troubled Protestant*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969.
- Geisler, Norman L. *Inerrancy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.
- _____. *Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976.
- _____. *Miracles and Modern Thought*. Dallas: Probe Ministries International, 1982.
- _____. *Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982
- Geisler, Norman L and William Z. Nix. *A General Introduction to the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1980.
- Gundry, Stanley N., and Alan F. Johnson. *Tensions in Contemporary Theology*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1976.
- Guthrie, Donald. *New Testament Introduction*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970.
- Halley, Henry H., *Halley's Bible Handbook*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1967.
- Harris, R. Laird. *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969.
- Harrison, Roland Kenneth. *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969.
- _____. *Introduction to the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971.
- Johnson, Philip E. *Darwin on Trial*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 1991.
- Lewis, C. S. *Miracles*. New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1947.
- Linneman, Eta. *Historical Criticism of the Bible*. Trans. R.W. Yarborough. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990.
- _____. *Is There a Synoptic Problem?* Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Co., 1992.
- Lindsell, Harold. *The Battle for the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1969.
- _____. *The Bible in the Balance*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979.
- McDowell, Josh. *Evidence That Demands A Verdict*. Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1972.
- _____. *More Evidence That Demands A Verdict*. Campus Crusade for Christ International, 1975.
- Montgomery, John Warwick. *Crisis in Lutheran Theology*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1967.
- _____. Ed. *God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on Trustworthiness of Scripture*. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1974.
- Morris, Henry M. *The Long War Against God*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989.
- _____. *Science and the Bible*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1986.
- Pache, Rene. *The Inspiration and Authority of the Scripture*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1969.
- Pinnock, Clark. *Biblical Revelation – The Foundation of Christian Theology*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1971.

- Ramm, Bernard. *Protestant Biblical Interpretation*. 3rd. revised ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965.
- Sparrow-Simpson, W.J. *The Resurrection and the Christian Faith*. Grand Rapids. Zondervan Publishing House, 1968.
- Tenney, Merrill C. *The Reality of the Resurrection*. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963.
- Unger, Merrill F. *Unger's Bible Handbook*. Chicago: Moody Press. 1967.
- Warfield, Benjamin B. *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. Phillipsburg: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1948.
- Young, Edward J. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964.

AUTHOR INDEX

- Adams, Thomas, p. 20.
Albright, W.F., p. 46, 50; n. 50.
Anderson, Norman, n. 60.
Anderson, Sir Robert, n. 45.
Angus Green, p. 114.
Archer, Gleason, n. 3, 27, 42, 58, 59; p. 33.
Ariarajah, Wesley, n. 36.
Arnold, Thomas, p. 59
Augustine, Aurelius, pp. 98, 116, n. 123.
- Baille, John, p. 87.
Barnabas, p. 51
Barth, Karl, p. 87.
Birdsall, J.N., n. 127.
Blaiklock, E.M., 46, 50; n. 22, 53, 66.
Bromily, Geoffrey, n. 24.
Brown, Harold, p. 123; n. 39.
Bruce, F.F., n. 22, 71, 66.
Brunner, Rudolf, p. 87
Bulu, Joel, p. 23
Bultmann, Rudolf, p. 37, 49; n. 34, 61.
Burtner, Robert W., n. 88.
- Calvin, John, p. 98, 119; n. 106.
Chiles, Robert, n. 88.
Clement of Rome, p. 51.
Copley, Singleton, p. 59.
DeYoung, Don, p. 4, 6, n. 60, 112
Diocletian, p. 65
Douglas, J.D., n. 9, 10, 127.
- Ebeling, Gerhard, p. 39
Elwell, Walter A., n. 105
- Farrands, W.L., n. 67
Feinberg, Paul D., n. 44, 52, 105, 106.
Fritsch, C.T., n. 124
Fronmuller, G.G.C., n. 95
Fuchs, Ernst, p. 39
Fuller, Harry J., n. 110
- Gasque, W. Ward, n. 73, 74.
Geisler, Norman L., n. 5, 8, 22, 29, 39, 63, 68, 69, 76, 103, 114, 115, 116, 118, 119, 121, 122.
Geisler, Norman L & Nix, William E., n. 5, 22, 25, 120, 128.
Gerstner, John H., n. 106
Gleuck, Nelson, n. 51; p. 46
Gogarten, Friedrich, p. 39.
Greenleaf, Simon, p. 52, 59; n. 75
Grieve, Val, n. 80.
Guthrie, Donald, p. 123; n. 70.
- Harrison, Everett, n. 70.
Harrison, R.K., p. 123; n. 42.
Henry, Carl, n. 39.
Hermas, p. 51.
Hitler, p. 45.
Hodge, Charles, n. 92.
Hoffman, Mark S., n. 89.
Homer, p. 49.
- Ingersoll, p. 65.
- Johnson, Philip, n. 21, 35.
Josephus, Flavius, n. 77; p. 59, 116
Kerr, William F., n. 99.
Kimchi, David, p. 115.
Kittel, Gerhard, n. 24.
- LeBlanc, Doug, n. 83, 85, 86.
Lewis, C.S., n. 76.
Levita, Elias, p. 115.
Lewis, P. Jack, n. 126.
Lightfoot, J.R., n. 72.
Linden, Eugene, n. 12.
Lindsell, Harold, n. 104, 108.
Linneman, Eta, n. 40, 41, 101, 102; p. 39, 95, 123.
Locke, John, p. 60; n. 81.
Luther, Martin, p. 98, 117, 118.
- Maddox, J., n. 19. p. 26.
Marcion, p. 51, 52
Martin, Walter, p. 33, n. 28
Mayor, J.B., n. 94.
McClain, Alva J., n. 45.
McConkie, Bruce R., n. 90.

McDowell, Josh, n. 31, 39, 43, 46, 64, 82; p. 124.

Metzger, Bruce, n. 84.

Morris, Henry M., n. 4.

Newton, John, p. 33.

Ogden, Schubert, n. 36, 96, 97, 98.

O'Keefe, J.A.B., n. 67.

Papias, p. 31.

Paton, J.G., p. 23.

Payne, J. Barton, n. 1, 30, 43

Pentecost, Dwight, n. 43.

Pfeiffer, Charles, n. 49, 51, 126.

Philo, p. 117

Pilkey, John, n. 48.

Pliny, p. 64.

Plummer, Alfred, n. 91.

Polycarp, p. 51.

Preuss, Robert, n. 106.

Ramm, Bernard, n. 11.

Ramsay, William, n. 54, 56; p. 46.

Rea, John, n. 51, 126.

Robertson, Archibald T., n. 93, 100; p. 19, 76, 107.

Robinson, John, p. 51.

Russell, Bertrand, n. 38.

Ross, Randolph, p. 103; n. 113.

Schaff, Philip, n. 123.

Shaw, J.F., n. 123.

Sloan, W.W., n. 32.

Smith, Wilbur, n. 78, 79, 80, 81

Sproul, R.C., n. 29.

Soulen, Richard, n. 37; p. 38.

Tacitus, p. 64.

Tan, Paul Lee, n. 43.

Thierring, Barbara, n. 33.

Thiessen, Henry, n. 23, 43, 87, 117.

Tillich, Paul, n. 36.

Tippo, Oswald, n. 110.

Tupou I, HRH King George, p. 23.

Valentinus, p. 51.

Velikovsky, Immanuel, n. 48.

Vi, Pita, p. 23.

Voltaire, p. 65.

Vos, Howard, n. 51, 126.

Wace, Henry, n. 26.

Walvoord, John, n. 42, 45.

Warfield, Benjamin, n. 107.

Wesley, John, p. 65.

West, Thomas, p. 20.

Whitcomb, John, n. 42, 45.

Wieland, Carl, n. 20.

Wilder, Smith A.E., p. 26.

Willis, David, n. 109.

Wood, Leon, n. 42.

Young, Edward J., n. 42.

SUBJECT INDEX

- Abrahamic covenant, p.11.
- Adequacy of the Bible, p. 79.
- Application of the Bible, p. 18, 20, 21, 27.
- Ancient document rule, p. 50.
- Apocrypha, p. 115, 122.
- Aramaic writings in the Old Testament, p. 12
- Archeology, p. 45, 48; n. 53, 54.
- Acts, book of, p. 95
- Authority of the Scriptures, p. 8, 31, 73, 81, 86, 90, 94, 98, 108, 109, 113, 117, 121, 124.
- Bible
 - authors, p. 8, 13, 16, 18, 32, 33, 72, 86, 92, 97, 98, 104, 107.
 - basic division p. 10.
 - central person p. 10, 66.
 - central theme, characteristics of p. 72.
 - evidence for reliability, p. 2, 45, 48, 49, 50, 52, 67, 102
 - forces against, p. 21, 22, 26.
 - issues, p. 8.
 - importance, p. 8
 - Influence, p. 64.
 - languages, p. 8
 - nature, p. 5, 24, 28, 31, 32, 35, 67, 69, 92, 98.
 - number of books, p. 8, 12, 13, 32
 - purpose, 8, 9.
 - structure, 9.
- Canaanites, 104
- Canon, p. 113
 - apocrypha and canon, p. 115.
 - defined tests of, p. 113.
 - key considerations, p. 113.
 - formation of p. 114.
- Character of God, p. 32, 57, 66.
- Church
 - acceptance of Scripture, p. 114, 117.
 - commissioned to communicate p. 25,
 - existence rooted in Resurrection, p. 64.
 - inherited Sacred OT Scriptures from Judaism, p.13.
 - in relation to political and social institutions, p. 5, 25.
 - rejection of the Apocrypha, p. 117.
 - testimony about the inspiration of the Bible, p. 97, 98.
 - testimony on special revelation, p. 80.
- Claims of the Bible
 - prophets and OT writers about their writings, p. 28, 29, 97.
 - Christ and the Apostles about the OT and the NT, p. 23-25.
- Contradictions
 - Bible, science and history, p. 6, 101, 123.
 - Bible numbers, p. 105.
 - contradictions defined, p. 99, 100, 101, 107, 111.
 - contradictory verses, p. 105.
 - Miracles, p. 103.
 - morals and religion, p. 104.
 - OT quotes, p. 103.
 - original autographs, p. 106.
 - reports of the same event, p. 105.
- Covenant
 - Unilateral, p. 10, 11.
 - Bilateral, p. 10, 12.
- Creation vs. evolution, p. 100, 101.
- Creation science, p. 26.
- Creeds
 - Apostles Creed, p. 23.
 - Methodists Articles of Religion, p. 23, 121.
 - Nicene Creed, p. 23.
 - Thirty nine Articles of the Church of England, p. 120.
 - Westminster Confession of Faith, p. 119.
- Daniel's 70th week, p. 40.
- Davidic covenant, p. 16.
- Dead Sea Scrolls, p. 19.
- Death, p. 7, 39, 67, 84, 115.
- Distribution of the Bible, p. 65.
- Easter, p. 64.
- Evangelical theology, p. 23, 39

Evidence for the Bible: divine revelation
 internal evidence, p. 28.
 external evidence, p. 28.

Faith, p. 78.

False prophets, p. 74.

False teachings, p. 24.

Great Commission, p. 25.

Greek texts, p. 18.

Hebrew arrangement of the Bible, p. 10, 114, 118.

Heresy or false teaching and accurate Bible teaching, p. 24.

Historical accuracy of the Bible, p. 45.

Historical Critical Method, p. 38.

Historical division of the Old Testament, p. 13.

Historical research, general rule of, p. 47, 50.

History, secular view of, p. 45.

Holy Spirit
 Author of the Bible, p. 8, 107, 108
 God's agent in conforming believers to Christ, p. 25.
 Confirming the Bible, p. 34, 35.
 Internal witness of, 34, 35.
 Selection of writers, p. 18, 92.

Illumination, p. 20.

Indestructibility of the Bible, p. 65.

Infallibility, p. 97.

Influence of the Bible, p. 65.

Inerrancy
 Chicago statement, p. 108.
 Defined, p. 97.
 Evidence, p. 97, 98.

Inspiration
 alternative possibilities, p. 66.
 defined, p. 86.
 evaluation of theories, p. 91.
 process of, p. 93.
 testimony of the Church, p. 98.
 theories of inspiration, p. 86.
 selection of writers, p. 92.

Interpretation, p. 20.

Israel
 future history, p. 40.
 Messiah political Savior of, p. 16.

Jesus Christ
 Death, burial, and resurrection prophesied, p. 63.
 Deity, p. 82.
 Incarnation predicted, p. 42, 43.
 real figure in history, p. 50.
 means of salvation, p. 8-10, 15.

Jesus Seminar, p. 49.

Judeo-Christian ethic, p. p. 27.

Liberal Theology, p. 23, 36-39,

Literal method of interpretation, p. 40.

Lord's Day, p. 64.

Accuracy in copying the New Testament, p. 49.

Homer's Iliad vs. the Bible's original manuscripts, p. 19, 49.

Surviving New Testament manuscripts, p. 49.

Masoretic text, p. 19, 108.

Messiah, p. 16.

Miracles, p. p. 57, 103, 123.

Missionaries to the South Pacific, p. 9

Morals and religion, p. 25, 104.

Mosaic covenant and its characteristics, p. 11.

Mosaic Law, p. 14.

Myths, p. 34, 37, 75, 87.

Naturalism, p. 37.

Nature of the Bible, p. 32.

Neo-evangelical view, p. 86

New Testament
 allusions or quotes by early writers, p. 51.
 authors, p. 14
 content, p. 14, 29.
 credibility of writers, p. 45, 50.
 contrasted with the old, p. 14.
 dating, p. 51.
 evidence from writings of opponents, p. 51, 52.
 Greek manuscripts, p. 32, 108.
 number of books, p. 14.
 organization, p. 14.
 place of writing, p. 14.
 relationship with the Old Testament, p. 14, 15.
 reliability of documents, p. 48-52.

Old Testament
 authors, p. 13.
 contrasted with the New Testament, p. 14.
 date of writing, p. 13.
 described, p. 12.
 emphasis, p. 10.

geography of writing, p. 13.
 history, p. 13.
 language, p. 12.
 earliest manuscripts, p. 13.
 number of books, p. 7, 12, 13.
 outline, p. 13.
 purpose, p. 7.
 relationship with the New Testament, p. 16.

Passover, p. 64.

Predictions of Christ in the Old Testament, p. 42.

Printing, invention of, p. 14.

Proofs for the Bible, p. 28-68

Population control, 20.

Prophecy, p. 36, 42, 43.

Redeemer, p. 7.

Redemption, history of, p. 8.

Reformers, p. 118.

Relationship between the OT & NT, p. 7, 16.

Resurrection of Christ, p. 99.

- credibility of eyewitnesses, p. 52.
- defined, p. 58.
- evidences, p. 57, 60.
- proofs for, p. 60-65.
- scholars views, p. 58.

Revelation p. 69.

- additional revelations forbidden, p. 31, 80.
- Bible as revelation, p. 71, 72.
- general, p. 64.
- limitations, p. 65.
- progressive versus continuous, p. 85.
- special, p. 65.

Revelation, book of, p. 80.

Roman Empire, p. 14.

Salvation, p. 7, 14, 24, 122.

Science and the Bible, p. 48, 99, 100.

Selection of human writers, p. 92.

Semitic language, p. 10.

Sequence of God's communication process, p. 18.

Society and the Bible, p. 25.

Teaching/preaching of the Bible, p. 20.

- How to teach, p. 20.

Ten Commandments, p. 11.

Testimony of Christ

- approval on the Old Testament, p. 53, 54.
- authentication of the New Testament, p. 28.
- believed and taught Christian doctrines, p. 56.
- considered accuracy of Genesis story, 53, 54.
- on Adam and Eve, p. 54.
- on creation, p. 54.
- on Jonah, p. 54.
- on the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, p. 56.
- on Moses and the burning bush, p. 54.
- on Moses and the bronze serpent, p. 56.
- on Moses and the Pentateuch, p. 54.
- on Noah and the ark, p. 56.
- recorded in the Gospels, p. 48.

Textual criticism, 11, 18, 51.

Transforming power of the Bible, p. 33.

Transmission of the Bible, p. 18,

- Christian Bible's accuracy, 18.
- Masoretic text, p. 19.

Translations, 19, 65.

- definition, p. 19.
- distribution, p. 29.
- Septuagint, p. 12, 19.
- Latin Vulgate of Jerome, p. 19.
- German Bible, p. 19.

Trinity, p. 81.

Types and symbols in the Old Testament, p. 16.

Unity of the Bible, p. 32.

Worship, p. 12, 81.

Writing, origin of, p. 13, 47, 48.

SELECTED SCRIPTURE VERSES

The following selected verses are central to several core issues regarding Scripture. They are not exhaustive, nor do they document every issue discussed in this book.

Exodus 19:3, 25; 20:1-17; 32:16.

Leviticus 19:31.

Deuteronomy 4:39, 40.

2 Samuel 23:2, 3.

Psalms 12:6; 19:1, 2; 7-11.

Daniel 9:25-27.

Matthew 5:17-19; 8:4; 28:20.

Mark 12:26, 27; 14:49.

Luke 1:1-4; 24:27, 44, 45.

John 1:18; 3:13; 10:3, 4, 14, 34, 35; 12:38; 14:6, 26; 15:15, 25; 16:14; 17:8, 17; 20:30,31.

Acts 1:3; 20:20, 27-33.

Romans 1:2, 18, 19; 2:14-16; 3:2; 8:16; 10:13-15; 15:4.

1 Corinthians 2:9, 10, 14; 14:37; 15:3, 4, 14.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15.

Galatians 1:6-9, 12; 3:6-10, 16, 21, 22.

Ephesians 2:20; 4:13-15; 6:17.

2 Timothy 2:2, 15-18, 24-26; 3:1-9; 15-17; 4:2-4.

Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:1-4; 4:12; 5:12; 8:13; 9:15.

James 1:22; 3:1.

1 Peter 2:2.

2 Peter 1:3, 4, 16-21; 3:1-3, 15, 16.

1 John 5:9.

Jude 3.

Revelation 1:8-11; 22:18, 19.

